

# **GUARDIAN**



## **The Global Supermarket Havoc in the Eastern province**

**Racial crimes and British justice**

**Human Rights in Sri Lanka**

**US presence in Asia**

● **ASIAN PEASANTRY**

● **SYMPOSIUM**

● **MUSIC**

# MARGA PUBLICATIONS

*Marga Publications which consist of independent research studies undertaken for international and local organisations, symposia of various seminars, and lectures given at evening discussions are now available with all leading booksellers and at the Marga Institute, 61 Isipathana Mawatha, Colombo 5.*

* Non Formal Education in Sri Lanka	15/00
* Welfare and Growth in Sri Lanka	8/00
* The Cooperative System and Rural Credit in Sri Lanka	10/00
* The Sinhala Reading Public	5/00
* Youth, Land and Employment	10/00
* Religion and Development in Asian Societies	10/00
* Needs of Children and Adolescents in Sri Lanka	12/50
* Instability of an Export Economy	
(Gamani Corea)	
Hard cover	45/00
Soft cover	37/00

# LANKA GUARDIAN

Vol. I No. 16 December 15, 1978

Cover Picture:

Eating into the heart of the poorer nations  
(See Page 12)

## CONTENTS

- 2 - 3 News background
- 4 - 9 International News
- 10 - 11 Racialism
- 12 - 14 Food
- 15 Press opinion
- 16 - 17 Labour
- 18 - 19 Music
- 20 Symposium
- 21 Anniversary
- 23 Paper

Published by Lanka Guardian  
Publishers Ltd., Third Floor,  
YMBA Building, 126 3/28 Main  
Street, Colombo - 1.

Telephone: 29028.

Editor: **Mervyn de Silva**

Printed by Ananda Press  
82/5, Wolfendhal Street,  
Colombo - 13.

Telephone: 35975

## Trends

### Graphite

Is Sri Lanka in for a windfall? A US manufacturer of America's most advanced, multirole tactical fighter, the F-18 Hornet, has succeeded in building many of the plane's parts with laminated graphite thread. The finest graphite is found in Sri Lanka and mined in small quantities because only a little graphite is needed in even vital industries. Used in the manufacture of planes graphite is light, strong and saves fuel and helps planes to last long. It cost the manufacturers \$500 a pound at the start. Now it costs them \$43 a pound. With increased use they are hoping the price will level off at \$5 a pound. Graphite is also used in the manufacture of tennis rackets, golf clubs and sailing masts.

### Many ironies

The choice of Sri Lanka by the Press Foundation of Asia to hold its tenth anniversary sittings was full of ironies. There was President Jayewardene standing before the delegates to tell them that freedom of the press 'means not only freedom of expression but the freedom of the editor to express his views without coming into conflict with that of the owner'. Some FPA delegates knew that Lake House had sacked half a dozen or more editors for 'not coming into conflict with that of the owner'. But to add to the ironies President Jayewardene confessed that

he was both share holder and head of "this mighty organisation" which his government has come to inherit.

### Hornet's nest

Prof. P. P. G. L. Siriwardena has raised a hornets nest about the marking of University and A Level answer scripts. It is claimed that he has pulled up Tamil lecturers for lenient marking. But what is not known is that he also pulls up Sinhala examiners who are lenient in their marking, yet no communal charges are made. It does happen that some examiners are lenient and others are strict.

On the campuses there is a growing body of opinion against the remarks and allegations of the Vice Chancellor. Many Sinhala lecturers are perturbed by his remarks which they claim are reminiscent of the Nazi campaign against the Jews in the thirties.

Siriwardena has made out that Sinhalese were stifled and discriminated against in the Science faculties. Yet it was Prof. Kandiah who made him a Professor amidst much protest.

### Pastor's claim

Jesus to the Communist World Inc. a right-wing organisation in USA, headed by Pastor Wurmbrod, who was jailed in Romania, takes

(Continued on page 2)

## Letters

### Pre-planned performance

I was delighted to find that Dr. Costan de Vos had not only looked askance at all the figures given in my Review, but also came up with the *petite* ones that were missing and raised many pertinent questions which would help readers find their way around in "the murky field of statistics" to arrive at the facts — which, unlike figures, are sacred indeed.

The use of the 1974 figures for Cement production and 1976 figures for Textile production does certainly savour of some chicanery. I can assure Dr. de Vos and your readers that availability of comparable data from published sources was the only determinant of the choice of years and that any other significance would be incidental.

The reasons for setting low targets for 1978 could best be explained only by those who are responsible for it, for it will be necessary to know not merely the production figures but also the "production conditions" as Dr. de Vos has rightly put it. While aiming at the noon day sun is certainly not a strategy that can be condoned or recommended, one cannot believe that Dr. de Vos is seriously suggesting that targets be fixed on the basis of past achievements only, regardless of the reasons for any poor performance, particularly because the declared objective is to raise levels of output from the depths to which they had sunk. I can only join Dr. de Vos in hoping that those who have access to all the relevant facts and figures would enlighten us on this point.

I would also like to state that my intention was to show that there has not been any miracle as had been claimed and no attempt was made to suggest that there had been a debacle in the Cement industry. All credit to those who are responsible for increasing production by 22% above the 1974 achievement. To

(Continued on page 24)

## Race and classes: Some questions

One issue of which a bipartisan approach seems to have evolved in Sri Lankan politics has been that of race. The attitude of the two dominant Sri Lankan (Sinhala?) parties towards the Tamil community seem to differ only in nuance rather than in substance. The item captioned 'The Business of Race' in the Oct 1st issue of this journal noted the appearance of business organisation, the composition and stated aims of which expressed this bipartisan outlook. The recent furor over alleged favouritism in the marking of answer scripts at University and 'A' Level exams provided the latest example of the essential unity in the approach of both major parties on this vexed question of race.

While the government controlled *Lake House* and *Times* newspapers presented solely the views of the Minister of Industries and the upper echelons of the University Establishment, the *Davasa* Group prosecuted the campaign with an ideological vigour and zeal strongly reminiscent of the (West German) Axel Springer press on one of its frequent anti-communist crusades. The SLFP's *Dinakara* which strikes radical postures critical of the government on most matters can hardly be distinguished from the *Davasa* in the slant it adopts in its coverage of this and allied issues concerning the Tamil Community.

It is against this monolithic backdrop of a media blitzkrieg that the following questions currently circulating within the academic community and independent but informed circles in general, should be viewed. These questions arise from the (unprecedented) press conference given by the Minister of Industries, the Vice Chancellor and others:-

1. An allegation of an offence was made concerning the 1963 Chemistry practical exam for the G. C. E. A/L. Why did the then

Head of Department take no action at the time to institute an inquiry without waiting for 15 years to announce it to the press particularly since practical exams have been discontinued after 1971?

2. An allegation was made one year after the previous government came into office regarding marks in the A/L Mathematics papers. A high powered committee of inquiry comprising 3 eminent (Sinhala) Dons namely: professors B. A. Abeywickrema (the then V. C.) P. W. Epasinghe and V. K. Samaranyaka was appointed to go into the matter. They found no discrepancy. Why was this fact ignored?

3. At the press conference it was claimed that on the basis of marks in *one* question (the famous mosquito diagram) in *one* subject in *some* scripts at the 1977 A/L exam 4000 Tamil candidates have got high marks - which is an insinuation that all Tamil-marking examiners are cheats and that there is systematic cheating in this medium. However, isn't the evidence presented, extremely skimpy statistically speaking, in relation to the conclusions reached? Furthermore isn't it correct that even *within* the Tamil medium there were discrepancies? Then again why was no *official* inquiry held into the matter?

4. Is it not correct that a random check was made in other subjects too at the 1977 G. C. E. A/L and no discrepancy was found?

5. As far as university exams are concerned, in the case of the Peradeniya campus GSQ 1977, there were 3A's and 35 B's in Botany out of the 45 Sinhala medium Bioscience students, while there were 10 A's and 2B's out of 12 Tamil medium students. Aren't there logical explanations of this phenomenon other than the one proffered i. e. cheating by the Tamil examiners? Also, why was there no official inquiry held to clarify this even though

the results were released over two months ago?

6. In the case of the Tamil medium examiner in Colombo who was dismissed for examination offences in 1972, isn't it correct that at the time he was an outpatient of the mental hospital at Angoda and the Doctor in charge of the hospital certified to his being mentally ill? If this is true surely a case cannot be constructed alleging systematic cheating by Tamil examiners?

Meanwhile, it is of great interest and significance to note that the academic community of the University has closed ranks on a non-racial basis to oppose and condemn the stand taken by the Minister of Industries and the Vice Chancellor. This is clearly shown in the press statements issued by the University Teachers Association, Peradeniya campus, the University of Ceylon Science Teachers Association, Peradeniya campus and the academic staff Jaffna campus. It is also noteworthy that these statements have been 'blacked out' by the overwhelmingly predominant sectors of the mass media.

### Trends . . .

(Continued from page 1)  
credit for the victory of the UNP at the last General Election. Their bulletin claims that "In Sri Lanka, our mission workers, led by Sister Pereira, placed their lives at stake to make a massive distribution of Christian anti-Communist literature. This contributed toward the complete eclipse of the left's political power in last year's general election.

The leftist movement, however, is planning to come back to power through the trade unions, controlled by Moscow-brand Communists and Trotskyites. Pastor R. Wurmbbrand had very good meetings there and will go back soon. He counts on your prayers that many Red sympathizers will be swayed from following devilish Communism and will choose to be numbered among Christ's elect."

# Nature's onslaught

**W**e tend to over-react in the face of tragedy. This is just what Justice Minister Devanayagam may have been doing when he said that to rehabilitate the cyclone hit Eastern Province the Government would have to divert all its current expenses on development work to the Eastern Province. But as the picture clears, with more information coming in, the Justice Minister's first observation still remains the best description of what has happened to the once quiet and peaceful eastern coast of our country.

No newspaper report or picture has been able to get across the savage fury of nature's onslaught for a seemingly unending eight hours. The few coconut trees that survived have had their crowns wrung mercilessly. Others that tried to resist the storm came out of it as if they had gone through a giant sugar cane crusher. Even the solid concrete posts were not spared. What the wind couldn't do falling trees and debris did contributing to the highest death toll by a natural disaster that the country has ever suffered. The only parallel to the present disaster that history records is when the sea overstepped its bounds and reached Kelaniya. But the Mahawamsa does not record the number that died, only the reason for the sea's anger which was provoked, it says, by the burning in oil of a Buddhist monk.

A modern chronicler of the Mahawamsa would have a time of it wondering what caused the heavens to weep when the foundations for a just and free

society had just been laid. But let the theologians worry about that. More immediately the natural disaster has been so overwhelming that nearly all the political parties have been awed by the tragedy. No party, however, has forgotten to express its sorrow or to rush its personnel on rescue missions to the disaster area. On the economic side it remains to be seen how much of

a setback the cyclone's havoc and destruction has caused.

The work of reconstruction in the three affected districts, where an emergency has been declared, could be the stimulus needed to push our economy along. But on the other hand can the shops and pavements continue to be overloaded with expensive gew-gaws while the ill clad cyclone destitutes shift straws and sticks to put up some sort of shelter before the heavens start weeping again?

## Cyclone relief

**A**ccording to the *Daily News* there is enough food now in the cyclone affected area, the victims themselves are receiving Rs. 500 for rebuilding of houses and all the signs of life returning to normal. *The Daily News* seems anxious to point a rosy picture of the sad events that have overtaken the country, but doesn't this lead to the very complacency that the Government must avoid in bringing the million or so affected people to normal life.

Perhaps the first few weeks are the hardest in any rehabilitation effort. Those who have returned from the disaster area after mercy missions speak of the need to revive hope among the destitutes before they sink into apathy. Though it was several days after the abatement of the cyclone nothing was being done by the people themselves to bury the rotting carcasses of dead animals, some to be found even in the heart of the Batticaloa town.

