



# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE  
ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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**BBC** 1989

JUSTICE NOT JUST US

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ONLY THROUGH UNITY CAN THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE BE HEARD  
ABOVE THE ROAR OF OPPRESSION

In the struggle for justice and human rights, busyness is not necessarily an indication of effectiveness. Activists can become extremely busy working on issues which may seem important and exhilarating, but which may not even threaten or slow down the steady and rapid growth of the powers of injustice. In fact, the powers of injustice cheer on such busy activities because these activities distract people from the really important issues which would lead to a confrontation with the powers of injustice. To be effective in our struggle for justice and human rights we must be able to identify those urgent issues for which we share responsibility, and then have the courage to confront them quickly and creatively, being unafraid of the powers of injustice and their threats against us and our organizations. Their greatest asset in their struggle to control and manipulate, is our own fear and our misdirected busyness. Their greatest fear is our ability to identify the key issues, and to confront those issues head on.

Many times we have told our international friends that we want to bring about change in our country through non-violent means. We know, perhaps better than our international friends, what violence and civil war means, for our country has been ruled violently for 27 years now, and the government has waged a war against the ethnic groups for longer than that. We do not want to see more death and destruction brought upon our beloved motherland and our Burmese people.

The Saw Maung government has now launched serious military attacks against some of our camps in the jungle. They can do this because now they are receiving the money they so desperately need from countries more interested in our rich natural resources than in our human rights. We see no way to defend ourselves but to fight back.

Help from our international friends is needed to bring about a non-violent solution to this crisis. You can do more than encourage us to find a non-violent path. You can work with us to make that non-violent path possible.

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

**ACTION -- ALERT -- ACTION**  
**8-8-89**

August 8 is rapidly approaching. We renew our appeal to friends all over the world to join with us on this day in a united call for justice in Burma. This issue of "Dawn", along with the past 8 issues, outlines many of the human rights abuses in our land and against our people. They also list countries and companies which are giving economic and political support to the Saw Maung military regime. You can help by dealing directly with those issues which your government, or companies from your country are responsible for.

**In the struggle for human rights, silence is not golden, it is a sin!**

If your government has recognized the Saw Maung military government, initiate a campaign through letters, cables or rallies calling for them to withdraw their recognition and instead stand with the suffering Burmese peasants, workers and students.

If companies from your country are investing in logging, fishing or other economic activities in Burma, call on them to stop. Boycott their goods, and picket in front of their offices calling on them to respect the human rights of the Burmese people instead of worshipping profits. Remember, everytime you purchase something from one of these countries, you are helping pay for the bullets and artillery shells which are killing the students and ethnic minorities.

Start letter and postcard campaigns to the Saw Maung government demanding that they listen to the Burmese people and allow an interim government to be set up so that truly free and fair elections can be arranged. If they are serious about allowing a democratic system to develop in Burma, they must allow the people the right to participate fully, without the threat of military retaliation against them.

Send letters to the Saw Maung government demanding the release of all political prisoners. Issue number 6 of "Dawn" listed the names of some of these prisoners. We will try to give you an updated list in the near future. These political prisoners are often tortured seriously, and some of them may have already been killed. Your support for them is urgently needed. If possible, you should also contact the Burmese embassy in your country stating your concern for the well-being of these prisoners and calling for their release. Also, ask your governments to intervene and write letters to the United Nations asking them to take action as well.

# JUNGLE REFLECTIONS

## DEMOCRACY AND UNITY

Democracy and human rights have been lost in our motherland since Ne Win took over power on March 2, 1962. In order to try to regain democracy and human rights after the past painful 27 years, students and working people have struggled through peaceful means since March of 1988.

However, the military did not give heed to the voices of the people. They closed their ears to the cries of the people by detaining, torturing and killing the people in the hearts of the cities all over Burma. Because of this brutal reaction from the government, at least 8000 students, monks and laboring people died in pools of blood on the streets. For those of us who witnessed these evil deeds of murder, the scenes can never be erased from our minds.

Those of us who took part in this peaceful struggle, finally had to flee the bullets of the military and seek refuge in the jungles with the ethnic groups who have been waging a revolution against the government for many decades already. We, the peace loving Burmese people do not seek civil war. We seek change through peaceful means. However, our options become more and more limited as time goes by.

Now we see that some countries value money and business more than democracy and human rights. Because of this, our struggle must last a long time, and must become more bloody. To countries like China, Japan and Thailand who love wealth more than democracy and human rights, we the peace loving people of Burma say that we will long remember your deeds during these days. One day our dreams for a peaceful and democratic Burma will come true, and then your economic gains will have to end.

