Burma Issues

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INVESTING IN DEMOCRACY

When Slorc troops approach, all kinds of transportation are utilized to escape to safety.

See Forced Labor in Kyauk Kyi Township, page 4 of this issue.

Photo by Saw Nyi Nyi

Information for Action +++ International Campaigns for Peace +++ Grassroots Education and Organizing

WOMEN IN BURMA

by Anna Mitchel

Women in Burma have never suffered the cultural disadvantages of their sisters in other parts of the world. Throughout their history, Burmese women have enjoyed equality with men in the household and the economy. Marriage was and is a civil act; women retain their own names, and divorce is a simple procedure with no stigma attached to either party. More important, women have always had the right of inheritance. Only in Buddhist religious terms were they considered inferior.

Countless women participated in the nationalist movement in the colonial period. The census for colonial Burma in 1872 stated that "female education was a fact in Burma before Oxford was founded." Leaving their classes, the female students took part in demonstrations marching alongside the men. At this time, Burmese women held office in the Rangoon City Corporation and in the Legislative Council. They were also members of the Rangoon University Students Union.

Daw Khin Myo Chit, Shwe Gu May Hnin, Ludu Daw Ah Mar and Kyi Aye became well-known for their contribution to early Burmese modern literature. Daw Mya Sein, a scholar, teacher, wife and mother was chosen to represent Burmese women at a special Burma Round Table Conference in London in 1931 and later, on the eve of the Second World War, to lead a delegation to China.

In 1953 the late U Nu, Burma's only elected president, appointed Daw Ba Maung Chein to represent the Karen state, making her the first and only woman to reach cabinet rank. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's mother, Daw Khin Kyi, was made Ambassador to India. Sao Nan Hearnkham was a well-known Shan politician in the 1950s. Under the BSPP rule (1962-1988), nine women were elected to the first Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Assembly).

The continued repression in Burma means that women are facing different types of difficulties. The most obvious ones are listed below.

Economics and Family Life

High inflation means that just keeping the family fed and clothed is an increasing burden. Sometimes the wife must find paid work, like her husband, in addition to taking full responsibility for the family welfare.

Education and Employment

Equal rights to education for men and women have been eroded under military rule, and now apply only up to the end of high school. Although more women than men pass their final exams, they are then only permitted to study limited subjects at university level. After finishing their studies, women stand little chance of obtaining jobs.

Forced Portering

Female porters are used by the Burmese to carry the same heavy loads as the males. Bad and insufficient food, lack of medicine, and extreme brutality in the face of sickness or exhaustion on the part of the porters all contribute to this misery. Additionally female porters are regularly raped by the army.

Sexual Abuses and Trafficking in women

SLORC soldiers regularly commit sexual abuses on women. Military commanders may summon village women of any age, married or not, to their camps where they frequently rape them at gunpoint.

It is estimated that around 40,000 women and children, mostly aged between 10 and 16, have been kidnapped in Burma and sold to the brothels of Thailand. With the collusion of police and the military from Burma and Thailand, young victims are trafficked across to Thai border towns like Chiang Mai, Mae Sai, Kanchanaburi and Ranong where they are sold into prostitution. Prices range of US$100 to US$560. The prostitutes include ethnic Burmese and other tribal people. The girls live in conditions of slavery, poorly-fed, beaten and tortured, sometimes to death. Escape is practically impossible: but if they do so, they risk being either imprisoned or sent back to Burma. Their health is not monitored and those who contract the HIV virus may be forced to continue work until too ill to do so. Some are then released, others killed.

Abuses of Development and War

Development in Burma, as in many other countries, has led to the impoverishment of women, depriving them of the means of subsistence and forcing them out of rural areas.

Forced labour, which is inflicted on the whole Burmese population, is especially hard on women, who must either bring their children to the work site with them, which is often an inappropriate environment, or abandon them in uncertain conditions. Any woman unable to contribute labour must either hire someone else to replace her or pay a fine at the SLORC-fixed rate.

