

# DAWN

NEWS

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NOVEMBER 1989

NO. 21



I SPOKE THE TRUTH  
I WILL SPEAK THE TRUTH AGAIN!



# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE  
ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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1989

### AS SEEDS SPROUT IN FERTILE SOIL

#### SO DEMOCRACY GROWS ONLY WHEN IT IS BORN IN THE POOR

The people of Burma only need what is most suitable for their lives. Their demands are simple as are their expectations. However, it is these demands and expectations which must determine the future of Burma.

When a new building is constructed, the most important first step is the foundation. If this foundation is not strong enough, the entire building will soon break apart and collapse.

In Burma, the foundation of the society is the farmers, workers and other poor people. They are not much interested in high political ideologies and theories. Their main interest is proper health care, good education for their children and a government which will work together with them to solve the problems which they face each day. This is why we must go to the poor, live with them, listen to their problems, give simple health care, and teach their children. If we do this, we can help them develop their minds and their future.

The goal of ABSDF and the Ethnic Minorities is to carry out this task. Even though we students do not have enough medicines for our own camps, we take what little we have and share it with the poor living in our areas. Slowly the villagers begin to trust us, and see that we are all equal in this society.

We go in groups to the frontier areas to spend time living with the villagers. We learn from them what their true problems and needs are. Then, together with them, we seek solutions. We are learning much from the villagers, and the solutions to problems which we find are practical and effective. This is very different from the solutions discussed in intellectual forums where theory and ideology from other countries are the main focus.

Our assistance to these peasants is very limited. We have few medicines to give them, few school supplies to help their children, and almost no food to share with them when they are hungry. Yet we are determined to stay with them and work together with them. We firmly believe that they are the foundation of our country, and that democracy must begin with them and build upwards. This is the only kind of democracy which can stand.

I long for the people from other countries to truly understand the real situation of the basic community of the poor people in Burma. I want these international friends to know how and why the people suffer, and how they have to always flee for their lives. I also want the international community to understand that theories and ideologies from on top will not ever solve the problems of our people. Only an ideology which starts from the poor and suffering can truly bring about a new and peaceful Burma.

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

# VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

## A REPORT FROM MINTHAMEE CAMP

Our students are divided into five groups and spend a lot of the time visiting villages in the frontier area. We go to learn about the realities of the villagers' lives, and to share with them about our democratic movement.

Sometimes we are very close to the Burmese military. The Burmese soldiers are often very young. They do not want to be fighting in this civil war. Many of them would defect to our side, but they fear for the lives of their families back in Rangoon and other cities. Ne Win and Saw Maung rule the country by fear. Few people support them, but because they know that these military leaders will not hesitate to arrest, torture or kill, they remain quiet.

The real problem Burma is facing now is that the few powerful elite led by Ne Win have managed to divide the people and get them to start killing each other. Then they sit back in their guarded houses and get rich by selling off Burma's resources to profit-hungry countries who have little or no interest in human rights.

In the villages, we see how terribly poor the villagers are. They do not have enough rice to eat even though they plant and harvest it. The military takes most of it away. Then the villagers have to buy rice to feed their families. One pyi of rice costs them about 25 kyats which is the same price the city people have to pay. The villagers have almost no money, so they can not afford to buy this rice. They finally have to sell their cows and anything else they have to get money to feed their

families. We feel extremely sad to see the people who produce the food for the country having to suffer hunger and malnutrition this way.

Often, when the Burmese military comes into the villages, they kill the villagers' cows, pigs and chickens for themselves. They also take any rice they can find. They rarely pay the villagers for this.

The villagers are extremely afraid of the military, and hate them very much. They are afraid that the military will take them away as porters, and if they go as a porter, there is a good chance that they will not survive.

The students in my camp want the international community to boycott Burma economically and politically. This is the only way the civil war can finally be brought to a quick end. However, few international countries and groups are interested in organizing this kind of boycott. They seem to believe Saw Maung when he says that there will be free and fair elections next year (1990). We wish to tell all these international groups that there will never be free and fair elections while the military controls the country. These elections are only a farce to trick you into ignoring the true situation in our country. While you sit there waiting for the promised elections, Saw Maung is steadily arming himself, selling away the country, and killing more people. This is why many of our students have now decided that the only solution left is to take up guns. So our sad country sinks deeper and deeper into war.

