IN THEIR OWN WORDS: Voices of 1988

STUDENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE: Maintaining Access
THE ISSUES-

STUDENTS OF THE REVOLUTION
Throughout the twentieth century, the students of Burma have been a driving political force. Beginning with the fight against British colonialism in the 1920s through the early days of independence in 1948, the student movement gave birth to some of the major architects of democracy in Burma. Following the military coup in 1962, students again fought against injustice and political oppression. Most vivid in modern memory, perhaps, is the student involvement in the pro-democracy movement of 1988. This activism has not come without a price; many students were killed, others have been imprisoned or forced into exile. Nevertheless, students continue their struggle, developing new strategies to meet the challenges before them.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
Voices of 1988
In a collection of interviews and letters, student activists speak out nearly seven years after the uprising of 1988. Some speak from exile in the United States and Thailand, others from inside Burma. They discuss their experiences during the turbulent months of 1988, the impact of those experiences on their lives and their hopes for the future of their country.

INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE:
Maintaining Access
Many of those opposed to the current regime in Burma advocate isolation of the country by the international community. Others argue that it is more effective to engage those who have the power to create change. This debate raises questions regarding the collaboration of academic institutions on the exchange of material, skills and the preservation of history. Should "engagement" of this type be maintained regardless of the government or political philosophy? And who benefits most from this flow of ideas?
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EXCHANGE & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS
A Benefit For All
By John Badgley
"Colleagues! Please carry on marching. If the colonial police horse kicks once, it shall set the country aflame."

The booming voice of a young student leader, Ko Ba Hein, standing on the roof of Magwe prison during the "1300 Peoples Uprising" ignited the fire of student activism in the pages of recent Burmese history. At this important juncture in the struggle for independence from the British in 1938, students joined hand in hand with young Buddhist monks, workers, farmers and the general public in the Burmah Oil Company strike. This type of alliance became the model for mass movements whenever the country faced political and economic crises.
Thein Tin (Librarian), Ko Hla Shway (Gen. Secretary), Ko Aung San (Vice-President), Mr. M.A. Raschid (President), Mr. Taw Kyone Boon (Treasurer), Mr. S. Varma (Editor, Union News), Ko Zin (Clerk), Ko Hla Maung (Inter-Varsity Affairs Secretary), Ko Tin Maung Gyi (Entertainments Secretary).

RANGOON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION Executive Committee and Staff — 1936-37

Thein Tin (Librarian), Ko Hla Shway (Gen. Secretary), Ko Aung San (Vice-President), Mr. M.A. Raschid (President), Mr. Taw Kyone Boon (Treasurer), Mr. S. Varma (Editor, Union News), Ko Zin (Clerk), Ko Hla Maung (Inter-Varsity Affairs Secretary), Ko Tin Maung Gyi (Entertainments Secretary).
Student activism in Burma initially began as a movement to protect the rights of students. In 1920, students spearheaded the strike against the University Act which placed Rangoon University under the University of Calcutta. This strike not only drew the support of all the people of Burma but also served to heighten the patriotism of the Burmese, whose country had been made a province of British India.

The protest against the University Act also led to the official establishment of the Rangoon University Students Union (RUSU) on January 31, 1931. The Union stood for freedom of thought and freedom of expression. It became the ground that nurtured both the spirit of nationalism and the modern Burmese literary movement.

During 1935 and 1936, a second university boycott grew out of protests against the British colonial education system. As a result, nationalist
schools throughout Burma were established, unearthing the teachings of Burmese culture, history and literature long buried by the British, and giving birth to a modern education system which enshrined Burmese culture. It was during this time that the national students union, the All Burma Students Union (ABSU), was formed and Ko Aung San, who was later to become the father of the independence movement, was named as its first general-secretary.

The historic "third annual meeting" of the National Students Union held in Bassein in 1938 paved the way for a new chapter of student activism. Ko Ba Hein and Ko Toe Yin of Mandalay University Students Union put forth the idea that students should be involved in politics, a proposal that was approved by the majority. From that time onward, students actively took part in the struggle for independence against the colonial rulers.

In a demonstration in front of the Government Secretariat in December 1938, a student, Ko Aung Gyaw, died as a result of injuries sustained in a beating by colonial police. During the same period, military police fired into a crowd of monks and students protesting in Mandalay, killing 17 people. The deaths of Ko Aung Gyaw and the "17 Martyrs from Mandalay" were recorded in history as the only incidents of bloodshed committed by colonial rulers. It served as a reminder for the Burmese people of the incomparable brutality of their own army in the suppression of subsequent student demonstrations.

The Rangoon University Students Union building became the home for famous leaders of the independence movement such as General Aung San, U Nu, U Ba Hein and U Ba Swe. These students later became the leaders of the Doh Bamar Asiayone (Our Burma Association) which played a crucial role in the fight for independence. While the October Revolution in Russia and the growth of socialism had an impact ideologically on the student leaders, student activism in Burma was fundamentally based on nationalism and patriotism. The peacock, the national symbol of Burma, was used in its fighting form for the flag of the Students Union. Throughout the modern history of Burma, the fighting peacock has reflected the spirit of the Burmese students' struggle against any ruler who suppressed the rights of students and the rights of the people.

In 1939 Aung San and a group of his nationalist colleagues who later became known as the "thirty comrades", surreptitiously left Burma to undergo military training in Japan. The Burma Independence Army was formed with the help of the Japanese and fought against the British together with Japan's Imperial Army. However, under the reign of the Japanese during the Second World War, Burmese patriots discovered the real motives behind imperialist Japan's support, and staged a revolt against them by forming the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL).

Later in 1946, when workers protested the cost of living and other "injustices" under the colonial system, the students joined in, turning the campaign into a nationwide general strike. Following independence in 1948, student unions remained strong and initiated several boycotts and strikes. The most important calls to action were made in 1949, 1953, 1956 and 1958, primarily around changes in the education system. The 1958 demonstration was a call for an end to the civil war.

**THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MILITARY DICTATORSHIP**

Soon after the Burmese Army staged a military coup on March 2, 1962, the Revolutionary Council of General Ne Win enforced strict regulations on the university student hostels and the governing bodies of Rangoon University. The University Council, which had been composed of the rector, professors and representatives of students, was replaced by military officers. The University Senate and the Hostel Committee were also reformed according to the wishes of the Revolutionary Council.

Expressing their dissatisfaction with the military's intervention in the affairs of the University, the All Burma Students Federation of Unions (ABSFU) staged a protest march on campus on July 7, 1962. That evening, two truckloads of soldiers arrived and opened fire on the students with automatic rifles. At dawn the following day the
Students Union building was destroyed by dynamite. More than one hundred students were killed in that incident. In a radio broadcast the next morning, General Ne Win referred to the student demonstration: "If it was done purposely to oppose us, I have nothing more to say except that we will face them sword against sword, and spear against spear, that is the only solution."

General Ne Win seemed to think that suppression of student dissent by force, the destruction of the historic Student Union building and outlawing the organization of the Independent Students Union would eliminate student activism in Burma. In fact, student activism continues to exist as an underground movement. Political study groups have proliferated throughout the country and the spirit of the fighting peacock has been passed on from one generation to the next.

**A NEW ERA OF STUDENT STRUGGLE**

Students of the present generation grew up reading the history of student activism during the early stages of the struggle for independence and later as part of the armed resistance against the British and then the Japanese. These historical events still influence the strategic thinking of Burmese students in their fight against the military dictatorship. When the 1988 uprising was crushed by the current regime, ABFSU's youthful leaders developed a three-pronged strategy similar to that pioneered by Aung San during the anti-colonial resistance: students above ground, an armed underground and party organization.

The 8-8-88 uprising was actually the climax of protracted student struggle against the military dictatorship. It would also move the struggle beyond the borders of Burma and under the eyes of the international community. Most of the demonstrations during that month of August took place in front of the US Embassy. The students and people of Burma hoped that the United States, as a powerful democratic country, would extend support for the restoration of democracy in Burma.

The brutal crackdown on democracy activists was followed by an initial migration to the border camps by some 8,000 students. The population of students and supporters along Burma’s border with Thailand, China, India and Bangladesh swelled to approximately 10,000 by early 1989.

In order to organize scattered students along isolated areas of the 2,000-mile-long border, the first student conference was held from November 1-5, 1988, at the Karen National Union (KNU) base of Kawmoora situated near the Thai-Burma border. Out of this conference the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) was formed on November 5, 1988. For the first time since achieving independence, student activists from various generations (1962-1988) united under the banner of the fighting peacock. Because it encompasses various generations of students activists, ABSDF includes a wide range of ethnicity, social classes...
and expertise from doctors, lawyers and teachers, to workers and farmers.

The Constitution of the ABSDF was promulgated and the Central Committee, the leading body of the movement, was elected. The Constitution outlined the following aims and objectives:

1) To liberate the entire people of Burma from the suppression of military dictatorship;
2) To achieve democracy and human rights;
3) To restore internal peace;
4) To establish the Federal Union of Burma.

The ABSDF adopted the concept of "national politics" as the guiding principle of the student movement. A policy statement of the ABSDF clearly states: "At this moment in the history of Burma, the primary conflict is that which exists between the military regime on one side and the various ethnic groups comprising citizens of Burma on the other. People who are struggling against the military dictatorship in order to topple its suppressive nature constitute not a single stratum but a cross section of all people regardless of social class, gender, ethnic origin, religion, education, political ideology... in short, this fight is for and by each and every citizen of the country. The struggle against the dictatorship is not the monopoly of any individual, stratum of society or ethnic group. Every Burmese citizen is in this together, and therefore it becomes the duty and the undeniable right of all those who love their country, cherish human rights and wish to see progress to support and promote this initiative."

The arrival of thousands of students to the areas controlled by ethnic minorities was a pivotal point in the history of Burma. Various ethnic resistance organizations extended support for the establishment of the ABSDF and the "Students' Army", the armed wing of the democracy movement. In the course of this tough struggle, students can build greater understanding with non-Burman ethnic nationalities by expressing their spirit of brotherhood, courage, commitment and sacrifices for the common cause. At the same time, the younger generation has been made aware of the suffering of non-Burman ethnic nationalities and the aims of the ethnic resistance movement. Students realize that national reconciliation based on the concept of federalism is the key ingredient for the restoration of democracy in Burma. The ABSDF sees its role and responsibility in the establishment of the Federal Union to: "(1) educate the people on the necessity of a Federal Union and to organize them around it and (2) strive for the construction of such a state where all the nationalities of Burma can live in solidarity and everlasting harmony."