Many have been uprooted from their home communities by SLORC's relocation campaigns, herded into cramped concentration camps, sometimes separated from their families, often deprived of adequate food and clean water, and frequently subjected to beatings, back-breaking labour, devastating disease and repeated rape.

Other women have faced the experience of internal displacement, hiding in the jungle, not knowing where to go next, or how to find food or medicine for the hungry or sick.

Providing a decent life for their children is the deepest wish for most women worldwide, and is nearly impossible in the unstable environment of a civil war.

Refugees

Amongst the nearly 90,000 refugees along the Thai-Burma border, the great majority are women. The death rate amongst them is high, and many deaths are caused by preventable or treatable diseases like malaria, diarrhoea and cholera. Some deaths are attributable to malnutrition. Many of the children have never known a normal, healthy life and both mothers and their children lack education due to the disruptions of war.

Recently refugee camps have been attacked by forces from Burma. Some camps have been burned and refugees killed. Thai security was completely inadequate to prevent repeated raids on the camps, so that many refugee families have had to flee into the unfamiliar Thai jungle,

The continued repression in Burma means that women are facing different types of difficulties.

where they must feed and care for themselves as best they can.

In an attempt to escape the dependence and hopelessness of refugee life, some women hire themselves out as cheap labour on building sites or domestic servants. They hope to earn enough to keep their families supplied with essentials: but because of their illegal status, they are frequently exploited and have no redress if their employers ill-treat or refuse to pay them.

The liberation of women from social injustice is intertwined with the liberation of people from all walks of life. Determined not to be intimidated by the formidable forces ranged against them, the following women are just 5 of the many who have been willing to fight oppression, and suffer for their beliefs in Burma's future.

Ma Theingi is a well-known art teacher in her early 40s who acted as a personal secretary to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. She has also written a book on the tradition of puppet theatre in Burma. Arrested along with U Ba Thaw (Maung Thaw Ka), who later died in prison, and forty-one others on 20 July 1989 at the NLD headquarters, she was held in Insein Prison until 1993.

Daw San San Win obtained the BA (LLB) degree from Rangoon University in 1972. She attended a training course for apprentice lawyers for a year at the Supreme Court and served as an advocate. In 1988 she participated in the demonstrations with the Lawyers Thamag. She successfully contested the General Election in 1990 for the NLD, winning a seat in Ahlon Township. The authorities alleged that she attended a clandestine meeting called to form a temporary government in 1990.

Daw San San obtained a B.Sc (Biology) degree from Rangoon University in 1954. She served as a teacher first at the Central High School and then as a demonstrator at Rangoon University. Daw San San won the State Scholarship award and attended a training course in oceanography in Yugoslavia in 1955-56. She also served as a demonstrator to the Assistant Director of the Labour Department from 1959 to 1988.

During the pro-democracy movement in 1988, Daw San San chaired the Labor Directorate Worker's Thamaga. As a result of her involvement in the demonstrations, she was forced to resign from her job. As a successful NLD candidate in 1990, she was elected as the Hluttaw representative for Seikkan Township. The authorities alleged that Daw San San attended a clandestine meeting on the formation of a temporary government in 1990. She also held discussions at her house with other elected NLD members. She was reportedly sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment.

Ma Khin Htwe first met U Hla Pe when she attended his mathematics tuition class in 1979. During the pro-democracy movement she was in contact with the activists U Ba Tint and Daw Khin Kyway through U Hla Pe. When U Hla Pe fled to the Thai-Burma border in 1990 as part of a group of exiled elected representatives who later formed the NCGUB, Ma Khin Htwe acted as an intermediary, passing letters amongst democracy movement members. Before her arrest, she was planning to join the underground People's Democratic Front. (U Hla Pe, NCGUB Minister of Information, died in mysterious circumstances in Bangkok in 1993.)

Ma Thi Da is a doctor and short story writer in her late twenties. She worked in a philanthropic Muslim Hospital before being arrested with ten other political activists on 7 August 1993. All of them were held without legal representation or contact with close associates until their trial started on 27 September. SLORC was forced to adjourn the hearing after a large crowd turned up at the court.

