

**STOP  
GENOCIDE IN CHITTAGONG  
HILL TRACTS (BANGLADESH)**



*WHAT MUSLIMS CAN DO TO ME?*

**VEN, AGGAVANSA MAHATHERO.**

**CHAKMA RAJGURU.**

# **STOP GENOCIDE IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS**

( BANGLADESH )

By Ven. Aggavansa Mahathero,  
Chakma Rajguru

© Author

*Published by :*

Ven. Aggavansa Mahathero,  
Chakma Rajguru  
Deshbandhu Nagar,  
P.O. Baguiati, Calcutta-700 059.

*Printed by :*

ADSONS  
C/5, College Street Market, Calcutta-700 007.

*Available at :*

The Publishers Address

First Print : October 1981

Price Rs. 10.00

## Stop Genocide in Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh)

### (1) Area

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is situated in Bangladesh (B.D) bordering Arakan (Burma) and Mizoram (India) to the east, Bay of Bengal to the south Chittagong district (B.D) to the west and Tripura (India) to the north. This hilly tract has an area of 5139 sq. miles. The district has 3 sub-divisions at Rangamati, Bandarban and Rangarh (now Khagrachari). Headquarter is at Rangamati.

### (2) Population

(i) There are thirteen ethnic groups of Mongoloid origin and of Tibeto-Burman language family. The groups can again be classified into four sections (1) Chakma, Tangsungya, Chak, (2) Mogh, Khiang, Khumi, (3) Tripuri, Marung, Mro, (4) Lushai, Bowm, Bonjugri, Pankhui. The population of the groups are as follows:

Chakma	400,000
Tangsungya	80,000
Chak	20,000
Mogh	100,000
Khiang	2,000
Khumi	2,000
Tripuri	15,000
Marung	20,000
Mro	5,000
Lushai	2,000
Bowm	3,000
Bonjugri	2,000
Pankhui	2,000
	<hr/>
	6,53,000

(ii) The population of Bengalis in 1947 at the time of partition of India was 26,150. The communal Muslim Govt. of Bangladesh has forcibly settled Bengalis and their number increased from 26,150 to 225,000 in 1980.

(3) *Administrative set up of Chittagong Hill Tracts*

The district consisted formerly of 3 sub-divisions with 12 police stations. Now there are 6 sub-divisions all over the district. Recently it is reported that the district is likely to be bifurcated into 3 viable districts to facilitate administrative activity easier.

(i) This move is made by the Government to decentralise the feelings of the tribals against torture, looting, rape, burning of houses in absence of functioning of a political party.

(4) *Brief history*

The Chakma king crossed over to Chittagong in 1418 A.D. when driven away by the Arakanese Usurper Minhti. The Nawab of Bengal Jalaluddin Mohammad gave shelter to the Chakma King Mahekiri (Marekyaja) in southern Chittagong. There was power struggle for the control of Chittagong by Arakan, Tripura and Muslim Nawabs of Bengal from 14th century until finally the Mughals under the generalship of Shayestha Khan annexed the area in 1666 A.D. The Chakma King Dhabana acknowledged the Mughal hegemony in 1666 A.D. and helped them in suppressing the Mogh-Portuguese combined depredation in Bengal. The Mughals made an agreement with the Chakma King Dhabana recognising the dominion of the Chakmas over whole of Chittagong (Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts combined) except the Chittagong town and the strip in between the Nizampur Road (Dacca Trunk Road) and Bay of Bengal and to open up trade with Bengal on delivery of trade tax in kind (Cotton). This was renewed in 1715 by Mir Jumla, Mughal Governor of Bengal and Chakma king Fateh Khan (The Chakma kings adopted muslim names and titles without embracing Islam).

(i) The ethnic groups who lived in this area were shortly pushed eastwards into the hills in the train of the consolidation of Mughal Rule.

(5) *British Rule*

The British received Chittagong in 1760 A.D. under an agreement with Mir Kashem Ali, the Nawab of Bengal. They did not remain satisfied with the position of the Mughals during the Mughal rule. But attempted to curb the powers of the Chakma King by establishing Kuthis (camps) well inside the Kingdom. This was disliked by the Chakma King Sher Doulat Khan who refused to acknowledge suzerainty of the British and naval battles took place between the forces of the Chakma King and the British at Silak and Jibali in 1777 A.D. and 1780 A.D. respectively with heavy British defeat. This confrontation with the British continued up to 1784 A.D. In 1785 A.D. King Jan Box Khan made an agreement recognising hegemony of the British.

(i) The policy of the British remained suspicious upon the Chakma King and squeezed the Kingdom by creating a separate district Chittagong Hill Tracts (C.H.T.) in 1860 A.D. Moreover the CHT was divided into three circles—

Chakma circle, Bohmang circle and Maung circles placing Chakma, Bohmang and Maung chiefs at the head of the three circles. They made provisions to safeguard the hill tribes from economic exploitation through plains people and to isolate the ethnic groups from the political development in other districts of Bengal.

(ii) Except a few higher posts in the districts administration all administrative tasks were fulfilled by an indigenous body of representatives and functionaries of the respective ethnic groups. The aim to keep the administration of the hills separately from the administration of the plains led to the appointment of a superintendent and later a Deputy Commissioner (DC) (Act XII of 1860/Regulation of 1900). In 1921 the CHT were declared a "backward tract" and only the Governor-in-Council was authorised to interfere with the administrative and judicial proceedings in the Hills. Following the provisions of the "Government of India Act, 1935" the CHT was declared a "Totally excluded Area". When after World War II the partition of the subcontinent was planned, the three chiefs of the CHT demanded a status of the native state for their respective circles. In a later application, they suggested the formation of a confederation with the neighbouring states of Tripura, Cooch Behar and the Khasi states. This confederation should be placed under the direct administration of the Central Government which should be responsible for the safeguarding of the rights of the tribal people.

(6) *CHT under Pakistani Rule*

After the partition of India in 1947 CHT was included in East Pakistan through the award of Mr. Radcliff. All the British officers holding high posts were replaced by the Bengali officers who reported against the tribal people as pro-Indians to the authorities. Pakistan continued to administer CHT according to the provisions of the Regulation 1900 A.D. which guaranteed some sort of autonomy to the CHT population. The CHT was placed under the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions, which was responsible for the administration of the former "partially and totally excluded area". In 1955 the Provincial Government decided to abolish the special safeguards for the CHT and to place them under the Rule of Regulations. The three chiefs of the CHT and the then British DC however succeeded in warding off this integration by stiff resistance and several appeals were addressed to the Central Government in Karachi. Never the less during Pakistani rule a slow but steady infiltration of tribal led institutions at self-Govt. began and first of all the indigenous police force was disbanded, its officers were sent to different district and Bengali police and other departmental officers were appointed in the CHT. As a result, the tribals have been denied police and other official protections.