We have rushed dry rations to areas where there is neither fuel nor even the elementary pots and pans to cook a simple meal. One government servant had

found a tin in which to boil the water for tea. The food parcels and such other offerings attract both the needy and the greedy and the crooked and there is genuine doubt as to whether the relief is reaching the deserving at all. Since mercy missions are restricted to areas accessible by vehicles the question arises as to what is happening to those living away from the major highways.

There is need to encourage the people affected to come back to life with their own efforts rather than live off the hand-me-downs of the well-to-do. Why not organise communal kitchens in the affected areas and get the houseless themselves to help in the preparation of meals and cooking. Life can begin to grow once more round this essential activity with directions and help from the army and the navy and the airforce. In fact these three forces could be given the job of acting as the link in restoring communal life. The masons and carpenters can follow to put up the more permanent structures. What needs to be restored to the cyclone refugees is their self-respect. They will then learn to build.

# Malaysian workers and the FTZ

The Free Trade Zones in Malaysia were launched in the aftermath of the May 1969 race riots, in order to ease the acute social problems of rural poverty and urban under-employment. The foreign investors were given *carte blanche* to set up completely foreign owned enterprises. They had ten-year tax holidays, free trade status and state regulation of unionisation.

Today, ten years later, the problems that FTZs spawn, came more sharply into focus. When a recession occurs and business is slow, the foreign enterprises seek to lay-off workers through legal and extra legal methods. This creates terrible job insecurity.

Conversely when business is bright and demand is heavy, employees are pressurised to work long hours, and to increase output. The modern assembly line in Malaysia is staffed predominantly by young girls, on whom these demands can more easily be made. Most of them come straight from the villages and have no idea of their labour rights or financial worth. When they can't maintain the high pace of production demanded or refuse to do more than the legal 32 hours overtime a week they are fired.

Malaysian workers are also exploited across the causeway in Singapore where 120 000 of them are at work. Nine hundred workers cross the Johore strait each day, commuting to Singapore for work.

These emigrant workers are said to perform the heaviest, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs in Singapore. It is claimed that the Singapore success story is largely due to the efforts of these emigrant workers. They perform the most risky jobs in the shipyards and construction sites and record the highest number of industrial accidents.

The Malaysian workers have no job security because in many instances they are paid on a daily basis. And are not allowed to change jobs for three years.

## Orange politics

What's in an orange? Lots more than just pips as this story from the Asian Wall Street Journal reveals of a struggle between two giants of the 'free economy'. The Japanese love oranges and are willing to pay a dollar for each and the Americans grow them in profusion and would gladly sell them at that price. But this true love story cannot find a happy ending as the laws about supply and demand tell you it should for there are some nasty elders by the name of 'quotas' and 'permits' which prevent the lovers from getting together. The 'gang of 91', as the influential Japanese companies and individuals holding the orange quotas are known oppose American moves to open Japanese ports to oranges because this would cut into their enormous profits. The Americans point out that these profits are enormous because orange growers in America make only \$ 1.6 million on the shipments while the 'gang of 91' makes \$ 43.9 million on this same shipment. To help the powerful 'gang of 91' there is an equally powerful lobby of 340,000 families in Japan who grow mandarins and command very great weight within the ruling democratic-liberal Party.

While Japanese resistance is building up on one side American resistance is building up on the other. The orange growing states in the US are refusing to pass a multilateral trade agreement through Congress which will have a lot of bearing on the trade and tariff agreements being thrashed out in Geneva. The \$ 20 million or so orange shipment is just small potatoes, the Asian Wall Street Journal points out. What is at stake because

Their civil rights are curtailed. They are subject to sterilisation and marriage restrictions. And union activity is of course met with deportation. ●

of this orange dispute are many billions of dollars of world trade. But the orange growers won't give in. As one Aide to a Senator has said, "If nothing was there for citrus, I'd hate to see the multilateral trade negotiations going down the drain, but it would be hard for me to recommend a vote for the them." If the Japanese Ports open to the orange growers there is a \$ 70 million to a \$ 100 million market waiting for them. And this increased business would naturally help to narrow the current \$ 9.33 billion deficit the US suffers in its trade relations with Japan a major reason, according to the Asian Wall Street Journal, why the dollar is presently in the dumps. The irony is that the orange growers are driving Toyotas, using Seiko watches and watching Panasonic television. And now they are wondering why they should do so when the Japanese cannot 'buy a few boxes of oranges.' So much for the 'free economy'. ●

## AI on political imprisonment in China

Just 12 days before the 30th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Amnesty International published a major report on political imprisonment in the People's Republic of China. The 176-page report outlines in detail the country's constitutional, legal and penal systems under which suspected political dissenters are

(Continued on page 23)

# Third World poorer now than then

**H**ard on the heels of latest OECD statistics on foreign aid and investment in the 'Third World' (see *Lanka Guardian* Oct. 1 page 8) come two new sets of figures — one from the European Bureau of the Wall Street Journal, and other from an MIT study by Paul Rosenstein-Rodan. Some of the highlights of these two surveys findings revealed to us that:-

\* The incomes gap between the West and the 'Third World' has increased rather than decreased, after the granting of formal political independence. Towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the 20th century, the per capita income of persons in underdeveloped countries was about one half of the per capita income of people in the developed west. By 1970 however, the per capita income of people in the under-developed world was around one twentieth (1/20) of that of people in the West. In other words the ratio of the incomes between the periphery and the metropolitan centres has changed from 1:2 to 1:20 within the past 75 years or so. This proves that on a world scale the rich have become, and are becoming richer while the poor are growing poorer. Thus, underdevelopment is not a feature that is being eradicated, but rather an ongoing process. Furthermore, this process continues even after political independence, so long as economic dependence remains.

\* This fact of continuing under development is also proven by the drop in the proportionate share in the world income enjoyed by the non-oil producing 'Third World' countries. This percentage dropped from 22% in 1950, to 14.6% in 1960 and to 10.7% in 1973.

\* The statistics also reveal the utterly imbalanced and iniquitous character of the existing international division of labour. The 'Third World' contains not only 70% of the globe's population,

but also an overwhelmingly predominant share of the world's raw materials, mineral and fuel, all of which are needed for the manufacture of industrial goods. However, in reality the 'Third World' produces less than 10% of the world's industrial goods. The economies of the 'Third World' countries have been distorted to such an extent by their colonial past and dependent present, that the growth of heavy industry is very limited. Western sources are not anxious to finance the growth of the capital goods sector in these countries, and the industrialization strategy promoted by the West, concentrates almost exclusively on light and medium scale industries. This explains why light industry comprises over 50% of the total value of industrial manufactures of the 'Third World' while it amounts to only 35% of industrial manufactures in the West. (The other 65% is accounted for by heavy industry, which is the 'engine of growth' in these countries.)

\* What does underdevelopment mean in real terms? The statistics provided on poverty. Around 750 million people in the 'Third World' have an average annual income of less than 50 U. S. dollars which is below the poverty line, while according to the MIT study, the figure of those who live in a state of absolute poverty is higher still. In fact, in Asia alone, this latter figure amounts to over 530 million. Meanwhile, there are over 800 million illiterate people in the 'Third World'. In Latin America they amount to over 38 million, while the number of semi-literates is 114 million.

\* Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that just as the gap between rich and poor countries is increasing so too is the gap between the rich and poor sections of society within the poorer countries. The phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor growing poorer thus holds true not only at an international level,

but also at a national level. The poor in the 'Third World' are therefore truly the 'wretched of the earth'. This is borne out by statistics on income distribution in 39 representative 'Third World' countries which reveal that the richest 5% of the population has anything between 16-30 times as much wealth as the poorest 40% of the population.

\* It is important to recognize that underdevelopment is not due to lack of or insufficient integration with the developed Western economies. Indeed, just as underdevelopment of the 'Third World' and the development of the West was historically a direct result of colonialism, the present process of increasing underdevelopment in the Tricontinental countries has been accompanied if not antedated by increasing integration of their economies with that of the West. Foreign investment and loans granted by the West to the LDC's have reached unprecedented heights resulting conversely in a huge debt burden and surplus drain which further incapacitates peripheral economies. While Latin America's foreign debt tops 25,000 million U. S. dollars the 'Third World's' foreign debt currently totals over 200 billion U. S. dollars. (India alone pays out 1 billion U. S. dollars a year as repayment and interest on foreign debts.) As far as foreign investment is concerned, direct foreign investment in LDC's by U. S. based transnational corporations in the period 1950-1972 totalled 50 billion U. S. dollars, while the resultant outflow from 'Third World' in the form of profits, dividends etc etc, was around 100 billion U. S. dollars.

This empirical data gathered and presented by sources which could hardly be described as radical or left-leaning, is only a tiny fraction of the wealth of statistics readily available to prove conclusively that the path of dependent capitalist growth in no way furthers the greatest good of the greatest number in our societies.

● Flashback

# The rape of Bengal

by Sparine

At the December 1978 elections, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League won a landslide victory. Mujibur who had already spent ten years of his life in jail for rebelling against Punjabi and Urdu domination of East Bengal, was in a position to rule all of Pakistan whilst giving greater autonomy to Bengal. Neither Zulfikar Ali Bhutto nor Gen. Yahya Khan were prepared to tolerate Mujib's prominence and so they unleashed Gen. Tikka Khan on the hapless population of East Pakistan, thereby fulfilling Lord Louis Mountbatten's quarter-century old prediction that Pakistan would disintegrate.

"No people have had to pay as high a price in human life and suffering as the people of Bangladesh," lamented Mujib in an interview in London soon after his release in early January 1972. In an attempt to heal the wounds of civil war, Mujib proclaimed that Bengali women raped by Punjabi soldiers were heroines of the war of independence, since in traditional Bengali society rape victims are ostracized.

Soon after Indian troops had liberated Jessore, Joseph Fried of the *New York Daily News* reported that: A stream of victims and eyewitnesses tell how truckloads of Pakistani soldiers and their hiring *razakars* swooped down on villages in the night, rounding up women by force. Some were raped on the spot. Others were carried off to military compounds. Some women were still there when Indian troops battled their way into Pakistani strongholds. Weeping survivors of villages razed because they were suspected of siding with the *Mukti Bahini* freedom fighters told of how wives were raped before the eyes of their bound husbands, who were then put to death.

Since journalists had been barred from East Pakistan during

the nine months of civil war, few authentic reports on the atrocities committed against Bengali women leaked out. But by January volunteers began assessing the problem.

An Asian relief secretary for the World Council of Churches called a press conference in Geneva to discuss his two-week mission to Bangladesh. The reverend Kentaro Buma reported that more than 200,000 Bengali women had been raped by Pakistani soldiers during the nine-month conflict. Some estimated the rape toll at 400,000.

Ms. Berengere d' Aragon a photo reporter for *Black Star* said that as the Pakistani regulars swept through the tiny hamlets, a high incidence of forcible rape took place. The *razakars* muslim Biharis - who acted as mercenaries, were even worse offenders. The *Mukti Bahini* also committed rape in the process of 'liberation'.

In the *New York Times* *Magazine* Aubrey Menen records a typical case. A seventeen year old Hindu bride of one month, living with her parents, was the victim. "At ten one night a truckload of six soldiers burst into their home. Two went into the room that had been built for the bridal couple. The others stayed behind with the family, one of them covering them with his gun. They heard a barked order, and the bridegroom's voice protesting. Then there was silence until the bride screamed. Then there was silence again, except for some muffled cries that soon subsided.

"In a few minutes one of the soldiers came out, his uniform in disarray. He grinned to his companions. Another soldier took his place in the extra room. And so on, until all the six had raped the belle of the village. Then all six left, hurriedly. The father

found his daughter lying on the string cot unconscious and bleeding. Her husband was crouched on the floor, kneeling over his vomit."

Girls of eight and grandmothers of seventy-five had been sexually assaulted during the nine-month repression. Pakistani soldiers had not only violated Bengali women on the spot; they abducted tens of hundreds and held them by force in their military barracks for nightly use.

Ms. Berengere d' Aragon recounts the story of thirteen-year old Khadiga. She was walking to school with four other girls when they were kidnapped by a gang of Pakistani soldiers. All five were put in a military brothel in Mohammedpur and held captive for six months until the end of the war. Khadiga was regularly abused by two men a day; others, she said, had to service seven to ten men daily.

