



# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

# BBC

PUBLISHED BY THE  
**ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT**

**VOL.1 NO.5**

**MARCH**

**1989**

### DEMOCRACY COMES THROUGH PAIN

A LIFE HAS BEEN SACRIFICED, AND FROM IT WE GAIN NEW  
STRENGTH FOR THE STRUGGLE



Oh my friend  
And my comrade  
Your broken life  
Lies on the ground.  
Your drops of sweat  
Your drops of blood  
Flowing through our struggle  
Remain in my heart.  
The bloody scene  
Can never be erased.  
With feet of iron  
And heart of courage  
We will pass through the jungle.  
We will sacrifice everything  
To repay your bloody debt.  
Let me do this,  
My friend in heaven.

Red Peacock

အို... မြေပြင်တလင်း အသက်နှင်းခွဲ  
ရဲဘော်ရောင်းရင်း သူ့ဖော်ချင်းငဲ့  
သစ်တို့ပေးဆက် သွေးချွေးစက်တို့  
ငါ့ရင်ပတ်ဖျန်း သွေးနီ လွှမ်းလျက်  
အရံခက်သမိုင်း  
စစ်သံချောင်းနှင့် ခရောင်းဆူးတော  
ကျော်လွှား နှင်းပြတ် စောက်လှန့်ရူးတပ်  
အားအား ဂုဏ်မှု အရုဇုန်  
တမလွန် အရပ်မှ  
သွေးကြေး ဆတ်ခွင့် ပြုမီ သူ့ဖော်ချင်း။

On March 13, 1988, Maung Phone Maw, a 22 year-old student of the Rangoon Institute of Technology was killed by riot police. A disturbance had broken out in which several of his friends had been injured. The disturbance was instigated by the police. Maung Phone Maw, along with all of his other friends, tried to go to the People's Council office to seek justice for their injured friends. Along the way they were confronted by the firemen and the riot police. The firemen used water hoses to try to turn the students back, but were unsuccessful. Then the riot police opened fire. Maung Phone Maw was seriously injured. He died a short time later in the arms of a teacher at the university.

This incident was the start of the movement which led to the general strike in August and September of 1988 and ended the 26 years of one-party rule by Ne Win.

We dedicate this issue of DAWN to Maung Phone Maw, and the sacrifice he made for our country. We bow our heads in respect to all the people of Burma who have sacrificed their lives for democracy and human rights in Burma.

## A PAGE FROM BURMESE HISTORY

### THE THIRTY COMRADES

Throughout the early 1930s, opinion was divided in Burma as to whether the country should be separated from British India or whether it should remain a part of that dominion. The question was resolved in 1935 when the "Government of Burma Act" was signed in London. Two years later, Burma became a separate colony with its own Legislative Council. This council dealt only with "Burma Proper," however, and not with the indirectly-ruled border states.

Even as Burma was gaining a greater degree of autonomy, however, the underground nationalist movement was gaining momentum. In 1930 at the University of Rangoon, the All Burma Student Movement emerged to defy the British system. The young men who spear-headed this group studied Marxism and called each other *Thakin*. A title of respect "like the Hindi *Sahib*," previously used exclusively in addressing Europeans. In 1936, the group's leaders -- Thakin Aung San and Thakin Nu -- boldly led another strike of university and high school classes in opposition to the "alien" educational system. The success of their movement in bringing about major reforms helped give these young men the confidence in the following decade to step to the forefront of the nationalist movement.

Meanwhile, however, war was brewing. The Burma Road made that inevitable. Built as an all-weather route in the 1930s to carry supplies and reinforcements to Chinese troops attempting to repulse the Japanese invasion, it was of extreme strategic importance. As Allied forces moved to defend the road, the Japanese made plans for an all-out attack on the Burmese heartland.

Burma's colonial government unexpectedly played into the Japanese hand when it arrested several leaders of the Thakin organization in 1940. Aung San escaped by disguising himself as a Chinese crewman on a Norwegian boat. He arrived in Amoy seeking contact with Chinese Communists to help in Burma's drive for independence. But the Japanese arrested him, and although his movement was highly opposed to Japan's wartime fascism, his release was negotiated on the grounds that he and other members of the Thakin organization would collaborate with the Japanese.

