

B. U. R. M. A.

BURMA RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ACTION

July, 1992

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Despite calls for a national convention to end the civil war, Slorc continues its military campaigns against the ethnic minorities which leave villages, like this Karen village, deserted and the people homeless.

Slorc has called for a national convention during which the groundwork for the writing of a new constitution can be laid. The call has been met with a lot of skepticism by various opposition groups in Burma. This month B.U.R.M.A. looks at several reasons for this skepticism, and why the international community should not place too much hope on peace emerging from such a convention.

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CIVIL WAR

Although the Slorc made an announcement on May 23, calling for a temporary halt in its intensive offensive in the Karen State, two other ethnic minority groups in Burma, the Kachin and Mon, have begun an unusual "monsoon season attack" on the Burmese army in their areas. It seems that Slorc's announcement suggesting a move towards national reconciliation has not convinced the ethnic minorities that the 43 year-old civil war in Burma is about to be ended or that they can trust Slorc to truly pursue a course towards peace and reconciliation.

Mon State (Southeast Burma)

Recently armed ethnic Mon guerrillas from the New Mon State Party (NMSP) began carrying out a rainy season offensive against Three Pagoda Pass which was their former headquarters and an important border trade route on the Thai-Burma border which was overrun by the Burmese Army at end of 1989. The first attack broke out on the 12th of July and clashes are still going on now. The fighting has resulted in the death of ten of Slorc's men, 12 others wounded and 2 unaccounted for while the Mon guerrillas claim only one wounded.

Major Carr Raw of the NMSP said that the plan is to restore the old Mon headquarters at a time when Slorc is facing serious difficulties getting supplies which they must carry long distances from their main bases inland. The heavy monsoon rains make such resupplying extremely slow and difficult.

Subsequently, Slorc has sent about one soldiers to reinforce the 160 soldiers who are trying to hold onto the areas involved in the clashes. Hundreds of civilians from the Three Pagoda Village are fleeing from the fierce battles which are going on. Some of the villagers have also taken refugee deep in the jungles.

At the same time, Thai officials are negotiating with Burmese Army commanders to have both Thai and Burmese soldiers withdraw several kilometers back from the border area in order to create a "free trade zone".

Consensus on this plan has not been reached yet. At the present time the Thai Border Police station and the Burmese army check point in "Three Pagoda Pass" are only about 200 meters apart, easily within gun range. Thailand is apparently once again chanting their impossible slogan to "change civil war zones into zones of economic development". To accomplish this, they must pressure the armed resistance movement of the NMSP not to interfere in their plan to set up economic zones along the border. A total lack of awareness concerning the root problems of the civil war in Burma will insure that this Thai dream can never effectively be implemented.

In a recent interview, Major Carr Raw of the NMSP said that the Mon are only struggling to maintain their rights, their indigenous culture and their literature. "For example our own literature in the capital of the Mon state, which is now under the Burmese army's control, is not recognized and thus is not allowed to be taught," Major Carr Raw said. "Our people are being executed and raped daily in the Slorc military operations. If we have our basic ethnic rights, why should we take up arms? Our dream is very simple: we wish to promote the life of the Mon people within our own culture."

Economic zones along the border are not the major interest of the Mon people, nor will such zones actually change the civil war zones into anything else. As long as the Burmese Military continues its war against the ethnic minorities, there can be no peace and not "economic zones".

Kachin State (Northeast Burma)

One of Burma's strongest armed ethnic guerrilla groups, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), launched a surprise attack on the 5th of June and captured the two towns of Pang Su and Nam Yung which were under the control of Slorc. Pang Su is an India-Burma border town and Nam Yung is about 30 kilometers inside Burma from the India-Burma border. In KIA

history, this strategic attack was probably one of the deepest penetrations the KIA has made into the northwestern India-Burma border area from its northeastern China-Burma border bases. Following the KIA attacks, Slorc's Swedish designed PC-6 And PC-7 fighters bombed the disputed areas and transported in new and fresh troops by helicopters. One PC-6 and three helicopters were shot down according to the KIA report.

The dawn attack started at 5 am. After an exchange of fire lasting about one and a half hours, Nam Yung was captured by the KIA. It has a population of about 300 civilians

After a further six hours of fighting, Pang Su, home to 150 civilians, was also captured. Due to heavy bombing by the Slorc, the KIA withdrew its troops into the surrounding areas of the towns on the 13th of June.