(i) In 1959 with the application of the basic democracies order the indigenous political systems were substituted by the new political order of the Military Government under Ayub Khan, and with the new constitution of Pakistan in 1962 a systematic but clandestine colonization of the district by the

Bengali began. Finally in 1964, as a result of the amendment of the constitution in 1963, the special status of the CHT granted under the Regulation of 1900 was totally abolished and all branches of the district administration earlier run by tribals themselves were brought under the control of the Central Pakistan administration.

(7) *East Pakistan/BD Minority Policy*

From 1947 to 1950 the East Pakistan Government policy towards the ethnic minorities in the CHT may be called a "laissez faire, laissez aller" policy. The authorities cared for the upkeep of law and order and the tax collection and did not interfere significantly with the "self Government" of the ethnic groups. During the mid-sixties this policy changed dramatically. The East Pakistan Government wanted to apply development models of the industrialised countries for the development of the third world countries which emphasized large, capital intensive projects, preferably industrial ones to facilitate economic growth at the cost of tribal peoples integrity and cultural preservation, the Pakistan Govt. directed special interest and attention to the CHT and its only partly tapped resources. On this background the plan to construct a hydro-electric plant at Kaptai materialised, financed largely by American capital. The catchment area now covers 50,000 acres of the best plough land in the hills, 40% of the districts total cultivable area, the lake displaced 100,000 persons, few of them were rehabilitated, none adequately. More than 40,000 members of ethnic groups migrated to India. The construction of this dam marks the first step in the chain of large scale intervention in the CHT. The lake with its different effects created disruption and disintegration of the settlement patterns, the economic and social structure of the Chakmas. The development of new economic potentials as fish farming and fish industries are allotted to the Bengalis only and the ethnic groups were completely kept away from enjoying the fruit of their own resources. This gave incentives for further re-organisation of the use of the CHT's resources to outsiders of the district.

Being armed with these opportunities the Bengali Muslims became blind with power and continued to interfere with the social structure and activities of the tribals in various ways in the hills. The Bengalis used to acquire forcibly the meagre products of the ethnic groups. In 1953 the Chakma Raja Tridib Roy was arrested and insulted by the police in spite of personal intervention of the British D.C. who resigned after failing to safeguard the interest of the Raja who wanted to preserve the right of the tribals by upholding justice.

In 1964 the Pakistani Government enlisted an eleven-man international team of geologists, soil scientists, biologists, foresters, economists and agricultural engineers to devise a master plan for the integrated development of the area based on what they considered to be optimum land use possibilities. The team worked for two years with helicopters, areal photographs and electronic computers. The team came to the conclusion that regardless of how well the traditional economic system of land use in the C.H.T. may have been in the

past, it can no longer be tolerated. The research team decided that the hill tribes should allow their land to be used primarily for the production of forest products for the benefit of the national economy.

The ethnic groups should give their land for national economy and national interest. It is all right. But what will be their future? What will be their livelihood? Are they to die or migrate to India leaving their lands to the Bengali Muslims?

The Forestal reported and Webb concluded that "a whole system of culture and an age-old way of life cannot be changed overnight, but change it must and quickly. The time is opportune".

Correct, time is opportune. One lakh persons had already been on the move, why not 350,000 more to become destitute.....?

The C.H.T. may be said to be East Pakistan's land of promise. Some of the plain's growing population can possibly be absorbed in the thinly populated areas, because cultivation is negligible and is found in a few places in the valleys.

It is strange that though the land policy has been implemented following the recommendations of the Forestal survey and the Master plan, it left its land-man ratio analysis completely out of consideration. The C.H.T. was not thinly populated in the mid sixties, the master plan is quite clear in this respect. As far as its developed resources are concerned the Hill Tracts is as constrained as the most thickly populated District. The emptiness of the Hill Tracts, therefore, is a myth. Only a small part of the valleys lying between the ranges in the Chittagang Hill Tracts is level land; the greater part is a highly dissected terrain of steep sided hillocks often less than a hundred feet in height. It is needless to say that cultivation was possible in these steep hills. In fact the few thousand cultivable acres of land is not capable of sustaining a population of 878,000 people and in actual calculation the density of population is higher to any other districts of the country.

The legal and administrative conditions for extending the Bengali grip to the natural and human resources of the C.H.T. were implemented following the change of the national economic planning in East Pakistan in the mid sixties. The exploitation of the resources of the C.H.T. has started under the guide of a development plan which really aimed at accomplishing the task of massive de-tribalization of the C.H.T. and to plan and prepare military actions in advance should there be any resistance to this sort of development planning i.e., detribalization. Road construction schemes were implemented to facilitate the military build up and actions in the hills.

It was Mujibar Rahman's policy to force the tribal people to loose their identity "Let them become Bengalis". During the constitutional debates Manobendra Narayan Sarma, M.P. representing the Hill Tracts, tried to safeguard the interests of the hill peoples. He moved amendments for the preservation of special rights of the minority and backward nationalites. His proposal was that the C.H.T. should become an "autonomous tribal region" to protect

the interests of its inhabitants was interpreted as a conspiracy against Bangladesh sovereignty and accordingly was rejected.

In 1972 a delegation led by M.P., M. N. Sarma met Mujibur Rahman to discuss for demands of the C.H.T. viz :—

- (1) Autonomy of the C.H.T. with its own legislature.
- (2) Retention of the 1900 Regulation in the Bangladesh constitution.
- (3) Continuation of the tribal Chief's Offices.
- (4) Constitutional provisions restricting the amendment of the Regulation and imposition of a ban to the influx on non-tribal people to C.H.T.

Mujibur Rahman answered that this would encourage ethnic feelings. He advised the delegations to go home and do away with their ethnic identities.

This demand of regional Autonomy e.g., the Retention of the 1900 Regulation in the Bangladesh constitution was interpreted as a successionist movement, and immediately after the deputation had left massive military operations by the Bangladesh Army, Police and Air force were carried out in the C.H.T.

Thousands of men, women, and children were murdered and hundreds of villages were burned. To escape torture and persecution, hundreds of tribal people fled to the forests.

In 1975 a second delegation consisting of 67 representatives of the C.H.T. population met the president of Bangladesh, Justice A. S. Sayem to renew their demands. The result of this mission, however, was similar. The Bangladesh Army carried out raids in the hills, burnt villages and put the inhabitants into jail. Again in 1976 similar proposals were presented to Ziaur Rahman, then president of Bangladesh, even the Government supported tribal convention forwarded a plan to Ziaur Rahman in January 1980. Proposing similar demands though being more compromising as to the Bengali settlements in the hills and less decisive on the issue of regional autonomy. In reply, the Government promised to stop new Bengali settlements in the hills.

