

# B. U. R. M. A.

## BURMA RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ACTION

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A Slorc outpost near Three Pagoda Pass where a proposed gas pipeline might enter Thailand carrying large amounts of natural gas from the Gulf of Martaban to gas-fueled electricity generating plants in Thailand.

During the 1992 rainy season, Slorc has been carrying on an aggressive political offensive to convince the international community that democratic reforms are taking place within the country. This month B.U.R.M.A. looks at some of the issues related to this political offensive, and how this offensive is truly effecting much of the rural population.

P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504 Thailand

## ECONOMICS

*Economic development aid has too often been viewed as an end in itself. Dams, roads, exploitation of natural resources, etc. are considered good if carried out efficiently. In reality economic development aid is not an end in itself, but a means to either support a process of improving the quality of life and human rights of the common people, or of supporting a corrupt power system which disregards the rights of the common people and reaps the benefits of such "development" mainly for itself. Burma is a clear case of where development aid can not be separated from human rights.*

**A**t the recent ASEAN meeting in Manila Philippines, US Secretary of State James Baker and Senator Evans from Australia called on ASEAN nations to place economic sanctions and an arms embargo on the Burmese military regime until full human rights and democracy are achieved there. The ASEAN response was predictable. Their commitment to their policy of "constructive engagement", they responded, was to be continued, and they strongly disapproved of connecting human rights to development aid. At the Non Aligned Movement meeting held the last week of August, a similar statement was made. Human rights, although very important, should not determine economic development aid for a nation. The countries most vocal on this issue are usually those which, themselves, fear that an investigation of their own human rights record could mean a loss for them of foreign economic development aid as well. They would try to perpetuate the idea that human rights and economic development are two issues totally unrelated to each other.

In Burma, at least, nothing could be further from reality. While foreign investments in Burma have increased over the past few years, the living standard of the people has continued to drop. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forcibly moved out of the major urban centers into squalid, unsanitary "satellite villages". In the rural areas, some sources estimate that as many as one million rural villagers have been displaced by military campaigns and are now living in concentration camp-like settlements, as refugees in neighboring countries are simply struggling for survival deep in the jungles. Despite economic "development" aid, the

human rights situation in Burma remains deplorable.

Nowhere has this issue hit home more clearly in Burma than with foreign investments to develop Burma's vast mineral resource potential. Burma is rated as having very high potential in chromium, copper, gold, lead, rare earth, silver, tin, tungsten, zinc, barium, gemstones, gas and oil. During the past three years, a large number of foreign companies have entered Burma to especially seek out and develop its oil and gas reserves. Millions of dollars have been paid to the Burmese military for these concessions. The money fuels the military machine and the only thing left to the people is higher prices. It is reported that black-market prices for gasoline in Rangoon have hit 150-180 kyats per gallon (about US\$25 to \$30) compared with the official price of 16 kyats (US\$2.80). (II 1991)

The link between human rights and economic development is emerging most clearly in a recent development to exploit the vast natural gas fields in the Gulf of Martaban. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT) approached the Burmese military regime in 1991 with a US\$1 billion proposal to invest in exploration for natural gas in the region and to construct a 500 kilometer pipeline from the Gulf of Martaban through Moulmein and on to Three Pagoda Pass where it would feed a giant power plant in Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province. It is estimated that from 3 to 6 trillion cubic feet of natural-gas could exist in this off-shore field. (II March 20, 1991)

The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat) would purchase the gas from PTT. Their main concern, however, is the security of this gas supply. The proposed gas

pipeline would pass through areas controlled by the Karen National Union. It would probably be necessary for the Burmese military regime to guarantee that no sabotage of the pipeline would occur before the project could successfully be completed.