According to the KIA report, the KIA attack resulted in 16 Slorc soldiers dead, 67 captured as POWs, while a total of 6 KIA men were wounded. Major Soe Than, commander of the Slorc forces and 13 of his men fled across the border into India and surrendered to Indian officials there. About 1,000 civilians also fled to take refuge in India.

At the present time, intensive fighting is being carried out along the Ledo highway (a road connecting India to China via Burma which was built by the British during World War II), the railway and smaller motor roads. Slorc is currently assembling an unidentified number of porters around the battle zones to help carry supplies and clear up mine fields.

General Than Shwe, present chairman of Slorc, personally made a one-day tour of Danai town where Burmese soldiers wounded in the fighting are being hospitalized.

- Source;
New Mon State Party report
Kachin Independence Army report



ECONOMICS

UNDP's Role

Even though Burma's economic deficit is accelerating, Slorc's UNDP-backed economic reshaping program continues. This seems strange in the light of the very unstable political situation in Burma and Slorc's newly allocated defence budget of US\$200 million to carry on its civil war against the ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, UNDP has requested a total of US\$90.7 million in assistance to implement the "economic" dream of Slorc.

UNDP has assisted numerous seminars in Burma to which foreign experts have been invited to help boost Burma's economic development. UNDP's intent seems to focus on decentralizing the economic structure, the privatization of a selected number of state enterprises, and the introduction of a market oriented economic system.

Meanwhile, although UNDP has stated that it is well placed to assist the Slorc to conceptualize and implement economic reform strategies, the people's per capita income has fallen continuously from kvats 1,510 (US\$232) in 1985 to kyat 1,225 (US\$188) in 1991-92.

The UNDP should reconsider whether or not any of its assistance is aiding the development of the Burmese economic or in fact simply fueling the civil war.

• Source;

Mgr (-/6/92)

BP (20/6/92)

WPD (3/6/92)

New American Investments.

During the month of June reports have been received that three new USA companies have entered into Burma despite the fact that Burmese opposition groups and the international community have been calling for full economic sanctions against the Burmese military regime which has one of the world's worst human rights records.

Trend International (Burmuda) Ltd. of the USA signed an agreement with Slorc on the 16th of June for a production sharing contract to reac-

tivate the suspended oil-fields in two blocks in the central part of Burma.

Apache Oil Ltd. of the USA and Slorc signed a production sharing contract for the reactivation of suspended oil fields in the two blocks of northwest Burma near the block acquired by Trend International Ltd. The President of Apache, Mr B. M. Rahmani was present at the signing ceremony in Burma.

Watana Trading Ltd. of the USA also signed an agreement with Slorc on the 11th of June for a production and sharing contract for a granite mining operation in Yezin village-tract in the central part of Burma. Mr Frank W. M. Wong, managing director of Watana, represented the company at the signing ceremony in Burma.

• Source;

WPD (16/6/92)

WPD (12/6/92)

EGAT & ADB Plan the Building of Dams

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) has recently concluded a study on eight projects concerning the building of more than 10 dams along the Salween and Moei border rivers. The plan was started in May of 1991 with the Asia Development Bank's agreement to finance facilities. The Electric Power Development Co. of Thailand (EPDC) sponsored and completed the primary studies on the projects.

The studies show that the projects would generate a capacity of 6,397.5 megawatts and an investment of US\$5,120.75 million would be needed. Alone the Slorc would have great difficulties funding the projects.

EGAT and Slorc are still discussing how to tap the abundant hydro-potential of the rich tributaries of Burma. Two possibilities have emerged. One is that Thailand wants to take on the projects because they offer an alternative source of electricity for the tremendous energy needs of Thailand. Another is that Burma would look after its own projects and sell the electricity to Thailand. If the project would be implemented, it can provide

two-thirds of Thailand's current energy needs.

There is no doubt that these projects will have a serious effect on the environment, especially on the Burmese forests in the area. One of the reasons that EGAT wants to build dams on the Burmese side of the border is that local Thai environmental and conservation groups will strongly fight against the building of dams on Thai soil.