Another aspect of Governmental policy is to win over the influential representatives from among the tribals. Few of them have been made to support the centre by official patronage. A segment of the Mogh (Marma) community has been neutralised by the integration of the brother of one Bohmang (Marma) Chief, Mr. Aung Swe Prue Chowdhury M.P. He was elected with the support of the autonomy workers. He betrayed not only the Marmas but also the people of the C.H.T. in exchange of a Deputy Ministership and has been acting as Government agent.

#### (8) *Forcible Muslim Settlement in Chittagong Hill Tracts*

The large scale Bengali muslim infiltration by the Government into the Chittagong Hill Tracts already started during Pakistan regime. During Bangladesh Liberation War 50,000 Bengali muslims entered the Khagrachari subdivision in Ramgarh area and Nakhyangchari area in Bandarban subdivision



with the help of the army and occupied the lands of the tribal people forcibly. The tribal people were beaten to death by the Bengali muslims, their homes were set on fire, woman folk were raped in broad-day-light, properties were looted, Buddhist temples were ransacked and burnt. The Government in reply when approached by tribal people said that some miscreants might have done it. The case will be looked into but no action was taken. On December 5, 1971 during the Bangladesh liberation war after the withdrawal of Pakistan army from Panchari area the Bangladesh army (Mukti Bahini) raided, plundered and pillaged the Panchari area. Sixteen people were sacrificed in jungle out of them 2 people did not die and told the story of the sacrifice. Eighteen people were butchered in broad-day-light who came to receive the Bangladesh army. Two hundred houses were burnt on December 14, 1971 another 22 people were killed in trenches at Kukichara when they were taking shelter at night. Many houses were ransacked by the Bangladesh army. One hundred seventy-six (176) houses were set on fire and mercilessly beaten the tribals, women were raped and molested at gun point. Tribal youths were arrested and mercilessly beaten and many were shot dead as pro-Pakistani elements.

This is an illusion of fate. In 1947 at the time of Independence the tribal people were dubbed as anti-Pakistani and in 1971 they have been suddenly found to be as pro-Pakistani by the same Bengali muslims who danced with the West Pakistani muslims at that time. (1947)

On December 16, 1971 five Tripuri tribesmen were killed at Bangalkatthi. The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on December 21, 1971 killed at Tarabania under police station Dighinala 9 tribal people including women and children. Tribal houses were looted and girls molested. On December 22, 1971 the people of Panchari were compelled to pay Rs. 10,000 and a boy of five years was put to death. Between the 24th and 29th December 1971 the BDR extracted by force from the people of Itchari Rs. 2000.00 and looted the tribal Mogh village at Sonai under police station Ramgarh.

During the last week of December 1971 and first week of January 1972 the district authorities in connivance with the Awami League began to make indiscriminate arrest. Many leading tribals including a Chakma lady teacher were arrested on false and flimsy grounds as collaborators. Educated tribal youths and leading tribesmen went into hiding in panic and fear. The Maung Chief Maung Prue Sain who was then Tribal Adviser to the Government of Bangladesh on his visit to Rangamati in February 1972 was appalled with the existing situation and sent the following telegram—

**“EXPRESS TELEGRAM—BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN  
PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH, DACCA REPEAT TO PRESIDENT  
OF BANGLADESH/MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND HEALTH/SECRETARY  
GENERAL OF BANGLADESH. VISITED RANGAMATI ON  
SIXTH INSTANT STOP EXTREMELY AGGRIEVED TO FIND INNOCENT  
TRIBAL PEOPLE ARRESTED INDISCRIMINATELY AS ALLEGED  
COLLABORATORS STOP EARNESTLY REQUEST INSTRUCT CIVIL**

**ADMINISTRATION IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ALL TRIBALS SO FAR ARRESTED WITHOUT PREJUDICE AND FURTHER ARREST BE CEASED STOP—MAUNG RAJA AND TRIBAL ADVISER OF BANGLADESH."**

One of the most serious crimes committed by the Bangladesh armed forces and muslim Bengalis was the shockingly barbaric treatment of M. S. Prue a son of the late Bohmang Chief. He was made to parade the streets of Bandarban Town with his head shaven and a string of shoes around his neck. The authorities surprisingly remained a silent observer. The tribal Mogh on-lookers did not regard this inhuman behaviour at all humorous and were left questioning whether it would be their turn next? On January 9, 1972 at a largely gathered public meeting in Bandarban attended by the Bohmang Chief and other Mogh leaders, a muslim student of Satkanis College nakedly accused the Bohmang Chief as a collaborator in a threatening tone and told the tribals that if they cared for their lives they should all become Bengalis or go to Burma. It is reported that 4000 tribal families numbering 30,000 tribals choose the latter suggestion and left for Burma.

By the last of February 1972 the Indian army was withdrawn from Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Bangladesh Government posted in the Hill Tracts to maintain law and order the Bangladesh Rifle (BDR). Unexpectedly the BDR like the armed forces, began to oppress and maltreat the helpless tribal people. On March 22, 1972 the BDR beat up the villagers of Dhalya, raped 5 girls and took Rs. 2000.00. The male members were tortured, Bairagibazar village was ransacked by the BDR and almost all the girls of the village were dishonoured. On April 30, 1972 the BDR personnel raped tribal girls and 5 school teachers were manhandled on the same day.

On May 8, 1972 the BDR personnel from Khagrachari went to Tarabania under Khagrachari police station to investigate the murder of a muslim shop keeper of Logangbazar, failing to find out the alleged culprits they carried by force to their jeeps some tribal girls and left for Khagrachari. The armed tribal youths to save the honour of their women lay in wait and ambushed the jeep. The BDR personnel fled in fear of their lives leaving behind the arms and ammunition and the girls.

On March 29, 1972 about 2000 muslims armed with automatic weapons raided the villages of Manikchari, Chikanchari, Sangupara, Pakkamura and Godatala under Rangarh police station. The police on April 2, 1972 made an enquiry of the matter but no arrest was made. This lenient policy encouraged the miscreants to raid the villages for the second time and all the cattle of the villagers were carried away.

A portion of the tribal population of the Feni valley not being able to withstand these acts of atrocities have taken shelter in safer zones leaving behind their lands and homestead which have now been occupied by the muslim intruders from the plains. If such lawlessness and chaotic conditions are allowed to persist it is apprehended that the tribal people will be evicted

from their homeland. Many are already contemplating and if nothing is done to ensure their safety there is likelihood of a mass exodus to India.

The district with its scanty land resources has already become over populated in the lands left un-inundated by the existing dam of the Kaptai lake. It was a surplus area in producing food stuff but after the Kaptai dam the district turned into a permanent food deficit area and if nothing is done to ensure their safety there is likelihood of a mass exodus to India.

