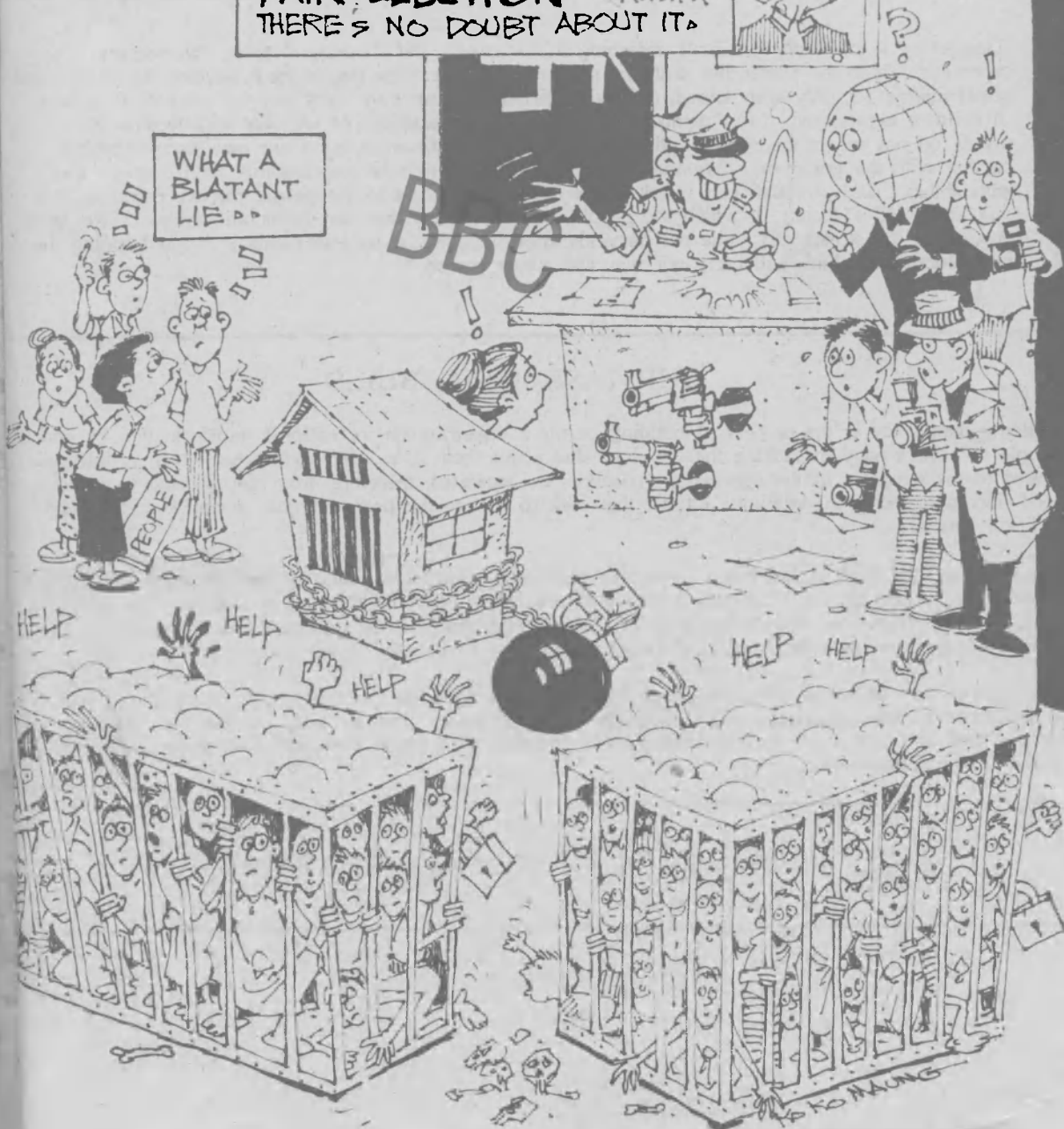


I'VE ALREADY PROMISED THEM
WE WILL HOLD "FREE AND
FAIR ELECTION" *...HAMMM...*
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT



WHAT A
BLATANT
LIE

BBC



DEMOCRACY IS NOT THE RULE OF GOVERNMENT

IT IS THE RULE OF THE PEOPLE

"Democracy is not won by simply marching in the streets and shouting slogans. Democracy is a process in which the power lies with the people. Therefore, the people must develop knowledge and responsibility, for only with knowledge and responsibility can they carry out the most difficult task of building democracy. Most democratic systems fail because people are lazy and because the people do not accept the responsibility of their power. We must build our new democracy by starting with the grassroots. We must liberate the people to take responsibility with courage and with ability. Only through hard work and a deep commitment to the people can we carry out this task and build a society in which the people can and will protect the democratic system. We have shouted in the streets and made our demands known. Now let us join hands to begin building the new foundation which will carry our new and future society."

OUR TASK IS TO BUILD

Building democracy is the process of building people's organizations for national transformation by enabling people to have a hand in making the decisions that affect their lives. It is a process which is integrally linked to the struggles of the oppressed: it cannot be separated, therefore, from the national movements for total liberation and even Asia-wide efforts, that seek to change the present unjust, social, economic and political structures.

Those of us who work at building this process may have a particular ideology, but we must be careful not to impose this on the people. Our task is to assist in building open, democratic, critical people's organizations that can then choose the national program or ideology they want. It is a pedagogy that prepares people for critical co-operation with larger national issues. Herein lies the basic thrust of our work.

We must always remember that true people's participation does not come naturally. It must be learned, and it is learned through experience, not through the study of theory. So we must put our own personal theories on the shelf and seek ways to help people bring out their own experiences and develop their own ideologies based on those experiences.

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

August/September 1988

BBC



Led by a picture of Aung San, the man who helped bring the country to independence from the British, people march in the streets, determined to bring democracy back to their land. They were confident that they would be successful in their nonviolent protests.

Students, young and old, took part in the demonstrations. Even though the students played a significant role in organizing and mobilizing the demonstrations, people from all walks of life, and all ages, participated. It is not correct to say this was a student movement. It was more than a student movement; it was a national movement with every sector of society taking active part.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE JUNGLE

AUGUST 8, 1988

In the Mortuary

A long search
through every place of the city
brought the distraught mother
finally to the mortuary.
She came in search of her son
who failed to come home last night.

Her eyes reflected sorrow and terror,
as those of a trapped mouse.
while she searched through the bullet-riddled
corpses
for her beloved son.

"Oh my, no!"
A body of a dead monk
lay silently on the floor.

At another place,
on the floor of the mortuary,
lay a young girl
in her teens.
She was without longyi,
but would never know her disgrace.

Here lay another corpse,
his skull shattered
but his hand still clenched
in a determined call for justice.

"Oh my, no!"
Over there!
a body dressed in white shirt
and green longyi.
A student.
"Son! Son!
My beloved Son"

She dabbed her eyes with her shaky hands
and scrutinized the dead body of her son.
A gold chain

which she had given her only heir,
was no longer on his neck.
A red arm band
with the fighting peacock symbol
still adorned his arm.

At that moment,
the broken-hearted mother
collapsed.

(dedicated to September 19, 1989,
that unforgettable bloody day
after the military coup.)

Marn Let
3 Pagodas Pass Camp

Aung San Suu Kyi :

She Who Dares

On July 21, the general secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave a speech to a large crowd in Sanchaung township, Rangoon, where a year earlier several hundred people had been arrested and two highschool girls had been crushed to death by army trucks. In her speech, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said: "Ne Win is the one who has lowered the prestige of the armed forces. I call upon all members of the armed forces as well as SLORC officials to be loyal to the people. You don't have to be loyal to Ne Win." Her speech was met with applause and cheers from the crowd.

On July 7, students and others were commemorating those killed on the same day in 1962 when the Burmese Army killed scores of young people at Rangoon University and even dyna-

mitted the historic Rangoon University Students' Union Building. Aung San Suu Kyi addressed these large crowds in Rangoon's Pazundaung, Latha and Botathaung townships, as well as in front of the City Hall in the city centre.

More than 10,000 people, defying Martial Law decrees

which bans gatherings of five or more people, listened to her speeches.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi encouraged the people to carry on their "peaceful and non-confrontational struggle for democracy." She emphasised that any pro-democracy demonstrations had to be "peaceful and orderly."