Ms. d' Aragon also writes about Kamala Begum, a wealthy widow, living in a Dacca suburb. When the fighting started she sent her two daughters into the countryside to hide. She felt she could afford to stay behind, secure in her belief that she was "too old" to attract attention. She was assaulted by three men, two Pakistanis and one *razakar*, in her home.

The horror of rape in backward societies and the terrible consequences were adequately displayed in Bangladesh. The government attempted to launch a campaign to marry off the victims. But the suitors, often *Mukti Bahini* freedom fighters wanted handsome dowries.

"The demands of the men have ranged from the latest model of Japanese car, painted red, to the publication of unpublished poems," a government official bitterly complained.

Robert Trumbull in the *New York Times* quoted an Australian physician in Bangladesh who said that "almost every rape victim tested had a venereal disease."

(Continued on page 2)



# Central America : revolution and counterrevolution

by A. Zapata

The recent outbreak of revolutionary struggle in Nicaragua and the general insurrection that started on September 9 have put Central America on the front pages of the international press. The region known as Central America — that narrow length of land connecting the two American continents — has 18 million inhabitants in a land area of 517 943 square kilometers; yet it is burdened with the ominous exploitation implied by 2614 million dollars of direct U.S. investment (through 1975 according to U.S. Commerce Department figures). The region has all the conditions for developing a truly revolutionary situation.

Since the early 20th century, Central America's history has been highlighted by emerging liberal and reformist currents, and by the long struggle to establish a Central American Republic, composed mainly of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Yet while a lot is said today about the military dictatorships imposed on the peoples of South America — among which the dictatorships of Augusto Pinochet in Chile is especially notorious for oppression, sell-out policies, crime and plunder — the republics of Central America have also undergone political transformations since the beginning of the second stage of capitalism's general crisis; changes preceded with invasions by the U.S. marines in a number of countries. In Honduras, with the Carias era, beginning in 1933; in Guatemala, with General Jorge Ubico, who took power in 1931 and proceeded to sell out the country's main natural resources to the United Fruit Company (today known as United Brands); in El Salvador, also in 1931, when the Military Directorate took power leading the country into 47 years

of successive tyrannies in league with the country's national bourgeoisie. By far the most notorious case in Central America is that of Nicaragua, which has been ruled with an iron fist since 1937 by the descendants of the Somoza family.

Central America, from one end to the other, depends on its agricultural exports. Not only that, the countries are both one-crop producers and one-crop exporters with the export headed mainly for the U.S. market. Bananas (Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica), coffee, cotton and sugarcane are the principal sources of income in the area, though in Honduras mining is also being developed.

The incipient financial sector of the bourgeoisie has been able to establish itself to a degree in some Central American countries, but always under the thumb of international banking circles.

The local import-export bourgeoisies, at the same time, have attempted to establish their oligarchies, fighting constant battles among themselves in each country for political backing and control of the power mechanisms, they have tried to impose governments that will guarantee their economic interests by giving them greater participation in decision making.

This explains the growing conflicts between these local bourgeoisies and military dictatorships, as well as the contradictions within the bourgeoisies of countries of a more democratic nature in the region, such as Panama and Costa Rica.

The bourgeoisies correctly consider the revolutionary potential that objectively exists in Central America as an even greater threat to their predominance and economic expansion. At the same time



... countries that are one-crop producers and importers, mainly for the US market ..

although the military regimes and their repressive machinery can in the short run act as a brake to this potential of the masses and even ensure the predominance of the great alliance of counter-revolutionary forces, they will, in the long run, hold just as much to create the subjective conditions for the development of the mass movement and the effective formation of its vanguards.

On the other hand, there is the so-called limited democracy that the Carter administration proposes with its fluctuating, demagogic policy on human rights. The main purpose of the Carter policy is to attempt to get the Latin American tyrannies to "loosen up a bit" and to grant certain individual and political freedoms — rights which already belong to the masses but which these dictatorships have stripped away. This sort of policy, together with the reformist offensive of the Socialist International on our continent, helps give hope to the local bourgeoisies, making them capable, as in Nicaragua, of turning to direct action to

achieve their objectives, while continuing to deceive and exploit their peoples. Meanwhile, they present themselves to imperialism as more secure servants than those of the fascist-style governments. Nicaragua today is undoubtedly the clearest example of that type of situation.

The counter revolution is trying to unite its forces to defeat the revolution. To this end, dissimilar sectors of the bourgeoisie are for the time being ignoring their discrepancies among one another to form various alliances that would facilitate their rise to power when the dynasty falls.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Socialist Party, the trade unions, the student movement and the masses as a whole are showing once again that the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is incapable of leading the fight against Somoza.

Somoza has announced that his reactionary guardsmen had gained control of the situation in Masaya, and that he would "pacify" the country within a week.

What Somoza did not say at his press interview was that his hired assassins were massacring the people, which at the beginning rushed out to fight without a sufficient degree of organization, but which later acquired an organic coherence under the leadership of the Sandinista Front.

What Somoza did not say either was that in Masaya province, which he claimed to have under control, the National Guard did not go out on the streets at night; that the positions they held during the day were recovered at nightfall by the people led by the Sandinista commandos; and that the towns of Diriamba, Daria, Catarina and Niquinhome were held by the rebels.

Neither did Somoza mention the execution of the notorious guardsman, Captain David Baez, after a Sandinista commando unit attacked and occupied a Somoza stronghold at the northern border port of Las Manos.

The strike called late in August by the business sector and later led by the Sandinista vanguard and the labour movement has not been mentioned by the tyrant either.

The Voice of America, which daily changes its position according to the latest turn of events, has now just rendered the counterrevolution a new service by trying to portray the Sandinista Front as being divided into non-Marxist and Marxist tendencies. The former, it says, is made up of young intellectuals, serious and decent people who are linked to the business community, who are presumably considered by the "colossus of the north" to be the exact opposite of the former.

In the Central American area there is but one counter revolution, in which a primary role is played by the fascist-style regimes of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, led by the most reactionary U.S. power group, the Pentagon and the CIA.

In Central America, there is but one revolution, one banner under which to fight for the demands that are dearest to the masses.

In Central America, revolution is characterized by a great breadth of expression. It is not solely the Communist Parties, with their scientific interpretation based on Marxism-Leninism, which are fighting for revolutionary changes.

The masses join together in many political, trade union, student and social organizations which raise the banner of revolutionary change with a great variety of political and ideological expressions. Examples of these organizations are: the FSLN of Nicaragua; the People's Liberation Forces (FPL) of El Salvador; the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) of Guatemala; the People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP) and the Socialist Party of Costa Rica.

In their respective countries, the FSLN, the EGP and the FPL are struggling to bring about a strong alliance of workers and peasants, and they are ready to join forces with other sectors in their countries truly determined

to wage the final battle for genuine social, political and economic changes; changes that would free the masses from the impoverishment to which they are kept chained by the repression and unrestrained exploitation of the military tyrannies and the U.S. monopolies.

The repressive armies of the Central American area are the main props of the counterrevolution and must be confronted by the revolution's maximum expression: the masses.

The moment has come when the peoples arm themselves for the final struggle and, led by a coherently organized vanguard, sweep the shameful poison of counterrevolution from the face of Central America.—GRANMA

## The rape . . .

*(Continued from page 6)*

Indigenous terminations were widespread. Dr. Geoffrey Davis of the International Abortion Research and Training centre also reported that countless incidents of suicide and infanticide were recorded.

Mother Theresa opened a convention in Dacca to accept babies for adoption and Planned Parenthood offered terminations in Dacca and seventeen provincial clinics. Overcoming their aversion to abortion, Bengali women volunteers set up facilities on their own. Ms. Tahera Shafiq who headed the work was adamant, rape was a false word, she preferred to use the word torture to describe the experience of Bengali women.

To what extent was rape encouraged or tolerated by Pakistani officials? Mulk Raj Anand, an Indian novelist said there was a "planned attempt by the West Pakistanis to create a new race" or at least to dilute Bengali nationalism. Charges were also made that pornographic films were shown in barracks. —"What do soldiers talk about in barracks? Women and sex. Put a gun in their hands and tell them to go out and frighten the wits out of a population and what will be the first thing that leaps to their minds?"

# Peace Zone proposals and the US presence in Asia

by 'Chintaka'

"Peace Zones" are back in the news. Proposals for such Zones, of all shapes and sizes, make their appearance periodically in the mainstream media. During the previous regime, it was an 'Indian Ocean Peace Zone' mooted by Mrs. Bandaranaike. One of the most brilliant slogans seen in this country in recent years was the one coined spontaneously by some anonymous university student following the Weerasooriya shooting of November '76. The slogan which adorned many a wall throughout the Island read as follows: 'The Indian Ocean — a zone of peace; Peradeniya — a pool of blood.'

Following President Jayewardene's remarks in India, Peace Zones are back again — this time on an Asian, or even global scale, it seems. Editorialists and columnists in the state-run media have showered copious praise on the proposal, without however spelling out in concrete terms what it entails. In both Government and Opposition, the SLFP's ideologues haven't been helpful in clarifying matters either. Thus, both the mainstream (pro UNP) media as well as the SLFP spokesman have only served to obfuscate the issue through their unwillingness to pose the central question concerning the issue of peace in Asia. This question obviously is: What is the main obstacle to peace in the Indian Ocean and Asia in general? To phrase it differently, what is the main source of war in the Asian region? What is the dominant external military presence in Asia? Quite clearly, it is the United States of America.

Following the Indo - China defeat of 1975, the American media was filled with speculation about

a 'scaling - down' of the U. S. presence in Asia. Intermittent remarks by various U. S. government officials seemed to confirm this speculation. However, three years later we see that this reduction has merely involved a few bases in Japan, some 1600 soldiers withdrawn from South Korea and a few hundred removed from Taiwan. According to the *New York Times*, there are still some 139,000 U. S. soldiers stationed in Asia. In fact, the U. S. is said to be buttressing its military positions in the region, principally in Australia, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea and Diego Garcia island. In Australia, work was started on a new military enclave in the state of Victoria as part of the 'Omega System'. In the Philippines, Washington is further modernizing the huge Clark air base and the Subic Bay naval base.

There are now 85,700 men stationed at U. S. bases in Japan and South Korea, and the meagre troop reductions that have taken place there were more than compensated for by the stockpiling of nuclear warheads there. This is particularly true of South Korea. Washington has available in Asia two U. S. marine divisions, 7 aircraft carriers, and more than 30 tactical and strategic air squadrons. There are besides, 10 nuclear submarines stationed in Guam.

Of all the U. S. bases in Asia, the one that has caused the greatest controversy in recent times is the one at Diego Garcia. On this key question the silence of UNP spokesmen and the mainstream media is deafening. (As on the Korean and Puerto Rican questions, the SLFP's criticism of the U. S. on the

Diego Garcia issue was extremely muted in the period '71 - 77). The United States has ringed the Indian Ocean from the Australian coast to the south of Africa with a string of military bases. The island of Diego Garcia has been assigned a top role in this strategic system. Under construction there are now an airport where strategic bombers can land and a seaport capable of handling nuclear submarines carrying Polaris and Poseidon missiles. So much for 'nuclear - free zones'!

U. S. journalists who have visited the island have reported that construction work is proceeding without interruption. The local residents have been moved away from their homes; military personnel skilled in the handling of sophisticated equipment has been increased from 700 to 1100.

The naval vessels of the U. S. Seventh Fleet have been following the sea routes of the Indian Ocean for some years now and the combat readiness of the land forces, marine units and air force squadrons is being stepped up for possible operations in the Persian Gulf and other areas nearby.