• Source;

TN (3/5/91)

BP (23/6/92)

Borneo Co. of Singapore

Slorc has issued notification of the establishment of a joint venture with Borneo Co. Ltd. on the 19th of June. The joint venture called Myanmar Borneo Co. Ltd. will carry out marketing of pharmaceutical products, office automation equipment, printing and photographic products, department store management and related activities, travel, and resource development including engineering services. The total investment is kyats twenty million (about US\$3,577,817.53).

The address of Borneo Co. Ltd. is:

Mr. Neil Rombaut, Company Director

450-452, Alexandra Rd.

Singapore 0511.

• Source:

WPD (20/6/92)

Unimix of Hong Kong

Slorc issued a notification about the establishment of a joint venture with Unimix International Ltd of Hong Kong on the 25th of June. The joint venture is called Myanmar Unimix International Ltd. and will carry out manufacturing and marketing of garments. The total investment is kyats 15,625,000 (about US\$279,516.99). Mr Paul CM Tsang of Hong Kong will act as Chief Executive Officer of this joint venture.

• Source:

WPD (25/6/92)



ENVIRONMENT

Deforestation in Ethnic Mon Areas

Background on Thai Logging Companies

One of Burma's ethnic groups, the Mon, have been facing the fear of serious deforestation in their area due not only to extended logging extraction periods but also expanded logging areas in contracts signed between some of Thailand's logging companies and Slorc. Five Thai companies which have become quite notorious in Mon areas are Tanakit Timber Ltd., Maesod Forestry Co. Ltd., Ranong Victoria Point, Chom Sin Co and Pathunthani. Some of the shares in these companies are apparently also owned high ranking Thai military officials.

The ethnic Mon are upset about the raping of their forests by all these Thai companies who signed contracts with Slorc since early 1989. The contracts are basically for two years extraction and should have ended by the end of 1991. Each of the companies have to deposit US\$50,000 for the contracts and the security deposit is put under the favor of the forestry department of Burma.

However, due to tremendous profits, contracts for one to two year extensions have been reached between the Thai companies and Slorc.

Rate of extraction

The Maesod Forestry Co. not only signed a new expanded concession which covers an estimated 23,000 acres on November 13, 1991 for a term of one year extraction but was also granted an extension of one more year in their old concession area. Maesod Forestry hopes to extract 20,000 Hoppus tons from both concession areas.

All the rest of the companies, except Chom Sin Co., have inked contracts covering two more years extraction with the Slorc. Pathunthani is the most skillful and experienced in the business and has extracted 20,000 Hoppus tons up to now (see more detail in BURMA Vol 2, No.6) but Chom Sin Co. has lost about Thai baht 600,000 in

the extraction work and has suspended operations due to their lack of skill and experience in the business. Since 1989, the five Thai companies have already extracted at least 270,000 Hoppus tones from the ethnic Mon area.

Following the old two-year extraction contracts in 1989, all the Thai companies expected to extract about 15,000 Hoppus tons but in reality each of the companies could extract at least 18,000 tons per year. The net extraction period is only in the dry season from October to May and the rest of the period is monsoon season during which the extraction is temporarily suspended because of the heavy rains and the extreme difficulty for transportation in the jungle.

Slorc's Sale System

According to the old sale contract, Slorc divided teak wood quality into grade No.1 and No.2. The rest of the woods are group A (hard wood), and group B, C, and D (softer woods). The sale prices ranged from the grade No.1 teak at US\$1,400/ton to US\$2,100/ton and US\$140/ton to US\$210/ton for grade No.2. For other wood, the price ranges from group A at about US\$100/ton, group B at US\$45/ton, group C at US\$39/ton and group D at US\$34/ton. Under the recent new sales contracts, Slorc raised the prices by 30% for all grades of logs extracted by the Thai companies.

Opinion of the Ethnic Mon

At the same time the Thai companies also pay a very small amount of money to the Mon armed resistance (New Mon State Party) to carry out extraction work in the Mon territory. One member of the NMSP said they got Baht 700/ton for the hard woods and baht 500 for other sorts of wood in the early 1990s. After the Mon headquarters in Three Pagoda Pass was occupied by the Burmese army at the end of 1990, the Thai companies began to pay less for wood ranging from baht 400/ton for hard wood and baht 250/ton for soft wood even though Slorc raised its price by 30%.