During Bangladesh liberation war many tribal people fled away and took shelter in India. These lands were occupied by the Bangali Muslims and they hold the land in their occupation still today, though the owners returned to their homes after the war. The Bengalis who fled away to India during liberation war were rehabilitated in their own lands on return by the Government and monetary help was given liberally. More over many repatriated Bengalis have been rehabilitated in the Hill Tracts after the forcible eviction of the tribal owners from their homesteads, agricultural lands were taken by force and distributed among the Bengali settlers.

Why this double standard of a benevolent, secular Government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman? The real motive and aim of the government will come out through the mouth of General Manzoor, G.O.C. 24, Infantry Division at Chittagang. We are coming to that later.

Bengali settlements have been continuously encouraged by Government mental agencies and in the past few years over 55,000 Bengali settlers are said to have moved into the district. Landless Bengalis in other districts of Bangladesh are bribed to go to the C.H.T. for settlement. They were threatened to deny all sorts of help from the Government when refused to move to C.H.T. Bengali settlements. The settler family used to get 5 acres of land for cultivation, each family, free ration for 6 months till the harvesting of the crop. One pair of bullocks and Taka 3600/- (Taka 5000 personal communication) to cover initial expenses.

In August 1979 the Government issued a secret circular advising the district commissioners of all other districts of Bangladesh to prepare lists of landless people under their jurisdiction. Now these landless people from all over Bangladesh are being taken to Chittagang Hill Tracts in Government-hired buses, trucks and trains.

The Ganakantha a Dacca paper in a report dated 16.10.1980 stated that despite protest and strong opposition of the tribals, the Government have taken up a programme of rehabilitating about 100,000 families from the other districts of the country into the Chittagang Hill Tracts.....Each family will be given 2.5 acres of plain land or 4 acres of bumpy land or 5 acres of hilly land free of cost. The settlers will receive Taka 3200.00 in addition each family will be given 12 seers of wheat per week for the first 6 months, if necessary for another 6 months. This programme has been drawn up with the financial help of the Saudi Arabia Government.

The Government denied that the Hill Tracts are being systematically depopulated by eviction of ethnic groups and later populated with Bengali Muslim settlers. The aim of the Government is to complete de-tribalisation work in C.H.T. and to beat drum of denial at the same for eye wash to the humanity loving people of the world. For this entry of foreigners into C.H.T. specially interior villages were restricted.

Amnesty International reported that Bengali authorities will speed up the development of the C.H.T. and refused to bar Bengali settlers from entering the hills because it would be unconstitutional to stop any citizen from settling in the hills and buying land there. On the other hand, officials communicated that the Government has stopped all such settlements. Strictly to suppress the actual happening there. But the ultimate aim is to convert the C.H.T. into a Bengali Muslim majority area. Whenever a Bengali settlement comes up in the hills, madrasahs and bazars are constructed. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), police and Military camp are opened to protect them.

The figures of speed of the Bengali immigration into C.H.T. is given below :—

	Tribal	Bengali Muslim
1951	287,274	26,150
1970	498,162	76,564
1980	653,000	225,000

In 1980 alone 100,000 Bengali Muslims have been settled in the hills through Government initiative. They have been racing against time.

To back this development the Bangladesh Army has launched massive road building programmes in the hills. The C.H.T. have been divided into 11 development circles to facilitate this build up and all-weather roads are being constructed under army guidance and plannings from Bandarban to Ruma, from Chiringa (on the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Road) to Alikadam from Ramgarh to Dighinala via Khagrachari from Chittagang to Khagrachari via Fatikchari.

(9) *The Armed Forces*

The 24 Infantry Division is stationed at Chittagong cantonment. In 1972 the Division was armed with three more brigades in addition to its original 3 brigades. A new BDR sector was established with Headquarter at Rangamati. The strength of the BDR Sector is 3 armed battalians. Two Ansar (Islamic guards) are stationed at Khagrachari and Ghagra. The armed police force has been increased from one battalian to 5 battalians. There is a anti-guerrilla training centre at Mahalchari under Khagrachari sub-division. The full strength of the armed forces including the para-Military forces is noted is given here :—

B.D. Army	24 Inf. Div. of 6 BDE	80,000 men
BDR Sector	6 Bns.	25,000 "
Ansars	2 Bns.	5,000 "
Armed Police	5 Bns.	10,000 "
Trg Centre	—	800 "

Besides Bangladesh naval and airforce personnel stationed at Chittagang have been giving help to the armed forces at the time of need.

In 1978 the Shanti Bahini in an appeal stated that the entire district of the Chittagang Hill Tracts is now simply a military camp. Almost the whole one Division Army stationed at Chittagang has been deployed in the C.H.T. 3 Brigade Command offices have been set up at Rangamati, Kaptai and Bandarban, 3 cantonments at Dighinala, Ruma and Alikadam, 1 naval base at Dhulyachari with 3 gunboats (near Kaptai). Two special police posts at Barkal and Matachhari. The Sector Headquarter of the Bangladesh Rifles has been set up at Rangamati and two of its wing headquarters at Kaptai and Ramgarh. Two Ansar (Islamic guards) battalions are stationed at Khagrachari and Ghagra and in every bazar of the district, one police camp has been established. Amnesty International states that between 20,000 to 100,000 armed personnel are active in the Hill Tracts. Besides armed forces, BDR wings and police are posted in the adjacent Chittagong district to help the armed forces of C.H.T. in distress.

(10) *Resource of C.H.T.*

The settlement of landless Bengali families is only one aspect of the economic interest in the C.H.T. More important are the forest reserves and the mineral resources. The exploitation of the C.H.T. forests is sped up for export purpose (at the beginning of 1971, Bangladesh which is in a chronic demand of wood, has started to export timber). The ruthless extraction of forest produce will destroy the natural environment in the C.H.T. within a few years. Those who practise shifting cultivation will lose the very basis of their existence in the Hill. Moreover there are a big reserve of mineral gas and petroleum in Jogigofa and Rangamati area. The coal reserve is abundant in the forest areas of C.H.T. and copper is available in Miani reserve forest area. Western enterprises have been searching for mineral resources in the hills since years and it will not be far fetched to link West German and Australian interest in development aid in the Hill Tracts with the newly discovered uranium in the hills.

The fish products in Kaptai reservoir is plenty and a big portion is being exported. The fruits of C.H.T. is famous for its delicious taste.

(11) *Resistance by Tribals*

This development of the Hill Tracts did not meet the favour of the ethnic groups concerned and since the beginning of the seventies a slow but steady increase of resistance to Governmental policies and the pending threat of economic and ethnic cultural alienation and oppression has grown. The first mass killings by Bengalis in the hills started right after their Independence. These massacres were connected with the efforts of the Pakistani Army to recruit Rajakars and Mujahids from among the hill area at the late stage of the Independence war.