For this reason, we students must be united, and work together harder than ever before. If we can not unite and work as one body, our struggles in the jungles will be in vain.

In a democratic State there must be freedom of speech, writing and action. In such a State we can choose the people's representatives who will truly represent us as the government. This is a noble dream.

Therefore, all of us now living in the jungles must

start building a new Burma, a Burma which is exemplified by life in our jungle camps. Once we have true democracy within our camps we can begin to build the new Burma which we have dreamt about all these many years. If we do not start building in this way, our victorious struggle might quickly be replaced by a new dictator.

There is a Burmese saying which suggests that only through unity can we achieve our goals. If we are not all united, we can never achieve our goal of building a new society.

There are those who try to create disunity among us. Many of them have been planted by the Saw Maung military, for Saw Maung fears our unity more than anything else. We must be able to identify those who wish to break us apart, so that we can protect our dream.

If we students do not unite at this stage, we can not dream of a democratic Burma, and the world family will look down on us and will stop their help and support. Our struggle for justice and freedom will end.

Oh beloved comrades, be aware, and always be alert. Do not let rumors break us apart.

If there is unity among us, there will surely be a new day for Burma.

Khant Thu Hlaing



## WAN KHA ATTACKED

Wan Kha is one of the student camps situated inside Burma about 15 minutes from Mae Sot Thailand. It presently houses about 200 students. The camp rests in a horseshoe bend of the Moel river so that three of its sides border Thailand.

On about April 27, the Burmese military began an attack on Wan Kha. The attack consisted mostly of artillery shelling. For protection, the students dug bunkers around the edge of the camp which could protect them from the artillery attacks except for direct hits.

Then on May 7, the Burmese military opened up for a full attack on the camp. For the first three days of the attack, 200 to 300 artillery shells were fired into the camp each day. These consisted of 105 mm shells and 120 mm and 81 mm mortars.

Ground attacks were also made against the camp. It is estimated that as many as 5,000 Burmese troops were involved in the attack. Wave after wave of these troops bore down on the camp, but were driven back by the camp defenders. Many of the Burmese soldiers were also killed by their own mortars and artillery shells.

Camp defenders say that many of the Burmese soldiers who tried to force their way into Wan Kha camp were as young as 15 years old. Most of them appeared to have been drugged as they staggered towards the camp defense lines holding a grenade in one hand and a knife in the other. Some walked towards the camp simply dragging their guns along the ground. For the camp defenders it was the kind of scene that nightmares are made of.

It is not known how many of the Burmese military were killed, but some Wan Kha defenders estimate at least 300. For the camp, 5 Karen soldiers were killed. One student died from a shrapnel wound in the head, and 5 have been injured.

During the fighting, two Burmese officers were captured after being wounded. The Karen military contacted the Burmese government in order to return these officers to their homes. However, the Burmese government refused to accept them back, claiming that they were now considered spies. These two Burmese officers now rest in a Karen hospital—men truly without a country.

How can the Burmese military afford to wage such an extravagant attack on a small camp such as Wan Kha? The artillery shells are extremely expensive, and to fire 200 to 300 each day indicates that the

government now has money to throw away.

By late 1988, the Burmese government had only 8 to 10 million US dollars left in their treasury. The logging and fishing concessions which the Burmese government has sold off to Thai and Japanese companies (other countries have recently also gained some of these concessions) have dumped millions of dollars into Burma which the government can now use to buy these artillery shells and fire without rest at the student camps along the border.

On May 18, 1989, Burma auctioned off \$3.89 million worth of teak to foreign firms. Companies from Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, India and Western Europe took part in the auction.

It is difficult to get exact figures on how much the Burmese government has received to date from logging and fishing concessions, but several months back one source put it at least to \$50 million. Since then, many new contracts have been signed, and much money has flowed across the desk. Without this money, Saw Maung could never carry out such violent attacks against the student camps and the ethnic minorities.

We call on our friends in these countries to have the courage to deal with this issue. If you can end your country's involvement in Burmese affairs, we Burmese people can then solve our own internal problems with a minimum of bloodshed. However, the more money your countries send to the Saw Maung military, the more the blood of our unfortunate people will have to flow. Wan Kha is an example of what we seek to avoid. Please stand with us.

- Negotiations for a peaceful settlement are the best possibility to end this bloodshed. However, Saw Maung/Ne Win will never negotiate if they have the money and international acceptance which their power requires. Only when they are economically and politically isolated, will they be willing to sit down at the table and talk peace.