Though the U. S. tries to justify its military presence in the Indian Ocean and Asia in general by referring to a 'Soviet threat', the real objectives of this presence are the protection of its economic interests (eg. the operations of the transnationals) and also its strategic ones, not to mention the purpose of exerting political leverage. This was confirmed by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt's admission at Senate hearings a few years back that the U. S. would have to maintain a large military presence in the Indian Ocean even if there wasn't a single Soviet ship in the area! The Soviet Union on the other hand still has no military bases in any Asian country. It must likewise be noted that the Indian Ocean is a

(Continued on page 17)

# Racial crimes and British justice

The Asian Organisations against racialism called a meeting to protest against the verdict in the 'Virk Brothers' case. This statement was made by Mr. A. Sivanandan, the Sri Lankan Director of the Institute of Race Relations and Editor of the prestigious journal "RACE AND CLASS"

On July 19th Michael Argyle sentenced Joginder Singh Virk to 7 years imprisonment, Mohinder Singh Virk to 3 years, Balvinder Singh Virk to 2 years and Sukhvinder Singh Virk to 3 months for allegedly causing serious bodily harm to three white youths. Not only were the sentences savage but the whole case rested on the police version of events. The Virk brothers had in fact been the victims of racist attacks and racial abuse. They had defended themselves under severe provocation. The police arrived and arrested the Virk brothers whilst the real attackers went free.

Judge Argyle not only accepted the police version of events but went on to condemn as "irrelevant" the introduction by the Defence of "racial prejudice" as a motivation - and rebuked them for asking the white attackers whether they belonged to the National Front. In ruling 'out of court' the whole social context of the 'crime' the judge was in effect reflecting and reinforcing the racial bias of the police and denying justice to the black defendants.

This case raises fundamental issues. For black people in Britain the police and the state afford no protection from racial abuse and racial violence. To "tell the police" is a sick joke meaning to invite arrest for being innocent. When perforce, black people defend themselves, they are apprehended as the attackers; and when judges unquestioningly accept police interpretations, turn a blind eye to the racial dimensions of

the case and even accuse black defendants of introducing racial issues where there were none, justice is not only not done, but is no longer seen to be done.

Judge Argyle's ruling is not an isolated instance. But it is difficult to glean examples from press reports of similar court proceedings because the police, and, subsequently the magistrates or judges, have already defined for the reporters who is the victim and who the aggressor - thereby precluding once again the articulation of the black experience.

The researches of the Institute of Race Relations, however, reveal a disconcerting pattern in recent judicial opinions and decisions:-

In December 1977 an 18 year-old black youth who accidentally stabbed to death a white attacker was jailed for 18 months. He carried a knife for self protection. A gang of youths (who had been put off a bus for insulting a black conductor) attacked him and he defended himself. The Judge, Melford Stephenson, who accepted that the whites had been responsible for the incident went on to say, "I have got to make it clear that people of any race and colour who carry the kind of horrible weapon that you used must learn that the consequences must be grave". (*South London Press* 9.12.77.)

In January 1978 at Kintbury, 20 year - old Gary Wheeler was fined £25 for assault and ordered to pay £15 costs after an incident in which he had been racially abused and pushed in a public

house. Despite the Defence evidence that the white was responsible, the white went unapprehended. (*Newbury Weekly News* 12.1.78).

In April 1978 a Nigerian businessman Issa Ahmodu who "lived in fear of mugging" was pounced on by plain clothes men and pursued. Mr. Ahmodu pulled a penknife in fear and ran to his hotel. He was later charged and fined £40. (*South Kensington News* 14.4.78).

On June 11th, 150 white racists rampaged through the Brick Lane area of East London assaulting people and property. When Manikur Rahman and Sherajul Haque joined other Asians and white anti-racists in demonstrating against the National Front in their area, they were charged with threatening behaviour (and Haque with possessing an offensive weapon). The magistrate imposed a bail curfew banning them from their own community in Brick Lane whereby they had to stay indoors every Sunday from 7 am to 7 pm. (*Hackney Gazette* 27.6.78).

In Bradford this August Mohammed Saeed Bhatti was fined £200 for maliciously wounding a white man. The white claimed that Asian children had abused him and his wife, whilst Mr Bhatti, the children's uncle claimed that he was abused and attacked first (*Evening Post* 23.6.78).

In a 'Sus' case where two youths were found guilty, the woman from whom they were alleged to have attempted to steal, told police that she had noticed nothing of the sort. The magistrate told the police in court, "I hope you told her to get out of the way and mind her own business". The policeman replied: "In no uncertain terms, sir"; to which the magistrate added, "Quite right, I don't approve of that kind of person". (*Wandsworth Community* October 78).

During the now notorious acquittal of John Kingsley Read, former leader of the National Party, for his statement, "One down, a million to go" (following the murder of Gurdip Singh Chaggar) Judge McKinnon said that "these are matters upon which people are entitled to hold and declare strong views in moderate terms" and concluded: "In this England of ours, as it is at the moment, we are allowed to have our own views still, thank goodness, and long may it last".

In cases where judges do accept a racial motivation for a crime (unlike Judge Argyle), the sentence on whites and the apprehension of whites is quite out of line with those relating to black people.

The murderers of Curdip Singh Chagger had the murder charge commuted to manslaughter and got a sentence of four years. Of the 150 white racists who rampaged through Brick Lane on June 11th, 20 were arrested and only 3 were actually charged. Mr. John James Bogle of Sale, a member of the National Front, charged with firearm offences and theft of ammunition had two revolvers and a rifle kept loaded in his home and was fined a total of £110 by the courts. (*Sale Guardian* 1.12.78).

Two Norwich men involved in repeated assaults on black university students at East Anglia University convinced the judge that the victims were chosen because of their colour. But the judge did not want to "deprive them of their liberty" and "affect their employment" prospects, so he fined them a mere £100 each. (*Eastern Daily Press* 13.12.77).

Compare the sentences on the Virk brothers with that of two white racists at Wolverhampton who pleaded guilty to wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and possessing an offensive weapon. One was jailed for 2½ years for a "deliberate and unprovoked" racial attack on a West Indian, the other had a 6 months suspended sentence. (*Belfast Telegraph* 9.8.78).

There is also a remarkable contrast in the bail conditions being handed out to blacks and whites.

On June 7th three youths (2 Asian, 1 white) came up before Old Street magistrate, Mr. Nichols, charged with using threatening behaviour in Brick Lane. All were given bail but Rahman and Haque were ordered to stay indoors every Sunday from 7 am to 7 pm (*Hackney Gazette* 27.6.78). Contrast this with the fact that the accused murderers of Ishaq Ali were allowed bail on July 7th on the condition that they live in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool for their own safety. At their second court appearance on 6th September, this condition was revoked and they returned to London. Also on July 7th at the same court, three Nigerians who had 'overstayed' their visa conditions were remanded in custody. And in Birmingham this October, magistrate J.F. Milward allowed bail to Martin Sherlock, the alleged murderer of West Indian Vernon Brown - despite police objections. Brown had been pushed under a double-decker bus on the way to a football match (*West Indian World* 13.10.78).

And now for the police offensive - which the judiciary tends to underpin:-

At 12.15 on the morning of July 3rd, seven plain-clothes men broke into the home of an Asian family in Longsight, Manchester. They terrified the entire family, broke up the house and pulled out the telephone. All the family thought they were members of the National Front; one son, Munir had even tried to call the police for help! Nazir, the father was beaten up and had to go to hospital. Both Nazir and Munir Ahmed have now been arrested and charged with 'wounding with intent' - a charge which carries a life sentence. (*Ahmed Defence Committee*).

In January 1978 plainclothes men harassed a 19 year - old black youth in Dalston who (having been attacked 3 weeks earlier by National Front members and suspecting them to be NF members) produced a pen-

knife from his pocket. He states that he was verbally abused and punched by the police - sustaining a hand injury. He was charged with possessing an offensive weapon (*Islington Gazette* 6.12.78).

In April 1970 following a spate of attacks on Bengalis in the East End, the police arrested several Asians on offensive weapon charges. One person was in fact the nephew of a victim who had called the police and was still bleeding from the attack. (*Race Today* December 73).

In May 76 white boys attacked Bengalis outside Daneford School. The Bengalis were arrested. (*Race Today* June 76).

Also in May, Shamsul Uddin was seen by witnesses to have been assaulted by three white boys. He was arrested and charged with possessing offensive weapons - a broom and a hammer found in his home by police. (*Race Today* June 76).

In August, Mustapha Bourkis of Stepney appeared in court charged with having an offensive weapon. P.C. Hey stopped him because he "noticed something bulging in the back of his trousers". Bourkis said, "I'm not going to walk the streets unprotected. If someone tried to attack me, I would do whatever I could to keep them away." (*Hackney Gazette* 11.8.78).

## LANKA GUARDIAN

Revised subscription rates.

With effect from 1st January 1979.

	One year	Six months
Local	Rs. 60/-	Rs. 40/-
Asia	Rs. 300/-	Rs. 150/-
	US \$ 20.	US \$ 10.
	£ 10.	£ 5.
Foreign	Rs. 450/-	Rs. 300/-
	US \$ 30	US. \$ 20
	£ 15	£ 10

Cheques and money orders to be made out in favour of Mervyn de Silva.

The Circulation Manager,  
Lanka Guardian Publishers Ltd.  
Third Floor, YMBA building,  
126, 3/28, Main Street, Colombo 1.

# Still hungry after all these years

## The not-so-grand opening of the Global Supermarket

It takes a lot of vegetables to fill a DC-10 jumbo jet. Yet three times a week, from early December until May a chartered cargo DC-10 takes off from Senegal's dusty Dakar airport loaded with eggplants, green beans, tomatoes, melons and paprika. Its destination, Amsterdam, Paris or Stockholm. These airlifts of food from the African Sahel began in 1972, the fourth year of the region's publicized drought. They increased dramatically as famine spread.

In 1971, Fritz Marschall, an executive of the Brussels affiliates of Bud Antle, Inc., visited Senegal. Perhaps you have heard of Bud Antle, the California-based corporation that trades world wide. The world's largest iceberg lettuce grower, Bud Antle is the company that managed in 1970 to get Cesar Chavez jailed for picketing.

Marschall, formerly a sales manager for Mercedes trucks, was struck by the similarity between Senegal's sun-rich climate and that of southern California. Only two generations ago federally funded irrigation projects and ill-paid Mexican labour had helped make California an agribusiness wonderland. But as farmworkers in California began organizing, Bud Antle, like other companies, began looking for cheaper labour elsewhere. Maybe Senegal could replace California as the company's

source of vegetables for the high-priced European winter market.

By 1972, the German-born Marschall—known in European vegetable circles as "the pusher"—had set up Bud Senegal as an affiliate of Bud Antle's Brussels affiliate, the House of Bud. Promoting the entire venture as "development," Marschall got the Senegalese government, the German foreign aid agency and McNamara's World Bank to put up most of the capital. The Senegalese government helpfully supplied police to clear away villagers who had always presumed the land was theirs for growing millet for themselves and the local market. The Peace Corps contributed four volunteers.

Today, more than 60 armed security officers not only guard the fields but each day search the poorly paid field hands, mostly women, to be sure they don't sneak vegetables home to their families. When we visited the Bud Senegal fields last winter, the American technical overseer told us that the most embarrassing incident in his life was searching a suspected field worker who was a nursing mother—and getting squirted in the face with her milk. He has recently resigned.

### To the Global Supermarket

Under the banner of "food interdependence," multinational agribusiness companies like Bud Senegal are now busily creating a Global Farm to supply a Global Supermarket. Big food wholesalers, processors and retail chains have been delighted to find that land and labour costs in the Third World are often as low as 10 percent of those in the U. S.

Countries most Americans think of as agricultural basket cases—because we've seen so many photos of their starving babies—multinational agribusiness sees as potential breadbaskets, future Californias.

With the emergence of one Global Supermarket, the world's hungry are being thrown into ever more direct competition with the well-fed and the overfed. The fact that a food is grown in abundance right where they live, that their own country subsidizes its production, and even that they themselves sow and harvest it, means little.

Like the women seasonal labourers on Bud Senegal's vegetable plantations they may never eat one bit of it. Rather, the food will be destined for some branch of the Global Supermarket where everyone in the world, poor or rich must reach for it on the same shelf. Every item has a price and, true to the market system, that price is determined by what the Global Supermarket's better-off customers are willing to pay.

