



SINGAPORE TECHNOCRAT

Vol.5 No.2 Singapore Polytechnic Students' Union March '76 20¢ MC(P)809/76



***Strongly Support the Just Action
of the V.I. Students!***

INSIDE:—

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---------|
| 1. FOCUS ON ASEAN | — pg 5 | 3. USSU EXHIBITION | — pg 14 |
| 2. NO CHINESE NEW YEAR AGAIN
FOR THE 14th YEAR | — pg 3 | 4. FILM SHOW ON "THE
MINAMATA DISEASE" | — pg 13 |



Even before the indignance of the people over the 1974 Bus Fare Hike dies down, indications that S.B.S. will be starting another bus fare hike appear again. Their excuse will be that they have been "asked to provide too many concession (ST 10/2) in the midst of rising cost of diesel and other items such as wages and spare parts."

Despite numerous statements that they are making losses, S.B.S. HAVE YET to prove by making public its 1975 accounts that this is so (S.B.S. Co. report Nov. '73 to '74 shows that they are making a profit of \$12.8 million). Infact with the improvement of maintenance, management, etc. S.B.S. should be able to reduce their operating costs. Furthermore, the increase in road tax and the implementation of the A.L.S. will bring S.B.S. more passengers per day, ie. more profit.

The public transportation problem is becoming more and more acute in Singapore and the majority of the people have so far been silent. However, it is doubtful if this silence can be maintained if there is a further increase in bus fare. The Vocational Institute issue serves as a warning to the S.B.S. authority and gives them a clearer understanding of the people. The withdrawal further exposed the higher exploitative nature of the S.B.S. in its attempt to squeeze the very little bit of blood and sweat out of the V.I. students and their families.

The incident once again proves that "WHERE THERE IS REPRESSION, THERE IS RESISTANCE!". If S.B.S. is to increase the bus fare again, it will definitely be met with opposition from the people!

SOME INTERESTING FIGURES

* Singapore Bus Service (Pte) Ltd's, Profit before Tax during the period November 1973 to October 1974 is \$12.8 million. Source: SBS Annual Report November 1973 to October 1974.

* SBS was formed in 1973 from the 3 Bus Companies; ABS, UBC, ABC, which were formed from the 10 bus companies operating in Singapore for many years. In 1970 the lowest rate was only 5 cents and the distance was about the same as the present 20 cents distance.

* In February, 1974 the 10 cents Bus Fare Hike was implemented by the SBS. At that time the man-trip per day was approximately 1.4 million. Estimating 10% of the commuters to be travelling on 50 cents trip and were therefore not affected directly by 74 Bus Fare Hike (no increase for 50 cents trip). That means an increase of $(1.4 - 0.14) \times 0.1$ Million Dollars per day. i.e. $(1.4 - 0.14) \times 0.1 \times 365$ million dollars per year = 46 Million Dollars per year.

* According to a report submitted to the Minister of Communications, SBS is making an operating profit of 120 dollars per bus per day. According to Sin Chew Jit Poh 8th October 1974 there were about 1450 SBS buses operating per day. Therefore SBS net profit per year should be about $\$120 \times 1450 \times 365 = \63.51 million. Source: Report of Government Team of Officials printed by National Printer.

* SBS in 1974 was making an income of 10 million per month. (Sin Chew Jit Poh 22nd January 1975) i.e. about 130 million per year as written in a SBS publication "The Bus Way To Secure a Future".

* SBS claim that the diesel hike has increased its running cost by \$180,000 per month which is only \$2.16 million per year.

* In 1970 we were paying 5 cents per trip now we are paying 20 cents.

* In Malaysia the charge for many bus service is 4 cents per mile. (In K.L., Penang, etc)

* In Hong Kong the charge is a flat rate of HK 30 cents or 50 cents (i.e. 15 cents or 25 cents in Singapore) and the 15 cents trip is comparable to the 40 cents trip in Singapore

THE V. I. DEMO

— Technocrat Reporter

VI STUDENTS - FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

Most of the VI students come from poor family with family incomes of less than \$200 per month. Due to this fact, many of them join the VI to secure a job at a young age. Most of them join the VI after primary school or secondary two and they are often considered as "lousy students".

THE CAUSE

The VI students have been travelling with bus passes until February 1st 1976 when their bus passes were withdrawn silently without any reason. Since then they had to travel at the same rate as adults. Many of them have to pay a dollar or more a day for their bus fare alone especially for those studying in institutes like Jurong, Ponggol etc. This means an increase of several hundred per cent compared with the former 20¢ a day or \$4 per month in the case of bus card. To many, this means no lunch even though they have to do heavy work in the workshop. Many sleep away the lunch hour while some others are lucky enough to share their friends' lunch, as lunch money has been used as bus fare. Many parents told their children not to continue schooling if the situation carries on because they simply can't afford it.

THEIR EFFORT

Due to the seriousness of the matter, many students have approached their principals and letters have been written to the SBS but there was no reply. In at least 3 schools, students have boycotted classes hoping to move the principals to do something more. In Ponggol VI the students' boycott continued for several days and in Pasir Panjang VI students boycotted class on Friday 6/2/76. In Ponggol VI the principal issued school passes but these were not recognised by SBS. Finally they were forced to take their last resort - to bring to the attention of the public their plight which had never been made known.

THE INCIDENT

In the morning of 9th February 1976 at about 9 am about 1500 VI students (many from PPVI) first gathered at the Padang to protest against this unreasonable withdrawal of their bus passes. They put up banners, pla-cards etc and shouted slogans like "We want back our bus passes". Their protest quickly drew the attention of many passers-by. Of course the police came. They dispersed the students, snatched away their banners and ordered them to go home. The students instead of going home marched through the town to the SBS headquarter at Mackenzie road to protest and some others marched to the Industrial Training Board. They were met with police and riot squad and were told to disperse.

At about 10.00 am another group of 300-500 students arrived at the padang and started another demo. Again they were met with the same treatment and they also marched to the HQ. By then, the whole street along their path was swarmed with police and ISD agents (what were they doing there?). In spite of threats the students marched on and finally reached the SBS HQ. They sat down orderly and began to chant slogans. After some time, 3 temporary representatives were sent to meet the SBS representatives. However the talk was fruitless and the students were threatened to be assaulted physically if they did not disperse. At the same moment, a group of more than 400 students were on their way to the SBS HQ. However, before they could reach, the 2nd group of students who had been there earlier on were already dispersed. The police, the ISD, riot squad, etc were busy throughout the day even though they were totally uncalled for.

SUPPORT

The students' action received tremendous support from their families, teachers, friends, and mem-

bers of the public. Many of the parents encouraged their children to go even though that meant confrontation with police. Many teachers took their attendance on the morning and released the class early so as to enable them to participate in the protest. Remarks like "good!" "You all are doing the right thing" "Don't worry, we support you" etc are often heard from passers-by. A policeman was even heard saying that "if I am not in uniform I will join you all".

THE REPERCUSSIONS

Principals of the Vocational Institutions whose students participated in the Monday 9th Strike (Ponggol, Jurong, Geylang Serai, Pasir Panjang, Aljunied, Baharuddin) were called up by the authority concerned. Subsequently, students were threatened with expulsion if they were to go on strike again. Pasir Panjang VI have been swarmed with agents from the Internal Security Department (ISD), some of them waiting at the gates to question students as they entered the school. All principals have been told to submit the names of students who participated in the Bus-Pass Strike. Those who were picked out by the police as 'leaders' met with rough treatment.

In Geyland VI, students witnessed one of them being called up by the principal and handed over to the Police.

In Ponggol VI, two students were called into a special room in the school and beaten up by CID men.

In Pasir Panjang VI, the students saw one boy led away by the Police and haven't seen him since.

PRESS REPORTS

New Nation reported 1500 students at Padang Demo on 9th February 1976 but on the next day, it reported 700 odd students. According to many VI students and eye witnesses, the 1st batch of students at the padang had already exceeded 1500 in number.

The Straits Times on 10th came up with a report titled "Man held in anti-SBS padang demo" and on 11th it carried another report entitled "Principals: 'outsider' behind bus pass demo" giving the reader an impression that this "21 year old man" was responsible for the demo. The Straits Times even reported, "an outsider' is believed to have been behind the mass demo.. This 21 year old man is in fact a Poly student who was there together with SPSU officials to find out what was happening. Just on reaching there he was brought away and detained until the next day. On the 11th, report even carried statements by a Principal of one of the VI claiming that the students "have probably been misled like blind sheep.." and they were there "just for the fun of it"... All these statements like those in other press were intended to discredit the VI students and to shift the attention of the public from the root cause of the demo. (their suffering, their plight, their lunch!) to a "21 year old man". It is most regrettable that the principal of a VI would think their students as "blind sheep" and they would go to the extent of confronting the police, riot squad and dogs "just for the fun of it".

WHY SBS RETURNED THE PASSES

Straits Times on 14/2/76 reported that the VI students would be getting back their bus passes and the decision "resulted from talks among officials of the Educational Ministry, the ITB and the SBS". We question: why didn't they reach a similar conclusion earlier? Why had they remained silent while students had earlier on shown signs of discontentment in their institutes? Why did they have to return the bus passes before the 16th February? The picture is crystal clear. The SBS authority returned the bus passes to the students because they had no other choice. Although it meant a lot of embarrassment for them to return the bus passes, it would mean even a greater embarrass-

PRESS RELEASE

11th Feb. 1976

UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE STUDENTS' UNION (USSU)
SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' UNION (SPSU)

STUDENTS FIGHT FOR RETURN OF BUS PASSES

The Issue

On Monday morning 9th Feb. 1976, between 1,500 to 3,000 students gathered at the Padang to protest against the sudden withdrawal of their bus concession passes in Jan. 1976.

Students of the Vocational Institutions are usually from poorer families. The withdrawal forced them to pay bus fares which they just cannot afford. From \$4/ a month, their transport costs shoot up to as much as \$1.40 per day. Some students are even forced to go without lunch because their parents cannot give them any more pocket money.

The busfare problem affected every vocational student deeply. They wrote to SBS but received no reply. Many students in some institutes boycotted classes and demonstrated within their schools. Finally when all appeals and protest proved to be useless, the students had no choice but to bring to public attention. Students from about 7 vocational institutes took part in the protest. They were mostly from Pasir Panjang, Jurong, Geylang Serai, Singapore, Ponggol, Bukit Merah and Baharuddin Vocational Institutes.

Police Action

Although the demonstration was completely peaceful by all eye-witness accounts, the students were met with unexpected brutality. Police manhandled and bullied the students, even threatening them with arrests if they did not disperse.

The SBS

The SBS's withdrawal of the vocational students' passes is highly unfair and ridiculous considering that all other students in secondary schools and Pre-U still hold their bus passes. This can be seen as a most contemptible act of the SBS to make more profits.

USSU/SPSU Stand

USSU and SPSU

support the students in their just cause in demanding for the return of the bus concession passes.

condemn the SBS for withdrawing the passes in their attempt to make more profits and urge the SBS to make a quick decision to return the passes to the students.

regret that the Ministry of Communications did not prevent the SBS from withdrawing the passes and knowing full well the plight of the students did not take any action and urge the Ministry to take action to ensure that the passes be returned to the students.

view with disappointment the Industrial Training Board, responsible for the vocational students, for not being able to carry out their duty in fighting on the students' behalf.

view the police action as totally uncalled for and urge the students not to be intimidated by the violence they encountered on Feb. 9th and stand united and always act together.

call upon the public to give their support to the vocational students.

Students Unite

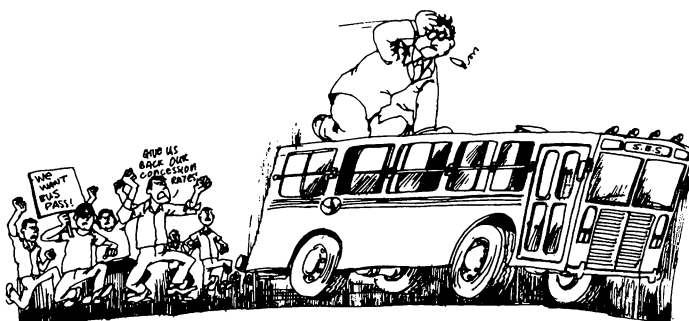
The violence of the police and riot squad at the demonstration is but one of the tactics used by people who think young schoolchildren can be easily bullied. Students must stand united and always act together as their demand is totally justified. The public will surely support once they understand the truth.

Signed:

Phung Mei Ying
President
USSU

Signed:

Foo Chin Yen
President
SPSU



NO CHINESE NEW YEAR AGAIN FOR THE 14TH YEAR

Feb 2nd this year fell on the 3rd day of our Chinese New Year. At that particular time, many of us were in one way or another, enjoying ourselves, visiting friends and chatting our heads away. Rarely did any one of us stop to ponder the significance of the day Feb 2nd.

The significance of this day started 13 years ago, in 1963. It was a time when our people were highly conscious of the future of our country. A time when even secondary school students knew what it was like to lift up their heads in dignity to study to serve their country and also a time when the young and old discussed the affairs of our country without any fear of persecution. Suddenly all these liveliness and concern for the country and our people were brutally stifled. The PAP government then turned white with terror. They arrested more than 130 members of political parties, trade unionists, students and journalists under the infamous Operation Cold Store. Their reason for arrest was that these people were "communists" who objected the merger with Malaya and who wanted to turn Singapore into another Cuba. The truth of the matter was that these people disagreed with merger on unequal basis. They knew that if we entered on that ground the marriage would not last long. These people were proved right, for after two years the marriage between Singapore and Malaya was broken. Yet some of these people are still detained. After 13 years, not even in the facade of being brought under the trial. Why are these people still being detained? Why is it that they will not succumb to forces and just give a statement of recantation and get their "personal" freedom? Are they useful inside there? These questions are easily asked but rather difficult to answer. Perhaps we can go through them one by one and find sources to answer such questions. Why are these people still in prison? Well, people like Dr. Lim Hock Siew is feared by Lee Kuan Yew himself because "he is a great organiser". Many others inside are men of integrity and greatly respected by the ordinary people. Lee Tze Tong was truly elected a Member of Parliament before his arrest. Said Zahari was a prominent journalist with vast experience with people, his integrity well respected and these were considered "subversive". Ho Piow had been a PAP member but was disillusioned by the PAP elitist and anti-people structure. He became a great trade unionist for the poor stevedores. He

sacrificed his university education to take up social responsibilities. Besides these people, there are many other brave people under detention. Why is it that they will not succumb to forces and just give a statement and get their "personal" freedom?