Countering charges by the military that the NLD was trying to dominate other smaller parties, she said: "It is very difficult for bullies to understand that there may be another kind of mentality around."

She continued: "The military rulers are afraid of getting killed. It is interesting to note these people, who so readily kill other people, themselves are afraid of getting killed. When you consider how many people are moving politically despite all the restrictions, you must admit that we, the Burmese people, are a very brave people. Don't be frightened. If you're going to let yourself be intimidated, they are going to go on intimidating you."

Countering charges that she was pro-communist," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said: "On the one hand, the military rulers are accusing me of being communist and on the other they say I have too much to do with the Americans and the British. It doesn't make sense."

The pro-democracy movement was gaining momentum as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi announced that "we will be marching by the thousands to pay respect to my father, U Aung San, and the other State leaders who were assassinated on July 19, 1947."

Every year, 19th July is celebrated officially in Burma as Martyr's Day. This year, however, the celebrations became somewhat different. On 18th July, more than 10,000 troops were moved into Rangoon and army trucks equipped with loudspeakers criss-crossed Ran-

goon to announce the newly issued Martial Law Order 2/89.

Under the new law, anyone defying SLORC decrees would be tried by military tribunal. Those found guilty would receive three years imprisonment with hard labour, life imprisonment or execution. Roadblocks were erected at all major intersections in Rangoon and soldiers, ready with guns, began patrolling the streets.

In a telephone interview with the Voice of America, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi declared that she had cancelled her planned

◀ She was
the only leader the
military rulers were
afraid of
She spoke the truth ▶

march in order to avoid a bloodbath. "One good thing about this anniversary is that it has forced the SLORC to come out and show its true fascist colours so that everybody knows exactly what we are dealing with now."

On 20th July, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's compound on University Avenue in Rangoon was surrounded by thousands of troops and she was placed under house arrest along with NLD Chairman U Tin Oo. They are likely to be detained for more than a year, well past the promised election date in May 1990. Telephone lines and telex communications with the outside

world were cut off for more than a week.

The official version of these repressive measures was presented by the SLORC on 21st July: "Action has been taken against Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo under the law protecting the State from dangers of disruptive and destructive elements, effective from the morning of 20th July."

SLORC spokesman Kyaw San said: "The persons against whom action has been taken are restricted to their respective abodes which they are presently resident. Only their legal family members who are on the household lists may go outside with guards. They are not allowed to see or visit foreign embassies and political parties. Outside individuals are also prohibited from making contact with them either in person or through telephone; the State has taken the responsibility of providing medical treatment and health care for them."

Kyaw Sann claimed that action had been taken against the NLD leaders because they "sowed disunity between the army and the people and discredited the armed forces." Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was accused of being a communist and U Tin Oo detained because he had said that the general elections, scheduled for May next year, will not be free and fair. This is the SLORC's idea of democracy: "If you don't believe that there's going to be democracy, we'll put you in jail!" Any comment would be superfluous.

In connection with the bomb explosion at the Syriam oil refinery near Rangoon on 7 July 1989, the SLORC-run Working People's Daily reported on 18 July, "We have uncovered who planted the bomb. We have made strenuous efforts to uncover the case ... you will see the photographs of those who have been arrested in connection with the bomb explosion (i.e. Than Zaw, Moe Kyaw Thu and Nyi Nyi Oo -- DAWN). The three are already in our hands and they have confessed. But we have not yet caught the main culprit (meaning Moe Thiha -- DAWN). He came to Yangon from a camp in the jungle together with the explosives."

The DAWN has also made strenuous efforts to uncover the real culprits and to find out who actually planted this bomb. These are our findings:

MOE THIHA, 24, is a former youth organizer for the National League for Democracy from Rangoon who used to be in charge of the local unit in Syriam. He joined the NLD on 11 November last year - but left for the Thai border on 1 April 1989 following constant harassment against leading NLD members by the military. Since his arrival at Thay Baw Bo a week later, Moe Thiha has never left the camp or the border area. He is a singer and a poet who has been recording songs and music for distribution to the other student camps along the border. He has also been actively involved in setting up the ABSDF's Jungle University at Thaw Baw Bo. He has never

The Truth behind the bomb blast

taken part in any military or demolition training nor has he been back to any town in Central Burma since he left Rangoon in April.