In March 1941, Aung San was returned to Rangoon aboard a Japanese freighter. He secretly picked out 30 members of the Thakin group -- later known as the "Thirty Comrades" -- to be trained by the

Japanese on Hainan Island in the art of guerrilla warfare. Among the comrades was Thakin Ne Win.

In December 1941, the Japanese landed in Lower Burma. Together with the Burmese Liberation Army led by Aung San, they over-whelmed the British, drove them from Rangoon in March, then convincingly won battle after battle. British-Indian and American-Chinese troops suffered heavy casualties and were forced to withdraw to India.

Aung San and the "Thirty Comrades" had joined the Japanese to help advance the Burmans' independence cause. Through the early 1940s, Burmans joined the Liberation Army in great numbers.

By 1943, however, it was evident that the Japanese wanted to see Burma's national government, which they had supported, placed under the administration of the army. Burma was declared "independent" in August of that year, with Dr. Ba Maw, former education minister, as head of the puppet state. Thakin Aung San was named minister of defense, and Thakin Nu was chosen foreign secretary.

The *Thakins*, however, were not at all pleased with the arrangement. In December 1944, Aung San established contact with the Allies, and in March 1945 he shocked the Japanese by transferring his 10,000-man army to the side of the Allies. His troops were now called the "Patriotic Burmese Forces" -- and they helped the Allies recapture Rangoon. The Japanese surrender was signed in Burma's capital on August 28.

(Taken from INSIGHT GUIDES BURMA, by APA Publications)

### WHAT A PEOPLE'S ARMY IS

One which "protects" the people  
One which "serves" the people  
One which is "loyal" to the people  
One which "stands" for the people  
One which "maintains the rights" of the people

## ELECTIONS

There is much talk now about elections in Burma. The Saw Maung government has finally presented their draft election law, and suggested that elections might be held in mid-1990. Based on this suggestion (and perhaps related more to the hope of getting their hands on some of Burma's rich natural resources) the Japanese government has recognized the Saw Maung government, and will soon resume aid. The US government has also indicated that they are happy about this trend towards democracy in Burma.

It is indeed surprising that two nations who want to represent the "good example" of democracy in the world today would fall for such a cheap trick as this "promise of free and democratic elections".

Under the present military government, free and democratic elections are totally impossible. There are many reasons for this, but two are shared with you in this brief reflection.

First of all, Saw Maung came to power totally against the will of the Burmese people, and his hands are stained with the blood of thousands of innocent Burmese -- blood which has not yet even dried. The people live in fear even today. Arrests are frequent, and many people are in prisons without benefit of trial. Many others have simply disappeared, and perhaps one day their bones will be found in the killing fields of Burma. In such a situation, how can democratic elections be held? Can democracy grow up in an atmosphere of fear, death and anger?

Only when the people feel free to talk together, organize together and live in the faith that their votes really will make a difference, can free and democratic elections be held.

The second reason that the elections, if held at all, will not be democratic is the very fact that international observers will not be present. Even if they were allowed to be present on the day of the elections, it would be meaningless.

Democratic elections are a process. For them to be truly democratic, political parties must be free to campaign, meet the people and share their ideas. The people must be free to challenge government structures, raise their own concerns, and build up their own organizations. If this is not allowed, where is democracy?

The day that people mark their ballots and put them in the ballot box is only the final day of the election process. If foreign observers are present on this day, Saw Maung may arrange for very free and open balloting. But this balloting will have absolutely no meaning if the entire process has not been free and democratic. Who will help observe the process from this day until election day? Who can guarantee that this entire process will be democratic?

We know from the experience of the past 27 years that the process will not be free and democratic. Therefore the elections, if held in 1990, will be a total farce, and those nations which feel that Burma is moving towards democracy through the present government, are also a party to that farce.

Stand with us, the people of Burma! We continue to call on Saw Maung and Ne Win to step down and allow an interim government run by representatives of the people to prepare for the elections in which all people can participate freely and democratically. Democracy grows only from the grassroots up, it does not come from a draft election law put forth by a dictator!

---

Nothing shouts louder of a nation's conditions than the habits of its youth. And the habits of the youth of a nation are nothing more than a direct reflection of how adults handle responsibility.

Denis Waitley

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNGLE

### SON WHISPER TO ME

by Tin Moe

The melodious rhyme has been bloodied  
The violin strings cry softly  
A guitar lies shattered on the pavement.

