

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

42nd ANNIVERSARY MARTYRS DAY



July 19, 1989

July 1989
NO. 13

GENERAL AUNG SAN

OUR FALLEN LEADERS

Saturday, 19 July 1947. The morning was wet. But Rangoon went on its business as usual under the low-hung monsoon clouds.

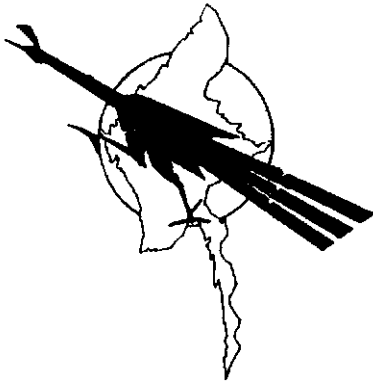
The officials at the Secretariat were busy while people went in and out of the office rooms. It was the start of another routine working day.

But things happened suddenly. At 10:37 a.m. in the Chamber in which the members of the Governor's Executive Council were holding a cabinet meeting under the chairmanship of Bogyoke Aung San, there broke out an ugly, unearthly noise. The pungent smell of carbide and fumes of heavy smoke rolled out of the Chamber when people rushed in to find out what had happened.

Inside, there was confusion. Chairs had been turned over, tables had been upset and there was blood on the floor. Councillors were lying in different positions, dead or dying. Bogyoke Aung San, Thakin Mya, Mahn Ba Khaing, Deedok U Ba Choe, the Sawbwa of Mong Pawn U Razak, U Ba Win. Councillors trusted by the people, loyal to the people, had been cruelly cut down by the bullets of dastardly assassins.

U Ohn Maung, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications, who had entered the Chamber to submit a report, was also killed on the spot. Ko Htwe, the young bodyguard of Education Member U Razak, was shot dead on the steps of the stairs when he attempted to stop the escape of the assassins.

This was the heavy price paid for our political unity and freedom.



DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE
ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

No.

13

JULY

1989

THE CRY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA WILL NEVER DIE

"A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of bang right. This is one of the concepts which a dictator uses to keep control. Through training and through habit, the dictator believes that in time the people will accept manipulation and suppression as being right and good. This will ensure the power of the dictator. However, the spirit of the people can not be so easily controlled. When they begin to cry out for freedom: when they no longer accept a thing that is wrong, their cry can never be silenced. It is this cry which the dictator fears, for it is the cry of truth and justice. Stand with us to raise this cry! Stand with us so that the world will gain a little more justice and a little more peace."

During the past 27 years, the Burmese people have frequently stood up to cry out against injustice. Each time their cry has been answered with bullets and more suppression. Thousands have been arrested, and many still remain in prison today.

In 1988, the people once again let their cry for freedom be heard around the world. This time their cry was louder and more determined. Perhaps eight thousand lost their lives raising that cry. Yet it has not, and can not be silenced.

In cities throughout Burma, people continue to voice their protest in various ways. Demonstrations, totally banned by the martial law government, happen spontaneously and the military has been unable to discourage them even though leaders are constantly arrested and imprisoned. As one leader is detained, new ones arise to carry on the struggle.

In the jungles, the students and the ethnic minorities also continue the struggle. Together they are building a new future for Burma.

No matter how oppressive the Saw Maung government may be, the voice of the people will not be silenced, for it is the voice of truth and of justice.

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

REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNGLE

DAYS OF SHOCK AND BITTERNESS

(A story from 8-8-88)

August 8, 1988

It was a fine day indeed. Everything went well until 6 o'clock in the evening. I finished my dinner and took a stroll down to my friend's residence to do some small talk. I said "Hello" to the grocer along the way.

Then, all of a sudden I heard shouts from the distance. I was startled and said aloud "They are coming, they are coming!" My visit was cancelled and I rushed to the main road where the shouts were coming from. The people were shouting "Down with the dictator", "Down with Sein Lwin", and "Give us Democracy. We want Democracy" I saw the students in their school uniforms marching at the head of the crowd. Behind them were the monks and the people. The wide, long road of North Okkalapa was crowded with people in want of freedom and democracy. They were such a determined people. Their faces were solemn and they were holding up their right hands shouting the slogans with all their might as if the shout would penetrate the sky.

8-8-88 8-8-88 8-8-88 8-8-88 8-8-88 8-8-88
August 9, 1988

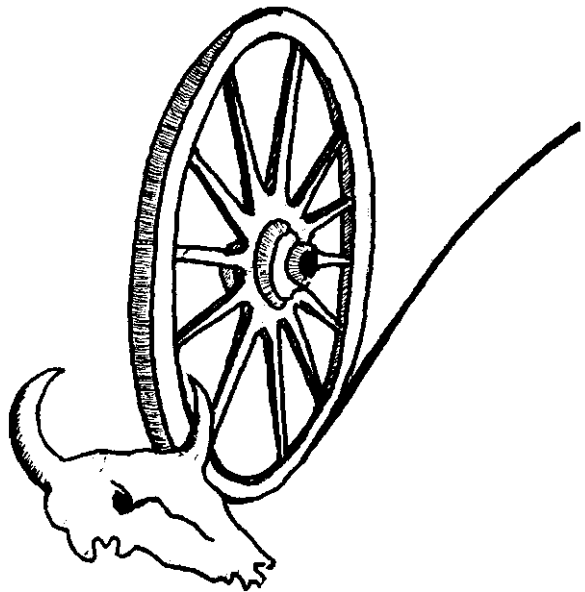
The day dawned clear and bright. Lying in bed, I still heard the shouts of elated, solemn, determined people. Then I got up from the bed and washed my face, brushed my teeth, got dressed and went out to enquire about the demonstration the night before.

