

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

OCTOBER 1989

NO. 20





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ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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INJUSTICE

IS NO LONGER THE IN THING

"I once stood in the midst of war and felt that I should do something to stop it, but could think of nothing that one person alone could do. So I did nothing, or at least next to nothing. And the war continued and grew, and the suffering overwhelmed me even more. "If only a thousand people were interested," I thought, "then I could finally take effective action." But there seemed to be only me, so I did nothing. Then a wise person reminded me that even though one small brick can not build a building, it is an important start. If everyone who had one brick thought that that one brick was not useful, then finally there would be no bricks, and no building. But if each one who had one small brick would bring that brick to the building, soon there would be enough to build the structure strong and sturdy. So I no longer wait for one thousand people to be concerned about the war and the suffering it causes. I take action, even if alone, for I am certain there are others who will also take action, and in time we will have strong enough power to end war and suffering.

So, to you who feel you can not confront the forces of violence because you stand alone I say, "Do what it is ~~your~~ duty to do and do not fear to stand alone. It is only your fear which makes you ineffective, and so it will be your courage which makes you effective. Stand up and confront the forces of evil!"

E.C. Dodds

The injustices which abound in Burma today are not natural nor normal to our people. It is just as difficult for us to bear the realities of these injustices as it would be for you in your country.

We have recently heard reports of children dying from hunger in our capital city of Rangoon. This has not happened in Burma for perhaps centuries. Burma has food! We can produce enough food to feed all of our people as well as export a substantial amount. Then why must these children suffer and die like this?

The answer simply is that injustice now rules our country. The food which our farmers struggle to grow and harvest is taken away and exported for money to buy weapons for the military. Now Burma does not have enough rice to eat, but there are plenty of bullets. Our people can not eat bullets!

This is why the Burmese people have finally decided to stand up and end this injustice. We can no longer remain silent while these small children suffer such a slow and inhuman death. Injustice is no longer the in thing for us. It must be put out of our country once and for all!

"Dawn". PO Box 1352, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

THE "BURMESE WAY TO DEMOCRACY"

THE THREAT OF DEMOCRACY (TO SLORC)

In May 1990, the military regime of Burma has promised the world that free and fair elections will be held. Unfortunately, this has been sufficient promise for many countries to re-establish normal political and trade ties with this dictatorial regime which came to power through a bloody coup rather than with the free consent of the people. These countries are now sitting back to see if the "truly free and fair elections" will be held or not. If the elections are not free and fair, it is still doubtful that these countries will take much action. They have now become more interested in the economic gains they can make from Burma rather than the human rights of the Burmese people.

For the Burmese people, the idea that SLORC can or will organize free and fair elections is nothing but an extremely sad joke. Too many people have died under SLORC's vicious boot to give the people any confidence that an opposition party will have any chance at all.

When SLORC announced that the one-party system of 26 years had ended, many people rushed to form political parties. A record 230 plus parties were finally registered. SLORC liked to flash this list of political parties to the world as evidence that SLORC was truly building democracy in Burma. Only the naive could believe this bit of advertising.

Now, reacting to the extreme popularity of some of these political parties, particularly the National League for Democracy headed by Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, SLORC has decided that too much democracy (or perhaps any democracy at all) is dangerous to the country, and especially to the ruling elite headed by Ne Win. To re-establish the control of the National Unity Party (the official SLORC party) by once again eliminating the opposition, Saw Maung has begun closing down many of the parties, and imprisoning leading members of others. Both Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo have been placed under a one-year house arrest.

To clarify what this means for the up-coming elections, government spokesman Kyaw Sann recently made the following statement to the press:

"No politician has been detained merely because he is a politician, but because he has violated one or the other of the existing laws. So unless and until a judicial court has decided if a detained politician is or is not guilty of the offence alleged against him, the question of his eligibility to contest the elections will have to be kept pending." (Bangkok Post, October 21, 1989)

Col. Ye Htut, another spokesman explained the present position of the government towards Aung San Suu Kyi

"Certain restrictions have been imposed on her and these include restriction of her movements and activities to her home, so this means she is barred from contesting the elections so long as the restrictions remain in force." (Bangkok Post, October 21, 1989)

In a truly free and fair election, the opposition parties must be allowed to campaign openly and with equal opportunity with present ruling parties. The government party (NUP) is now campaigning without any opposition since they have either arrested opposition leaders or closed down their parties. According to diplomats in Rangoon, at least 5,000 political leaders and activists have been arrested since July of this year. Prisons have been emptied of ordinary criminals in order to make room for all of these political detainees. (Nation, October 21, 1989)

NUP is also forcing all government workers to join the NUP by preventing any non-NUP members from advancing in their jobs, or from receiving full workers benefits. Such is "truly free and fair elections" SLORC style!