This is because they are the living testimony for the injustices of our society today. The society which is so called developed when 60% of our population is earning less than \$300 a month, and that 9% of our population is having 91% of the wealth of our society which has a per capita income of \$1300. It is a society where workers' productivity has always been higher than wage increment and yet the controlled trade unions every year say that the workers are lazy and not producing enough, a society where even children are severely exploited to serve foreigners' interest as depicted in the new amendment to the Employment Act, a society where PUB, HDB, hospital fees, school fees, bus fare, road tax, TV licenses bills all rocket up and ironically these departments are making profits every year. Yet when some of the more enlightened spoke against these injustices, immediately they were slapped with ISA or forced into hiding.

Yes, they bear testimony to all these which they predicted. Are they useful inside there? Yes, they are; they are organising awareness. They are doing what they legitimately can do - by staying inside and not giving up. Though the price for the struggle is great, they are the symbols of our time. These very brave people- they are paying their lives for the awareness they are organising and what greater love can these brave people give to their fellow men?

What then are we to do? We students must help them in organising awareness as a first step towards demanding a fundamental change against the injustices of our society. We must organise at every level to question and search, from our small group of friends to the students' union level so that more and more people are clear about the affairs of our country and more will be brave to take actions appropriate to free our society from these injustices thus setting a trend towards a better society.

Finally we dedicate this page to all the honest, fearless and upright patriots still detained in the prison cells of the PAP regime.

"ANTI-NATIONAL"

"Anti-National", they said
 Lo, here is the proof.
 Is this truly so?
 If
 To destroy the colonialists
 To oppose to the end the imperialists
 To eliminate oppression
 To liquidate injustice
 ...this be "Anti-National":
 Yes, I am Anti-National!
 If
 To entomb the system of discrimination
 All injustice all servitude
 And bury feudalism
 ...this be Anti-National"
 Yes, once again my declaration is "yes"
 and it's true
 I am Anti-National!

SAID ZAHARI, 1963

We Were Green

We were green and illusioned
 for we came to the ivory tower
 with high hope
 to acquire expertise
 and to lead an affluent life

We were green and imposed upon
 for we thought life was just so easy
 society was prosperous
 and the people were so happy

We were green and misled
 for we were proud of our government
 thinking that our "leaders" were champions of our people
 who brought affluent life
 and a prosperous society

We were green
 We were green and deceived
 for we have found
 no pleasant stay in lecture rooms
 the students are submissive
 and book-bound
 and lectures are monotonous
 and diploma is nominal

We were green and duped
 for we have learnt that for majority
 life is miserable
 and 9% of the people, owning 91% of the wealth
 and the workers are exploited and enslaved
 and live in agony

We were green and deluded
 for we've understood that
 our "leaders" are weak
 as they are afraid of criticisms
 and they are afraid of persons
 who stand and speak for people
 as they throw them behind bars
 and they are frightened of organisations
 that unveil the truth
 as they ban them one by one

But we shall not be green and shall not be fooled
 for we can perceive reality
 and we shall eliminate oppressors
 and liquidate inequalities
 and fight on and on
 until justice is done

-- Samuel Tay



THE COST OF 'MAINTAINING PROFITS?'

ASEAN COUNTRIES

— THEIR BASIC PROBLEMS

— a group of students

EDITORIAL NOTE

Owing to technicalities, this issue of Singapore Technocrat is late, but we feel that the analysis presented by this article on the socio-economic and political aspects of the ASEAN members is never late.

Eversince its inception in 1967, ASEAN was never taken seriously. It has been a target of criticisms and ridicules which put all the member states into quite an embarrassment. Why then was it formed? There are many theories, of these, from one aimed for economic corporation to one of American Imperialist design. Noting that 1967 was the rise of a pro-United States regime in Indonesia, the Thais were hotly involved in the Indo-China and Korean War under the request of US, the Philippines were traditionally pro-US, a step-up of US involvement in Vietnam and the fervent deepening of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the answer as to which is the correct theory does not need a Sherlock Holmes to find.

The only outcome over all these years of ASEAN existence is the creation of fantastic amount of committees, so much so that many an ASEAN diplomat finds himself lost ("there are so many committees, you know") (Petroleum News Feb. 1976) and progress towards regional cooperation between the member states is very sluggish. This is mainly due to conflicting interests between all the countries which however seem to fit a peculiar pattern towards disunity rather than unity. Obviously this disunity between ASEAN countries, one of the world's largest reservoir of raw materials, is benefiting some people. Who will this be, is a question that lingers on everyone's mind.

Yet as if, waking up from its long hibernation, ASEAN is revived again. As Rajaratnam (Singapore's Foreign Minister) said, it is going through "birth pangs" noting that it never had lived before. Why then is the urgency of the Bali Summit. What makes the five states suddenly realise the importance of ASEAN?

It is beyond any doubt that the liberation of Indo-China had everything to do with it. The growing problems of an alternative form of government from the existing "Western Parliamentary System", as phrased by the Communist, and the growing dissent within the indigenous citizens of ASEAN for an equitable distribution of wealth within and among the nations, propelled the heads of ASEAN to meet in Bali. What will they agree or disagree upon as a regional organisation will definitely set the stage for the direction of action to be taken in the next few years to come.

Certain possible conflicts and common grounds are bound to be brought into the limelight. For instance, the most noted common areas will be the alternative posed by Communism, the foreign capitalist domination of the all ASEAN economies and possible economic cooperation between member nations so as to achieve economic independence. On the other side of the coin, conflict between Philippines and Malaysia over Sabah issue; conflict between Singapore and Indonesia over the idea of free trade zone, and the question of food and energy sharing between all of them, will test how much the various leaders can come to some regional solution and not like businessmen hawking over price tags.

It is ironic that some 21 years ago, in Indonesia also, the Bandung Conference was held among the 'newly emerging countries' and anti-Colonial movements in Asia and Africa. Today, another summit is called with Indonesia as the host, but Indonesia no longer a bastion of anti-Colonialism and anti-foreign domination.

Today all five parties to the summit are very much dominated by US and other capitalist countries and have Governments which are clearly anti-Communist. The summit will hope to strengthen this pro-

foreign domination stand of these Governments and to combat nationalist movements of these respective territories. If the Indo-Chinese people, despite massive US control all these years, could liberate themselves, there is little to suggest that the people in these five territories would not be able to do likewise. The Summit can be seen as a concerted attempt to stall this inevitability.

THAILAND

Thailand is situated north of the Malay Peninsula, south of the Indo-China states, with Burma at its West. It has an area of 514,000 sq. km. and a population of 41 million. Basically, it is an agricultural country with vast stretch of fertile land and lots of rain. Its major agricultural products are rice, rubber, corn, sugar cane and coconut. The land is also very rich in basic metals like tin, copper, lead, coal and silver. Recent discoveries offshore showed that Thailand is rich in petroleum too. Ironically, with all its riches, Thailand is a very impoverished land, stricken with poverty, full of social problems and definitely could not control its own destiny. Why is this so? Only a closer look at the country will reveal its inner problems.

BRIEF HISTORY

Though Thailand prides itself that it was never technically colonised by any power, it had, as far back as the 16th Century, been a target of Western powers. Many a time parts of Thailand had been invaded by the Dutch, British, Portuguese and Spanish. By the end of the 19th Century, it had already become a semi-colonised country.

During the World War II, Thailand was invaded by the fascist Japanese. The Pibul Songkhram regime, then collaborated with the Japanese by allowing them to cross Thailand and moved into S.E. Asia. After the war, Thailand was swept into United States imperialist's whirlpool which suppresses nationalist movements in S.E. Asia and Thailand inclusive.

The Pibul Songkhram regime came into power via a coup de tat which ended Thailand's constitutional monarchy rule of King Bhumiphol. Since then Thailand had been under a string of military dictators. In 1958, Sarit Thanarat seized power by toppling the Pibul regime and ruled for 6 years. When he died in 1963, the infamous Thanom Kittikachorn succeeded him. Within a few years of his corrupted rule, he dissolved the National Assembly and declared martial law. This aroused great indignation among the people. The people were suffering and the gaps between the military elite and the people were widening at an alarming rate. The bottle could not be contained anymore and it burst with the students spearheading a national campaign against the corrupt Thanom in October 1973. The October uprising, as it was called,

saw the end of military rule and the institution of a parliamentary form of Government. All the political parties were included except the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT).

With the downfall of Thanom, the King appointed Sanya Dharmasakti as the caretaker Prime Minister. In early 1975, general election was held. There were 22 parties contesting 269 seats. The largest party that was voted in was the Democrat under Seni Pramoj with 72 seats. Seni, formed the minority Government but was ousted after 3 weeks. His brother, Kukrit Pramoj, after teaming up some of the opposition, formed the coalition Government that rules up to now, without any ability to correct the country's fundamental problems, - foreign economic domination and poverty.

ECONOMY

Basically, Thailand's economy is developing predominantly along the line of agricultural and raw material production. About 80% of the Thai population is engaged in agricultural farming with rice as the main crop. However, the rural economy has been very much neglected. The contribution to Thailand GDP had declined from 39% in 1961 to 30% in 1974.

Much attention had been given to the development of a few big cities concentrated with foreign investments mainly from US and Japan. It has been a common phenomenon in most of the developing countries of the Third World, such as Thailand, that most of these profit-seeking foreign investments are concentrated in big cities where labour is abundant, wages are dirt cheap and transportation is convenient. Most of the foreign corporations are mainly interested in labour intensive manufacturing industries where profit returns from the investment are extremely high.

The recent development of foreign investment in Thailand is one of 'cooperative' venture kind where capital is both from foreign and local source. But this development does not change the policy of Thailand. Profits are still extracted out of the country, far exceeding the foreign investments here. This kind of unequal economic 'co-operation' has made Thailand into a subordinate position in the world capitalist economy - the relieving end of any economic crisis. This is exemplified in 1974/75 when Thailand, like any dependent economy, was hit by recession. Unemployment went up to 8.7% and is still growing, while the prices of its major export items such as rice has been badly depressed.

This unhealthy economic development trend, had widened the gap between the rich and poor, between urban and rural economies. The declining economy of the countryside contributes to the serious problem of the influx of peasants to the cities. This naturally aggravates the unemployment situation in the cities and brings about a drastic reduction in agricultural production, hence, marks the beginning of the collapse of rural economy.

Thailand eversince Thanom, up to Kukrit, has been experiencing grave economic difficulties. The recession, inflation and stagnation of the capitalist world does not spare Thailand, as its economy is heavily dependent on United States, Japan and Western Europe economies. The result is that thousands of urban workers are made jobless while the prices of dai-

ly necessities began to rise, even rice (but price of rice was stalled because of vehement protest from the workers and students). These twin problems of rising costs of living and scarce job opportunities, make the lives of the young Thais uncertain and aimless.

THE AMERICAN PRESENCE AND WHAT IT MEANS

Ever since 1950, when an agreement on military and economic aid and technical co-operation was signed between Thailand and US, Thailand was brought into political dependence on the US. It had, since then, been a professional fighter for the US in this region (during the Indo-China War it provided the American with military bases and support and logistics units). It also took part in the Korean War, at the request of the US. This accounts for why the Indo-Chinese viewed Thailand as highly suspicious when it retains the US bases.

Under the guise of military and economic aid, the US Imperialists had their own ulterior motives. These are aimed at suppressing local and regional nationalistic movements which will jeopardise their investments in S.E. Asia. Thousands of G.I's and CIA Agents and "specialists" are still being sent to Thailand, to ensure the smooth operation of US investments.

The influx of American investments is astonishing. The treaties were signed in the most unequal and unjustifiable way such that the Thais could not limit the American goods exported to their country. Furthermore, the Thais have to provide transport and production facilities for raw materials and semi-manufactured products needed by the United States industries. Of late, Thailand had also become the supplier of US strategic materials like rubber, tin, tungsten etc. In return for all these services, Thailand became the dump yard of US manufactured goods.

During the October Uprising of 1973, the Americans appeared un-involved in dampening the students' revolt, but it is unlikely to be so as the military was well staffed by US advisors. Nevertheless, in recent years, they seemed to have steeped up activities in undermining nationalistic movements. These activities seemed to be CIA oriented i.e. political manoeuvre but no fundamental changes. Evidences of these are, the increased violence during the current election which had claimed the lives of two student leaders and lives of twenty peasant leaders who were murdered during the period from February to August 1975.

Perhaps Thailand's weak political position vis a vis United States can be best exemplified by the Mayaguez Affair when the US imperialists, disregarding the sovereignty of Thailand, issued an order to US personnel in U-Tapao base to recover the ship. Of course, Thailand staged a show piece protest and threatened to cut diplomatic links with US. This naturally did not materialized.

BASIC PROBLEMS OF THE THAIS

Because the economy is very much dependent on foreign capitalists economies, the ruling elites could not help but to push the cost of living, taxation, and prices of basic necessities up, contrary to the livelihood of the Thais. With the collapse of the rural economy, peasants began to flock into the cities aggravating the unemployment and housing problems. According to official sources, the population of Bangkok is 4 million but 1½ million of them are slum dwellers.