It was about 7 in the morning. When I reached the main road, I knew confusion was already there. A large crowd was heading towards the main road. I threaded among the curious people to the sidewalk of the main road. Just then a red pick-up truck was driving from the direction of downtown Rangoon to North Okkalapa at full speed. I saw the uniformed students in the back of the pick-up truck busy nursing a student whose body was red with blood. Then another car followed at full speed like the one ahead. About 15 minutes later, the news reached us that the troops gunned

down the students and the people who took part in the demonstration at Tadalay [The small bridge] Junction and that two flag-holders [a boy student and a girl student] were killed, many injured by tear gas and a monk arrested by the troops. That saddened me too much and tears welled up in my eyes. A stout woman behind me was weeping and cursing "Those dogs, those brutal soldiers have slain our children, our people".

I felt very much concerned about my younger brother who was among the demonstrators. So with the purpose to search for my younger brother I set out towards Tadalay Junction.

No sooner had I set out than I heard shouts behind me. I turned back and looked what was happening. Alas, another group of students in uniforms, shouting slogans, was marching along the main road. Behind them was a large crowd of mixed people. The purpose to search for my younger brother disappeared and a certain spell, an inexpressible thing prevailed and spurred me to join the demonstration. I did.



We marched along the main road, shouting slogans and persuading the onlookers to join in the demonstration. Before we reached the North Okkalapa overhead bridge, I encountered my younger brother unexpectedly who was also searching for me. He guessed I would be in the demonstration and he was right in his surmise. He looked exhausted. His shirt, longyi and school bag were dirty. As soon as he saw me, he came running to me and asked where I was going. In anguish and lament he continued "Don't go Ah Ko Gyi [elder brother]. Those brutal dogs shot us with machine guns. We spent the whole night at the Shwedagon Pagoda. About 6 in the morning, when we came down we encountered a military unit. As soon as they saw us, they opened fire. About 30 students, fell down in a matter of moments. Unless a van from the American embassy had not intervened we all would have been killed. They are wild beasts. Don't go brother."

My eyes became wet with tears again. I cried out in bitterness, "Those brutal ones have shed the blood of our people. Those merciless ones". The participants in the demonstration and the onlookers showed their sympathy. Then I urged my brother to go home.

After he had gone home, I joined again in the demonstration. We marched on till we reached the North Okkalapa overhead bridge. Some 15 trucks including two armored cars full of soldiers could be seen even from a distance. Soldiers, their guns at the ready were setting barricades to block the road. No one could proceed and the great mass of people came to a stop.

Hoping that they would remove the barricades, students shouted, "People's soldiers are our soldiers. People's soldiers are our soldiers". Then they knelt down before the barricades shouting the same slogan. By 11 a.m. the voice of a soldier came out from a loud speaker. That was the warning for everybody to go home. But no one heeded the warning. The second warning came and the demonstrators did the same. Then the third came. They did the same and continued shouting the slogans.

Five minutes later, the soldiers started shooting without warning. We were startled and shocked. Many tried to run away. At the same time I saw the three students who were standing upright in front of the crowd and holding the flags fall down in the first round. They were immediately carried away to the hospital.

Students shouted to those who tried to run away to come back. They shouted, "Don't be afraid. We will die for you. Don't run away."

Soldiers paused for 5 minutes and warned us again to go back home. In the second and third rounds, 3 rows of students in front except a girl student who was holding the photograph of General Aung San, the late war hero, got shot and fell down. The sorrowful scene spurred a lot of people to come back.

In the fourth, a girl was hit in the chest and she fell down. The wounded were replaced by the unhurt students themselves. There was a great confusion of people along the road. The shooting went on till 4 in the afternoon. That was beyond the endurance of the people. Therefore, the large crowd of people dispersed at last. Then the troops went into the center of the town.

The floors of the general hospital of North Okkalapa were full of corpses and wounded. On August 9 alone, nearly 200 students, monks and working people were killed and over 300 wounded. During the August uprising, North Okkalapa township alone lost about 500 people and 850 more were injured.

In those days, hundreds of innocent people got killed and hundreds more injured throughout Rangoon. In fact, those were the days of shock and bitterness that was beyond the endurance of the unarmed students and the people. So they took the arms that they could get and tried their best to hinder the mobility of the troops. They tried in vain to attack the soldiers but they were cut down brutally by the troops.

After those shocking incidents, everything calmed down as the military suppressed everything tremendously. But in the hearts of the people, things were still burning; still fresh. Nothing could make them forget those events in the days of shock and bitterness.

To maintain the power of the dictator, the army, born of the people, massacred its own innocent people instead of defending them. As a matter of fact, it was not the people's army any more. It was an army for the dictator.

8-8-88 8-8-88 8-8-88

Written as a tribute
to our fallen Comrades of Democracy.

by
Naing Lu Aung
Thay Baw Boe Camp

SHIPPING NEWS

In July, the SS Ava of the Five Star Shipping Company (Burma) sailed into Bangkok harbor. The SS Ava was bringing logs from Colias which is a logging camp inside Burma, near Mathey Island. In June the same ship brought logs from Colias logging camp as well as from Rangoon.

