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ACCOUNT A

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ATTENDING U THANT'S BURIAL IN RANGOON, BURMA

U Thant died of cancer in hospital in New York on November 25,1974. His body lay in state at the United Nations in Manhattan on Nov.27 and 28..It was then taken to a funeral home until the next day when it was taken to the airport for the long flight home to Rangoon in Burma. His wife remained behind at their home in New York. His daughter and son-in-law accompanied the coffin. While he was alive, the military government in Burma headed by General Ne Win had refused to validate U Thant's Burmese passport; his daughter and son-in-law now travelled to Burma on Certificates of Identity, not Burmese passports.

They arrived in Rangoon on December 1,1974. There was no official reception by the military government of Burma or General Ne Win.

Following their arrival, the military government agreed to the family request that the coffin be allowed to lie in a temporary pavilion erected by the family in the middle of the former race course grounds, the former Rangoon Turf Club. The funeral bier was watched over by young Red Cross attendants paid by U Thant's family. Ordinary people from all over Rangoon and vicinity flocked to the pavilion to pay their respects.

U Thant's family planned to take his coffin to the local public cemetery in Rangoon at 3 p.m. on Thursday, December 5. The crowd of people flowing into the former race course grounds did not let up, but around 1 p.m. on Thursday, there was a subtle shift among the people in the crowd. Women with children and families started to melt away, ostensibly to

line up along the route to the cemetery, or to go ahead and take their places at the cemetery and wait there. Their places in the crowd were quietly taken by young people, most of them students from the universities, colleges and high schools in and around Rangoon. Unnoticed the young people filtered in through the main front gate of the former Turf Club as well as through the two back gates, and by 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec.5, the race course grounds was filled entirely by thousands of students. At 5 minutes to 3 p.m., those students standing near the funeral bier quietly asked the young Red Cross volunteers to leave; they complied, slipping quietly away. The crowd was suddenly hushed.

At 3 p.m. the students stepped up to the bier, hoisted the coffin onto their shoulders and a great cry went up from the student body suddenly breaking the eerie hush. They quickly formed into a procession heading toward the front gate, bearing the coffin along, shouting they were going to bury U Thant with honor befitting a man of his stature. U Thant's family who was standing by their cars parked on the race track waiting to take the coffin to the public cemetery hurriedly left the scene.

The procession of tens of thousands of chanting students streamed out to the road and bore the coffin ten miles across town to the Rangoon University campus. There it was carried into Convocation Hall, a gray building in the middle of the central campus area, and placed on the bier waiting on the stage inside the Hall. Waiting monks in saffron robes were seated in a row in front of the bier to say

prayers for U Thant. Directly below the stage standing guard were 30 male students with red head bands that proclaimed they would give their lives if necessary in defending the monks and U Thant's coffin.

Backstage at Convocation Hall, students were already organizing the storage and orderly distribution of food and soft drinks donated obviously ahead of time by the citizens of Rangoon; cooked rice and curry wrapped in traditional banana leaf were handed out to the students who stood in the tens of thousands filling the mile-long eantral campus area from Convocation Hall to the empty lot, the site of the old Students' Union building, near the massive iron gates of the University. From Convocation Hall, Chancellor Road ran straight down to the massive main gates now closed by students. A young participant on campus reported his banana leaf contained only cooked rice and salt and a piece of banana, but he ate heartily and proudly, he said.

The students efficiently identified many agent provocateurs from the Military Intelligence Service (a national network of informants and agents on the payroll of the Burma Army who spied upon every household in the country and who were known to report falsely to the military government to get citizens into jail, in justification of their existence; they were much feared by the public) who had infiltrated the campus; some were locked up in a room, while others were stoned and driven away from campus.

The students in a body wanted to inter U Thant's remains in a mausoleum they began erecting almost immediately on the empty site of the Students' Union building. They used brick from the construction underway on campus of the library extension wing, with hundreds of thousands of Rangoon citizens begging for the honor of carrying the bricks. People streamed into campus carrying a brick or two per person as donation toward the construction of U Thant's mausoleum. Several

persons appeared on campus who donated cement and mortar to the students.

In addition the citizens of Rangoon made collections and donated money towards the students' mausoleum; in the first two days U Thant's body lay on campus, the students received donations of kyats 150,000.