Later Mukti Bahini entered the Ramgarh area and killed 400-500 Marma, Tripuri tribals. The para-military force of the Awami League the Rakkhi Bahini terrosised the tribal villages under the pretext of searching there for collaborators.

The emergence of an ethnic resistance movement is the result of developments of various causes outside and within the hills. The reaction to the Government policy of integrating the district came from the students who began to organise themselves in the form of the Hill Students Association.

The reasons are known which led to the Bengali immigration. This speed up of a development of a tribal economics had been able to word off until recently. Though land scarcity caused a slowly increasing division into a few well-to-do hillmen and a large number of poorer tribesmen (especially among the Chakma and Marma in the north of hills) mutual aid and cooperation along kinship lines had prevented the worst. This changed fundamentally after the dam. Traditional settlement patterns of the Chakma and Marma plough cultivators were destroyed and the affected people were scattered all over the district. Thus the territorial condition for the working of Kinship solidarity was weakened or destroyed to a large degree. Though a part of the peasants was poor, real misery was unknown. Today 100,000 persons mostly Chakma, Marma and Tripuri are said to be landless.

This widespread social disintegration and economic deterioration led to attempts to check further developments of this kind. In 1966 after the alarming affects of the Kaptai dam the C.H.T. Welfare Association was founded. This underground party soon split into two groups on the issue of the realization of the fundamental right of the C.H.T. population. One group supported peaceful means, the other armed struggle. After the unsuccessful return of the hillmen's delegation in 1972, the leadership went into the hands of the militant wing, votaries of the peaceful movement deserted the organisation which was dissolved the same year. This led to the formation of the Parbattya Chattagram. Jana Sanghati Samiti (C.H.T. peoples coordination Association) headed by the then M. N. Larma and his brother Jyotirindriya Narayan Larma, a school teacher with the Shanti Bahini (peace force) as its armed wing underlying these changes were an increasing sense of alienation and frustration of the tribal leaders.

The political activities of the PCJSS therefore were aimed establishing an alternative administration suited for the changed tribal reality. The Shanti Bahini have been operating since 1972. They consist mostly of Chakma, Tripuri and Marma, the three largest ethnic groups in the C.H.T. These groups have been most directly affected by the events in the hills. It is not possible to give an exact number of guerilla fighters. According to Shanti Bahini statements, 15,000 fighters have joined the guerrilla force. The Bahini has a reserve force of 50,000 and the present operating strength is 5000 fighters. Amnesty International source mention 5000 fighters who are headed by the former MP M. N. Larma. They are said to have no foreign backing today.

The relationship of the rebels to the neighbouring guerrilla group of the Mizo National Front is said to be bad. The relationship with Mizo National Front rebel groups has deteriorated when a M.N.F. mobile band suddenly attacked the S. B. men in Ruma area, killing three of them. This estrangement has increased in subsequent period as the M.N.F. rebels used to collect fund forcibly from the supporters of the Shanti Bahini. Later on the S. B. fighters trapped a convoy of the M.N.F. rebels who have been coming from Chittagong with arms supply from Bangladesh Government in 1974. The S. B. fighters ambushed the convoy killing the commander of the M.N.F. rebels including several others. After this incident the Mizo National Front did not come in confrontation with the S. B. fighters.

The Shanti Bahini has one arch enemy in the non-tribal Marxist-communist Sarbahara Party of Siraj Sikdar. This party made inroad among the tribals specially Marma and Tangsungsyas "a sub-caste of the Chakmas in the Rankhiang area. This group is smaller in size and hostile to the Shanti Bahini. They have been fighting each other in the past, at the moment, however, they have stopped in order to concentrate on attacking Government forces. Moreover this leader Siraj Sikdar, an U.S. agent was captured in 1974 and killed in captivity. He distributed American money among the Tangsungsyas and Marmas to win them over and to keep them under his influence. The group faded away after the death of Siraj Sikdar whose flow of money to the tribal people also ceased forever.

The Shanti Bahini have extensive organisational networks in the Rangamati Ranegarh, and Bandarban sub-division. Their main base is located in the forests. They have strong support from other ethnic group i.e., Murung, Mro, Khiang, Khumi, Chaks, Bowns etc. The main target of the Shanti Bahini operations during last year have been the new settlers. The guerrillas first serve a quit notice on the settlers in a particular locality. This is followed by an attack in which the new settlements are often raised to the ground. Except for the military camps, the guerrilla force is in control of the C.H.T. They have successfully integrated into the traditional social systems without antagonising them. They are not operating against customary hierarchies, the three chiefs (Chakma, Bohmang and Maung) and the Dewans, Talukdars and Headmen at present existing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Without the consent of the Shanti Bahini no important political decisions are taken on local level. They have a cadre organisation with military like hierarchies. The members are volunteers from the local population, very often they come from the emergent middle class.

The Shanti Bahini are responsible for publicity and propaganda of the rebel organisation. The PCJSS has, in the meantime, established its own administrative and judiciary systems in the country-side with the help of the local panchayats, the administrative units of their organisation.

In fact the district seems to be run by two parallel administrations the

civil military apparatus of the state and the Shanti Bahini with a fairly effective intelligence network and a disciplined cadre. As a matter of fact the organisation though originally a Chakma, Marma and Tripuri organisation, they have integrated other fighters who used to show hostility to them and extended this influence on other ethnic groups as well.

Under their supervision land reforms have been carried out in some places. The production brigades of the PCISS/Shanti Bahini are said to participate in agricultural production. They also collect taxes, mainly from Bengali Bazar traders, contractors para military forces who are stationed in isolated areas, the contractors who purchases the right to cut wood in the forests for the saw and paper mills in the C.H.T. from the hillmen. The Government officers including the Bengalis also pay taxes to the Shanti Bahini for their safety and security.

The political demands of the Shanti Bahini have a few changes over the time. First of all, they have not demanded secession from Bangladesh. In 1975 they stood for an autonomy similar to that of the Indian states under the Central Government. Facing the hard lines in the Bengali Government the Shanti Bahini stand for :—

1. Self determination within Bangladesh with a separate legislature.
2. Restitution of all lands taken by Bengali immigrants since 1970. Total ban of influx of Bengali settlers.
3. Constitutional arrangements for the preservation of the indigenous cultures and their identity.
4. Free movement and commerce within the district.
5. Freedom from officials harassment.

They also demanded para military force recruited from among the ethnic groups.

From 1966 onwards a steady increasing number of crimes of Bengali settlers, Government officials and Bengali police (rape, arson, abduction, theft) were reported to the Deputy Commissioner at Rangamati who remained a silent spectator and took no action against the criminals.