A 25 year old farmer from the Shan State lies in Mae Hong Son hospital with multiple wounds from a mine he stepped on while serving as a forced-labor porter for the Burmese military. He was forced to walk ahead of the troops to serve as a human mine sweeper. His wounds covered almost his entire body and he was unable to walk any further. The military simply left him behind to die.

He was found by some ABSDF students who were visiting villagers in the area. They brought him to the Mae Hong Son hospital where he is now being given treatment. Hundreds of other porters are not so lucky and finally starve to death along the paths where they are left by the military. This is the plight facing villagers in Burma today.



## EDITORIAL

On the 5th of August 1989, Brig-Gen Khin Nyunt held a special press conference at Guest House No 2 of the Ministry of Defence. He spoke specifically about the uprising last year - who created it, who controlled it and who led it.

He claimed that "It was found that university student disturbances created by the BCP UG (Burma Communist Party Under Ground) erupted into mass protests". He added that "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was enticed into serving the purposes of the BCP and that BCP thinking has been dominating the thinking of her party (National League for Democracy Party)".

On the 9th, 10th and 11th of September 1989, Brig-Gen Khin Nyunt held another special press conference. This time he claimed that "The Embassy of a 'major country' gave funds to rightist opposition groups trying to overthrow the military government." Although the foreign embassies were not named, it was clear that the US, British and Australian embassies were being criticized. He said 51 rightist conspirators had been arrested, and he criticized foreign media for biased reporting against the military regime. These included BBC, VOA, AIR as well as many magazines and newspaper and even Amnesty International, the Human Rights organization based in London.

This means that last year's pro-democracy uprising was led by not only leftist elements but also rightist elements.

The reality of the situation is actually as follows:

During last year's uprising, the BCP Headquarters (southeast of the China-Burma Border) did not publish any news concerning the uprising except only once about the Phone Maw affair. This news was actually written by one student from RIT (Rangoon Institute of Technology) who arrived at the BCP after the Phone Maw affair (March 13th, 1988). Sources from the BCP said "We did not get the exact news about last year's uprising inside Burma". In September 1985, the BCP 3rd Party Conference decided to fight against the Ne Win military only by armed struggle. No members accepted a political struggle or an underground movement. Even in their discussions of a possible political and underground strategy they first would organize the people who live in villages and after

that surround the city and capture it as a final step. Last year's uprising spread from the city to the village.

According to a report in the "Far Eastern Economic Review" of June 1st, the BCP had broken into smaller groups based on ethnicity rather than ideology, by March and April of 1989. These included the Kokang group, which also controls the Mong Ko base area as well as some guerilla zones in central Shan state, the Wa of the CBP's former Northern and Southern districts and the Panghsang headquarters area. About 200 BCP leaders and some high officers, apparently taken by surprise, fled across the Nam Hka border river into the China border town of Meng Lien. The non-communist groups which remained formed the Burma National United Front (BNUP). It was clear that there was no more a communist party inside Burma. It is impossible that the BCP, which completely broke apart soon after the uprising, could have led last year's uprising which covered the entire country.

The recent warming of relations between Peking and the military government in Rangoon, has made the presence of the old BCP leaders in Yunnan an embarrassment for the Chinese authorities. According to sources at the Sino-Burmese border, the Chinese first tried to persuade the mutineers inside Burma to let their former leaders return and retire on the Burmese side of the border. But the new non-communist leadership in Panghsang, most of whom are Wa hill tribesmen, turned down the proposal prompting the Chinese to look elsewhere for a solution. On June 22, the ex-BCP exiles in China, including the former chairman Thakin Ba Thein Tin, were transported in four Chinese army vehicles up to Kambatiti Pass on the border between China and Kachin State. The Kachin rebels, apparently under Chinese pressure, agreed to let the ex-BCP leaders stay in their area.

This clearly illustrates that the Chinese government and the Burmese military regime have very good relations now.