For those parties which wish to boycott the elections in order to protest the total lack of democratic process, a further barrier blocks the road. According to SLORC law, every registered party must put up candidates for the elections. What this means is that all political parties must either cooperate totally with the SLORC policy, or close down.

Ah, the "Burmese Way to Democracy" as envisioned by Ne Win, and put into practice by his good servant Saw Maung.

EDITORIAL

PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR PEACE

Hope still lives in the eyes of the dead as well as in the eyes of the living. This is the reality of the Burmese people today.

At the same time, the Burmese people strongly feel the wall of isolation which exists between themselves and the international community.

The only thing the people of Burma need is peace.

Yet, in reality, they continue to face arrest daily, and executions by the military regime become more common. Under the present martial law, people can be arrested for almost anything, leaving a veil of fear over the entire population.

Through the mist of isolation, the Burmese people have looked hopefully to the outside world for support and encouragement. Yet, almost all of those who come to Burma are, in fact, the indirect killers of the people. Foreign companies, and merchants deal directly with the military regime, and provide the money which the military regime uses to kill the people. Thus, even though they themselves do not pull the triggers, they indirectly support the death of these innocent civilians.

The military regime shouts out its slogans of peace, elections and development to the world, giving these companies and merchants the excuses they need to invest in Burma for quick profits. Their investments do not benefit the people at all, but only lead to the executions of those demanding democracy and peace. The roads, bridges, hotels, shopping centers etc. these companies help build are just preparations for the civil war which the military regime desires to wage against the people.

Let me say once more as clearly as I can, **"dealing with the military regime simply helps that regime indirectly in killing the people of Burma rather than providing social and economical development to help the country grow out of its *Least Developed Country* status!"**

Can the outside world continue to remain silent in the presence of this reality?

There is no difference between the people of Burma

and those in other countries throughout the world. We are all equal human beings. As all people everywhere, we wish to enjoy full human rights and justice in a free and happy atmosphere.

If you listen carefully, you will hear the voices of the Burmese mothers weeping for the children they raised through many difficulties and hardships and who have now disappeared. These weeping voices are a witness to the people of the world that all is not well in Burma today. These voices witness to the hunger, arrest, torture and brutally killings which their own Burmese military has brought over the country this past year. They also witness to the sorrow created by the indirect killing carried out by those foreign companies investing in Burma, and by the silence with which the outside world has greeted these investments. Is the world deaf to these sorrowful cries?

The people of Burma are fighting for peace against the guns of the military dictatorship. They have sacrificed their lives, and they will continue to sacrifice their lives for peace and the building up of a new generation in the country. Even though starving, they strike out against the military with the dream that one day in the future they will be free to eat the rice which they grow but which is now taken away from them immediately after harvest.

They fight, not with guns and bombs, but with a deep love for their country and their people, and with every physical and mental effort they can muster.

Peace is not just a word to be pasted on a military regime's dictatorial rule to legitimize that rule. Peace will come only when the people win their right to justice and full human dignity. Peace will only come when the military release their hold on power which they have taken against the will of the people.

How will the people of the outside world participate in this process? Will they cooperate with the military regime and continue to indirectly kill the people? Will they stand silently by, afraid to raise their voices against this injustice? Or will they join the fight for peace?

(A Burmese living in Burma committed to non-violence.)

"During the past year 50,000 of our people were kill and the world didn't care. Now one American journalists is shot, and the world is shocked into action. Perhaps we should have killed an American journalist 10 years ago!" (from the film UNDERFIRE)

TRUTH REVEALS REALITY BETTER THAN FICTION

THE WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY which is the official English mouthpiece of the military regime, always carries a motto on the front page which is suppose to illustrate the outstanding character of the SLORC. For the Burmese people, it is almost a game to match this "fiction" with the truth which they see around them almost every day. Following is an example of truth reflecting reality more than the fiction presented by the SLORC.