The logs are first purchased by an Indian company which then sells the logs to Thailand. Each ship load consists of about 4,000 tons of logs and are sold to the Thai company for about US\$ 150 per ton.

Ready-made furniture is also brought into Thailand aboard this ship. About 700 pieces of wooden furniture were recently delivered.

The logs on the ship are freshly cut. They have not yet been dried out. They are various hardwood logs, including teak wood.

The SS Ava has also taken another 5 loads of logs from Mathey Island to other countries. Each load is about 4,000 tons. Indian and South Korean ships have taken at least 5 more loads of logs out in the recent months. Each of these ships takes about 6,000 tons of teak wood.

Between May and June of this year, another Five Star Shipping Co. vessel took 14 elephants and 6000 tons of teak wood to West Germany.

A similar vessel took 8 to 10 thousand tons of beans, 6,000 tons of teak and 40 to 50 tons of dried jelly fish to Japan.

Belgium received 200 blocks of pure silver via the Five Star Shipping Co. Each block is 1 foot long, 5 inches wide and 5 inches thick.

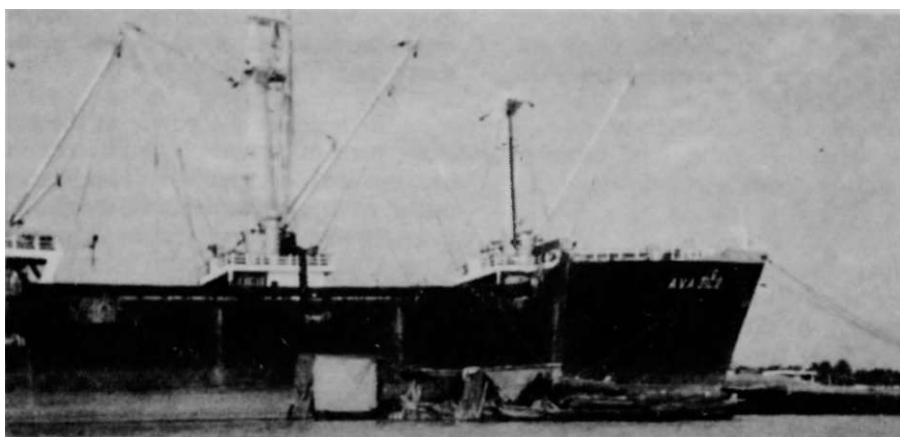
England received at least 6000 tons of the highest quality of Burmese teak.

During this year, Five Star also shipped nearly 10,000 tons of rice to Singapore, while other shipping companies are also carrying out huge quantities of rice.

The SS Sagain recently returned from a visit to West Germany, Belgium and England. It was carrying a load of ammunition on its return trip. In August of 1985 it made a similar trip, returning with over 10,000 rounds of ammunition.

The Industrial Ministry of Burma has one department called Big Industry Number 1. This department has a ship named SS Pyi Daw Aye which is driven by the navy. It often brings ammunition into Burma.

The Hurper Company of Singapore often deals with the Saw Maung government. They serve as an intermediary in arms deals.



The SS Ava in the Bangkok harbor off loading logs from Burma. Taken on July 7, 1989.

NEWS FROM RANGOON

(These news items were sent to us by friends in Rangoon)

Evictions in Rangoon

In May, 1989, the SLORC sent an order to the people of Mayangon Township, No. 151, Hlaing, Rangoon, that they must move from their homes to prepare for the construction of a military park.

The villagers requested the SLORC to allow them to remain until after the rainy season when it would be easier to move and construct new homes.

However, the SLORC ordered 400 houses to be moved before the 28th of May. An added burden was that each family also had to pay SLORC 3000 kyats (about US\$ 430) for their new housing site.

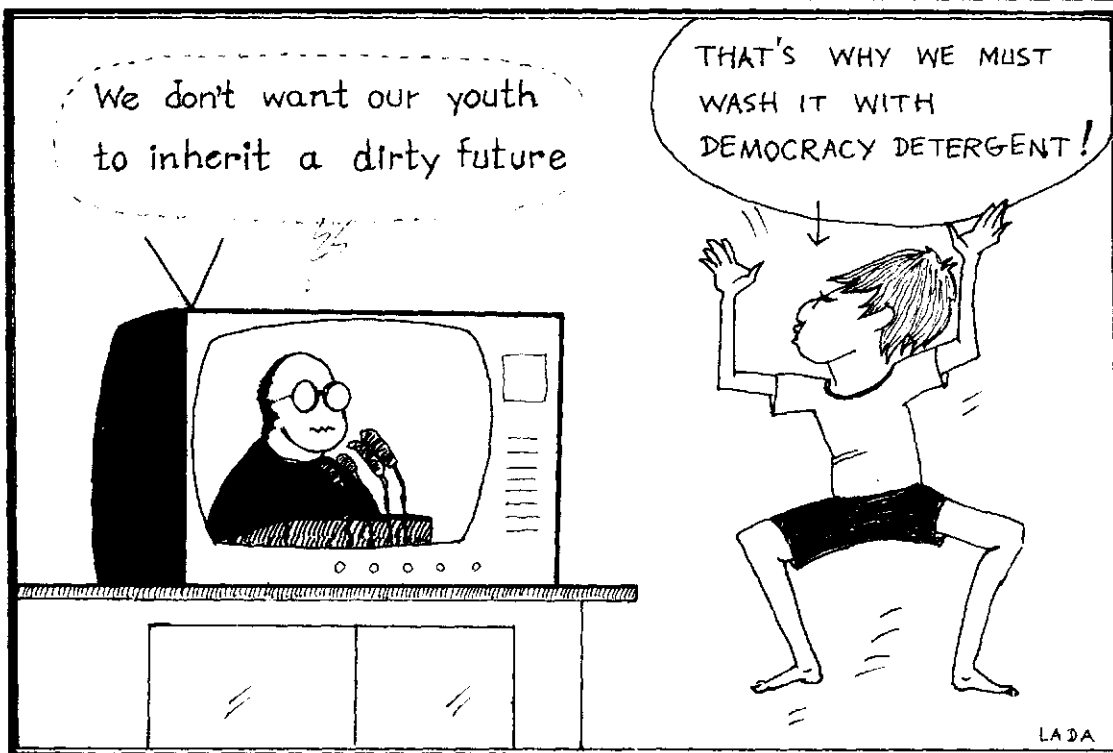
The second order came from SLORC for more houses to be moved with a demand that the people