These inroads on the people of ethnic groups were at first individual or partly collective crimes on the part of the Bengali; they were at that date not yet part of an integrated scheme of over-all eviction. Only since the beginning of 1977 reports of massacre became publicly known. It was alleged that in the early 1977 the Bangladesh Government sent Troops to massacre the tribals leaving in Matiranga, Guimara, Manikchari and Lakshmichari. One thousand Marmas were killed and 5000 of them were forced to go to Tripura. All the properties of these wretched people were taken away by the Bengalis being protected by the army.



During the last week of December the army carried out "operation kite flying" in Kukichara, Panchari, Bhaibonchara and Pushgang 70 miles north of Rangamati, possibly a response to Skirmishes with the Shanti Bahini units in the Ghuchari area in early December 1977 where 47 personnel of armed police Battalion were ambushed and killed by Shanti Bahini. The army at 10 A.M. on December 25, 1977 started from Panchari towards Logang and Pushgang in a convoy of about 1000 personnel. They set fire to all the houses and temples on both side of the road and asked the Bengali settlers to loot the properties of the tribals. The tribal people fled away into jungles for safety leaving their prepared food and many of them ran for jungles while taking food after hard labour in the field in the morning. The Bengali Muslim settlers who went with the army to loot collected booty and took away to Chittagong in 80 bullock carts and thousand of cattles, goats fowls were carried away from the area. On December 26, 1977 a public meeting of the Muslims and tribal people was organised by the army and people were asked to attend the meeting at gun points. General Manzoor spoke in the meeting. He stressed that the settlers are poor and landless. They should be given shelter by the inhabitants of the area. At the end of the speech he shouted—we don't want you. You can go wherever you like to. But we want your land. The Muslims should be settled there for the propagation of Islam.

On December 30, 1978 one E.B.R. Company stationed at Ruma Cantonment were on patrol duty in Maidong Mouza. Three members of the Shanti Bahini were also on patrol duty in the same area, they (SB) remained in ambush when they sensed the coming of the Bangladesh Army. The Bangladesh Army move in jungle with long bamboo poles beating the bush on both sides by two sepoy. This precaution they used to take because in several occasions previously many army personnel were killed in secretly put boby traps.

The Shanti Bahini members though few in strength opened fire with their three rifles killing 10 E.B.R. personnel and the rest fled away leaving the dead bodies. Some S.L.Rs and Rifles were captured.

The Bangladesh Army Head Quarters was very much worried on the increasing attack of Shanti Bahini on the army patrol. The Army intelligence reported that the S.B. Headquarter and its top leaders are staying in the Rankhing Reserve forest. Moreover conflicts between army and SB have been increasing. Severe fights were reported in May, October, and December in Eidgar, Manikchari and Fakirachara area apart from every clashes and fights. In December 22, 1978 Bangladesh Army invaded Dumdumya, Maidong and Panchari Mouzas to carry out their plan "operation annihilation close doors". The area containing 50 villages with a population of more than 75,000 men. The army cordoned the area on all sides and launched a 5 pronged march into the area. They have launched mortar attack on the sleeping villages at night killing many cattle and damaged a large area of crops. In all 35 villages were burnt down to ashes. More than half of those villagers lived in jungles without food till January 9, 1979 and the rest about 25,000 people

fled away to Mizoram and they were pushed back to C.H.T. into the hands of the butchers of Bangladesh Government by the Morarji Government of India.

As a result of the jungle fights in early March 1980 and heavy losses of Bengali troops the Army launched counter attacks on villages and civilians. An integrated attack took place on March 25, 1980 in Kalampati union. The commander of a local army unit arranged for an assembly of the leading tribal people of the Kalampati union in the market to hold a religious congregation and the ordinary hill men were made to gather for the repairing of the Poa-para-Buddhist Temple. While they gathered in the temple army suddenly opened fire on them killing 300 persons on the spot. Thirty women were abducted and taken into the military camps and raped. After this thousands of Bengali settlers entered the scene immediately after the army attack and began to burn and to loot homes of tribal people. They were on the rampage in the village of Kaukhali, Mukhpara and Headmenpara, burnt the home of hillmen, butchered those who came across their path. Nine temples were destroyed 20 monks were beaten. Hands of two monks were broken. The Government refused to discuss the Kalampati killings. Three opposition M.Ps. Shahjahan Siraj, Rashed Khan Menon and Upendra Lal Chakma investigated the killing and observed in their reports that the Government had let loose a reign of terror in the Hill Tracts with a definite aim of uprooting the tribals from their ancestral homes. The report state that the Government plan included forcible distortion and destruction of the religion, culture, language and tradition of the tribal people. The Bengali settlers occupied the lands of the tribal people protected by the Bangladesh Army. They agreed to vacate the tribal lands verbally only but in fact they threatened to repeat the killings when the tribals return home.

A large number of similar incidents have occurred since then and it is quite obvious that the armed forces have stepped up their annihilation policy. About 800 people were massacred by Bangladesh Army in Chittagong Hill Tracts between December 10 and December 22, 1980. On December 10, 1980 armed forces attacked, looted and burnt 7 villages in the Harina valley, an unknown number of men were killed and women raped. Fifteen thousand people crossed over to the neighbouring Mizoram, but Indian Border Security Forces sent them back to Chittagong Hill Tracts. It is feared that all of them died either in torture or simply due to starvation.

Similar operations in this area on the 10th, 19th, 21st and 22nd of December 1980 led to the death of 5000 tribal people. The Bangladesh High Commission in London admitted that the C.H.T. are the scene of considerable lawlessness, and that murder, arson and looting are prevalent. But they deny any undue violence or policy of repression on the part of the Government forces.

Genocide is but one aspect of this situation. An unknown number of persons have been put in jail during the last years without any charge or trial. It is estimated that between 5000 and 10000 men and women are imprisoned nowadays in jails and many outside the district but usually in military camps.

Imprisonment for women means rape. Youngmen are crippled to prevent them from handling weapons.

The Bangladesh Government has opened forced settlement camps (or more appropriate, concentration camps) to curtail the local support for the Shanti Bahini in recent year. This type of camps have been established in Bilaichari union, Moghban union, Balukhali union and some in the Bandarban and Ramgarh sub-divisions. The village of Ghagra on the Chittagong-Rangamati road has been deserted by the Chakma villagers, because another camp was to be built there. Government sources say they are trying to resettle the uprooted tribals in Government sponsored cooperative farming estates. These projects are assisted by the Asian Development Bank.

In order to obtain information and confessions torture is widely used. This includes severe beatings, electric shocks uninterrupted interrogations, with holding of food and water, holding hands on hot substance, inadequate medical care, standing in the sun until collapse, living and sleeping in open trenches to the elements, and half drownings. Especially the parents of the Shanti Bahini guerrilla fighters are put under pressure to make them force their sons to give up guerrilla activity.