FICTION

THE WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY

Volume XXVI, Number 281

Yangon, Sunday, 8 October, 1989

Kyat 1

Only when the rule of law and order and peace and tranquility prevail, would the lives, homes and propelry of the people be safe and secured; only then would they be able to earn their livelihood in peace and freedom. The Tatmadaw (army) is carrying out this duty and all nationalities of the Union are urged to give all co-operation and assistance in this great task.

TRUTH



An unarmed woman student shot dead in the streets of Rangoon during the pro-democracy movement of 1988. This is the actual way the Tatmadaw (army) of Saw Maung urges all people of Burma to give all co-operation and assistance to building peace and tranquility in the country.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

SOME FACTS

1. Burma contains about 80% of the world's teak wood reserves.
 2. After 1962, no logging concessions were awarded to international companies except for small areas in the ethnic-controlled areas along the borders.
 3. In March 1988, the B & F Enterprises of Thailand signed the first logging concession. Since then, 42 other Thai concessions have been signed.
 4. These 43 Thai concessions plan to import at least 1.2 million tons of wood a year.
 5. If all concessions are successful, and paid for, they will generate US \$200 million in 1989 for the Saw Maung military regime.
 6. Firms from Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Europe are also participating in the teak concession bonanza in Burma.
 7. Selective cutting of trees is not practiced. All trees in a concession can be cut and the land left bare.
 8. Presently, due to bans on logging in Thailand and some other Asian countries, Burma is about the world's only source of teak. Thus the wood used in teak furniture and fixtures which people around the world purchase probably originates in Burma.
 9. Burma has a land area of approximately 676.5 thousand square kilometers. Only about 15% of this area is under cultivation and 2% is in pasture land.
 10. About 47% of the land of Burma is forested. Much of this is hard woods such as teak. Burma is said to have about 80% of the world's teak reserves.
 11. On October 29, 1987, the UN granted Burma the status of Least Developed Country (LDC). This is a terrible judgement on the Ne Win government, for Burma was once one of the wealthiest nations in the region.
 12. Before the political crisis began in earnest in July 1988, foreign-exchange reserves stood at US\$ 18 million, barely enough to cover the cost of imports for two weeks. In October, the reserves were virtually zero. Foreign debts had risen to a record US\$ 4.4 billion.
 13. In order to pay for his war against the Burmese people, Ne Win needs funds. Earnings from the export of rice had fallen drastically, earning only about US\$ 73 million in 1986-87. The export of teak and other hard woods became more crucial as a means of saving the military regime. By 1987, the export of teak was earning US\$ 138 million.
- ("Far Eastern Economic Review", 1988 Yearbook)



ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

WHAT THIS MEANS

1. Since March of 1988, Burma's precious forests have been disappearing at an alarming rate. There is virtually no control over this destruction, and there is no selective cutting to assure forests for the future generations of Burma.

2. We, the people of Burma, have not given our consent to this wanton destruction of our land, and we intensely resent it.

3. The vast sums of money gained from these concessions do not benefit the people. In fact, the living standards of the average Burmese has gone down since these first concessions were signed. Now, many Burmese people do not even have rice to eat every day.

4. The military regime is using the profits from this rape of Burma to purchase arms from Pakistan and Belgium which they then use to further suppress the Burmese people.

5. Millions of acres of Burma's forests have been sold off to foreign countries. Details on the size of all the 43 Thai concessions, and those sold to Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Hongkong are not known, but the following can serve as an example:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Chao Phya-Irrawaddy | 100,000 acres |
| 2. Santi Forestry, Co. Ltd | 100,000 acres |
| 3. Sirin Technology | 365,750 acres |
| 4. Thip Tharn Thong Co. | 100,000 acres |
| 5. Union Par Co. | 400,000 acres |

6. Since no selective cutting is required, these millions of acres of forests could be laid bare within a few years. There is also no reforestation plan. Thus the climate and the life of the villagers living in these areas will be affected negatively for many decades to come.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

1. On September 18, 1988, Saw Maung staged a military coup in order to crush the popular democratic movement which was growing all over the nation. Thousands of people were killed.