now pay 5000 kyats.

The people were forced to move to Thayawadee Township in Pegu division which is about 80 miles from Rangoon. These people are now facing very many hardship, because the SLORC wants to build a military park.

In Rangoon Division, Hlayku Township, Southern Minlwin Kone Village, 5 houses were suddenly destroyed by the military troops and the SLORC officers. These house were legally registered houses, and had received no eviction notice from the SLORC. They were destroyed during the heavy rainy season, so the people were in much misery.

Now SLORC has ordered that every day 15 houses move out of that area. If they do not move, the military and SLORC will come in and destroy the houses. About 162 houses with 900 people are affected by these evictions.



FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Burma tightens law on printing, publishing

Rangoon (AP, Reuter) - The military government yesterday increased penalties against violators of a quarter-century-old law in a possible attempt to control literature issued by some opposition political parties.

The government announced amendments to the 1962 Printers and Publishers Act that increase maximum prison terms from three to seven years and fines from 2,000 kyat (US\$320) to 30,000 kyat (\$4,800) for those who publish material without proper registration.

The military government has warned political parties to observe the 1962 law. Many among the 200 parties have published anti-government pamphlets without seeking permission from authorities.

Two major opposition parties, the National League for Democracy and the Democracy Party, have claimed exemptions under clauses of the 1962 law.

BANGKOK POST
June 20, 1989

Burma officially changes its name

BURMA officially changed its name in English yesterday to the Union of Myanmar and the name of the capital city to Yangon, the government-run Working People's Daily said.

A new law, enacted by the military government, also changed the name of the nationality, Burmese, to Myanmar. The words for Burma and Burmese in the Burmese language are both pronounced Myanmar.

The Burmese language is written in a script derived from Pali, an ancient language of southern India, but there are several forms of romanization.

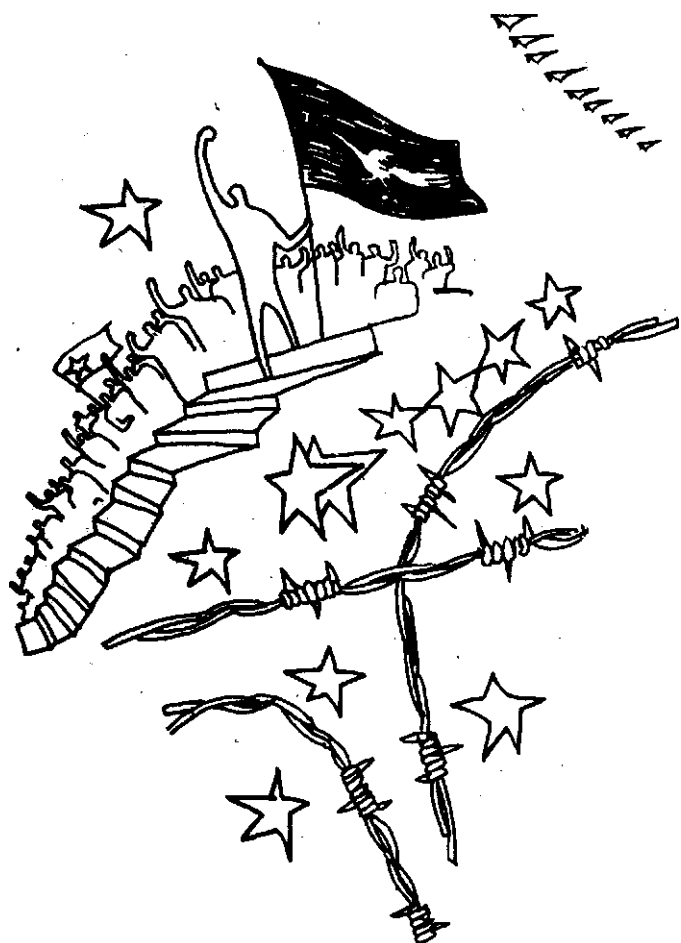
In speaking, Burmese normally use the words Myanmar Pyi or Bama-Pyi for the name of their country although Myanmar Pyi is always used in writing. Pyi is the word for country.

