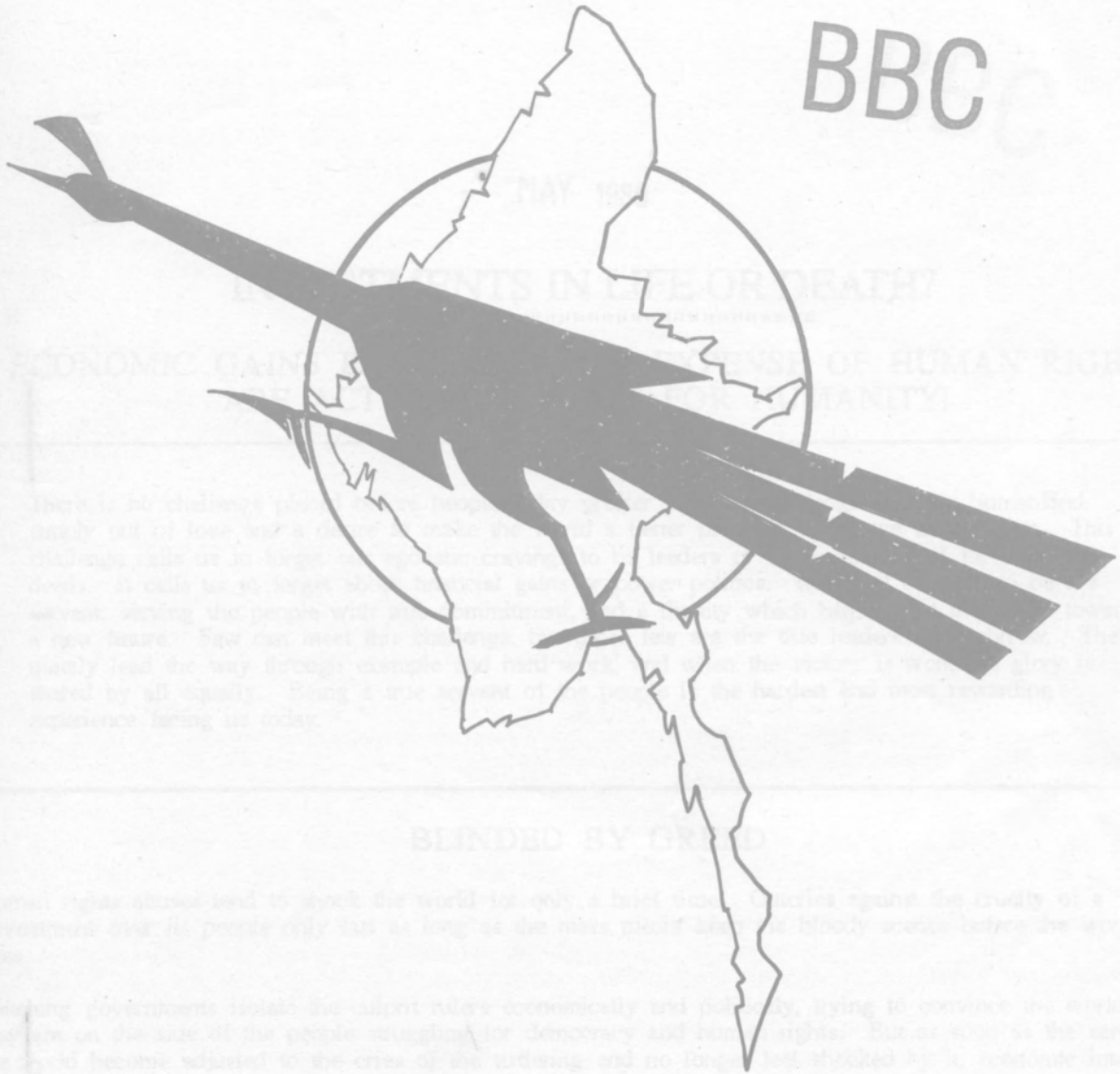


BBC



DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

DAWN, PO Box 1442, CEO Bangkok 10500, Thailand

721 NO. 1
-- MAY 1989

BBC

INVESTMENTS IN LIFE OR DEATH?

ECONOMIC GAINS EARNED AT THE EXPENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ACTUALLY LOSSES FOR HUMANITY!

