

DAWN
NEWS BULLETIN



June 1989
Number 12

8-8-88

A DAY WHEN WE DARED TO DREAM



"Today the dream which has lain dormant in our souls for so many years has awoken. We raise our shackled hands in joy because we know that these chains of oppression can be broken! We will be free! Tomorrow we will stand together in dignity knowing that now we can dream, and we can work together to make those dreams reality! This is the spirit of liberation that proves we are human, and that we are born in the image of God!"

EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT OF AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1988

Ye Haung, 19 years old

I was arrested and held in Insein prison for 16 days. During that time I and my other friends were tortured severely.

On March 16 I joined the student strike which marched past the White Bridge. Many students were killed on the spot. Red tear gas was used to disperse us. This tear gas is extremely painful and burns the skin. Those of us who were not killed, or who did not have a chance to escape were pushed into police vans. I had fainted, and when I came to I saw that 3 boys and 2 girls in the van were already dead from wounds and from suffocation. Some of the girls in the van did not have clothes on as the soldiers had ripped their sarongs off. We boys gave them our sarongs to wear. In the van there were about 50 men and 15 women. There were three vans packed full of students like this.

Many of the students in the vans had been wounded, either by bullets or by beatings over the head. We thought that the police would first take us to the hospital so the wounded could be treated, but instead we went straight to Insein prison. At the prison, a doctor from the General Hospital came and begged the soldiers to let him take the wounded to the hospital for treatment, but the soldiers said that the orders from "above" were to keep everyone in the prison.

When they unloaded us from the vans, there were at least 150 dead. They were piled up nearby. Only a few of us survived. We were put in one room in the prison where there was no toilet. The first day we were given no food at all. On the second day we were given some bad rice to eat. At night, we were constantly kicked so that we could not get any sleep.

I was taken to another room where I was tied down to a bench and questioned. I was often given electric shock. A bright light was directed into my eyes. While they were torturing me in this way, I felt a pain in my feet and hands. Later, when they let me up, I saw that they had pulled out my nails. Here, you can still see the scars. This one was only half pulled off. The others were

completely pulled off and are just now growing back.

From our cell, we could see the cell in which the girls were kept. We saw the soldiers mistreating them and started to make a lot of noise in protest. So the soldiers took us out and made us crawl over small sharp stones as they beat us with thick rubber hoses. I was hit hard over the backs of my legs.

Our friends in the women's cell were almost all raped. There were about 300 women in the one cell, and all of them were raped.



Another type of torture was to put us down in a deep tube in the ground. We were in water up to our chests, and could only see a small circle of light at the top of the tube. Some of us were kept in this tube for seven days and nights before being released.

When I was finally released, I went to Mandalay where I continued taking part in the student protests. After some time, I went back to Rangoon.

During one demonstration, the soldiers completely surrounded us and shot from all sides. About 30 people died. Then the soldiers got back into their trucks and started moving on towards another demonstration. The people in that ward really got angry, and chopped trees down to completely block the trucks. When the soldiers saw that their path was completely blocked, and that they were surrounded by angry people armed with kitchen knives, and sticks, they said they wanted to give up. They said they knew that they were paid by the people and they did not want to harm their brothers and sisters any more. They said they only wanted to join with the people in the struggle for democracy. The villagers believed them and moved the trees out of the way. As soon as the road was open, the soldiers raked the villagers with gun fire and sped off.

On August 22, I went to Moulmein on an organizing trip with some friends. At 6 pm we arrived at Kyeik Dhoke monastery where a strike center had been set up. A demonstration was in

progress. Suddenly the soldiers arrived and shot into the crowd. Of the 39 people who died instantly, 7 were Buddhist monks. Two students had to have their legs amputated because of gun shot wounds, and three others had serious damage down to their legs. A 12 year old child was hit in the head and a young girl student was hit in the chest.

From there we traveled on to Motama where we heard that students were being shot on the main road. Two were killed and one girl was wounded. We took the wounded girl to the hospital. That was on September 19. She died in the hospital the next day.

One thing I will never forget is when the soldiers told the demonstrators, "You are asking for democracy, but we can not give you democracy. So we will give you bullets instead!". That is the way they talked and acted as they killed unarmed people. That is also the kind of inhuman thinking they had when they bayoneted a monk to death.

(19-year-old student)

On August 10, 1988, we heard that blood was needed at the Rangoon General Hospital because so many people had been wounded by the military. My friends and I went to donate our blood. While we were in the hospital, the staff asked us to stay and support them in a demonstration. They said that the hospital was out of medicines, blood and even bandages, and they wanted to organize a march to call on the government to stop the shooting. Our group, along with many other students, stayed to support the doctors and nurses. We marched out of the emergency ward on the east side of the hospital, turned right and went towards the other side of the hospital where the blood bank is. We re-entered the hospital grounds near the blood bank and stopped. There was shooting coming from inside the Dental College nearby.