On the 8th of June 1989, the "Far Eastern Economic Review" reported that "Trade between China and Burma, both legal and illegal, is now believed to be about US 1.5 billion dollars a year. On the 5th of August 1988, official trade along that stretch of the border was established by the signing of an



agreement between Burma's Myanma Export/Import Corporation (MEIC) and its counterpart in Yunnan. Last December Burma agreed to sell to China 1,500 tons of mazine, valued at US 180,000 dollars. Indeed, local sources in Mandalay claim many businessmen from China have recently moved to that northern city to supervise the trade. Some of them have even managed to buy National Registration Cards and thus become Burmese Citizens".

During the middle of October 1989, 23 high ranking military officer led by Army Commander-in-chief Lt-Gen Than Shwe, Brig-Gen Khin Nyunt (the most powerful man in Burma today, son-in-law of Ne Win and a strong critic of communism) and Trade Minister Col David Abel, went to China on a 12-day friendship mission. This was reported in the official State newspaper "Working People's Daily". The newspaper, however, did not mention what they did while in China. The BBC announced that the military group first arrived in Peking and then went to Shanghi where, according to some people, there is an arms factory.

A comparison of both countries during their respective uprisings proves quite interesting. During

the massacre in China on the 3rd of June 1989, Deng Xiaoping said that "The demonstrators are trying to split the Chinese Communist Party" In Burma, Brig-Khin Nyunt said that "University student disturbances created by the BCP UG erupted into mass protests". In both countries, several thousand demonstrators were killed by their People's Military, many people were executed and many people have been arrested. Even though Khin Nyunt shouted against the BCP and communism (because this is the best way to organize the army to kill unarmed people in the streets since the Burmese army has hated the communists for a long time), he still tries to keep good relations with China in order to get their political and economic backing. What is most clear is that the military simply wants to hold power as long as possible.

In reality, last year's pro-democracy uprising was not led by the leftist nor the rightist. The demonstrators were only trying to get justice and an end to fascism.

Their slogans were:  
"We want Human Right"  
"We want justice"

## ACTION-ACTION

SLORC has continually promised that there will be free and fair elections on May 27 1990. However, opposition leaders continue to remain under arrest which eliminates them from the political campaign. The major opposition party, National League for Democracy has come under very serious harassment with its leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo placed under a one-year house arrest.

We call on our friends to write letters to Gen Saw Maung, SLORC Headquarters, Rangoon Burma, to protest the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, and to demand their release at least by the end of 1989 so that they can continue to campaign as a major opposition party. This is essential if free and fair elections are to be a possibility.

Please write another letter demanding release of the thousands of political detainees which are being held without fair trial. It is also essential

that you demand a fair trial for those who have been sentenced to death and to life at hard labor by the military tribunals which have been set up contrary to all international laws.

We also continue to call on all friends to take actions to protest investments in Burma made by your government or by companies in your country. In this issue, and in many past issues of "Dawn" we have tried to list these companies and what kinds of investments they are making or planning to make. We need your support in building up this economic and political boycott against the present military regime.

We would also request that you send us letters telling us of your actions of support. This is the way solidarity can be built. When we know that you are supporting us, it gives us more strength and courage for our own struggle. Please keep us informed.

Peace can never happen if we simply try to convince the oppressed to remain non-violent. We must also be willing to take the risks involved in confronting our own responsibilities within our own countries and societies.

## INVESTMENTS

"Burmese military rulers, feeling an economic pinch and diplomatic pressure to give their country more freedoms, are savoring another oil deal with the West.

"At a time when many donors have adopted a wait and see attitude, Canada has continued its assistance to the economic and social development of Myanmar (Burma)," Rear-Admiral Maung Maung Khin said in Rangoon. "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

He was speaking at the signing on Monday of a contract between Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise and Petro-Canada Resources for exploration and production of petroleum. Petro-Canada Resources is wholly owned by the government of Canada." (Bangkok Post, November 9, 1989)

"Burma on Wednesday invited the Malaysian oil corporation Petronas to examine the possibility of helping upgrade its oil and gas exploration a Malaysian spokesman said.