In order to preserve their own power and privileges, the ruling elites allocated a major proportion of the national budget to the military. As a result, pressing needs like education of the people is neglected. There are lack of schools, lack of teachers and thus the illiteracy rates are very high. The Americanised educational system is definitely beyond the means of the poor and being elitist in nature, the system created many dropouts even from those who could manage to send their children to schools.

The health of the Thais is also neglected. Epidemics like flu, cholera, malaria and V.D., which kill thousands a year, are prevalent. Government statistics revealed that there are only 33,000 hospital beds for the sick which means a ratio of 1000 patients to 1 bed; the ratio of doctors to the people is 1:15,000 and

since many of these doctors are located in the urban areas, the ratio in the rural areas are more appalling - 1:70,000!

The influx of foreign investments also brought along with them corrupt cultures which promote prostitution, drug taking, strip tease shows and blue films. These affect the way of life of the Thais and subvert their rich cultures. The government does little in arresting these appalling conditions of rising crimes, prostitutions and drug additions. On the contrary, they even so about promoting such vices by calling up the prostitutes for routine check up to ensure that they are up to serve the foreign investors and tourists.

THE LANDLESS PEASANTS

Perhaps the biggest problem confronting Thailand is the land problem of the peasant. Peasants constitute 80% of the population and are often referred to as the backbone of the country. Yet, 85% of the peasants lost their means of production when they are being evicted by the government and landlords. Lands have been 'bought' and 'sold' for military bases, strategic projects and foreign industries. Disputes between the peasants, and the landlords and the government had risen lately. Most of the time, the peasants lost out but even if they had won they would not be able to hold on to the land for long, as they will be either cowed by the authorities or forced to pay higher taxations or rent on their lands. As more and more peasants become landless, and seeing the authorities exploiting them, many peasants in the North and North-east of Thailand joined the Communist Party of Thailand, while others drifted to the towns to sell their cheap labour.

THAILAND, WHAT WILL YOU BE?

Politically, Thailand is a very vulnerable country. Ever since the October Uprising, the military had lost ground in the political arena while the subsequent parliaments are manned with still the same kind of people who do not have the tenacity to wrestle with the fundamental problem of the society - i.e. a foreign dominated economy. On the top of this the parliament is utterly weak. It is already well known that the Communist Party of Thailand is already in control of 34 out of 70 provinces of Thailand, mainly in the North and North East and some in the South. Whichever way the Thais decide, it will be the way that is going to have serious repercussions in South East Asia.

If the parliamentary form of government does not work out to arrest the basic ills of the Thai society and continue to be fragmented, resumption of military rule is not to be neglected. The close associates of Thanom are still active in the backroom, and at this particular moment, the logical friend of the foreign investments especially Americans, is the military. Hence it will not be surprising that if the situation is favourable to the communist, the military will stage a coup d'etat to control the country again.

But whatever the form of government, taking control of Thailand, it will have to minimise poverty of the countryside, create employment for the workers in the urban areas, the social disintegration and integrate the students meaningfully towards building an economically and politically independent Thailand. If the government is a self-interested, corrupted and repressive one and continues to pursue a policy to pacify foreign investors, it will undoubtedly face resistance from the people who are just sick and tired of the existing situation in their country.

MALAYSIA

BRIEF HISTORY

Since the beginning of the 16th century, Malaya, which was then consisted of peninsular Malaya and Singapore, had been invaded by Portuguese, Dutch and the British. The British started to invade Malaya in the 1880's and it became a complete British colony in the beginning of the 20th century. The reason for the British occupation of Malaya was of imperialist motive, because of its rich tin reserves and potential rubber-production. Malaya was since then a place where the British grabbed the raw materials for its industries and also a place where the British dumped its industrial products. This heavily retarded

the economic growth of the nation and had resulted in the poverty in the country. The various policies and administrative structure of the British had substantial influence on the political and social patterns of the later government. In fact, many policies of the present government are just modifications of those in the colonial age. This we can see from its economic, internal security and other policies which we are going to discuss later. The cause being because of the complex relationship between the British and the country's leadership.

In 1941, 2nd world war broke out, Malaya was invaded by the Japanese in 1942. The start of communism in the country took place much earlier. The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) was formed in 1930 and it was already a potential power by 1940. Communists force was the only effective force resisting the Japanese invasion of Malaya, because British and other foreign forces were beaten badly. In fact the remains of the British force in Malaya were retreated back to Britain. The communists to a great extent, impacted and checked the advance of the Japanese force. War ended in 1945 and the British returned to Malaya.

Dissatisfied with the outraged exploitation of the local people, nationalism began to breed. The people together with the communists went against the colonial rule. They demanded a People's government and a just society. At the same time, Malay racist conservative power, comprising Malay noblemen and village heads began. In order to allay opposition, British realized the need of co-operating with the local power. Having two different choices of local powers, the British chose the latter because it was capable of being moulded to suit their motive and interest. The British subsequently put CPM as an outlaw party with the declaration of the "state of emergency" in 1948. Light administration posts were allocated to the Malay leaders. Malay colleges were set up to produce and nurture conservative Malay elites who were submissive to the British. British way of administration, to a great extent thus has been inherited to them.

To divide and rule, the "Federation of Malaya" was formed under which Singapore was ruled as a self-governing state. On the 31st, August 1957, the British agreed to grant "independence" to the Federation of Malaya. Malaysia was formed in 1963 when peninsula Malaya, Singapore and the Northern Kalimantan states of Sabah and Sarawak merged together with a central government based in Kuala Lumpur. Nevertheless due to conflict of interests, Singapore later splitted itself from Malaysia and formed an independent state in 1965. Thus Malaysia now consisted of the Peninsula Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah. (refer to section on merger in Singapore section)

ECONOMY

Malaysia is rich in raw materials. Her rubber and tin productions rank the 1st in the world. Besides, she also has rich resources of iron, coconut, oil palm and the newly discovered petroleum. But Malaysian industries is still at its infancy and her economy is heavily foreign dependent. Thus the economic progress and the country is insignificant, giving rise to numerous social and political problems.

Malaysia has been practising the policy of welcoming the influx of foreign capital. In order to achieve this, incentives like tax exemption and others are used to attract the foreign investors. Besides this, Malaysia also offers abundant cheap labour, industrial raw materials and even labour laws have also been enacted to safeguard the interests of the capitalists. Malaysia herself is also a market for the finished products of the United States, Japan and West Europe capitalists economies. Foreign domination is the most significant feature in Malaysian economy. Just look at the foreigners' share in various economic fields: 75.3% in agriculture (mainly rubber) 72.4% in mining and 70% in external trade.

Undoubtedly, the foreigners are holding the key positions in the nations' economy. Britain, with its traditional economic domination in Malaysia, is still the main investors, while Japan and United States are fast stretching their hands. Together, they own over 60% of the invested capitals which means that Malaysian economy is very much controlled by these

foreigners. One immediate result of foreign domination is the loss of huge pieces of lands to the foreign capitalist. This gives rise to an acute and urgent problem of landlessness among the peasantry of the country. According to an agricultural research in 1960, 2/3 of all the padi farmers in Malaysia do not own land. In Penang and Province Wellesley, 60% of the land is owned by landlords and 81% of the farmers are landless. This problem of the landless farmers is further aggravated in that they could not even afford to rent land. In the highly praised Muda-irrigation scheme area, 60% of the 50,000 farmers completely do not own any land. Where are the lands belonging to the farmers gone to? Where have the 50,000 sq. miles of peninsula Malaya gone? Majority of the cultivated lands are in the hands of the multi national corporations, local bureaucrats and local Feudal landlords, with the MNC's having the lion's share. They have grabbed 2 million acres of the most fertile lands which clearly reflected that the whole economy is still within the enclosure of the colonial stage. For the local bureaucrat capitalists, who are mostly conservative political leaders, they take advantage of their political positions to establish various bureaucratic organisations, factories, occupying large pieces of land. For example, FLDA, which occupies over 380 thousand acres of land. The bureaucrat-capitalists themselves also possess lands, which run up to 780 thousands acres and 2.5 million acres in Johore and Pahang respectively. The government has been heedless of the applications for ownership of land from the landless peasants.

To these landless people, land means livelihood and no land means starvation, and the need to satisfy their hunger is so great that they resort to occupying "government lands". These moves happen in the states of Perak, Pahang, Kelantan, Johore, Kedah, Selangor. In reaction, the authorities resort to using repressive machineries like the FRU, to ruthlessly evict these people. They destroy the crops, arrest and imprison the farmers. But nevertheless between 1969 - 71 their occupations of land increase from 20.2 thousand acres to 47 thousand acres. It was reported in ST 24/9/74 that in Pahang alone, over 70 thousands acres of government land had been cultivated by these landless peasants. However, not all the landless peasants are able to make a livelihood out of the land as they are very poor, hence many of them move towards the urban areas in search of employments. This aggravates the unemployment situation in the cities and contributes to the decline of the rural economy. Though intimidated, the landless peasants' struggle is intensified. The 1974 "Tasek Utara Squatter Incident" in Johore proved this point all too clearly. The inhabitants' houses were demolished in order that eviction is possible. They are said to occupy state land. But the people refuse to budge. They demonstrated and protested against the high-handedness of the authorities in front of the Johore Secretariat Building and claimed that they were legal tenants of the land as they were issued number plates by the land office. Their struggle continued even when the FRU scopped in and arrested all of them (refer Technocrat Vol 4 no.1)

THE PEOPLE WHO CREATE WEALTH

To the foreigners, Malaysia is of great value. Foreign owned rubber establishments earn among the highest rate of profit in the world. A report in the FEER says that the profits, earned by the four traditional MNC's of Britain operating in Malaysia that is Dunlops, Guthrie, Harrison and Barlow - Boustead, from rubber and oil palm productions, constituted 45% of the total amount that the British get out of Malaysia. So much wealth had gone out of the country, what about those workers who created such enormous wealth?

Perhaps, it is better to see from the wealth distribution of the nation. 10% of the upper class households grab 40% of the wealth while 40% of the lower class families have only a share of 12% of the national pie (Nanyang Siang Pau 2/10/75), and 30% of the families have a monthly salaries of less than M\$100. Thus, while the MNC's and local bureaucrat-capitalists are enjoying luxurious living, the workers and the peasants are barely scrapping for food. Their living condition is extremely difficult especially dur-

ring these period when the foreign dominated economy of Malaysia is hit by recession. The famous Baling Hunger Strike, during which 13,000 hunger stricken people staged a demonstration against Government's inaction against poverty could well reflect the people's hardship. People of other areas like Kulim, Sik, Weng, Taipeng, Bentong and Bandar Bahrul also held similar demonstrations. The people could not tolerate this foreign domination any further.

Each year billions of dollars are taken out of Malaysia by the MNC's. For example, Britain alone takes \$2.2 billion per year. Yet, thousands of the Malaysian people still live in abject poverty. Had this money been used to uplift the livelihood of the people, perhaps the situation of the poor and landless in Malaysia could be solved faster. Why then is the Government not willing to control the MNC's? Why is it that after more than 18 years of so-called independence, there is still no independence of economic action? These burning questions are in the hearts of all who know Malaysia as their home.

The Government instead of checking the outflow of profits by the MNC's from the country, suppresses the workers and peasants. Laws were passed to ensure that workers' voices could not be heard. Such laws are the ISA (1960), the Trade Union Ordinance (1955). Progressive trade unions, were brutally suppressed by the government as they stood out to represent the workers' voices against the MNC's. However, these repressions are not going anywhere as workers are more and more conscious of this oppression and are fighting against it. The reported number of strikes which was about 100 in 1974 and which involved thousands of workers, give an indication of the extension of dissatisfaction and discontentment, the system created.

POLITICS

The present government is formed by the National Front which is a merger of several political parties which won the general election in 1974. Among the parties which formed the National Front are, UMNO (United Malay National Organisation), a Malay conservative power, MCA (Malayan Chinese Association), a Chinese bourgeois party, MIC (Malayan Indian Congress), an Indian bourgeois party, Pekemas, Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, Gerakan, etc. Parliamentary Opposition parties are relatively weak in Malaya. Although in Sabah and Sarawak, these parties are much stronger, they are not strong enough to control the state governments. Many of the opposition parties themselves are opportunistic but there is still many opposition groups that are rather progressive, and even revolutionary. It is noted that the government will not hesitate to use the notorious ISA to suppress the activities of the latter groups.

Hundreds of people are being detained as political prisoners without trial, even though some of these people obviously did not involve in any politics in Malaysia itself. Examples of these people are Juliet Chin, former Hon. General Secretary of USSU and Khoo Ee Liam, a Malaysian student studying in Australia, who was arrested immediately on his return to Malaysia. To further their political repression, they implemented the Essential Security Act (1975) which stipulates that anyone can be detained indefinitely or sentenced to death if a 'hooded' witness testifies that that person is a communist, and this testimony cannot be challenged in any open court. The government Amended the University and University Colleges Act aiming at crippling students' movements after the students showed that they could be a potential force to question the government's policies. But all these legislations are ultimately aimed at one party, The Communist Party of Malaya. The Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) was formed in early 1930, inspired by the Russian Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. It consisted mainly of the lower class people in 1940. When the Japanese invaded Malaya, the British surrendered both Malaya and Singapore. The CPM led the Malayan People's Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA), whose members were multiracial to fight the Japanese. After the war in 1945, the CPM which was virtually in control of Malaya, surrendered their arms to the British to begin their constitutional struggle for power. However, the British, realised that if the CPM was to control Malaya (including Singapore Island) it would

mean that their economic hold on these regions could be reduced to zero. Thus, they started a repressive programme against the CPM who later withdrew into the jungle and proclaimed the line of armed struggle to power. Eversince the liberation of Vietnam, the CPM is surging into the limelight again. Killings of Special Branch officers, and top cadres of the government intensify in these few months as reported in the New Straits Times. There is even a proposal that Perak be under military rule because of its vulnerable situation. Also it is evident that certain parts of Perak, Pahang, Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Trengganu are being controlled by the Communists. This is shown by the inability of the Security forces to penetrate these areas and that the local people are assisting the CPM in various ways like providing food, money etc. All these of course, pose a terrible threat to the government of Malaysia. Will they be able to stall and defeat the communists? This is a question that many wonder. Even Adam Malik, the Indonesian Foreign Minister showed his concern when he remarked that "If Malaysia need help in its security problem, Indonesia, like a big brother, will respond".