In July of this year, an accord to develop the Martaban Gulf natural gas field was finally signed between the state-run Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise (MOGE) and the French oil company Total. The area which is to be explored and developed involves two off-shore blocks M5 and M6 covering a total area of 26,140 square kilometers. The PTT is now expected to negotiate a partnership in the gas development project with Total and MOGE. PTT would probably take a 30% stake in the project. Field development and the pipeline are now estimated to cost over US\$2 billion, and would probably not be completed until 1998. PTT hopes to get an initial 250 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. (BP 29/7/92)

The opposition forces have raised serious doubts about this project. Their concerns cover several significant areas:

### 1. Environmental

The pipeline would run through heavily forested areas. For security reasons, large areas of the forest on either side of the pipeline would probably have to be removed. The destruction this would create to the ecological balance in the area, including potential erosion problems, has not yet been studied and there has been no indication that the companies and governments involved are planning to make any such studies. The same can be said concerning the ecological and environmental problems created by drilling in the Gulf of Martaban. Vast areas of shoreline and sea habitats could be seriously damaged by pollution created by these drilling activities.

Some of the areas through which the pipeline might pass have already faced serious ecological damage by Thai

logging companies who have reportedly stripped areas bare of trees and bush. This destruction will have very negative long term effects on the area, its natural wildlife and on the villagers who live there. It may also have serious environmental effects on neighboring Thailand which could face serious floods when waters from heavy rains rush down these barren hillsides and on into Thailand.

## 2. Political

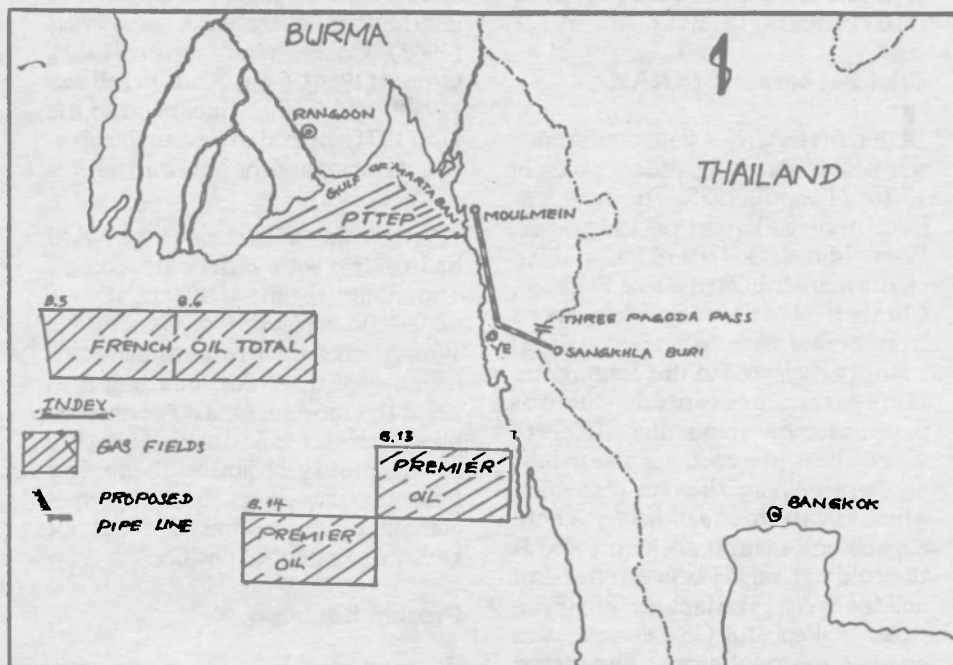
The pipeline, as now planned, would run through the Karen State and possibly through parts of the Mon State. In order to guarantee protection of the pipeline, the Burmese military would have to "secure" these areas. This would involve heavy military offensives. For such offensives, the Burmese military will need a steady supply of weapons and other military equipment. Any investments into this project will probably be used by the military to drive out the Karen and Mon, and this becomes a direct involvement in the internal political issues of Burma.

## 3. Human Rights

The areas through which the pipeline must pass are inhabited by Karen and Mon villagers. They have lived here for many generations. To insure that these villagers do not sabotage the pipeline, or provide sanctuary to Karen or Mon soldiers who might sabotage the pipeline, the villagers would all have to be removed. This would mean the displacement of perhaps hundreds of thousands of minority villagers. Examples of such relocations which have taken place all over Burma during the past few years indicates that the human rights of these villagers will not be guaranteed by the Burmese military. In fact, they could even be used as forced laborers to build the pipeline and connecting roads just as they are being forced to build railroads and roads in other parts of the country. If this project were truly aimed at economic development of Burma, it should not bring such hardships on the people.