Son, the sound of the soldiers' combat boots  
have broken the silence of every night.

I sit and wonder if you my son  
have gotten malaria from the rains

I want to know where you have been  
for these five months.

I want to hear your voice calling,  
"Mom, dear mom."

Some neighbors say they saw your fighting peacock  
flag  
stained with blood, and lying in a ditch.

So son,  
please whisper to me.

(Written for the fallen heroes who fought for  
democracy)

-----  
Editors note:

The words of this poem are very powerful, and to  
help you understand more clearly what the author is  
saying, we provide the following explanations.

The "melodious rhyme" represents the poets and  
writers killed by the military.

The "strings of the violin" represent the middle-aged  
and old people of the country.

The "guitar" represents the youth.

The mother warns her son not to come home by  
explaining that the sounds of the soldiers boots are  
still heard every night.

She knows her son is in the jungle camps and  
worries that he might get malaria.

She also worries about his safety because she hears  
the continuous reports of students being killed by  
the military.



“အမေ့သား၊ စကားတိုင်းတိုင်း ပြောလှည့်ပါ”

ကာရံချိန်က ဆွေးစွန်းနေတယ်  
တယောကြိုးလည်း တီးတို ငိုကြွေးနေတယ်  
ဂစ်တာတလက် ခုတ်ခုံထက်မှာ အသက်ဗွဲပြာတော့သူ  
အမေအိမ်နား ဒီညများမှာ စစ်သားဘိနပ်  
တခွပ်ခွပ်နဲ့ ဂျစ်လို့စောင့်နေတယ်။  
အိမ်လည်လွှဲတဲ့သား ချိုးစက်တွေကြားမှာ  
ငှက်ဖျားမိနေရော့ သလား။  
အမေနားမှာ သားခေါ်သံများ  
တိုင်းတိုင်းကြားလျှင် နားကိုလှည့်စား  
ဒီညများ တယ်သွားနေလဲ လူလေးဂျယ်။  
သားတို့ကျောင်းက ခွပ်ဒေါင်းလံကလေး  
ရေပြောင်းတော့မှာ ဆွေးစွန်းလျက်  
ညနေဘက်က ဂျစ်လွက်ထဲက လူတွေတွေ့ခဲ့သတဲ့...  
အမေ့သား  
စကားတိုင်းတိုင်း ပြောလှည့်ပါ။

တစ်မိုး



## NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Following the visit of the Thai Supreme Commander, Gen. Chavalit, to Rangoon in December 1988, over 20 Thai private companies and two government companies have received logging concessions from the Saw Maung government to exploit Burmese timber. Fishing concessions are also being signed. The Burmese people are unhappy about this development as this is helping fund Saw Maung's oppression of the population. Following are articles and letters which have recently appeared in the local press concerning this issue.

BANGKOK POST  
March 10, 1989

### LOGGING PASSES LIMITED TO 3 IN MAE HONG SON

THE number of Burmese log import checkpoints in Mae Hong Son will be limited to three, Forestry Department acting director Yukti Sarikaphuti said yesterday.

Mr. Yukti, who spent two days on the 250-kilometre border stretch in Mae Hong Son, said a small number of check points would facilitate inspections, enhance safety for officials on either side of the frontier and prevent the import of timber of Thai origin.

Burma has given 16 Thai companies 20 concessions to fell 500,000 cubic metres of hardwood and 160,000 cubic metres of teak annually. This excludes the 54,000 cubic metres of planks for the Forest Industry Organisation.

THE NATION  
March 8, 1989

### SCORES APPLY FOR FISHING RIGHTS FROM BURMESE PANEL

SOME 50 fishing companies from several countries are aggressively seeking concessions from the cash-hungry Rangoon government which has decided to set up a special committee to select suitable applicants.

According to the latest Burmese official survey along the country's 1,600 mile coastlines, it is estimated that there are 1.7 million tonnes of marine products compared to the current annual catches of about 300,000 tonnes.

If the fishing concessions are awarded to all 50 foreign companies their total catches are estimated to be 880,000 tonnes. Observers noted that the Saw Maung government is unlikely to grant concessions to more than 1,059 fishing vessels.

Eight of the 50 applicants have signed contracts with the Burmese government. They will contribute about US\$17 million in revenue to Rangoon. Four of the eight are Thai companies.