Suddenly we heard the sound of three army trucks coming down the street. The first truck went by, but as soon as the other two trucks were in front of the hospital gate, the soldiers opened fire. The first truck then came back and the soldiers got down and shot directly into the crowd. My friend, Myint Wai was hit in the side and eight ribs broken. Another friend, Hla Myint, was hit and died immediately.

Everyone was running to get out of the way of the gunfire. I saw two doctors and two nurses directly in front of me get hit by bullets. I grabbed one of the nurses and pulled her into the hospital. Then I

ran as fast as I could to get out of there. On that day, one doctor was killed and another was wounded. Four nurses were also wounded.

In September, I left Moulmain with a group of friends at 3 am. At 2pm the next day we arrived at Ko Nu village where we rested beside a stream. He heard the sound of a boat approaching. We thought it was a passenger boat and one of my friends stood up to look. What he saw was a heavily armed military boat heading towards us. Most of us started to run, but three of my friends were too frightened. They were arrested by the soldiers. That was on September 22. They were taken to a nearby monastery where they were forced to lie on the tin roof in the hot sun and look at the sun. The soldiers would ask them what they saw in the sun. When they said "nothing", they were kicked in the side. My best friend, Ko Thein Ten who was a 1st year student of psychology was one of those treated this way. After one day of being interrogated like this, they were stripped to their undershorts and their finger and toe nails pulled out. Photos were taken of them. Then they were forced to run down the street of the village. The soldiers shot them in the back as they ran down the street.

The soldiers who did all of this were from the 79th Battalion of the Burmese army. Captain Tint Lwin and Captain Khin Latt were responsible for ordering the shooting.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

FIRE FIGHTING

Guest editorial

Civil war and invasions leave nothing behind but disaster. There are ways to prevent them, but generally people ignore the early signs, and wait until the situation is so critical that death and destruction can no longer be contained. It is like a fire in the house. The quicker we identify that fire, the easier it is to put it out and the less damage there will be. However, the longer we postpone taking action (due to fear of the fire, or disinterest) the bigger the fire grows until putting it out is almost impossible and the damage it causes is fatal.

If we are alert and willing, we can spot potential conflict situations and address them while they are still small. Addressed properly and with enough energy and enthusiasm, we might just be able to prevent them from exploding into all-out civil war or invasion. However, history and experience show that the human race will do everything they can to ignore these potential eruptions (they of course have a multitude of reasons and rationalities for doing this) until it is too late.

Our situation in Burma is one very clear example. Perhaps the conflicts within the country which took place in 1988 could not easily be addressed by international friends, but the preceding events could have since they were directly influenced by other countries, such as Thailand and Japan.

Following the September 18, 1988 military coup by Gen Saw Maung, the Burmese military government was loudly condemned around the world. Their brutal killing of unarmed demonstrators caused almost every country in the world which was involved in Burma to stop all economic aid and to isolate the country politically. This weakened the government, and gave the people a better chance to regroup their struggle and force the government to negotiate. A man like Saw Maung or Ne Win will only negotiate at the last moment, i.e. at the point that they truly begin to fear that they will lose their power. Thus it is important that they be weakened to the point that they feel it is in their own best interest to start negotiating and compromising with the people.

From September to December of the same year, the Saw Maung government was being forced in this

direction. With their national money reserves down to probably US\$8 million, they knew they could not keep control of the country for long. Salaries, especially those of the military had to be paid in order to keep control, and weapons needed to be purchased in order to keep up pressure on the ethnic groups fighting for federal states.

At this point Saw Maung knew that if he did not get financial assistance and at least some political acceptance soon, he would be faced with another major uprising which he would not be able to control so easily. So, he contacted his good "brother" Gen Chavalit, supreme commander of the Thai armed forces. Gen. Chavalit agreed to make a visit to Burma in December.

This was a crucial time for the growing civil war in Burma, and a crucial time for international activists to take action. A small fire was burning in the Burma house, and Chavalit's visit was like pouring gasoline on that fire. If his visit could have been prevented, the fire would not have been fueled, and the chance of putting it out would have been greater.

As it was, Chavalit's visit was protested by only a very few people. It was not enough evidence to Chavalit or the government that sentiment against Thailand's involvement in Burma was very strong. Therefore, Chavalit made his visit, and easily made trade agreements with the Saw Maung government, feeling quite confident that there would be insignificant protests against it. He was correct. Upon his return, most human rights and peace groups continued to remain silent.

Chavalit's visit to Burma was an important turning point. It meant an informal political recognition of the Rangoon military government, but more importantly it meant a possibility for much needed foreign exchange. With this foreign exchange, Saw Maung could increase his suppression of the democratic movement and also expand his attacks on the ethnic groups scattered around Burma. The fire of civil war in Burma suddenly loomed larger, and the chances of putting it out and containing the damage grew more difficult.