He said Burma has substantial oil and has reserves and there was a good potential for Petronas to provide technical expertise in tapping them." (Bangkok Post, November 10, 1989)

"The Burmese state-run Rangoon Radio said more than 700 Japanese cars arrived in Rangoon by sea on Wednesday.

The delivery of 762 cars was reported to be the "largest single shipment" ever to have arrived in Rangoon port in Burmese history, the radio said in a report monitored in Bangkok on Wednesday.

No description of the vehicles was given" (Bangkok Post, November 10., 1989)

"Burma seeks Malaysia's help in developing its tin industry, a Malaysian official said on Thursday after meeting with a nine-member Burmese trade delegation.

"Burma wants us to help explore its tin resources

and provide technical assistance to further upgrade the industry," Kok Wee Kiat, Malaysia's deputy trade and industry minister, told reporters.

According to the Statistics Department, Malaysia's trade with Burma amounted to US\$19.9 million in 1987, but declined to \$18.5 million last year." (Bangkok Post, November 11, 1989)

According to a UPI report in the Nation of November 10, 1989, "a spokesman for the Coca-Cola company said that the company does not do business in Burma, and he expressed puzzlement about a Burmese student group's call for a boycott of the soft drink company's products." The spokesman further said, "Coca-Cola does not do business in Burma. We do periodic feasibility studies in all the markets around the world where it's legal to do business'. We probably have done one recently in Burma, but that is at the very routine stage in a market where we have no business. The students may be misreading the feasibility studies and think that we are conducting business in Burma."

It is a bit confusing we agree. The September 23, 1989 issue of The Working People's Daily, shows a picture of Mr Stuart Eastwood, Mr. K Joe Shein and Col. Tun Zaw signing notes concerning production, distribution and sale of soft drinks, including Coca-Cola in Burma. The article which accompanies the photo says that Mr. Stuart Eastwood is the Director of Economic Development of the South-East and West Asian Division of the Coca-Cola Corporation.

Furthermore, a report in the Nation of October 13, 1989 states, "Coca-Cola is moving into Burma with the establishment of a bottling factory at a cost of more than Bt100 million."

It may be true that Coca-Cola presently does not sell its products in Burma, but the evidence points to definite plans to do so in the future, and this is what we are protesting against. A feasibility suggests interest, and we are surprised that corporations would be interested in investing in a country where the government has such a poor human rights record.

In a recent speech, Saw Maung criticized those political parties which have registered, but have threatened to boycott the 1990 elections. He made a comparison with someone who has paid to purchase a ticket to enter the theater in order to watch a movie. Once they have purchased the ticket, they have the right and responsibility to go in and view the film. What Saw Maung fails to recognize is that no sane people would force themselves to sit through a rotten movie simply because they already purchased the ticket. When they see that the movie is not going to be of any worth to them, they walk out!

## TO ALL INVESTORS IN BURMA

### An open letter to all of the businessmen who deal with the Saw Maung regime

I am one of the students from Burma where you have started to do business. Maybe I am small when compared to you, but I would like to tell you about something which completely concerns me. I believe it is my right to tell you this.

We have been oppressed by the Ne Win fascist military government since 1962. Even though we are human beings, we have had to survive like animals. We have been losing our rights for over 27 years. One main issue is that our brains or our intelligence have been disintegrated by that fascist military government. If you compare us with people of the same age from other developed countries, our intelligence level is so low.

Since the military took power on 2nd March 1962, the people have steadily struggled against the military. Starting last year, there were very big demonstrations against the fascist military in the whole country of Burma. But the military killed about 8,000 un-armed demonstrators. Besides that, several thousands of people were arrested and badly tortured inhumanly by the military. Many people have been killed and arrested by the military since their September coup.

The students and the people are still against the fascist military. Many of our people have already sacrificed too much for our revolution and for our country. We have no plan to go to another country to take political asylum. We will never leave from our country. We are fighting against the military and we are dying in our country. We have given a promise that we call "Gade" to our comrades who sacrificed their lives in our revolution. This "Gade" promise means, "we will never give up our struggle, we will fight against the fascist military until we win and we will rebuild our country to be similar with other developed countries".