In today's complex world, human rights and economic development aid can not be separated. Economic

# GULF OF MARTABAN



Map showing the Martaban Gas Fields and the possible route the gas pipeline will take through Karen State and into Thailand

development and the aid which it requires either strengthens the human rights of a people, or it supports those structures which destroy people's human rights. Few voices of leadership in the world today have the courage to stand on this position.

On August 8 of this year, in a speech to Lions Club members in Bangkok, former Thai National Security Council chief Prasong Soonsiri called on Thailand to recognize this reality. He said that some groups in Thailand have interests in logs, fisheries and mining in Burma. Thailand should consider abandoning these interests. Thailand, he continued, should also review its unclear policy towards Burma. Only some powers-that-be in the country support the Burmese junta.

**"We should do as wanted by the world concerning human rights problems. We should give moral support to the people of Burma who fought for democracy. They deserve the same support as the Thai people who fought for democracy in May,"** Prasong said. (BP 9/8/92)

## Other Economic News

### Texaco

In their 1991 Annual Report, Texaco reports that exploration activity underway and planned includes "seismic studies on three blocks totaling 10.1 million acres onshore and offshore Myanmar (formerly Burma). Texaco's interests range from 42% to 50%. Two wildcat wells are planned for 1992."

### Thai Military Bank Ltd.

Burma has granted Thai Military Bank a license to open the first representative office of a foreign bank in Rangoon in decades. Rangoon Radio reported that the decision to allow the Thai bank to do business in the country was in line with government policy to set up a monetary system conducive to a market-oriented economy. (BP 31/8/92)

## POLITICS

### Burma and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

#### Brief Background to NAM

**T**he first Afro-Asian conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia from 17 to 24 April, 1955. The host was President Sukarno of Indonesia. Prime Ministers Neru of India, U Nu of Burma, Mohamed Ali of Pakistan, Chou En-lai of China and delegations from twenty nine Asian and African states participated in the conference. Delegates presented various proposals of numerous different views. The conference was able to pass an extraordinary 10-point resolution which laid the foundations for a non-aligned and neutral position towards the cold war raging between the East and the West. The famous "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" was one of these resolutions. The second conference was planned to be held in Algeria in June, 1965 but on June 17 a military coup led by the defence minister toppled the Algerian government and the conference had to be canceled.

The Belgrade Conference was held in 1961. Owing to the participation of some non-Asian and non-African countries it was called the first Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement or NAM for short. The conference was co-sponsored by Tito (Yugoslavia), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nehru (India), Nasser (Egypt) and Nkrumah (Ghana). When a draft resolution was presented which was anti-Israel in nature, most of the delegates seemed to be satisfied with it, but U Nu of Burma took the floor to persuade the participants to consider a more balanced version which was proposed by India. Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Nepal supported U Nu. After some discussions the more moderate Indian resolution was adopted unanimously. Thus U Nu, and Burma, became a prominent figure in the NAM. This was one of the supportive factors which helped Burma's U Thant to become the Secretary General of the UN that same year. U Thant was seen by the world as a representative of the NAM

and his skillful handling of the serious international crises e.g. Congo crisis (1962), Cuban missile crisis (1962), Cyprus (1964), 6-day Arab-Israeli war (1967), and China's admission to the UN (1971), helped to elevate the prestige of Burma and the NAM in the eyes of the world.

As the cold war intensified the NAM had to deal with various new crises. The military regime of Burma, already under the leadership of General Ne Win, ignored their responsibility as a member of the NAM and began to avoid the movement. The regime explicitly proved their disloyalty in 1979 by completely removing themselves from the movement, accusing it of committing serious mistakes and not keeping to a neutral position.

#### Present Situation

**I**n 1992, the Burmese military regime again suddenly took an interest in becoming a part of NAM. During the August NAM meeting, which was being held in Indonesia, Burma requested and was granted re-entry into this international group. They bring the total membership of NAM to 108.