Chavalit's visit was soon followed by Prapass' visit a few months later. This was also a very crucial visit because the main purpose of Prapass' visit was

to expand trade agreements which meant more money for the Saw Maung regime, and a greater civil war fire. It was extremely important that protests against this visit be initiated so that more trade agreements were not signed and so that international governments got the message that people were not happy with their support of a military dictatorial regime. However, his visit was met with almost total silence. It was only after his return from this trip and after he had signed a large number of new trade agreements, that a small protest by some Thai students was organized. It was too late to make any difference in the rapidly growing fire of civil war in Burma, but it was significant. Small as this protest was, and late as it was, it worried Prapass. He went to great pains to explain his visit and justify his support for Saw Maung. His reaction to this small protest suggests that if human rights groups and peace activists would have rallied in protest (large protest) before his visit, he might not have gone, and Saw Maung might not have gotten the finances he so desperately needed to continue his attempt to overthrow the people's democratic movement.

So what is the situation now? Saw Maung is now getting a steady inflow of foreign exchange from more and more countries who are making a mad rush to Burma to get their hands on some of the rich resources Saw Maung is selling off. Economic interests quickly over-ride human rights and justice issues. If only one country suddenly makes a move to gain an economic strong hold in a dictatorial

country, others will quickly follow because they do not want to lose the opportunity to make money.

Secondly, the Saw Maung government has gained legitimacy. Gen Chavalit, Prapass, and other Thai politicians have made strong efforts to justify the rule of Saw Maung to the world. They have become Saw Maung's mouth-piece to convince the world that democratic reforms are under way and that free and fair elections are being organized. The voices of the Burmese people are being drowned out.

These two factors mean that the small fire that was simmering and more easily extinguished from September to December of 1988 has now become a raging civil war which perhaps can only be put out by the gushing flow of blood from the people. The chance to bring about a solution with less violence and bloodshed may have been lost, and the fault lies, to a large degree, with those peace activists who should have done something to prevent their governments from fueling the fire inside Burma.

The forces for peace and justice always seem to work slowly while the forces of injustice and dictatorship move quickly and with great determination. Perhaps that is why there is so little progress in building a more peaceful world. Only when the peace and human rights groups around the world can begin to take action quickly and early will they be able to make any progress in stopping war, exploitation and suppression.



The remains of a student dormitory following an artillery attack on a student camp. Peace for the students is an international issue. Join with us to put an end to this senseless violence.

ARRESTS AND TORTURE

During the past 27 years of rule by Ne Win, the people have taken to the streets in protest on several occasions. Each protest was met with violent suppression by the military, and thousands of people arrested and imprisoned.

Lists of those imprisoned are never made public, so families never know if their son or daughter was killed, or still languishes in a prison cell.

Following the September 18 military coup, the Saw Maung regime immediately began searching for anyone they suspected of being directly involved in the general strikes. Thousands of these suspects have been rounded up and have disappeared. A SLORC spokesman has said that about 900 people arrested during the uprising still remain in prison. The number is surely much higher, but it is almost impossible to get evidence since arrests and executions are done secretly.

Following are the names of a few of the people who are known to have been arrested, and now still remain in prison ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Min Ko Naing, age 23, Chairman of the All Burma Students' Federation Union, arrested in March 1989 | 6) Ex. Capt Soe Nyunt, NLD |
| 2) Kyi Moe, age 23, Finance, Secretary of the New Society Party, arrested together with Thet Tun | 7) U Aung Myint, NLD |
| 3) Yoe Thein, member of the National League for Democracy (NLD), arrested in March 1989 | 8) U That Shwe, NLD |
| 4) Ney Min, age 42, lawyer, arrested in Rangoon on 21 October, 1989 | 9) Khim Maung Khung age 30, Ms. Hlaing Hlaing Myant, age 19, and Maung Phone Naing age 19 all arrested on June 21st, 1989 |
| 5) U. Tun Oo, member of the NLD | 10) On 18 June, Rangoon radio reported that 195 students are still held in prison |

The following reports have been received concerning the fate of students who have recently returned to Burma.

- 1) Mr. Tint Lwin Oo from the city of Pegu returned to Burma recently and was immediately arrested. He has been sentenced to death.
- 2) Mr. Naing Latt was arrested two days after returning to Burma.
- 4) Mr. Htun Linn (Joe) returned to Rangoon in March under the repatriation program. One and a half months later he was arrested, and remains in prison in Rangoon.
- 5) In May, Thein Naing, Nyunt Naing, Kyaw Naing and Aung Naing all returned to Burma through the legal channels. When they reported to the SLORC office as required, they were immediately arrested and their whereabouts is unknown.
- 6) In May Sai Hte Saing, a former monk who was very active in the Moulmein strikes was given much liquor by Burmese agents in the Thai town of Mae Sot, and then forced back into Burma where he was imprisoned.
- 7) Mr. Kyaw Kyaw also returned to Burma via Myawaddy through the legal channels. After reporting to SLORC as required, he was forced to serve as a porter in the Wan Kha battle fields.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

For the past 27 years, Burma has been a closed country. As the Burmese Way to Socialism took over the country following Ne Win's coup in 1962, all institutions and businesses were nationalized. Foreign investment in the country was discouraged, and the rich natural resources of Burma were only partially developed. Although the plan of the Burmese Way to Socialism may have been good, corruption and inefficiency in the government finally drove Burma to becoming one of the 10 poorest countries in the world.