Ma Thi Da was a close associate of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi before she was placed under house arrest in July 1989. Ma Thi Da became well-known for her short stories. She has also written novels which, with the exception of her latest novel, the SLORC refused permission to publish. Although publication of her latest novel was allowed, it has been banned. On 15 October 1993 Ma Thi Da was sentenced to 20 years in prison. She was convicted under the emergency regulations for having, among other charges, had contact with illegal organisations and distributing anti-SLORC leaflets.

Sources

Women in Politics, report produced by Burma Information Group

The Burmese Women Union, background paper, may 1995

FORCED LABOR IN KYAUK KYI TOWNSHIP

(First in a three-part series)

Burma's military junta is not shy to advertise its intentions to "develop" (quotation marks heretofore omitted) Burma's rural economy. As had been suggested in previous issues of this newsletter ("Global Economic Warfare," June, 1995; "The Dark Side of Development"...)to assume that development is a process that actually benefits the people at large -- or even that one understands what the word means to Burma's military -- can be dangerous, and even fatal for the people bearing the brunt of progress.

Burma-watchers are well-acquainted with forced labor, torture and execution on notorious public works projects such as the Ye-Tavoy and Loikaw-Aung Bauk rail roads and restoration of the Mandalay palace moat. Despite Draconian labor practices, the perceived or professed aims of these projects -- to improve rural transportation links or beautify an important historical site -- are not by nature destined to cause suffering. A rail road, or a natural gas pipeline, or a moat, or a public highway, does not necessarily incur human rights abuse, death and destruction. In fact, as infrastructure and economic systems these examples have quite a number of advantages: rail freight is sixty times cheaper by the ton than road transport, and sweet natural gas is the cleanest burning fossil fuel around. It is the entire process of how the work is carried out through which people choose to levy suffering upon others.

Forced labor -- apart from military portering -- has apparently been rampant in rural Burma for many years. However, the Burma army's recent push to promote development of border areas has seen an upsurge in both the use of forced labor and the scale and diversity of projects. In Pegu Divisions' Kyauk Kyi township, the push to develop the rural economic infrastructure has followed increased control over once-guerrilla held and administered areas. As the Burma army extends its influence over both lowland and highland regions of Kyauk Kyi, development projects have increasingly become a platform for forced labor, property confiscation and military oppression.

In the first six months of 1995, local Burma army Infantry Battalions (IB) 60 and 39, and Light Infantry Battalion 351 under Tactical Command No. 3 quartered in Kyauk Kyi, began at least three rural development projects using forced labor. Individually, these projects harmed the natural environment and local economy; collectively, they depict the silent and ongoing suffering in one corner of rural Burma.

During the 1994 rainy season, Kyauk Kyi suffered severe flooding and an unknown acreage of paddy was destroyed. Villages within reach of Burma army bases are customarily required to surrender part or all of their rice harvest to the army, and then receive rations from the military granary, thus disabling villagers from supporting the Karen National Liberation Army rebels with rice. Furthermore, the villagers' rice is used to provision Burma army troops stationed both in the immediate area and deeper in the forest. Last year's flooding strained the rice supply for all of these mouths: the farmers themselves, the rebels who rely on their support, and the army which both needs the rice itself and wishes to control the people's political activities through its distribution.

Damming the Kyauk Ke Kyi Stream

Tactical Command No. 3, headed by Lt. Colonel Nyi Soe, belongs to the army's Southern Region Command, led until 15 June 1995 by General Soe Myint and based in Toungoo. The General ordered Nyi Soe to conduct a feasibility study for increasing the electricity supply to Tactical Command headquarters in Kyauk Kyi by constructing a dam and hydro-electricity generating station along the Kyauk Ke Kyi stream. In addition, the reservoir created by the dam was to be used for irrigating army-controlled rice fields in Kyauk Kyi township.