# BBC

## The Re-writing of Burmese History

On May 5, 1989, the military government assigned the Education Ministry to compile a new history of the country. It seems that the history books presently in use do not provide a true and clear picture of what really has taken place during the past hundred years or so. This is not the first country in which a military dictator has suddenly decided to make the country's history more compatible with the image the military dictator wants to portray.

The history of Burma indeed does need to be researched and printed. However, we do not think the State Law and Order Restoration Council, which is ruling the country with an iron fist, has the mandate to take on such an important task. They have too much at stake to write the true facts. How can they possibly be critical of Ne Win and his 27 years of rule? How can they truly look objectively at the events of the past two years in which they slaughtered thousands of innocent men,

women children and monks in order to maintain their own dictatorial rule?

If a new history of Burma is to be written, we suggest that it must be done by people who do not have to try to cover over their own evil deeds. The history must be written by those who can keep at least some objective distance between themselves and the events they are recording.

The SLORC's project to re-write Burmese history can only be seen as a further attempt to manipulate the people and international opinion. Perhaps in this "new history", a new Father of Independence will be announced, and we will be press-ganged into believing that this new "Father of Independence" has been benevolently leading us for the past 27 years. The SLORC must soon learn that the Burmese people, despite being intellectually manipulated and isolated for all these 27 years, are not naive about the true history of our motherland!

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## The Return of Tourism

Tourism has always been a sensitive issue in Burma. During the past years, tourists were only granted a one-week visa to visit the ancient sights scattered throughout the land. Travel and hotel arrangements had to be made through the government-run Tourist Burma office. Only official guides were supposed to take care of the foreign visitors. Many foreign visitors left the country frustrated because the travel they wished to do could not be arranged in the short seven-day period, or because Tourist Burma could not arrange air or land travel which they required.

Hotels were limited, and foreign guests were not allowed to stay in unofficial guest houses or with Burmese friends. In 1984 only about 20,000 tourists visited Burma. In 1987 this increased to a little over 40,000.

Tourism in its best form allows for maximum sharing between the local people and the foreign visitors, and minimum destruction of the local culture and values. Little exchange has ever been

allowed between visitor and visited in Burma.

In 1988, tourism basically ended due to the democratic struggle of the people and the fear by the government that foreigners might learn of the true desires of the Burmese.

Now a new drive to open up tourism is underway by the Saw Maung government. On May 12, 1989 the government began to offer tourist visas for 14 days. They hope to increase the number of foreign visitors to the country to 150,000 by 1992. The visitor is still, however, under the direct control of the Burma Tourist office which means their visit is totally controlled by the government.

Foreign countries are showing much interest in investing in new hotels throughout the country. Flights from Chiang Mai Thailand direct to Pagan Burma are being talked about.

What does this mean for the Burmese people? It most certainly does not mean that their economic

life will improve. It does mean, however, that they will be more carefully controlled, because successful tourism depends on a stable political climate. The government, if it wants the tourist dollars, must keep the population calm and quiet. They must find some way to do that effectively, for the Burmese population is still angry at what happened last year, and at the continued military dictatorship. The government knows that any renewed outbreak of public protest against the government will further discourage foreign visitors. Thus their control over the population must be total.

Furthermore, even in highly developed countries like Thailand, tourism does not necessarily bring economic benefits to the common people. The benefits go mainly to a few government officials, wealthy owners of hotels and restaurants, and primarily to foreign countries who own the major shares in the large hotels and travel companies.

A Thai company has already offered to rebuild the famous Strand hotel in Burma. This old colonial hotel is part of the history of our country. The Thai company has suggested that they will build a 12-story annex to the hotel which will not only destroy the history of this old hotel, but will also destroy the entire skyline of Rangoon which has few buildings higher than the trees which line the streets.

A few Burmese will, of course, receive employment in this big new hotel, but their salaries will be low so that the tourist's visit to Burma can be as cheap as possible while still giving the investors a maximum profit.

Further north, in Pagan, one of the ancient capitals of Burma, several countries are also negotiating to build new hotels. Presently only a few simple hotels and guest houses cater to the visitors who travel around the area viewing the ancient temples and monuments on horse-drawn carts much as the village people do.