During the seven year struggle since 1988, students have gained experience and evolved into committed revolutionaries involved in various aspects of the movement. Some have become "freedom fighters" who are resisting the military regime, joining hand in hand with ethnic brothers. Some have become political organizers, building an internal network of underground activists with an emphasis on human rights documentation and lobbying. Others became diplomats of the movement lobbying the support of the international community, or journalists and artists working to raise the public profile of Burma's struggle. There are also health workers, teachers and trainers who are serving people in rural areas by establishing permanent schools, hospitals and mobile medical teams.

1995 — A CRITICAL YEAR FOR THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

In December 1994, the army of the current regime, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) launched a military offensive against Manerplaw, the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU), the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and other democratic opposition groups. Also attacked was Dawn Gwin, the ABSDF headquarters. SLORC encircled Manerplaw and the Dawn Gwin area with over 10,000 armed forces and bombarded with heavy artillery shells. In February 1995, after the fall of Manerplaw, the ABSDF leadership decided to abandon Dawn Gwin. Women and children from the ABSDF were evacuated to the Thai side of the border,
however, the majority of the ABSDF forces remained inside Burma as mobile units. The fall of Manerplaw and Dawn Gwin sets back the student movement to a certain extent. But it will not end or weaken the students’ struggle. The morale of students is still high despite the past seven years of battle and harsh jungle life.

Despite differences in opinion among the ABSDF leadership in the past, the appropriate strategy for the movement has recently been reviewed in light of the new situation. The organization will now concentrate more on mass mobilization and political education. Over the past seven years, ABSDF has organized democratic leadership training courses with a focus on democracy, human rights, federalism, sustainable development, and the history of the resistance movement in Burma. Teams of the ABSDF that include political organizers, medics and teachers will intensify their work on political education and development in rural areas. In this way, the work of village level democratization will be the starting point for laying the foundation of a future democratic Burma.

Although on the surface the military dictatorship appears strong, one must remember that its foundation is weak, for it lacks an essential ingredient: the support of the people of Burma. The people already expressed their discontent against the military dictators in the 1988 democratic uprising and the general election of May 1990. If the people can be motivated to move from a position of passive submission to a more active but non-violent and low-risk non-cooperative stance, SLORC can be removed from power. In an atomized, alienated and fearful society such as in Burma today, there is a need to build the confidence of the people, reestablish the institutions of a civic society and reverse the atomization process. Since 1991, ABSDF has been expanding political defiance base areas deep within the heartland of Burma in coordination with other groups in the democratic movement. The main objective is to establish a communication network and to disseminate the concepts of political defiance, political organizing and trade unionism that will be followed by a mobilization for action.

The ABSDF accepts that the role of international diplomatic and economic pressure against the military regime also plays a crucial part in the strategy of the democratic struggle. It will intensify its international campaign—challenging the legitimacy of the SLORC, advocating corporate withdrawal from Burma and focusing on the gross violations of human rights, rapid degradation of the environment and the corruption of the military regime.

The ABSDF believes that there must be a change from dictatorship to democracy in Burma. No tyranny can exist forever. It is just a matter of time. It is the historical responsibility of students who are pioneers of the democratic movement to help equip the people with an appropriate strategy and set an example of courage and sacrifice. 1995 is a critical year for the Burmese student movement. We must overcome the challenges, obstacles and difficulties that are before us. Student activism in Burma will continue to be alive; however, as long as there is injustice and oppression of the people—"Our heads are bloody but unbowed.”

Dr. Thaung Htun is a 1982 graduate of the Rangoon Institute of Medicine I, who joined his colleagues in the liberated area of Burma in October 1988. He is currently a member of the Central Executive Committee of the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and serves as part of the Secretariat of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB).
AFTER MANERPLAW, IS THERE HOPE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES?
A REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE
by Michael Mitchell

I arrived in late February at the new headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU) as the sun began to set behind the jagged mountains that run the length of the Burma-Thailand border. It was just over three hours since I had departed the small Thai city of Mae Sot to meet with General Bo Mya, the leader of the Karen. He arrived in a truck with his military escort 30 minutes later. The lines on his face were tightly drawn and fatigue showed in his eyes as he sat down at the large, wooden meeting table. He looked exhausted, and for good reason. Over the last three weeks, the Karen lost their decade-old headquarters at Manerplaw, and the military base at Kawmoora had fallen days later. Now, State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) troops were consolidating their hold over what had been Karen territory and preparing to press forward with their attack on the areas under KNU control. There was no doubt that the Burma army was on a roll.

This meeting with General Bo Mya was part of a two-week evaluation the International Republican Institute (IRI) conducted with leaders of Burma's democracy movement and ethnic nationalities to determine the prospects for continued pro-democracy activity from this mountainous jungle area as part of its long-term program to strengthen the democratic movement inside Burma. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) refused to criticize SLORC because these member nations want Burma's natural resources. In the West, Europe continues to accept the regime structure inside Burma to direct these efforts are steps toward empowering the people. There are signs that the army rank and file is not hostile to the democratic activists. In 1990, the areas surrounding virtually all the military bases (where soldiers are housed) elected NLD Parliamentarians. Therefore, some Burma experts believe that the military is not likely to repeat the massacre that took place against the democracy demonstrators in 1988.

The best hope for restoring democracy in Burma lies in the hands of its 43 million people. Providing training in political defiance techniques and establishing a leadership structure inside Burma to direct these efforts are steps toward empowering the people. There are signs that the army rank and file is not hostile to the democratic activists. In 1990, the areas surrounding virtually all the military bases (where soldiers are housed) elected NLD Parliamentarians. Therefore, some Burma experts believe that the military is not likely to repeat the massacre that took place against the democracy demonstrators in 1988.

Cracking SLORC's grip on power will not be easy. However, all the elements that sparked the 1988 uprising that almost banished the military junta still exist: terror and persecution by the government, an extremely low standard of living, and lack of freedom.... At the funeral of U Nu, Burma's first democratically elected Prime Minister who was buried last month in Rangoon, students peacefully protested the U.S. press for and got a U.N. embargo, launched an invasion force, and is now spending billions to try and get Haiti's democratically elected government on its feet.

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The commitment to continue the struggle was shared by all the groups the IRI observers interviewed. It took over a day of driving and hiking through the jungle to reach the new All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) camp. Located nearby are members of the National League for Democracy/Liberated Area (NLD/LA) who are part of a special branch that sends activists to work inside Burma. Both groups had been driven out of the Burmese village of Dawn Gwin, and are now just outside the Thai border. In fact, plans are moving ahead aggressively to adopt a different approach to democracy activities inside Burma. This new effort will use small, highly mobile teams of activists that can stay in the field for longer periods of time without having to return to a Manerplaw-type main headquarters for food, supplies, and information.

Dr. Naing Aung, the ABSDF chairman, said that the students were preparing to organize into small groups and move deeper inside Burma. The ABSDF intends to increase its political defiance activities inside Burma.

Future Prospects for the Democracy Movement

The fall of Manerplaw was a serious setback, but over time the democratic forces can recover. The difficulties in replacing SLORC with the lawfully elected 1990 Parliament represents a formidable challenge, however, and should not be underestimated.

As it stands today, the democracy movement in Burma exists on little international support. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) refuses to recognize SLORC because these member nations want Burma's natural resources. In the West, Europe continues to accept the concept of constructive engagement. While the United States acknowledges the existence of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (the government-in-exile), it offers little moral or material support for democratic activists inside Burma. This represents a curious dichotomy from Haiti where, in the name of democracy, the U.S. pressed for and got a U.N. embargo, launched an invasion force, and is now spending billions to try and get Haiti's democratically elected government on its feet.

Burma, Political Situation Update, March 1995. For copies, call (202) 408-9450.
In 1992 and 1993 the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma (HPRT) of the Harvard School of Public Health conducted a study of the trauma, health, mental health, social function, and coping strategies of the Burmese students who have fled to Bangkok since the 1988 pro-democracy uprising in Burma. The study was done in collaboration with the Indochinese Refugee Information Center (IRIC) of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and Burmese students in the United States and Bangkok. Recommendations based on this study reflect the current circumstances of the students in Thailand. Although the living conditions and political forces impacting the students' lives in 1995 have grown even more oppressive than they were in 1993, it appears that Thai policy toward Burmese illegal immigrants is unlikely to change substantially in the near future. Unless there is a change in the policies of the few countries that offer resettlement to the students (i.e., the United States, Australia, Canada), there is little cause for optimism for those who remain in Bangkok.
BACKGROUND

Political oppression, severe economic decline and widespread human rights abuses by the ruling dictatorship in Burma have been well documented. The civil unrest and massive pro-democracy uprising in Burma in 1988 were led by university, high school, and middle school students. Throughout 1988, as Buddhist monks and large numbers of civilians joined the student protests, military attacks on the protesters grew increasingly violent. Thousands of students were imprisoned, tortured or killed; others disappeared. Estimates of the number killed vary from 3,000 to 10,000. Approximately 10,000 students fled into the jungle at the borders of Burma to seek refuge. In the jungle, they suffered military attacks; disease; and lack of food, water, and shelter. Since 1989, 2,000 to 3,000 of them have moved from the jungle to Bangkok, Thailand.

In Bangkok, 3,000 of the exiled students registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and became recognized by the UN as "persons of concern." Nevertheless, Thai law considers them to be illegal immigrants: they live in hiding and are subject to arrest, physical harm, detention, and deportation, despite their UN registration and the fact that they were receiving UNHCR financial support. Over the past four years the Thai government has attempted to confine the Burmese students to a detention camp that the government calls "The Safe Area." The students have resisted going into the camp primarily out of fear of deportation.

Young people are at high risk for experiencing human rights abuses because of their youthful behavior, disconnection from family and supporters, and lack of political and economic power. Nevertheless, little is known of young refugees' traumatic life experiences and health outcomes. Most policy regarding young refugees, including policy regarding Burmese students, is determined by political issues. Usually little consideration is given to the traumatic experiences or the effects of trauma on the group seeking protection. Similarly, little, if any, attention is paid to the young people's health and psycho-social needs. For this reason in 1992 and 1993 HPRT, IRIC and Burmese students in Bangkok and the United States formed a partnership to conduct a public health study of the exiled Burmese students.