There is no challenge placed before people today greater than the challenge to serve humankind simply out of love and a desire to make the world a better place in which we all can live. This challenge calls us to forget our egotistic cravings to be leaders or to be recognized for our good deeds. It calls us to forget about financial gains or power politics. Rather it calls us to be the servant, serving the people with true commitment, and a dignity which helps point the world towards a new future. Few can meet this challenge, but those few are the true leaders of tomorrow. They quietly lead the way through example and hard work, and when the victory is won, the glory is shared by all equally. Being a true servant of the people is the hardest and most rewarding experience facing us today.

BLINDED BY GREED

Human rights abuses tend to shock the world for only a brief time. Outcries against the cruelty of a government over its people only last as long as the mass media keep the bloody scenes before the world's eyes.

Watching governments isolate the culprit rulers economically and politically, trying to convince the world that they are on the side of the people struggling for democracy and human rights. But as soon as the ears of the world become adjusted to the cries of the suffering and no longer feel shocked by it, economic interests take over.

A military dictatorship need only sell its country's precious resources for a song to silence those governments which had once so arrogantly claimed to stand with the people. How quickly these governments believe that "democracy is truly developing" when their eyes become focused on vast teakwood forests, oil, mineral and marine wealth. Like a sudden flash of intense light, the sight of these rich bounties blinds them to the realities of suffering and death still existing under the military dictatorship. It is now an issue of greed versus human rights.

Is it so easy for these countries to believe that the Burmese people really want to spell democracy...

D-I-C-T-A-T-O-R-S-H-I-P

"DAWN", P.O. Box 1352, GPO Bangkok 10500, Thailand

ACTION -- ALERT -- ACTION

On August 8, 1988 (8-8-88) a nationwide strike started in Burma which finally caused two men to step down from leadership of the country, and almost ended Ne Win's iron-fisted rule of 26 years. Although the strike was finally crushed by a military coup staged by Gen Saw Maung on September 18 of that same year, the struggle for democracy and human rights continues.

For this struggle to be successful, support from international friends is crucial. Therefore, we are calling on all international friends to join with us in a world-wide campaign to celebrate the 8-8-88 strike, and to once again raise the issue of human rights violations in Burma.

As the date for this campaign nears, "DAWN" will try to give information about companies and governments supporting the military dictatorship in Burma so that friends from those countries can use this information for their campaigns. As long as Saw Maung receives money and political recognition, he will continue to arrest, torture and kill the Burmese people. Your help is needed to stop all political and economic aid to him. Following is a news report covering the 8-8-88 event. This was the start of our struggle for human rights in Burma, and it is this even which we celebrate on 8-8-89. Please join with us.

4 KILLED AS BURMESE RISE AGAINST SEIN LWIN

THE NATION
August 9, 1988

Anti-government demonstrations surged through the capital and 14 other Burmese cities yesterday with hundreds of thousands of protesters demanding democracy, human rights, and the ouster of new President Brig Gen Sein Lwin, witnesses and official media said.

Official Rangoon Radio reported violent incidents in two cities -- the former capital of Mandalay in central Burma, and Mergui on its southern tip.

"Security forces concerned had to use their weapons to control the situation," the radio said. "As a result two were killed and six were wounded in Mandalay and two were killed and six were wounded in Mergui."

The radio said demonstrations hit 14 cities outside of Rangoon, from the northern town of Myitkyina to Mergui in the south.

In the capital heavily armed troops stood guard at government buildings but did little to stop the marchers. The radio said 44 demonstrators and one looter were arrested in Rangoon.

"We want democracy. We want human rights -- that means no Sein Lwin," one student told United Press International.

The chanting, singing protesters flowed through the

city in several different processions, some of which stretched for more than 2 miles. It was estimated that more than 100,000 of the capital's 2.5 million people took to the streets.

"The whole city was out on the streets. There were marchers and demonstrators everywhere -- on main roads and dirt lanes all the way out to the airport," said one witness.

Tens of thousands more people crowded the balconies of their homes and businesses, cheering on the protest, the largest demonstration against Sein Lwin, a tough retired army general, since he took power on July 26.

One Burmese analyst called the massive outpouring of popular opposition to the government "the most radical political development in the last quarter century" in Burma.

He compared it to the "people power" revolution that overthrew President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

The crowds, which included women, children, and saffron-robed Buddhist monks, thinned at sunset, but about 7,000 sat in protest outside of the heavily guarded City Hall.

The military commander of the 22nd Army Region used a loudspeaker to tell demonstrators they had been given one day of freedom to march and now should disperse. The protesters shouted back that they wanted more than one day of freedom and vowed to stay on until they won.