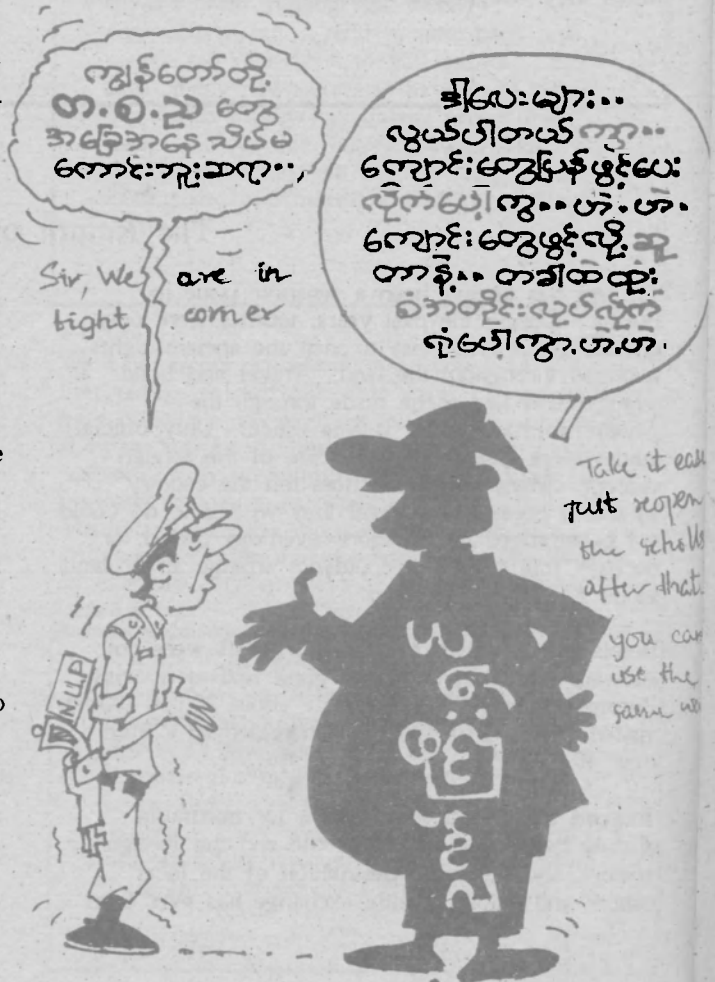
Pagan is a sacred place to the Burmese people. They highly respect the thousands of temples, pagodas and monuments which dot the flat plains. Will the new hotels and mass tourism which they will bring destroy this sacred place?

It is doubtful that the tourists who will be invited to Pagan will want to rough it with the local people. They will demand swimming pools, imported beers and air conditioned couches to haul them past the ancient sights. Will they have any interest in what these monuments mean to the Burmese people? Will they care about the lives of the people being displaced and discarded for the promotion of this tourism? Will they leave Pagan having learned

anything about the Burmese people, their hopes and their dreams? It is doubtful, because mass tourism emphasizes financial income rather than the truth. The ancient spirits which inhabit these historic brick remains will certainly be saddened by what is happening to Burma and to her people.

Economically, the people will gain little. The money which the government will earn from this tourism will most certainly go to the military to further its iron-grip hold on the people. Little if any will go into development which will benefit the people. In time local villagers will probably be forced into crime and prostitution in order to survive this new "modern development".

We are not opposed to tourism. We look forward to the day when we will have a say in how tourism is developed in our motherland. We look forward to the day when we can meet foreign visitors to our country with: "Welcome to Burma, to a democratic land which cherishes truth, justice and human rights!" But now, we can not accept a tourism which is used to further dehumanize and kill our people and our motherland.



## COMMENTS ON THE NEWS

### What does the opening of schools mean?

The news that the Burmese military government is planning to reopen the schools in June should cause rejoicing among the Burmese people, old and young alike. All Burmese youth (excluding the children of the military elite) have lost one entire year of their education. This includes even kindergarten children whose small institutions were also closed by the military perhaps for fear that they might organize anti-government demonstrations. For one entire year, the course of education in Burma has come to a standstill, setting the country back even further. Yes, the news of the re-opening of the schools should bring rejoicing. However, our international friends must forgive us if we seem a bit cautious to accept this news with heartfelt thanks to our military dictator leaders.

In 1988 the schools were closed because the students were in the streets demanding democracy. Today, democracy is as distant as it was in 1988. Why then would the government want to re-open the schools? It is virtually impossible to know exactly what goes through the mind of a man like Ne Win, but we suggest two reasons why he have made this move.

The Burmese government is in desperate need of foreign money. It is spending a frightening amount of money on its war against the ethnic minorities, and any loss in flow of this cash into the country could negatively effect this war. Many foreign countries, including Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, India and Western Europe are interested in purchasing some of Burma's vast natural resources. They need news which they can use to convince their populations that they are not

propping up a dictatorship which rules the people by violence. The opening of schools provides a picture of tranquility, of peace restored to the country, of a people happy and content. This would help boost the flow of foreign cash into the country--the money which Saw Maung and Ne Win so desperately need to control the population. Thus the re-opening of the schools may simply be a sweet frosting to cover a rotten cake which will further entice foreign governments and companies to join the "Burmese feast".