The goals of the study were to assess:
1. The amount and type of trauma experienced by the students;
2. Their mental health, perceived health status, and level of psycho-social disability;
3. The relationship between exposure to trauma and mental health and;
4. The strategies the students said helped them cope with their difficult life in exile.

This information could then be used to promote the well-being of the students while they live in exile.

DR. KATHLEEN APPLETON, M.D

Kathleen Appleton, M.D. is the Clinical Director of the Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic (IPC) and the Medical Director of the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma (HPRT) in Boston. She has extensive clinical experience treating Southeast Asian survivors of mass violence, torture, rape, trauma, and forced migration. She directed HPRT's 1992 epidemiological study and needs assessment of Burmese student exiles in Thailand.
METHODS

Because the participants were illegal immigrants, special permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Thai Ministry of Interior. Permission was granted to use the campus of Chulalongkorn University for all planning sessions and interviews. For the protection of the students, strict anonymity was maintained throughout the project.

At the end of the interview the students were asked to list five things that helped them cope with their difficult lives in exile and what they would like to see happen if they could not return to Burma within the next five years.

A team of six Burmese student research assistants, under the supervision of Harvard and Chulalongkorn researchers, coordinated the sampling of a representative group of students in hiding. In order to obtain a representative sample, demographic data about the Burmese "persons of concern" was obtained from UNHCR and a quota system was devised. Participating students came to the Chulalongkorn University campus for the interviews, which were conducted in Burmese by a research assistant and a supervising researcher.

The survey consisted of a questionnaire with four sections: (1) basic demographic information and questions about work, health and disability; (2) Burmese version of the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25; (3) Burmese version of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire; (4) questions about survival strategies. The format of the questionnaire was derived from the survey used in HPRT's 1990 study of 1,000 Cambodian residents of the Site 2 camp for displaced persons at the Thai-Cambodian border.

The Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25 consists of 25 questions about symptoms of depression and anxiety. The Harvard Trauma Questionnaire consists of 35 questions about traumatic experiences such as torture, imprisonment, lack of food or water, and 30 questions about Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms such as recurrent nightmares, feeling on guard, being easily startled, and avoiding activities that remind one of the traumatic events. The students were asked about trauma events in four time periods: prior to the 1988 uprising, during the uprising, after the uprising (which includes their experiences in the jungle), and during the past year. At the end of the interview the students were asked to list five things that helped them cope with their difficult lives in exile and what they would like to see happen if they could not return to Burma within the next five years.

RESULTS

One hundred and four Burmese students registered as "persons of concern" were interviewed. The demographic characteristics of the 104 were comparable with those of UNHCR, indicating that the study group was representative of the students as a whole. Results revealed that the student group is young; nearly one third of the participants were younger than 23 at the time of the interview. At the time of the 1988 uprising, nearly one third of the participants were under 19 years of age and nearly 70% were under 23 years of age. Eighty-five percent of the participants were men; 15% were women. A small number of students were married and had children. Three quarters were ethnic Burman. Among the 92 participants who said their flight to Thailand included time in the jungle, the average time spent in the jungle before fleeing to Bangkok was 17 months. Over half of the students arrived in Thailand in 1989 and 1990; one third arrived in 1991 and later.

When they fled Burma, three-fourths of the participants had been officially enrolled as students. Over 90% had eight or more years of education and three-fourths had eleven or more years. Only one-fifth of the students had been able to enroll in formal education programs in Thailand and only two of them were still enrolled at the time of the survey. Among those who had enrolled, the average time spent in school in Thailand by the time of the survey was five months. The reasons given for not enrolling
related primarily to the students’ illegal status.

In Thailand, the students had to change residences frequently. Three-fourths had moved more than three times and one-fifth had moved more than ten times. The most common reasons given for moving were fear of the police and financial difficulties. No student reported receiving financial support from relatives or parents; 83% depended on financial support from UNHCR and 10% supported themselves.

The study results indicated that the students fled a very violent situation in Burma where they experienced a high degree of trauma. Unfortunately, when they fled their homes they found that they fled to an even more violent setting. Of the 35 trauma events, 26 were reported as occurring more frequently after the uprising than during the uprising. During the uprising, the five most common trauma events were mass killings of unarmed civilians, hiding, harassment, murder of strangers, and lack of food or water. Events such as imprisonment, interrogation by police, serious injury, being close to death, rape, murder of family members and friends, and forced isolation from others, were all reported as occurring more frequently after the students became exiles. During the period of flight to Thailand, the five most common trauma events were difficulty finding adequate shelter, forced separation from family members, threat of deportation, interrogation by police and imprisonment. Torture was reported almost as frequently as after the uprising during exile (16.3%), as it was during the uprising in Burma (18.7%).

Over half of the students rated their health as fair or poor and over half reported being bothered by illness or pain in the past month. One-fifth said that their health prevented them from doing tasks such as working around the house and studying, but very few said their health confined them to bed or a chair most of the time (2%). In other words, although many perceived their health as less than optimal, few reported being disabled by poor health.

The study results revealed a high level of depression and isolation among the students; nearly 40% of the students had depression symptom levels predictive of a clinical diagnosis of Major Depression, and approximately one-tenth of the students had Post-traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms scores predictive of a clinical diagnosis of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Ninety-one percent of the participants reported that they had no one to confide in or to lean on for support in Thailand, 82% reported no contact with families or peers in Burma in the past month, and 64% reported no contact in the past year. Fifty-nine percent reported that their activities had caused a family member or friend to be threatened.

When the students were asked to list five things that helped them cope with their difficult lives in exile they focused on activities which related to higher moral principles such as altruism, democracy,
Buddhism and friendship. For example, in response to this question, 75% said participating in the pro-democracy struggle, 31% said self-confidence, 45% said helping the people of Burma, 12% said friendship with other Burmese students. Paradoxically, these are the same factors which contributed to fleeing Burma and to some of their ongoing conflict with Thai authorities. Nevertheless, when analyzed, some of these coping strategies were found to be associated with lower symptom levels.

When the students were asked what they would like to see happen if they are unable to return to Burma, the students' most common responses were that they want to obtain legal status in Thailand (68%) and further their education (65%). Only 15% said they would like to resettle in a third country.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Burmese students in Bangkok and those who have recently resettled in the United States and Australia report that the circumstances for the students in Thailand have seriously deteriorated. The students have not received legal status, UNHCR financial support has dramatically diminished, and pressure to enter the Safe Area has increased. Reports indicate that the students, particularly the youngest ones, are losing their self-confidence and are becoming increasingly hopeless about their future. In 1992 and 1993 most students wanted legal status in Thailand; now most students want to leave Thailand. Many have applied for resettlement in a third country. Prior to October 1994, the students could pursue the application and interview process for resettlement in Bangkok and only go to the Safe Area once they were accepted for resettlement. In other words, the Safe Area was used as a transit camp. This changed in October 1994; the students are now required to go to the Safe Area if they wish to proceed with the interviewing process necessary for acceptance for resettlement. This has virtually halted the application process. Reports of violence in and around the Safe Area, together with the ever present fear of repatriation to Burma restrain most students from considering the Safe Area as an option.

CONCLUSIONS

The trauma the Burmese students experience in exile is unrelenting. The violence they initially experienced during the uprising changed to the hardships of disease and military attack in the jungle, and then to the dangers and violence of life as an illegal immigrant hiding in Bangkok. In view of these facts,
it is not surprising to find that the amount of depression among the students is very high in comparison to a general population of young people in the United States (5%). In fact, the 40% rate of depression among the students strongly supports the concern of the international human rights community for the safety and protection of the students. Remarkably, in spite of this high rate of depression, very little disability was found among the students. The low level of disability and the low level of PTSD may suggest a resilience among the students, however, it may also suggest that if the students continue to live in a setting of ongoing trauma, more of them will develop PTSD and their levels of functioning will deteriorate.

The students' self-reported health status is substantially poorer than that reported by non-traumatized refugee groups and is comparable to that of Cambodians who experienced the Pol Pot genocide and then lived in a border camp for up to ten years. In research in western populations, persons with poor personal health perceptions repeatedly have been shown to be at substantially increased risk of future medical problems in comparison with those whose self-perceptions of health status are positive.

As described above, it is paradoxical that some of the behaviors that many of the students said helped them deal with their difficult life in exile, such as participating in the pro-democracy struggle and helping the people of Burma, are the same behaviors that contributed to the students' being forced into exile in the first place and to their ongoing difficult relationship with the authorities in Thailand. This paradox underscores the necessity of substituting meaningful, altruistic, but legal activities which would provide the students with a sense of purpose to their lives and prevent ongoing re-experiencing of trauma and conflict. Certainly, the opportunity to return to school and pursue their education is not only what the students themselves wish, but an appropriate alternative as well. In 1993 it was felt that an education program in Bangkok was the best alternative, however, given the lack of progress toward legal status in Thailand and the reported deteriorating outlook for the students if they remain in Thailand, resettlement in a third country where they can return to school may now be the best option.

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**MAY 1, 1995**

**AN APPEAL FOR HELP AND ASSISTANCE**

Last night, there were raids on the residences of Burmese refugees in Bangkok. Most of those arrested are refugees already recognized as persons of concern by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Many of them are NLD and ABSDF members.

We would like to appeal to all the NGOs and the Embassies here to provide help and assistance to these people to be freed from arrest, imprisonment and forced repatriation to Burma. The following people are currently at police stations in Bangkok:

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The above appeal from students in Bangkok was posted on the Internet.
In order to avoid increasing morbidity from depression, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, and physical ill health, the students need safety and protection from further violence and trauma. Without legal status and security this group of young people will continue to suffer a decline in their mental and physical health. Confinement in a camp, such as the Safe Area, will place the students at high risk for increasing psychiatric morbidity and deteriorating social function. The low rate of disability found in this study would, in all likelihood, dramatically increase.