The army has established checkpoints on roads and waterways to control guerrilla movement and transportation of food stuffs. Salt, Medicine, Food, and Kerosine are not allowed to be carried beyond Rangamati, the districts' capital. These measures have widely affected. Communications and whoever met on the road is liable to be abducted into army camps. The villagers are not allowed to purchase large quantities of consumable commodities and the army fear that those commodities will definitely go into the hands of the Shanti Bahini. Food shortages are affecting many parts of the C.H.T. today. Army in roads do not even stop at temples. A number of monks have been killed, imprisoned or tortured. On December 23, 1979 the B.D. army launched attack with the help of the Bengali settlers, on the four villages of Bangahata, Thakurjya-makalak, Gulsakhali and Nalua. Ven Bannitananda Bhikkhu was the priest of the Thakurjya Makalak Buddhist temple. The villagers while fleeing away requested him to accompany them in jungles. He is aged about 70 years. On repeated request of the villagers he said "I am a monk and have rejected this world of properties riches and self seeking. They have their Maulavis, what Muslims can do to me?" He sat in meditation in front of the Buddha image inside the temple. The army man opened fire on the air to frighten the local people. They have looted all the houses and set them on fire. Some Muslims entered the temple of Ven Bannitananda Bhikkhu. They found him in meditation and remained unmoved inspite of their shouting and intrusion inside the hall where he was in meditation. One Bengali shouted, "Here is a monk in deep meditation". Another shouted cut him into pieces. The third said—He is a monk like our Maulavi. The second man said—He should be killed first because they are the ones protecting tribal people from become muslims. Saying this he severed the head of the Bhikkhu. Others joined the fray cut off the hand and legs and drag-

ged the body out of the temple, threw it out in the lake water. The head and a leg was left on the bank touching the water in a hurry. The picture on the cover is the dead body found later when the villagers returned to see the ashes of their burnt away houses and severed limbs of their monk.

During the early phase of confrontation the Government strictly refused to negotiate with the Shanti Bahini. But as the army was suffering heavily things began to change slowly with the exchange of letters in May 1979. Until May 1980 few letters were exchanged and the M.P. Upendra Lal Chakma of Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD) acted as go-between. He had three rounds of talks, with PCJSS. In February 1980 two top leaders of the Shanti Bahini Jyotirindra Narayan Larma, (*Santu Larma*) and Maung Sabai; who had been imprisoned in 1976 were released to persuade the PCJSS and Shanti Bahini leaders to give up the demand of self-determination. The Home Minister announced the release of 100 more tribal prisoners in March/April 1980 but few were released only. Mr. Ziaur Rahman, President of Bangladesh went to Rangamati and discussed with the tribal leaders including Rani Binita Roy, the then adviser to the President. They categorically told the president that the tribal leaders, supposed to be supporting the Government, have in the core of their heart strong aspiration for self determination of the people of C.H.T. Mr. Zia went back to Dacca and established a 5 member Parliament Committee headed by the Home Minister to discuss the Issue of Chittagong Hill Tracts in February/March 1980. The committee was given the task to enquire into the causes of the crisis in C.H.T. It is significant that this committee did neither include member of the opposition parties nor the C.H.T. representatives. Needless to mention the committee has never reported any finding made by it so far. It has come to light later on that the majority of the members of the 5 member parliament committee were not in favour of compromise and strongly opposed President Zia. However Mr. Zia nominated Maj. Gen. Manzoor commender of the 24 Infantry Division deployed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to negotiate with the Shanti Bahini and Upendra Lal Chakma MP was given green signal on 27.3.80. The Shanti Bahini refused to negotiate with the Government after the Kalampati massacre of 25.3.1980.

The political leaders of the Government and the military commanders in the Bangladesh army pressing hard for a military solution. Even Mr. Zia was not keen for a negotiated settlement. The lower ranks in the army have been pressing Mr. Zia for a compromise as they have been most sufferer in the guerrilla war. In this situation of pull from top and below the Government decided to have legal provision for a legal genocide. The Government introduced a new bill in Parliament in December 1980 "The Disturbed Area Act of 1980" to have a legal basis for genocide in the hills. According to this Act persons in uniform and local administrative officers would be authorised to make arbitrary arrests and open fire on any body engaged in any unlawful activity. Unlawful activities are broadly defined as including any action prejudicial to the sovereignty or territorial integrity or security of Bangladesh or the

maintenance of public sector. Police and defence forces would be authorised to enter any premises to conduct a search, destroy any house believed to be hiding explosives or ammunition and confiscate property. Applications of these sweeping powers could not be challenged in court.

The Bangladesh Government has admitted that this bill is tailored to curb the insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The bill however has met strong opposition from various parties. It has not been passed so far. Its aim is clear to the peoples concerned. The Government is looking for a genocidal solution of the problems of the ethnic minorities up there.

In the days followed, bands of Bengali settlers aided by Bangladesh army attacked several villages in the surrounding area burning houses, looting, raping, forcing the inhabitants of the villages to flee further into the wooded hills. Buddhist temples were looted and either partially or totally destroyed. Several priest suffered torture at the hands of the army personnel.