A second reason for this "good news" comes from the other extreme. Saw Maung and Ne Win are afraid of truly free and fair elections. They know that if they allow the people to vote freely, the present military leaders can never win. They have no intention of giving up their power which they have held on to so selfishly for over 26 years. They need some reason to cancel the elections and enforce their military rule for another long period of time.

Once the schools are opened, it is very possible that the students will once again organize, and renew their struggles in the streets. The government can then say that there is not enough stability in the country to hold elections. It will also give them reason to brutally attempt to destroy the student worker's movement as they tried to do in 1988.

Whatever the reason for the government to decide to re-open the schools, we say that the birth of democracy in our motherland must come first. Only when we have democracy will our education have any meaning to us and our families.

"We all believe that any leaders and governments which are democratically elected and govern through democracy and a respect for human rights will ensure the future success for the country and its people."

(From the Manifesto of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, November 1-5, 1988)



### BLOOMING FLOWER

Listen!  
You leaders of Burma!

You killed senselessly in the  
streets!

Because of this  
A flower is now in bloom.

Its petals glow beautifully  
Though we feel great sadness.

It is the flower  
which is the blossom  
of revolt!

Ko Ko Lwin

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## BOOKS----BOOKS

### VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

(Burmese youth in transition)

This book contains interviews, reflections and poetry of some of the students who still live in simple jungle camps along the Thai/Burma border. It is a call to friends around the world to join with them in seeking justice and the right to help build a new and better Burma. It is their plea to you to not forget Burma and its struggle for democracy. From their isolation deep in the dense jungle, they call out through these pages for your solidarity and support. Voices from the jungle are often not easy to listen to, especially when they challenge us to take action, but we need to listen, and we need to be ready to become involved.

"Voices from the Jungle" is an attempt by these students to break out of their isolation and tell the world about their experiences, their nightmares, and their dreams. Their stories and poems tell of youth suddenly being thrust into an adult world in which they are now forced to make life and death decisions. While being interviewed, one young 19 year-old student suddenly said in frustration, "I can not answer the questions you are asking about politics. Those are questions for the adult world to discuss. I am not an adult!" The yearning to be a youth, and to have a chance to grow up as a youth still exists in their hearts, but they are now forced to be adults far beyond their years of experience and understanding.

However, despite their desire to live the carefree life of millions of other highschool and university students around the world, they are taking on their new responsibility with determination. The "Jungle University" in which they are now enrolled belongs to them, and they are enrolled in it because they have now chosen to take this path. What the future holds for them is unknown, but we who are friends and sympathizers can help influence that future by getting involved. "Voices from the Jungle" is a challenge for us to join in the task of building a better world based on justice and human rights.

("Voices from the Jungle" is available from - Center for Christian Response to Asian Issues, 2-3-18 Nishi-Waseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan)



## TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN

In Burma, health care is something a few people talk about, but the majority of the people know nothing about. Those who have to go to the hospital may be diagnosed by caring and capable doctors and nurses, but medicines are almost non-existent. Almost everything the patient needs, including medicines and blood, must be purchased on the black market at extremely high prices which few people can afford. Thus many people simply suffer at home, hoping that local cures will do the job.

In Three Pagodas student camp, the ABSDF is proving that it can make better efforts to care for the sick than can the Burmese government.

Yee Nwe Tun, a 25 year old woman who graduated from Rangoon University in physics has been diagnosed as having malignant lymphoma. Khin Marlan, a 21 year old woman from Rangoon suffers from chest pains and P.U.O. Both of these cases would have great difficulties finding treatment in Rangoon.

Together the students of Three Pagodas, and members of the ABSDF committee arranged for the two women to go to Bangkok where they entered a good hospital. After much searching, several international organizations were found which could help cover the expenses for treatment. Now the two young students are getting excellent treatment and medication. Their conditions have improved, and they will soon be discharged.

This proves that medical care, along with other necessities, can be arranged if the government is truly concerned about the well being of the people.

### REAL ANSWER

My friend,  
I don't want to murmur  
how much I suffer,  
but want to tell everything  
which swells up in my heart.