THAN ZAW, 27, is one of Moe Thiha's friends and former colleagues in the Syriam branch of the NLD Youth. He became involved in the pro-democracy movement last year, and his younger sister, a Rangoon University student, was shot and killed in the wake of the military

members of a legal, registered political party, nothing more.

MOE KYAW THU, who is only 17, joined the NLD recently. Had he been planning to engage in demolition work as alleged, he would not have exposed himself to the Army by joining the NLD.

On the grounds that Moe Thiha never left Thay Baw Bo and hence could not have given the three youths the explosives as alleged, we assert that these three-- and of course, Moe Thiha, are totally innocent. It is no coincidence that this case was trumped up shortly before the SLORC placed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin U under house arrest.

We demand the immediate release of Than Zaw, Nyi Nyi Oo and Moe Kyaw Thu. We urge all foreign embassies in Rangoon and the international community at large to take up this matter with the SLORC.

The REAL culprits should not escape unpunished either. We accuse the Directorate of the Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI) of being behind this plot. The trumped up charges against Than Zaw, Nyi Nyi Oo, Moe Kyaw Thu and Moe Thiha speak for themselves.

continued page 9

takeover on 18 September. Moe Thiha points out that Than Zaw believes in party politics and has never advocated violence, nor has he participated in any violent activity. The swollen lips of Than Zaw in the picture run by the Working People's Daily could explain "the confession" he and his two friends were supposed to have made after their arrest.

NYI NYO OO, 25, is another of Moe Thiha's friends. Nyi Nyi Oo, Than Zaw and Moe Thiha all worked together in the Syriam branch of the NLD. They were

MORE ABOUT ABSDF

I. NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION

The name of the organization shall be known as "All Burma Students' Democratic Front" (ABSDF).

Explanation:

The Front is a revolutionary organization representing students in the whole of Burma who are struggling for true democracy. It has been nationally, as well as internationally recognized that those who have been in the vanguard of the resistance movement against the reactionary military dictatorship in Burma are the students.

Whereas the students are the beloved progenies of the indigenous people from all walks of life and whereas they have been champions in the struggle for democracy and human rights denied to the entire people in the country, they are perceived as leading and representing the struggle which is participated in by the entire people. For that reason, the Front leading the present revolution is also named as a student organization.

II. SYMBOLS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

The Flag

The flag has a length of 9 feet and a width of 5 feet. It bears a white star in the upper left hand corner on a red background. The symbol of a fighting peacock with the head pointing towards the white star rests within a golden circle placed proportionately in the center.

Explanation:

The red color signifies courage and determination. Gold signifies dignity and human rights.

The fighting peacock signifies the willingness of the student masses to sacrifice their lives and fight with a spirit of courage and determination. The white star symbolizes democratic revolution.

The circle in the center denotes repression. The attitude of the peacock lunging forwards so as to break through the circle signifies the struggle for freedom and the desire to be rid of the shackles of repression.

III. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ABSDF

- a) To liberate the oppressed indigenous peoples of Burma;
- b) To achieve true democracy;
- c) To terminate the civil war, achieve internal peace and establish unity of the entire indigenous peoples;
- d) To establish a Union that will progress and prosper according to world standards.

IV. BELIEF

It is our absolute belief that the rule of a government which is not truly elected by the people and which has seized, by force, the executive power from the people can only result in the deterioration of the country.

It is our belief that the rule of leaders and government based on democratic ideology and human rights, and respected by the people can successfully build the future of the country.

We firmly believe that a constructive government which is consistent with that belief and deserving the trust of the people, will emerge.