The Mon also state that they absolutely do not want to allow Thai companies to rape their forests, but must accept it unwillingly as their liberation struggle must also rely on some use of Thai territory. For example food, ammunition supplies and international relationships rely on Thai territory. When the Mon recently protested the Thai companies destruction of forests in Mon areas, Thai officials cut off all the supply routes to the area and even refused to allow Mon leaders to come to Thai territory. The Mon point out that without adequate food and ammunition, the Burmese army would easily overrun their defence positions.

Slorc also often accuses the ethnic minorities of destroying the forests through their slash and burn agriculture methods. However, a Mon leader said that the charge is a groundless accusation because the Mon agricultural system destroys much less forests than logging extractions by both Slorc's forestry department and Thai companies. The Mon leader further said, "If we allow the Thai companies to continue their extraction for ten more years in our area, we think our forests will be totally ruined."

Thai companies hire Mon refugees very cheaply along the Thai-Burma border as unskilled laborers to help in the deforestation. The refugees fled their villages out of fear of the Burmese army in the civil war zones. The payment for cutting of a tree and clearing off all the branches is only 25 baht. Although the Mon refugees know that the Thai companies are exploiting them, they are forced to do the work in order to earn a little money for their survival.

• Source
New Mon State Party



• Sources used in this issue:

WPD - Working People's Daily
TN - The Nation (Thailand)
BP - Bangkok Post (Thailand)
MGR - Manager (Thailand)

PEACE

The world is now watching Cambodia. Over 20,000 people working for the United Nations and representing countries around the world are now engaged in a mammoth mission to save the country and bring an end to the ghastly war which has been raging there for so many years. The budget which the United Nations estimates will be required to carry out this two year task is well over US\$2 billion. And then, they tell us, there is no certainty that the peace/salvation mission will be successful!

Cambodia is indeed in a horrible condition. During the years of Pol Pot, an estimated two million people perished from torture, disease and execution. In one killing field near Phnom Penh one can see the mass graves where about 20,000 people were buried. Bits of bone and clothing still cover the area and signs placed beside the graves which have already been opened indicate where mainly women and children were found, where beheaded skeletons were dug up, or which simply say, "Mass grave of 450 victims".

A total of 86 of the mass graves have already been opened, and revealed the bodies of 8,985 victims. Another 129 graves remain untouched. A shrine has been built to house the skulls of most of the 8,985 victims so that people can stop by to pray for a peaceful rest for these people who died so violently.

Nearby, in Phnom Penh, the Toul Seng school which was one of Pol Pot's most infamous torture prisons has been kept as a museum. One can walk through the rooms and see the instruments of torture used to extract confessions. The torture was successful since almost all of the victims finally prepared the confessions Pol Pot and his revolution demanded. The confessions are uncomfortably similar. After signing the confessions, the people were trucked to the killing field where they were beheaded, struck over the head with a hoe, or in some other inhuman way, killed.

How could all of this go on for so long? Although Pol Pot closed his country off from the eyes of the world, news was leaking out about the hor-

rible atrocities going on inside. People around the world tended to dismiss the news as rumor, or simply excused themselves by saying, "We should not get involved in Cambodia's internal affairs." The result: an estimated two million men, women and children dead, and a country which the world is now struggling to save through the biggest United Nations mobilization ever put together. What happens if they fail to succeed despite all the money and energy at their disposal?

However, the question which keeps pleading for an answer, and which seems to be avoided by almost everyone is: If the world had responded sooner to the cries of the Cambodian people and not just considered it Cambodia's internal affair, could this holocaust have been avoided in the first place?

A civil war has been raging in Burma for over forty years now. Like Cambodia, Burma also has its killing fields, and although they might not be as enormous as those in Cambodia, they are just as barbarous. Confessions are gotten by torture, and those who confess under these conditions are often brutally killed. It makes no difference who carries out these tortures and killings, the contempt for basic human rights and justice is always the same.

The cries of the people of Burma have gone out to the world. Will the democratic nations of the world take heed and intercede so that Burma will not require another massive United Nations US\$2 billion heart transplant? Unfortunately they may not. Many countries, especially those within ASEAN are repeating the deathly words, "We can not interfere in the internal affairs of another country." Others say the right things about human rights, yet fail to declare a total economic boycott on the Burmese military regime which needs the money foreign investments bring in to continue its civil war against the peoples of Burma. Yet others have a "wait and see" approach, placing hope in Siorc's recent "reconciliation" moves. They have forgotten the old adage that, "When the fox talks peace,

you had better watch your chickens very closely."