A bullet rest in my lung  
as the doctor has recorded.  
But my dear friend,  
the dictator has ordered my lips to say  
the wound has been made  
by a sharp bamboo stick.  
After four bottles of blood  
have flowed into my body  
I feel no better.  
The greatest discomfort comes  
from the shackles  
which bind my hand and leg  
keeping my pale body

fast to the bed.  
My parents shed tears  
their eyes dark  
their ears listening carefully.  
I know my condition  
and in my last few moments of life  
must strive to answer the question  
which the "Inspection Commission"  
wish to keep silent.

The truth they want to hide is  
"What lies in my lung,  
is truly one of your bullets!"

Khin Ohnmar

(This poem shares the last minutes in the life of Ko Soe Naing, a student from Rangoon Institute of Technology, who was brutally shot by the riot police in March of 1988)

## FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

### BURMA WANTS TO CRUSH REBELS TO BOOST TRADE

Burma wants to crush an ethnic insurgency on its border with Thailand in order to increase bilateral trade, Deputy Foreign Minister Prapass Limphaphandu said yesterday.

Mr Prapass quoted Burmese army chief Lt-Gen Than Shwe as saying Burma was fighting guerrillas for control of the border region to secure rich logging and mining territory.

The 40-year-old insurgency spilled over into Thailand in recent weeks after Burmese government troops ousted Karen rebels from their bases and pushed them back to the border river. Several thousand Burmese civilians crossed into Thailand to escape heavy shelling.

Mr. Prapass said Burma, which has awarded logging concessions to Thai companies in the mainly rebel-held areas, was also considering mining concessions. Karen rebels gain much of their revenue by taxing goods passing through their territory.

BANGKOK POST  
May 4, 1989

### BO MYA WARNS BURMA JUNTA TO STAY AWAY

Karen rebels will not allow logging or mining by Rangoon or its contractors in their territory, Karen National Union President Bo Mya said yesterday.

Apparently referring to a report the Burmese Government wants to crush an ethnic insurgency on the Thai-Burmese border to increase trade with Thailand, Bo Mya said the Karen would prevent Burmese forces or logging concessionaires from felling trees and hauling logs out of KNU-held territory.

He said it would be impossible for logs to be hauled out of Karen-held territory without permission, and any Thai traders who wish to acquire logs from Burma should contact the KNU.

He accused Singapore, Pakistan, Sweden and South Korea of selling arms and ammunition to Burma, thereby "enhancing the strength of the Saw Maung regime."

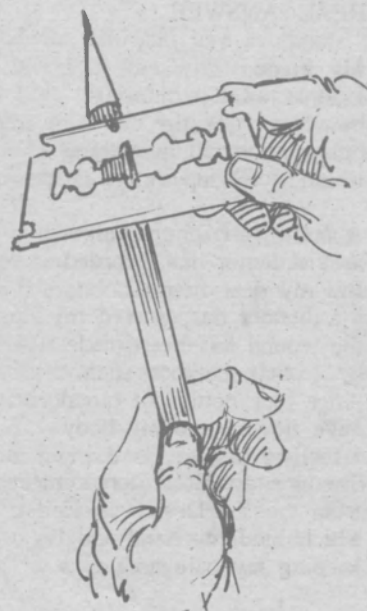
BANGKOK POST  
May 5, 1989

### BURMA TO REVISE ITS HISTORY

Burma's military government on Friday assigned the Education Ministry to compile a new history of the country from the pre-independence period to the present, a government spokesman said.

The new history book, which would be "an accurate and true history of Burma," would include documented records as well as personal interviews, said Kyaw San, spokesman for the State Law and Order Restoration Council's information committee

BANGKOK POST  
May 7, 1989



## BURMESE POUND KAREN BASES TO CLEAR LOG ROUTES

Burmese troops fired hundreds of shells at two Karen camps yesterday in an effort to clear logging routes to the border.

Karens said many Burmese troops were killed and wounded during the attack in which seven rebels were killed and four wounded. The claims could not be independently confirmed.

Burmese troops fired 105 mm shells and 120 mm and 81 mm mortars continuously from early morning until late in the afternoon, mostly at Wan Kha.

The Burmese drive is also intended to wipe out rebel blackmarket activity to cut their source of revenue.

So far this year, Burmese troops have seized the key Maw Po Kay and Tikerney Karen camps opposite Tak. Burmese troops seized Mae Taw Way, another key camp last year.

BANGKOK POST  
May 8, 1989

## BURMA TO REOPEN ALL SCHOOLS

Burmese authorities plan to reopen schools nationwide in mid-June a year after they were closed in the wake of violent demonstrations against former Burmese strongman Ne Win.

Burmese Health and Education Minister Dr. Pe Thein said the school closings had been detrimental to the country as well as parents and students, the state-run Working People's daily newspaper reported Monday.