V. PROGRAM

ABSDF will work for:

- a) the emergency of a democratic, truly representative and constructive government which will exercise the executive power in the interests of the entire people
- b) the equality and co-existence of all the indigenous ethnic groups of the Union
- c) establishment of a State based on democracy and which will progress and prosper in accordance to world standards

VI. CONVICTIONS

It is the conviction of ABSDF that:

- a) we are revolutionaries fighting with high consciousness, gained from difficult experiences in life, for our Motherland
- b) we, the loved progenies born of the

people, have to always stand on the side of the people and protect their interests

c) we must always oppose and try to overthrow any party or government which may denigrate the dignity of the country and the people, and bring ruination and calamity to the country

VII. POLICY

The ABSDF will fight on until the realization of:

a) true democracy in the Union of Burma

b) the full enjoyment of human rights by all citizens

c) the cessation of civil war and the unity of all the indigenous ethnic groups

d) the extinction of the military clique and the formation of a democratic government based on sovereignty of the people

e) the firm foundation of democracy is established in order to prevent the emergence of the evil system of one-party dictatorship in the future of the Union of Burma.

REPORT FROM A VILLAGE VISIT

After the students from our camp made many trips into the interior of Burma to visit the people, we discovered more about the actual life of the peasants. We have seen that they are suffering many serious difficulties. Because of the extremely high price of rice, many of them exist only on rice soup. One kilogram of rice now costs about 16 kyats, which is too much for the ordinary person to afford. This price is double the price last year. It is true that the salaries of government workers has been increased, but they make up a very small percentage of the entire population. For the rest of the people, there has been no increase in income even though the cost of living has risen drastically, and inflation continues to spiral upwards.

This affects the peasants most seriously since they have the lowest income of the people. Most of the farmers now do not have sufficient money to do their yearly farming. This will most certainly result in a drastic drop in the total acreage under cultivation this year, which will mean a drop in rice production.



WE DISCOVERED MORE ABOUT THE ACTUAL LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

SLORC's approach to solving this problem is to distribute rice only to government employees and the armed forces. This is certainly a sin because it will cause starvation to most of the ordinary people in Burma. Just as SLORC has claimed that they have no responsibility to reform the education, health and social systems, they will also claim that starvation caused by their policies is not their responsibility since they have no control over the economic system!

Therefore, who will finally solve the basic needs of the people before the elections in 1990? Is it true that SLORC has no responsibility for solving the problems of the people after taking over power in a bloody coup against the will of the people? We would like to know the answers to these questions.

At the same time, the benefits from the fishing and logging concession which Saw Maung has sold off to his "friends" never reach the common people in the villages we visit. The extremely heavy fighting along the borders simply proves that all of this money is channeled into the civil war and instead of helping the people is used against the people. These profits earned from the resources which belong to the people are only used to keep the SLORC in power. Can the civil war now growing in Burma ever be solved in this way?

Burma's rich natural resources, which are the precious inheritance of all the Burmese people, are being exploited by SLORC only to continue the war against the people as well as to lengthen their military dictatorship over the people. Is this just?

The Burmese people, including the peasants in the distant villages we visit, can not respect and admire a government which will not properly care for the people. This is the reason the people are fighting back and refuse to give power to the military even though the military used brutal armed suppression against them.

We would like to urge all countries cooperating with and supporting the military regime in Burma, to be more aware of the Burmese people's lives and properties. Put more pressure on the military dictator, and help the Burmese people who are fighting for human rights.

Dr. Naing Aung
ABSDF

Those who were accused of been behind the bomb blast

Than Zaw (27)
Photo from the
Working People's
Daily



Moe Kyaw Thu (17)
Photo from the
Working People's
Daily

Nyi Nyi Oo (25)
Photo from the
Working People's
Daily



Moe Thi Ha (24)
Photo from the
Thay Baw Bo
camp

An Analysis of Brig Gen Khin Nyunt's 5 Aug Press Conference:

Conspiracy but by whom?

Last year's popular uprising for democracy in the Union of Burma by people from all walks of life was undermined and discredited as a plot of the Burmese Communist Party (BCP) by Brigadier General Khin Nyunt. This is an out-right lie and an insult to the will of the people.

Daw Khin Kyi, wife of our national leader and father of the Burma Army, was also accused of having links with and sympathy for the BCP. It was also implied that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was under the influence of the BCP and that all the student leaders and opposition parties had communist connection. Thus, all those who had participated in the popular democratic uprising were accused by Khin Nyunt as being directly or indirectly involved in the BCP conspiracy.