2. Following the coup, about 8,000 people, mostly students, fled to the Thai/Burma border area to seek refuge and to continue the struggle for democracy. Others remained inside the country to carry on the work.

3. During the past year under military rule, thousands of people who worked for democracy have been arrested, imprisoned and killed. No public trials are allowed.

4. The Saw Maung military government has vowed that they will eliminate the opposition groups and ethnic minority groups by the end of 1989. This they are attempting to do through large military campaigns against the ethnic minority States and student camps, as well as through the detention and torture of opposition leaders inside the country.

5. Burma is one of the 10 poorest countries in the world. In order to carry out these huge military campaigns, Saw Maung needs a lot of money. He is getting this by selling off Burma's precious resources cheaply to profit-hungry countries.

6. Saw Maung is stealing the rich forest, marine and natural resources which are the inheritance of the Burmese people, and is selling these resources to earn money to purchase weapons to further suppress and oppress the people.

7. The selling of logging concessions is not simply an economic issue, but is also a human rights issue. Many of the logging concessions are in areas traditionally owned and occupied by the ethnic minorities. For example, The Sirin Technology Co was given a 175,750 acre concession in the Karen State. The ethnic minorities were not involved in the negotiations, did not give their approval and do not gain from the logging done in their territories.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

8. There is also a military purpose behind these concessions. Many of the concessions are along the Thai/Burma border. By clearing out the trees, the Burmese military can more easily control the movement of people there. Their policy probably is to completely clear the border line of any trees or brush cover (similar to the US policy in Viet Nam during the war there).

9. As logging companies move into the areas which the ethnic minorities control, roads are built making it possible for the Burmese military to easily move

in and gain control. In the Karenni State, many villages have now been destroyed by the military as it gains a foothold in the area. The Karenni people are then forced to flee into Thailand as refugees.

10. By selling concessions cheaply to Thai companies related to the Thai military, the Burmese government has also been able to gain more support from Thailand for its military campaigns against the ethnic groups. Thus the destruction of the forests is also closely linked to Saw Maung's policy to eliminate the opposition of the ethnic minorities.

ABSDF CALL FOR ACTION

We, members of the ABSDF, are greatly concerned about the violations of human rights which the Saw Maung government is carrying out against the Burmese people, and we are also greatly concerned about the destruction of the forests and waters of our land. We know that protection of the environment is a global concern, and that the destruction of the forests in Burma will not only mean tremendous suffering for the Burmese people in the future, but will also effect global weather patterns. We will continue to try to collect information on this important issue which we can share with organizations around the world who are working together to try to protect the delicate environment in which we live.

We call on all friends to help us in our difficult struggle through the following ways:

1. Write letters to the governments of Burma, Thailand, Singapore, and Hong Kong urging them to stop this senseless destruction of the forests in Burma.

2. Call for boycotts of all teak wood furniture (both lawn and indoor) with letters to the retailers explaining why.

3. Call on your governments to boycott the Saw Maung regime both economically and politically until it is willing to negotiate with the people for a

peaceful solution to the civil war now growing in our country.

4. The ABSDF is gravely concerned about the military regime's policy towards the ethnic minorities. These groups have lived in these mountain areas for centuries, and traditionally have a positive attitude towards the environment. They have never destroyed the forests or the wild life living there, for they know they must live in harmony with their surroundings if they and their children are to continue to survive.

The present logging policies of the Saw Maung government are designed for two main purposes - to make money fast for the military, and to destroy the livelihood of the ethnic minorities in order to subjugate them. We strongly protest this policy, and call on friends around the world to join with us. We believe that, with united action, we can protect the environment, and we can help the ethnic minorities protect their unique cultures and lifestyles.

5. Form a "Burma Support Group" which can help coordinate campaigns in support of human rights in Burma. Inform ABSDF if you form such a group. ABSDF will attempt to provide information which you can use for your advocacy work.

6. Let your voice be heard in support of human rights and justice in Burma!

FIELDS OF SLAUGHTER

In late June of this year, a resident of Koikaw village in the Kayah State, wrote a letter telling of the terror villagers in his area suffered under the Burmese military. His story illustrates how the Burmese military gets the porters they need to carry their supplies.