Primary and secondary schools as well as colleges and universities were closed in June 1988 after protests intensified against Gen Ne Win.

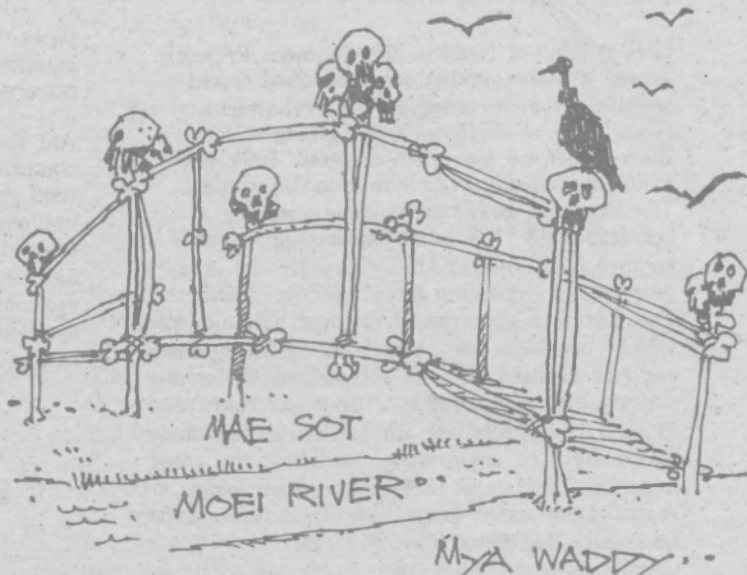
The reopening would start with the primary level, Dr. Pe Thein said.

Spokesmen for the All Burma Federation of Student Unions, which is not recognised by the government, said military authorities must open a dialogue with student leaders before schools are reopened.

BANGKOK POST  
May 9, 1989

## THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER MOEI

[ THAI-BURMESE FRIENDSHIP BRIDGE  
BUILT BY THE BONES OF THE STUDENTS ]



## SEOUL TO HELP FINANCE THAI-BURMA BRIDGE

South Korea is to help pay for the construction of a Thai-Burmese Friendship Bridge across the Moei River on the border with Burma.

The amount of the aid was not discussed.

The bridge will cost about 175 million baht, most of which will be paid by Thailand and Burma.

BANGKOK POST  
May 11, 1989

## BURMA DOUBLES LENGTH OF VISAS FOR FOREIGNERS

Once-reclusive Burma yesterday doubled the length of visas for foreigners to 14 days as part of an effort to develop its tourist industry, a senior official said.

"The extension is also meant to serve the foreign businessmen who are now visiting Burma in increasing numbers in response to the "open door" economic policy declared by the government," said Maung Maung Kyaw, a director-general in the Ministry of Trade.

BANGKOK POST  
May 13, 1989



## BURMA AND UN AID

UNDP (United Nations Development Project) strives to assist underdeveloped third world countries in their struggle for development. Since 1951, UNDP has been giving aid to Burma and the aid given between 1951 and 1986 amounted to 123.9 million US dollars. The Burmese government announced on September 18, 1987 that Burma will receive another 65.5 million US dollars for the five year period beginning from 1985 to 1990. The Burmese government claimed that aid from UNDP has been very beneficial to the country and has brought about a lot of progress in the country. It asserted that Burma has been able to send many scholars abroad for further study in the field of engineering, medicine and other important fields. It is therefore truly very essential for us to know how much the country has really benefited from this aid.

Let us study the UN backed agricultural project at Ye Zin in Pinyinmana township. Ye Zin village is situated on the Rangoon-Mandalay highway and is 10 miles north east of Pinyinmana. Because of its ideal position for an agricultural center, the Burmese government has constructed a dam there to irrigate the surrounding area for cultivation. With aid from the UN, the Burmese government set up an Institute of Agriculture here at Ye Zin together also with an Agricultural Research Institute.

FAO and UNDP had given the government of Burma 3.5 million US dollars for the project. Construction of buildings for the Institute of Agriculture began in 1970 and it took ten years for the various buildings to be finished. The concrete buildings, when finished, look quit grand and beautiful at a distance, but a closer look would expose the sloven workmanship and inferior quality of the buildings. Countless bags of cement for the construction were stolen and sold on the black market by the engineers and construction workers who found it very hard to meet the high cost of living with the meager salary that they got. That is why, what should have been sturdy concrete buildings have very little cement and were built mostly of lime and sand. In case of a fairly strong earthquake, the buildings would collapse easily. During the rainy season, water seeps through the roofs and leaks. The bathrooms and toilets are also of very inferior quality and moreover, maintenance is so inept that within a few years, they could no longer be used. Water

pipes, window glasses and other building materials and equipments that could be dismantled were stolen by the poverty stricken workers and sold on the black market.