The truth and falsity of, and the justice and injustice behind these accusations can be viewed as follows:

Firstly, from recent history we can see that the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) had as its leading members former cadres of the "Red Flag" and the "White Flag" Communist Parties and ex-members of the left-wing People's Volunteers

Organization. In addition, U Chit Hlaing, the chief theoretician of the BSPP, was also a political cadre of the communist school of ideology. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the ideology, the programme and the activities of the BSPP were greatly influenced by communism.

It is quite plain for all to see that the Burmese Way to Socialism advocated a one party dictatorship system and many communist ideals. At the peasants congress in 1963, Gen Ne Win said that class consciousness was of utmost importance and that the interests of the workers and peasants were what the ruling clique really cared for. He, of course, was expounding the fundamentals of communism. Following the military coup in 1962, Ne Win and his cohorts following the footsteps of all communist governments, nationalized heavy and light industries without any compensation. Therefore, if he has any sense of criticism, Brig Gen Khin Nyunt should be criticizing his mentors first.

Of course, everybody is entitled to his basic rights, and freedom of thinking and opinion should not be obstructed. This is something that no one can

deny. But it is also a fact that the ideology of the BSPP was a gross copy of Marxism. So, if Brig Gen Khin Nyunt is really true to himself, he should arrest Ne Win first for spreading communist indoctrination in our nation.

After 1962, and from 1963 to 1974, a lot of books on Marxism and Leninism were on sale at the Ava Book Store in Rangoon. These books in fine glossy covers and papers were sold at give away prices -- from 75 pya to 1.50 kyat. The shop was run by BSPP members. So, how can a person like Khin Nyunt, who have always belonged to the BSPP, say that he, his cohorts and mentors have nothing to do with communism. Yet, when it comes to protecting self-interests, Khin Nyunt find it easier to label the others of being led by the communists.

Khin Nyunt also said that a certain Soe Myat Thu was caught at the home of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi after meeting her and waiting for a chance to contact foreign missions there. Soe Myat Thu had actually gone back to Burma after he had voluntarily resigned from the ABSDF. The accusation that he was there to contact diplomatic missions was purely a fabricated charge. If the ABSDF wants to contact foreign missions it can easily do so through its members all over the world and not in Rangoon. The sham charges by Khin Nyunt are merely an attempt to discredit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

From the observations made,

we can draw the following conclusions:

1. The present democratic revolution does not belong to a single class. It is a national uprising supported by all the classes and strata with the aim of achieving genuine democracy in Burma. The accusation that it was led by the communists is groundless. It is nothing but an attempt to smear the popular support of the people and to create misunderstanding among the people

2. We have made it clear that our goal is to attain genuine democracy and basic human rights and it is being supported by all the democracy-loving nations of the world. Khin Nyunt hoped to scare away this popular support by using the word "communist". No one will fall for his propaganda which is based on lies and falsities.

3. The falsified accounts of so-called communist involvement given by the military clique is to break the solidarity of the students, political parties, and the revolutionary forces.

4. The soldiers of the Burma Army have been fighting the BCP for decades. They have been trained by their commanders to kill and suppress anything labelled BCP. They did not hesitate to massacre the people, including the students who had taken to the streets to demand their just rights and democracy, because they were told that those demonstrators were BCP members. The relations between the people and the Army have irreparably

damaged as a result of this selfish act.

5. Today, the BCP is very weak and there is little it can do in terms of dictating activities that can have any bearing on the national scene. Militarily also, it has been weakened by the defection of the Wa revolutionary forces -- the main strength of the BCP -- which have joined forces with the Wa National Organization. Despite this, Khin Nyunt has thus made the BCP a scapegoat and has accused it

of leading the massive popular uprising on 8-8-88.

We of the ABSDF believe that the military clique has once again failed in its attempt to cheat the Burmese people and the world. The Saw Maung regime is a cornered beast which will stop at nothing to ensure its survival. With this in mind, and for the sake of the nation and the people, we will be cautious but will spare no efforts towards achieving democracy.

A 7-Point Demand by ABSDF

The following demands are excerpts from the "Statement to All the People" by the Central Committee of the All Burma Students Democratic Front. In the same statement, the ABSDF also appealed to the international community to extract the same concessions from the military clique.