"On the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of June, the Burmese soldiers of the 66th Division provoked terror in the town of Loikaw and nearby villages.

They were going to make an offensive operation somewhere near the Thai border, so they needed one thousand five hundred porters.

They shanghaied many males between the ages of 16 to 60 on the roads and junctions during the day and they surrounded whole villages at night, kicked open the doors of the houses and grabbed every male they could catch.

In the villages of Konetha and Wari Kawhku, they shot their guns at random and grabbed every adult and teenage male who was unable to flee. In Konetha village a native Kayah was hit in the leg and wounded.

They kept about 500 men in a barracks normally used for a platoon of soldiers. That barracks is surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by soldiers day and night. The 500 men were given two cupsful of boiled rice twice a day without curry. Drinking water was limited to enough for only ten or fifteen of the men each day.

Nearly all the shops, tea houses, restaurants and other buildings closed their doors during those days of terror and the town was nearly deserted.

On the 23rd June night, every house in Shwedaung Quarter was forced open and many people who could not flee were captured. Among those people were many school teachers.

About a week ago, a hijacked porter was killed by a land mine several miles east of Loikaw. When the relatives of that man went to collect the body, another one was killed again by a land mine and some were wounded.

Whenever there was a military operation it was known that they made the porters (by force of course) be point men. The loads the porters had to carry were heavy and sometimes the soldiers let the porters starve. When the porters were wounded or ill they were simply left in the jungle. If the porters were killed there was no compensation of any kind or assistance to the family left behind.

Sometimes some of the porters simply did not come back. No news was received about whether that porter was dead or alive, and the soldiers simply did not care."

Stories like this are common, but many international friends may doubt their authenticity. It is difficult to get sufficient proof of these injustices.

However a Swiss photographer, Karl Ammann, walking through the Karenni area, recently stumbled across the decomposing bodies described by villagers as porters brutally murdered by the Burmese army. (THE NATION, October 22, 1989) According to villagers he talked with, there were bodies of at least 150 porters in the area, some beheaded. Others had their legs broken so they could not run away. Apparently these were simply left to die.

Karenni soldiers estimated that the offensive, which happened in July, involved between 500 to 600 troops from the Kayah state capital of Loikaw along with 700 to 800 porters. The Burmese troops retreated back across the Salween river after inflicting some damage to Karenni camps.

It seems quite certain that the bodies of the porters which Karl Ammann found belong to villagers rounded up in Koikaw as described in the first part of this article.

Cambodia had its "killing fields". Now Burma has its "fields of slaughter". Cambodia's killing fields went unprotected by the international community for so long that millions of Cambodians lost their lives. How long will the fields of slaughter in Burma go unprotected by the international community, and how many more of our people must die?

VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

"Before the uprising, I used to work in a government bicycle factory. Although I was in the second year of university, my salary was only that of someone from the fourth standard. I received 170 kyats (approximately US\$24) per month.

We had to be ready to start work at 7:00 am and did not get off until 4:00 pm. If we came late three times, we were automatically fired. Often, if there was work to do, we had to work until 7 or 8 pm. Overtime pay was very small.

We had Saturday and Sunday off unless the government called us for extra work.

My salary gave me a little over 5 kyats to use each day. Transportation to and from work cost me 2 kyats per day. Luckily my mother packed lunch for me so I would not have to eat at the factory. If I ate at the small restaurant nearby, a meal would cost me about 15 kyats.

My family gave me about 100 kyats each month so I was able to get by. If I had been married, it would not have been possible. Most factory workers who have families must always borrow money to survive for the month. For each 100 kyats they borrow, they must pay from 115 to 120 kyats back. There are wealthy money lenders near the factory who provide this service to the poor workers.

Most people prefer getting a job in the illegal market where they can earn more. By buying and selling goods in this market, they can probably make around 100 kyats per day. That is a much better deal for them.

Since Saw Maung's military coup last year, the economy has gotten even worse. Prices of goods have gone way up and salaries of many workers have remained the same. People will continue to rise up against the military because they need to survive."

"Last month I spent several days in jail in Mae Sot Thailand. I was arrested for being in Thailand illegally.