On January 5, 1995, officers from IB 60 and LIB 351 ordered work on the dam to begin, using involuntary, unpaid labor from local villages. Approximately 700 villagers, of whom 200 are reported to have been women and children, were involved in constructing the 8 foot high dam wall. Work progressed more slowly than the local authorities planned, due in part to their own faulty surveying (the dam site had to be moved after seven days of full-scale labor) and partly due to lack of equipment. Villagers had to provide their own tools and ox carts, along with food and medicine if they got sick. In a construction accident, two people were killed, including a high school student from Kyauk Sa Yit village. Although it is believed that the families were compensated with 7000 kyats each (approximately US$58), the bodies of the dead were not returned, apparently in an attempt to keep news of the accident from spreading.

Rice supplies will be in very short supply this year, and starvation is a rapidly approaching reality.

Although work was to be finished by the water festival in mid-April, it was not completed on time. As this information was collected, the villagers' greatest fear was not of the forced labor itself, but of the danger posed by the dam's shoddy construction. With memories of devastating floods last year, the idea of a dam bursting under the pressure of Kyauk Ke Kyi stream's rainy season capacity has the people fearing for the land and homes. Furthermore, they are afraid that even if the dam holds, the local ecosystem, especially the vegetation now cut off from a normal water supply below the dam, will be damaged in the long run.

Rice is both the backbone of rural society in Burma and a crucial political and strategic weapon in the battle to control troubled civil war areas. As the next instalment of this series will show, rice cultivation and distribution will continue to influence forced labor and warfare in Kyauk Kyi.

INVESITING IN DEMOCRACY

"In 1988, the Government of the Union of Myanmar (sic) adopted a market-oriented economic system with the intention of introducing various reform measures and liberalising the economy for better all round development. One of the major reform measures undertaken to induce foreign investment was the enactment of the Union of Myanmar Foreign Investment Law, followed by the prescription of procedures to the said law. This law was the first new law to be endorsed in line with the new economic policy." (Investing In Myanmar 1995-1996)

by N. Chan

Following the 1988 military repression of the democratic movement, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) faced a serious economic crisis. Their coffers were bordering on empty and they needed quick cash to not only upgrade their military, but also to pay their soldiers whose loyalty is based on paycheck rather than ideology. At the same time, the mass uprising of the same year had alerted the international community to this backwater nation, a nation in which military human rights abuses against rural ethnic populations had gone on almost unnoticed since the end of World War II. The military regime, suddenly finding themselves in the international spot light, could no longer carry out repression against their own people without international threats of economic and political sanctions.

Adopting a market-oriented economic system was Slorc's way of responding to both of these issues. Rich with natural resources which had gone almost untouched for five decades, foreign companies were more than eager to enter Burma and deposit their cash in the hands of Slorc for the right to exploit these treasures. Teak wood, gems, fish, and gas began rapidly building up the foreign reserves of the country, reserves which were used to upgrade the military with purchases of new weapons from China rather than to improve the life of the people.

As for international criticism, a market-oriented economy sounded like a good first step towards democracy. While many governments continued to lambast Slorc for their human rights abuses, companies from these countries rushed into Burma claiming that their investments would open the country up to the world and democratic changes would certainly follow. Economic improvements were said to always usher in democracy. Few of these companies had the courage to look around for the many examples, such as Singapore, which prove that even an extremely successful economy does not guarantee democracy or democratic freedoms of the people.

Now, almost seven decades later, Slorc has allowed 138 enterprises to invest in the agriculture, manufacturing, energy, mining, fishery, tourism and transport sectors bringing in approximately US$2.7 billion. These investments come in two forms:

- 1. An individual foreign investor can establish his business as a sole proprietorship by bringing in one hundred per cent foreign capital. Similarly, a partnership firm or a limited company which is incorporated outside Burma can do business as a foreign branch by bringing in the total capital required by such a branch.