1. To immediately revoke SLORC Orders No. 2/88, 3/89, and 4/89.
2. To immediately release the student leaders, the student activists, the opposition leaders, and the other people now under detention. Let it be known that we strongly condemn their arrests.
3. To immediately release U Tin U, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and all other political detainees.
4. To leave unharmed the parents who are forced to submit the names of their "missing" children. To make public the namelist of parents who were made to report about their student children.
5. To permit opposition parties the right to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of printing and publishing.
6. To guarantee that the military will remain genuinely neutral and will always stand on the side of the people.
7. To permit supervision by international organizations until the elections are over.

THOUGHTS FROM ABSDF

Very often we are asked you we think the present Burmese system will be changed so that democracy can be built. This is a complex question, and one which we can not easily answer fully in this news bulletin. However, we wish to share some of our ideas with you.

As you know, our mother land, Burma, was controlled by a one party military dictatorial system for 26 years. Under this rule, we lost almost all of our basic democratic rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of press.

Finally the people took to the streets and actively took part in peaceful demonstrations demanding democracy and human rights. They also called for the transfer of state power to an interim government composed of genuine representatives of the people.

But the blood-thirsty military regime ignored the wishes of the people and Saw Maung's military clique held on to their power by using the gun.

On the one hand, the military regime promised to hold elections to gain international recognition and economic aid. On the other hand, they prohibited the basic democratic rights and disturbed the democratic movements of the opposition parties. Thousands of student activists and opposition party members were arrested and tortured for their involvement in working for justice.

Therefore, we do not believe that there will be free and fair elections under such a brutal military regime. Even if they do hold elections, they will try to force the formation of a coalition government composed of the National Unity Party (former BSPP) and other parties influenced by the military regime. It will not be a genuine democratic government. It will be a government which we might call a "guided multi-party democracy".

We therefore demand an interim government to restore genuine democracy in Burma.

The restoration of democracy depends on the following factors:

1. A split in the military, with the pro-democratic soldiers siding with the people.

2. International pressure on the government in the form of economic and political boycotts.

3. Continued and increased military pressure on the government by the ethnic minority forces.

4. Unity of the opposition parties and democratic forces.

There are three schools of thought in the Burmese army. One group wants to hold on to their power in controlling the entire country. The second group wants to force a win by the National Unity Party through the elections. A third group supports the people's call for free and fair elections. We must try every means possible to persuade these pro-democratic soldiers to stand completely on the side of the people.

We of the ABSDF will try our utmost to organize all the democratic forces to come together in unity.

International pressure plays a key role in the restoration of democracy in our country. If all the democratic countries would refuse to recognize the Saw Maung government, and would withhold economic aid, the military regime would face an economic crisis. This would force them to sit down at the negotiation table and compromise in the transfer of power to an interim government. This is why we of ABSDF continually seek international pressure on the military regime.

We hope to transform Burma into a democratic country through peaceful means. From the very beginning we wanted to solve the problems of the country through political means. However the military regime oppressed the democratic forces violently.

We demanded democracy peacefully, but they responded with bullets. What were we to do? We hope for the best, but we must prepare for the worst. The Burmese people will never give up their dream of democracy and so they will continue their struggle through all means until finally the victory is won.

ABSDF
CENTRAL COMMITTEE

THE PRESS AND THE MILITARY REGIME

NEWSPAPERS IN BURMA

Following Ne Win's coup on March 2, 1962, all newspapers were nationalized. At that time, the government allowed three Burmese language papers and two English language papers to be printed. They were the "Bo Ta Taung", "Loke Thaw", "Kyei-man", "Guardian", and the "Working People's Daily".

All of these newspapers were simply the voice of Ne Win, and provided the people with the news which he decided was important. They also used the pages of these papers to threaten the people. For example, in July of 1962, the military blew up the Student Union building in Rangoon University in an attempt to destroy student protest. The following day, the newspapers told the students, "This time we used only a small amount of explosives. The next time we can use a lot more."

In 1972, the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) was formed, and the newspapers became the common voice of this party. Most of the editors came from the military, and writers and reporters were prohibited from describing any mistakes made by the party, or from making any suggestions on how the government might function better. News concerning events inside Burma, and even international news, was first rewritten to follow the military dictatorship's line and then it was printed. The people, therefore, could never learn the truth from the papers. Ne Win used this media to try to control the minds of the people and manipulate their understanding of internal and international events. The papers also became the tool of Ne Win to publicly attack anyone who disagreed with his ideology. Since they were the only source of news, many people believed this news.