Based on the initial findings of this study, in August 1993 HPRT and Chulalongkorn University proposed an educational program for the students in Bangkok. It was felt that by allowing the students to return to their studies and pursue their high school and university degrees they would gain a sense of purpose to their lives and a legal manner in which they could express their altruism and at the same time avoid conflict with Thai authorities. Unfortunately, at the time, the Thai government would only allow the education program to be offered to students who went to the Safe Area. Given what is known about the detrimental effects of confinement on young refugees, it was felt that it would be wrong to entice students to go to the Safe Area; the proposal was withdrawn. If the students could be given a form of legal status enabling them to live freely in Bangkok, an education program should be pursued again.

Given the deteriorating conditions and the reports of an increasing sense of despair among the students in Bangkok, unless there is a sign that Thailand will grant the students legal status outside the Safe Area, western countries should promote policy changes in Thailand which would facilitate the students’ resettlement rather than deter them from pursuing the application and interview process. Special attention should be drawn to the needs of the most vulnerable groups such as the youngest students; they are the most developmentally and educationally disadvantaged and at the highest risk for psychiatric morbidity and deterioration. Additionally, women students need protection from sexual exploitation and those students who are now parents, have little children to protect, educate and support.

The United Nations estimates that over half of the 50 million displaced persons and refugees worldwide are adolescents and children. The Burmese students are not unique among the world’s young displaced persons and refugees. All young people should be entitled to security, protection, and the freedom to develop and grow into productive adults. Policy should be formulated which not only prevents trauma, morbidity and disability among young people, but also promotes responsible, altruistic adaptation and development.

END NOTES
Following is a collection of interviews and writings by activists who participated in the pro-democracy movement of 1988. Some of them are students who have been granted asylum in the United States, others speak from exile in Thailand, while still others write from Burma. Here they discuss their personal experiences, their political beliefs and their hopes for the future of their country.
As a result of their activities in 1988, the five students interviewed below were forced into exile, first to the Thai/Burma border, then to Bangkok and finally to the United States. The interviews were conducted by Zaw Win, also a Burmese student in the United States.

INTERVIEW WITH OHMAR KHIN — Ohmar received her Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Simons Rock College in Massachusetts and is currently an intern at the International Affairs Department of the American labor federation, the AFL-CIO, in Washington D.C.

Q • Could you describe your experiences around the 1988 pro-democracy movement?

Ohmar Khin • I was a senior at Rangoon Arts and Science University majoring in Chemistry. On March 16, 1988, while walking to class with my friends, I saw some students banging drums and calling others to gather nearby the Convocation Hall. We all walked and joined those who were already there. Students from the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) were protesting the incident of three days earlier. On March 13, a student named Phone Maw was shot dead by troops dispersing a demonstration. When we had a sizable crowd, we began to march out of campus to Inya Road. While passing by Inya lake we saw troops stationed on the road, blocking our way and riot police trucks rolling down the road.

Many students ran into near-by streets and some jumped in the lake. Others were beaten and kicked by police and dragged into the trucks. I got separated from my friends and ran into one of the houses in front of the lake. The residents let me and a few others in and locked their gate. From there, I watched brutal scenes, my heart pounding with horror. My sarong was torn apart. I was holding a pencil sharpener to defend myself if I were caught. Some troops tried to climb over the gate to catch us but a Japanese diplomat next door let us climb down into his residence and hid us in his house. It was night before I could finally get back home.

That night I was determined to fight for justice in our country. When I came to the United States, VOA interviewed me and broadcast my account. After that interview the SLORC-run newspaper, Working People's Daily, accused me of lying when I said that students were bloodily beaten.

Q • Did your family agree to your decision to become involved in politics?

A • No. My mother said this kind of activity is not appropriate for a girl. My brother did not agree with me. He worked in the Department of Justice and when his higher officers showed him a snapshot of me demonstrating at a rally they warned him that he had better stop me from doing what I was doing. He got really scared and tried to talk me out of it.

Q • Why did you forsake the comfort of your home and go to the border area?

A • Because I thought that our peaceful struggle did not pay off. So I decided to resort to an armed struggle.

Q • Can you tell me your first impression of the ethnic people?

A • When I came in contact with the ethnic revolutionaries who are branded "rebels" by the government, my concept of a "rebel" changed. It dawned on me that there is a huge difference between the real-life "rebels" and the image of them projected in a media which is under total government control. When I saw some gun-toting girls, I presumed that they would rather live in peace, however, because of the repression, injustice and discrimination by the Burmese military, the armed struggle had become their last option. When I compared my feelings of injustice and my experience of witnessing the brutality of the military in 1988, I began to understand the purpose of their struggle. Then and there I felt a sense of empathy for the difficulties of ethnic peoples in the far-flung areas. I joined Battalion 102 of the All Burma Student Democratic Front (ABSDF).

Q • Why did you decide to come to the US?

A • I had been brought to Bangkok because I had contracted a dangerous fever and needed to be hospitalized. I thought of going back to the camp from Bangkok, but I asked myself, "What can I do when I am back in the camp?" Since I was in poor health I wouldn't be able to do anything. I realized that we will also need an edu-
INTERVIEW WITH HLWAN MOE — Hlwan Moe is a senior at Rutgers University in New Jersey majoring in political science and has been working for the International Rescue Committee, a New York based NGO.

Q • How did you get involved in the pro-democracy movement?
Hlwan Moe • I was a part-time student at the Institute of Foreign Languages studying German and working at the Agriculture and Forestry Ministry. First, I got involved in the rallies that took place on the main campus of Rangoon Arts and Science University (RASU) in March 1988. I met with students from some hostels on campus, and some students from upper Burma. After a discussion, we decided to gear up our organizing work. Then schools were closed. When schools reopened in June, we resumed and intensified our activities.

Q • When did you leave Burma and why?
A • I left Burma for Thailand on September 21, 1988 after meeting with our Thai contact in Rangoon. The reason was very clear. We had to move on with our struggle for democracy despite the military coup to end it. In so doing, we needed to educate the outside world about what was going on in Burma. My colleagues also suggested that I go outside Burma on a fact-finding mission.

Q • How did you feel when you first came in contact with the ethnic people at the border?
A • My heart went out to those people whose lives are much worse than ours in Rangoon in terms of the economy, social conditions and education. I felt a responsibility for them too.

INTERVIEW WITH ZAW ZAW — Zaw Zaw is currently studying Computer Science at Montgomery College in Maryland and is working at Refugees International in Washington, D.C.

Q • Were you a student in 1988?
Zaw Zaw • Yes, I was a junior majoring in math at the Rangoon Arts and Science University.

Q • Had you had any issue with the Burmese government before 1988?
A • My father was sentenced to 10 years in prison because of his political activities. He ended up serving five years of his sentence, then was granted amnesty and released.

My grand-uncle was the Minister for Trade in U Nu's government. When General Ne Win staged a military coup to topple the U Nu government, all the cabinet members of the government were put in jail. So was my grand-uncle. When he was released in 1966, he went along with U Nu to the Thai-Burma border and organized an armed resistance against the Ne Win government. In 1974, my father and my uncle left home to join my grand-uncle in his resistance activities, but unfortunately they were caught by the army on their way. My uncle was killed, and my father was put in jail. My father repeatedly told me about how the military government came to power. That's why I always had a deep sense of discontent toward the military government. But my participation in the March student uprising was my first political activity, and I got arrested.

Q • Exactly why were you arrested?
A • I was one of the students who marched out onto Inya Street in response to the death of Phone Maw. It was March 16, 1988. We were blocked by the troops and got loaded onto a truck to be sent to jail. That night I was interrogated by some military intelligence personnel. They beat me several times and asked me why I got involved. First I lied. But they said they had a picture of me. The following night they did another interrogation, punching me four or five times. Worst of all, when I got sick, they did not give me access to any sort of medical treatment. I was put in jail for four months.

Q • What did you do after your arrest?
A • Two weeks after being released from prison, I took the holy order and became a novice monk together with six of my friends. Our monastery was at Yankin township in Rangoon. We discussed a strategy to intensify the student-led anti-government movement.
schools were closed down until June. When schools reopened, I took part in the rallies on campus. I went to ten different townships to do organizing work. When the army cracked down on the activity centers in our area, I fled to the border and arrived in Thay-baw-boe camp.

Q • Tell us something of your experience in Thailand.
A • After leaving Burma I stayed at the border camp until the end of 1989 when I was given the assignment by the ABSDF to escort patients for hospitalization to Bangkok and to stay and look after them.

I was involved in a demonstration at the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok to commemorate the 8-8-88 uprising and the police arrested us. Six of us were caught. We were sentenced to three months in prison. After serving the three months, we were not released to the border because the UNHCR believed we were at risk of being caught by the Burmese army. We were kept in detention. It was like we were supposed to stay there forever, so we decided to stage a hunger strike in the detention center. The response of the immigration officials was to send us to the Burmese side of the border across from the town of Ranong, in southern Thailand. At Ranong, altogether 200 people were put on a boat to be sent to Kaw-Thaung. When the Thai guards who were escorting our boat turned back mid-way, we bribed the operator of the boat to turn around to go back to Ranong, which he did. One week later, we headed back to Bangkok.

Q • What would you like to see in Burma's future?
A • As a student of human rights, I'd like to see a future Burma where all the citizens are given their fundamental human rights as their inalienable rights. I'd like to see the citizens of Burma know, appreciate, and rightfully use their rights to eliminate all forms of injustice and to build up an economically developed country.

INTERVIEW WITH PHOE THT - Phoe Thet is studying English at Montgomery College in Maryland and is an intern at the information office of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) in Washington, D.C.
Phoe Thet • Since I have always been interested in literature, I looked at the government from the standpoint of literature. At that time, Burmese literature was heavily influenced by Communist writings. I realized that the BSPP members were a class by themselves, to use Communist terminology. That view, however, was quite vague and I didn't know what was wrong with the country. Well, at that time, I was just an eighth standard student, and I wasn't widely-read. Only when I went to college, it dawned on me: there was a wide gap between the economic status of the residents of cities and that of people in the other parts of the country; the military became a class of its own; and the political system was not good for the country at all.

I found it really upsetting when the government kept mum on the death of Phone Maw. When I heard of the nurses being killed by the army, I got extremely mad. I couldn't bear the government anymore.

Q • Did you have any political grievances against the government before March 1988?