- 2. A foreign investor can enter into a partnership with his local counterpart or set up a limited liability company with shares held by local investors. He can also join with any individual, firm, company, co-operative or State-owned enterprise from Burma to establish a joint-venture either as a partnership firm or a limited company. In all such cases, the foreign capital to be brought in must be at a minimum 35 per cent of the total equity capital.

Since Burma has no middle class to speak of, almost all joint-ventures are carried out with State-owned (Slorc) enterprises. Some eighteen foreign enterprises are wholly-owned. Most of these are related to the tourism business.

One of the attractions for foreign enterprises to invest in Burma is the huge cheap labor market. The minimum daily wage for an unskilled worker in the State sector is 20 kyats. The buying power of this 20 kyats is equal to about US$0.17. One kilo of rice, a staple for all people in Burma, costs nearly 70 kyats. While foreign investors may get their work done cheaply, the people are left with little hope that they will ever escape their poverty. Skilled labor will probably receive more pay, but with an inflation rate of over 30% in the country, even these skilled laborers have a difficult time existing.

Hiring qualified staff must be done through township labor offices. The procedures are:

- 1) A private and cooperative business undertaking employing 5 workers and above has to notify the Township Labor Office of his intention to recruit workers in the prescribed form.

- 2) The Labor Office will prepare a list of candidates who meet the requirements mentioned in the form and send these candidates to the employer.

- 3) The employer is to select the most suitable person from among the candidates submitted by the Labor Office.

This system provides Slorc, which mans and controls the Township Labor Offices, with complete power over who is qualified for a job. People in Rangoon often complain that only family members of Slorc officials, or those who can afford to pay bribes, are selected by the Labor Offices for jobs with foreign companies. They also suggest that Slorc uses this system to place informers in all offices to keep track of foreign activities.

So has this new open-market economy brought hope for democracy to Burma? Recent visitors from Rangoon say no. One visitor lamented that at one time Burma had at least a small middle class of which he was a member. Now the middle class has all but vanished. The economy continues to worsen, according to this visitor, and Slorc is actually fearful of a new mass uprising from an angry and hungry population. Some suggest that Slorc suddenly freed Aung San Suu Kyi to help release some of this pent up pressure.

(continued next page)

(Investing in Democracy)

If the middle class in the urban areas is crumbling, the poor in the rural areas are facing an even worse future. Reports of starvation are filtering in from some distant rural villages. Of the 33 million rural people, only 11 million have at least 3 acres of land, the minimum needed for subsistence living. A third to one half of village households lack any farm land at all. Forced relocations, rape, pillage, and forced labor continue to be rampant throughout the border areas and rural people sense no move towards democracy and respect for human rights as a result of these foreign investments.

Foreign companies, themselves, do not have enough faith in their belief that their investments will actually open Burma up to democracy to seek out the truth. Invitations by organizations and individuals working with the victims of Slorc's abusive policies for representatives of some of these corporations to visit border areas and interview victims have all fallen on deaf ears. UNOCAL's senior public relations representative, David Garcia, continues to decline invitations by the chairman of the Karen district of Mergui-Tavoy to meet with people who have fled the route of a gas pipeline which UNOCAL of the USA and Total of France are constructing. These refugees claim to have been forcibly evicted from their villages by Slorc to provide more security for the gas pipeline. Some have even stated that they were used as forced labor to begin clearing the area through which the pipeline will pass. This is hardly fertile ground for democracy to grow and flourish on, and UNOCAL, along with other investors in Burma, must deal with this reality.

Aung San Suu Kyi has cautioned foreign investors to think carefully before bringing money into Burma. Democracy does not grow on money, it grows on respect for the dignity and rights of each individual within the society. Only when this is first established can economic growth benefit those who suffer the most. The most important investment in democracy is not financial, it is guaranteeing the human rights of every individual in the society.

Sources:

Investing in Myanmar 1995-1996

Harvard Institute for International Development Report to the UNDP, ***"Landlessness, Poverty, and the Environment in Myanmar: Can Grassroots Initiatives Create Sustainable Progress?"*** February 10, 1995

NLM 950812

SOME IMPORTANT RESOURCES

Burma: the Politics of Constructive Engagement

An up-to-the-minute analysis of the present state of Burma both nationally and internationally is presented in this small book published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE England on 31 July 1995.