The outcome of any struggle will always depend on whether the group that is leading the people is pro-people or anti-people. If the Malaysian government can convince the Malaysians that by pursuing foreign dominated policy is good for the people then half the battle is won, if not the CPM is likely to be menacing.

SINGAPORE

Whenever we talk of Singapore, we talk of its growth within the capitalist framework, and in the back of our minds we also thought of the foreign domination in the economy. Whenever we talk of its "political stability", we inevitably end up in measuring the statistics of repression. Why does such a dual character of Singapore exist? Why is it that every constructive form of opposition is smashed without any regard to the viewpoints and questions raised? This inability to accommodate intelligent question of the system suggests that somehow, under the present leadership, the Government is not willing or unable to initiate certain fundamental changes. What are these?

To have a greater depth of these questions, it is necessary to flip the pages of history a little.

BRIEF HISTORY

For more than 150 years since 1819, Singapore was under the direct British Colonial rule. It was colonised to serve the British interest to exploit the neighbouring hinterland of Malaya for raw materials and cheap labour and was also strategically located to protect the China trade. During this period as a colony, it was some sort of a headquarters for the whole of the Malayan Administration.

Thus, historically, Singapore is part of Malaya. But the British with its 'divide and rule' policy, had intentionally made Singapore and Malaya apart. Why should they do that, one may ask? The reasons lie in the fact that if Malaya and Singapore are united, then, Singapore could serve as a valuable port for Malaya and Malaya, a valuable hinterland to Singapore. As such, they can be economically independent, which runs contrary to the interests of the British who want to keep both gold mines open to themselves. These intentions of the British to separate Singapore from Malaya were carried through right to the end when they relinquished direct rule over Singapore and Malaya, but their economic hold still remained. This is the reason why, today, there are still many plantations and mines owned by the British in Malaya whilst great amounts of stocks in Singapore are owned by them too. Perhaps lately, as they had lost leadership of the capitalist world, their share in both these countries had changed hands into the United States pocket but the basic problem of both countries still remained - foreign domination.

Of course, the British could not do what they had wanted to do without local collaborations. They found Rahman and Lee fitted their picture all too well. One is a Malay chauvinist, whilst the other has high political ambitions and who would climb the political ladder via whatever means available even if it

is to the disadvantage of Singapore.

Hence as events unfolded themselves, the strongest anti-British party of Malaya and Singapore, the Communist Party of Malaya was driven into the jungle and outlawed, while in Singapore in 1963, Operation Cold Store castrated all effective left-wing movements. The British had made, what they thought as the checkmate move. The next step was to 'grant' self-government and independence to Malaya and Singapore under Rahman and Lee.

THE MERGER

By the late fifties in Singapore, the strength of the progressive anti-colonial movements had grown to such proportions that it threatened the political survival of the PAP and the economic interests of the British. The British wanted a merger of her former colonies so that it would be easier to control them as they would be under a pro-British central government in Kuala Lumpur. Both the Alliance government in Malaya (which was alarmed at the possibility of the spill over effects from Singapore) and the PAP then set to work on a merger of the two territories. The merger of the two territories was unlike the unification call of the progressive nationalist movement which demanded that the two territories be reunited again as one nation. The alliance PAP was motivated primarily to stem the tide of the progressive movement as internal security would be in the hands of the central government in Kuala Lumpur which has greater powers and resources to cope with the left than the PAP could in Singapore. Furthermore, the merger proposal was coloured by racial political considerations. Sabah and Sarawak were brought into this union primarily to balance the racial composition and equalise the Chinese-Malay ratio which would otherwise have been upset; in favour of Chinese majority, had these two Borneo territories been excluded. Thus instead of a reunification of a divided homeland, there was a merger of four territories two of which has little or no common historical links with the other two save for their common British colonial heritage. The left call was motivated by anti-colonial nationalist desires. The right wing alliance PAP merger was motivated by opportunists, survival and pro-colonial considerations. Thus the reunification of the homeland was distorted into a neo-colonial plot called Malaysia.

When Malaysia was formed, severe repression of anti-colonial patriots took place. Because of the racial undertones and chauvinist sentiments, the respective governments at both sides of the causeway peddled to their supporters who invariably are the capitalists, feudal landlords and colonialists. Local tensions were whipped up leading to two racial clashes in Singapore in 1964, almost a year after merger. Because the PAP peddled the Malaysian-Malaysia campaign which ostensibly appeared to be multiracial but was in reality whipping up Chinese chauvinist sentiments in Malaya with the ultra-Malay group in Kuala Lumpur pushing anti-Chinese lines, the fragile two year merger did not last. Singapore had to leave the Federation. The people of both sides of the causeway were again divided, but the colonialists had the satisfaction of knowing that merger served to cripple the open front left movement. The people have yet to this day to be genuinely reunited as they once were.

ECONOMIC DILEMMA TODAY

It is with this historical backdrop that sets the stage for Singapore today. Singapore, in 1965, had an economic structure that is culturally Western dominated, high tertiary and bent to serve the world capitalist system. The PAP Government then sought a solution from external sources. A total of three reports were submitted, namely I.B. - R.D. (World Bank) mission, F.J. Lyle Report and A. Winsemans Report. The former 2 encouraged the formation of a single economic and political entity of Malaya and Singapore while the latter urged the setting up of an independent economy which include crash industrialization and heavy dependence on foreign investors. Since the PAP had chosen to break-away from the mainland Malaya and in order to stay in power, there is no question of them adopting the former 2 strategies thus, the only economic strategy left open to them was that of Winsemans Report.

The report proposed a crash industrialization

programme in order to boost the slighting manufacturing sector, to make Singapore made products competitive in the world market and most important of all was to solve the unemployment situation. In order that this programme, with its linch pin on foreign investors, worked, its pre-conditions were 'political stability' and 'cooperative labour'. Thus the economic strategy mapped out is one of political repression and exploitation of cheap labour. In addition to these general guidelines, the report dealt with many specific issues with regard to foreign investors. It recommended that, during the initial period of industrialization, Singapore would have to attract foreign investors, managers and capital. It urged that the Government should guarantee against nationalization and expropriation without adequate compensation, tax incentives such as tax holidays (now extended to 10 years) are to be given to these foreigners, liberalization of immigration on foreign executives, and enabled the foreigners to take profit out of the country or keeping cash reserves outside Singapore. In short, the result of this strategy is a heavily dependent economy on foreign capital and technology with virtually no possible means of self-determination and also a creation of a Singapore which served to economically dominate the rest of S.E. Asia for the American, Western European and Japanese capitalist.

The subsequent development of Singapore's economy testified that Winsemans report is executed to the letter.

In 1968, the Employment Act was passed. In it, to strike is declared illegal or in Lee's own words 'treason'. Working days were lengthened and almost no retrenchment benefits are given. The employer has a right to hire and fire. Thus, the Employment Act was pro-employer rather than the employees or workers. In the same and subsequent years saw the passing of enormous legislations, such as the Industrial Relations (Amendment) Pioneer Industry Act, Trade Union Act which were all pro-foreigners, and anti-labour. Under the Trade Union Act, the Government made sure that all organised labour is under Government control through NTUC. Such controls are anti-labour as can be exemplified by the American Marine Case and the Interocean E.A.C. clerks case in 1974/1975. Foreign capital had begun to come in great amounts in 1965 onwards but also greater amounts of money is moving out of the country in terms of profit (\$837.4 million). As such the country becomes more and more dependent on the foreign investments.

The position that the Government finds itself is quite paradoxical. On the one hand, the workers see through the Government as an extension of the capitalist, serving the capitalist interest while continuing to ask them to tighten their belts. On the other hand, the employers see the Government as a businessman and know that the Government will back them up when there is a conflict between labour and them, or else they will threaten to move out of Singapore - a blackmail which they will not hesitate to use. One classic example of this inability of the Government to control the MNC employers, is that of National Semiconductor, an American Company.

In October 1974, N.S. retrenched some 700 people in the Singapore factories, purportedly because of the electronic slump but ironically on the same day, the newspaper, carried an advertisement of theirs stating that they are expanding very fast in Malacca.

THE WORKERS

The workers have been hardworking, in spite of the collaboration between Government, trade union and MNC employers, (the tripartite) to exploit them. Their productivity increased with every subsequent year from \$742.5 / month in 1970 to \$1,308.3 in 1974. Yet their pay falls below their productivity. More than 75% of the workers get less than \$400/- a month. It is obvious that the bulk of the remaining amount of money goes to the MNCs. The income distribution of the population is rather disturbing too. From a Straits Times source, it was reported that 9% of the population holds 50% of the nation's wealth while the other 91% gets the other half. Since Straits Times, is reputedly pro-Government, one can expect the income distribution to be much worse than quoted.

POLITICS / SOCIAL

For any country, it is the economic structure that dictates the relationship between the Government and people. Because Singapore's economy, is one moulded to serve foreign capitalistic interest, its politics, education and culture also enhance the economic system.

For the political side, repression has been on ever-since as early as 1963 with the infamous Operation Cold Store which imprisoned more than 130 people. Singapore is in a continual undeclared state of emergency which enables internal security exercises to be turned into mass arrests of workers and intellectuals. The Internal Security Act enables the Government to arrest and detain anyone arbitrarily for a period of 2 years which of course can be extended. Even open liberal organizations like Singapore Herald, a newspaper, Current, a magazine, Nanyang Siang Pau, a Chinese newspaper, Nanyang University Students Union, Ngee Ann Technical College Student's Union and lately the University of Singapore Student's Union are being smashed down, just because they questioned the capricious position Singapore is in. Why is there frenzied attack on all opposition? Perhaps the answer lies in what Rajaratnam said in the Far Eastern Economic Review on January 3rd 1975.

"Our dilemma, in concrete terms, is that the only credible opposition to the PAP is the Communist Party. There is a fundamental cleavage with them. As for the others, none can go more left than we can in Singapore context". If the Communist Party is the only credible opposition why is it that the Government, denied the people to hear the viewpoints of the Communist? If the fundamental cleavage is what the Government cannot reconcile, why not open it up for the people to judge? Perhaps the fundamental cleavage is that the economic strategy and political context of the communist party is an entity of Malaya and Singapore which the present leaders cannot face up to. With that statement, what Rajaratnam is effectively saying is that all opposition will face the jail whether communist or non-communist.

On the social side, the educational process keeps producing people and also a high dropout rate that can feed into the foreigner's industries. As an example, it is a well known fact that the Chemical Engineering Department was formed because of the Sumitomo Petro-Chemical complex. As for housing, the Philippine Economy Bulletin observed, "the philosophy behind Singapore's housing programme is aptly summarised as 'vested interested in the maintenance of a well-ordered society'".

CONCLUSION

Finance Minister Hon Sui Sen, summed up the Government's approach by quoting a man who is practically the guru of (at least some) multinational investors.

"Mr. Herman Kahn, the American futurologist and director of the Hudson Institute, concluded in a recent seminar on international business that the best guarantee for foreign investments here is that Singapore has no alternative. In his view, to ensure its continuing economic growth, Singapore has to 'maintain at all times a healthy investment climate through rational policies and a high level of social discipline'".

But is it really true that Singapore had no alternative? The foreign investors did not come here to put their capital to build our country, why is it that local capital is not utilised? They are in abundance as evidenced by the over-subscription of shares on the Stock Exchange. To further exemplify the availability of local capital, it is well known that when National Semiconductor was set up in Singapore, they only brought in \$200,000 whereas they obtained a loan of \$2.5 million from DBS. After 4 years of operation in 1974, they had a profit of \$36 million, their record profit, but at the same time they retrenched our workers.

The recent pig farming could have been established by our local people yet priority is given to the Japanese. Why? Perhaps the US\$2 billion investment in the Petro-Chemical Complex of Sumitomo has some side effects.

Singapore has an alternative, that is the advocacy of an equitable reunification with mainland Malaya. Could this be possible? Only those who read the sign of times can tell. Whatever the course Singapore takes in future, even after the ASEAN summit, it will not basically change its character of foreign domination and serving the world capitalist system which is a parallax of its historical role in this region. This will result in a heavily dependent economy on foreign investments, initiatives, cultural life style, and a continuing repressive Government which acts for foreign interests.

INDONESIA

Of the five ASEAN countries, Indonesia is the largest and perhaps the richest of them all in terms of raw materials. It comprises 3667 islands of which at least 3000 of them are inhabited, extending 3200 miles from east to west and 1000 miles from north to south. It is currently one of the biggest oil exporting countries (with a production of 400 million barrels in 1972) whose oil has low sulphur content which is less harmful to the environment and therefore is in great demand. In 1972, over 50% of Indonesia export earnings and a third of the country's revenue came from oil. After oil, timber ranked second as an export item and it is the region's largest exporter of log with 7.4 million cubic metres. As for rubber, it is the second world largest producer with an annual production of 700,000 tons, Indonesia also has, tin, bauxite, oil palm, coconut, copper, nickel, aluminium and fishery.