A • I didn't come to the US to study. Simply, I took the only option left. I expected something good might come along. When I got here, my horizons expanded like they had when I went to Bangkok from the border. When I first arrived in Boston, I saw a bunch of people demonstrating for abortion rights. A thought occurred to me that we couldn't do this in our country. Nor could we in Thailand. I was impressed with the intellectual freedom here. I thought I can't do anything for my country if I am not educated. So, I chose to pursue an education.

Q • What would you like to see for the future of Burma?

A • I believe everyone wants to see a peaceful Burma. As a person with a bent for literature, I would be oriented toward that area. There aren't many libraries in Burma. All the libraries we have are heavily loaded with Socialist propaganda. Inevitably, the general public doesn't have access that. We began to have nightmares. So we, altogether 38, decided to confront the immigration police to demand that they release all Burmese students or to arrest us as well. They didn't meet our demands and instead arrested us. I stayed in jail for nine months. I did a lot of contemplation in detention. My options were to go back to the border camp, or to stay on to lead a precarious life in Bangkok after release, or to go to a third country for refuge. At that time, there was a lot of tension in the border camps, and if I went back, I would be likely to look suspicious due to my long absence from the camp. I thought to live in Bangkok was impossible, and since I didn't want to go back to Burma, I decided to come to the US.

Q • What have you done as far as your education and your continued struggle for democracy are concerned?

A • Well, right now many countries are investing in Burma. The US is one of them, other democratic countries as well. I abhor the double standard of promoting human rights and democracy in one's own country and financially propping up foreign regimes that are violating these very rights. It is like the Burmese saying, "A jar of water in one hand and a fire ring in the other."
to new ideas and ways of thinking. In ’88, the people weren’t prepared enough to be successful after the uprising. People power wasn’t in full use. In my opinion, as long as the level of peoples’ intellectual development is low, a country can’t develop despite its reservoir of natural resources or a huge amount of foreign investments.

IN BURMA

The following letter was written by a student arrested during the democracy demonstrations in 1988. Seven years later, he writes from Thayawaddy prison where he has remained since his arrest. The letter was written to a close friend and fellow participant in the demonstrations who is now a refugee in the United States. It was clandestinely brought out of Burma by a visitor.

December 23, 1994
Thayawaddy Prison

My Dear Friend,

I have been staying here in Thayawaddy prison in such a monotonous cell. But I heard the glad news about you in the United States. I am so happy. Repeat, so happy. It is one of our day dreams come true in many nightmarish nights.

I know that you are studying. Engineering? It’s good. For now in my situation, I can do nothing. But you have the opportunity and you should take it very seriously. It is our hope for success and we must not forget it.

As you know our country is in deadlock with a future dominated by the military. The international community embraces "constructive engagement." Rather than campaign for democracy, human rights, the dignity of human beings, they choose their own interests.

When I was reading about the invasion of Haiti I read: "Democracy cannot be restored or imposed on or given to a country that is not mature enough for such a system". Burma does not need an invasion, but our country is worthy of democracy for its millions of citizens. Why won’t the world stand actively on the side of the democrats and the movement? In such a decisive moment how stupid the "constructive" approach!

The myth of the National Convention is that it’s held to write a military-dominated constitution. The international community has the wrong image of the junta. They want to believe that the junta has "approachable" elements within it. They do not. They are tyrants. They rejected the ‘90 election results. The world must not forget this. Sanctions, embargoes — these words I do not hear from the U.N. or its members.

Burma is a low priority for most of the world. We must try to elevate it. You, my friend, must educate the media and others.

In spite of this I am ambitious, vigorous and enthusiastic. I cannot live if I hold only a slim hope for the future. So we must continue to try, try hard.

It is our generation that must work for change against the powerful. Those people cannot influence our circles. They are morally corrupt.

We, the youth, students citizens of Burma, eagerly want true National Reconciliation, not the slogan that has been adopted by the junta. The ethnic course, the democratic course, they can be one. We can only sort out our problems by talking to one another. My dear friend, I am not a political being, but I have no choice. We are all needed now in this episode of our national struggle.

For just now, we are apart — some in Australia, the U.S. and Thailand, others of us here at home. But in one of our tomorrows we will meet again and we will join together in our struggle.

I hear the sound of highway trucks and the iron-strike of time. In Burma, in Thayawaddy jail, in one of its cells, on a winter night the wind makes me shiver. But I warm at the thought of my partners and our shared beliefs.

WE DARE. WE MUST WIN.

Signed,
3:00 a.m.-23/12/94

The passage below is taken from a letter written by the sister of a Burmese student who is now a refugee in the United States. She talks of the situation for the family that remains in Burma.

March 8, 1995

Dear younger sister,

...This coming May, SLORC will relocate the houses in our neighborhood. Where will we go? It is said that hotels or new buildings will replace our home. It is also said that we will get a room to live somewhere when the construction is done. But how can we be sure?

What is certain is that our family’s financial situation will be more desperate than today. You know
my dear sister..., our country's economy is very desperate. Prices of basic commodities are skyrocketing. A monthly rental for our room (9 feet x 35 feet) is 3,000 kyats ($500) and electricity and water comes close to 1,000 kyats ($160) so together 4,000 kyats. With two children, both your brother-in-law and I have to work very hard. Even then, we can only earn enough for our day-to-day living. We have no preparation for the future of our kids or even ourselves... I only pray to God to bless our family in this desperate situation...

Your sister

IN THAILAND

The following interview was conducted with a 34 year old man in a coffee shop in Bangkok. With him throughout the interview was his 18-month old child. The young man and his daughter were neatly dressed in old but laundered clothes, despite the fact that they were homeless and he had less than 25 baht ($1 USD) to his name. He asked that he not be identified.

Q • Why did you want to meet with me today?
A • I needed to talk with someone about our situation. My wife and I are in a desperate and dangerous way. We are refugees but we must live like criminals. We live day to day, on the move, not knowing where we might sleep or if we might eat. Not knowing what we might have for our child. I am sorry but my wife could not come to talk today, she is working at the factory and cannot take the time to come. She works six or seven days a week, more than 12 hours a day.

Q • Are you working too?
A • No, not now. Only one of us can work. The other must take care of the baby. We take turns. If my wife works she can stay at the dormitory of the factory and will have a place to sleep. Where she is working now we can sneak the baby in there at night. The owner is quite kind and for now is letting us do this. But the owner is also afraid. If the police know there is a big fine for anyone providing space to Burmese who are considered "illegal immigrants." Even though my wife is registered as a person of concern with the UNHCR we have little protection from the police.

Q • When did you and your wife come to Bangkok?
A • We came in May of 1992. My wife registered with UNHCR and was recognized as a person of concern. My wife and I were married in 1990 at the border. We both had fled Burma after 1988.

Q • Why did you and your wife leave Burma?
A • At the time of the uprising in 1988, my wife was a high school teacher in Pa-an Township. She was dismissed from her post by the Burmese authorities and accused of "agitating" the students and encouraging them to participate in demonstrations. After that she earned a living as a trader, going from town to the Thai-Burma border. Her father was a prominent politician in Karen State. While she was doing the trading she also passed communications from inside Karen State to the KNU [Karen National Union].

During this time she became familiar with a KNU officer who later surrendered to SLORC and accused her of working for the KNU. She was called in for questioning by Military Intelligence and then, afraid that she would soon be arrested, fled to the border.

But even at the border she had difficulties because she had known the KNU officer who surrendered to SLORC. Some people were suspicious of her and made life very hard.

Q • Why did you go the border?
A • I was also a teacher in Burma and involved in the demonstrations in 1988. At the border I was sent back inside Burma on reconnaissance missions. Some of the missions were quite dangerous. My face was becoming more familiar inside and I felt that it was only a matter of time until I was arrested by SLORC. That also contributed to our decision to move from the border to Bangkok.

Q • What is your hope now?
A • We have little hope. We have few options. We cannot return to Burma. We cannot go back to the border. Life in Bangkok becomes more and more difficult. We do not get assistance from UNHCR because we have not gone to the "Safe Area" [the camp designated for Burmese students].

Q • If life is so difficult, why don’t you go to the Safe Camp?
A • We are very afraid to go there. At some point we are sure we will be returned to Burma.
John Badgley was the curator of the John M. Echols Collection at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York from 1986 until March of this year. He holds a doctorate in political science from the University of California at Berkeley and conducted research in Burma under Fulbright fellowships in 1957-1958 and again in 1987-1988.

Illustration at left is a peisa, or palm leaf manuscript.
BACKGROUND ON THE CUL-UCL PARTNERSHIP

In 1972 Cornell University (CUL) and the Universities Central Library (UCL) in Burma signed an exchange agreement to provide both libraries with publications of interest to the research communities in Rangoon and Cornell Universities. In the ensuing years UCL shipped tens of thousands of books, periodicals, and newspapers, and over 4,000 microfilmed manuscripts — peisa and parabeik — to Ithaca through the Library of Congress office at the U.S. embassy in Rangoon. Cornell has sent an equivalent number of duplicate books and serials from our library, as well as materials and equipment for the manuscript preservation project. Most of the publications and all the manuscripts coming from Burma are in Burmese, while our titles are almost entirely in English.

Funding for the exchange during the first fifteen years was provided by the two universities. After assuming the curatorship in 1986 I sought outside support to preserve (microfilm) the palm-leaf and folded paper manuscripts housed at Rangoon University. A $35,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation and small donations from Cornell alumni sustained that project between 1989 and 1993. Since then, the Open Society Institute has given $8,000 for equipment and camera supplies, while Cornell University continues to subsidize the routine costs of shipping, raw film stock and developer fluid. An additional $30,000 of Luce Foundation funding to Southeast Asia centers at Northern Illinois University and the University of Michigan were used to match funds awarded Cornell. Thus, all three universities and the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) in Chicago have received positive copies of the manuscripts microfilmed by UCL. The subjects covered by the peisa include traditional medicine, astrology, court orders, and a variety of other secular issues from the Konbaung period.