WRITERS UNDER NE WIN'S WATCHFUL EYE

Ne Win, as the leader of Burma, has found ways to make money from absolutely everything and everyone -- including writers and journalists.

According to Ne Win's law, every writer has to send his manuscripts to a scrutinizing committee before it can be published. The writer must pay 10 pyas (100 pyas per kyat) for any word in the manuscript which is misspelled, or not in accordance with the Burmese/English dictionary printed by the BSPP government. A 50 pyas fee is also charged for every page of the manuscript. This is paid to the scrutinizing committee for reading the manuscript. If extra money is not paid to the scrutinizing committee to read the manuscript quickly, it is left on the table. Thus bribes and corruption have become rampant in this committee.

All manuscripts having even one word of criticism against the BSPP government never get past this committee, and thus are never read by the public.

The writer of a manuscript which does not support the policies of the government, is summoned to the National Defense Intelligence committee. Many writer have been jailed by this committee, and their manuscripts destroyed.

Translations of any foreign work is a frustrating experience. If a writer wants to translate a book, he or she must first submit the name of the book and a background of the writer. Any book which is considered a threat to the government is rejected immediately.

Many translated manuscripts actually never come back from the authorities, and the work of the translator is completely lost.

Every writer's life is an open book to the Scrutinizing Department. They can call for his or her arrest at any time if they feel the work is not flattering to the government.

Once the manuscript is printed, the writer must send 52 copies of the book to the government officials who search it for any mistakes or discrepancies with the original scrutinized manuscript. Once it has been checked, these 52 copies find their way immediately to the black market where the profits go to the government officials, not to the writer who worked so hard to make a living.

Ne Win is afraid of writers and journalists, especially those who write the truth. Therefore he has continually tried to close their eyes and their mouths.

The freedom of writing
The freedom of organization
The freedom of speech
The freedom of learning
All of these have been blocked.

Rather people have been encouraged to join the army, and that army is then used to manipulate and control the people. Through this army Ne Win has killed thousands of students and working people. Writers and journalists are not permitted to write about these realities.

(continued next page)

Every newspaper and magazine is still controlled by the government. Only news which the government wants the people to know is printed in these publications. How then can democratic elections be arranged? If truly free and fair elections are to be allowed, then the media and the publication of written materials must be freed from these controls.

Aung Chin Win Aung



This is a copy of one of the few newspapers which function in Burma today. There is now only one English newspaper and two Burmese language ones. All are controlled completely by the government and all news in them is carefully selected by the government.

Freedom of press is non-existent. News which is critical of government policy can never appear in the newspapers, and anyone who tries to print anything stating these critical views is subject to arrest and imprisonment without trial.

In all of the existing newspapers, the military is very visual. Pictures abound of military officers holding meetings, receiving gifts etc. The daily struggles of the people to find adequate food and shelter is never seen on the pages of these papers. One would get the impression from reading the government newspapers that life in Burma is nearly perfect.

Freedom of the press is essential if there is to ever be democracy in Burma. If the military is truly planning to hold free and fair elections, they must allow the people access to all information, and they must allow people to express their feelings and views freely.

Perhaps the military will claim that after elections, when democracy with a multi-party system has been established, the restrictions on press freedom will be lifted. But how can democracy be built on a foundation of oppression and suppression? The political and economic systems of a country grow from the kinds of seeds which are planted, and if those seeds now being planted are manipulation and control of the people, then a few days of casting ballots will change nothing.

We challenge Saw Maung and his government to start giving the people democratic freedoms now so that we can actually believe that free and fair elections can be arranged.

(The following is part of a written statement sent by Aung San Suu Kyi to the Thai Foreign Correspondents Club on April 23, 1989. Aung San Suu Kyi is head of the National League for Democracy, or NLD, which is the largest opposition political party in Burma.)

In Burma where there is no freedom of the press, we rely on the free press abroad to let the world know what is going on in our country.

The political climate of Burma in recent weeks has been such as to raise grave doubts with regard to the sincerity of SLORC's pledge to bring about free and fair elections. The atmosphere is charged with repression and the crescendo of arrests mount with every passing day. It is estimated that there have been over one thousand arrests since the beginning of March; of these some three hundred are members of the NLD. The great majority of those who are arrested are charged with attempting to break the peace, an accusation which is used systematically as a weapon to crush the movement for democracy.