Through the newspapers, the military regime could present news which only showed the good side of their policies. They could print humorous articles to make people forget their problems, and they could print articles which would help create conflicts between the different

religious groups and different nationalities in Burma. Misunderstands were also created between the people, between the people and the students, as well as between the people and the army. However, the BSPP was always given good reports in the paper.

I was born in September of 1965. All of my thinking, my education and my perspectives were manipulated by the regime through their newspapers. I can not see the truth nor reality clearly. My head can not turn either left or right. Their propaganda is just about all the information I received in my formative years.

Following Saw Maung's coup on September 18, 1989, only one Burmese language and one English language newspaper was allowed to be printed. These are the "Loth Thar" and the "Working People's Daily". A military bulletin called "Dot Yae Dot Ya" is also printed. Through these three papers, Saw Maung and the top military rulers send their voice to the people. They have not only killed the people with their guns, but also with their propaganda. The voice of the people can never be heard through the newspapers.

Now the military regime is using the newspapers to attack the opposition political parties. They have made especially harsh attacks against the National League for Democracy, and its leader Daw Aung San Su Kyi. They have tried to confuse the people as to what Aung San Su Kyi and the NLD stand for, and have even charged her with being pro-communist.

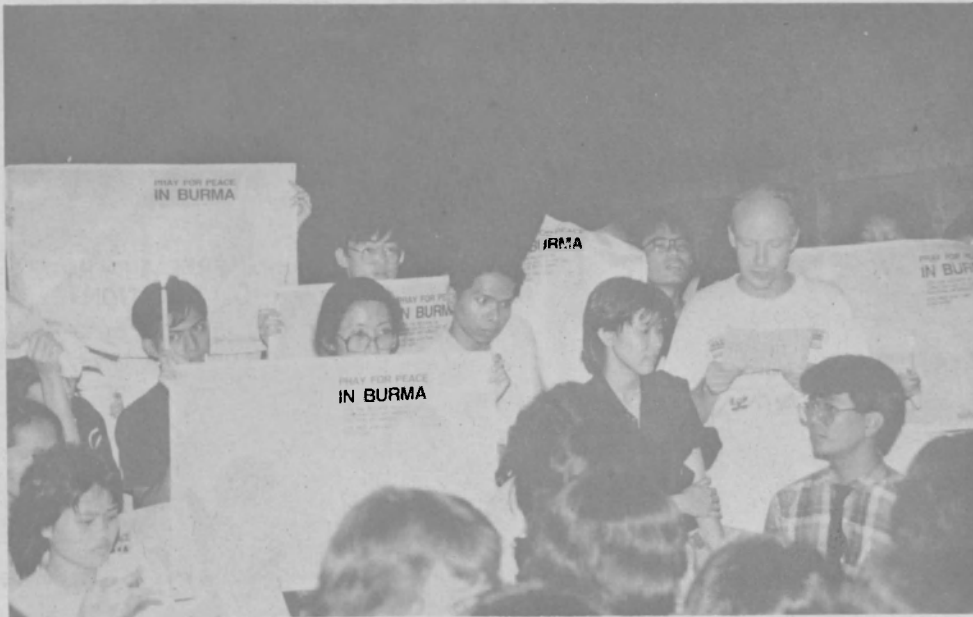
This experiences shows us that Ne Win and Saw Maung truly fear the voice of the people. Even though the people have eyes, mouths, and hands, and can speak and write eloquently, Ne Win and Saw Maung never give them the opportunity to express their dreams and desires through the public press. This has been the case since March 2, 1962.

Yae Chan

PREDICTING THE FUTURE
[ELECTION UNDER THE SUN]



8.8.89



O N E Y E A R
M E M O R I A L C E R E M O N Y F O R
O U R F A L L E N C O M R A D E S
I N B U R M A O R G A N I Z E D B Y
T H E A C O B (A C T I O N
C O M M I T T E E F O R D E M O C R A C Y
I N B U R M A)

8.8.89, In Front of the
Burmese Embassy in
Bangkok (Photo)