BRIEF HISTORY

From the 15th century up to 1945, Indonesia was the colony of the United Dutch East India Co. During these years, the Dutch ruthlessly exploited the Indonesian people of their resources and slave labour. Culture and "good" life was that of the Dutch who also seemed to possess "civilization". However, all these were alien to the rural Indonesian. Soon under these ruthless exploitations, nationalism began to grow, with revolts and rebellions against the Dutch sprouting almost everywhere. These are of course suppressed by the Dutch whose vested interests were endangered. However, this nationalistic feeling could not be dampened and under various Indonesian leaders, organised struggle began culminating into a nationwide movement known as Budi Utomo (Noble Endeavour) in 1908, May 20th. This day was known as the "National Awakening Day".

Economically, Indonesia is not very well off, either. Being a raw material producer country, which was dominated by the Dutch, the Balanced Budget Policy of the Dutch caused great sufferings to the ordinary Indonesian. The 1930's recession of the Western world did not spare Indonesia either, it ravaged her economy and with the Balanced Budget policy of the Dutch, the people's education and economic lives were severely affected.

The World War II broke out in 1939. It was a war between contending powers - Germany, Japan and Britain and United States, for the control of economic resources of the world. Japan was, then, the major Asian power which was pursuing its way towards rich Indonesia. However, its advance was abruptly stopped by the devastating atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The United States thus proclaimed to mankind that it had done a great deed by stopping the Japanese with the killing of thousands of them and of course all the rhetoric clouded their real intention which was to dominate the S.E. Asian countries because of raw materials for their own industries. World War II also set in motion the dynamic spurt of human history which saw the Independence of Indonesia in 1945, liberation of China in 1949 and the establishments of various nationalistic liberation movements all over East and South East Asia.

After independence in 1945, Indonesia under Sukarno became very nationalistic and an anti-capitalist country. The Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) was then a legitimate party working side by side with Sukarno. The ordinary peasants and workers livelihood was slowly improved although to the disadvantage of the upper class. But corruption was not weeded out and though progress was made towards self-reliance, it was slow. With the British setting up Malaysia, Indonesia saw herself threatened by the imperialists powers and denounced Malaysia. This led to the Indo-

nesian Confrontation from 1963 to 65. In 1965/6, riddled by the slow progress of the country economy, tension began to mount between the right-wing, military faction and PKI. A coup was staged by the right wing faction of the army, and they emerged victorious while making Sukarno a nominal head and killing a million Indonesians who were alleged to be "communists". It is believed that the CIA had sponsored the coup de' tat. After 1965/6, Indonesia under the new leadership of General Suharto began to open up the country for foreign exploitation.

ECONOMY

Since the coup, General Suharto has been gradually delegating economic planning authority over to the economists who are trained in the U.S. by the Ford Foundation known as the "technocrats" or among themselves - the "Berkeley Mafia". Naturally these people considered that the quickest and the best way to alleviate the country's economic woes was to attract foreign capitals. As such, the Suharto government in 1967, enacted the Foreign Investment Law which enables the foreigners to have the right to repatriate current profits, no limitation of ownership rights, tax holidays, tax exemptions and other business incentives. Naturally the influx of foreign capital begins, especially American and Japanese which reached US\$1701 million in 1972.

However, all these capitals are channelled towards production of primary produce, and raw material extraction which only served the industries of the American and Japanese and not the development of Indonesia. No doubt, these Foreign owned industries do raise the per capita income and increase the gross national product, giving the appearances of economic growth, but it is a lopsided growth, based largely on resources extraction, such as timber, oil, tin, nickel etc, and labour-intensive manufacturing industries such as electronic components which bear little relationship to the needs of the Indonesian people.

Yet, apologists for the activities of the multi-national corporations, operating in Indonesia will definitely say that surely the Indonesian themselves do gain in terms of money and skill. To a certain extent, this is true, in that only the upper class Indonesians and military personnel benefit either through trade or corruption which sustained their ever expensive life style that is alien to the average urban workers and the poor rural peasants. To a certain extent, they do possess skill but only those that can serve the Western capitalist economies and not that of the Indonesian people.

Facts speak for themselves. After 11 years of military dictatorship, due to wrong economic policy and corruption, Indonesia has gone bankrupt. The country's foreign exchange stood at \$1,500 million in 1974 but in 1975 it shrunk to \$571 million according to the International Monetary Fund and this was the amount which the government negotiated with the Morgan Guaranty Trust in May, together with Japanese loan to pay back the debt of Pertamina. The countryside is still crying out to the government to help solve their poverty but these cries evidently fall on deaf ears.

Perhaps the best description to describe the economy of Indonesia is given by FEER in their 1976 yearbook. "Indonesia remained a poor, agrarian country where the majority of the population still living below acceptable minimum standards. The primary task of investment strategy must be to raise the standard of living of the poor rural masses as rapidly as possible".

POLITICAL / SOCIAL

How does the Suharto Government react politically and socially in order to upkeep such economic policies? It began by slaughtering 1 million Indonesians alleged as "communists" and went about systematically to suppress any opposition to the Suharto creed of luring foreign capital. The domestic oppression necessary to maintain "stability" and a favourable foreign investment climate is already creating conditions for revolts. With the countryside poverty stricken and the cities specked with slums, the climate of revolt is further enhanced. No wonder, Indonesia is the most security conscious of the five ASEAN states and did not hesitate to invade East Timor when the left-wing Fretilin had already proclaimed control over her country. At the present mo-

ment, Indonesia has at least 120,000 political prisoners in various secret concentration camps where many are believed to be tortured or killed. About 60,000 of these prisoners are held on Kalimantan where some are forced to work on the rubber plantation for good year. As the "Quarterly Economic Review" predicted, the political consequences of the current economic policy:

"So far, most of the foreign investment has been in such sectors as mining, oil extraction, forestry, where results cannot begin to show until 5 to 10 years time. In the meantime, the military regime, will have its work cut out to keep under control the social unrest arising from the contrast between the low standard of living of the majority of the town people, not to mention the peasantry, and the conspicuous consumption of a few leading lights of the military - industrial complex. Agitation against the Army's managerial activities is likely to increase".

Social unrest was not uncommon. The students, who were traditionally the vanguard of social change in Indonesia, protested in 1974 during Tanaka's visit against Japanese domination of Indonesian economy. Had repression action not melted out to the students, of whom one of their leaders, being convicted as carrying out anti-national activities, the students would have undoubtedly protested against the American domination also. The Suharto regime is keen to show that they will whack anyone including students should they even question their basic economic strategy.

CORRUPTION

Why must these military oligarchs advocate such economic policies, when after 11 years, it produces nothing for Indonesia but rather plunge Indonesia into more seated underdevelopment? The answer lies in the interest of the ruling elite. As they had embarked on a course to eliminate the communists and people's representation, they need to arm themselves in order to retain their power. One way of doing it is to have USA to back them up and by liberalising the country's resource, for foreign exploitation will undoubtedly win the favour of US. It is the US MNC that will benefit from such open-door-grab-whatever-you-can policies. Secondly, is corruption. The country is riddled thru' with corruption. Anyone who wishes to get things done in Indonesia must pay to get it done, so says the business community, especially, anyone who want to make any venture in Indonesia (though not openly). The army is a very strong machinery indeed in Indonesia, so strong that any worker or peasant who wish "to get out of trouble", he has to pay for it. The foreigners too pay to have their business going and keeping the pockets of the generals lubricated. This seemed to pay off well, if there is any sort of protest by workers against poor working condition, retrenchment or negotiations over pay. Needless to say the workers are the ones who are always the victims in this corruption game. No wonder progress is almost stagnated! The economic policies, political repression and corruption not only disturb the lives of the people, but also affect their education and culture. The rich Indonesians of course can pay to have their children going to school, but the poor cannot. Inevitably, the poor will be poorer, because they do not have the money to pay for their education which can assure them of a better earning power. The rich Indonesians are more posh and it is within their reach to ape their ideal people - the westerner. Thus within the Indonesians, themselves there is a cultural gap between the rich and the poor and yet considerably Indonesia as a whole, its cultural heritage is rich and unique, but not being evoked to serve the people.

Of late, there has not been any major conflicts in Indonesia against the military dictatorship. But that does not mean tranquillity. There is considerable armed resistance to the fort. It is well known that armed PKI groups operating in Central Java are striking at night against big landlords, corrupt local officials and right-wing military leaders and there are some 700 to 2000 guerilla operating on Kalimantan as of 1969, in West Irian, the Free Papua movement has begun a guerilla struggle to drive out the Indonesians; the movement seeks unification with Australian-controlled East New Guinea in an independent all-black nation. As many as 30,000 Papuans are reported to

have taken part in the fighting (FEER, March 1969). Now Fretilin, in East Timor have already declared that they are resorting to protracted guerilla war against Indonesia.

To help the Indonesian government suppress these rebellion, an American military mission has been dispatched as early as the 1960's, headed by a colonel with experience in the special forces and in counter insurgency in S.E.Asia. Thus, for the people of Indonesia and the American soldiers who will be sent to protect the US investments, the road ahead may be long and bloody. Perhaps another Vietnam.

In the long run, foreign investments will not only fail to create the kind of diversified economic growth that Indonesian need, but it will also help to perpetuate the present status quo, with problems of corruption at the top and oppression at the bottom. And in the perspective of development for Indonesia, unless problems of foreign domination, education poverty and political repression can be weed out soon, may be the only alternative left is a social revolution which will drive out foreign economic domination, destroy the present corrupt system and mobilise the Indonesian people to develop their own country.

PHILIPPINES

Philippines, the second smallest country of the member state of ASEAN, is made up of 7,107 islands of which Luzon and Mindanao are the larger ones. Luzon, Mindanao, Palawan and twelve other islands accounted for 94% of the total area of Philippines.

Philippines is the world's largest grower of coconut and is also the first nickel producer of Asia. Sugar was the nation's top export item.

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1521, a Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan landed in the Philippines island. But he was promptly killed by a local tribal chief. Philippines was made a colony of the Spanish Empire in 1565. A full-scale revolution launched by the Philippines from 1896 to 1898 brought the Spanish colonial rule to an end with proclamation of Independence of Philippine Republic in 1898. In the same year, Philippines was ceded to US after the Spaniards lost their war with the US. Once again the Philippines was made a colony but with a new master. In 1946 formal independence was granted to Philippines with the signing of several unequal treaties. Such treaties pave the way for American's continual domination in the economy.

The geographical importance of the Philippines makes her a natural gateway to the markets of the Orient. America intended to use Manila as a trading centre, to sell her products to the vast market potential of India or China. However, Manila proved incompatible with Hong Kong and Shanghai as a trade centre. The incompatibility has reduced Philippines to a pawn in international power politics. Besides, American investment usually in public utilities and railroads began to pour into Philippines.

When the Pacific War broke out in 1941, Philippines became a stepping stone of the Japanese into Indonesia. After the war the Americans returned and resumed control of the Filipino Administration.

During the colonial rule of Philippines, the American has nurtured a group of elites from the land-owning class to take over the domestic administration. When the Philippines obtained formal political independence from the US in 1946 this group of elites naturally took over the daily running of the country.

Since the independence of Philippines in 1946 till 1975, all the five persons who occupied the presidency of Philippines came from the landowning class. They represented the interest of the landlords and compradors. The five presidents in chronological order are:

Roxas (1946 - 1948)
 Elpidio Quirino (1949 - 1954)
 Magsaysay (1954 - 1957)
 Carlos Garcia (1957 - 1961)
 Macapagal (1961 - 1966)
 Marcos (1966 -)

ECONOMY

Philippines is basically an agricultural country. She produces rice, sugar, tobacco and corn. Her thick forest provides large quantities of timber. Copper, aluminium and nickel are also mined in Philippines.

Sugar has always been the main source of revenue for the Philippines. Most of the large sugar plantation of area 100 to above 500 hectares are owned by the Americans. The sugar processing industries are also in the hands of the American capitalists. The American capitalists pressurised the Philippines Government to use most of the cultivable land for the growing of sugar crops. This had led to the shortage of land for the growing of padi. Every year, she has to import large quantities of rice. In 1971, she had to import 400 to 1000 tons of rice.

The US monopolies and their local subsidiaries own or control enterprises involved in petroleum, tyre, rubber, chemicals and other vital industries. In 1970, the total American investments in Philippines amounted to US\$950 million. The magnitude of US investment is not the only thing that weighs down on the Filipino people. It is also their strategic position. For instance petroleum supplied by Esso, Caltex and Mobil is under complete US control. By this commodity alone US monopoly capitalism controls every other Philippine commodity. The US oil monopolies supply more than 90% of the country's energy requirements. Tyre production, trade in construction materials, import-export and the wholesale trade are controlled by foreign firms chiefly American.

The largest commercial banks, insurance companies and other financing institutions are owned by American capitalists. They used the domestic savings of the Filipinos to support their US enterprises operating in Philippines. Many large industrial projects get their credit from local sources. The Philippines Government subsidise US gold mining in Philippines at US\$60 per ounce of gold. According to data obtained, the foreign capitalists had drawn US\$2 billion from the local financing institutions in the period 1962-1968.

The profits remitted by US firms reached a mean annual rate of US\$40 million. There are also unidentifiable transactions in the Central Bank of Philippines records, amounting to few hundred million US dollars for the payment of imports, travel abroad and others.

The dependence on US have dreaded many Filipinos. The Philippines began to turn to other countries including Socialist countries. Recent years figures show that the Japanese had increased their economic activities in Philippines. The Japanese investments increased rapidly and in 1974 had taken over the top place in the foreign investments list.

TRADING

Under the Bell Trade Act, there is a free-trading between the US and Philippines. Such free-trade is only favourable to the US and the local compradors. The exports of Philippines are mostly raw material and agricultural products. Whereas the imports from the US are mostly manufactured products and machineries. Such kind of trade would only end up with the Philippines have insufficient US dollars to pay for the imported manufactured goods. The result is a chronic deficit in the foreign trade of Philippines. In 1975, the trade deficit amounted to US\$500 million.