The military leaders, who seized power last September while brutally putting down a pro-democracy uprising, dropped the term "Socialist Republic" and called the country the Union of Burma in English. It was an apparent attempt to appease a populace angered by a quarter-century of ruinous socialist policies.

The latest change in the country's name, government officials say, is to better reflect Burma's ethnic diversity. The torn Burma connotes Burman - the dominant race in the country - to the exclusion of Kachins, Karens, Mons and other ethnic minorities. In Burmese, people normally use the term Bama to refer to the Burmans.

A number of the minority groups have been fighting for decades for greater autonomy from the central government.

THE NATION
June 20, 1989



Suu Kyi's arrest triggers protest

BURMA'S opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was briefly detained after troops fired on a demonstration by about 500 people in the Burmese capital yesterday, killing one protester, Rangoon Radio said.

The opposition leader was released an hour after the arrest but three students arrested with her were still in police custody, the state radio said. It was the first reported fatal shooting by security forces in Rangoon since the army took power in a bloody crackdown on mass pro-democracy demonstrations last September, when diplomats said at least 1,000 protesters were killed.

The radio said Aung San Suu Kyi, 44-year-old daughter of assassinated independence hero Aung SAN, was attending a wreath-laying ceremony in a northern Rangoon suburb for students killed during protests one year ago.

It said when officials tried to detain her about 100 supporters tried to snatch her back. Security forces opened fire, killing an official of another opposition party and wounding one other.

THE NATION
June 22,1989

Tension in Rangoon as 2,000 stage rally

TWO thousand young people rallied in central Rangoon yesterday after an unprecedented denunciation of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi by the military government, diplomats said.

They said tension in the capital of Myanma, formerly Burma, was high following the verbal attack at a government news conference on Thursday in which a spokesman equated her party with the banned Communist Party and threatened action.

"The temperature is rising. I can't see either side backing down. It's getting more and more confrontational," said a Western diplomat contacted by Renter from Bangkok by telephone.

BANGKOK POST
June 24,1989

Burma cuts phone lines after shooting

BURMESE authorities cut international phone and

telex lines in an apparent effort to stop foreign correspondents from reporting on a shooting incident in Rangoon this week, reporters returning from Rangoon to Bangkok told UPI yesterday.

Military guards briefly detained a photographer for Time magazine and seized his film only to return it later, the reporters said.

BANGKOK POST
June 24,1989

Foreign firms buy \$3.3m Burma teak

Burma auctioned off more than 4,000 tons of teak worth \$3.5 million on Thursday to foreign firms, state-run Burmese Radio Rangoon said.

The radio, in a report monitored here Friday by AFP said the 62 local and 35 foreign representatives of 97 foreign timber firms from Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, India, Singapore and some western countries participated in the auction.

BANGKOK POST
June 24,1989

Bo Mya hits out at Thailand

KAREN guerrilla leader Bo Mya criticized Thailand yesterday for trading with Burma's military government, saying this provided funds for the government offensive against Karen camps.

The Karen National Union, Burma's largest ethnic minority fighting for greater autonomy, has lost at least five camps in the government drive that started last October. Two more camps, Wangkha and Palu, are under attack.

The Karen leader said Thai army chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh had broken the world community's boycott on dealings with the Burmese military government, which killed thousands of people last year in crushing a popular campaign for democracy.

Chavalit ignored humanitarian concerns and "is doing business with the tyrannical, oppressive regime while other countries are staying away" Bo Mya said.

"The Burmese have been able to step up their military activities because of Thai support," he said.

Bo Mya said the Burmese government has sold the Thais timber and fishing concessions at rock bottom prices to finance its offensive against the guerrillas.

Pramarn talks tough on Burma intrusions

INTERIOR Minister Pramam Adireksam yesterday declared that Thai security troops guarding the border here will not tolerate any more violations of the Thai territory here by Burmese troops seeking to over run two Karen strongholds on the border.

Pramam said it was unquestionable that the previous incursions were deliberate.

"They (the Burmese) are determined to score a military victory even at the expense of ignoring Thailand's territorial integrity," he added.

A Karen spokesman said yesterday Burmese aircraft attacked the jungle headquarters of the Karen rebels early this month as part of a major government offensive aimed at wiping out the 40-year-old insurgency.

Em Marta said he was at the headquarters in Manerplaw June 6 when four PC-9 aircraft fired rockets and dropped bombs in a brief raid.

Marta, an official in the KNLTs foreign affairs department, said 24 2.75-inch rockets were fired, slightly damaging one building and wounding 10 Karen soldiers. Most of the bombs fell into Thai territory, he said. A spokesman of the Thai armed forces has denied that the aircraft violated Thai airspace.

THE NATION
June 20,1989

5m Baht Damage Bill for Rangoon

RANGOON will be asked to pay Thailand live million baht in compensation for damage caused to a Thai border village by intruding Burmese troops last month.

Interior Ministry sources said the cost of the damage was estimated by ministry officials who were sent to inspect Ban Wang Kaew in Mae Sot District recently.

The village was set ablaze by Burmese soldiers who had crossed the border and dug in to launch an attack on a Karen rebel stronghold on May 20.

BANGKOK POST
June 21,1989

Burma party leader quizzed

Rangoon (UPI) - Burmese military intelligence agents detained and interrogated the leader of an opposition political party demanding details of her contacts with students and foreign diplomats, the leader said yesterday

Cbo Cho Kyaw Nyein told reporters she was taken by three military intelligence officials to their headquarters at 3:00 p.m. and released 21 hours later.