THE NATION  
March 1, 1989

### SANAN VISITS BURMA TO WIN FISHING, LOGGING CONCESSIONS

AGRICULTURE Minister Sanan Kachomprasart left for an official trip to Rangoon Yesterday, becoming the highest ranking Thai official to visit Burma after the bloody coup that brought Gen Saw Maung to power last September.

Sanan said he will discuss with Burmese authorities ways and means to strengthen economic cooperation.

He said he is seeking more logging concessions for Forest Industry Organization (FIO), and the Thai Plywood Company Limited, both state enterprises which are facing declining wood supply as a result of the logging ban nationwide.

Eighteen Thai private companies have been granted permission to log in Burma, but their operations are being hampered by ethnic rebels controlling the Thai-Burmese border. The rebels, who are fighting for independence from Rangoon, have threatened to disrupt the transport of logs going through the areas under their control.

Commenting on reported resentments among the Burmese about the Thai business deals with the Saw Maung government, Sanan said he didn't know about it. "We are not getting involved in the Burmese domestic affairs," he said.

---

THE NATION  
February 28, 1989  
(Letter to the Editor)

### DESTROYING BURMA

The picture of "Burmese logs" on page 6 of the Nation on Feb 22 sent chills down one's spine.

It is rather hypocritical of the Chatichai government to ban logging in Thailand but to accelerate forest destruction in Burma by importing more and more Burmese logs.

The border between Thailand and Burma is only imaginary. Forest destruction in Burma will sooner or later affect Thailand.

The Burmese military regime is selling logging concessions just to make quick money, which is needed to keep it in power. But the Burmese can clearly see that the Burmese military regime is virtually selling out the country.

At the same time, Thai officials pretend to be good neighbours and visit Rangoon regularly to secure more logging and fishing concessions. The unsavoury Thai behaviour has angered the

Burmese and this could lead to a resurgence of the long historic hatred between the two nations.

Should this be the eventuality, the powers-that-be in Burma and Thailand are to be held responsible, not the peoples of the two countries.

Maung Lu Aye  
Sydney

---

THE NATION  
March 7, 1989  
(Letter to the Editor)

### SAWASDEE KRAP

Who is walking on our bloody road?  
Eyes and ears of us were closed.  
Teaks and fishes are crying now.  
Where do we go from here now?  
I want to know where are the Thai people.  
I'm so sad.  
Sawasdee krap!

By M.T.  
Three Pagodas Pass

("Sawasdee Krap" is the Thai greeting. Editor)



THE NATION  
March 10, 1989

## HUMAN RIGHTS BODY ON BURMA

GENEVA - The UN Human Rights Commission, concerned about reported violations of human rights in Burma has urged the government to ensure freedom for its people.

In a resolution passed by consensus late on Wednesday night, the 43-nation commission said obstacles still remained "in the way of the democratic aspirations of the Burmese people".

The UN body decided to encourage the Burmese authorities to take all measures necessary to assure fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association, with a view to enhancing prospects for democracy".

The commission, which will end its six-week annual review of rights around the world today, has no power to enforce its decisions.

A nationwide uprising against decades of one-party socialist rule in Burma was quelled by a military takeover last September. According to US figures, thousands of unarmed demonstrators were killed. - Reuter

The ABSDF wishes to thank the UN Human Rights Commission for their interest in and concern for the Burmese people. We extend our invitation to this special body once more to visit us in the border camps so that we can share with you the true situation in our country.

THE NATION  
March 13, 1989

## TOKYO TACKLES DILEMMA OVER RANGOON RECOGNITION

By The Nation's Regional Desk

JAPAN, which surprised many countries with its announcement to extend diplomatic recognition to Burma's Saw Maung government last month, is poised to resume its frozen aid to that country.

"But we have committed no fresh assistance commitments," a senior Bangkok-based Japanese diplomat told The Nation recently.

A diplomatic source said Japan's decision to recognize the Saw Maung regime was partly influenced by Thailand's policy toward Burma which saw a series of visits by senior Thai officials to Rangoon in recent months.

The first, and probably the most significant move which was seen as helping to break the diplomatic isolation of Burma, was by Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh last December. The trip was followed by those of other senior Thai officials.

Japan has a staff of about 10-15 people at its embassy in Rangoon and since the announcement of the diplomatic recognition, the Japanese ambassador has reportedly been meeting Burmese people both in the government and the opposition to discuss the present situation in Burma.