The trade deficit and the outflow of capital from Philippines have depleted her foreign reserve, leading her into an external debt of US\$2.1 billion in 1971. She had devalued the Peso several time in an attempt to alleviate the adverse situation.

BASIC PROBLEMS OF THE PEOPLE

Most of the farmers are tenant-peasant. They sweat and slog in cultivable lands, possessed by a few landlords. Their share of the harvest is hardly enough and often inadequate for the subsistence. They are further subjected to practices of usury, compulsory menial service and various form of tributes.

The inflow of western technology had brought about mechanization of farming. The expenditure incurred in mechanization of farming is high and only rich landlords can afford it. The low level of technology of the owner-peasants was outmatched by the

large capital and high level technology of the landlords. As a result, many owner-peasants were made bankrupt. Mechanization has also brought about a reduction in the labour intake. Consequently, many tenant-peasants were displaced from the lands. These large amount of labour force had to turn to industrial areas. However, the enterprise set up by US monopolies and national capitalists have always been insufficient to absorb them. This had led to the employed having extremely low wages because there are too many unemployed and underemployed and excessive competition in the capitalist labour market.

Laws were enacted to attract the dispossessed peasantry to acquire public land. These public lands are uninhabited and the peasants have to do the clearing of forests to make it cultivable. However the status of the peasants were not improved.

The land problem was aggravated by the unscrupulous grab of public land by the greedy landlords together with the capitalists and compradors. They used their surplus in agriculture production to acquire more land. They get titles to vast areas of public lands, trap settlers into clearing and cultivating them and then reject or retain these settlers as tenants. They grab mountains, hills and rivers and turn them actually into ranches. They become logging concessionaries and at the same time acquire the land from which trees are cut.

Because of the peasant unrest caused by centuries of exploitation and oppression, the Government set a limit to the amount of land possessed by landlords. The maximum retention limit is 75 hectares. Such a regulation can easily be complied with as the landlord can always share out the excess area to his immediate relative. He can also sell it to buy land elsewhere.

POLITICS

In the early 1900s, the US colonialist had laid the foundation of the Philippine political system. The Philippines practised Parliamentary democracy, which has much resemblance to the US political system. The President of the Philippines is invested with full executing power under the system practised.

The Philippines used to boast a bourgeois democratic system of elections with constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech, assembly, freedom of the press and liberty. In September 1972, President Marcos, who had already been President from 1966 and whose constitutional limit to the tenure in office was drawing close, declared martial law and promptly suspended the Constitution. His reason for doing so was because of the threat to Government by the Communist Party of the Philippines which was allegedly planning to overthrow him from power. At the same time the Muslim Moro National Liberation Front in Southern Philippines, in Mindanao, was gaining momentum. The effect of the constitutional suspension was that Marcos could remain in office well in excess of his two terms provided for in the Constitution. He is now in his tenth year in power with no sign of 'relinquishing' it.

On the pretext of imminent danger, he tightened his control over the people, smashed all opposition parties; conducted mass arrests of intellectuals, priests, journalists, students, workers and farmers; censored all press released. Ultimately he consolidated the power of the compradors, capitalist, feudal and foreign capitalist classes over the people. He betrayed himself by revealing himself as merely a tool of foreign interests.

He proclaimed land reform laws which were to white-wash the true nature of the system of exploitation of the farmers. The armed forces stepped up its repression of the million and a half Muslims in Mindanao who were exploited by the Christian landlords in that island as well as by Manila.

To date, the most effective opposition to the Marcos Regime is the Philippine Communist Party and signs are that its strength is growing daily drawing support from the workers and farmers and student intellectuals as well as even religious priests.

As resistance to martial law increases, repression correspondingly increases. Today 6,000 political prisoners languish in prisons throughout the country.

"The Malay Dilemma"

by Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad (Donald Moore)

(the present Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Malaysia. Ed. Note)

It is seldom that one gets emotional when reading a book. And not all books leave an imprint in the mind reminding us constantly of problems that a society or a nation faces. Mahathir's "The Malay Dilemma" left me depressed, angry and shocked. This book would upset even a seasoned politician. I found the book more disturbing because the author is not just another of those misguided demagogues. He is a medical practitioner with a middle-class background and one would expect at least mild liberalism in his attitudes.

The theme of the book, to put it in a word is racialism; more particularly May 13th, 1969. May 13th is itself an emotionally-charged memory. It is a page in Malayan History that has been written with the blood of the ordinary people.

Mahathir attempts to analyse the causes of May 13th — what went before and what is to be done. A medical man, by his very training is expected to lend some detachment and depth to any analysis he makes. There is neither detachment nor depth in this book. But the author strangely enough does not claim to be unprejudiced either. To quote him:

"In the following pages I have made an attempt to define the meaning racial equality by reference to the racial problem in the United States of America. It is not unbiased, but as so much has been said about the Malays being a privileged people in Malaysia, it is perhaps time to hear the Malay view of these privileges and of racial equality. It is then up to the earnest and the honest to appraise them and then formulate a solution to the problem."

This is not a Malay view of the problem of racialism and racial conflict that exists in Malaya. It is the view of one individual — a quite confused, blinkered, but outspoken individual. Someone once defined a philosopher as a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that is not there.

Mahathir reminds me of that definition. He begins his book with a chapter entitled "What went wrong?" What went wrong on May 13th, that is, I had expected a serious scientific treatment of the topic dealt with and coming from a man who had associated with policy makers, one would expect findings and recommendations which would not offend the reader's sense of reason. But the whole book is one long morbid exercise in futility.

I will give an example of what I mean by the author's indulgence in this sort of exercise; he touches on race-consciousness and if I may quote,

"If race differentiates citizens, then there must also be race loyalty. Racial loyalty must involve privileges for one's race and denial of rights to others. Under these conditions each member of a race must be instinctively guided by considerations of profit and loss for himself. It follows that the more the privileges of a given race the greater the gain for the individual member. Each member must therefore seek to enhance

the position of his race so that he himself may gain in the long run. If this fact of race, race loyalty and privilege are understood, then attitudes on race relations in Malaysia can be better appreciated."

In short each race for itself and each individual for himself. Perhaps a reviewer should not plunge into a debate with the author unnecessarily. But in many cases there is sufficient justification when one is compelled to cross swords with the author. Does not the author realize the disaster that this type of self-seeking attitude will cause? Like the blind philosopher he has got his premisses wrong and his conclusions bear no resemblance to reason or reality. But where a blind philosopher is not a threat to anybody a politician with parochial and obscurantist ideas can be a real danger.

But the publisher has done us a favour by bringing out this book. We have an opportunity of knowing the thinking of people who believe in Mahathir's brand of politics. Mahathir's arguments for his thesis are couched in somewhat refined pseudo-academic language; whereas the majority of the others are crude and irrational. Nevertheless their philosophy is the same.

This book is about a race, the characteristics of that race, its economic backwards and the solution to the problems that this race faces. That by itself cannot make a book, or its author racial. But when the author looks at everything from a racial angle then his conclusions leave much to be desired.

The racial problem in Malaya has been analysed by others, Malay and non-Malay. Fortunately there are a number of Malay politicians and academics who have taken a look at the racial problem from a different angle: the socio-economic angle. They did not fall prey to the tempting short-cut to what are basically economic problems. Also a proper understanding of political and historical factors are essential to anyone dealing with the racial problem.

Mahathir deals superficially with British political and economic manipulations that contributed to the present state of the Malays. But he does not place much emphasis on the political or economic aspect of the problem. He makes the same mistake that has been made by a number of others, namely, that the Chinese control the economy of Malaya. The Malays have lost out to the Chinese, he says, and are continuing to lose whatever they had. He attributes this mainly to the Malay character which has now resulted in what the author calls the Malay Dilemma. To quote:

"Now, as before, the Malays seem to be teetering between the desire to assert their rights and arrogate to themselves what they consider to be theirs and the overwhelming desire to be polite, courteous and thoughtful of the rights and demands of others. Deep within them there is a conviction that no matter what they decide or do, things will continue to slip from their control: that slowly but surely they are be-

coming the dispossessed in their own land. This is the Malay Dilemma."

The Malay dilemma is an imaginary one. He has no dilemma because the ordinary Malay does not suffer from this predicament. To him all rich men are the same, they are interested in maximising their own profits at the expense of the poor and the not-so-rich. Aren't there landlords belonging to a particular race who exploit members of their own race? Does a Capitalist restrain himself just because he will have to earn the extra dollar at the expense of someone of his own race. But paradoxically enough, Mahathir puts across the view that Malays should become capitalists. And his reason, rather oddly, is that they will satisfy the ego of the Malays. Touching on the appointment of Malays to directorships of large monopoly firms he says:

"Finally, by virtue of their status these directors, are in a position to acquire riches. At first this might seem grossly unfair. These few Malays, for they are still only very few, have waxed rich not because of themselves but because of the policy of a Government supported by a huge majority of poor Malays. It would seem that the efforts of the poor Malays have gone to enrich a select few of their own people. The poor Malays themselves have not gained one iota. But if these few Malays are not enriched the poor Malays will not gain either. It is the Chinese who will continue to live in huge houses and regard the Malays as only fit to drive their cars. With the existence of the few rich Malays at least the poor Malays can say that their fate is not entirely to serve the rich non-Malays. From the point of view of racial ego, and this ego is still strong, the unseemingly existence of Malay tycoons is essential."

This is naive that a politician cannot afford to enjoy. I don't know how rich men of a particular race help in achieving the aspirations of the poor of that race!

The book is badly written. It is conversational and at some places incoherent just like an unprepared election speech. It is platitudinous and repetitive and it is strewn with contradictions.

When analysing the reasons for Malay backwardness Mahathir deals with in-breeding amongst the Malays and their concept of values which he argues have held back their progress. But by some strange twist of logic the very factors that have hindered progress of the Malay male does not seem to have affected Malay women. The author says that they are industrious and shrewd and in fact the Malay should learn from them.

Well, I can go on citing such incongruities. The book seems to have been hastily written. It is more an ill-inspired political manifesto of the author than a serious analysis of a serious problem. All the same it is well worth your while to read it as I share the view of those who feel that national problems should be openly debated. Mahathir's book is only a point of view. I shudder to think that anyone other than a small group of the misinformed can subscribe to the ideas presented in this book.

The book is published in Singapore and is available locally. I commend the publisher for his boldness in bringing out this book. I would urge you to get a copy of it.

— Reproduced from the Current.

A GAME EVERY ONE CAN WIN



Cartoons reproduced from REVIEW

The Women Take Over Clothing Factory

Five-hundred workers in Thailand have rebelled against repressive working conditions and taken over management of two clothing factories. The following report is based on a story on the December 21st takeover at the Hara Clothing Factory carried in the January 13th edition of Chaturas Weekly, a leading Thai magazine.

"We have been thrown into this desperate situation by the delaying tactics of the owner. We have been struggling three months during which time we haven't received our wages. Faced with having no money for food, we decided to start our own production of clothes and sell them for cheaper prices," a representative of the women workers of the Hara Clothing factory told Chaturas Weekly. The reporter was one of the many visitors and sympathizers who had come to the factory near Wat Pai-ngern, Trok Chan in Bangkok to express support for the strikers.

Three months ago, the workers struck for fair wages and better working conditions but no satisfactory agreement with the owner could be reached. Since all of the women workers have family responsibilities, they could not afford to remain on strike and receive no wages. Thus, on December 21, 1975, the women decided to start producing and selling clothes themselves, keeping the profits for their wages. They also decided to change the name of the factory.

At the celebration of the opening of the factory under the new name, Samakkee Gammagorn (Unified Labor Factory), about 1,000 supporters from different movement groups, including students and workers, came to show their solidarity with the women.

The owner of the factory, Limleng Saeung, a Taiwanese also owns a big clothing store and another factory about 60 kilometers south of Bangkok at Omyai, Nakorn Pathom. Actually, the strike first started at the Omyai plant. For some unexplained reason, the electricity was cut off for two days and the owner refused to pay the workers for this period of forced idleness. The strike soon spread to the Bangkok factory where the owner has threatened to close down several departments and transfer the workers to the Omyai factory. At the Bangkok factory there are two types of wage earners, piece rate and daily rate workers. However, the Omyai factory workers are paid on a daily rate basis which means they earn less than the Bangkok workers.

Ms. Leng Sae lab, a representative of the workers said, "At the Bangkok factory if one can produce forty pieces, she will earn about 20.00 Baht, while the Omyai counterpart would get less than 10.00 Baht. Even if we make more than our quota, we will not get any extra pay. When seven of our representatives went to the management and fight for a fair wage system, they were all fired the next day." When being asked whether they were afraid of being arrested for stealing property, she told me "No, we are not afraid. When the management commits illegal acts they are not arrested. We see them living happy and free lives. We have never seen the law on our side." The workers did not show any concern over management.

"We will administer our own factory, and already several wholesalers have come to us to buy."

On the opening of the Unified Labor Factory, one of the first decisions made was that the first round of production would be sent to the peasants who are experiencing exceptionally cold weather in the north and north-eastern parts of the country. After this need is taken care of, clothes will be sold to the general public. Prices have been lowered significantly. Previously, one pair of pants cost 190 Baht; now it costs only 50 Baht. The workers have calculated the production costs as against profits before the takeover on blue jeans, shirts, T-shirts and jackets. The figures showed for each item clearly revealed how much profit the owners were making at the workers' and consumers' expense.

When asked how long the strike will continue, Chiab, a worker answered, "It depends on the management; whether they will be frank and sincere enough to talk with us."

A management spokesman, Prasert Chai-pinand, claimed that the management had tried to abide by the labor laws, and let the Interior Ministry's Labor Department resolve the problem, but that the workers had not agreed. He said that the matter "has already been reported to the police," but as the management had in fact been operating in flagrant violation of labor laws, they are not in an ideal position to bring down the law on the workers.