The United Nations itself could intervene in a much more creative and effective way. While the UN Human Rights Commission has blasted Burma's human rights record, the UNDP carries out development programs within the country which directly benefit the military's campaigns against the ethnic minorities. The United Nations has also continued to allow Siorc to sit in the Burma seat of the General Assembly despite the fact that the people of Burma, in the 1990 elections, completely rejected Siorc's right to rule the country. The opposition groups inside Burma also continue to wait for the UN to call for economic sanctions against Siorc which could help limit the money flowing into Siorc's military machine from countries like Thailand, the United States, Japan and China.

In 1991 a Karen man visited Washington DC and had opportunity to walk along the Vietnam War Memorial wall which lists all of those Americans who died in the US war in Vietnam. After viewing the long marble wall, he stood in silence until someone asked him what he was thinking. "I am just wondering," he said, "when the civil war is finally all over, how long will the wall have to be to hold all of the names of our people who will have been killed?"

Democratic nations around the world, as well as the United Nations, could help make that wall smaller by taking effective action in solidarity with the people of Burma. Human rights is not a country's internal affairs. It is the concern of everyone who cares about peace and justice. Human rights knows no national boundaries, and it becomes a reality only when all people who really care do what they must do to make human rights become a reality. The world can help end the civil war in Burma, and if they do so, it may not be necessary for the United Nations to later intercede with a massive program which "may not be able to revive the country and its people."



POLITICS

Background to the National Convention

The first meeting between the military junta (SLORC) and representatives of some of the opposition political parties to make arrangements for a National Convention took place in Rangoon, Burma on June 23 of this year. Although more than two hundred political parties have registered with the Multi-party Democracy Election Commission, only seven parties were invited. Most of the other parties have already been de-registered by SLORC under various pretenses.

General Myo Nyunt announced that the purpose of the meeting was "to open the door towards measures to be taken for convening a National Convention to lay down basic principles for the purpose of framing a firm Constitution essential for the emergence of a multiparty democracy system within the nation." General Myo Nyunt, a member of the SLORC, is also the chairman of the Steering Committee of the meeting. He further asserted that "there is no cause whatsoever for any domestic or foreign organization to be able to exert any kind

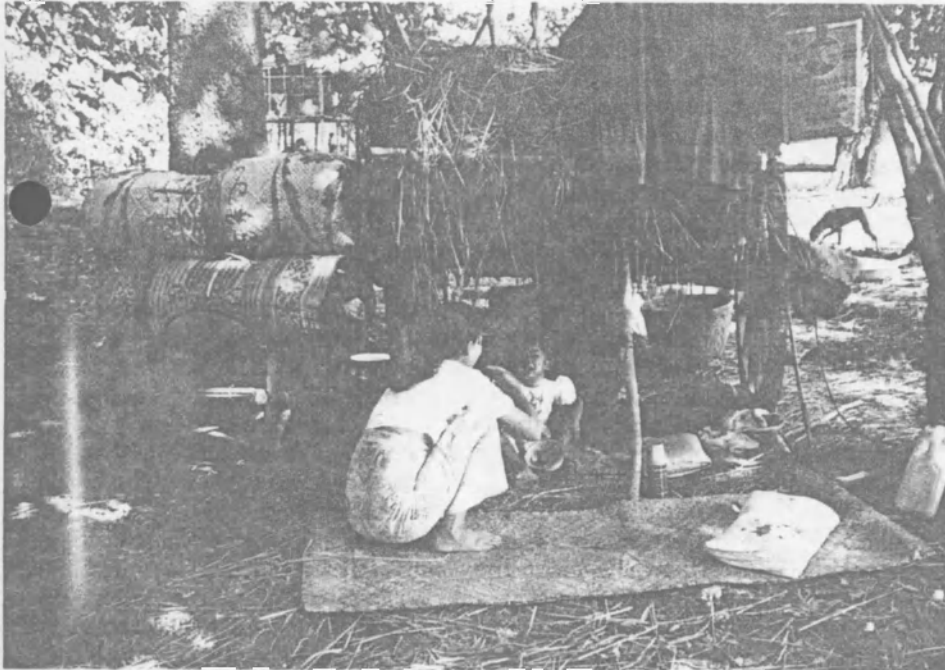
of pressure upon the SLORC ... because the SLORC is the ARMY." (WPD June 24)

It is apparent that his speech was carefully designed to express the reaction of the SLORC towards the international community and the dissidents who have openly manifested their skeptical views of SLORC's true intentions. The international community and the dissidents have numerous profound reasons for their skepticism towards the SLORC's move.