By renewing recognition, an official of the Japanese Foreign Ministry said recently, Japan would partially resume its financial aid to the impoverished country and make good on a 9.1 billion yen (US\$ 72 million) grant and the 12.5 billion yen (US\$99 million) it had originally promised in development assistance.

But the source said Japan has no plans to offer new assistance projects in Burma and future aid will be closely monitored to make sure that it helps contribute to the economy. A cement and a power plant are among the major projects in Burma that are aided by Japan.

BANGKOK POST  
March 5, 1989

(A translation of an article which appeared in a Thai daily newspaper called KHAO PHISET, and reprinted in the BANGKOK POST.)  
BOYCOTT OF THAI GOODS

THE Thai people would not like Thai goods to be boycotted by any country, especially when the country is enjoying an export boom and exploring new markets. The current campaign against Thai products by a group of Burmese students appears to worry Khao Phiset because the students have also sought moral support for their cause from other organisations worldwide.

Calling itself the "All Burma Students Front," the Burmese students are based in Thi Ba Bow camp in Karen-controlled territory. It was reported that the students had distributed a bulletin, named "Don News Bulletin," throughout Burma and abroad.

The ABSF students bitterly complained about Bangkok's recognition of the Saw Muang military regime and Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh's collaboration with Rangoon in persuading Burmese dissident students who took refuge in Thailand to return home. The student group thought that the only objective of Gen Chavalit's "peaceful" approach was economic exploitation.

One of the statements in the bulletin charged that while allowing Thai firms to exploit Burma's natural resources, the Saw Muang regime has prohibited Burmese fishermen from fishing in the waters franchised to Thai trawlers.

"We appeal to the people in all parts of Burma, including Rangoon, to stop buying Thai goods, be they clothing, plastic ware, soap, toothbrushes, iron ware. We also would like to appeal to justice-loving organisations to join the students in boycotting the Thai products," Khao Phiset quoted a statement from the bulletin.

The weekly said it didn't believe the students call for a boycott would have any effect on Thai goods. It, however, warned; "We should not forget our sentiment at the time we joined forces to boycott Japanese goods. We should not shut our eyes and ears and ignore the furore of a small group of people which may spread in the future."

Khao Phiset also asked: "What are we doing now? Is it called NIC? Is it our ambition to become the centre of the so-called Suwannapoom - a success that can be achieved by exploiting our neighbours?"

The ABSDF continues to call for a boycott of all Thai goods sold in Burma, and much appreciate similar actions which friends from other countries are also planning to undertake. Any economic support, of any kind, given to the Saw Maung government is a support of the military oppression against the Burmese people. In the same way, any actions which pressure such economic support to end is a support for the struggle of the Burmese people for true democracy.

ASIA WEEK  
March 17, 1989

#### LAYING DOWN THE LAW

On March 2, newspaper vendors in Rangoon had a rare field day. Hawking the grey, official Working People's Daily, they demanded -and got - three times the normal price. The attraction; a supplement containing Burma's long awaited draft election law. But if popular interest in democracy was running high, there were aspects of the draft's fifteen chapters that caused disquiet among oppositionists, especially supporters of the high profile National League for Democracy.

The league's general secretary and most popular figure is Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burma's assassinated Independence hero Gen. Aung San.

"There are a number of points that need clarification," Suu Kyi said. One month is allowed for "suggestions and opinions" to be given to the election commission, which will then submit a final version to the military regime of Gen. Saw Maung for approval. Under a published timetable, an election is due around May 1990. But Suu Kyi jibed; "I don't think publication of a draft law or the keeping of timetables means that elections will take place, or that they will be free and fair."



THE NATION  
March 4, 1989

#### SAW MAUNG SAYS THAILAND A TRUE FRIEND

A Thai university professor yesterday quoted Burmese military ruler Gen Saw Maung as describing Thailand as "Burma's true friend" because of its understanding of the political situation in that country.

Prof Dr Kramol Thongthammachat, dean of the Political Science Faculty of Chulalongkorn University, claimed he had an impression that Saw Maung was sincere about bringing democracy back to Burma.

Kramol said Saw Maung expressed appreciation that Thailand did not interfere with the domestic affairs of Burma and welcomed Thailand to do business in his country.