When Saw Maung carried out his military coup in September of last year, his brutality was globally condemned, and virtually every country involved in development work in Burma froze their aid. Diplomats also boycotted Burmese government functions to further express their disapproval of the vicious acts of suppression the military continued to wage against the people.

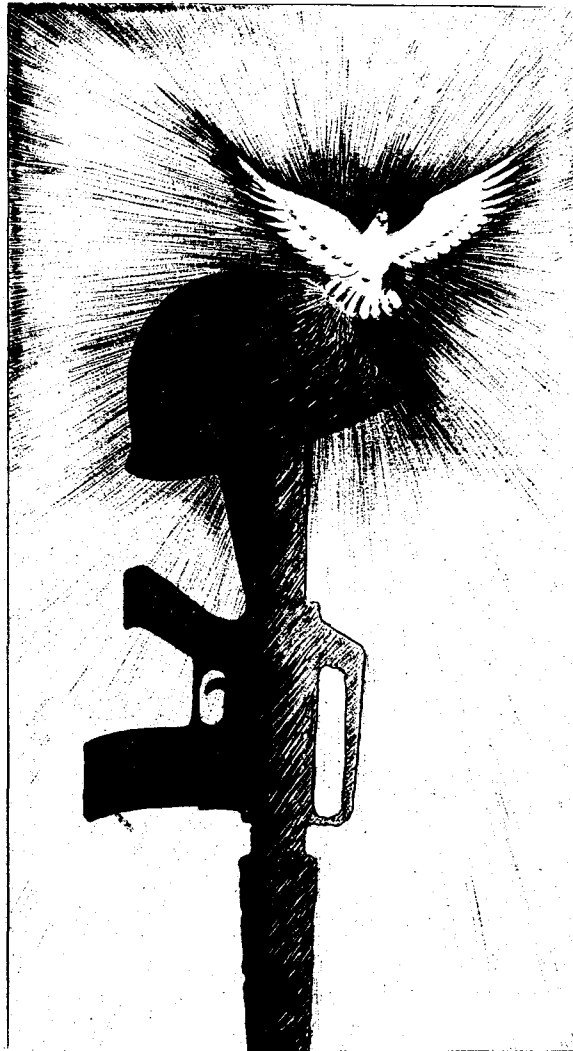
By the end of 1988, Burma's economy had become even worse. Prices were going up and there were severe shortages of most commodities including rice. This kind of situation would quickly send the people back into the streets. The government needed money fast!

Finally, in order to get the foreign money needed to keep the government and military afloat, and in order to calm down the population, Saw Maung ended the Burmese Way To Socialism by opening the country to foreign investment, and by offering to sell, at very cheap prices, much of Burma's precious natural resources.

Today, millions of dollars are flowing into the government's coffers. Little of this money is of benefit to the general population. Official figures say that 50% of the country's budget is used for the military, but other sources say that it may be as high as 80%. What ever the percentage may be, one fact remains clear - the people are not gaining anything.

Thailand was one of the first countries to take an interest in exploiting some of Burma's vast teak wood forests, and rich fishing grounds. Japan quickly followed as did Australia, India, Singapore and South Korea. Today, only the United States and England continue to speak out against the

military regime, and continue to freeze their economic aid to the country. However, they also seem to be softening their stance. An American oil company, Unocal Corp, is now seeking petroleum exploration and production interests in Burma. Under the present government, they can certainly hope for big profits at the expense of the Burmese people.



THAI LOGGING CONCESSIONS

Following a severe flood in 1988 which killed many people and destroyed vast areas of land, and which was due to a large part by the indiscriminate felling of trees, the Thai government finally banned all logging in Thailand.

Thai logging companies were not easily discouraged. They simply went to Burma where the government desperately wanted their money, and where huge forests of teak wood remained. Burma contains about 80% of the world's reserves of teak wood.

The Saw Maung government began selling off concessions to these Thai companies at an alarming rate. It was also significant that most of the concessions sold to the Thai companies were in land controlled by the ethnic minorities which have been waging wars for federal states against the Burmese government for decades. The Thai and the Burmese militaries, therefore, had to make some kind of agreements as to how these companies could be protected as they entered the "rebel" areas to cut the wood they had purchased from Saw Maung.

A cycle of oppression has thus developed. In order to wipe out the ethnic insurgencies, Saw Maung needs money and political support. In order to get money, he sells the country's resources against the will of the Burmese people. In order to protect the companies who are purchasing the resources, he buys weapons and is now attempting to wipe out the ethnic groups. Saw Maung and the Thai companies gain, while the Burmese people lose.