The incident which took place in Danubyu on 5 April 1989 (see details in News From the International Press-editor) and its aftermath is indication of the attitude of the State Law and Order Restoration Council towards the National League for Democracy. The secretary of the Danubyu SLORC, an army captain, decided to take the law into his own hands and tried to shoot down a small group of peaceful, unarmed members of the League. The timely intervention of his superior officers prevented what would have been an act of cold-blooded murder but in an interview with Bertil Litner, Army officers representing SLORC declared that it would have been correct for the captain to have given orders to fire. Moreover there is a rumor going around that the Irrawaddy Divisional SLORC is taking action against the officers who prevented the shooting. Such blatant advocacy of violently repressive measures serve only to heighten the wall of doubt and mistrust which exists between the SLORC and the people.

There is today a frightening lack of communications between the Armed Forces and the civilians of Burma. It is well known that an intensive campaign based on false allegations is going on within the Armed Forces to engender resentment and hatred of all those involved in the movement for democracy. Brigadier Tin U, Secretary of SLORC has been known to attack and smite leaders of the NLD at official meetings and the military intelligence is said to be spearheading a smear campaign directed against the same leaders. Such deliberate measures to create bad blood between the Armed Forces and those struggling for democracy does not inspire confidence in the promise of free and fair elections. The NLD has called time and again for dialogue between SLORC and the political parties. Unless there is a frank exchange of views it will not be possible to allay the fears and mistrust which exists on both sides.

It is a tragedy that the people of Burma should be made to suffer for their belief in the inherent dignity of man. It is the genuine desire of SLORC that free and fair elections should be held in accordance with the will of the people, it is high time that measures are taken to ensure that the civil and political rights of the people are respected and safe-guarded.

We Burmese people are a happy and easy-going people. We do not demand many things for ourselves. We live together, share together and celebrate life together. We much prefer to laugh and eat together than to argue and fight together. But we have been pushed to our limit. The brutal military government has attacked our dignity as human beings, and continues to treat us as if we have no rights in our own country. Even the lives of those who are committed to working for free and fair elections are threatened. We have been forced to take action which we trust will lead Burma back to sanity. It is not the elections alone which are necessary, but the rights and freedom necessary to prepare for those elections. Without these, no election can be free and fair.

SAVE BURMA'S FORESTS

The Last Green Place

The Asian mainland's largest intact tropical forest area is in grave danger as a war rages over Burmese teak wood.

Thailand's forests have been decimated to the point of no return, at a rate of 3% each year. The areas of Burma under control of the Burmese military government have also been severely deforested. In 1984, National Geographic magazine estimated that the destruction of Burma's forests was "spreading at a rate of 250,000 acres a year", that the government Timber Corporation was cutting 540,000 tons per year, and that marketable teakwood from government controlled areas would be depleted in ten years.

In contrast, much of Burma's frontier areas remain forested, with deciduous teak forests in the mountains and "monsoon forests" in the south, home to such wildlife as hornbills, tapirs, rhinoceros and wild elephants. This is largely because of a 40 year ethnic minority rebellion which has prevented Burmese government access to the timber. Rebel run logging operations have been comparatively small scale.

Following November 1988's disastrous floods in deforested southern Thailand, the Thai government banned all logging nationwide. This was followed by a rush by Thai military/business figures to make timber deals with counterparts in previously isolationist neighbors such as Laos and Burma. Political issues and human rights considerations have been subordinated to the desire to profit from new timber concessions. The Burmese junta, in dire need of foreign exchange to purchase the ammunition essential to the maintenance of its privileged lifestyle, has sought desperately to fulfill its commitments in bringing hardwood to the Thai purchasers.

U Nu, the last freely elected leader of Burma, recently commented, "We have had forestry conservation since the British were here, but (now) there is no provision for it. Our forests will disappear." (February 8, 1989)

The Teak War

In the north, the Burmese government reportedly has made arrangements with favored drug warlords including the notorious "heroin king" Khun Sa, for transport of logs through their territory. Trading firms are said to commonly be involved in both commodities: narcotics and wood.

In the south, although some insurgent leaders are cooperating in increased logging for Thai firms, tribal rebels have vowed to attack Burmese logging and log transport operations. Fierce battles are being fought as the Burmese army attacks the Karen tribe's region along the Thai border, in an effort to claim timber and force logging roads through.

Burmese military operations in the frontier areas are characterized by human rights abuse including forced labor, torture and destruction of entire villages (as documented by Amnesty International, Anti-slavery Society, and other organizations). The Teak War has brought this devastation deep into the forest home of the indigenous tribes. For the hasty profit of military elites, Burma's magnificent forests may very soon become a thing of the past.