(Officially, kyats are 5 to a U.S. dollar but are actually traded 20 to a dollar on the thriving Rangoon black market; kyats 150,000 is equivalent in value to \$7,500.)

In addition to donations of brick, mortar, cement, money, food and soft drinks, the citizens of Rangoon in a collective effort donated hundreds of kerosene oil lamps for lighting the campus and truckloads of blankets and coats for the students guarding the panpus at night.

The choice of the site, the empty lot where the Students' Union building once stood, is significant. U Thant in his student days was active in the Students' Union during the movement against the British for Burma's independence; and on July 7, 1962, when students were standing in front of the Students' Union building protesting peacefully against a University regulation, General Ne Win, who had previously seized power from the democratic civilian government on March 2, 1962, ordered his troops to open fire, without provocation, upon the unarmed students. It was estimated some two hundred students died that day both outside and inside the Students' Union building which was then blown up by the troops. The site has been empty since, except for mourning wreaths placed by students and bereaved families.

Following the seizure of the coffin on Dec.5 by the students, an act of defiance against the military dictatorship, the government closed down all schools and colleges in and around the Rangoon area but took no action against the students for full five days. The students were braced for murderous reprisal from the moment they seized the coffin; they knew from past experience the Array government would shoot to kill unarmed civilians.

The military government allowed U Thant's family to contact the students; the family was shown into a small room backstage at Convocation Hall where they sat down to negotiate the return of the coffin with the students' Committee to Establish U Thant's Mausoleum and members of the Buddhist clergy. It was then the students and monks learnt the Rangoon military command council (the local administrative unit of the ruling military government under General Ne Win) told U Thant's family they had set a deadline for the return of the coffin to the family. The deadline was 12 noon, Sunday, December 8, 1974.

The students and the Buddhist monks presented a three point proposal to U Thant's family to relay to the Army government. They were:

1. Upon return of the coffin to the family, the family must be allowed to erect a mausoleum in Kandawmin park (at the foot of the hill where the holiest pagoda in Burma stood, the Shwe Dagon pagoda) .
2. The military government must hold a State funeral for U Thant as befitting his stature in life.
3. The military government must agree to amnesty for all students and citizens who participated in the demonstration.

The reply from the government was relayed to the students by U Thant's family.

It said :

1. They agreed to allow the family to erect a mausoleum in Kandawmin park but the government would not contribute a single kyat. It would sell building material to the family at government rate (lower than the rates at the flourishing black market) and it would supply free labor.
2. They would not agree to a State funeral.
- 3■ They agreed to amnesty for all.

On the morning of Sunday, Dec.8, the day of the deadline given to U Thant's family by the military government, the students and Buddhist monks agreed with U Thant's family that a vote be taken by the following persons: 5 students, 3 Buddhist monks, and 3 members of U Thant's family.

The 3 members of U Thant's family, the 3 Buddhist monks and 1 student (out of the 5 students selected) voted to return U Thant's body to his family, while the remaining 4 student leaders dissented. The general feeling among the studentbody of Rangoon who numbered about 45,000 to 50,000 and who were waiting en masse on campus that Sunday was that U Thant's remains should be interred in their mausoleum which they had already erected on campus.

Inspite of the obviously determined mood of the thousands of students gathered on campus and inspite of the majority vote by 4 out of 5 student leaders who wanted to inter U Thant's remains in the students' mausoleum, the members of U Thant's family said they were confident his body would be handed over to them, and waited in Mandalay Hall across the site where the newly erected students' mausoleum now stood. An Army truck was allowed in and it moved up Chancellor Road to Convocation Hall as arranged earlier in the understanding between the family, the three Buddhist monks and the one student. It was a little before 11 a.m. and by this time thousands upon thousands of students were very closely packed along the route from Convocation Hall to the new mausoleum near the main gates of the campus. At about 11 a.m. students emerged with the coffin from Convocation Hall, but instead of taking it to the waiting truck, the coffin was handed over the expectant, waiting students who then passed it from hand to hand and shoulder to shoulder until it reached the site of the new mausoleum. Just then a voice shouted over the loudspeaker, "Burial with honor in our mausoleum!" and thousands of young people watched as the coffin was draped with the white and blue United Nations flag before it was put into the mausoleum which was then sealed. It was half an hour before 12 noon, the deadline given by the Army government.