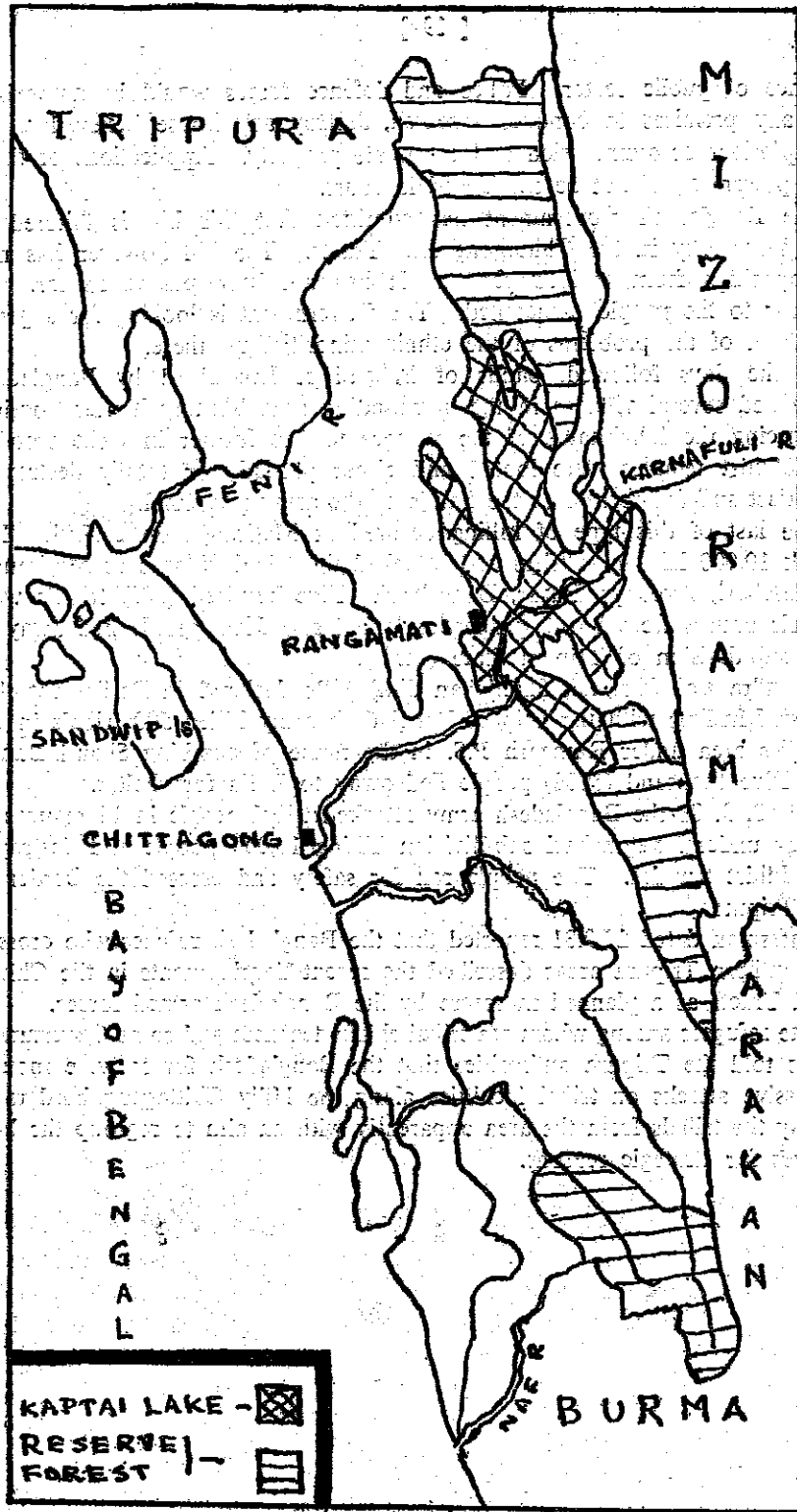
The last of this type of killing occurred at Matiranga on 26.6.81. The army took 10,000 Muslim settlers and attacked the tribal villages at Matiranga, Beltali, Belchhari, Ayodhya Bazar, Banraibari. Five hundred (500) tribals were killed, their houses were burnt, properties looted and 5000 people fled away to Subroom sub-division of Tripura State (India).

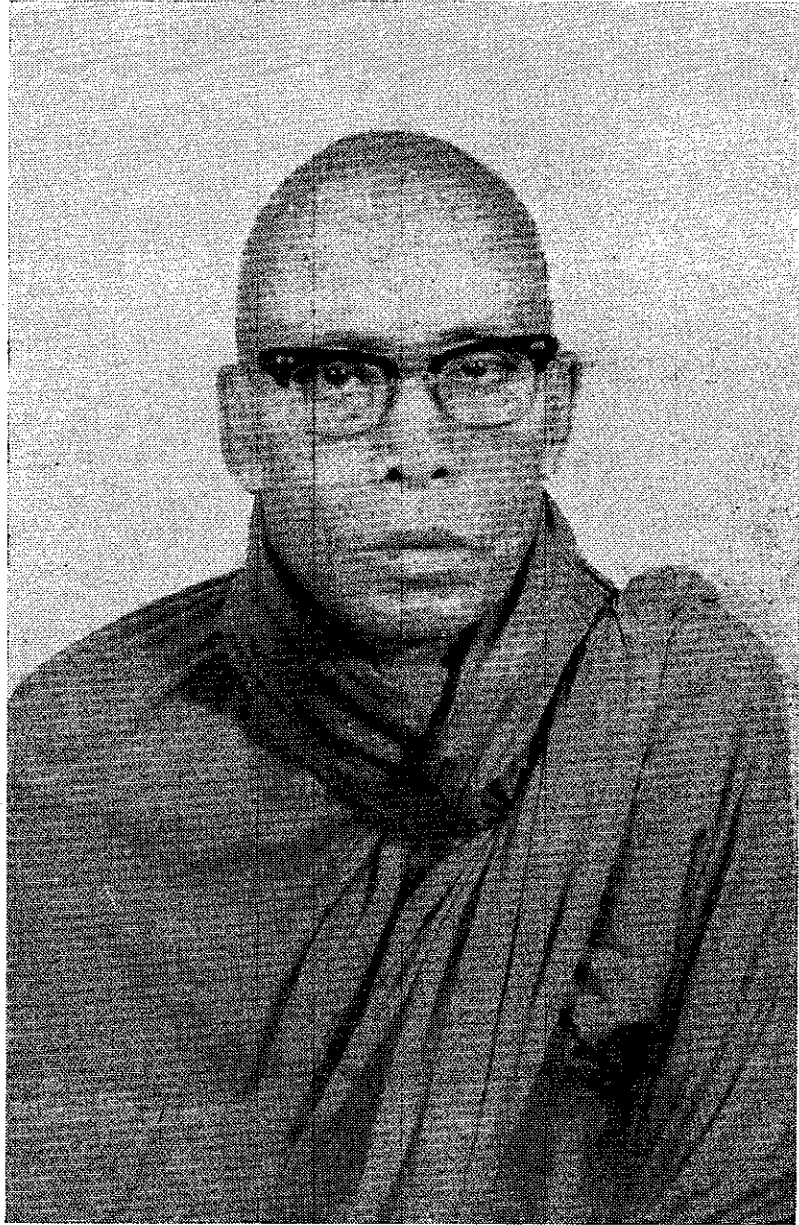
Upendra Lal Chakma, Shahjahan Siraj MPs declared in Parliament that Bangladesh Muslims with the help of Bangladesh army killed 500 tribals in the 11 sq. miles area under Ramgarh P.S. in the name of combing Shanti Bahini fighters. Five thousand (5000) people fled away to India for shelter.

On 23. 9. 81 the Bangladesh army attacked tribal people in 14 mauzas in Feni valley under Khagrachari sub-division killing 10,000 people and destroyed many Buddhist temples. The people ran for safety and crossed the border to India in Tripura.

Statesman dated 27.9.81 reported that the Bangladesh refugees who crossed over to southern Tripura areas described the recent developments in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as a planned massacre by the Bangladesh armed forces.

The refugees among whom are tribal chiefs, teachers and some Government employees told the Tripura authorities that the Bangladesh forces were mounting successive attacks on tribal localities along the Hilly Chittagong borders to drive away the tribals from the area apparently with an aim to regroup the border villages for strategic reasons.





VEN. AGGAVANSA MAHATHERO  
CHAKMA RAJGURU

1

2

SECRET