Project Maje
April 1989



JUNGLE REFLECTIONS

THIEVES IN THE DARK

This is my true experiences during the bloody days of August 1988 in Rangoon. I am a dental student, and worked as a volunteer in the Rangoon General Hospital during these days to help my innocent Burmese brothers and sisters.

On August 11, Sein Lwin's government resigned. About 11:30 that night, a house surgeon at the hospital picked up the phone to contact a friend outside the hospital. By accident he overheard a conversation between two people on another extensions of the phone. One of them was Maj. Soe Win of the 22 L.I D who was at the Kyan Taw cemetery. The other was Maj. Khin Maung Aye of the Rangoon Command who was at the Rangoon General Hospital mortuary.

Maj. Soe Win was telling Maj. Khin Maung Aye that the "case must be finished before mid-night. If it is not finished, there will be a very big problem. We must dispose of the 85 bodies!"

That night the medical officer on duty sent several workers to the mortuary to identify 4 bodies. I took the opportunity to go along. We arrived at the mortuary at about 11:45. It was dark in the mortuary, but we saw that men were at work there.

We identified the four dead bodies which were already decaying since the military had sent them to the mortuary four days after death. All of them had been killed by bayoneting. They had also been shot, but the gun shots were not the cause of death. They had been bayoneted in the neck, head, face and left chest.

I was very surprised to see so many dead people in the mortuary. Most of them were without clothing. They were men, women, young boys and girls and

one monk. The mortuary was guarded by 22 L.I.D. troops.

One major from the Rangoon Command was also there and he was fully equipped. He asked the duty officer of the mortuary, "When will you be finished?" The Duty Officer replied that it would be about 2 o'clock before they could identify all of the bodies. The major became extremely excited and shouted, "If you do not finished by the target time, I will inform the high ranking officials!"

About that time, I saw a car drive up to the back of the mortuary. It was strange because it was a white car with the sign of the U.S.A. on it and the words "United States of America" on the front driver-side door. The front and rear tags were white with black letters indicating that it was a diplomatic car. In the parking area I saw two other cars with the same kind of tags. They were also white cars. Another van was too far away to be seen clearly.

A large Hino truck was also there, but its tags were covered with jute bags. Workers were throwing bodies into the truck and van. The smell was horrible. That night they took 65 bodies away to the cemetery.

This was all confusing to me. We had heard that US embassy cars had helped pick up injured people off the streets during the shooting. I never saw this myself. However, I did see the government using cars marked as US embassy cars move people from the mortuary to the cemetery. This is surely a breach of diplomatic law.

We are now struggling to change a government which not only violates human rights, but also the laws of diplomacy. This is a serious crime.

Like thieves in the dark
They steal away life
Life which is precious
Life which should bring hope.

Like thieves in the dark
They hide their cruel deeds
Deeds which shame humanity
Deeds which destroy sanity.

REMEMBERING A FRIEND



On April 27, 1989, Tin Soe of Saw Hta camp, died from malaria. This is a sad moment for us. Once again Burma has lost a son full of the energy and dreams which could make the country fresh and green again.

However, we will not weep for a long time. The task ahead of us is too urgent. Tin Soe came to the border area knowing of the dangers from disease and other hardships. He came because he believed that a new Burma must be built, and that the building of the new Burma will be filled with sacrifices.

Like all of the students in the border area, Tin Soe could have chosen to remain in his home town, and become a silent exceptor of the military regime. If he had chosen that path, perhaps today he could be sitting in a coffee shop talking and laughing with his other friends. Perhaps he could be back in his university, sitting under a flowering tree with his girl friend. These are the things that young people should be doing.

But he knew that to live that way would be to ignore the realities of suffering and oppression which exist in Burma today. Therefore he chose to give up all those things which youth all over the world want, and go to the jungle instead where he would have to suffer. He chose that path because he wanted Burma to be a better place. For that dream, he has given his life.

We draw strength from Tin Soe and other friends who have died in these jungle camps. We will continue to keep the dream of a new Burma alive and growing. Please join with us in this struggle for new life.

CELEBRATING THE BURMESE NEW YEAR

On April 17, 1989, a ceremony was held in the Three Pagodas ABSDF camp to celebrate the Burmese New Year. Students collected money from the local villagers as well as from within their own camp which they donated to a nearby Buddhist monastery.