U Thant's family retreated from Mandalay Hall and went to the Burma Broadcasting Service government controlled radio station about two miles away where the Army officers were waiting. They reported the breakdown of the agreement and handed over to the Army officers, the Rangoon military command council members, the money donated to them by the students, kyats 150,000.

An ominous lull followed. The *Array* government failed to do anything to the defiant students for the next 62 hours after the deadline at 12 noon, Sunday, Dec.8, passed. The students remained on campus braced for battle, although they did not have arms to return the fire from the troops they were expecting; they knew it would be a massacre, but many of them felt confident the United Nations, the people of the world were on their side.

The government controlled radio, Burma Broadcasting Service, made a national broadcast at 8 p.m. Sunday night, Dec.8, which, among other things, accused the students of acting against the wishes of U Thant's family by burying him in a site they did not approve. Following the government broadcast, the students issued two statements, one a reply to the accusation, and the other an appeal to the people of the world (both attached). Mimeographed copies of the two statements were distributed in Rangoon as well as across the country by students in colleges and schools in provincial centers. A copy was smuggled out of Burma with the account of what happened in Rangoon when U Thant's body came home.

News went around the campus that the students had collected another kyats 300,000 for U Thant's mausoleum. That amount of money donated by local citizens in a country that had been economically bankrupted by the mismanagement and greed of the military dictatorship in the 12 years of their rule, was another strong indication of support from the public and the news cheered them.

On Tuesday, Dec.10, as night fell and midnight approached, the students asked and got volunteers, close to two thousand men and women, for the night watch, while the rest dispersed to eat and rest. The volunteers decided to split the watch; some slept around the mausoleum while others sat and talked.

It was 2 a.m. Wednesday before dawn, Dec. 11, when the attack came. The *Array* government had sent for troops from outside the city to storm the University; they feared that troops stationed in Rangoon would be sympathetic and refuse to kill students. A crane ripped off the massive iron gates as the troops fired a blanket of tear gas. Armored units rolled into the campus, crushing the students who were sitting behind flimsy wooden benches. The crane was used to hit and maim, while the students standing guard in a circle around the mausoleum were bayoneted. As they fell in a bloody heap, an Army engineering team rushed up to the mausoleum, smashed it, and brought the coffin out amidst the carnage. Those not killed or wounded were rounded up and taken away in *Array* trucks.

Later the government announced it had confiscated kyats 70,000 from the students on that raid, the collection of funds donated for U Thant's mausoleum. The discrepancy between the amount the Army government announced it confiscated and the amount the students collected in donations, kyats 300,000 has not been explained.

Many students were arrested on that raid and scores more wounded and arrested, but there are still hundreds missing and nobody knows if they are in hiding, in custody, or dead. People saw dead bodies being carted away by the Army but no one knows what happened to them.

Taking the coffin from the bloody scene at Rangoon University campus, the Army took it seven miles across the city to quiet Kandawmin park at the foot of the hill where the towering, golden Shwe Dagon pagoda looks down upon the city. U Thant's family was summoned and at 6:30 a.m. Wednesday morning, Dec. 11, the coffin was buried in the ground. The grave was then filled with tons of poured concrete. Rangoon military command council officers who were at the gravesite with a wreath, turned to leave with the wreath in their hand, not daring to leave it where the people could spit on the Burma Army wreath.

By 8 a.m. Wednesday morning, Dec.11, crowds of people were astir and pouring into the streets of the city and everywhere all over the city masses of people were gathering.

At 8:30 a.m. the Army government announced a curfew and that sparked a rampage of burning and destruction by the people venting their bitter anger and hatred of the military dictatorship. But like the students they were without arms. The Army government ordered truckloads of troops armed with automatic weapons and tanks into the embattled streets of Rangoon and ordered open, indiscriminate fire. It was slaughter. Eyewitnesses reported thousands of dead bodies were carted away by Burma Army Dodge trucks (one of them, a numbed witness recalled, was marked No.702) and the bodies were dumped into the river.

However the military government announced in an official statement that only 9 rioters were killed and 74 wounded, and that was quoted in newspapers like The New York Times and others around the world.