NAM's acceptance of Slorc as the legitimate ruling power of Burma comes as a shock to many people since the Slorc was absolutely and democratically dismissed by the people of Burma in the 1990 general elections. Many observers, as well as most members of the opposition in Burma, see Slorc's interest in NAM not based on Slorc's interest in rejoining the international community, but rather based on their own selfish interest in trying to gain international legitimacy for their continued control over the country and people. Slorc's dismal human rights record should have been sufficient reason for NAM to hold off allowing Burma reentry into the organization until power is finally transferred to a government elected and accepted by the people, the civil war ended, and all political prisoners released.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad defended the readmission of Burma to NAM in a statement

which reflected the policy of "constructive engagement" which the ASEAN countries have been pushing for several years now. "We could leave Burma out of the Non-Aligned Movement but that is not the way to change Burma's position," he said. "The fact that they associate with others means that they have to live up to the standards of others."

However, Burmese Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw made it clear that NAM membership would not promote nor encourage political liberalization in Burma. This process, he affirmed, is an internal affair. (BP 3/9/92)

Since many of the members of NAM are sensitive to charges of human rights abuses in their own countries, it came as no surprise that there was not a receptive ear to calls by the West to link economic aid to fundamental freedoms. (TN 1/9/92) At a closing press conference, Foreign Minister Ali Alatas of Indonesia emphasized NAM's opposition to any linking of human rights with development. "Both development and human rights are vital," he said. "But linking one to the other in a conditionality relationship will reduce the value of both." (BP 7/9/82)

Slorc has consistently made it clear that the way they conduct their internal affairs is no concern of either their international friends or foes, and that their extralegal rule over the country is, in fact, accepted by most of the international community. In Declaration 1/90 the Slorc stated, "The State Law and Order Restoration Council is not an organization that observes any constitution; it is an organization that is governing the nation by Martial Law....it is the government that has been accepted as such by the United Nations and the respective nations of the world." (para 6 of Declaration 1/90, issued on July 27, 1990). By saying this they mean they need not comply with any law, yet they (including their misdeeds) are recognized by the UN as legitimate.

(Continued on page 6 as Politics)

## HUMAN RIGHTS

*The 1992 "rainy season/dry season" offensive of Slorc has included an aggressive political aspect to change its human rights image on the international scene. Among other things, they have released a small number of political prisoners, given permission to the family of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to visit her (she has been under house arrest for about three years now) and set work in motion to convene a national convention to draw up a new constitution. On August 24 universities throughout the country were opened and at the end of August Slorc signed the UN accord on protection of civilians in war situations. Also in August, Burma rejoined the Non Aligned Movement. From an outsiders view point, all of these Slorc activities might suggest that their military has softened its bellicose control over the people.*

*The evidence, however, suggests that for people throughout Burma, human rights has continued to deteriorate. The following reports outline some of the suffering still being inflicted upon poor rural villagers.*

### Karenni and Karen States

In the Karenni (Kayah) State, Slorc continues to direct attacks against civilian populations as punishment for their moral support of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and the Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF). Villagers, most of whom must already struggle daily to survive, are being forcibly relocated, used as forced labor and portage, and deprived of their homes, land, food and possessions.

In an attempt to cut off civilian support for the opposition by depopulating entire areas, in mid-March 1992 the Slorc gave orders to 76 villages in Pruso, Deemawso, and Loikaw townships of western Karenni State to leave the area by March 21. The orders said that any man, woman, or child thenceforth seen in the area would be shot on sight. This policy is frighteningly reminiscent of the "free fire zones" US military forces established in Viet Nam during the war there which left hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese villagers homeless, hopeless, hungry and angry.

The population of the villages affected by this relocation is estimated to be over 20,000 people. All of them were ordered to move to Slorc relocation camps outside Pruso and Deemawso towns. Instead, thousand fled into areas more firmly under opposition control, or to Karen National Union territory far to the south, or to the homes of friends and relatives in the towns. Others have simply hidden in the jungle to take their chances rather than submit to the camps.