Del Monte is another example of how agribusiness creates a Global Farm to service a Global Supermarket. Though originally based entirely in the U. S. Del Monte today operates farms, fisheries and processing plants in more than two dozen countries. Board Chairperson Alfred Eames, Jr... wrote glowingly in a recent annual report: "Our business isn't just canning it's feeding people." But which people? Del Monte has been accused of bullying self-provisioning Filipino farmers off their land to set up plantations to grow bananas for Japan. Del Monte is contracting rich, fertile land in northwestern Mexico that previously had grown a dozen local food crops in order to feed asparagus-cravers in France, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland and Del Monte has opened a

*Joseph Collins and Frances Moore Lappe are co-authors of Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity (Houghton Mifflin, 1977). Lappe is author of Diet for a Small Planet (Ballantine, revised edition, 1975). They are both co-directors of the Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2588 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94110.*

new plantation in Kenya so that no Britisher need go without his or her jet-fresh pineapple. Del Monte finds that a pineapple that would bring only eight cents in the Philippines can bring \$1.50 in the Tokyo division of the Global Supermarket.

Seeing all the world as a Global Farm, agribusiness today is building on solid colonial tradition. Since the earliest outside interventions, agriculture in the colonized world has been a mine from which to extract wealth rather than the basis of livelihood and nutrition for the local people. But today, to the traditional "export crops," like coffee, sugar and cocoa, multinational agribusiness is adding items previously grown at home in the U.S. or Europe: vegetables, strawberries, mushrooms, meat and even flowers. Jet cargo planes and swift refrigerator ships have helped make all this possible.

The Global Farm is spreading fast. Today in Central America and the Caribbean, for example, more than half the agricultural land—its best half—has been put into production for export. This export push goes on despite the fact that up to 70 per cent of the children under five in many of these countries are undernourished.

Who helps pay for the transformation of countries like Costa Rica into farms and feedlots for the likes of Del Monte? We do—in the name of "foreign aid." The Latin American Agribusiness Development Corporation, owned by some of the largest agribusiness corporations in America, has in the past four years helped start up more than 60 projects in Central America geared to the U.S. division of the Global Supermarket. LAAD has obtained two thirds of its capital in loans from American taxpayers, via the Agency for International Development.

During the winter and early spring well over one-half of many vegetables in your supermarket come from Mexico. They are grown on land that could, and in many areas did, produce beans. With beans displaced and their prices rising in Mexico, many rural people find it hard to secure this basic nutritious staple. Similarly, the Brazilian military government has brought in Cargill and other giant U.S. grain-marketing firms in an all-out drive to boost soybean exports to the Japanese cattlefeed market. This soybean export drive has been at the expense of ordinary Brazilians, some of whom last year rioted, because exported soybean export had crowded out their basic food—black beans. And in Chile the junta vigorously pushes food exports, while it has been estimated by a Canadian economist that 85 per cent of the Chilean people are malnourished.

The Global Farm does more than divert land away from growing the varied, nutritious crops that used to be grown and eaten in the poorer countries. Crops for the Global Supermarket monopolize the funds and services of government agriculture programs and neglect local food crops. Finally, the Global Supermarket is the best incentive yet for the local elite to fight redistribution of agricultural resources. Unwittingly Global Supermarket consumers in countries like the United States are becoming a suction force, absorbing land and labour that could otherwise be producing food for those who need it most.

### THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Ironically, many Americans see agribusiness as the solution to hunger. Having been told that scarcity is the cause of hunger, they inevitably believe that production must be the answer. Only agribusiness, they reason, has the technical and managerial knowhow to produce more food.

On the surface, this sounds logical enough. In fact, it's nonsense. Simply increasing production will never solve the problem of hunger. The real questions are *what* is grown and *who* eats it—and the answers to these questions are determined by who controls the food-producing resources. The problem is not technical. It is political.

**Why is the Third World growing more and eating less? Because giant multinational agribusiness companies are shipping their food to the U.S. and Europe. Below: some examples of typical firms and foods involved in this lucrative trade.**

**LATIN AMERICAN AGRIBUSINESS CORPORATION:** A consortium of 15 giant U.S. corporations, including Borden, Ralston Purina and Gerber. Incorporated in Panama to avoid paying U.S. taxes, it still receives U.S. loans. Exports beef, vegetables and carnations from Central America and Colombia for Saffeway and Southland (7-Eleven). Land and labour costs in Latin America run it as little as ten per cent of those in the U.S.

**CARGILL:** The world's largest grain commodity trader. The Minneapolis-based multinational is the largest family-owned U.S. corporation. Return on net assets increased more than 40 per cent after the Soviet wheat deal. Now expanding into poultry in Pakistan and Taiwan. The company is also relying more heavily on its Brazilian soybean base. Successfully survived expropriation of its Peruvian fishmeal operations.

**DEL MONTE:** World's largest agribusiness corporation. Ownership of Del Monte's Filipino pineapple and banana plantations is being contested by peasants who claim the company threatened to encircle their farms and cut

off all access unless they signed leases. Shirley Temple Black sits on the board of directors. Recently moved its asparagus production from California to Mexico; 90 per cent of the crop is then exported.

**BUD ANTLE:** This concern uses some of the best farmland in Senegal to produce vegetables, melons and exotic spices for the European market. But the same land would be equally suitable for grains and other nutritious crops badly needed in local diets. In the early 1970s, exports increased as famine spread. Back in its Salinas, California, headquarters, the world's largest iceberg lettuce grower was instrumental in jailing Cesar Chavez.

**UNILEVER:** Manufactures more than 1,000 products. The name Unilever doesn't appear on any of them. In India, Hindustan Lever buys crops at low prices and packages them into Vanaspati vegetable ghee for the affluent. The makers of Birds Eye and Lipton Tea are not satisfied with near-monopoly status in Europe. A board chairperson commented: "It remains to be seen how soon the rest of the world can be brought into line."

The diagnosis of scarcity and its prescription of more production have been the central thrust of the "War on Hunger" for at least 30 years. More than enough evidence is now in to know where that philosophy has taken us. As newspaper headlines each month attest, the gap between rich and poor nations is growing, and the so-called Green Revolution is part of the cause.

Presented as an all-out effort to boost food production, governments, international agencies like the U.N., the World Bank and multinational corporations have promoted agricultural "modernization" of all sorts. This means largescale irrigation, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, tractors and combines and new high-response seeds. The result has been that Third World agriculture, once the basis of livelihood for millions of self-provisioning farmers, has become the latest way for a small elite to get rich. As sheer control over the "right" piece of land begins to virtually ensure financial success, a catastrophic chain of events has been set into motion.

Competition for land by a new class of "farmers"—moneylenders, military officers, bureaucrats, city-based speculators and foreign corporations—has sent land values soaring. Land values have jumped three to five times in the "Green Revolution" areas of India. For people who owned the land they worked, that's fine; but most do not. Higher rents force tenant and sharecroppers into the ranks of the landless, who now make up the majority of the rural population in many countries. With their profits, the powerful new class buys out the small landholders who have gone bankrupt. Thus, fewer people are gaining control over more land.

Moreover, with vast acreages planted uniformly in the most profitable crop, commercial operators from Brazil to Indonesia mechanize to avoid "labour management problems." By conservative estimate, two and a half million labourers have already been displaced by tractors and harvesters in Latin America alone. Fewer than a third of these will find other rural jobs. They have no choice but to join the ranks

of the urban unemployed. Thus come about the rapidly swelling slums of cities like Calcutta of Mexico City.

Once Green Revolutionist landholders are established, they start growing crops not in the local diet. We found landowners in Mexico's Sinaloa and Sonora provinces switching to grapes for brandy; we found entrepreneurs in Colombia switching from growing wheat to growing carnations. Thus, for labourers forced off the land, the price of the food crops that remains is still higher.

The end result is tragic, ironic and predictable: more food is being produced yet more people are hungry. This point is hardly speculative. International Labour Organization studies document that in the very Asian countries—Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia—where the Green Revolution has been pushed, and where, indeed, food production per person has risen, the rural poor are worse off than before. The study concludes that "the increase in poverty has been associated not with a fall but with a rise in cereal production per head, the main component of the diet of the poor" (our emphasis). These seven countries account for well over half of the rural population of the non-socialist Third World. Other studies by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development confirm the pattern: in the Third World, on the whole there is more food and less to eat.

### DESTROYING THE LAND

In its lust to harvest new riches, agri-business is treating the soil carelessly all over the world. It can afford to, because profits are high and there is always new land to move on to when the old develops problems. In Mexico's Zamora Valley, the strawberry export industry treats cheaply the land that it has acquired cheaply. Too much irrigation and pesticide spraying result in infested and exhausted soil. But the few strawberry millionaires merely

count on taking over new sites where the process can be started all over again. In supplying the Global Supermarket, Mexico's strawberry growers are competing with the greater expertise of U. S. producers. To compete, according to a major study of the Mexican strawberry industry, "they plunder resources to the fullest, i. e., getting the maximum out of them without investing more than strictly necessary..."

In Brazil, one of the last remaining great natural preserves, the Amazon river basin, is rapidly being stripped of its forests. Giant multinational firms like Anderson Clayton, Goodyear, Volkswagen, Nestle, Liquigas, Borden, Mitsubishi and Universe Tank Ship (owned by multibillionaire K. Ludwig) are bulldozing hundreds of millions of acres to raise cattle for export. Liquigas plans call for floating barges of cattle downstream to Belion at the mouth of the Amazon. There, workers will slaughter and cut up the meat: more workers will quickly plastic-wrap it in packages complete with weight and prices in lire. The meat will be flown to Milan for immediate distribution to Italian supermarkets. The company figures it will save on refrigeration, since the meat will be chilled "naturally" at 30,000 feet

But the environmental consequences of clearing land for cattle are likely to be disastrous. Tampering with a tropical forest, it turns out, is not the same as cutting down trees in the temperate zone. Once the multi-canopied vegetation of the forest is stripped away, the torrential tropical rains, which sometimes dump six to eight inches in a single day, wash away unshielded topsoil, and the equatorial sun bakes what remains into a brick-like wasteland. Ecologists warn that by altering the Amazonian forest so vastly, drainage and water evaporation rates might well set off chain reactions that would significantly alter climate throughout the world.

NEXT: 'One country, one crop.'



# ජනදින

## Corruption in the co-ops

That certain co-operatives have suffered even greater losses under this regime than under the previous regime has been pointed out by the ruling party's own MPs. It was the co-operatives that the UNP made a principal weapon of in coming into power. Even after coming into power the party continued to berate the previous rulers and throw mud at them. But what have they done towards the co-operative movement even after two budgets? Has it been put on the right course? Or have they succeeded in ridding it of corruption? The co-ops are still the blackmarkets of certain directors, and the institutions to which the UNP appoints its favourites. The UNP cannot convert the co-operative movement into being a service for the public. Nor have they any need to do so.

# දිනකර

## Sinhala in the courts

The language of courts Act came into effect in 1961. In July 1970 the courts made a beginning to function in Sinhala from Gampaha. From then onwards the number of courts functioning in Sinhala increased. From May 22, 1972 after the introduction of the new constitution Sinhala was made the language of the courts. But with the coming of the UNP government and the introduction of a new constitution the status quo was changed. Under the new constitution's clause 24 (4) the Minister of Justice Mr Devanayagam enacted a special gazette notification No 1/6 enabling courts to conduct all work in

English. To mollify the criticisms now rising from within its own rank of MPs the government has appointed a ministerial committee to examine the difficulties encountered in administering the courts in Sinhala and how they can be removed. Before this committee meets what the government should do is to remove the special gazette notification enacted on September 7, 1978 because this is the biggest difficulty in administering the courts in Sinhala.



## These traitors should be exposed

Our lead story today reveals how five Sri Lankan journalists work for the CIA. That four of them are employed by Lake House has to be specially emphasised. If any individual in this country is found working for the CIA it is a traitorous act and whatever government is in power it is its duty to take action against them. When the journalists concerned hold prominent positions in the government's own paper the state's responsibility to act against them is even more grave. The fact that their connections with the CIA have been revealed, as they say, by the horse's mouth, that is by an American Senate Committee report, there can be no doubt about the CIA connection. This report is a public document. If an Indian MP could get it there is no difficulty for the Sri Lankan Government to get it. The Government therefore, should get a copy of this report, conduct a full investigation of the named journalists and take suitable action against them. This, we emphasise, is the duty of the Government. If the Government ignores this, citizens are likely to infer that the Government, too, approves of such conduct.