## Epilogue

From Dec.11, 1974 to Jan.7,1975, all shops and markets in Rangoon were closed by order of the military regime who took that opportunity to raid the thriving black market which was chock-full of necessities like soap, sugar, milk foods as well as items like watches and radios, all long since disappeared from the State owned co-operative stores, the only shops allowed under the military regime's "Burmese Way to Socialism" where the people have to queue up for long hours to get the pitiful amount each family is allocated from the government stores' half bare shelves.

After seizing power in 1962, General Ne Win abolished private enterprises entirely and his Army officers, many of them with low education, were placed in the charge of State owned enterprises, and their sole guide to running the economy of Burma was the half baked theories of General Ne Win and his Army buddies on what they called the "Burmese Way to Socialism". It quickly became apparent how ill equipped General Ne Win and his Army officers were to handle the economy; in 12 years of Army rule, Burma which was a developing, growing political democracy before 1962, has slid backward into a deteriorating economy where production is declining, and there is constant severe shortage of everything, from rice, sugar, cooking oil, to milk foods and raw materials - this in a fertile land where, before Army rule, the people not only had enough but also exported rice to feed the hungry of the world. Due to the inadequate supply of rice to the people by the regime, industrial unrest, strikes, sit-ins, go-slows by laborers, workers, dock workers across the country are paralysing the economy.

After years of the Burmese Way to Socialism paradise, under the repressive regime of General Ne Win, 80% of the population cannot afford to buy one sarong (in Burmese, longyi, a garment worn daily by both men and women) of the cheapest coarsest cloth a year. Yet General Ne Win lives in private palaces and takes his family on shopping trips to London, and his Army officers ride in Mercedes limousines, live in good houses and are the privileged class.

The black market came into being because of the continuing severe shortage of necessities, consumer goods, raw materials, spare parts, equipment; the military dictatorship, when it so desired, winked at the black market, as they, now the only people in Burma with money, also used the market to make purchases. But during the period following the riots in the streets when shops and markets were forced to close, the military dictatorship took everything it could find in the black market stalls and distributed the goods to its troops as reward for the brutal killings in Rangoon.

As of January 7, 1975, the curfew imposed upon the city of Rangoon nearly a month ago is still enforced. Armed troops, raw jungle boys, patrol the streets of the city and all public places. They shout at the citizens to go inside their houses at once. "Do you people want to die?" they threaten.

END

ACCOUNT B

Rangoon, Burma, dated December 13,1974

As I write, I feel very shaken by the events of the past week regarding U Thant's burial.

A group of animals, a minority group of inhuman people, in their bitter jealousy of U Thant's international stature, refused to allow a proper and fitting resting place for U Thant's remains. Instead they allocated a tiny plot of land at the \*foot of the prostitute's grave.

(\*foot of the prostitute's grave: the term 'prostitute' refers to the wife of the military dictator, General Ne Win; her name was Daw Khin May Than, also known as Kitty Ba Than, as her father was Dr. Ba Than. She died in 1973 and was buried at the local cemetery, Kyandaw. in Rangoon. In Burmese culture, to point one's foot at someone is a gesture of insult. Therefore, to place U Thant's remains at the foot of the prostitute's grave is an extremely venomous insult.)

This insulting action on part of the military dictatorship angered the people of Rangoon who made the students in Rangoon take decisive action by seizing U Thant's coffin (on Dec.5,1974) and then interring his remains with dignity in a mausoleum befitting his stature which the students erected on campus on the empty site of the Students' Union building. U Thant's mausoleum on campus appropriately lies . beside the memorial site of the student martyr, \*Bo Aung Kyaw.

(\*Bo Aung Kyaw was a student who died in the 1930's as a result of police action on orders of the British government when Burma was a British colony. His name is a continuing symbol of student resistance to unjust repression.)

However, before U Thant's interment in the students' mausoleum (on Dec.8,1974), his coffin lay on a funeral bier on stage at Convocation Hall in the middle of the University campus from Dec.5 to 8,1974. I went over there everyday to speak to the students, to give them words of encouragement and support. These young people, both men and women, are very brave, and I admire them tremendously. They are Burma's true heroes and heroines. I did not actively take part in the proceedings on campus but I was there daily to speak to the young people and give them moral support. So very many of the students I saw and spoke to have all been killed. heart is heavy with deepest sorrow.

The people of Rangoon crowded onto campus while U Thant's body lay at Convocation Hall. It was estimated by many that there were over 400,000 people there each day, and even after U Thant's remains were interred in the students' mausoleum, the crush of people on campus did not abate.