While I was in jail, I met about 20 young Burmese men who had been porters in the Wankha battle. They were all from Paan Township in the Karen State. When the Burmese military was preparing to attack Wankha, they rounded up hundreds of young men to serve as porters. These young men were forced to carry heavy loads of rice, guns and ammunition into the battle zones. Many were killed in the fighting.

The 20 young country boys in the Mae Sot jail managed to run away. They have never been out of their village before, so they did not know where to go. By chance they crossed the border into Thailand. When they saw the Thai flag, they were excited because it looks very much like the Buddhist flag in Burma. They thought they had found a Buddhist temple where they could take refuge. However, it was a Thai Border Police station and they were arrested for illegal entry and sent to jail.

When I met them in jail, they had already been there about 4 months. They can not get out because they can not pay the 200 baht fine to the Thai police. I have no idea how long they will have to stay there.

They said that if they can get out, they do not want to return to their village because they are afraid they will be forced to work as porters again. They would like to take refuge in one of the ABSDF camps.

The poor are always victims. First these young boys were victims of the Burmese military, and now they are victims of the Thai police. They really do not understand any of this, and just want to be able to live peacefully.

VOICES FROM THE VILLAGES

THE FUTURE OF THE CHILDREN OF BURMA IS FADING

Burma is suffering a disastrous civil war. In the frontier areas, many children are living with an uncertain future. Almost all of them have a deep desire to learn their lessons peacefully, to play games happily and to eat enough food. Yes, their needs are very simple.

But the sad reality is that they live in constant fear of the Burmese military. Their experiences of fear and death are far more than children of their gentle ages should ever be forced to know.

When the Burmese army comes into their villages, the army confiscates their rice, arrests their father or brothers and sometime even takes them even though they are only 8 or 9 years old. They often see their neighbors, accused of supporting the insurgents, tortured and killed. They are terrified of guns and army green. Laughter is a luxury in their lives.

These children who want to learn their school lessons peacefully can only learn hard lessons from these experiences -- how to run away from the army, how to hide in the jungle or how to quickly jump into a bunker when the army comes to their village.

Their health condition is never good. Few villages have a doctor. There is little medicine for their survival and the price for the medicine which is available is very high.

Their parents are peasants who farm the fields, but their families must buy rice daily. They grow little paddy. They used to grow a lot of paddy every year but after they harvested the rice, they had to sell it to the government at a fix very low price. Often the army came to their village and confiscated their rice without paying anything. If they could not give the rice, they were tortured and arrested and forced to go to the battle zone as a porter.

A small Mon child sits without clothing, without enough food, without a hopeful future. It is for these children that we must build a new Burma.

Now, they have also sold their cows and buffalos which they need for growing the paddy because they must have money to buy rice.

The children have suffered terribly because of the civil war. The government says the children are very important, and the country's future depends on these children. But now they only live with suffering. Many families have only one set of clothing for their two children, others have only rags while still other have nothing to wear at all. They are not protected from natural disasters and they continue to suffer because of the civil war.

The children are like the paddy which is grown by their parents. The paddy steadily grows and becomes a valuable crop, but in two or three months time, when harvest comes, what will happen to it? Will their parents have a chance to keep the rice, or will it be forcibly taken away from them by the military?

The children are growing. Their future is a bright dream to them now. But what will happen to the children? Will they be able to keep that future, or will it be snatched away from them by the government?

I would like to make a request to my readers. Please think carefully about these children. You can help stop this civil war. Do it for the children.

(This is my true experience and eye witness during my visit to villages in an area northwest of Three Pagoda Pass - A student, October 1989)



OPENING OF SCHOOLS

After being closed for over one year, lower and middle schools in Burma have slowly and cautiously been reopened. It is clear that the SLORC knows that they have not been able to generate confidence and trust among the people - even among the small school children. In order to pressure parents and guardians to keep the small children from creating any more pro-democracy "disturbances", everyone was required to sign the following form as their child was registered for classes. As a way of protesting, many of the children crumpled the form up before handing it to their teachers.

GUARANTEE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGARDING STUDENTS

I have signed below to promise that I shall take full responsibility for my son/daughter, (name) (age) (NRC No), who is attending _____ standard at the Basic Education High School No 1 Dagon, regarding the following facts:

1. I guarantee that my child will be honest, nice and diligent in his/her studies.
2. I guarantee that my child will not take part in any disturbances.
3. I guarantee that my child will not get himself/herself involved with any political parties.
4. I guarantee the sound character of my child.
5. I guarantee that my child will obey his/her teachers, parents and guardians.