I have told you a short history of our country and about us. Now let me make some comments about you.

I dislike the people like you who are now making business in Burma. Do you ever think about how much money the people like you give to the fascist military to oppress and to kill us?

I know that you know a little something about our country's situation. But, because you are the selfish man, you care only about your money. So, you learn about our country and about its resources. But you seem not to have learned much about the people of Burma. This is your serious mistake. You do not care about the people from our country and how they suffer. Maybe that is right from your point of view since you do not need to care about our people if you only want to earn profits.

I don't need the help from people like you or from other selfish men. You do not need to support us.

But, you must not disturb to our revolution. If you disturb our revolution, you will loss all your property and all your profits in our country one day. I am sure of this. This is right from our point of view.

An oppressed Burmese student

### SAVING THE FORESTS

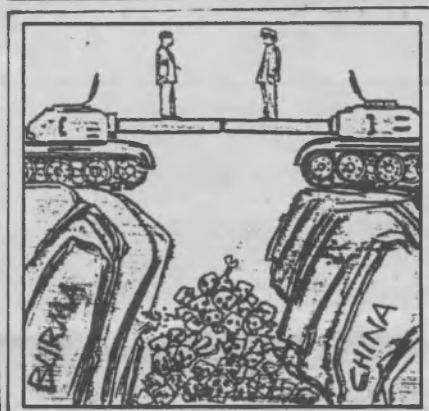
According to a Bangkok Post report on November 3, 1989, the United States (USAID) has agreed to finance a \$2-million six-year policy research project to salvage Thailand from critical environmental problems. This project has been taken on because of severe environmental problems created by deforestation, rapid industrialization and urban areas which have expanded much too fast for the infrastructures to handle.

At the same time little, if anything, is being done to bring an end to destructive deforestation which is being carried out in Burma, especially along the Thai-Burma border areas. The above mentioned project which will cost a minimum of \$2 million is trying to salvage what remains. A project to save what still exists in Burma would cost much less, and would have a positive effect on the entire region now and in the future.

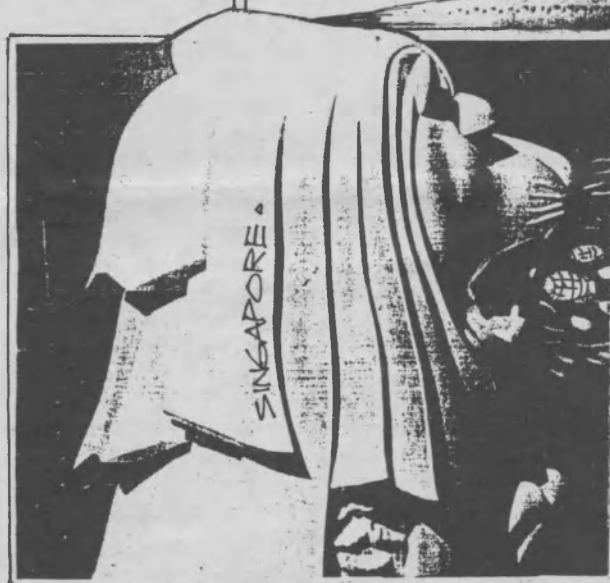
## VISIT TO PEOPLE'S REPUB



The Myanmar goodwill delegation headed by Lt-General Than Shwe visit the NORINCO—China North Industries Corporation and view the rocket launchers exhibited in Beijing on the morning of 20 October. (News reported)—MNA Photo



The Myanmar delegation members studying the P-6 Jet Fighter at the Shijiazhuang Airport on 21 October evening. (News reported)—MNA Photo





PUBLIC OF CHINA



# THE CONSPIRACY OF TREASONOUS MINIONS WITHIN THE MYANMAR NAING-NGAN AND TRAITOROUS COHORTS ABROAD

Conspiracies and machinations to do great harm to the country perpetrated by party organizations, rightist forces, some diplomats, some foreign broadcasting stations, some foreign publications and anti-government forces outside the country who were carrying



## NEWS FROM INDIA

"During last year's uprising, I joined the Ba-Ka-Tha (All Burma Student Federation Union) together with student leader Min Ko Naing who was arrested 13th March 1989.