It is estimated that about 7,000 were finally interned in Deemawso camp, and the KNPLF estimates a similar number in Pruso camp, although information of the Pruso camp can not yet be confirmed. Some people have finally been able to escape from these concentration-like camps, and their stories bring the harsh realities of present-day interior of Burma into more focus.

Ms. Naw Ler Eh, who is a 28-year-old Karenni Baptist, recently arrived in the Karen National Union territory with her husband and 3 small children. They were one of the families from Ku Bra Village in Deemawso Township who faced relocation.

In March 1991, before the relocation started, Naw Ler Eh was forced to go along with the Burmese military as a porter. She had to leave her three small children, ages 3, 6, and 8, behind. "The soldiers made me carry about 30 kilograms (about 66 pounds) of their rations such as rice, salt, sardines and other things. They only gave us a very little bit of plain rice to eat."

The group of porters Naw Ler Eh was with consisted of 6 women and 20 men. They were often beaten by the soldiers despite being weak and sick. "The soldiers hit me in the face with their rifle butts. They beat two men and one woman to death while I was a porter", she related. Even when sick with malaria they had to continue carrying their loads over the mountains.

Naw Ler Eh was luckily enough to be one of the survivors of this group. She returned to her village and family only to hear sometime later that all of the

village was to move to the Slorc camp in Deemawso by March of 1992.

"It's a long way to Deemawso and I had to carry my 3 year old girl on the front and a load of rice on my back. There was no way I could carry any other belongings, only as much rice as I could take. My 6 year old daughter and 8 year old son had to walk all the way over the hills with us, and we were very slow. It took us two whole days to walk. I tried to keep the children from crying by telling them we were going to Deemawso to play."

At the Deemawso resettlement camp, they were given a small hut within an enclosed area which was guarded by soldiers. A small lake provided dirty water which had to be used for everything. No food was furnished by the military, and the people had to survive off of what they had brought with them.

Finally, in desperation, people pleaded with the guards to allow them to go into the nearby town to find work so they could buy food. The soldiers then began giving special passes for this, but never to more than one person in a family at a time.

Hte Bu, the husband of Naw Ler Eh, was taken along with a group of other men to work on a railway being built by Slorc nearby. The railroad is a part of Slorc's "Border Area Development" program which is funded by the UNDP. This project uses forced labor to build roads and railways which will give the Slorc army better access to opposition areas.

"I had to work on the railway for 4 days. They assigned each of us a stretch of ground one-eighth of a mile long by 26 feet wide, and ordered us to build a railway embankment. It went right across people's rice fields. We had to dig and pack the dirt all with our bare hands. There were no tools at all. Then after working all day, we just had to sleep in the dirt where we worked. They gave us no food; we could only eat whatever we had brought along."

Finally Naw Ler Eh, along with her husband and children decided to escape from the camp. On the night of June 1, thirty people in the closed

camp jumped the surrounding fence and ran into the jungle. They took refuge in a KNPLF area. Then on July 1 they decided to travel on to the KNU area which they felt would be safer. It took two weeks for them to travel through the jungle to safety. Along the way 2 members of their group were shot by Slorc patrols.

More and more refugees such as Naw Ler Eh and her family are showing up along the Burma/Thai border. Their security here is also not certain as the Thai government has not guaranteed them a safe place to stay. They do not know when they will once again be victimized by a war which has been going on for so long that they can not remember a time of peace.

• Source:

Mannerplaw Report

## Kachin State

**R**eports from the Kachin State in northern Burma indicate the relocation of the population and forced labor is probably carried out nationwide by the Slorc.

In Kying Hkrang, 30 kilometers north of the Kachin State capital of Myitkyina, the Burmese military has begun the construction of a hydro-electric power plant. An agreement between Slorc and the People's Republic of China has been signed for this project, and the PRC is supplying 160 technical experts as well as material and equipment.

Every household in Myitkyina and the surrounding areas has been conscripted to supply one worker per week. If a family can not supply a worker due to old age or sickness, they must then hire an outsider to fulfill their responsibility. Workers are also required to supply their own food.