Father's signature

Name

Occupation

Mother's signature

Name

Occupation

Guardians Signature

Name

Occupation

Full Address

FROM INSIDE BURMA

"I was two when my father died, and I grew up with people always telling me what a great man he was. He was 32 when he died. But if you look at his speeches now, if you look at what he did, he was really a great man. I feel embarrassed saying this about my father, but the more you study his life, the more impressed you are. The things he said then are timeless. You can apply them to the situation now. He was very worried about how this army could be misused, and he said a lot about it. He made this point: that this army was not founded for the use of one man, or for one group. It's for the country; it's for the people.

He didn't think much of (General) Ne Win, and he never trusted him a lot. My father stopped him from becoming commander of the army, had him removed, and demoted him to quartermaster general at one point."

Aung San Suu Kyi

INVESTMENTS AGAINST DEMOCRACY

According to THE NATION, October 27, 1989, nine out of 28 foreign companies that bid for on-shore oil exploration and exploitation in Burma have been given contracts.

Nine blocks extending from north-west Burma near the Indian border to the Irrawaddy Delta in the south have been allotted by the government.

The government has also invited foreign companies to bid for off-shore oil exploration in 37 blocks along Burma's coastline. The invitation, sent out Tuesday, will close Nov. 30.

The 9 firms are:

1. Yukong Ltd of South Korea
2. Petro Canada
- 3-4. Amoco and Unocal of the USA
5. Idemitsu of Japan
- 6-7. Kirkland Resources and Croft Exploration of the UK
8. BXPP of Australia
9. Royal Dutch Shell, a joint British and Dutch company.

On the following day, THE NATION reported that Yukong of South Korea had signed a five-year venture requiring about US\$72 million in capital. Their concession covers 39,000 square kilometers in the Chindwin Basin.

On October 30, H.E. U Khin Maung Yin, Burmese deputy construction minister, hosted a party to thank Udon Tantisunthorn, deputy minister of agriculture and cooperatives in Thailand, for his cooperation on the Thailand-Myanmar (Burma) Friendship Bridge Project linking Mae Sod and Myawaddy. While thousands of Burmese starve, the party was held in Hugo's restaurant of the Central Plaza Hotel. Unfortunately the Burmese suffering from starvation will not benefit at all from the party, nor from the so-called "Friendship Bridge".

The bridge will benefit Thai loggers and traders who are interested in quick profits from Burma, and it will benefit the Saw Maung military who can get their supplies quicker.

It may be a friendship bridge for the military, but it is a death bridge for the Burmese people and the ethnic minorities.

A Burmese military goodwill mission to China has strengthened relations with Burma's largest and most important neighbour, official reports said yesterday.

The mission included the powerful secretary of the ruling junta, Brig-Gen Khin Nyunt, and Trade Minister Col David Abel.

The Burma *Working People's Daily* said "both sides agreed the existing Sino-Burmese friendship should be strengthened on a state-to-state as well as army-to-army level."

In its natural state, teak takes about 100 to 120 years to grow to the size of 7 feet 6 inches girth at breast height (4 feet 6 inches from ground level).

KAREN

According to many scholars, the Karen originally came from an area around Mongolia. Slowly they migrated from place to place until they ended up in what is now Burma in about 759 B.C. At the time of their arrival, there were no other inhabitants here.

As time went by, the Burmese tribes also moved into the area, and fought with the Karen. Finally the Burmese conquered the Karen, stripped them of their land and their culture, and drove them into the surrounding jungles.

The Karen now live in a basin between the Salween river in Burma and the Western border of Thailand. Their land is beautiful and rich in resources. Here the Karen have stubbornly held on to their unique way of life and to their culture.

The Karen call their land Kawthoolei, which in the Karen language means "Flowerland".