"What they wanted to know is my links with students-it I have been supporting them or encouraging them to foment trouble - and my relations with foreign diplomats," she said at her home in western Rangoon.

"I was interrogated the whole night, the interrogators taking turns after an hour or so, and by about dawn the next day, my head was in such a whirl that I did not know if I made any coherent replies to their questions," she said.

She said she was not harmed physically, but the way she was treated amounted to "mental torture."

"I am the leader of a legally registered political party, so the treatment meted out to me could also be meted out to other political leaders," she said.

BANGKOK POST
June 21,1989



He estimated that Rangoon sold US\$2.5 billion worth and received up to US\$250 million in advance payments.

The Karens control many of the areas covered by the concessions, and Bo Mya said the guerrillas have prevented the Thai concession holders from taking out any significant amounts of timber.

THE NATION
June 26, 1989

Fear of further unrest in Burma

Analysts said on Sunday the mood in Burma was one of uncertainty, with the military apparently worried about the next few months as students prepare to mark the anniversary of nationwide pro-democracy protests put down by a coup in September last year.

"People are having a tough time making ends meet, and political parties find it hard to believe democracy is at hand while students remain dissatisfied with their lot," one analyst said.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) and its popular leader Aung San Suu Kyi came under heavy attack by the state media after soldiers and police fired to disperse a crowd during a wreath-laying ceremony last Wednesday commemorating unrest in June last year.

The government, while attempting to discredit the NLD, has offered the possibility of a dialogue "at an appropriate time" with those parties which toe the line.

More than 200 political parties have registered with the State Election Commission since the coup. Most have formed alliances as elections promised by the government for May next year draw closer.

But military authorities have so far claimed they are too busy "getting the country back in shape" following last year's disturbances.

"The possibility of talks depends entirely on the political parties. When the time comes we will consider holding talks with those parties which are cooperating with us," a military spokesman said.

He warned the military would come down hard on parties which continue to be "hostile."

A ban on public gatherings and a nighttime curfew imposed since the coup will remain in place as long as defiance of law and order persisted, the authorities have said.

BANGKOK POST
June 27, 1989

Rangoon orders new martial law crackdown

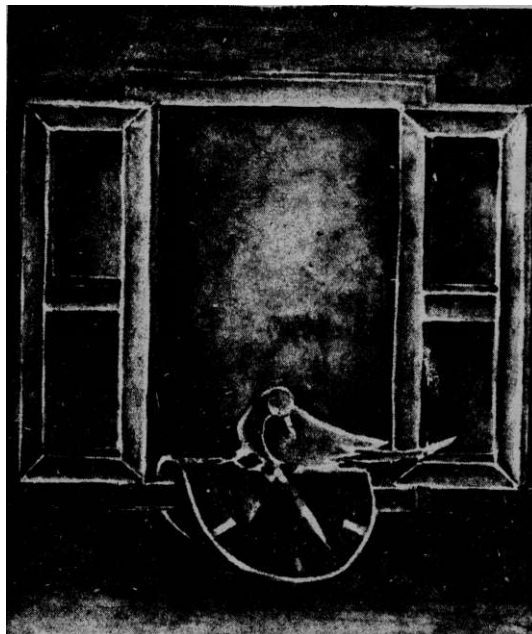
THE military rulers in Myanmar (formerly Burma) intensified their criticism of the opposition yesterday and launched a media campaign to remind the country it is still under martial law.

The text of decrees restricting speech, assembly and movement was published in a special edition of the state-run Working People's Daily newspaper and was being broadcast by loudspeaker vans touring the cities, officials said.

The decrees were issued after the army took power in September to crush months of popular demonstrations.

Diplomats said decrees imposing a 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew, banning outside gatherings of more than four people and forbidding criticism of the defence forces had been unofficially relaxed in recent months.

BANGKOK POST
June 27, 1989



A LOOK AT BURMA TODAY

UNRAVELLING AN ENIGMATIC BURMA

A Burmese-bom writer, using the pseudonym, Yan Ko Naing, reassesses the volatile situation in Burma and presents the first of an analytical three-part series based on historical, political and economic factors that could decide the future of the troubled country. (The final two parts will appear in later issues of 'Dawn')

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As Burma inches closer to another promised general elections around May next year, none, certainly not the patient Burmese people, have ever been served by underestimating Gen Ne Win, 78. Thirty years ago, when he was still considered something of a hero, having voluntarily relinquished control of his 18-month caretaker government and turned down a nomination for the Magsaysay Award, Asia's Nobel Prize, Ne Win made a hardly original, but nonetheless chilling remark. On the occasion of what turned out to be the country's last free elections, he declared, 'Let the country make its own choice. It will get the government it deserves.' (The Nation (Burma), December 22, 1959)

The incumbent Saw Maung regime is hoping with time to establish legitimacy in the eyes of the outside world that is notoriously short on memory and long on political expediency. Sighs one Burmese journalist, who requested anonymity; "How long can the world stand without any principle?"

Traditional Burmese concepts of authority, which are directed toward individuals rather than institutions, plus strongly held belief in the Buddhist notion of karma, help explain the stoic acceptance by the people of their lot.

The second-generation military men

The lack of a genuine charismatic military alternative to Ne Win may also explain the "wait-and-see" attitude of the potential source of a future, more significant, coup; the second generation of military men, especially those at the divisional commander level.