"Burma is torn by issues such as the role of the army, the validity of western political models and autonomy for the ethnic minorities which comprise 440% of the population" says author John Bray, "and as the economy becomes reintegrated into the wider regional and global economies, the ensuing political change will not be easy to control."

The study owes much to interviews with first-hand observers in Burma and Japan as well as the rest of Asia, Europe and the United States. It looks at the stance and interests of different world players vis-a-vis Burma and argues that the international community has a legitimate interest in facilitating peaceful political evolution to promote both national and regional stability.

John Bray is Head of Research at Control Risks Information Services, a London-based political and security risk consultancy, and is a specialist in Southeast Asian affairs.

Burma: the Politics of Constructive Engagement by John Bray, 80 pages, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, July 1995, price 6 pounds.

Life on the Line

A video of a journey into the killing fields of Burma, where a modern holocaust is being fuelled by foreign money.

Just before Christmas 93, the Karen National Liberation Army visited a village deep in the Burmese jungle. With them were two British film-makers - director Damien Lewis and anthropologist Tom Sheahan of Bare Faced Productions. Villagers greeted them warmly.

It was a different story when Lewis and Sheahan came back a few days later. Slorc troops had descended on the village on Christmas Day, raking it with machine-gun fire and grenades and killing a woman and all but one of her daughters.

Bare Faced's film assesses the reasons for this brutality. It argues that Western companies, now benefiting from the opening-up of what was Asia's most isolated economy, bear some responsibility for the repression that has followed.

For further information: Damien Lewis, Bare Faced Productions, Warwick House, 106 Harrow Road, London W2 1XD, England

REFUGEE LABOR COMES CHEAPLY

By La Lor

American Reebok Company, which produces the internationally famous Reebok shoes, is proud of its reputation of being a company committed to human rights. Providing a just salary and avoiding child labor and/or forced labor is an important part of their standards. Company inspectors regularly visit Reebok factories around the world to ensure that all workers, most of whom are women, receive proper treatment.

Even with this serious attempt to live up to good human rights standards, problems do emerge. Reports in some newspapers have brought to light a serious problem in one of the Reebok factories in Kwangtung China where workers had to live in substandard living quarters on the seventh floor of the factory. The rooms were smaller than acceptable and at night the doors and windows were locked to prevent the workers from leaving.

Most Reebok factories are in areas where cheap labor is readily available. In 1987, they began moving their factories from South Korea and Taiwan to Thailand and other countries in the area such as Indonesia, Philippines, China and India were labor was cheaper and more abundant. With this cheap labor, good quality shoes could be produced at a reasonable price for the world market.

However, as countries industrialize, labor begins to organize. The Thai labor movement has worked hard to increase the minimum wage of workers to a level which makes it more possible for them to survive in the rapidly growing economy of Thailand. This has pushed companies like Reebok to seek new sources of cheap labor. One such area is the Thai/Burma border where refugee camps provide a source of hundreds of unemployed refugees who welcome jobs.

In 1994 the Mae Sot Bangkok Rubber company opened in Mae Sot town of Tak Province in western Thailand. This company, a producer of Reebok shoes, made the move ostensibly out of sympathy for the refugees whom, the company said, needed jobs. Of the 180 workers hired, all are from a Karen refugee camp nearby. They are almost all women and the youngest is 15 years old.

If accepted for work, the women must spend 120 hours learning how to cut and stitch shoes. During this time they receive no salary. If they pass the training successfully, they begin work and receive a salary of 50 baht per day (approximately US$2). The minimum wage for Thai workers is 118 baht per day, more than double what the Karen refugees earn. Work is from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with Sundays and official holidays off.

In Thailand, even Thai workers have a difficult time getting protection for their rights, so the Karen have little hope of successfully demanding better pay and work conditions. Their situation depends entirely on the compassion of the factory manager.