"Before the coup we distributed the rice to rural areas and we went around Rangoon and gave speeches. After the coup, we formed the Progressive Students' Democratic Front. I went on an organizing trip to the east and west parts of Pegu Division. After that I went to the India/Burma border.

"I arrived in Chandel district and the Indian government formed one refugee camp for us which they called Leikum camp, but we never did have the refugee status. We got 100 Rupees daily from the Central Government which we used to buy ngapi, kerosene, soap and some medicine. However the Manipura riflemen did not pass the money to us daily. Instead they would give it to us 4 days each month.

"They took care of our security. They gave us rice, cooking oil and chili, but the rice was very old and stale. We got food but it was not enough for the 250 students inside the camp. Most of the students got malaria and diarrhea. The Central Government of India supplied one doctor but he never brought any medicine or instruments. We did not get blankets either, but I heard that the Central Government had issued them.

During the cold season, it became so cold that the water changed to ice. We asked for blankets, but the Company of the Manipura Rifles did not give them to us.

"We read in the newspapers that the Central Government gave the students 100 Rupees every day and also they gave 2 Rupees as pocket money. However we never got anything from the Manipura Rifle. We did not get the permit to go outside the camp and we were not allowed to meet any journalists.

"We were threaten by the Manipura Rifles about 3 times. One time, one army officer called a female student out of the camp secretly. After one month, he sent the girl back to the camp. We went to see him and he said he will marry the girl. He called the girl again and asked her to sign one English language letter. She cannot read English. The next day, the newspaper said the army officer and the student girl did not have any relations.

"We formed the ABSDF of the Burma/India border. I served in military affairs. One day I went to

secretly visit the Indian students at Imphal to explain our situation. When I returned to my camp, I met the army and I was arrested for 3 days. I made a hunger strike inside the jail and demanded the right to return to the camp. Finally they released me and sent me to the camp. Next day, one student went outside secretly and he was also arrested. He was brutally beaten by the army so that he could not even walk. That night, we called the meeting and decided to leave from the camp the next morning. But, the army did not accept our plan to leave and we were sent back to the camp like animals. We made a strike, and after that a Lt-Commander from the Minapura Rifles said that they would move us to another camp. They sent one group to Thu-Ta-Kan village which is near the Burmese Border and another group to Tee-Tan-Zan village which is quite high in the mountains. They did not give any food and blankets and the students walked about 80km to return back to Burma.

"At that time, the situation inside Burma was very dangerous for the students who fled to the border area. The military regime announced the law that if the students from the border area came back to their homes secretly, they would be sentenced to death or sentenced to life in prison. When I arrived in Rangoon, I could not live in my house. The military used to regularly visit the student houses who actively took part in demonstrations. One day, I made an appointment to meet my mother at a secret place, but on that night, the police called my mother and held her in jail for the whole night.

"We had only one piece of cloth to wear and always had to worry about being arrested by the army even though we are in our own country. When the sun set, I was always busy trying to find a house to sleep in for the night. Even at midnight, the military used to search the houses. I met them 4 times, but I was very luck because they did not recognize me.

"I stayed in Burma about 5 months after I arrived from the Indian border and then I left for the Thai/Burma border.

"Even though we face a lot of problems, we will never give up our struggle. We love freedom and justice. We need freedom and justice in our country in order for the lives of our people to improve.

"Today, I am very tired. My body is wet with blood. But tomorrow I will be strong enough to fight the fascist military regime again."

Kyaw Kyaw Win

## THINKING BACK TO 1988

### A PROMISE FOR LIFE

I never wanted to believe that the soldiers were shooting the people. I was convinced that they were only shooting into the air to frighten the crowds. I was not used to seeing cruel things, so did not want to believe that such things were happening in my own country.