They also issued a statement urging the Burmese people throughout Burma to celebrate the New Year by going to pagodas and monasteries to offer prayers for democracy and peace in the country.

Although the government bans people from meeting together in groups of more than five, they can not ban the people from going to the temple to pray. Thus, this is a good opportunity for the people to join together and pray for democracy which is the dream of all Burmese.

ASK FOR A NEW FORCE

His left hand clutches his chest
Blood oozes between his fingers
Yet his right fingers never releases
their hold on the Peacock Flag
Never can it fall to the ground
even though his body collapses in pain.
A sound, unclear to his ears asks
"My child, do you want democracy?"

I want to ask you--
You who read this poem--
If this child were your teenaged child,
Would you raise a clenched fist
and angrily shout at the group
which hungrily seeks power?

Standing unarmed before the military
We asked only for democracy
and they instead gave us bullets
This we can never forget till the world ends.

To all our people
we make this request--
the students and people want true democracy
and liberation from the power-hungry rulers.
Join us to build this new force
with power from your left or right hand

San Min

Page.....9

အား သစ် ကို တောင်း ဆို ငြင်း

ရင် ဘတ် ပေါ် မှိ ထား
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ဆန်းမင်



FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Satires defy guns during celebrations in Burma

Rangoon (Reuter) - Grim-faced soldiers manning trucks armed with machineguns put a damper on usually exuberant new year celebrations in Burma but crowds in Rangoon defied the troops to express their resentment of military rule.

Every day during the five-day festival that ended on Monday gleeful youngsters hurled buckets of water over passers by, the traditional way of washing away the old year and welcoming the new.

But residents said the number of revellers was small compared with earlier years. The biggest crowds gathered at the offices of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) to hear satires that this year mocked the ruling military council.

With the troops avoiding confrontation, the meetings drew up to 5,000 people, including Buddhist monks, in some of the biggest protest gatherings since the army took over last September.

An old woman watched from her doorway as helmeted soldiers passed in a truck and said sadly, "Everybody hates the army. They are rude and cruel people."

A tour of Rangoon and the northern city of Mandalay during the normally exuberant five-day festival confirmed the depression still gripping the people, who saw their dream of overturning 26 years of repressive rule shattered by the bloody September 18 takeover.

Opposition figures said it appeared the army, despite its promise to hold elections next year, was taking a tougher line on dissent since a series of demonstrations in March commemorating student deaths a year ago.

Bangkok Post
April 19, 1989

Burmese fear for safety of opposition leader

By David Brunnstrom

RANGOON - After eight months of tough military rule, the increasingly confrontational nature of Burmese politics have raised fears for the life of the country's leading opposition figure.

The 43-year-old Aung San Suu Kyi, charismatic daughter of Burma's assassinated independence hero Aung San, said troops totting automatic rifles threatened to shoot her during a recent campaign tour. During her April 5 visit to the town of Danubyo, about 60 miles north of Rangoon in the Irrawaddy region, Suu Kyi said an army captain ordered a squad of six men to take aim and fire at her and about 20 supporters if they continued to march down a street.

"It was quite clear that I was the primary target, so I went through the center of the street and went through the group of kneeling soldiers," Suu Kyi said.

"At that time, a major came running in and told the captain to stop. People behind me told me afterwards when this happened, the captain tore off his epaulets and gestured to the effect "what use are these if I am not allowed to use my authority?"

"The implication is that he felt his military rank gave him the right to shoot people down in the street," she said.

THE NATION
April 20, 1989



Aung San Suu Kyi lashes out at Australia's Burma policy

Rangoon - (AFP) - Australia is among several nations which seem to be putting economic interests over democratic concerns in relations with the military regime in Rangoon, opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi said here on Tuesday.

She criticized "some countries" for easing their pressure on the junta to implement democratic reforms.

"Sometimes I can't help feeling the real reason why some countries want to improve their relationship with this government is not so much in the course of democracy as in the cause of economic cooperation," she told a group of foreign and Burmese reporters at her home on Rangoon's outskirts.

She said she was thinking in particular of Australia, which reportedly has resumed some aid programmes to Burma after having suspended economic cooperation following a military coup on September 18.

"I can't help wondering whether Australia's policy has more to do with economic consideration rather than human rights and desire for democracy," Aung San Suu Kyi said.

"I say very frankly to the Australians that I'm not very convinced that everything they are doing is to support a great movement to democracy. There are a lot of economic interests involved," she added. She did not elaborate.