In 1963 the entire population of Burma, as well as the international community, were extremely suspicious of the military regime led by Ne Win and his Revolutionary Council (RC). The main reason was the massacre of more than 100 students on July 7, 1962. On April 1, 1963, Ne Win issued a general amnesty order. That order was followed by the release of thousands of prisoners including political prisoners. Almost all the prisons in Burma were emptied so that the event popularly became known as a "prison shake-up". Then followed the negotiations between the RC and the National Democratic United Front (NDUF) which was the front of the

strongest revolutionary organizations such as the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), the KNUP (the predecessor of the Karen National Union), the New Mon State Party (NMSP), and the Kareni National Progressive Party (KNPP). The junta's delegation was initially led by Col. Saw Myint and later by Col. Hla Han. The NDUF was led by Manh Ba Zan of the KNUP with Ye Baw Htay of CPB, Nai Shwe Kyin of NMSP and Saw Maw Reh of KNPP as co-leaders. After some preliminary preparations the negotiations officially began on 2nd September and proceeded for more than two months with some significant progress. But it was abruptly and unilaterally terminated by the RC on November 14. The next day, Nov. 15, delegates of various revolutionary organizations were sent back to their respective liberated areas. At midnight that night about three thousand opposition politicians were rounded up. In a single night all the empty prisons were overcrowded again while in the rural areas fighting resumed and even escalated. It was the first instance when the dishonesty of Ne Win and his men could be clearly seen. The second instance was in 1968 when

Ne Win invited experienced and prominent politicians such as former prime minister U Nu, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Lay Maung etc. (most of them being released from detention very recently) to participate in a committee called "The Internal Unity Advisory Board". The 33 Commission, as it was popularly known, was instructed to submit their recommendations within a limited time. Three different recommendations came up. Ne Win rejected all advice outright saying that such kind of disunity (three separate recommendations) was harmful to the state. In fact all three recommendations had one common point. All different views advised Ne Win to relinquish his illegally acquired political power. Thus Ne Win ignored a rare chance which could have been the beginning of a long process in trying to solve the delicate and complicated problems of Burma.



A refugee family ekes out a living deep in the jungle. Few of the ethnic minority people have any faith in Slorc's call for national reconciliation. They have suffered too much for too long.

The third instance was in 1974 when Ne Win promised to transfer power to civilians. Civilians did take over power, but these civilians were only Ne Win and his fellow generals who flagrantly changed their uniforms into civilian clothes.

The fourth was in 1987. At that time rumors were spreading all over Burma that some of the currencies of higher value would soon be demonetized. Having experienced such devaluations twice (in 1964 and 1985), citizens rushed to buy everything they could so that at least something would be left when the demonetization order came out. Ne Win's BSPP government denied the rumors. The government issued a stern warning to those who were propagating the rumors. To improve the credibility of their statement the government arrested a number of persons who attempted to buy some valuables. When the citizens began to relax the junta suddenly issued the demonetization order on September 5, 1987 thereby depriving the population of 80% of their savings since they were caught completely off guard.

The fifth instance was in 1988 when Ne Win declared that eight of the top BSPP leaders, including himself, were going to resign. He further declared that there would be a plebiscite to inquire whether the people supported a one-party system or a multi-party system. This announcement was part of Ne Win's speech delivered on July 23 at the emergency conference of the BSPP. But two days later this pledge was discarded. The BSPP conference appointed Sein Lwin, broadly known as a relentless butcher and who was one of the eight leaders said to be retiring, as the new chairman of the BSPP and the new President of Burma. Instead of proceeding with the already declared plan for a plebiscite, Sein Lwin presented the new oppressive program of the junta thereby igniting the spark which rapidly engulfed the whole nation in the 1988 nonviolent uprising.

The sixth instance was during the nationwide uprising in August-September 1988. While Dr. Maung Maung, the third president of Burma installed within a mere two months, declared that the special congress of the BSPP to be held in September would decide whether to hold a referendum to choose between a one

party system or a multiparty system, large posters and placards sprang up in almost every large building in Rangoon as well as in other big cities of Burma. These posters and placards carried slogans supporting the one party system. They were, in fact, made by the BSPP, not by the people working in those buildings. That was the reason why the people turned down the offer extended by Maung Maung.