**INVITE US TO  
CATER FOR  
YOUR PARTY**

**6  
to  
60  
or  
more**

## PAGODA

Catering is a speciality.

We cater for any function large or small: weddings, engagements, cocktails, luncheons, dinners.

## PAGODA RESTAURANT too

is available for your party.

Phone: 23086, 29236.



## PAGODA

105, Chatham Street,  
Colombo 1.

Cyril Rodrigo Restaurants  
Ltd.

# Organising the Asian peasantry

There is now ample evidence to show that cooperatives, 'panchayats', community-development programmes and other such 'institutions' have not been successful as instruments for tackling the poverty of the poorest classes. Usually imposed on the people from above by governments, by and large such bodies have been dominated by the more socially and economically powerful groups. These groups have used these 'peoples organisations' to steal away the lion's share of the inputs and outputs of most development efforts for their own benefit.

Lately, on a spectrum running across the U.N.'s development assistance agencies to politicians and planners in Third World countries, it is being said that the poorest segments in a country's population need to have their own organisations to enable them to take advantage of development projects and programmes.

## Need for peasant organisations

Need there indeed is for peasants to organise themselves to get a better deal. Looking on at the Asian region as a whole, the need for peasant movements, and organisations to sustain them, stems from gross inequalities in the structure of agrarian societies. Given the paucity of resources available to them and the highly skewed land-ownership pattern, it is hardly surprising that they should explode into revolt every now and then. If peasants do not revolt more often, or if there are still not enough examples of strong peasant organisations, it is to a large extent due to the nature of the repression that awaits their attempts to get organised. The following pages clearly show how sporadic, or sometimes organised attempts on the part of the poor peasantry

to redress the social relations of production in its favour, are suppressed by the better-off people in league with government authorities.

There is another paradox, and yet the paradox itself is a pointer to the need for strong peasant organisations that can put forward the peasant cause and struggle for it. The paradox is that in six out of the seven countries (India, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia), which were covered by an I.L.O. study (*Poverty and Landlessness in Asia 1977*), only in one (Bangladesh), did population increase faster than food production. Moreover, the increasing poverty of the poor segments in Asia's population is not due to general stagnation in Asia, or, worse, economic decline. The paradox goes further, for "all but one of the seven countries surveyed have enjoyed a rise in average incomes in recent years, and in some instances the rise has been quite rapid."

The poor do not necessarily starve because there is no food around, but because they simply do not have the buying power to acquire it. So, hunger and poverty cannot ipso-facto be eliminated by producing more. What needs greater attention is how to empower the poor so that they may get their due share; for when the chips are down those who have power (land and other assets) survive, those who are powerless, perish.

## ILO Convention on rural workers

It is in the context of increasing impoverishment, both economically and politically, of the poor classes of landless labourers and small peasants that it is now being recognised in official international and national circles to promote the growth of organisations of

rural workers.

In 1975, the general Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted a Convention aimed at associating rural workers with economic and social development action in order to improve their conditions of work and life permanently and effectively. The Convention also noted that "in developing countries there is massive under-utilisation of land and labour and that this makes it imperative for rural workers to be given every encouragement to develop free and viable organisations capable of protecting and furthering the interests of their members....."

But unfortunately the high-sounding sentiments expressed in the Convention lie as corpses across vast stretches of the Asian Region. The gap between intentions and deeds is nowhere so evident as in the disgraceful record of so many Asian governments in coopting, or failing that, in actually suppressing or outlawing all genuine efforts of peasants to organise themselves on the lines that the ILO calls on them to do.

## The politics of peasant oppression in India

One of the most glaring examples of the credibility gap between precept and practice in the sphere of organisations of rural workers has been the record of the Central and State governments in India during the recent Emergency from June 1975-77. Side by side with Indira Gandhi's attempt to centralize and personalise all political power in her hands, a Twenty Point Programme was announced to tackle various economic problems. One of the twenty points was the declaration that the accumulated debts of all bonded labourers would be written off and that all such persons would be freed

from the shackles of a form of feudal slavery that could not be tolerated in a modern democratic and socialist state. Yet, in blatant contravention of its own programme, the government found itself incapable of tolerating the efforts of peasants to give muscle to officially prescribed polices. This situation continues to persist even in the Post-Emergency period under the new Janata Government.

For measures such as debt-redemption and enforcement of minimum wages and land reform to become effective, it is obviously necessary that landless labourers and small peasants should have their own organisations in order to protect their own interests and to challenge the power of landlords, money-lenders and those in the administration who are in league with the former. Otherwise, without organised pressure, which may take the form of class confrontation or a polarisation of class interests, the established groups in the rural social structure will hardly concede anything that goes to weaken their hold on the political and economic levers of power.

However, given their precarious conditions of survival, their acute sense of dependency on their feudal patrons and the generally surplus labour available in the rural areas, it is not at all easy for landless rural workers and peasants to be organised into an effective political force. But in certain instances where efforts to organise the rural poor have been partially successful, there has been a predictably adverse response from the landlords as well as the administrative sentinels of law and order. Thus, in the state of Bihar in India annoyed landowners have also organised and armed themselves against the poor peasants.

#### **Murder of a peasant leader in Bihar**

Under cover of the Emergency in Bihar, in flagrant violation of the 'paper spirit' of the Twenty Point Programme, any form of peasant resistance or protest was

ruthlessly suppressed. As reported by the Economic Times of Bombay on July 5, 1977, "barbarous assaults on the lives of peasants were perpetrated by such measures as liberalization of gun licenses and organisation of shooting camps to train landowners."

There are innumerable examples of acts of intolerance and outright brutality in India against attempts by low caste and other poor classes to organise themselves in order to resist their exploitation and improve their living conditions. But it should be enough to give a summarised account here of a particular case of revolt and counter repression in Bihar and Maharashtra to illustrate the nature of the forces that are ranged against the emergence of genuine organisations of the rural poor.

The story that follows is the story of a peasant leader, Gambhira by name. The area under description is Chaundadane in Bihar's East Champaran District. Chaundadane is feudal, dominated as it has been by gun-wielding, blood thirsty zamindars for over a century. "There still exist zamindars with many hundreds of acres of land, employing hundreds of sharecroppers, fleecing them and flourishing. The zamindar can, whenever he wants to, beat up any peasant and seize his land; rob the peasant or take away his wife, sister or daughter. All zamindars have guns. Each of them has a regular 'army' equipped with guns and other weapons. These 'regulars' are settled in separate busties by the zamindars; they are given land and all facilities. It is this 'army' that fights for the zamindar in times of conflict with the peasants and labourers." (Frontier, Calcutta)

It was to fight this highly organised feudal set-up of the landowners that Gambhira and his friends organised the peasants into the Kisan Khetihar Mazdoor Sangh (KKMS). The KKMS covered an area of more than five hundred villages and fought the zamindars on various economic issues such as tenancy rights and wages. The struggle was

carried on well within the law on such matters. But the greatest success was achieved in the struggle against social oppression. The zamindars became particularly alarmed by the new-found self-confidence of the Harijan peasants. They spread the propaganda that the KKMS peasants were communist terrorists (Naxalites) and decided to take retaliatory action. In collusion with the police, the landlords had Gambhira and his close colleagues arrested, and in the course of interrogation, brutally tortured and murdered. Such was the fate of one who dared to give the peasants their own organisation to further their social and economic prospects and to resist brutal exploitation at the hands of landlords who had exploited them relentlessly for generations.

Next: Fate of peasant organisations in Thailand.

#### **Peace zone . . .**

*(Continued from page 9)*

passage through which Soviet ships must necessarily pass in their voyage from one end of the vast Soviet land mass to another. Unlike the U. S. the USSR has no exploitative economic interests to safeguard in Asia. Neither does the USSR have to buttress the anti-people dictatorial regimes of the area, which is a task the U. S. has to perform. The recent naval build up by the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean and Pacific areas is really a response to the hegemonic U. S. presence in the area, and is welcome by Vietnam, Laos and most left-wing regimes and movements, with the notable exception of course, of China.

Any proposal for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean or Asia as a whole which does not have as a corollary the concrete demand for the removal of all U. S. military bases in the area (especially the Diego Garcia base) is therefore both meaningless and hypocritical.

# Song without words ?

by Reggie Siriwardena

I am not a music critic, but as an interested listener to the music of both East and West, I found Dr. A. J. Gunawardana's article on the late Rukmani Devi (*Lanka Guardian*, Nov. 15) so provocative that I feel impelled to offer some comments on it. Objecting to the attitude or critics who judge all art by its social relevance, Dr. Gunawardana sums up their position thus:

"The more 'relevance' there is, the better the music, *hang the quality of the music* or the singer's rendering of it." (My emphasis.)

By implication, therefore, Dr. Gunawardana holds that there are at least two indispensable criteria without which vocal music cannot be judged—the quality of the music and the singer's rendering of it. However, when Dr. Gunawardana comes to make his own estimate of Rukmani Devi as an artist, he seems to forget one of his own criteria. Conceding that 'the lyrics of her songs were woefully mired in the banalities of the Colombo school of poetry', Dr. Gunawardana goes on to say that 'nonetheless on her lips, they acquired a life that transcended the commonplace sentiments embodied in them.' So much for 'the singer's rendering'. But what about 'the quality of the music'?

As far as Rukmani Devi is concerned, Dr. Gunawardana seems to have been so carried away by her voice and her execution that, in effect, he says 'Hang the quality of the music' too. —'It is the singer,' he concludes, 'that finally makes the song, not the lyric, however meaningful, *not the melody, however sweet.*' (my emphasis.)

Shouldn't Dr. Gunawardana have considered the fact that the great

ter part of Rukmani Devi's repertoire consisted of the plagiarised Hindi and Tamil film hits that constituted our popular music during a whole era—that, indeed, the banality of the words was matched by the banality of the music? No doubt, it wasn't Rukmani Devi's fault that, with her undoubted natural gifts, she had the misfortune to be born into the darkest era of Sinhala music and to waste her talents on music which was not only third-rate but also second hand. But in these circumstances one can speak only of potentialities and not of musical fulfilment. If Dr. Gunawardana had paused to invoke one of his own criteria, he might have been compelled to ask himself the question whether anyone could be considered a singer of the front rank without her skills being tested against music which was also of artistic distinction. A good singer is not a mere performer but an interpreter, and there can't be interpretation without something significant to interpret.

I remember being told that the legendary Adelina Patti used to sing even *Home, Sweet Home* enchantingly. I doubt, however, whether any music critic worth his salt would have called her the great singer she was held to be if her golden voice had always been expended on music of this quality—and even if she had died a regrettably tragic death. I don't imply that Dr. Gunawardana's judgment has been swayed by this last circumstance, but the hysteria of the 'national' press makes it necessary to draw a clear line of distinction between the expression of grief or sympathy on the one hand and critical assessment on the other.

Now about the words. Dr. Gunawardana seems to consider

words and their meaning irrelevant to one's critical judgment of song. I find this extremely odd in some one who, when we were both helping to prepare an HNCE anthology in English, appropriately suggested the inclusion of Bob Dylan's *Blowing in the Wind*. But one doesn't need the example of contemporary protest music to show that the power of song depends on the fusion of meaningful words and effective music.

I suggest that in all ages and places, wherever music has had a vital place in relation to the life and culture of a society, song has been linked with social activities such as worship, labour and communal celebrations, or associated with other arts such as dance and theatre, including the fusion of music and drama that makes opera. Of course, the same thing could be said even about instrumental music in older cultures, but with the dissociation between art and social activity that takes place in bourgeois societies, it has become possible to make instrumental music, because of its more abstract nature, 'pure' music—music for music's sake. Song can never be pure music in this sense, because by its very nature it is a mixed art, bringing together poetry and music; and since it is words that are usually sung, and not pure sounds, the element of verbal meaning cannot be excluded from song, and is an inseparable part of the impact made on the listener.