Following are a list of some of the Thai companies which have purchased logging concessions from the Saw Maung government.

-
- 1) Boonsawadi & Friends Co. Ltd., has won a March 1988 tender to recover 8,822 tons of timber.
 - 2) Cedar International Trading Co. Ltd.
 - 3) Chao Phya-Irrawaddy Co. Ltd. received a contract to fell different kinds of logs in a 100,000 acre forest. It is a three-year contract with a minimum felling rate of 50,000 tons annually. The company will pay Burma's state timber corporation US \$95/ton for yang logs, \$62/ton for other types.
 - 4) Mae Moei Forest Co. Ltd., has received a logging concession in the Karen State, without the approval of the Karen.
 - 5) Pathum Thani Tangkakorn Co. Ltd., has a contract for felling about 50,000 tonnes of timber annually in the Karen state.
 - 6) Santi Forestry Co. Ltd., has a concession opposite Mae Saring of 100,000 acres.
 - 7) Sirin Technology Co. Ltd. has three concessions. One covers 165,750 acres in the Karen state where 156,990 tons of teak and 2,198,000 tons of other varieties are expected to be taken out.
 - 8) Thai Sawad Import-Export Co. Ltd. has a concession in the Shan state. They are said to have purchased about 30,000 tons of felled logs at US\$ 500/ton. This equals \$15 million.
 - 9) Tip Tharn Thong Co. Ltd. was awarded a 100,000 acre concession in the Mergui region which holds an estimated 1.7 million tonnes of timber. The company will pay the Burmese government US\$ 100 for every tonne brought out under a 3-year contract.
 - 10) The Forestry Industry Organization of Thailand has signed a contract to export 54,000 tons of timber under a two-year contract. They will pay US\$ 175 for grade A timber, \$75 for grade B and \$60 for grade C.

(continued next page)

Special notes on the logging concessions:

- This is only a partial list of the more than 21 Thai companies now legally felling timber inside Burma. A Burmese government report states that almost a million tons of timber have already been sold to Thailand.
- In mid-February, Mae Moei, Muang Pana, and Sirin Technology were reported as having already paid Burma about US\$ 6 million out of a total \$100 million.
- An early report said that six companies (B&F, Chao Phya & Irawaddy, Santi Forestry, Sirin Technology, Thai Pong, and Thai Sawad), held contracts covering 500,000 acres in eight areas along the Thai-Burmese border, allowing the companies to harvest up to 4.7 million tons of logs. Each company was said to hold a three-year contract requiring them to fell a minimum of 50,000 tons of logs annually.

OTHER THAI ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENTS

- 1) Tippianthong Company is planning to barter Thai goods such as second-hand cars, food and consumer products for Burmese gems worth US\$ 10 million.
- 2) Atlantis Corp. has a fishing concession to catch 250,000 tons of fish per year and will pay US\$ 70 a month per ton.
- 3) Mars & Co has a fishing concession but details are not available.
- 4) Tippianthong Company will invest US\$ 12 million to expand the Strand hotel in Rangoon with an additional 200 rooms in a new 15-storey building. The company will also manage the hotel. This company will also develop and manage a new department store in Rangoon.
- 5) Union Par Co. is planning to invest several million Thai baht to renovate and operate the Inya Lake Hotel in Rangoon.
- 6) Jansom Thara Resort Co of Ranong will enter a venture with the Burmese state enterprise Myanma Hotels and Tourism Services to establish two luxury hotels in Burma.

JAPANESE ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENT

Immediately following the September 18 coup, Japan froze its very substantial aid to Burma and said it would not continue any economic aid to Burma until human rights were restored. Thus it was a great surprise when Japan suddenly began sending aid again, and normalized political relations with the Saw Maung government. Some sources suggest that Japanese government aid to Rangoon may amount to as much as US\$ 800 million.

Reports from friends in Japan suggest that a group composed of some big corporations and called the Japan-Burma Association was behind the move for Japan to normalize relations with Burma. The president of the Japan-Burma Association is Mrs. Yoshiko Otaka who is a member of the Lower House of Parliament and wife of the Japanese ambassador to Burma.

Some of the Japanese corporations involved in the Japan-Burma Association include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Nichimen Co. Ltd. | 8) Mitsubishi Sikiyu Co. Ltd. |
| 2) Kanesho Mataicho Co. Ltd. | 9) Mitsubishi Shoji Co. Ltd. |
| 3) Kajima Construction Co. Ltd. | 10) Tomen Co. Ltd. |
| 4) Mitsubishi Juko Co. Ltd. | 11) Nisshol-Iwai Co. Ltd. |
| 5) Kanematsu Goshu Co. Ltd. | 12) Nippon Koei Co. Ltd. |
| 6) Daimaru Co. Ltd. | 13) Sumitomo Shoji Co. Ltd. |
| 7) Mitsui Bussan Co. Ltd. | |