"Saw Maung said he considers Thailand to be Burma's true friend," he said.

Unlike many Western countries, Thailand did not openly condemn the mass killing in Burma during the month-long street riots by students and civilians and the subsequent coup that brought Saw Maung to power.

Army Commander in Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh became the first known foreign dignitary to visit Rangoon after the September coup. Agriculture Minister Sanan Kachonprasart early this week also visited Rangoon to negotiate logging and fishing deals with the Burmese.

THE NATION  
March 4, 1989

#### US ACCUSES RANGOON OF EXECUTING STUDENTS

WASHINGTON - The United States has protested the execution of some students who returned to Burma after the military seized power last year, a senior US official said yesterday.

David Lambertson, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said the United States lodged its official protest with the Burmese Foreign Ministry. But he added, "We think the number of executions of returned students is small."

Other students, including some who returned under the belief an amnesty was in effect, were tortured, he said.

Subcommittee chairman Stephen Solarz said members were "particularly concerned by reports that Burmese students who have been either forcibly or voluntarily repatriated from Thailand, where they took refuge after the September 1988 coup, have been tortured or murdered by the Burmese authorities."

In response to questions, Lambertson estimated that 1,000 people were killed in September when Burmese military authorities quashed a nationwide uprising.

Lambertson said the United States, West Germany and Japan all suspended aid to Burma last year but Japan has since resumed aid, a development he said was encouraging.

"...All over the world, among all races, languages, religions, ideologies, there are men and women born to serve their neighbor, ready for any sacrifice if it helps to build at last a really juster and more human world.

"They belong in their own environment but they feel themselves to be members of the human family. They think of other people everywhere as their brothers and sisters, people from every latitude and longitude, every climate, people of all sizes and colors, rich and poor, whatever their education or culture.

"...Let us look about us and recognize our brothers and sisters who are called like us to give up their ease and join all those who hunger for the truth and who have sworn to give their lives to make peace through justice and love."

from The Desert is Fertile by Dom Helder Camara

## The plight of Burmese writers

By Yan Ko Naing

"Burma," says Aung Chin Win Aung, "is a writer's nightmare. You do not know whether you are here or there, up or down, within or without. Every writer has to send his manuscript to be scrutinized before being allowed to be published. It feels like sending your daughter to be deflowered officially before being allowed to marry someone of her own choice."

All of the writers' manuscripts are scrutinized at a special department where the appointed scrutineers are not even qualified writers or academics. "They are mostly military officers," says Aung Chin Win Aung.

The censoring borders on the ridiculous; any word that is misspelled or not in accordance with the Burmese dictionary printed by the government, is fined 10 pyas. Then, the writer has to pay another 50 pyas (100 pyas to a kyat) for each page as fee to the scrutineer for reading his work to find fault. Ironical? "It's a big joke," sneers Aung Chin Win Aung. Bribes and corruption are rampant.

"After my first book, Bawa Datana (Philosophy of Life) was allowed to be sold by the Scrutiny Department, I had to send 52 books to the ruling party to be rechecked with the original manuscript," recalls Aung Chin Win Aung, shaking his head vigorously in frustration.

"Every writer's life is an open book at this Scrutiny Department. Including mine," says Aung Chin Win Aung.

There are many obstacles laid on the path that a writer treads; four copies of the manuscript have to be submitted, you are frequently called to the department only to wait and wait and then sent back to come back another time.

Editors and journalists are also no exception; the former are "like slave", and told what to publish and what not to editorialize. Journalists are restricted to mundane parties and celebrations for visiting dignitaries; most of their free time spent drinking and eating at these functions where government spies are

aplenty recording every conversation.

The Information Department has the final check, the final say on any article appearing in the newspapers, periodicals, magazines and any publications. The information minister in Burma must be the busiest man next to the intelligence chief.

THE NATION March 5, 1989



Writers are crying  
No chance to write  
No chance to talk  
No chance to work  
No ink, no paper to print

Aung Chin Win Aung

BANGKOK POST  
March 13, 1989

## BURMA GOVT WARNED NOT TO DISRUPT CEREMONY

BURMESE student dissidents warned yesterday they would retaliate if the military government suppresses ceremonies planned for today honouring a student killed by the military a year ago.

"We want to warn the military not to make brutal suppression against the students gathering for the memorial ceremony," said Thaung Htun, a spokesman for the All Burma Students Democratic Front.