On August 9, 1988, I was on the streets demonstrating with the people near Shwedagon Pagoda. Suddenly the military appeared. They told us that we could not go on, and that we were to disperse. We refused. Suddenly they began shooting into the crowds. I was in the center of the crowd. At first, when I heard the sound of the guns, I did nothing. I could not even think. All around me people began to fall down. It was very strange to me. In the movies, when someone is shot, they usually make a loud shout when they are hit. It was not like that at all. When someone was hit by a bullet, they fell down silently. They made no noise. Some of them seemed to be unaware that they had even been shot. It was like a strange dream.

I began to run to the walkway beside the road. There were already many bodies in the road. I noticed a student near the sidewalk. Just as I got near to him, he was hit in the chest by a bullet. As he fell down, I caught his arm and carried him to the sidewalk where there was more protection. I knelt down and held him in my arms to see if I could help. He reached up and got hold of my shirt and looked me in the eyes. I had never seen him before. He was not my brother or my friend. He was a total stranger. But when I looked down at him, I felt a strong comradeship with him. He must have known he was going to die quickly and he said to me, "I have finished my duty for the revolution. I can not do anything more than this.

Promise me that you will work for the revolution for the good of the whole country. Promise me." Then he died there in my arms.

It was a very strange feeling. All around me the soldiers were shooting at everybody they could see. When this new comrade of mine died, I laid his head down on the sidewalk and ran away. I ran blindly. I had no idea where I was going or where I was. I just ran. I was shouting "Why? Why are they shooting the people who have no weapons? Why? Why are the people dying?" At that time I felt totally crushed. I was filled with terrible fear and hatred and wanted to kill the soldiers but I had no gun in my hands. So I kept running and shouting without knowing really what I was doing.

Finally I calmed down. I thought again about the student who had died in my arms and the request he had made to me. I will never forget that promise. That one promise, made to a stranger, totally changed my life. Now, every day, I think about my promise to him, and I continue my commitment to struggle for democracy and peace in Burma. I can never stop. It is not a promise for just a short time. It is a promise which will determine my entire life. Once we have gotten rid of the military dictatorship, our work will not be over. We must continue to work hard to rebuild unity in our country and to heal the wounds which Ne Win has created during the past 28 years. My promise made to this new comrade whom I met for only a few minutes on the street of death will determine how I live the rest of my life, and how I spend, not only the years I have left to live, but also how I use all of my resources and skills.



## WHO IS THE TRUE CRIMINAL?

### Who has might determines what is right

During the past 28 years, Burma has been under the boot of Ne Win and his military apparatus. No figures are available on exactly how many people have been imprisoned and tortured to death during this time. No figures are available on how many ethnic minority villages have been razed, how many villagers taken away as porters and how many women raped and destroyed. We only know for certain that Burma has changed from being one of the wealthiest countries in the region to one of the world's poorest.

In October, two young Burmese students forced a Burmese airliner to land in Thailand. After some negotiations in which they basically requested only that their expression of dissatisfaction with the Burmese military government be internationally publicized, they peacefully gave themselves up to Thai authorities. No one was injured in this incident, and no property was damaged. Yet, these two students are now criminals facing trial.

How can we speak of justice when a military regime which murders thousands of people is still recognized by the international community as the legitimate rulers of a country, and two students who harm no one are called criminals? Perhaps if the two students

Those who have might are the ones who determine what is right in the world today, and those who are powerless are only the victims.

In 1988, the people of Burma stood up to protest this military dictatorship which did not represent any of the wishes and dreams of the people. In retaliation, thousands of unarmed people were shot dead in the streets. This was witnessed by foreign journalists and embassy officials. It can not be denied. It truly did happen, and the blood of the innocent students, children, monks and working people did stain the streets red for many days. Arrests, tortures and killings continue to this day. Military Tribunals, established by Saw Maung, have sentenced people to death without the benefit of legal assistance or even the right to call up witnesses in favor of the condemned. Since July of this year 100 people have been sentenced to death and another 100 sentenced to hard labor. Since this violates all national and international laws regulating the rights of human beings, these executions are tantamount to murder!