An official of the Tak Labor Office says that his office can not effectively check on and control the working conditions in factories which hire foreign laborers. There are yet no laws which effectively regulate the treatment of illegal laborers even though there is now a provision that factories can hire refugees and illegal immigrants in many of the Thai provinces along the Thai/Burma border.

When approached about the low salary paid to the refugees, a company official said that he feels 50 baht is an appropriate amount and is equal to what other factories in the area pay. He said that if his company gave higher wages, problems would be created between his company and other border companies.

Dr. Thirasri Thamarak of the Thai Labor and Social Welfare Department says that if Thailand wants to use imported labor for its industries, it must make suitable laws to protect the workers and provide them with a minimum wage which is fair and just. Without such a law, Thailand will soon face severe criticism from the international community for abuse of the human rights of these workers, and could even face an international boycott of any goods produced in Thailand by refugee labor. There is also a possibility that in the future Burma will find fault with Thailand for paying Burmese workers a lower salary than Thais receive.

The problem is not that the refugees are given jobs. They are usually happy to put their time to use earning some money for their families. The problem lies in exploiting this cheap labor for the benefit of the company's profits. Unemployed Thais in the area complain that they now can not get jobs because the companies would have to pay them a minimum wage of at least 118 baht instead of the 50 baht they can pay for refugee labor. Human rights workers also point out that the U.N. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees stipulates in Article 24:

» **1. The Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the same treatment as is accorded to nationals in respect of the following matters:**

- a) In so far as such matters are governed by laws or regulations or are subject to the control of administrative authorities: remuneration, including family allowances where these form part of remuneration, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, restrictions on home work, minimum age of employment, apprenticeship and training, women's work and the work of young persons, and the enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining:

Even though Thailand has not signed this convention, companies whose reputations are built on a respect for human rights and dignity should make certain that wherever they are, all of these rights guaranteed under the United Nations Charter of Human Rights are fully available to all workers in their industries.

Sources

PKJ daily 950710 950724

SR 950712

Sources in this issue include:

PKJ = Pu Jat Karn, Thai language daily

SR = Siam Rat, Thai language daily

TN = The Nation, English daily

BP = Bangkok Post, English daily

NLM = New Light of Myanmar, Burmese English language daily

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

Japanese Aid -- Following the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, Japan is considering reinstating financial aid to Burma which was suspended in 1988. Foreign Minister Kono expects to see improvements in human rights and democratization before aid can be guaranteed.

TN950801

Church Raid -- In Bangkok, Police raided a church service at the Calvary Baptist Church, arresting 45 Burman and Karen illegal immigrants. They were detained in jail and later sent back to border areas.

BP950801

Sanctions -- US Senator McConnell has introduced a sanctions bill against Slorc, claiming there has been no human rights progress in Burma despite the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. The move has been opposed by Winston Lord who claims that there is no international support for sanctions.

TN950802

Arrests -- Burmese opposition leaders Thu Wai, Tun Shwe and Htwe Myint were rearrested and sentenced to seven years in Rangoon's Insein Prison. No reason for their arrest was given, but it gives cause for concern about other opposition members who continue to speak out against the Slorc regime.