(note: current population of Rangoon is 1.8 million. The student body active in the movement to establish U Thant's mausoleum included students from universities and colleges and high schools in Rangoon and are estimated to number 50,000.)

The whole country is outraged and angered by the military regime shabby treatment of U Thant's remains. But since we, the people, have no arms, we suffer brutal reprisal.

On Wednesday, December 11,1974, at 2 a.m. before light, the Army assault on the students began. They forced their way in and their armored vehicles ran over the hundreds of students who filled the area in front of D Thant's mausoleum on campus; they were standing, sitting or lying down on Chancellor road and on the grass, behind some wooden benches from the classrooms. The cries and screams from the dying students filled the air.

The armored vehicles had to be washed of the students' blood afterwards but the prostitute government said no one was killed.

As the armored cars crushed the students, those young people, both men and women, who had vowed to give their lives defending U Thant's remains, stood in a circle around U Thant's mausoleum, with their backs to it. None of the students on campus had any arms. The mausoleum was immediately surrounded by Burma Army troops in full battle gear, and behind the troops came members of the Burmese Way to Socialism Party (the party founded by the Army, the only political party allowed in General Ne Win's one party State) and agents of the dread Military Intelligence Service who carried dah (Burmese swords) and daggers.

The troops advanced on the band of young people around U Thant's mausoleum with fixed bayonets, yelling at the students, "This (coffin) is none of your business!", and charged the unarmed students. The young men and women held hands and stood fast;

they appeared to believe staunchly in their cause. Neither the men nor the women flinched or trembled as the bayonets, dah and daggers were thrust into them. They fell in a gory heap around their mausoleum which the troops then smashed. U Thant's coffin was brought out and taken away.

As the stream of blood on campus congealed, people scooped the blood up in their hands to take home, in sacred memory of the fallen students.

Oh, my dear friends, what I have to say is endless, but let this brief description suffice.

I heard that U Thant's brother is under strict surveillance, with Military Intelligence Service agents stationed on his street. I also heard that Brigadier Sein Win (deputy to the dictator, General Ne Win) and Dr. Nyi Nyi (geology professor at the university who became Deputy Minister of Education and later Minister of

Hines) were also under strict surveillance, allegedly for speaking out on behalf of the students.

In Tavoy (a town in the far south where Burma borders Malaysia and Thailand), the townspeople pulled down the flag in front of the Burmese Way to Socialism Party branch headquarters and hoisted a women's longyi (Burmese sarong) on the flagpole, as a gesture of insult and mockery, and openly cursed the military government. Also, they declared that the government news broadcast by the government controlled radio, Burma Broadcasting Service, was a pack of lies, and instead they would only listen to the BBC overseas news broadcast, they said, and hooked up a loudspeaker in the market square so that everyone would be able to hear BBC news. A traveller from Tavoy arrived yesterday in Rangoon with this account.

If only we had arms, even the women are certain to use them to shoot back at the bullies. The people are united and are the source of strength in Burma.

END

ACCOUNT C

Rangoon, Burma, dated December 13, 1974

Early on Wednesday, December 11, 1974, before dawn at 2.m., many, many students were killed. By 10 a.m. that day, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated in the streets of the city, burning office buildings. There were so many fires, it took a long time for the firemen to put them out.

There is a curfew and no one is supposed to be on the streets. Having seen the dead students with my own eyes, I am unable to wipe the scene from my mind. I am full of sadness and also full of anger and resentment. The people are not getting help from anywhere outside the country. I am very bitter. I am made even more bitter by the fact young people who were right in their fight against the military regime were murdered by the soldiers.

My heart goes out to U Thant's family.

On Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1974, when the people of Rangoon rose up and revolted by burning and destroying as many People's stores belonging to the government as they could, they did not harm anyone working in those government stores, and thus demonstrated that the people hate only the military regime, and not the shop clerks serving in the People's stores.

Although there were hundreds of thousands of citizens, they were armed only with sticks and had no chance against the automatic weapons and tanks of the military government. We were savagely put down.

The blood of the dead students on campus flowed in a river on campus and when it congealed, it was taken home in bags and pockets by the people. The students

standing watch by the campus gates were crushed to death by armored cars that rolled in after the gates were ripped off by a crane. Those men and women students standing guard around U Thant's mausoleum were bayoneted and killed; they were defiant to the very end.