Bangkok Post
April 22, 1989

Moynihan moves to halt Burmese exports to US

Washington (AFP) - Senator Daniel Moynihan has introduced legislation to ban US imports of teakwood and fish products from Burma, his office said on Thursday.

Moynihan, a Democrat from New York, praised President George Bush for suspending Burma's tariff preference under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), but said "more must be done to prevent the further financial subsidization of the present Burmese regime."

The senator insisted, "the United States must do what it can to keep hard currency - and guns that hard currency buys - from the Burmese military."

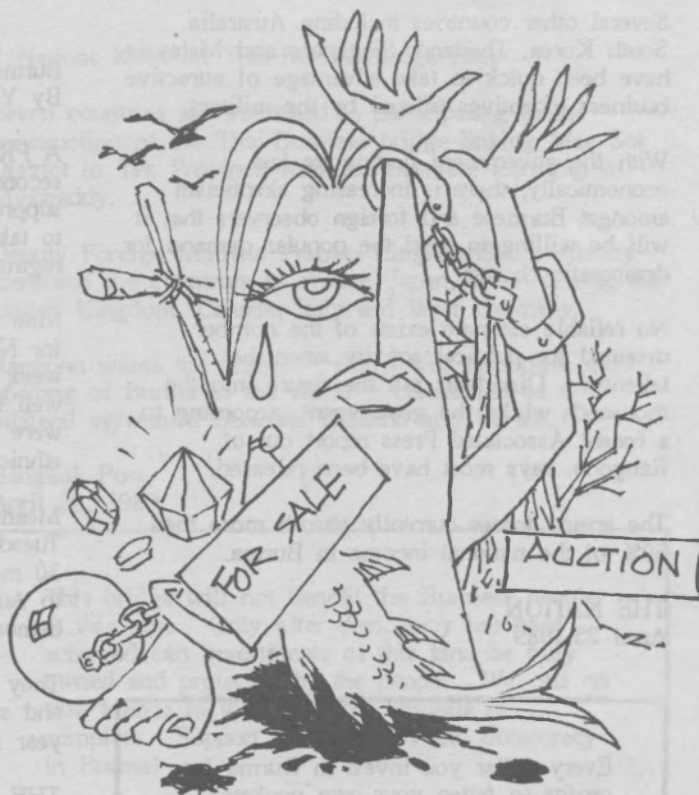
His office said that Burma's forests contain 80 per cent of the world's remaining teak reserves and that firms from Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Australia had purchased millions of dollars' worth of logging and fishing concessions from Burma's military regime in the past few months.

"The money from these concessions will not help ordinary Burmese," said Moynihan.

"Rather, the profits will prolong the life of the current government and equip the military for yet more violence."

"The massive logging concessions are all the more troublesome in light of the need to control deforestation."

Bangkok Post
April 22, 1989



Democracy under the gun

By David Brunnstrom in Rangoon

Burma is essentially a country divided; divided between an entrenched military establishment, less able to see the benefits than the hazards of change and an idealistic pro-democracy movement lacking in funds and its activities severely curtailed by hostile authorities.

And now observers say, the weakening of overseas pressure and the resumption of aid payments - most notably from Japan - has provided a significant boost for the government.

"The Japanese have tried to say that there is no new aid coming in but there is a hell of a lot of money in the pipeline," one analyst said on strict condition of anonymity.

"There is at least \$800 million set to come gushing in and it is obviously going to bring substantial relief to the regime," he said

Another Rangoon source put the total projected figure for Japanese aid at over \$1.5 billion.

Several other countries including Australia, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, have been quick to take advantage of attractive business incentives offered by the military.

With the government finding its feet economically, there is increasing skepticism amongst Burmese and foreign observers that it will be willing to heed the popular demand for democratic change.

No reliable estimate exists of the number detained for political activity since the takeover. Dissidents put the figure into the thousands whilst the government, according to a recent Associated Press report out of Rangoon, says most have been released.

The armed forces currently absorb more than 50% of the national income in Burma.

THE NATION
April 25, 1989

Every dollar you invest in Burma for profits to fatten your own pockets, pay for the guns and bullets which drain the blood of the Burmese people!

Oriental eyes hotel trade in Burma, Kampuchea

By Sam-ang Vutisaksatit

THE Oriental Hotel said it is interested in operating hotels in Burma and Kampuchea, pending the outcome of the peace process in the two neighboring countries.