Throughout the history of Burma, there have always been tensions between the Karen and the Burmese government. Finally, on January 31, 1949, this tension broke out into a revolutionary struggle for justice and human rights. The reasons the Karen gave for starting their struggle were:

1. The Karens are no longer allowed to study their own language in schools,

2. Their schools and educational institutions were taken by force and many were destroyed,
3. They are oppressed in many walks of life, in education, in getting employment and in earning their livelihood,
4. Their fields and plots of land were nationalized and confiscated,
5. They were being systematically exterminated by annihilation, absorption and assimilation programmes,
6. The Karen have to take on Burmese names and thus lose their Karen identity.

One Karen historian has explained the Karen struggle thus:

"By this time it must be realized about the belligerent resistance of the Karen against the Burma Government is that it is not the struggle for the emancipation of a people from foreign rule. Neither is it true to say that it is a struggle undertaken solely to fulfil national aspirations. It is a struggle first to survive, then through a long experience of mistakes, series of political and military setbacks and untold adversities, to seek the right form of government - government of the people, by the people and for the people."

"The Karens fight to create a piece of land where their people may live in peace."

Gen Bo Mya, chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) and president of the Karen National Union (KNU), said yesterday he is ready to negotiate with the Burmese Government if Army Chief Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh (Supreme Commander of the Thai military) can arrange a meeting.

He is prepared to talk with Burmese leaders under equal status and if Gen Chavalit agrees to act as mediator, he said.

Thailand should be site of the meeting, he said.
(BANGKOK POST, October 29, 1989)

A week ago, a Burmese government spokesman said civilian courts and military tribunals had sentenced 100 people to death in the past three months. Of these, 24 were convicted by military courts set up specifically to deal with breeches of martial law.
(BANGKOK POST, October 29, 1989)

Thousands of people have been detained and held in prison without trial since July of this year. Military tribunals do not allow for due legal process. The death sentences which they have given out are only acts of revenge against the pro-democratic movement. Those thus sentenced have no lawyers, and have no right to see their families.

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS



Reading the ABSDF appeal on 8-8-89



Selling ABSDF t-shirts in Kani City



Press conference on 8-8-89

On August 8, 89, friends in Japan held a service to remember the 8-8-88 uprising in Burma. These friends have been very active in trying to raise the awareness of the Japanese people to the democratic struggle in Burma. They hold press conferences, sell ABSDF t-shirts and translate ABSDF materials, including "Dawn", into Japanese so more people can understand our situation and our struggle. They are also working to bring pressure on their government to end all support for the Saw Maung regime and to get Japanese companies to cancel their business contracts as well.

ABSDF appreciates this kind of sincere support. It truly encourages us in our struggle.

"Dawn" is especially pleased that they take the time and effort to translate "Dawn" into Japanese so that our information receives wider attention. This is a very special kind of support.

We would be interested in hearing of other support activities from friends around the world. Please send us copies of your support writings, photos, or any other items which will alert us to your activities.

ACTION-ACTION

If English is not a common language easily read and understood by most people in your country, form a group to translate all or parts of "Dawn" into your local language. It is important to ABSDF that as many people as possible know of our struggle. Translating "Dawn" would be a great service. This will also help in solidarity work as we wish to build solidarity, not only with the intellectuals in a country, but also with the working people who have so much in common with our own peasants.

REFLECTIONS

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ရီရီတုန်း

Once,
 the beautiful flowers were blooming
 in my nursery.
 The innocent flowers were dancing
 and fluttering in the breeze.
 All the blooming flowers were beautiful
 in my garden,
 the butterflies and bees
 were flying around happily.
 My duty was to create beauty
 by weaving them into a dainty lei.

Then the storm blew.
 It beat upon my beautiful flowers.

I went to my garden
 and looked over my flowers.
 Some had fallen down
 some petals had been beaten violently
 others were withering and dying.

I fell to my knees
 my eyes filled with tears.
 I must continue with my duty,
 to create the beautiful lei.
 but,
 the cord I use for weaving
 is damp with blood.

This poem was written by Ms Yi Yi Tun, a 27 year old Burmese student suffering from cancer. She is presently under treatment in a Bangkok hospital. Ms Yi Yi Tun has never given up her desire to see the Burmese people regain their human rights despite her own difficult situation. Her poem expresses her commitment to continue struggling for justice even though the military regime has spilled so much blood of her friends and even though her own health is not good now..

If you wish to send words of encouragement to Ms Yi Yi Tun, you can send them through "Dawn". Your concern and support would be greatly appreciated.