Aid received from FAO and UNDP for the institute also comprised of a bull dozer, some tractors, hand tractors, seed drillers and some other modern agricultural implements. They are seldom used but are stowed away most of the time in the warehouse. Two trucks, 2 Mazda light trucks and an ambulance car had also been given to the institute, but because of inefficiency in maintenance, the vehicles broke down within a few years and the institute does not have the money needed to repair them.



The Institute of Agriculture was officially opened in 1973. In theory, the students learn much about modern technology in farming and agriculture but they have very little chance to put to practical use the knowledge that they have had. They do not get the chance to work with the tractors and seed drillers that FAO and UNDP had given to the institute because there is acute shortage of fuel and moreover, the institute would not be able to repair them or buy new spare parts to fix them should they break down. That is why, in practical field work, students who are taught about modern farming and agriculture have to labor with oxen and primitive hand ploughs like in days of old.

Students learn about plant hormones and they also learn about herbicides like 2,4-D, but they don't even know how it looks like. 2,4-D is a very good defoliant and is widely used by cultivators to kill weeds, but in Burma it is not used by cultivators. The Burmese government uses 2,4-D in its alleged operations against opium in the Shan States. In its defoliation campaign, the Burmese government takes great precaution to avoid the danger of their planes being shot down by opium growers. Consequently, the chemical had been sprayed widely, not on opium cultivation plots but on rice and other agricultural crops grown by the innocent local populace.

This resulted in great loss in agricultural produce of the local populace and to make matters worse, large numbers of livestock had died because of 2,4-D contamination.

Through the auspices of FAO and UNDP, many university tutors and lecturers from Burma have gone to foreign countries for further study. Many come back and work at the Institute of Agriculture. The Burmese government does not really seem to have any great use for them at the institute and they have only 2 hours of teaching time per week. The rest of their time have to be whiled away either by chatting among themselves or by playing.

The government confiscated 300 acres of land from the YE Zin villagers without arranging any indemnity for them. These villagers suddenly found themselves without land to work on. One student from Ye Zin Agriculture Institute had said that he would not venture to go alone into Ye Zin village at night. The villagers bear grudges against the government and might choose to have revenge on a student from the institute.

Some reliable sources from the institute had commented that FAO and UNDP officials had expressed their wish to appoint experts to help and direct the project so as for the institute to run smoothly and for the project to bear fruits. The Burmese authorities concerned refuse to accept the proposal on the pretext that the staff is quite efficient and could run the institute efficiently without the help of any expert. It would cost the institute more money to have an expert there.

Work is not readily available for graduates from the institute and they have to apply for work in other fields. The Burmese government seems to agree that Burma is an agricultural country and it depends greatly on agriculture for progress and development. But the fact that graduates from the Institute of Agriculture could not find work in the field in

which they have been trained is proof that there is much to think about on what is said and what has really been going on.

All these shortcomings prompted the students from the institute to comment that Burma does not benefit from this UN aid and it has been like throwing money away into the open sea.

This is just a review of the Ye Zin Agricultural project which is supported by aid from the UN. Burma has also received aid from the UN for other developmental projects. If a lot of fault could be found with one project, it would roughly be about the same with the other projects as well. No aid to Burma, be it from the UN, be it from other donor countries or no loans received from abroad have acquired much to really help develop the country.

It could only be concluded that these shortcomings are a result of inefficiency in management and misconception of current situation. No great pain has been taken by the government to achieve the desired goal and apart from that, those concerned in every department strive more for personal gains rather than for the good of the country. The present economic policy of the country met with failure because of the erroneous political policy of the Burmese government. Under existing political policy of the Burmese government, any aid from the UN or from other countries would acquire nothing to help the country develop. Burma may receive loans from other countries and Burma may be given the status of Least Developed Country and enjoy better foreign credit terms and all its debts exempted. But the people of Burma who comprise also the various ethnic groups in the country will never benefit from all these privileges.

from the KAREN NATIONAL UNION BULLETIN,  
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## LATE NEWS ON WAN KHA'

On May 20, we received news that Wan Kha camp has been over run by the Burmese military. Although we do not have details of the situation yet, initial reports indicate that four students were killed. Wan Kha is the 5th camp to be taken over by the Burmese military since December.

We mourn for the death of these four friends, and long for the day when Burma will be in peace and we can all return to our families and our schools.





# THE CHART OF DEATH