Adisorn, the son-in-law of influential businessman Dr. Chaiyudh Kamasuta, chairman of the ItalThai Group, said Oriental finds in Rangoon a promising prospects to develop a hotel blessed with rich historical and cultural heritages.

Oriental is eyeing the Strand Hotel by the Rangoon river with special interest because the hotel, built more than 100 years ago, is well-known to visitors. Another selling point of Burma would be the fact that its population is fluent in English.

However, Adisorn said Oriental still has to wait for the unravelling of the political situation in Burma, and that its team will be visiting the country soon to explore the business atmosphere there.

THE NATION
April 26, 1989

Burmese student leader flees government suppression

By Yindee Lertcharoenchok

A PROMINENT student leader and chairman of the second largest political party in Burma fled government suppression to the Thai-Burmese border last week hoping to take up armed struggle against the Saw Maung military regime.

Moe Thi Zun, chairman the student-led Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS), said in an interview early this week at a border area that the situation in Rangoon as well as other big cities was still tense and more students were expected to flee to the jungle areas controlled by ethnic Burmese rebels.

Meanwhile, the Associated Press reported from Rangoon Tuesday that Burmese authorities recently arrested some 30 members mostly students and other youths, belonging to Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD party for anti-government demonstrations, sources in the party said.

They were arrested for chanting anti-government slogans and staging anti-government plays during the Burmese new year festivities that ended April 17, the sources said.

THE NATION
April 27, 1989

Burma parties unite against junta

Rangoon (AFP) - Forty-one political parties planning to contest elections in Burma have joined forces seeking direct talks with the military junta on arrests and harassment of campaigners, a key opposition leader said.

"We want to speak to (junta leader) Saw Maung about fair and free elections," retired general Tin Oo, chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD), said in an interview here last week.

He said the alliance also wanted to speak with Gen Saw Maung about "orders detrimental to government principles," referring to complaints of harassment of campaigners.

He said the alliance would demand campaigning in which public assembly is allowed, with open media coverage.

There are 230 parties registered with the government's Election Committee. Ohn Gyaw, head of the political department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said elections were scheduled for May 1990 but could be held one or two months earlier if preparations for the ballot continued to go well.

Bangkok Post
April 27, 1989

30-member Burmese military team due today

ARMY Commander Lt Gen Than Shwe leads a 30-member Burmese delegation arriving here this morning for a six-day official visit at the invitation of his Thai counterpart, Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh.

The visit is the first official foreign trip for Burmese officers since the present Saw Maung regime came to power last September in a bloody coup d'etat.

The Burmese delegates will hold a meeting Monday morning with Thai counterparts at the Supreme Command's Headquarters, and will later call on Prime Minister Gen Chatichai Choonhavan and Deputy Foreign Minister Prapas Limpabandhu. Chatichai also serves as the Supreme Command's defence minister.

Topics for the talks are expected to include

cross-border timber trade, the establishment of border liaison offices minority and narcotics-related problems, and a range of economic, trade, academic, cultural, energy, tourism and medical issues.

Lt Gen Than Shwe, 56, who is the former commander of the Southwest Command, has held the post of army commander since 1987 and is concurrently a member of the SLORC.

The Burmese trip, which follows visits to Burma by Gen Chavalit on April 21 and Dec 14 last year, is aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and tackling common border problems.

Chavalit's last official trip to Rangoon was followed by visits by senior Thai officials and private businessmen. Perhaps the most controversial of the Thai guests was Deputy Foreign Minister Prapas, whose visit drew strong protest from Thai students here. The students charged the Foreign Ministry with effectively recognizing the Saw Maung government.

The Saw Maung regime has been widely condemned for mass killings and general violations of human rights.

THE NATION
April 28, 1989

7 Nations Keen on Thai-Burma Bridge Plan

Seven countries are interested in participating in the construction of the Thai-Burmese bridge linking Mae Sot District in Tak Province with the Burmese township of Myawaddy.

Deputy Foreign Minister Prapas Limpabandhu yesterday identified the countries as France, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Canada, Italy and West Germany.

Rangoon wants the bridge -- which will symbolise the opening of Burma to the world -- considered as a bilateral agreement between Thailand and Burma.

Bangkok Post
April 22, 1989

This bridge will not benefit the Burmese people at this time. Only after democracy has been achieved can investments of this kind be truly owned and protected by the people. We call on true friends to wait until our struggle is complete. Support human rights and democracy in Burma!