In the light of such historical records, with nearly half-a-century-old civil war still going on, and with thousands of political prisoners and students, among them most of the influential leaders such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin U, Min Ko Naing etc. remaining imprisoned, skepticism towards the intentions of the military regime is absolutely justifiable. It should not be surprising to the world that opposition groups in Burma have not responded to SLORC's recent overtures with much excitement or confidence.

Again in 1989 when SLORC, the new name of the military junta, invited the opinions of the people with regards to the Elections Law, many registered political parties presented their views. The most serious recommendations were the paragraphs related to the status of the persons who have some kind of contact with certain foreigners and those related to the time frame for the transfer of power to the winners of the elections. The NLD, as well as many other parties, tabled their very clearly written proposals. But the SLORC completely ignored the proposals and promulgated the Elections Laws which was solely the outlook of the junta. Events have proven that those two paragraphs were the most crucial articles of the Elections Law which were brazenly used by the

SLORC in their attempt to reject the results of the elections.

These are just some significant examples of how untrustworthy the junta leaders of Burma have been in the past.

In the light of such historical records, with nearly half-a-century-old civil war still going on, and with thousands of political prisoners and students, among them most of the influential leaders such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin U, Min Ko Naing etc. remaining imprisoned, skepticism towards the intentions of the military regime is absolutely justifiable. It should not be surprising to the world that opposition groups in Burma have not responded to SLORC's recent overtures with much excitement or confidence.

What is clear is that international pressure is having tremendous effects on the regime's prestige and economy. With the SLORC striving to trick the people and the international community into believing that reforms are in the making, friends of the democratic movement in Burma should be more vigilant and their support and assistance to the opposition should be stepped up. With such assistance and support for the struggle for democracy, the most crooked, well organized, well armed and atrocious regimes on the earth will have to face more difficulties, and this might pressure them to finally step down so that the people's elected representatives can finally begin the task of national reconciliation.



CORRECTION

In B.U.R.M.A. Vol. 2 Number 6 (June 1992), a typing error was made in the article entitled Environment, on page 5. The article states: "The highest rate of wood extraction by Pathumthani was in 1988..." It should be 1989. B.U.R.M.A. apologizes for this error.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Music Tape

On February 23, 1992, the members of the United Methodist Churches in Oriskany Falls and Deansboro, New York received a sheet of information about Aung San Suu Kyi from Amnesty International. Her plight, and the situation in Burma was discussed during the morning service, and the people concluded the morning worship with the chant, "Free! Free Aung San Suu Kyi!" That evening, the youth group from all the churches in Oriskany Falls rehearsed and recorded a song written by the pastor, Wrightson Tongue, Jr. The singing and the chant of the morning worshippers were digitally mixed into a final recording in a home recording studio at the parsonage.

The song easily enters ones consciousness, and listeners are soon singing and chanting along. It is one of those extremely creative and spon-

taneous bursts of solidarity which comes from people who care about justice and peace.

Those wishing to have a copy of the tape can order them from Free Suu Kyi, Free Burma, c.o UMOUN, 11th Floor, 777 UN Plaza, New York, New York 10017, USA.

B.U.R.M.A. is interested in learning of other such actions which help bring us all closer together in the struggle for human rights. Please inform us if you know of other groups or individuals who are finding exciting ways to raise the voice of justice.

Canada

Two friends, Colleen Jeffery and Philippe Lavalie recently gave a presentation on human rights in Burma to post-graduate students enrolled in the Asia Pacific Management Cooperative Program at Capilano College in Canada. The presentation

will be incorporated into the program's fall curriculum and other colleges have requested similar presentations dealing with human rights violations in Burma.

Peace Candle

The Peace Candle idea was picked up by friends in the Mennonite Central Committee office in North America. They lit a large candle and kept it burning in the office. Behind the candle was the sheet explaining the meaning behind the candle. People passing through the office could see it and would ask questions about Burma. Friends in the office wrote, "We believe that every flicker of light, every breath of prayer, brings us closer to peace in Burma."



AIR MAIL

ADDRESS RETURN REQUESTED