Slorc funds the project by giving jade to the PRC and by extorting money from each family in the area. The amount that each family must pay depends upon their financial status within the community. The sum ranges from 3,000 kyats to 300,000 kyats per household.

• Source:

Kachin State Update



At least 70,000 refugees from Burma now live along the Thai/Burma border. Many more live in India, Bangladesh and China. They have fled their farms and villages to escape being taken by the Burmese military as porters and human mine sweepers. They are also fearful of being used as forced labor in some of the Burmese military's "development" projects such as road and railroad building, and the construction of hydro-electric dams. In Thailand they also can not live in safety and security. They fear being suddenly repatriated into the hands of the Burmese military. For these people, human rights is only a term they occasionally hear, but are not allowed to experience. International groups like the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement could be doing much more to insure the basic rights of these people.

## (Politics continued from page 4)

With the end of the communist "threat" in most of the world, there is a serious danger that "human rights" will become the new political tool of the West to manipulate events in developing countries for the specific interests of the West. Yet, at the same time, there is an equal danger that despotic rulers in many developing countries will shrug off challenges to their human rights records as an "interference in their internal affairs" or, more commonly, a difference in the Western and Eastern definitions of what constitutes true human rights. The human rights of a people has been outlined in several international documents including the UN Charter of Human Rights. These rights are not limited by national boundaries, nor a

particular ruling parties interpretation. The UN Charter of Human Rights is, in fact, suppose to protect individuals from such "elite" interpretations.

The United Nations and NAM should take the task of protecting the basic human rights of individuals much more seriously rather than offering tacit approval of regimes which are known to be oppressing their people through arbitrary arrests, executions, forced labor, military operations, forced displacement and religious and/or ethnic persecution

# THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES

*More than 300,000 Muslim refugees have fled the Arakan State of Burma to seek safety in neighboring Bangladesh. Negotiations between the Burmese military regime and the Bangladeshi government concerning the repatriation of these refugees continue. The refugees themselves indicate tremendous fear of such a repatriation.*

*In a paper recently presented to the 44th Session of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities by a member of the Burma Muslim community, the reasons for this fear are outlined. The paper is presented here in part to help the international community better understand this complex situation where the lives of over 300,000 people depends on international awareness, concern and action.*

The situation of Muslims in Burma today has now become critical particularly for the Muslims in the Rak-hine (Arakan) state who are known as Rohingyas. The implementation of the military dictatorship's project to exterminate the Muslims in Arakan in the form of looting, rapes and killing have driven about 300,000 Muslim refugees into Bangladesh, in spite of the fact that Muslims are indigenous nationals of Burma. This is not the first time the Muslims have suffered such atrocities under the junta. In 1978, the scale of abuses became intolerable, with large scale harassment, looting and rapes committed against Muslims. As a result, over 200,000 of them fled over the border into Bangladesh to become refugees.

It is absolutely true that the repression of Muslims in Arakan is part of the gross and consistent pattern of human rights violations committed by the SLORC against all forms of political opposition and dissent and against vulnerable and weak sectors of the country's populations, such as ethnic minorities, whom the military authorities suspect may not support its national ideology. All the available evidence indicates that Muslims are targeted for repression by the Burmese security forces simply because they belong to a particular religious minority, some members of which seek greater autonomy from the central government's control, as expressed in the report of Amnesty International issued in May this year.

Despite the claims to the contrary by the regime, the religion of Islam reached Arakan in the 7th Century AD. Historical facts still exist of how the Muslims in those days took part in

the defence of Arakan and fought off invaders. In the old days Muslims and non-Muslims in Arakan were able to live together so peacefully and amicably that some Buddhist kings even adopted Muslim names and titles.

It was not until after World War II that this peaceful coexistence ended as a result of the instigation of narrow nationalists. Suspicion deepened among people following the establishment of militarism in 1962, when Ne Win began inciting hatred among the nationalities with different religions.