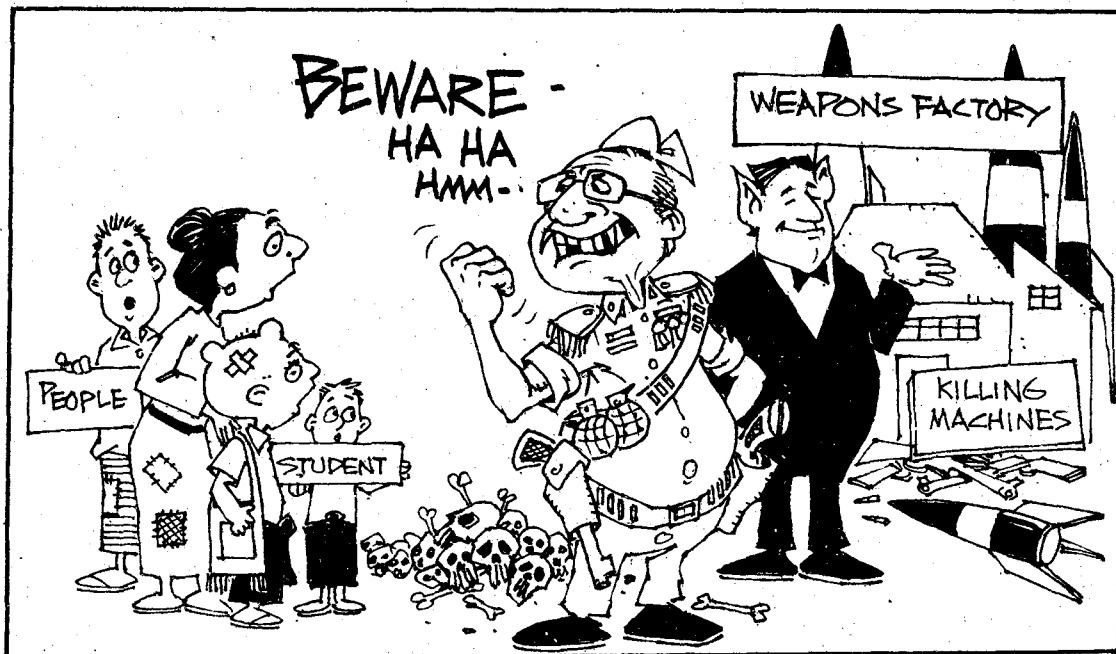
(economic involvements - continued)

The Japanese government provides loans in a program called the Industrial Self-Sustenance Aid Project. Loans from this program are commodity loans and amount to about 140 billion yen. One part of this program is to provide automobile components which are assembled in Burma in a Hino Motors operated plant. According to some inside reports, the Burmese government uses many of these components to build military trucks. This is against the Japanese government's policy which states that these loans are for non-military purposes.

=====

OTHER ECONOMIC INVOLVEMENTS

- 1) Unocal Corp based in California USA is the 16th largest US oil firm. They are exploring possibilities for petroleum exploration in Burma.
- 2) Malaysia Mining Corp has applied for a tin mining permit.
- 3) Fritz Werner Industrie-Ausrustungen of West Germany operates a weapons factory in Rangoon.
- 4) On June 24, the BANGKOK POST reported that more than 4,000 tons of teak worth US\$ 3.5 was auctioned off to foreign firms on June 21. Representatives of 97 foreign timber firms from Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, India Singapore and some Western countries participated in the auction.



=====

Recently in Rangoon, the SLORC called student leaders to a meeting. In the meeting a spokesperson for the SLORC challenged the students by asking them, "Why do you want to confront us? You do not have any guns, any organization or any international support. We have everything including guns, organization and international support. You can not win against us!" An 18 year-old student leader stood up and replied, "You are right when you say we have no guns, no organization and no international support. But we have something far more important on our side. We have the truth! This truth is what will make us free one day!"

=====

MILITARY ATTACKS AND PORTERS

The Burma Army, in keeping with the Saw Maung regime's stated promise to "annihilate" the ethnic armed resistance, is currently conducting a major offensive in the Kachin State (northern Burma). The operations which began on May 18 involved 12 battalions of the Burma Army against only 3 battalions of the Kachin Army in the Bhamo district. As along the Thai-Burma border the Burmese army deployed heavy field weaponry including artillery and rockets.

Related to the offensive, 2000 porters were forcibly gang-pressed to serve the Burmese military. Porters as young as 13 years old and as old as 70 years were involved. The very old were used as minesweepers since they could not carry any load and sometimes abandoned without their clothes on. Altogether 40 such elderly porters were left to die. There were several women with babies forced to carry heavy loads and were also subjected to rape.

(from the Kachin Independence Organization, June 21, 1989)

It has long been a policy of the Burmese military to use civilians as porters. People are rounded up off the streets of the cities and from the villages. Often pregnant women, young children and old people are used.