This conservation activity is part of a larger effort by Cornell to support archival and library conservation throughout Southeast Asia. Over the years it has involved many individuals in several countries. We are currently working with librarians and archivists in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Burma to create a regional conservation program to train staff and develop national centers in each country. Cornell's Conservation Librarian,
John Dean, and I attended three planning sessions hosted in Chiang Mai by M.D. Rujaya Abhakorn, University Librarian, with representatives from major libraries in each country. This project has been sustained by a $40,000 grant from the Netherlands Foreign Ministry. The Thai government initially expressed interest in supporting this regional effort, but key administrators changed and interest faded. Meanwhile, UCL had built a conservation center on campus and now wants to host the regional effort. Our next meeting will be held there. U Thaw Kaung, UCL director, has played a key role throughout in creating the UCL-CUL relationship, and in pressing his government to support the conservation project.

**UCL — A CANDIDATE FOR A REGIONAL CENTER**

John Dean returned to Cornell on March 30, 1995, after giving a series of workshops at the Universities of Rangoon and Mandalay. I quote a portion of his trip report:

...The main purpose of the visit was to demonstrate appropriate conservation techniques, especially those pertaining to palm-leaf and parabeik manuscripts, and to develop a more detailed knowledge of the condition of library and archive collections. The demonstrations were useful supplement to the work of U Thaw Kaung in establishing a local conservation center at UCL, and in creating greater awareness of preservation among Burmese librarians and archivists. The general collection survey and assessment of facilities were valuable in that they helped me to formulate a plan of action for preservation and conservation for Burma and for the Consortium (For Preservation of Research Library Material in Southeast Asia). To this end, U Thaw Kaung had arranged a series of meetings for me with government ministries and the heads of government agencies to determine the level of support for preservation, and to impress upon them some of the more basic infrastructure requirements for preservation programs...

An early morning meeting at the Ministry of Higher Education allowed me to state some of the purposes of my visit and to try to gauge the extent of the government's support for libraries and archives... The meeting was cordial, with the minister expressing his support for the work of UCL and for library preservation in general. He is very much in favor of the Consortium, and hopes that UCL will play a role in training staff from other nations in the region. I pointed out that, while international funding agencies could provide some support for the development of preservation and conservation capability in Burma, considerable investment and commitment by the government will be necessary if a viable program is to emerge. Cornell University Library can provide some support, principally in the area of advice and expertise, as there is great interest within the university in securing the survival of scholarly research materials. I referred to the longstanding project involving Cornell and UCL in microfilming important palm-leaf manuscripts in the UCL collections as being a useful model, as it ensures both the survival of the manuscripts and access to the manuscripts texts in the United States. The program needs to be expanded to include materials other than palm-leaf manuscripts (newspapers for example), and I recognized the need to significantly upgrade the filming equipment at UCL in order to accomplish this... I stressed the vital importance of stable archival storage conditions, and described Cornell's practice of storing camera negatives at the National Underground Storage facility at Boyers, Pennsylvania.

Dean gave successive workshops at UCL and in Mandalay, all dealing with treatment and stabilizing techniques for palm leaf and folded paper manuscripts. This excerpt from a Mandalay session is illustrative:

At 9:00 am I was collected to visit the Bagaya Monastery Library at Amarapura. This is an extensive collection of palm-leaf and parabeik manuscripts, all in excellent condition, and stored in new cabinets, which are enclosed with sliding glass doors and provide separation for the manuscripts through a
system of pigeon holes (I recommend that some screened ventilation be cut into the cabinets to reduce mold formation). Reportedly, air-conditioning will be installed at some point in the near future.

Excluding loose items, the library has 6,000 palm leaf manuscripts. Over the last several months, students from the University of Mandalay; 30 to 40 at a time, have been working on a collation and inventory project... I watched a group of students checking pagination by removing the bamboo splints securing each volume, and creating two card set records of the title, number of leaves, and any other pertinent information that could be gleaned. One card is stored with the item, and one card is sent to the UCL for entry into a data base. If a scholar wishes to read an indistinct manuscript, the surface is washed with methylated spirits, which brings the writing into sharper relief. It is hoped that these manuscripts and all others of scholarly interest, will be subject to systematic inventory on a national basis, with a program of preservation microfilm to extend access and preserve the originals. The earliest manuscript in this collection was produced in 1565, but most date from the nineteenth century.

...In considering the other nations and institutions in the consortium, with the exception of Thailand, only the Universities Central Library in Burma seems capable of organizing and sustaining a regional center. Sufficient space in a new building has been assigned for preservation, and UCL and its director, U Thaw Kaung, have a strong record of achievement in preserving the collections. Over the last two years, U Thaw Kaung has begun to organize other libraries and archives in the nation into an incipient national preservation group, with a strong committee of librarians, archivists, and scholars. The possibility of the Universities Central Library as the site for the center should be seriously considered, and in discussions with Deputy Minister of Education Than Nyun, it seems likely that the government would lend at least moral support to the idea.

A. Factors that are favorable to the location of the center at the UCL are:
1. The UCL and its director are founder members of the Consortium and known and respected by other members.
2. The UCL has a good record of action in the preservation of manuscripts.
3. Staff of the library seem committed to the care of the library and archive materials, and have some experience of preservation microfilming and the conservation treatment of palm-leaf manuscripts.
4. Appropriate space in a new building has been set aside for preservation, and there seems ample room for development into a larger facility.

B. Factors that are not favorable to the location of the center at the UCL are:
1. Because of the repugnance that many western countries and possible funding agencies feel for the current regime in Burma, financial support may be difficult to obtain.
2. The UCL record of achievement is based entirely on its care of palm-leaf and parabeik manuscripts, and funders may be concerned that too narrow a view of preservation is being taken without regard to more current
research and users.

3. While the space at the UCL is acceptable, there are no furnishings, equipment, or materials that could support the establishment of a center at this time.

Taking the negative factors first, it is expected that any existing operation in a consortium member institution will need to be significantly altered to meet the general training and operational need of the consortium. The intention of the center plan has always been to establish a preservation/conservation program in an institution with large and varied collections that would be a model for training and emulation. The core facility at the UCL is adequate for the development of the center, as the necessary administrative and operational infrastructure is in place, and there is tangible support at the higher levels of government.

The issue of government popularity is obviously impossible to address. The development of a cooperative center for the preservation of research library and archive materials for present and future scholars. The rapid deterioration and loss of these materials should not be allowed to continue because of political isolation, as all mankind will be the poorer for their loss.

The positive factors outweigh, in my view, the negative, and I am confident that the staff of the various Burmese institutions will recognize that the center must be comprehensive in its scope and not limited only to traditional manuscripts. Equipment and materials will be needed to bring the facility up to standard, and furniture and utilities will need to be upgraded. Nevertheless, I am confident that the UCL can become the model preservation/conservation program that we need for the center, and I will begin to make the necessary enquiries for support...

Some readers of, and contributors to, Burma Debate have sharply criticized Cornell’s work in Burma, and have developed personal animus towards those of us carrying out this project.

John Dean’s report illustrates the delicate balance we have tried to maintain over the past two decades as Burma has waxed and waned in its relations with neighbors and the rest of us. Even this library exchange and conservation program has been complicated and fraught with political considerations. Cornell has no grand design in the conservation of research materials in Southeast Asia. What I have described and emphasized is the role of individuals committed to saving particular literary forms of culture for future generations. Any of us who use libraries, or who carry out original research, understand the need for preserving primary sources; what is difficult is the conduct of projects that really accomplish the task. It is one thing to "be in favor of cultural preservation," it often takes quite another level of understanding and commitment to actually preserve cultural sources.

Some readers of, and contributors to, Burma Debate have sharply criticized Cornell’s work in Burma, and have developed personal animus towards those of us carrying out this project. It saddens me, but illustrates the need for open discussion about the issue. I deeply appreciate the favor extended by the editor of this issue which permits me to explain our conservation work in Southeast Asia, particularly in Burma at this time.
Frank Mastersen's article in the February-March 1995 issue of Burma Debate was most interesting, especially since it reflected opinions other than those of opponents to the SLORC. However, the article also contains some serious flaws, which have to be addressed.

First of all, Mastersen says that "it is no coincidence that Burmese heroin exports to the US surged immediately after suspension of anti-drug aid to the military government in Rangoon in late 1988." This is a very superficial way of looking at a complex problem, and it also implies that US anti-narcotics efforts in Burma prior to 1988 were effective. The GAO had already in a report dated September 1989 concluded that such efforts had not been effective, an opinion I share. I also pointed out in my article in the same issue of Burma Debate that the increase in opium production in Burma after 1988 is due to a number of other factors, not the least the SLORC's ceasefire agreements with the forces of the former Communist Party of Burma according to which these groups have been unofficially permitted to engage in any kind of trade. Drugs were not mentioned officially, but the sad truth is that these forces are rapidly taking over the trade from traditional drug barons such as Khun Sa.

Secondly, the argument that SLORC involvement in the drug trade is a myth because "the SLORC controls little of the areas under opium production in Burma" is weak, to say the least. Many people, who do not control a square inch of poppy fields, are still making fortunes from the drug trade. This includes people in Thailand, Hongkong, the United States and even in Burma itself. It is also not true that all heroin refineries are "under the tight control of ethnic drug armies." There is a string of new refineries along the Chindwin river — at Singkaling, Khamti, Homalin, Tamanthi, Kalemyo and Tamu — which are located in areas controlled by the SLORC. At one stage, the DEA in Burma and Thailand tried to claim that these refineries were controlled by the Kachin Independence Army, and that the KIA had moved "its refineries to areas close to the Indian border" as a ploy to lend credence to its anti-narcotics programme. This report was ridiculed, and rightly so, by narcotics police officers from other countries, and the DEA has since not repeated the charge. This was only one of many similar examples of misinformation spread by former DEA agents in Southeast Asia, who now fortunately have been replaced.

In fact, the SLORC benefits from the drug trade in a number of ways: "tax amnesties" for black money, massive investment in Burma's hotel industry — including some of the newest and most luxurious international-style hotels in Rangoon — kickbacks from drug traffickers and massive laundering of drug money through the military-controlled Myanmar Economic Holdings. Some well-known traffickers such as Lin Mingxian and Zhang Zhiming are reported to use the names of army officers, including high-ranking military intelligence officers, as fronts for their deposits in this "holding company" which definitely needs to come under the scrutiny of drug enforcement officials.