The government's official position was expressed by Porn Udompong, Deputy Director of the Labor Department. "The workers feel they have not been fairly treated, and they don't understand how to use this new Labor law. Nevertheless, we have not abandoned our determination to reconcile the two sides and bring them to a compromise."

The Bangkok Metropolitan Police Commander said on December 22, "If the Hara workers bring clothes from the factory to sell in the market, this will no doubt be considered stealing. At the moment, however, we have not intervened. It is still the Labor Department's responsibility. But if the victim (the owner) reports to us, we must proceed according to the law."

One week after the opening, December 29, 1975, the workers announced the public sale of stock in the factory (to share ownership of the factory). "We feel that it may be too risky to sell the clothes; therefore, we are selling stock to our supporters and sympathizers. One stock sells for 20 Baht."

At last report, the self-managed Samakkee Gammagorn (Unified Labor Factory) was in production. This is a small but significant victory not only for the Thai women who work in

these two factories, but for all overworked and underpaid workers.

— Reproduced from NEW ASIA NEWS

cont'd from pg 1

..... the V. I. Demo

ment if they didn't for the students promised to return to the padang on the 16/2/76, if they did not receive the bus passes by then.

THE GOVERNMENT

The incident has caused a great deal of embarrassment to the government, as their "cannot-help and would-not-help" attitude is once more exposed. That is not all, what is even worse is that it mobilised the police, ISD, and the VI authorities to suppress the students. Isn't it encouraging to see these students speaking out and acting out courageously for their rights? However, this is not the first time that such things happened and it is in fact expected.

CONCLUSION

What is more important is that the incident reflected the lives and feelings of our people. The fact that many VI students were forced to go to their institutes without lunch; the fact that many of them have to stop schooling; and the fact that they would go to the extent of staging another demo if the passes were not returned; all these clearly show that our people are living in a poverty stricken condition (50% of our working population are making less than \$200 per month).

The VI demo is a manifestation of the conflict between the oppressed and the oppressor in our society. No matter how much the "leaders" may boast of the "prosperity" of the society, the fact remains that wealth disparities have become greater each day. The VI demo clearly proves that unity is strength and that one day the silent majority would break their mute existence. Just actions will surely be victorious.

HELP!

WHAT? —
HELP TO IMPROVE THE TECHNOCRAT
WHO? —
YOU!
HOW? —
CONTRIBUTE ESSAYS, POEMS etc
to Technocrat.
Write in your opinions, suggestions
and criticisms
To: THE TECHNOCRAT EDITORIAL BOARD
Singapore Polytechnic Students' Union
9, Prince Edward Road
Singapore, 2.
THANK YOU!

Ed. Note

The views expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent those of the editor.



POLY LIFE

POLY 50 MASS PARTICIPATION

— Sports Reporter

14th January, 75 saw the annual Poly 50 race organised by the S.P.S.U. Sports Council being held. This year's race was attended by about 600 students, in teams of 7 men and 3 ladies. The reason why this event attracted so many participants was because it differs entirely from that of inter-department games, in which only a selected few could play. The Poly 50 race is very simple in nature. Teams of 7 men and 3 ladies are required to complete 50 laps round the Main Poly Campus. The aims of this Poly 50 race are firstly, to encourage mass participation amongst students and secondly to promote the spirit of "Friendship first, competition second". Preparation got underway months before the scheduled date; student organisers were drawing posters, reviewing on faults of last year's race and method for improving this year's race.

On the morning of this occasion, students were seen busily setting up the running channels and getting the whole place ready for the afternoon event. Everything was ready by noon, earlier than the scheduled time; for this the organisers are to be praised for their high spirit at work. The sky was cloudy and the weather was just right for a mid-afternoon race except for the fear of rain when it was drizzling slightly at 1.00 pm. Students were beginning to gather an hour before the race and final discussions were getting louder by the minutes.

By 2.30 pm, some helpers were seated, while some standing by their post, waiting for the start. A final briefing was given and the aim was stressed again before the participants proceeded to their respective position around the course. With the blow of the whistle and the wave of the red flag, the first 60 over lady runners were off in a tremble. The first few laps were covered in a very fast pace and the organisers and helpers were having a tough time controlling the participants and the crowd at the 3rd change-over points. The numbers of laps were recorded in a card which the runners passed from one to the other of his team and finally changed a new one at the end of each lap. Helpers at this place for the changing of the lap cards were having a hectic time because participants were too eager to save time that they threw the old lap cards and grabbed the new one. In the end the whole place was littered.

Although it had been stressed that there should not be foul play or malpractices, yet some teams were caught cheating (changing fresh runners) and were thus disqualified. Such an act was too bad, without any sportsmanship at all, but it was expected because in Poly the true approach to sports was not realised by the students yet. The real meaning of sports lies in fostering friendship amongst participants and strengthening oneself physically so as to serve the people better. Hence this year many matches were organised, encouraging mass participations and promoting the spirit of 'friendship first, competition second', whereas in the past emphasis was placed in

winning and thus 'sports' in Poly was only confined to a few 'elites sportmen'.

The spectators were enjoying, cheering for their friends. But for some sections of the spectators, their main motive was not to watch the race but to make fun of the participants. Some of them passed dirty remarks on lady runners.

Officials were quickly stationed around these sections of the spectators, trying to prevent them from entering the change-over areas. These unruly students even passed remarks and even went to the extent of throwing things at the officials. Although the student was caught red-handed, he and his friends were shouting away demanding evidence while claiming themselves innocent and also trying to get cheap publicity and recognition among the crowd. However there was no necessity to waste time casting pearls before swines so the officials just left them alone.

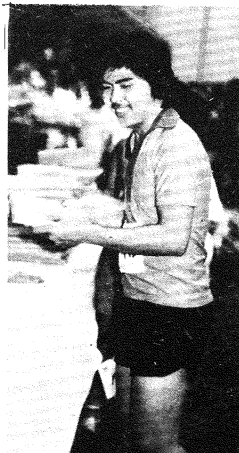
The behavior of such students, who have gone through more than a decade of so-called "education", is a distinct sign of the failure of our educational system. The educational system which aims at producing elites, is one which does not truly educate the students. Only those who are able to swallow and vomit out theories, facts, figures, etc. during examinations can survive and climb higher. It actually serves the interests of a minority elites and the industrialists. Students are turned into digits, who do not question, analyse problems but accept what is given. Hence apathy, submissiveness, selfishness, couldn't-care-less-attitude, egoism are the characteristics of many students today.

The rest of the spectators were happily enjoying the race and supporting their friends and class teams. The paces slowed down as the laps reached 30 and some runners were down with muscle cramps. The last runner of the team which finished first entered the finishing channel at around 5 pm and received a loud applaud from the crowd. The last team to finish came in about half an hour later but the crowd cheered and clapped. The encouragement was given because even though they were last to finish, the determination and the spirit of mass participation surely deserved this cheers and clapping. Had they aimed to arrive for the top positions, they would have given up long before this.

A brief souvenir giving ceremony was held and all those who had completed the race received their souvenirs. After this, many grouped together to take photographs while some sat down to share their experiences. The most heartening moment was when even participants were busily helping the organisers to pack and clean up the place. When dusk fell, the crowd began to disperse, bringing home with a memory of a race well run in an entirely new atmosphere.



The lady starters



a happy souvenir receiver

FILM SHOW ON "THE MINAMATA DISEASE"

— Wong Yian Tong

It was the first time I heard about this disease when I saw the poster regarding this film show. I was a little bit moved by the description on the poster and since the time was convenient I went for the show (its free of charge for all students). However after seeing the show I found that I was really touched by the scene that appears in this show. I really sympathise with those Minamata victims and I want to do something for them. The first thing I did was to give my opinions to the union requesting that this show be screened again. The second thing I did was to write this article to share my feelings with all of you. The show consists of two parts, (1) The lives of the Minamata victims, (2) The struggle against pollution, against a crime that is even worse than cold-blooded-murder.

The 1st part of the film showed us the lives of Minamata victims, and their families. Many of the aged who contacted Minamata died within a few months and they had to endure great suffering before their death. (Not only were Minamata patients bed-ridden but many were unable to perform simple action at all). Some cannot speak and cannot think and some were gone mad. The young children were the worst among those affected. Many were crippled when they were born. Their hands couldn't carry things and their legs couldn't walk. Many of them were deaf and dumb and their parents had to feed them, clothe them, and so on, for the rest of their lives. Worst of all, Minamata victims stop mental growth. Some Minamata victims who were in their teens or 20's still looked like children and had no mental world at all. What had these Minamata victims done that they and their parents must endure such inhuman suffering?

The 2nd portion of the film showed the indignant victims and the Japanese masses struggling against Minamata and pollution. They organised themselves in the one-share movement to force the Chisso company to admit their fault. Their just action received tremendous response. Many people donated money and others joined their rallies and they finally succeeded in forcing the Chisso's general meeting to close indefinitely. At the moment when the crowd clashed with the Chisso's man the spectators clapped and cheered. The spirit of the audience was very high. Unfortunately the film had to be stopped for it was time for lecture.

Although the film is in Japanese it is really a very educational film (probably that is why none of the audience left the room even though it was 5 min past lecture). No doubt there are many film shows screened in Poly but I must say that this is the best show I have yet seen. I hope that it can be rescreened for more students and if possible with English commentary. It would be better also if the organising committee can check and make sure that nothing goes wrong with the sound system.

EDITORIAL NOTE

It is already shocking enough to witness how Minamata victims suffer, but it is even more alarming to know that the Japanese company, Sumitomo, has come to Singapore after being forbidden to operate in Japan for it causes polluted diseases like Minamata disease. The Singapore Government has already signed the \$4.9 billion Sumitomo Petrochemical Complex contract on 1/1/76 and construction is underway and production is due by 1979. The complex is located in Pulau Ayer Merbau where 55 families have been evicted to make room for the highly profitable but equally deadly petrochemical industry.

MUSE—EXHIBITION & OTHERS

— P. K. CHAN

One month ago, on 8th January, 1976 the University of Singapore Students' Union put up a large scale exhibition entitled "Singapore - her people and their future". Although the preparations for the exhibition took only a short time of about 4 weeks, with the hardwork and the determination of the organising committee and all helpers, the exhibition turned out to be a very successful one. It received overwhelming support from the public as well as the student bodies. In spite of the sudden change of the venue due to the withdrawal of the permit, about 10,000 people came to see the exhibition.

The exhibition was presented in several sections, namely economics, politics, education and culture. It was also supplemented by slide shows depicting and revealing various aspects of working people and also the activities of the students' union.

The first part of the exhibits gave an account of the history of our island. The British colonialists landed at Singapore in 1819 and exploited the excellent geographical position of Singapore as a sea port for collecting cheap raw materials from the neighbouring countries to feed their industries in Britain, and as a centre for dumping their manufactured goods into the regions. The profit yielded went into the colonialists' pockets. After Singapore gained nominal independence, its role as an entrepot still ritually remained till now. Foreign investors are now being attracted to Singapore by its provision of cheap labour and also the various policies adopted by the government namely tax exemption for a period of as long as 10 years, extending of low interest credit and freedom of transferring of capital from Singapore. Foreign investors are also making use of the savings of our people to engage in industrial undertakings. The profits generated are mostly taken back home by them. And our diligent workers, who are the real creators of wealth get only a small miserable share.

Furthermore, the livelihood of our workers is also insecure. Industrial accidents occur every now and then in shipyards, construction sites and factories. Workers are often blamed for not being careful to avoid accidents. But how are the conditions of the workers? There has been little or no attention paid to the safety measures and precautions in many industries, as these would mean less profit. In addition, the work is often exhaustive and laborious. If an exhausted worker working in an unsafe environment meets with an accident, who is to be blamed? To achieve greater exploitation of workers, the capitalists even resort to ruthless tactics like introducing incentive schemes for 'superworker' making them to work extra-hard to compete with one another. The retrenchments of workers is even more threatening. Many workers were made jobless when retrenchment struck in 1974.

The next portion of the exhibits touched on the political aspects. From this section, we came to know more of the present ruling party and their repressive policies. After the PAP came into power in 1959, many workers and students unions were dissolved and replaced by government controlled unions. These unions have meagre support from their members as they do not represent the interests of their members. Besides, many students and political leaders were thrown behind bars under the notorious ISA. The famous 'Operation Cold Store' in 1963 had placed many prominent leaders, who took different principles from that of the ruling party, in detention. Up to date, many of them are still confined in the 'dungeons of horror'.

The section on education struck many to the very depth of their hearts. When we were small, our teachers used to teach us to study hard so that in future we could make use of what we learn to serve our country and people. This is really noble aim. But as we climbed higher up the education ladder, this noble aim vanished. We find ourselves mugging hard in order to obtain the diploma - passport to a more affluent living - and nothing else. The present educational system encourages us to participate in such

dehumanised competition. By so doing they hope to quarantine us from the social realities. Many of us who are indulging in this system have turned selfish, examination-orientated and submissive.

If you had been to the exhibition, you would surely agree that it was an eye-opening experience that you really get to know of many things that you have never come in touched before. However this exhibition definitely could not provide all that we need to know. Instead we have to continue probing, reading and discussing so as to obtain a promising outlook towards our lives and future, because it is a long term process. Things are changing fast everyday and only by improving ourselves that we will not be lagged behind by the current of progress.