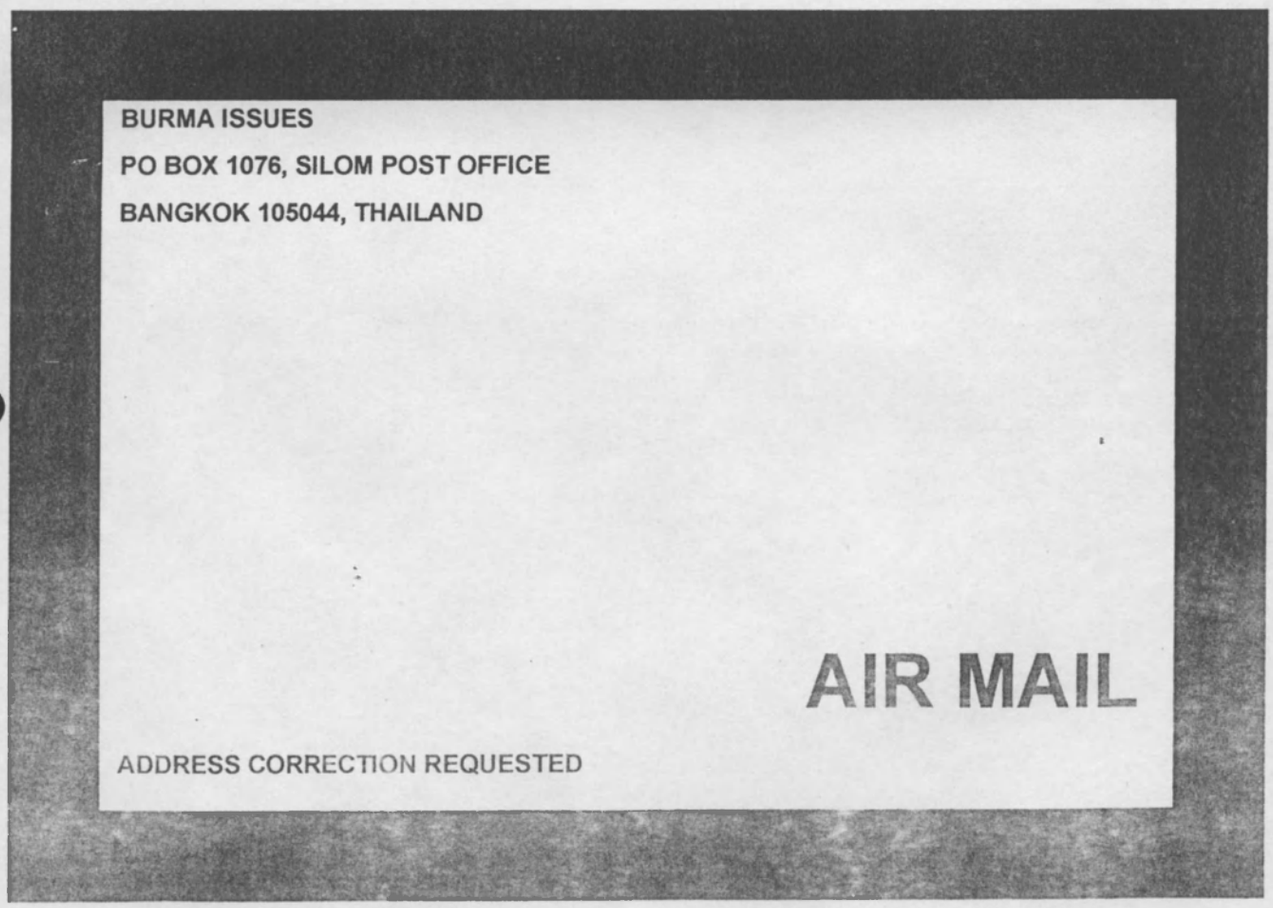
BP950803

Thai Ambassador Visits ASSK -- That Ambassador to Rangoon, Mr. Poksak has an hour-long discussion with Aung San Suu Kyi. He is the first representative of an ASEAN nation to have a private conference with her. Slorc cautioned against the visit, but Thai Foreign Minister Kasem said the visit was a goodwill visit.

TN950804

Investments -- Eighteen foreign countries are investing in seven sectors of Burma's economy. The United Kingdom, France, and Singapore are the largest investors by volume of investment. Sectoral investment statistics shows that the highest volume of investment goes to oil and gas sectors. Hotels and tourism is ranked second followed by the fisheries sector.

NLM950812

Killings -- Two Burmese fishermen are dead and 24 missing after an incident with Thai fishermen angered about the concellation of a fishing agreement they had to fish in Burmese waters. The Burmese *New Light of Myanmar* reported the incident, claiming that the agreement between the fishing company and Slorc had been violated by the Thai fishing crew.

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