Since the military came to power in 1962, freedom of religion and freedom of movement for Muslims has been restricted. No Muslims have been appointed to high government positions, and many Muslims already employed in the government offices have been dismissed.

The holy pilgrimage of Haj to Makka has been banned. Since a few years ago, a small number of Muslims are allowed to travel to Makka for Haj, but this was a token gesture of the regime to make it appear to the world that there is freedom of religion in Burma. The regime has also forbidden the use of microphones for Azan (the call to prayer), and seized land belonging to mosques and religious institutions.

On many occasions, military suppression has forced Muslims to leave their homes. The military dictatorship even joked that people should draw pictures of Muslims so that future generations would remember what Muslims once looked like.

In 1968 some 3,600 Muslims, including women and children, were arrested from all over Arakan and were driven to the areas of Buthidaung and Maungdaw. After about five months they were finally released and allowed to go back home, but many had meanwhile died and many others were unable to reclaim their former properties. It was at the same time the military regime instigated anti-Chinese riots in Burma in which many innocent Chinese were killed. The unrest was clearly a ploy to divert the people's attention from a severe nationwide rice shortage.

The truth about the cruel injustice inflicted by the dictatorship is that since 1974 in some areas of Arakan State the regime has ceased issuing national registration cards to Muslims on coming of age so that the regime can harass them and accuse them of being foreigners.

In 1982, an anti-Muslim riot was instigated in southern Burma in which about twenty Muslims were killed and many mosques and religious buildings were desecrated.

In 1983, the regime introduced some new citizenship acts, according to which most of the Muslims and other minorities in Burma were degraded to second-class citizens.

In 1987, when the people's dissatisfaction with the junta intensified due to the repeated demonetization of the Burmese currency, the junta instigated anti-Muslim riots to divert the people's anger, especially in Taungyi, Prome and Mandalay.

As you are well aware, in 1988 the dictatorship massacred several thousand people in Burma, which enraged the entire population. The regime later arrested Nobel Peace prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and many other politicians, earning world-wide condemnation. To divert the attention of the local people, and to alleviate international pressure, the regime held a general election in 1990, in which the NLD led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won 80% of the seats. However, the regime stubbornly refuses to transfer power to the repre-

sentatives elected by the people. The anger of the people therefore has increased, together with international condemnation and pressure on the regime.

In early 1991 the regime, with the intention of reestablishing unity among non-Muslims, started inciting anti-Muslim riots, and began a systematic harassment of Muslims in Arakan. The Muslims were continually arrested, beaten, tortured, some were even killed, their property looted, the women raped and conscripted into forced labor. These abuses have been documented in some detail by some international human rights organizations, and have been witnessed even by diplomats taken to the area by the SLORC themselves. These repeated persecutions have caused the present critical situation on the Burma-Bangladesh border today, and many more refugees are still arriving, which suggests that the abuses are still continuing.

Although there has been an agreement for repatriation, the SLORC has refused to allow the United Nations to

monitor the return of the refugees. Any repatriation, must be completely voluntary and must be overseen by the United Nations. Otherwise, repatriation would only condemn these refugees to further persecution. The regime has consistently proven its insincerity with an inclination to dishonor such agreements.

It is noteworthy that Burma is presently one of the few countries in the world where fascism and militarism remain in practice. Unless we can put an end to this brutal dictatorship, not only the Muslims but also the entire population will be unable to live peacefully in Burma. The international community can help in this most important task by taking action on several crucial issues:

- (1) to help put an end to Burma's 44-year long civil war,
- (2) to take firm steps to end the despotic rule of this military junta by imposing economic and other sanctions,

- (3) to help establish a genuine federal union where the oppressed minorities can enjoy equal rights and self-determination,
- (4) to help for the release of Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners and for the re-establishment of democracy in Burma,
- (5) to help return the Muslim refugees from Bangladesh only under the observation of UN representatives in Burma for the safety and the security of the refugees.

Source abbreviations used in this issue of B.U.R.M.A.

|    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| II | Insight Indochina      |
| BP | Bangkok Post, Thailand |
| TN | The Nation, Thailand   |

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

AIR MAIL