Enough, I am so very bitter. I could only stand and watch myself, as I had no arms. Enough, I cannot go on. I am left with bitterness.

END

ACCOUNT D

Rangoon, Burma, dated December 11, 1974

There are at least 50 army trucks along this street full of soldiers with bayonets fixed and carrying G 3 guns, on alert. Looking at them, my tears start to fall. After all, what chance have unarmed students got against the whole Burma Army carrying automatic weapons, their artillery and tanks?

The soldiers swagger back and forth along the roads, very proud of the fact they are the ones doing the killing, not the people being killed; and the swines shout at people, "Go inside your houses, do you want to die?".

Poor U Thant. If he could have known that so much blood would flow in his homeland when his body returned, I don't think he would have dared- even to die.

From the moment U Thant's body arrived in Rangoon, the people were astir and talking to one another. There was no official reception or recognition by the military government. A single official, the Deputy Minister of Education, U Aung Htun, showed up at the airport on his own, for some reason, when U Thant's body arrived; the next day, there was an announcement in the government controlled press that his service had been terminated. There was no explanation given.

U Thant's coffin was put on a car belonging to the United Nations Development Program office in Rangoon and taken to the temporary pavilion erected by U Thant's family on the grounds of the former Kyaikasan race course. Yesterday, December 10, 1974, the military government announced in the press that the Rangoon military command council (local unit of the military government headed by General Ne Win) was giving all assistance to U Thant's family by erecting the pavilion and arranging for the people from the Red Cross to stand guard. What lies! Everyone in Rangoon knows that in actual fact it was U Thant's family

who paid for the pavilion and who also paid Kyats 3.85 a day to the Red Cross for the attendants to watch around the coffin in the pavilion. (Kyats are traded 20 to a US\$ and Kyats 3.85 is about 19 cents a day.)

U Thant's coffin lay without official recognition or honor guard at Kyaikasan race course grounds where the people gathered from all over the city to pay their respects (from December 1 to 5, 1974).

There were at least 50,000 people there on December 5, 1974, when the coffin was to be taken to the local public cemetery for burial. Suddenly, thousands of people, students, and Buddhist monks in the crowd declared they were going to inter U Thant's remains with dignity and honor worthy of his stature in life. They asked permission to do so from one of U Thant's brothers who was present. U Thant's brother then grabbed the microphone and asked the people to listen first to what he had to say, and then do what they wanted afterwards; he said the family had asked permission from the military government to erect a mausoleum, and pending their reply, the family planned a temporary burial in the public cemetery. When he finished, the students announced over the microphone that they wanted the government to hold a State funeral for U Thant, as befitting his stature.

I do not know how or when the students had organized themselves or the people there, but it became obvious that they were well organized. The students held hands around the funeral bier and took hold of the coffin. A young woman student stood on a car and spoke passionately to the people over the microphone. Early this morning, December 11, 1974, she was among the thousands' killed by the military government. The students holding wreaths formed a huge procession leading from Kyaikasan race course grounds ten miles across Rangoon suburbs to Convocation Hall in the middle of the University campus; the men walked on the outer perimeter of the procession and the women walked in the middle where it would be somewhat safer if the Army assault came. No one knew when the attack

would come, but they knew too well General Ne Win had no hesitation about shooting unarmed civilians.

The crowd of people enroute was so great that cars stopped to wait for the procession to pass. People living in the houses along the ten mile long route poured out of their homes, carrying buckets of cold drinking water and cups to refresh the people in the procession.

U Thant's coffin was placed on a funeral bier on stage at Convocation Hall and for five days and nights (from December 5 to 2 a.m. Dec.11,1974), students and Buddhist monks spoke publicly on campus, denouncing No.1 (General Ne Win) and his late first wife for living luxuriously, spending the country's foreign exchange earnings on their trips abroad and living in palaces at home. People flocked onto campus from across the city to listen to these fiery denunciations of General Ne Win. Since free speech was abolished by the General (when he seized power from the democratic civilian government by coup d'etat on March 2,1962), the people found this frank, public criticism a rare and novel experience, and they crowded in by the hundreds of thousands to listen to the passionate speeches from morning till night.