What I would call (to use Dr. Gunawardana's phrase) 'the authentic mainstream of song' is therefore based on the union of meaning and melody. To ignore the quality of the music and its execution in the interests of 'relevance' is no doubt wrong; but it is equally wrong to judge vocal music solely on the quality of the singer's voice and her command of it. There are no doubt examples of inferior words being redeemed by their musical setting; what I do not accept is that

banal words and banal music can be transfigured merely by the singer's performance. To listen to song merely to be titillated by a beautiful voice is not to be in contact with 'the authentic mainstream of song' but to indulge in an aesthetic divagation from it. If Dr. Gunawardana were to extend his position to other arts, he would be telling us that in a play one need not consider the content but only the production and the playing, or that one should judge a film by the quality of its photography.

As for 'relevance', I grant that the term has been recently over-worked as a critical cliché and often misapplied. But does that entitle Dr. Gunawardana to dismiss so lightly the concept or the urges that find expression in it? To go no further, Mr. Charles Abeyasekera's article on the Tower Hall drama in the same issue of your journal shows how discussion of theatre and music in terms of social relevance can be illuminating. I would say the same thing about an article on Amaradeva by the same critic in an earlier issue of your journal—an article at which Dr. Gunawardana is perhaps glancing in some of his observations. What we need on Rukmani Devi is an examination of her songs in similar terms, particularly in the context of the social images and myths projected by the Sinhala cinema during her heyday.

Finally, I should like to enter a dissent regarding Dr. Gunawardana's attitude to singing through the mike. Of course, it is true that where musical performance is centred round the concert-hall and the operatic stage, the artist who matters is the one capable of what Dr. Gunawardana calls 'open-voiced, full-throated singing'. I wonder, however, whether even in the past this was the only style that was cultivated, for wasn't Indian classical music essentially chamber music? Be that as it may, why shouldn't the modern technology of artificial amplification of sound permit the cultivation of another kind of talent—that of the singer whose voice

may lack power, although beautiful in quality and expressive in articulation and who can therefore reach a large audience only through the microphone?

Moreover, it is not only the use of the mike in the concert-hall but also the rise of the cinema, of radio and TV, and the dissemination of record-players and tape-recorders that have helped to change styles of singing the world over. To turn one's back on the inevitable impact of these technological innovations and to see this process as always and necessarily a musical decline is 'to ring the bell backward, to summon the spectre of a rose'.

An analogy with another art may help to clarify my point. It is well known that the development of the cinema has changed acting styles, since the expansive, larger-than-life modes of the theatre seemed ludicrously exaggerated on the screen, particularly after the rise of the sound film. The best film actors today have developed styles of acting which in their intimacy and subtlety would be lost in theatre. There may have been critics in an earlier day and age who lamented the decline of the 'full-blooded, full-bodied' acting styles of the past and their diminution in the cinema. Today we take it for granted that the cinema, an art made possible by modern technology, requires a different kind of acting. Why should we be more supercilious about the microphone?

### Solution to Cryptic Crossword No II.

Across — 1. Cost 3. Spies 6. Stir 11. Confuse 12. Athwart 13. Polite fiction 16. Trebled 17. Element 18. Trainer 21. Sunbath 23. Shame the devil 26. Fortune 27. Medulla 28. Reel 29. Study 30. Hemp.

Down — 1. Cock 2. Syncope 4. Pretend 5. Examine 7. Tearose, 8. Rite 9. Pusillanious 10. What he intends 14. State 15. Itchy 19. Ash tree 20. Retreat 21. Stemmed 22. Axillae 24. Afar 25. Carp.

*For Electrical*

*Installations*

*designed to meet*

*your exact needs*

*Please contact:*

## LIGHT ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES

(ENGINEERS & CONTRACTORS)

REGD No. 96805

8th Floor, Paul VI Centre,  
Front Street, Colombo II.

Telephone: 36657

## Which way for the Left?

### (4) Dinesh Gunawardana

The LSSP which was founded in 1935 faced a rift in the early '50s when Philip Gunawardana formed the VLSSP which in turn collaborated with the SLFP in 1956 General Elections. The present MEP came into being in 1959 and was a partner in the National Government during 1965 - 1970. However, at its 1971 sessions the MEP renounced the alliance with the UNP and now claims to be a Scientific Socialist Party.

DINESH GUNAWARDANA (a son of the late Philip Gunawardana) who in 1968 worked as the Organising Secretary of the MEP Youth Leagues and who has been the Party President and General Secretary since 1973, talks of the left movement with the "Lanka Guardian".

*Q: The ideological - theoretical standpoint of the MEP doesn't seem to be as clearly defined and well known as that of other leftwing groups and parties in this country. Could you therefore, give us some idea of your party's theoretical position?*

*A: We are a Scientific Socialist Party. We differ from the other Left groupings mainly on International issues and how we analyse local situations towards creating a socialist society. We are more dedicated towards a Sri Lankan Revolution. Internationally, our position is very clear; we feel the basic contradiction today is between capitalism and socialism. With regard to various conflicts among socialist countries we do not totally approve of Maoist or Trotskyite positions.*

*Q: Together with Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Sarath Muttetuwegama and G. I. D. Dharmasekera, you were one of those who fared reasonable well at the last General Elections against the backdrop of a huge defeat for the Left. How do you explain the Left's electoral defeat and conversely your relative success (in losing by only a wafer-thin margin)?*

*A: The Left's ignominious defeat at the last polls was largely due to its own divisions, especially of the ULF. The MEP after 1970 had a clear position.*



Dinesh Gunawardana

We opposed the CJC and were the first to clamour for unconditional release of political prisoners. Also, we did not align ourselves with the UNP, the then opposition. And when the ULF was founded, the MEP proposed that the "new gathering" should not be another old UF of 1970, but a new Left Front truly representative of workers and peasants with a new program for the Left. We proposed that all sections—J. V. P, RMP, Shanmugathasan, Prins Gunasekera etc—should be invited to a preliminary discussion. We failed, and most likely for proposing this, the MEP was never invited to any subsequent discussions. As a result of all these clear posi-

tions—not being a part and parcel of UF of 70-77, MEP's stand that the main enemy was the UNP and Fascist grouping—seem to me the cause for my narrow defeat.

*Q: What in brief is your assessment of the general economic and political situation in the country?*

*A: Since coming to power, the UNP has been trying hard to nullify all the victories of the people since 1956, especially in terms of national sovereignty and their attempts at removing the domination of Imperialist and neo-Colonialist economic shackles etc. Now, the entire economy is brought under the whims of the IMF and multi-nationals. Our higher echelons of power are contemplating more repressive laws to restrain the working class. This is what we are facing today. And the JCTUO working committee has yet to work out a counter-program of action to mitigate this trend. Conditions of unemployment, health and education are deteriorating and Lanka's populace may well have to migrate for its existence.*

*Q: In such a context what do you think is the correct path that the left movement in Sri Lanka should traverse? In particular, what do you think are the immediate tasks of the left movement in the present conjuncture?*

*A: The entire Left would have to assess and analyse in terms of Sri Lankan conditions rather than giving priority to internationally offered solutions—to formulate a program of action to strengthen our national sovereignty. And for this, we must bring together all anti-Fascist forces, educate the masses on how a socialist program of action—mainly economic, central planning etc—could be implemented in the country. For this, the Left has firstly to sink their divisive view points on international issues and secondly, to muster all the progressive elements and jockey them to concerted action. Peasants, Youth*

and Patriots comprise the bulk of SLFP followers and the Left has yet to win them over. The Left must defeat the Fascist role of the UNP and fight to win basic democratic rights of the people.

*Q: If you accept the importance of Left unity, why has the MEP not joined either the ULF or the 'New' Left United Committee of Vasudeva, Shan, Dharmasekera, Yapa etc? We gather that these latter groups have repeatedly invited you for discussions on united action, but that you have not responded .....*

*A: The MEP trade union sections have consistently worked to bring these groups as participants in the JCTUO. Action Committee. This we have failed. Their positions on various issues were very conflicting, especially of Shan, Vasu and Dharmasekera. Therefore, on those terms the MEP has found it very difficult to arrive at a working understanding with them. How some of those sections joined the ULF just after the last elections and on what grounds are still unknown and vague—whether it was over theoretical reasons or for leadership considerations or for Parliamentary representation.*

*Q: What is your opinion of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna?*

*A: The pre-'71 JVP does not exist today. Then it was composed of wider sections and later the JVP has been changing its positions and today they are not clear enough to form a clear program or a party. Yet, the JVP could play a big role in a militant Left programme of action.*

*Q: Some groups claim that the SLFP still has a 'progressive potential', while others do not agree. What is your position on the SLFP and UNP?*

*A: There are mass progressive groupings within the SLFP because it is a mass organisation—not organised on the same basis of Marxist or Leftist political parties. And it is also wooing more and more sections from the Old Left. To what extent these progressive*

*(Continued on page 24)*

## Anniversary

# Human Rights in Sri Lanka

On the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it is appropriate to take stock soberly of our country's record in this field. Compared to many third world countries we are indeed fortunate. This is however no ground for complacency. The question that should concern us is not how much worse off others are elsewhere, but what room there is for improvement in our own country.

The advent to power of the present Government in July last year was followed by two outbreaks of violence. Post election violence is no new phenomenon, what is alarming is that it seems worse after each successive election. This could, if unchecked, totally negate the democratic process. Soon after, came the communal disturbances. The Government, whose responsibility it is to ensure that all persons in Sri Lanka can live without fear irrespective of their political allegiances, ethnic group or religion, took both events seriously and correctly instituted inquiries into their causes. The work of the Commission on the communal troubles is seen to progress with diligence. Little has been heard of the other so far, though it is understood that many thousands of representations were received by the one man committee appointed to look into the post election incidents.

The Government was quick to repeal the Criminal Justice Commissions Act and the Exchange Control (Amendment) Act which had corrupted the administration of justice and led to the ill treatment of suspects. There were also important improvements in the fundamental rights position in the new Constitution of 1978; these include the introduction for the first time of protection against torture or other cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the right to be informed of reason for arrest, the right to production before a Court after

arrest, the right to fair trial and legal representation, the presumption of innocence, the prohibition of retro-active penal legislation, and the abolition of the provision which permitted discrimination on grounds of sex. Another praiseworthy new provision extends the benefit of fundamental rights to stateless persons legally resident in Sri Lanka instead of limiting them to citizens. The new Constitution also grants certain necessary language rights to the Tamil speaking people.

However many obvious further steps remain to be taken while several old problems remain unabated. The Interpretation (Amendment) Act so strongly criticised when it was passed in 1972, remains unrepealed and continues to frustrate the injured subject who seeks legal redress against misuse of Governmental power. The Press Council (now manned by nominees of the present Government) continues functioning under the same, unamended law, which was condemned with equal vehemence when it was passed after several historic and heated battles in 1972 and 1973. The Government controlled mass media—both newspapers and radio—are as sycophantic towards their new masters as they were towards the old, and are as great a travesty of freedom of information and expression, while unprecedented resort has been made to the law of Parliamentary privilege against journalists. Corporal punishment remains on our statute book (though we are glad that the proposal to re-introduce the "cat" was dropped). Though Parliamentary control of resort to the Public Security Ordinance has been strengthened, no adequate measures have been taken to control the possible content of emergency regulations or to preclude a repetition of the gross abuses that have taken place in the past and could be repeated under such regulations. The "es-

cape clauses' and restrictions on fundamental rights in the Constitution remain wide. The protection of existing laws even if inconsistent, and the perpetuation of the prohibition on challenging a Bill once it has become law, make the provisions on fundamental rights in the new Constitution as ineffective as under the 1972 Constitution. The present Government regrettably emulates its predecessor in its frequent resort to "urgent" legislation on matters of no apparent urgency, thus precluding public debate on many important Bills. An acceptable long term accord with the Tamil speaking people still remains to be pursued and achieved. The independent machinery long campaigned for by CRM to investigate complaints against the police has not materialised, while police brutality and deaths in police stations continue.