"If they do, we will respond bitterly in various ways, including military action," said Thaung Htun in a telephone call to United Press International in Bangkok. He said the type of retaliation would depend on the situation.

Today is the anniversary of the death of Maung

Phone Maw, a student of the Rangoon Institute of technology, whose death last year began a chain reaction of mass protests that eventually unseated the ruling one-party government after 26 years in power.

The uprisings, however, brought direct intervention by the military which crushed the demonstrations and instituted martial rule. The military has said more than 500 people were killed during the disturbances, but Western diplomats have put the death toll at more than 1,000.

On Friday Kyaw Sann, the military spokesman, called on the people to ignore rumours of the demonstrations today and Thursday. Thursday is the anniversary of the deaths of more students killed by security forces during demonstrations in Rangoon last year.

"We have tolerated these and other rumours so far, but if they in any way jeopardise the already improving situation in the country, we shall certainly have to take action against the rumour-mongers concerned," Kyaw Sann said.

---

## SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

### Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on BURMA February 20, 1989 Bal Harbour, Florida

Five months have passed since more than 1,000 people were killed in a military coup which crushed a spontaneous movement for democracy in Burma. The Burmese army defended its actions by claiming street demonstrations endangered free elections. Today, the promises of early, free elections by Gen. Saw Maung's military junta are unfulfilled. Rule of law is a fiction in Burma.

Burma's movement for democracy was sparked by students. But workers also played a major role. Dockworkers, factory workers and great numbers of public employees raised their voices in behalf of democracy. In August and September, Burmese workers began to form independent labor unions and strike committees in virtually every government ministry and economic organization. A nationwide general strike emptied offices, factories and shops.

At first, the bloody coup appeared to put an end to the democratic reawakening of the Burmese people. But, now, it is clear that the core of a free trade

union movement is still alive. This independent movement, which has appealed for AFL-CIO and international labor support, leads an embattled, clandestine existence. Today, two free trade union federations are struggling to defend the basic rights of Burma's public, employees, journalists, teachers, dock workers, textile workers, transportation workers, construction workers and petroleum industry employees.

The AFL-CIO strongly supports the courageous efforts of the Burmese workers to restore democracy to their country. The Federation condemns the systematic violation of worker and human rights in Burma, including the suppression of independent unions, forced labor by civilians in combat zones, imprisonment without trial, torture and murder.

We applaud the recent actions of the U.S., Japan and other major donors, which have withdrawn their economic assistance from Burma. And we urge the governments of South Korea and Thailand, together with other countries, to end their economic dealings with the repressive Saw Maung regime.

In affirming its solidarity with Burma's free unions, the AFL-CIO pledges to provide them with such assistance as is appropriate and within our means. In this hour of travail, the AFL-CIO stands with the Burmese people in their just struggle for democracy and freedom.

## SUPPORT FROM CANADA

Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton Southwest): Mr. Speaker, in recognition of the great ground swell of support for the return of democracy in the Socialist Republic of Burma and of the need for national reconciliation, I call upon all members of this place and all Canadians to voice their support for the people of Burma and the efforts to restore human rights and democracy in that country, to condemn the killings and mass arrests in Burma, and to call upon the Burmese army and police to exercise restraint and respect for human rights.

I urge the Government of Canada to continue to publicly condemn the killings and mass arrests by the Burmese army, to further encourage the restoration of democracy in Burma and an end to one-party rule, and to persist in raising the issue of human rights and national reconciliation in its meetings with Burmese officials and in international organizations.



The ABSDF has been much encouraged by these and many other forms of support received during the past months. We know that we must rely on our own strength to carry out this struggle for full human rights and democracy in our country, but help from international friends also plays a very significant role. The international community can help by putting pressure, both economic and political, on the Saw Maung government.

We kindly request that you continue these activities of support, and we call on all friends to help bring pressure to bear on those countries which have recognized the Saw Maung government, and which are providing economic aid to him, either directly or through logging and fishing concessions.

We believe that letter or telegram campaigns can be effective ways of encouraging countries to withdraw their economic involvement in Burma at this time. We have tried to provide some information in this newsletter about countries which are most involved in Burma now, and we ask you to use your creativity in helping us communicate our concerns to them.





OUR HEADS  
ARE BLOODY  
BUT  
UNBOWED...