Given these circumstances, many law enforcement officials (not the DEA) have told me they find it hard to believe that the SLORC would be seriously interested in doing more about the drug trade than to go after druglords-on-the-wane such as Khun Sa. And, as Mastersen himself rightly points out in his article, the brother of Yang Moxian (who was executed for drug trafficking in China on 7 Oct 1994) was received by Burma's powerful military intelligence chief, Lieut.-Gen. Khin Nyunt, only two days after the execution.

Bertil Lintner
Bangkok

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All letters must include the writers name and address and are subject to editing. Letters may be mailed to BURMA DEBATE, P.O. Box 19126, Washington, D.C. 20036 or faxed to (301) 983-5011.

BUSINESS IN BURMA

I read your Oct/Nov issue of Burma Debate with much interest and would like to point out one error in the article "Is Sleeping Beauty Awake Yet." On page 23, line 13 you mentioned that I sold out my business this year. In fact, Peregrine was invited to buy 80% of the shares to meet the growing Myanmar business and 20% of the company is still owned by the MMAI group as we believe more than ever in the stability and growth of this nation.

I would very much appreciate it if you would mention it in forthcoming issues as your readers have the right to have the correct information.

Miriam Marshall Segal
Executive Chairman
Peregrine Capital Myanmar Limited
Yangon, Myanmar

MARAN BRANG SENG

I read with great interest your excellent article on Maran Brang Seng in your December 1994/January 1995 issue. We could not imagine a more beautiful and appropriate written testimony in his honor. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to you and your staff.

Seng Raw
Bangkok, Thailand

NARCOTICS

A fellow contributor on the narcotics problem (Feb/Mar 1995), Mathea Falco, was pivotal in pushing for the conventional "solution" in the Carter Administration. I am happy that [she has] reviewed her position, which is proof of her integrity. It is not easy for the powerful to admit possible misjudgments. On the other hand, Mr. Lester Wolff, then a Congressman — whom I met in 1974 — pushed for direct deals or at least some discussion with the Shan State Army and allies, the Shan United Army, the Kachin Independence Army, etc. However, Mr. Wolff did an about-turn, and even "agented" for the illegitimate junta for a substantial sum.

The above shift of positions among American actors reflects the complex, fluid dynamics of politics of the opium-heroin problem. It is not a "good guy-bad guy/cops-and-robber" issue. The problem and its politics are rooted in the long-standing and deep-seated disjunction between rulers and ruled, and are "under the tight control of ethnic drug armies." There is a string of new refineries along the Chindwin river — at Singkaling, Khamti, Homalin, Tamanthi, Kalemyo and Tamu — which are located in areas controlled by the SLORC. At one stage, the DEA in Burma and Thailand tried to claim that these refineries were controlled by the Kachin Independence Army, and that the KIA had moved "its refineries to areas close to the Indian border" as a ploy to lend credence to its anti-narcotics programme. This report was ridiculed, and rightly so, by narcotics police officers from other countries, and the DEA has since not repeated the charge. This was only one of many similar examples of misinformation spread by former DEA agents in Southeast Asia, who now fortunately have been replaced.

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Bertil Lintner
Bangkok
WASHINGTON, DC — A Roundtable was held on March 2 focusing on U.S. anti-narcotics policy and Burma. Featured speakers were Mr. Richard Porter, Director of National Security Affairs, The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and Mr. Douglas Rasmussen, Division Chief of International Narcotics Matters at the Department of State.

The meeting of March 28 featured Assistant Secretary of State, John Shattuck, of the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Mr. Shattuck discussed the State Department's Human Rights Report and directions for U.S. policy toward Burma.

The next Roundtable will focus on the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Burma and is scheduled for April 18. Speakers will be Curt Lambrecht, author of a U.S. Committee for Refugees issue paper on the topic, and Jane Grey of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration.


NEW YORK — The New York Roundtable is a periodic meeting of organizations and individuals interested in Burma. For more information contact Human Rights Watch/Asia by phone: (212) 972-8400 or fax: (212) 972-0905.

MASSACHUSETTS — The speaker at the Roundtable of February 13 was Ms. Deirdre Chetham, currently a fellow at the Bunting Institute and former Burma Desk Office at the Department of State. Ms. Chetham discussed her experiences at the State Department and the current political situation in Burma.

The March 13 meeting featured Prof. Susan Darlington, Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Asian Studies at Hampshire College. Professor Darlington, who had just returned from the Karen State in Burma, provided a briefing on the recent Burmese offensive against the Karen.

The Massachusetts Burma Roundtable is an informal group of individuals and organizations working to promote human rights and democracy in Burma. Meetings are held the second Monday of every month. For information contact Simon Billenness of Franklin Research & Development Corporation by phone: (617) 482-6179 or fax: (617) 482-6179.

SAN FRANCISCO — The Bay Area Burma Roundtable is held the third Wednesday of every month. For more information contact Jane Jerome by phone: (415) 424-8643 or e-mail: jjerome@igc.apc.org

SEATTLE — A meeting of the Burma Interest Group was held on February 27. Larry Dohrs of the Seattle Campaign for a Free Burma reported on the successful conclusion of the Eddie Bauer boycott as well as the visit to Seattle of Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire. Ms. Maguire and members of the group met with Mayor Norm Rice, the Seattle City Council and with King County Council member Ron Sims.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 3 and will feature Dr. Christina Fink of the University of Victoria in British Columbia.

Dr. Fink will speak on the geopolitical situation facing the Karen and other ethnic minority groups in Burma. Updates on the decision of the University of Washington Board of Regents to support shareholder resolutions regarding Burma and the selective contracting legislation in Seattle will also be provided.

The Burma Interest Group is a non-partisan forum attended by representatives of NGOs, business, academia and other interested parties that meets monthly to discuss Burma related topics. For more information contact Larry Dohrs by phone: (206) 784-6873 or fax: (206)784-8150.

LONDON — A Burma Briefing was held on March 28 which included presentations on the current situation in Burma and progress reports from a number of organizations working on Burma issues. Among those providing reports were Fiona King of Save the Children Fund; Zunetta Liddell of Human Rights Watch/Asia; Sarah Sutcliffe of the Burma Action Group; Harn Yawnghwe, Executive Director of Associates to Develop a Democratic Burma and Zhu Wei Xing of Health Unlimited.

The Burma Briefing is a periodic meeting of NGOs working on Burma. For information contact Edmond McGovern by phone: (441-392) 876-849 or fax: (441-392) 876-525.

BRUSSELS — A Roundtable was held in Brussels on March 30. The featured speaker was Zunetta Liddell of Human Rights Watch/Asia who discussed that organization’s recently released report, BURMA: ABUSES LINKED TO THE FALL OF MANERPLAW.

The NGO community in France and Belgium hosts periodic roundtables in Paris and Brussels. For more information on this European forum contact Lotte Leicht of Human Rights Watch by phone: (32-2) 732-2009 or fax: (32-2) 732-0471.
**BRIEFINGS AND DEVELOPMENTS**

**SLORC RELEASES POLITICAL PRISONERS**

On March 15, SLORC announced the release of 31 political prisoners including two of the leading members of the opposition National League for Democracy. The 68 year-old former defense minister, Tin Oo, was the co-founder along with Aung San Suu Kyi of the NLD and its first chairman. He was arrested in July, 1989. Kyi Maung, 76, was a former colonel and led the NLD to victory in the 1990 elections.

SLORC also reported that it had reduced by one-third the sentences of more than 23,000 prisoners in honor of the 50th anniversary of Armed Forces Day on March 27, 1995. A decree was issued reducing the sentences of inmates who have worked on projects that were completed in time for the anniversary celebration.

**BURMA FORUM TO FOCUS ON DRUGS AND AIDS**

A conference entitled, "Burma: Source of Heroin, Land of AIDS and Terror," will be held on Saturday, April 29, 1995 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa, California. Speakers will include Human Rights Watch/Asia Washington Director, Mike Jendrezczyk, OSI Burma Project Director Maureen Aung-Thwin and former BBC correspondent U Oung Myint Tun. For more information contact Professor Carol Burke, International Education Committee, Orange Coast College, P.O. Box 5005, Costa Mesa, California 92628-5005.

**CHINA DELIVERS VESSELS IN MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR DEAL**

The New Light of Myanmar (January 25, 1995) reported that China has delivered five of 14 vessels under a $30 million dollar contract with the Burmese government. Built by the Yunnan Machinery Import and Export Corporation of the People's Republic of China, the vessels — three shallow-water-going triple-deckers and two push-tugs — were handed over to the Inland Water Transport (IWT). Each of the triple-decker ships has 18 air-conditioned first class double rooms, ten second class double-rooms, three 16-passenger capacity third class rooms and a 270-passenger capacity ordinary class cabin. Each 16 crew member vessel is installed with modern maritime equipment and can carry 30 metric-tons of cargo. They will be used on the Irrawaddy and Chindwin rivers.

**JAILED WRITER RECEIVES PEN AMERICAN AWARD**

The writers' association, PEN, has announced that it has awarded the organization's prestigious freedom of expression award to Burmese writer, San San Nweh. The forty-nine year old author of such novels as *Prison of Darkness* was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in Burma for "spreading information injurious to the state" and "giving one-sided views" to foreign reporters. Many believe that it was her active support for Aung San Suu Kyi that lead to her arrest last year. San San Nweh is scheduled to be released in 2004.

**BEYOND RANGOON TO BE SHOWN AT CANNES**

The release of the film *Beyond Rangoon* is scheduled for May 19 at the Cannes International Film Festival in France. The political drama is set in Burma in 1988 and is directed by John Boorman. It stars Patricia Arquette, Frances McDormand, Spalding Gray and introduces U Aung Ko.

**MACY'S, EDDIE BAUER AND STARBUCKS: NO BUSINESS IN BURMA**

Three more American retailers have decided to disengage from doing business in Burma. Federated Department Stores, which owns Macy's, has announced that it will stop purchasing clothing made in Burma. In February, the sportswear company, Eddie Bauer, issued a statement that "...we deemed that the political climate and growing opposition to trade in Burma posed a political threat to our manufacturing opportunities." The company will move all future business from Burmese factories upon fulfillment of current contracts. Gourmet-coffee retailer, Starbucks, has stated that Burma will not be a market for a canned coffee drink that it plans to produce in a joint venture with PepsiCo, which operates in Burma. These retailers join other companies such as Liz Claiborne, Levi Strauss and Reebok International in rejecting business ties with Burma.