A young woman teacher who spoke to the crowd said her parents who were alarmed for her sake had sent for her to go home, but she was determined to stay and see the cause through to the end, regardless of what that might be; she believed totally in her cause and would fight for it, with her soul, her bare hands, with just the clothes she had on, since she had nothing else, she declared. The people vigorously responded with approval. The crowd of people on campus was so great, there were people waiting in lines to get in, the lines stretching about a mile or so away to Kamayut police station on main road.

On the first day that U Thant's body lay in Convocation Hall on campus, the students let the people in to pay their respects to the coffin on the bier on stage. But the students got wind of a government plan to infiltrate 3,000 plainclothes agents and seize the coffin, and the public was not allowed near the coffin after that first day.

The Psychology students took on the task of identifying these plainclothes agents as they slipped in with the crowd on campus; they were Rangoon party members and Rangoon wards' council members, all belonging to General Ne Win's Burmese Way to Socialism Party. As soon as one agent was identified, the students drove him out from campus with stones.

The students appeared to be united and harmoniously helped one another. When they received intelligence of another government plan, this time to cut off all electricity on campus and rush their people in under cover of darkness to seize the coffin, the Electrical Engineering students took charge of lighting the campus. They strung up wires tapping the city's power lines, and also arranged for thousands of kerosene oil lamps donated by the people of Rangoon to be placed on campus

The Medical students set up first aid stations around the campus, while the Rangoon Institute of Technology students took charge of building a mausoleum on the empty site of the Students' Union building on campus. They made arrangements to take bricks from the construction site of the new library extension wing on campus. So many thousands of citizens volunteered to carry the bricks that the R.I.T. students were forced to limit the honor of carrying the bricks needed to the people they knew personally. Many Rangoon citizens showed up on campus with donations of cement and mortar for the mausoleum.

The people of Rangoon donated not only cement and bricks, but also truckloads of food (rice and curry wrapped in traditional banana leaf) and soft drinks, and mounds of blankets and coats for the students standing guard on campus at night. They donated money as well for the mausoleum, and the students received several hundred thousand kyats.

(note: after 12 years of military dictatorship and General Ne Win's mismanagement of a fertile, rice exporting country, Burma's per capita income of US\$80 per annum is among the lowest in the world, and laborers and workers are on continuous strikes and sit-ins because they cannot buy enough rice to feed their families; in a bankrupt economy, the donation of such amounts of money to the students is another strong indication of support by the general public.)

By the time the military government agreed to give permission, on Dec.8, for U Thant's remains to be buried in Kandawmin park (at the foot of the Shwe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon), the students' mausoleum was completed and U Thant's remains were interred that day in the mausoleum on campus.

On December 11,1974, at 2 a.m. as fully armed troops in battle gear and Party members forced their way onto campus, by using a crane to rip down the gates and armored cars to crush the bodies of the students, the young men and women who had sworn to die defending U Thant's resting place, stood in a circle around the mausoleum, softly singing the national anthem. They were heard singing four stanzas before the troops fired tear gas and thrust their fixed bayonets into the students standing fearlessly around their mausoleum. Earlier they had begged Buddhist monks to break with the tradition of praying for the soul after death, and instead received prayers as they waited to be killed.

As the students fell by the mausoleum, the troops smashed it and brought U Thant's coffin out.

The news of the brutal murders of the students on campus spread quickly through the city and people came out into the streets, in unarmed uprising, to burn and destroy buildings belonging to the government. By one and two o'clock in the afternoon, December 11, 1974, armed troops and tanks were in position all over the city which looked like a war zone. The people were totally unarmed in their confrontation with the fully armed soldiers. Yet the government announced they quelled the uprising without bloodshed. You can believe it or not, my friends.

END

ACCOUNT E

Rangoon, Burma, dated December 13, 1974

As all roads are closed and no buses are running, I walked today.

At 11 a.m. I was on my way taking a shortcut through the compound of the Rangoon General Hospital. I took a road leading past the Mortuary when I encountered "Road Closed" signs. There were 3 or 4 teenagers gravely sitting under the trees nearby, looking scared. They told me that today they saw thousands of dead bodies loaded onto Army Dodge trucks. After that, I heard elsewhere that the dead bodies were being taken away by the Army to be thrown away. They are not being returned their families.

END OF EXCERPT