While these past problems to whose existence CRM has often drawn attention continue, new problems have also been created. Provisions unacceptable from a civil rights point of view are to be found in much recent legislation:- in the Proscription of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Law, the Criminal Procedure (Special Provisions) Law, the Local Government (Imposition of Civil Disabilities) Law, the Parliament (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) Law, the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, and the Universities Act. On most of these issues CRM has issued detailed criticisms.

As regards the Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law, one of the very reasons for CRM's existence is to keep a vigilant eye on the use of governmental power; we whole-heartedly agree that the people have the right to know how those to whom they entrusted power actually used it. At the same time certain basic safeguards must be accorded to any accused persons. CRM therefore especially regrets the existence of several unsatisfactory features of the Special Presidential Commissions of Inquiry Law which must detract from the

value of the findings of any Commission appointed under it. It is also regrettable that while the Commission probes past abuses with zest, no provision has been made to investigate the numerous allegations of political victimisation by the present Government - including many claims of poor persons being deprived of their livelihood - that have come to the Movement's notice, and violence used to intimidate workers on strike.

With regard to the University, we have been concerned about infringements of academic freedom such as interdictions, refusal of permission to travel abroad and arbitrary transfers of lecturers as well as political transfers of administrative staff of the University, and violence against students.

We are also concerned that the Government has recently made, without proper inquiry, allegations of favouritism by Tamil examiners and that certain academics have given statements on this issue, which can be used to provoke communal unrest.

Mention must also be made of several undemocratic features of the new Constitution, notably those relating to foreign treaties and guarantees to foreign investment, the abolition of by-elections even as regards the present Parliament, (which was elected on a different representational basis), and the provision that judges were deemed to go out of office automatically with the coming into force of the new Constitution. Security of tenure for judges is the cornerstone of judicial independence. Yet the recent "reconstitution" of the Courts resulted in eight new faces on the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, and the High Court, while no less than thirteen former judges were not reappointed.

CRM urges the Government to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a meaningful way by remedying the various defects referred to above, and also by becoming a party to the U. N. Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol.

Tune in to  
**BRISTOL**  
**SPORTS**  
**NEWS**  
 every evening at 7.30  
 over SLBC channel 2





# It's more than just paper

In 1974, in addition to their almost chronic problems of hunger, malnutrition and low foreign exchange reserves, most developing countries experienced severe paper shortage. This is not a difficulty that can be easily dismissed. As a result of the paper crisis, schools were closed in many countries in Asia and Africa, the cost of textbooks and school writing paper rose, in many cases, to prohibitive heights and literacy and other educational programmes were seriously disrupted. The full impact of the crisis on the developmental process cannot be quantitatively assessed, but it must have been considerable.

Moreover, some newspapers closed down, while others were forced to reduce the size of their publications. To the developed West, this might not seem of great importance. However, in a significant number of developing countries, the doctrine of the freedom of the press is acknowledged only grudgingly. In others, it is seriously and openly challenged. Whatever the validity of the doctrine, many governments seized the excuse of high prices to curtail further newsprint quotas and supplies to the nongovernmental press.

The position has improved somewhat since 1974, but it has been forecast that by 1979 the gap between the supply of, and the demand for, paper in the developing world would be of the order of 5 million tons. It has also been estimated that conditions will worsen thereafter, unless the pattern of development of the pulp and paper industry is radically changed. This crisis, like most others affecting the developing world, promises to become chronic.

Developing countries depend almost entirely upon developed countries for their paper supplies. In 1974, The Third World possessed a mere 6.2 percent of the world's plant and machinery capacity to

produce pulp and paper. This, despite the fact that 55 percent of the world's forests lie in the tropical area of their countries.

Why does this state of affairs exist? Although the technology for paper production originated in China and Egypt and was based on non-wood fibres, its development and application have been almost entirely confined to northern countries and to temperate wood species. These species possess characteristics that are generally not to be found in the mixed tropical forests of the developing world. The conventional wisdom has therefore been to exclude tropical woods from serious consideration for the production of pulp and paper. However, it is now generally acknowledged that mixed tropical hardwoods are capable of producing pulp and paper.

More important are the stated financial requirements of the industry. Pulp and paper advisers to international agencies and

developing countries are largely drawn from developed countries and are usually accustomed to huge mills. Not unnaturally, they often recommend the establishment of enterprises similar to those with which they are familiar

The outlook for a meaningful increase in pulp and paper production in the developing countries is therefore gloomy. The 1974 crisis will recur in the years ahead if there is no significant reduction in the size of plant and in the level of capital investment required in the sector, i.e., if smaller efficient mills are not designed. It will recur if the developing countries do not establish among themselves trade pacts to enable them to take advantage of the economies of specialization that are known to exist. Only a combination of these two approaches would ensure that their educational programmes and their information media — two basic factors of development — are not kept subject to the whims and caprices of the developed world.

K. F. S. King  
(Ceres)

## AI on political . . .

(Continued from page 4)

detained, interrogated, tried and punished without access to fair trials and without safeguards against maltreatment during detention.

While AI says that it has submitted the draft of its report to the Chinese government in June 1978 and has offered to publish any comments or corrections from the government, there has been no response despite repeated efforts on its part. However, within the last month it has been reported in the international press that Chiang Hua, President of the China's Supreme Court, has said that there are still many people wrongfully imprisoned in the country, and that 'all sorts of excuses' were being used to avoid reviewing miscarriages of justice.

The AI report is the result of several years of intensive

research. It draws on the case histories of prisoners of conscience in China currently under adoption or investigation by AI, some of whom are serving sentences ranging from 15 or 20 years to life imprisonment. The report criticizes the existence of legislation in China which provides for political imprisonment and says that laws are loosely worded and have been interpreted broadly, permitting large scale imprisonment on political grounds. Under the Chinese constitution, certain categories of people, defined as 'class enemies' can be deprived of their political and civil rights solely on the basis of their 'class origin' or political background.

The report further says that certain political offenders could be punished by compulsory labour without even judicial investigation. — G. D.

## Which way . . .

(Continued from page 21)

sections can guide the SLFP is a big question.

*Q: What is the MEP's position on the demand for Tamil Eelam?*

*A: We are for a Unitary Sri Lanka. Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese have to fight together for liberation from capitalist domination. The MEP policy is not for a separate state.*

*Q: Our final question: What is the MEP's official view of the late Mr. Philip Gunawardena's decision to join the UNP?*

*A: The MEP in its 1971 sessions changed its previous positions of working in alliance with the UNP. The late Mr. Philip Gunawardena himself was present at this session. So, we have rejected the role of the MEP in the National Government. Many of our old cadres who showed sympathy to the role of the Minister of Industries in the Government of 1965-70 arguing that the public sector industries were saved by him, have left the Party.*

## Letters . . .

(Continued from page 1)

say that there has been a 22% increase is, however, not the same as saying that actual production has been 129% or 167% of target! If we continue the exercise of providing the missing figures and measure the 1974 performance against the 1978 targets the results would be as follows: **KKS** 84.6%, **Puttalam** 94.6% and **Galle** 135.9%. Performance in the Textile sector in 1976 would be even more impressive as would be seen from the following percentages: **Veyangoda**: Yarn 85.6%, Cloth 98.0%. **Thulhiriya**: Yarn 58.4%, Cloth 52.5%. **Pugoda**: Yarn 90.2%, Cloth 121.7%.

**Shobana Sankhya**

### Transcendental horsefeathers

Buridan tied his ass between two equally attractive bundles of hay. The poor beast unable to decide which bundle to eat died of starvation. Dr Carlo Fonseka goes one better and

would have me play ass to his Buridan and decide between three equally attractive bundles of hay: JR, Sirima and Colvin. But I am no Nick Bottom to be translated into an ass, and I don't care for hay. Since Dr Fonseka would find it 'interesting and instructive' to know my 'own precious choice' I'll tell him: I'll settle for a glass of cold beer.

When Dr Fonseka says 'We must perforce choose from among the available political leaders he is voicing a popular superstition which is, I think, the root cause of the barrenness of our political leadership. It is because we have stuck to 'available political leaders' for the last thirty years that every single party is led by persons who are long past their political menopause; surely 14 million people can throw up better, fresher and more open-hearted leaders than JR, Sirima, Maitri, TBI, NM, Colvin and Pieter all of them nursing tired old grievances and waiting for their day to avenge them.

Colombo - 3 **Costain de Vos**



23054  
PHONE - 32113  
81862 (NIGHT)

**FOR ALL**

**TUNNELING, MINING, MARINE,  
WATER SUPPLY, AGRICULTURAL  
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT & ACCESSORIES**

**EQUIPMENT & CONSTRUCTION CO. LTD.**

7, CANAL ROW, P. O. BOX 818  
COLOMBO I.

# Best battery money can buy



**EVEREADY®  
Heavy Duty  
for power-hungry equipment**

THE GREATEST NAME IN PORTABLE POWER



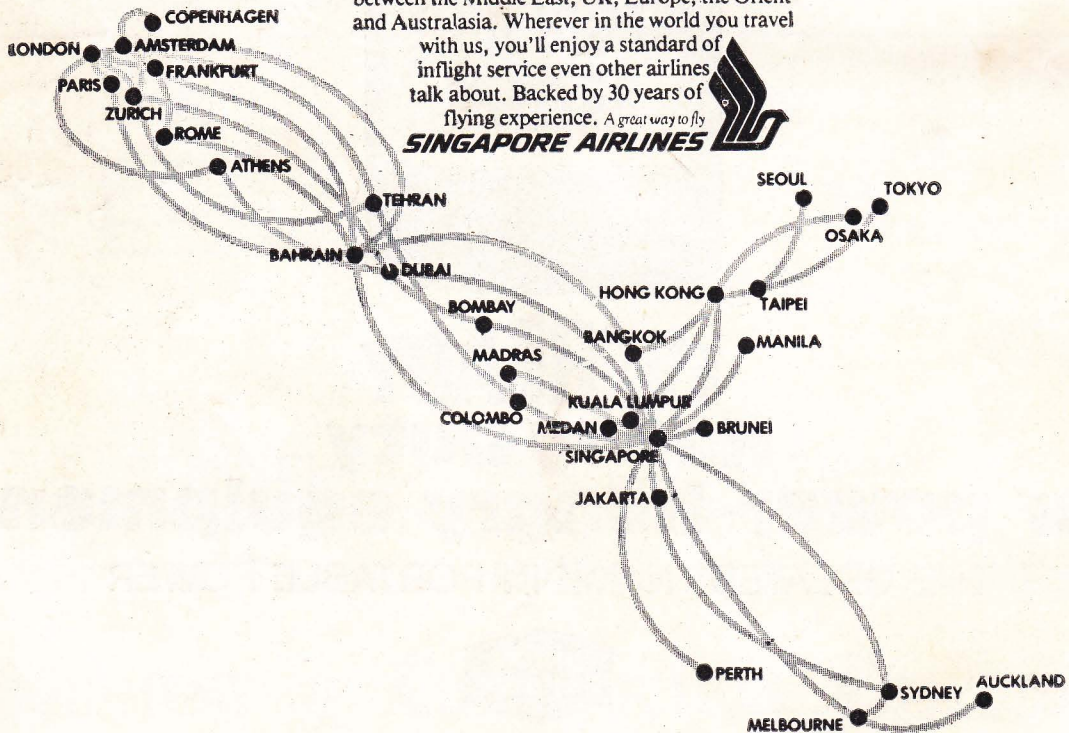
UNION CARBIDE CEYLON LIMITED

PHOENIX .



Our all-Boeing fleet of exclusive 747Bs, 707 Superjets, 737s and, our new 727 Hightails (the world's most advanced Boeing trijet), now flies to 30 cities in 25 countries with over three hundred services a week, including daily flights between the Middle East, UK, Europe, the Orient and Australasia. Wherever in the world you travel with us, you'll enjoy a standard of inflight service even other airlines talk about. Backed by 30 years of flying experience. *A great way to fly*

**SINGAPORE AIRLINES**



SIA Office: Lloyd's Building, 15A Sir Baron Jayatilake Mawatha, Colombo 1. Tel. 24148, 24181, 21501.