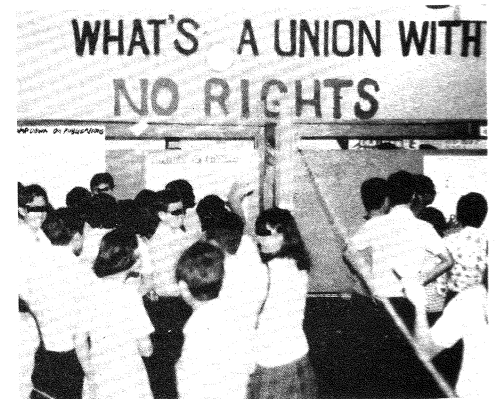
The exhibition was planned in view of the fact that we Singaporeans are having too scant a knowledge and concern of our island state. The exhibition provided many eye-opening and essential facts that we never knew of or know little about. We, students have become so cut off in our ivory tower pursuing academic qualification that many of us have lost contact with the society and our People. We have been also barred from the social realities by the prevailing culture, or to be precise, 'the culture of silence' designed to dampen any inclination towards social awareness. In addition, we students are also being over-pressurised by the towering academic work which leave us little time for other activities. Workers, besides being exhausted by the monotonous work, many of them have been moulded into submissive people by the prevailing culture which is being advocated in our society.

Judging from the encouraging and overwhelming support from the public and the students, we can deduce that the student union is an organisation that is with the interest of the people. She possesses the fidelity to serve the people. She has revealed and dismasked the long concealed social realities of our society giving us a clear insight to our people and country.

However the exhibition was only one of the many social issues that USSU has undertaken. Let us make a brief retrospection of USSU's past activities so as to understand better this students' body. Since the students' awakening in 1974 following the launching of the anti-bus fare hike campaign, the students have been increasingly concerned of our society. The campaign was to a great extent, a successful one, it did educate many students, who learnt of the bus company's ruthless tactic of grabbing extra profit. Together with SPSU, USSU carried

out a campaign collecting funds and clothings for the hunger-stricken flood victims of Bangladesh when it was outraged by a savaging flood in 1974. USSU and SPSU also involved in helping the unjustly evicted inhabitants of the Tasek Utara area in Johore, across the causeway. Students collected funds for the victims and also made a protest against the ruthless act to the Malaysian authority. And when the retrenchments of worker struck Singapore early in 1974, USSU together with SPSU, set up a R.R.C. to investigate the real reason for retrenchment and also probe into the workers' actual working conditions. Evidently USSU stands with the people. But, despite the good deeds done by the union, subsequently several student leaders were mercilessly deported and even imprisoned, while a few others were harassed and intimidated by the authority. Was it because the authority was unhappy with the doings of the students? Or was it that the authority does not like the students to be socially aware? The answers to the questions are obvious.

Recently, the authority came out with another contemptible strategy of banning the students' union, under the deceptive name of amending the University Act. The bill was passed unanimously without much discussion in the presence of less than half of the 65 MPs in a hurried parliamentary session, despite strong protest from the students. We may ask ourselves, why they banned the Union? Well, the question is best answered by referring to what the students' union has done, which have been discussed above. Banning of USSU is not the 1st case of its kind, the former unions of Ngee Ann Technical College and Nantah and the other progressive trade unions met exactly the same fate. This is in fact a Fascist act to suppress the people who can really fight for justice and whose acts and aspirations are conflicting and detrimental to the interests of the authority. But how should we view this? Should we be pessimistic and give up hope? No, definitely not, we should instead, bear in mind that the people shall have a just society. Our endeavour to liquidate social injustice and fight for an equal society shall materialise!!



EXAM FEVER

— Peter Lim Teng You

With the sessional exams just around the corner, the campuses plunge into a most monotonous atmosphere. What used to be crowded and rowdy games rooms are now only occupied by scattered groups of billiard and table-soccer players. The usually heavily booked games courts seem to be so deserted. Even the printing machine in the secretariat seem to be enjoying some well-deserved rest for it used to be running restlessly all through the year. That is campus life as it is. Another phase. One of those yearly affairs. Only a month ago life was still full of colours; now it is only black or white. Black if one has not been following the lectures and hasn't the slightest idea of turning to white pastures, ie. how to beat the exam system, white if one knows too well how to sail through the exams.

I do not necessarily suggest, of course, that one needs to elbow ones way through to achieve examinations success although that cannot be ruled out totally. Those who still remember the bizarre year of 73/74 would know what I mean. The exam leakage of that year just shows that exam alone cannot be the only yardstick in assess of how much one has picked up during the course of the year. The Technocrat editorial while condemning the culprits involved in the leakage then acknowledged: "perhaps there is too much emphasis on passing exam. All that is required of each student is to answer a few questions at the end of each session and it is of little importance whether he has full attachment to his syllabus. For those who have not worked hard the coming of the exam will be much dreaded. The overriding importance of being successful during that brief period can even motivate one to cheat."

Cheating aside, one has to ask oneself whether answering a few questions at the end of each session truly reflects what one knows. Moreover, to answer a few questions may not be too difficult. Those who really study throughout the whole year would definitely find no difficulty. But there is no such necessity. An intelligent forecast would almost certainly tell which questions would likely appear in the question paper, basing of course on the trend of past year's questions. Another aid of course is to be extra attentive during lectures a few weeks or so preceding the exam date. During this period, many lecturers will be giving tips. In the past there were cases like all exam questions of a paper being given as "tips". Are the lecturers to be blamed for this? Giving tips is in fact another sign of the failure of the exam system. Syllabus covering a wide range of topics has been stipulated by the authority concerned for the students, and lecturers just have to follow accordingly. Many a time syllabus could not be finished or have to be taught in stuffing-duck method so much so that students simply accept without understanding. In the end, hints would have to be given for fear of a great number of victims of the exam. Hence with these and other help, it is therefore not too difficult to prepare oneself for the all-deciding session.

Even if one is successful in the exam does it necessarily mean that one

has received a full education? To be educated means to be given the right to develop oneself into a social being. An awakened individual who is aware of the realities of life and society in which he lives and who is prepared to play his role in making that society socially just and worthy of human dignity. Our educational establishment as it is, is almost totally detached from society though publicly financed. It is at best serving the needs of those who are economically more powerful. Poly graduates are good examples of those manning the industrial machines to churn out big dollars for the capital intensive industrialists. Our establishment does not serve to narrow the gap between the rich and poor but on the contrary serves perfectly well to maintain the present status for the benefit of the minority. Therefore the exam only serves well to produce the brighter sparks to kindle the industrial fire to burn up the richness of society's resources. The top rats will be duly recognised of course. The not-so-top will receive less and so on down the rung.

The exam is just the ending point of the human rat-race. From start till finish, the race is made very competitive so that the whole system can go on. If there is no race there would not be rat to run and the system cannot be successfully perpetuated.

Exam fever is hence one of the by-products of the faulty educational system. One is caught in the fever because one has not realised the true meaning of education. One merely hopes to lead an affluent life. But an affluent life is not the only thing in life. We have got to live like a human, to be able to care for others and to be able to help the poor, the sick and the oppressed. We should not let the diplomas determine our

future. But with increasing number of students who have awakened to realise the short-comings of the system, there would surely be a diminishing number of conformists of the system.

Russian Humour

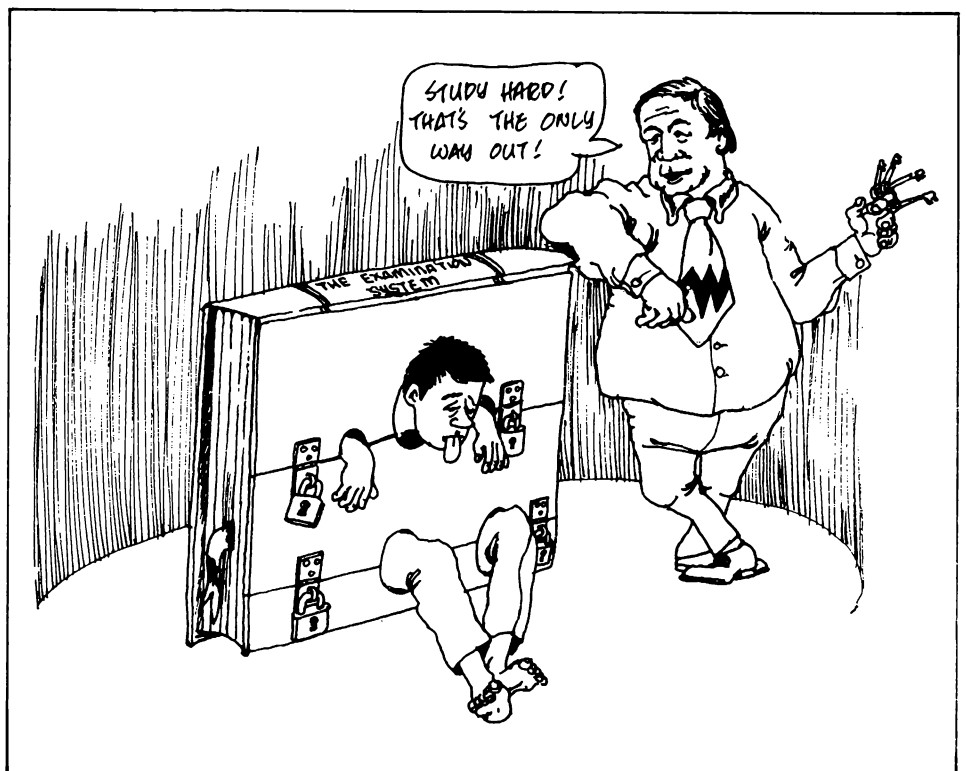
When Khrushchov was still in power, he used to tour the country. On one occasion he visited a collective farm and as usual, there were reporters and photographers covering and recording the collective's historic day.

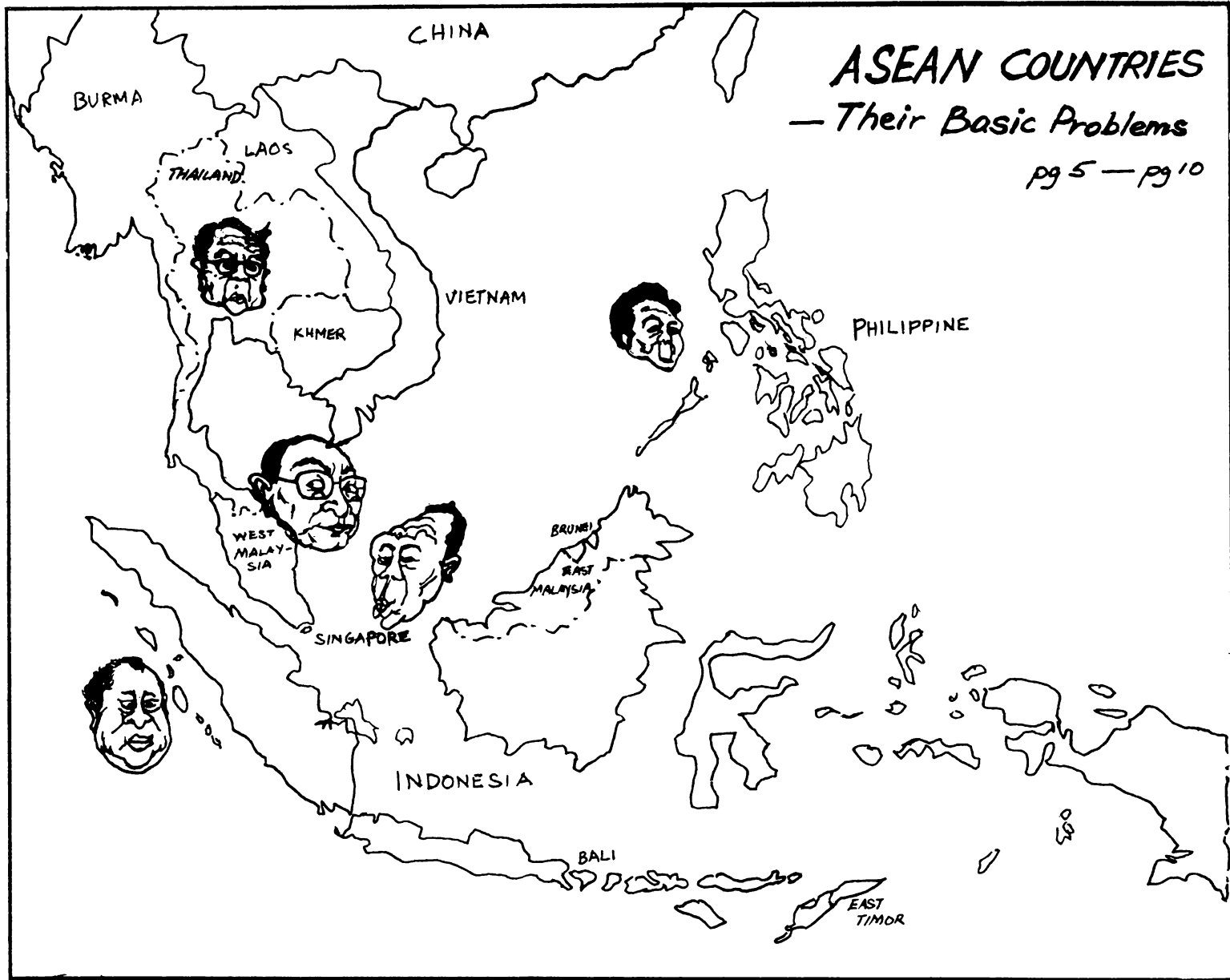
One photograph showed Khrushchov at the animal husbandry section of the collective and the editorial board of the provincial daily met to discuss the appropriate caption for the photograph as the original caption "Pigs and Comrade Khrushchov are together" was considered extremely impolite by the chief editor.

The editorial board cracked their minds thinking of a caption that would not bring them any trouble. "How about putting it this way 'Comrade Khrushchov and the fat pigs together with him' ", said one of them.

After considering this suggestion for some time they rejected it and continued to think hard again. Some of them kept pacing to and fro hoping that an appropriate caption would dawn on them.

Next day, the paper published the photograph prominently in its front page with the following caption "The third from left is Comrade Khrushchov".





ASEAN COUNTRIES

— Their Basic Problems

pg 5 — pg 10



'I WON'T DANCE TO HIS TUNE.'