These porters are forced to carry extremely heavy loads over the mountains to the battle front. Many die when they are forced to carry their loads through mine fields or directly into the battle areas.

This problem has been documented in previous issues of "Dawn". It is a problem of forced labor, inhuman treatment and slave-like conditions.

No legitimate government can treat its people in this way!



A Porter, forced to carry heavy loads for the Burmese military, shows the scars and infections he earned from this experience. He is one of the lucky ones. Many of the porters never survive the experience.

FREEDOM UNDER MILITARY CONTROL

On June 14, 1989 at least 10 publishing houses in Rangoon were raided and some printers were taken into custody. Freedom of the press now exists only as a dream in the minds of the people. Without freedom of the press, free and fair elections can never be organized. Political parties need to be able to publish their party's policies and share information with the public. The public, itself, needs to have access to information so that they can make decision concerning their election choices. With all information controlled and manipulated by the SLORC, how can any opposition parties prepare freely for the elections?

Under the 1962 Printers and Publishers Act, a maximum prison term of from three to seven years and fines from US\$ 320 to \$4,800 can be given to anyone who publishes materials without proper registration.

Under Section 5 of the present martial law which tries to regulate all aspects of the life of the Burmese people, gatherings of more than five people are forbidden. Those attending such a gathering are subject to imprisonment.

This law greatly limits the freedom of the people to prepare for the promised elections, and makes those elections even a greater farce. Over 1000 people, including many opposition party campaigners, were arrested during March and April in a justice system that has no provisions for bail or release.

Equality in Burma has little meaning. While about 6.5 million students had to go without education for the past year, the children of the military and prominent people have continued going to their own special schools complete with computer courses. They have lived as though there is no unrest in the country. They are also the ones who will go abroad for further study.

"We do not ask for freedom from responsibility. We simply ask to be free to become dignified and full human beings."

In 1988, the government closed all schools in the country, including nursery schools. Now, almost one year later, some primary schools are being opened. The 6.5 million students in the country have totally lost one full year of education.

However, the opening of schools does not mean that freedom of education is a reality. A government minister said that all terms, vocabulary and usage not in conformance with existing situations shall be deleted." He also made it clear that the subject of political science will not be taught when colleges and institutes reopen.

To further control the students, all teachers have been asked to sign pledges that they will not join any political parties and that they will not go against the present army regime. Students have also been asked to pledge that they will not take part in any demonstrations or join any political party.

The heaviest burden, however, falls on administrators of schools who have been told that if anything happens in their schools, they will be jailed. Under these rules, what good is an education? If we are not free to think and dialogue, why go to school?

			CALL TO ACTION AUGUST 8, 1989			
--	--	--	--------------------------------------	--	--	--

Peace, justice and human rights are issues which require global consciousness and action. Burma is a small country, and perhaps insignificant to most of the world, but we Burmese people long to live peacefully and productively as do the people in more well-known and highly developed societies. That is why we stood up to make our voices heard on August 8, 1988.

Peace, justice and human rights are still not realities in our country as you have seen in the pages of this issues of "Dawn". You have also seen that you, yourself, are not entirely isolated from our problems. When your government, or when companies from your country, cooperate with our government, we, the students, the working people, the farmers and the ethnic minorities, must suffer. That is why we are appealing to you for solidarity.

However, we do not call to you for verbal

solidarity. That is the easy way out. We need your solidarity in action. It is only you who can change your country's attitude and policy towards our country and our people.

On August 8, 1989, the people of Burma will remember the nation-wide strike which began a year ago. We will also remember all those 8000 friends of ours who died during those days and we will commit ourselves to continuing the task of ending civil war in Burma and restoring peace.

We can not tell you what actions you should take, nor how to carry them out. However, we can tell you what kind of help we need and trust that you will find creative and effective ways of supporting us. **It takes courage, but we must draw courage from each other and be willing to dream the dreams of peace and freedom.**

-
- 1) Political and economic support for the Saw Maung regime must be ended so that peace talks can be initiated. Letter campaigns, boycotts etc. can help in encouraging your government to stop all economic aid, both government and private, to the Burmese government. This is the most urgent issue, for as Saw Maung gets stronger, he increases his brutal attacks against the ethnic minorities and the students. The longer you postpone taking action to confront your own government's actions, the more the Burmese people must suffer.
 - 2) Letter campaigns to the Saw Maung government can help pressure him to release political prisoners and provide a list of the names of those killed during the general strike.
 - 3) You can encourage your government to take these concerns to the United Nations where they can call for sanctions against the Saw Maung military rule.
 - 4) Last year, approximately 8000 people were gunned down in the streets of the cities. Their sacrifice must not be forgotten. A memorial service should be organized to pay respect to these brothers and sisters of ours and to recommit ourselves to the work of building a new and more peaceful world. Try to arrange for 8000 people to gather together in one place for this memorial service. In this way, you can better visualize the number of lives so violently destroyed by this military government.
 - 5) Commit yourself to a letter-writing campaign which you will continue until the Burmese people achieve the human rights they so dearly long for. These letters can be sent to the Saw Maung government, and to your own government. A weekly mailing will help keep pressure on those in authority so that one day they will heed the call of the people.
 - 6) Place yourselves in the slippers of a young Burmese student and then decide if it is your God-given responsibility to stand up for justice, and to confront the powers of injustice.