Better educated than the aging, current leaders, the younger members of the Tatmadaw (military) are not paralysed by perceived obligations to the memory of the independence struggle or to Ne Win's patronage.

How much power these younger military officers are willing to relinquish, and whether they would entertain the idea of a genuine multiparty system, is quite questionable; possibly they are split among themselves, never before having exercised direct authority over their country or shared power.

Whispers of dynastic ambitions already surround second-generation Brigadier General Khin Nyunt, first secretary of the State Law and Order Restoration Council and head of the ubiquitous Military Intelligence Services.

Khin Nyunt, 51, was a colonel only last August and is closely connected to Sanda Win, Ne Win's daughter and confidante.

Regardless of Ne Win's fate, the Burmese military will continue to have a say in the country's political development for the foreseeable future. No one doubts that the 190,000 member tatmadaw, the only credibly unified force in the country, must be the basis for a viable solution to the present political and economic impasse.

Few believe that Gen Saw Maung is not acting in concert with Ne Win who now more than ever must draw on his considerable Machiavellian talents to save the country - and his beloved tatmadaw.

The tatmadaw, ironically, has given the biggest boost in three decades to Burma's democratic process, simply by promising an election and allowing political parties to register over the past half-year. While it is not certain an election will actually occur, no fewer than 233 political parties - many of them probably fronting for the officials of the disbanded BSPP (Burmese Socialist Programme Party) - registered to contest in the promised elections.

After a quarter century of military dictatorship, Burmese from all walks of life - pensioners, peasants, members of ethnic groups, artists, even those too young to know anything but military rule - are banding together to articulate their private visions of democracy as they compose the goals of their new parties.

Many of these new groupings, with wonderfully evocative names like "League for Mother Democracy" "New Ideology Improvement Party" and "Esprit de Corps Restoration Party", are insisting on a democratic and representative system of government. No one mentions a return to

socialism - though many are using the opportunity to push more parochial objectives, such as 'to develop astrological science and indigenous medicine', or to make good use of the experiences and knowledge of retired personnel and pensioners", and even the seemingly self-contradictory to provide religious freedom and to seek advice of the senior abbots... regarding the propagation of the Buddhist religion"

Aung San Suu Kyi under pressure

By all accounts, the most formidable challenge to the tatmadaw is the National League for Democracy party, headed, in an eerie twist, by the daughter of the military's own patron saint, Gen Aung San.

Blessed with relative youth, charisma and ambition, Aung San Suu Kyi, 44, who was two years old when her father was assassinated, has spent her adult life abroad, mostly in England where she married a British scholar.

A visit to her dying mother in Rangoon last year coincided with the beginning of the "democracy period" in Burma.

Burmese history dictates the rise of a charismatic leader *in times* of crises, but it is difficult to predict whether the necessary political accommodation could be reached between the present or future leadership of the tatmadaw and its mentor's daughter. Last week she led a rally in Rangoon in defiance of the martial law to protest political harassment against members of her party and student leaders.

Last August's initially and euphoric - and ultimately, violent - uprising against Burma's authoritarian regime was long overdue. Yet it is still too early to predict what fruit the short-lived "democracy movement" will bear.

For as long as he lives, Ne Win, a superstitious and short-tempered ruler who relies both on astrologers and the intense loyalty of subordinates, is likely to control Burmese political developments, no matter who is titular at the helm of government.

In the chaos of last year's uprising, Burma ran through three successive leaders in as many months, but it was Ne Win who dominated events. The general's call for economic and political reforms and his unexpected resignation as chairman of Burma's sole party helped fuel the protests. And his threat that the army would "shoot to kill" those disobeying its commands was carried out to bring a newly vociferous populace almost instantly to heel. It is difficult to say how many changes in the system - or bullets - will be necessary to keep people from returning to the streets. That the tatmadaw will remain in power for the foreseeable future, however, is much easier to predict, for radical students and other opposition groups are no match for the soldiers'

monopoly on information and arms.

Failures of the military

The events of last August and September in the cities of Burma revealed the failure of the Ne Win led tatmadaw to meet basic human needs by means of a socialism that would not compromise the country's traditional values. "The Burmese Way to Socialism," which could be considered an ideological symbol of unity, succeeded only in transforming a country that once was the world's top exporter of rice (and still contains 80 per cent of global teak reserves, among other riches) into a "least developed country", alongside Bangladesh and Chad.

The Burmese Way to Socialism is the title of an unassuming seven page pamphlet that outlines a quasi Marxist, semi-Buddhist means of liberating man from social evils caused by "pernicious economic systems in which man exploits man. But the document is less a dogma than an attempt to rationalize tatmadaw rule within a Burmese context.

The impact on the average Burmese citizen of the army's monopoly of political power and its centralized economic planning depends on where he lives.

Although the limited rural participation in last year's uprising does not necessarily reflect the lack of a countrywide consensus for reform, the "democracy movement" was primarily an urban phenomenon, for the city dweller has borne the full brunt of Ne Win's mismanagement.

In a sense, Burmese society probably has coped better than many peoples whose governments practice a purer Marxist socialism.

Burma sometimes only seems to be at odds with itself because the nation is impossible to describe accurately in quantitative terms.

Even its estimated population of 38 million is a guess based on the last complete countrywide census in 1931 and the more recent head counts of 1973 and 1983, which of course excluded members of minority groups still in rebellion against the central government.