**MINISTER ANNOUNCES "DE FACTO" DEVALUATION OF THE KYAT**

In an article appearing in the Bangkok Post (April 5, 1995), Burmese Minister of National Planning and Economic Development, Brigadier General David O. Abel, said that the government is encouraging use of the black market exchange rate of about 100 kyats to the dollar and that the official rate is no longer being used for most commercial transactions. The restrictions on currency have been one of the biggest obstacles to foreign investment in Burma since 1988, although creative mechanisms have been developed for businesses to deal with the exchange problem. According to Abel, local and foreign companies import goods, sell them at the market rate and use the Kyats earned to meet local business expenses and to buy goods for export. Exporting Burmese products then converts the Kyats back into hard currency. Abel was quoted as saying "We cannot say that we have devalued" explaining that the government will still use the official rate to calculate the national budget, economic statistics and customs duties.

**BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA PROHIBITS BUSINESS WITH BURMA**

In an 8-1 vote, the Berkeley City Council passed a selective purchasing resolution which bars businesses operating in Burma from doing business with the city. Taking a stand on the egregious human rights situation in Burma the Council approved the resolution on February 28. This legislation could have an effect on large U.S. companies such as PepsiCo, Unocal and Texaco that have invested in Burma. The city will direct is fuel distributor not to purchase from either of the two oil companies and PepsiCo will no longer be welcome as a supplier. According to activists, similar selective purchasing initiatives are underway in other cities in the United States.
KHIN NYUNT WARNS AGAINST DISSIDENT GROUPS

Yangon, 18 Jan 95 — Chairman of the Myanmar Education Committee and Secretary-1 of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt addressed the conclusion of the Special Refresher Course No. 14 for Basic Education Teachers, conducted by the Central Institute of Civil Service [CICS] in Hlegu Township this morning.

He explained that CRDB [Committee for Restoration of Democracy in Burma] is an organization led by expatriates and its subgroups were later formed in England, Germany, Australia and Bangladesh.

"Khin Maung Win and Tun Aung of CRDB (USA) are working for VOA [Voice of America] and movement of CRDB diminished beginning 1994 and are now organizing the students who arrived from Thai-Myanmar border," he said.

Aung Khin, Than Lwin Tun alias Aung Naing and Khin Hla Thi who took part in the movement of CRDB (UK) in London are part-time producers of BBC Myanmar Programme and therefore reports of VOA and BBC Myanmar Programmes are opinions of CRDB (USA) and CRDB (UK), he said.

CRDB (FRG) was formed with German citizen Myanmars and remaining expatriates and their movement became less as there is disunity among them, he said. CRDB (Australia), he said, was formed in 1989 and it also ceased to move in 1994.

Various groups like BAG [Burma Action Group], INDB [International Network for Democracy in Burma] and BDCI [Burma Democratic Council International] were also formed later but they are just subgroups of CRDB which are facing financial and other complicated problems, he said.

It is evident that as the anti-government organizations are terminating on their own accord, goodwill of the government and its endeavours for national internal interest become more and more prominent, he noted.

He stated that there is still the danger of destructive elements which are supporting the anti-government organizations like KNU [Karen National Union] and CRDB. He said it is found that such destructive elements will carry on with their wily schemes.

The Secretary-1 urged teachers to be mindful of the movements of these destructive elements and to discern the attempts to interfere with the nation's internal affairs in politics, economy and religion and fabricated reports with intent to tarnish the image of the nation.

He stated that the purpose to explain the intentions and movements of these destructive elements is to enable the teachers to lead their pupils away from the track of the dangers of their machinations.

The above excerpts were taken from an article that appeared in English in The New Light of Myanmar on February 19, 1995.

NOTABLES & QUOTABLES

"I was imprisoned, stripped of my parliamentary immunity and expelled from the National Assembly.... For three years, my home was surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and police, and I could not leave.... The military regime searched my house at irregular intervals. In many ways, imprisonment would have been preferable, since a prisoner has, after all, some rights....

...I am well acquainted with her situation and the criticism of those countries which support the military regime through active trade relations.... We have sent a clear message to the military regime urging them to re-introduce democracy in the country. We are now ready to increase the pressure, both to have Suu Kyi released and to re-introduce democracy."

The above statement by President Kim Young Sam of South Korea was taken from an interview by the Foreign Editor of Dagbladet in Oslo, Norway on March 14, 1995. This appeared in the March, 1995 issue of Burma Alert.

MEDIA RESOURCES

THE WORDS CRY OUT:
New Writing by Burmese in Exile
Edited by: Zaw Gyi and Alan Nichols
Australia-Burma Support Group
P.O. Box 563
Potts Point, NSW 2041
Australia

A collection of 13 essays, poems and lyrics by students and exiles from Burma, this book depicts memories of their homeland and thoughts on democracy and freedom.

BURMA: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL DISSERTATION RESEARCH 1898-1985
by Frank Joseph Shulman
University Press of America
4720 Boston Way
Lanham, Maryland 20706
Tel: (800) 462-6420
Fax: (301) 459-3366

A bibliography containing 707 dissertations covering a range of disciplines from anthropology, economics, education and political science to history, literature, religion and the natural sciences. Information provided includes details on the availability of the dissertations.

THE RETURN OF THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES TO BURMA: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OR REFOULEMENT?
U.S. Committee for Refugees
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Suite 701
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: (202) 347-3507
Fax: (202) 347-3418

This report discusses the on-going repatriation of some 250,000 Burmese Muslim refugees from exile in Bangladesh back to Arakan state in Burma. Through a series of face-to-face interviews with the refugees, the author brings into question the "voluntary" nature of the repatriation process.

HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF MYANMAR
by Jan Becka
Scarecrow Press
P.O. Box 4167
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840
Tel: (800) 537-7107 or (908) 548-8600
Fax: (908) 548-5767

Designed as a first reference for librarians, students and visitors, the book contains more than 500 entries describing the country's geographic features, historic and modern sites, regions, economic resources, main ethnic groups, major persons, events, and institutions. Comprehensive articles on such topics as Myanmar's administration and government, economy, politics, culture and religion are also included.
MEDIA RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

BURMA: ABUSES LINKED TO THE FALL OF MANERPLAW
Human Rights Watch/Asia
485 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017-6104
Tel: (212) 972-8400
Fax: (212) 972-0905

This report covers the period of October 1994 to February, 1995 and is in part based upon interview conducted with refugees along the Thai/Burma border. It documents first-hand accounts of killings and beatings of men taken by the army as porters, widespread use of forced labor, mistreatment of civilians, attacks on refugees in Thailand and deliberate instigation of communal tension through state radio.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM 3: EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS
Editors: John Daniel, Nigel Hartley, Yves Lador, Manfred Nowak and Frederick De Vlaming
ZED Books
7 Cynthia Street
London, NI 9JF
England
Tel: (44-71) 837

The third volume of the World University Service Series on educational rights, academic freedom and institutional autonomy includes an essay on Burma by Martin Smith. This entry covers the crisis in the education system, the restrictions on academic freedom and the discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities.

INSIDE WASHINGTON

US CONGRESS HONORS AUNG SAN SUU KYI
On March 8, 1995 Members of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues marked International Women's Day with a tribute to women who defend human rights in the face of extreme opposition. Among those honored was Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi. Featured speakers were Nobel Peace Laureate Betty Williams and Betty Bao Lord, noted author and Chairwoman of Freedom House. Members of Congress who addressed the gathering included Senator Patty Murray, Congresswomen Nita Lowey, Patricia Schroeder, Connie Morella, Nancy Pelosi and Sheila Jackson Lee, Congressmen Tom Lantos, Steve Horn and Neil Abercrombie.

STATE DEPARTMENT CERTIFIES UNDP OPERATIONS IN BURMA
The U.S. Department of State has provided certification to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) opening the door for millions of dollars in support from the United States for projects in Burma. By certifying that the UNDP has "...approved or initiated no new programs and no new funding for existing programs in or for Burma since the UNDP Governing Council (Executive Board) meeting of June 1993," the State Department allows for the release of funds previously withheld by legislation. The U.S. Congress had passed a provision in the Foreign Relations Assistance Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 withholding UNDP funding for projects in Burma. Some members of Congress, however, are questioning whether the conditions specified in the legislation have in fact been met to justify the State Department's certification and resumption of funding for UNDP activities.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE CIT ES ABUSES OF BURMESE REGIME
On March 16, 1995, John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor testified before the joint Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights of the House Committee on International Relations. In his testimony Mr. Shattuck stated: "...Burmese citizens have been subjected to the arbitrary and sometimes brutal dictates of the military. Government security forces commit serious abuses, including extrajudicial killings and rape and forced labor on public works projects." The Assistant Secretary concluded his testimony with a quotation from Aung San Suu Kyi's essay, "Empowerment for a Culture of Peace and Development."

BURMA DEBATE 35 APR/MAY 1995

VOICES OF BURMA

For Friends in Prison

My body lay semi-conscious and silent
In the narrow iron-barred prison.
Food...
Water...
Starvation...
Day and night.
In the darkness.

If you think that this dark net of prison
Is depression for me,
Let me tell you it is not so.
On the contrary,
Whenever a slight ray of light from the blue sky
Is seen through the iron window of prison,
To live and confront the uphill battle for justice
And for a new motherland at peace,
I know I have the will to survive
The journey and the struggle.
I will not complain.
In my heart I have the courage to continue.

This poem was written by a student in Bangkok as a tribute and gesture of encouragement for friends in prison in Burma. The author wishes to remain anonymous, as his own situation is at risk. The poem appears in The Words Cry Out: New Writing by Burmese in Exile. (See media section for information on this publication.)
Burma Debate is a publication of The Burma Project of the Open Society Institute.

Mary Pack, Editor

THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE (OSI) was established in December of 1993 to promote the development of open societies around the world. Toward this goal, the institute engages in a number of regional and country-specific projects relating to education, media, legal reform and human rights. In addition, OSI undertakes advocacy projects aimed at encouraging debate and disseminating information on a range of issues which are insufficiently explored in the public realm. OSI funds projects that promote the exploration of novel approaches to domestic and international problems.

The Burma Project initiates, supports and administers a wide range of programs and activities. Priority is given to programs that promote the well-being and progress of all the people of Burma regardless of race, ethnic background, age or gender.

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