THE ROAD TO EXILE

On September 18, 1988, Ne Win, through his loyal general Saw Maung staged a military coup to silence the voice of the people. The military opened fire on the unarmed demonstrators, and thousands were killed. Some sources estimate that at least 8,000 people, many of them young students died.

It was then clear to us that all of us who had participated in the call for democratic reforms were in danger of being arrested, tortured and killed. We began the long and sad journey into exile.

Leaving behind family, home and school was not easy, but it was necessary. We found refuge in the villages of the ethnic minorities who live along the edges of Burma. Here we entered a new phase in our lives - we became members of the "Jungle University".

Our purpose in coming to the "Jungle University" was to continue the struggle to bring justice and human rights to our people. We knew the task would be difficult, but we were, and continue to be, committed to carrying it out.

THE JUNGLE UNIVERSITY

Universities in the city
train us to be
followers,
status climbers,
money grabbers,
and selfish.

They teach us
some useful things,
many useless things,
and how lucky we are
to be university students.

When we graduate
we will want
good jobs,
good pay,
a place in the status quo,
and some way to ignore
the sufferings in our society.

The Jungle University
teaches us
how to survive,
and what it means to suffer.

It does not teach
the basic subjects
which those in authority decree,
but rather those subjects
which are essential
for food
clothing
safety.

One never graduates from the Jungle University.
The learning continues
as long as
there is suffering in society,
people are in prisons,
farmers and laborers are oppressed
there are voiceless masses.

The Jungle University teaches
how to care about the suffering of others
and how to give
so
others can finally live.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNGLE

by Sun Men

A grey sullen sky hung over the battle field which now rested peacefully in its cradle between the river and the nearby mountains. Scattered among the broken trees, disturbed boulders and shell holes, the bodies of many Burmese soldiers lay like twisted, unartistic sculptures. We moved slowly and cautiously among them, looking for any which might still be alive. They were young, no older than we. Probably they were students who had been yanked out of their classrooms to serve in the Saw Maung army. Now the real vision of Saw Maung and Ne Win was being played out - student killing student, Burmese killing Burmese, brother killing brother.

In their backpacks we found family photos, and letters from their families - a mother writing to wish her son safety and a quick return home, a young wife telling of the birth of their new daughter. Who would tell this mother and this young wife that they would never see their loved one again? Who would explain to them that we never wanted to kill our own brothers here in the jungle? Who will stop this civil war?

We did not come here to these jungle camps to wage a civil war against our own student friends. We came here to escape the cruel hand of a military dictator who lives only for his own comfort and power with no thought for the Burmese people he manipulates. Now that dictator has taken other young Burmese people and injected them with the fear that drives them to obey his commands without question. For that reason, and that reason alone, they attack us with such ferocity. As we try to protect ourselves, we end up killing those who are our own brothers. All of us are victims of the military dictatorship. We are not enemies of each other. The enemy is the love of power which drives a few people to

exploit the majority.

I have a message I would like to share with the Burmese people. It is a message I wish to share with that mother and that young wife as well. I want to tell all of them that our real enemy is injustice and dictatorship. If we but unite together, we can put an end to this enemy before it drives us to put an end to our own existence. Because of Saw Maung and Ne Win, we are now killing each other! This nonsense must stop! We students in the jungle do not want to kill our fellow students, our own brothers and sisters. But when they attack us, controlled by unseen hands and unknown medications, we must also protect ourselves.

I am saddened by these sights. Is there no other way?

The angry clouds of the late afternoon begin to rain their heavy tears on this sad sight. As the river rises, the bodies of more young Burmese soldiers float by. They have been cast away by their commanders who are too disinterested to provide them a proper burial. Who will ever know their names? Who will ever share this sad moment with their families?

Civil war has come to our dear, motherland. It is a civil war which the people do not want, but is pitting friend against friend, student against student. I call out to you who are in power and authority. "Step down from your pedestals of pride! Step down and let the people's voices be heard! Only then can this civil war which you have created end."

As the rain beats down upon this new killing field, I wonder if it can ever wash away the sadness which now covers my dear motherland.

8-8-89

THE DREAM SHALL NEVER DIE



"Today, we are free! Injustice and oppression still control our land, but we are free! We are free because we have chosen to reject tyranny and injustice, and in rejecting tyranny and injustice, we have broken their shackles which have bound us for so long! Never again can chains hold us down or muzzles silence our voices. Tyranny and injustice will soon be defeated, for they can not stand long against a people who are free. Rise up, all of you who wish to be free with us and together we shall rebuild God's peaceful creation!"