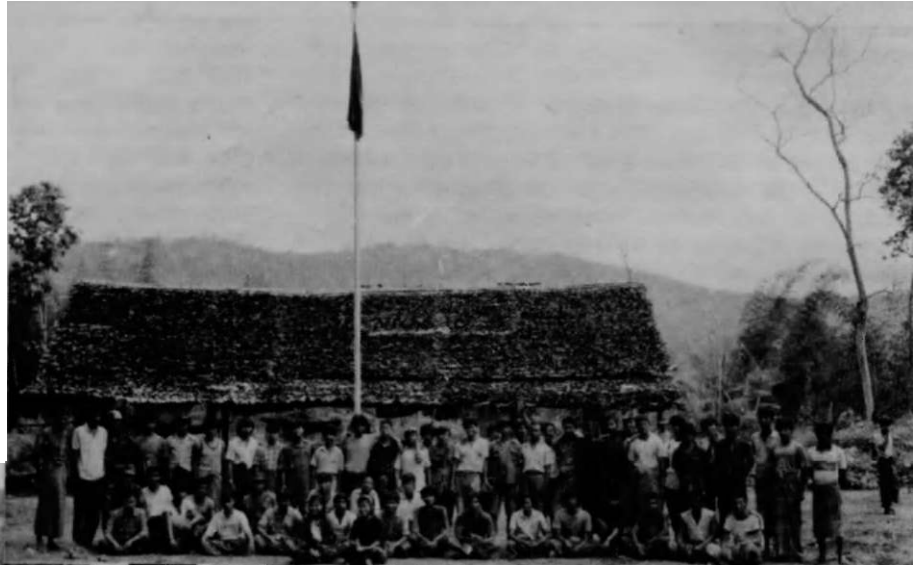
Given the long-standing instability of Burma's domestic situation, why did the uprising of 1988 not occur sooner?

Any answer must be tentative given the highly speculative nature of Burma-watching, made no simpler by Burma's isolation, the secretive nature of Ne Win and the tatmadaw, and the resulting uncheckable rumors that must serve as a leading source of information.

THE NATION
July 9, 1989

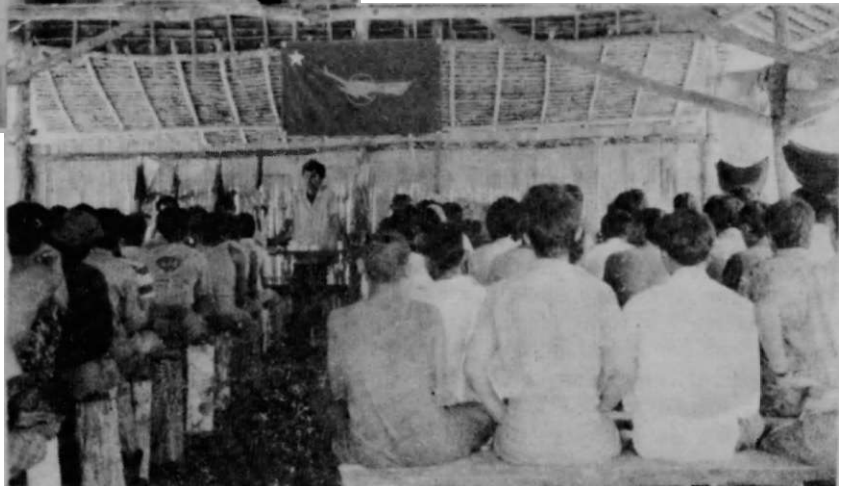
JUNGLE UNIVERSITY OPENS

Students gather outside the "Jungle University" for a picture which marks the opening of the first university in the jungle camps.



The university bulletin board carries important newspaper clippings, and the reflections of the students themselves. It is a "democratic" board because it carries the voice of the students.

There are many excellent resource persons among the students in the camps, and these persons have been called to teach in the University. Our new Burma will be built with our united efforts.



The first "Jungle University" has opened!

In a jungle camp along the Thai/Burma border, the Burmese students have formed a university which is totally operated by themselves. Together they share experiences and knowledge, and through dialogue are building their new vision for Burma. They are now more certain than ever that they can stand on their own feet and that they can solve their own problems.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

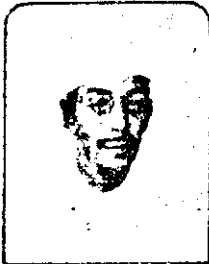
We have now sent out 13 issues of "DAWN" We hope you have received them all. We feel that "DAWN" is one way we can communicate with friends around the world, and this is very important to us.

In order to improve our efforts, we need your help. We feel it is time for evaluation, and to evaluate "DAWN" effectively, we need feed-back from our friends and readers. Therefore, we kindly ask that you take the time to answer the following questions and return them to us as quickly as possible. Any other comments and suggestions you have for our publication would also be much appreciated. We hope that we can continue sending you "DAWN", and that it will improve every month.

1. Do you find "DAWN" helpful? If so, in what way?
2. What items in "DAWN" are the most useful, and which do you find not so useful?
3. What kinds of news items should be added?
4. Do you have any suggestions for changing the format?
5. Do you want to continue receiving "DAWN"?
6. Are there any other people you know who would like to receive "DAWN"? Please give their names and addresses and we will add them to the mailing list.
7. Other comments and suggestions. (use other side if necessary)

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

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