Yet the world, especially the business communities, recognize this military dictatorship as the rightful rulers of Burma, and are willing to do business with them in a normal way. The silence from the rest of the world seems to testify that most everyone recognizes the right of Saw Maung to carry out this mass murder of the people. **Those who have might are the ones who determine what is right in the world today, and those who are powerless are only the victims.**

had had vast natural resources which they were willing to sell cheaply to international governments, they would have been received as heroes rather than criminals. Unfortunately the world today seems to respect the law of might more than the law of right. This is what the people of Burma stood up to protest in 1988, and what they continue to suffer and die about today. Justice, human rights, dignity and the common good must determine the **Law** of what is right, and this **Law** must replace the law of might which is only in the hands of the dictator. The international community must also become aware of this and stand on the side of those who are victims of the law of might.





## NEWS FROM INSIDE BURMA

On the 4th of March 1989, near the east of Ba Maw, fighting broke out between Burmese army LID 40 and KIA Tactical Column 2. KIA troops captured Lt-Col Thein Tun (Commander of LID 40), Capt Tin Oo, Capt Nyunt Shine, Lt-Capt Aung Myo Win, 21 soldiers and a lot of ammunition. The captured soldiers were sent to the KIA headquarter to receive primary health care since most of them had been wounded, and to explain the real situation.

Gen Zauw Mai (Army Commander-in-chief of the KIA) gave a speech and held a dinner party for them with participation of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front leaders (KIA division). The ABSDF leaders also held discussions with the captured soldiers. During the interview with them, Lt-Col Thein Tun said "My hobby is fighting war with a gun. That's why I joined the army!"

Three of the Burmese military soldiers are only 17 years old. According to military law, a male under 18 cannot join the army.

The captured soldiers lived in the KIA territory about 2 months to receive health treatment and then the KIA sent them back to their home areas.

In Rangoon, the SLORC held an exhibition of photos taken during last year's uprising, showing the bodies of those people who had been beheaded. The exhibition was meant to convince the people that the uprising was a very bad thing and was carried out with severe violence. (The SLORC did not show any pictures of military brutality done during the uprising.)

Everyday school children were brought to the exhibition to show them the photos and try to convince them that it was necessary for SLORC to take over in the September 18 coup in order to restore peace and order.

Students began writing anti-SLORC, anti-military and anti-government poems and slogans which they would quickly paste over the photos in the exhibition.

SLORC finally had to close down the exhibition to try to clean up the displays.

The US Cable News Network has made the first visit to Burma by a foreign news organization since July, and a government spokesman said yesterday other visa applications by journalists would be considered.

Col Ye Htut, government spokesman said, "Genuine journalists, who will report the truth objectively without bias, will be permitted when their credibility is vouched and guaranteed by a responsible person or organization." (Nation, November 11, 1989)

Since 1948, more than a dozen ethnic minorities have taken up arms to fight for their ethnic rights and dignity. They have never been given the right to fully participate in the central government, and have been forced to take on Burmese names and learn Burmese rather than their own ethnic language in schools. This is what they have been fighting against.

Now the government of Burma has formally outlawed four of these groups. They are the Kachin Independence Organization, the Karen National Union, the New Mon State Party and the Karenni National Progressive Party.

On October 9, the government opened the University of Medicine in Mandalay for final-year students. This is the first university to open since the September coup of last year.

Students who attended classes were offended by the presence of armed military around the campus and inside the campus. On October 10, these students staged a protest against this military presence. They demanded that the troops be withdrawn immediately from the campus. Highschool students in the area also joined the protest. In answer to the request of the students, the military attacked and beat many of the students. Others were arrested. Then the government immediately closed the university and several highschools.

"The road to freedom has few resting places. We do not have the luxury of tiring. The struggle goes on constantly."

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

## SOME FACTS

1. Burma has over 1,600 miles of coastlines

2. It is estimated that there are 1.7 million tons of marine products available within Burma's territorial waters.

3. Almost all fishing in these waters is done by small local fishing boats which can catch only about 300,000 tons per year. One Burmese once commented that "Burma has the only seas in the world where the shrimp die of old age."

4. Burma is expected to grant concessions to approximately 1,059 fishing vessels to fish in its waters.

5. Although selective fishing through the use of large-holed nets is required, most fishing vessels use small-holed nets which completely sweep out all marine life in the waters.

6. Burma has an exceptional range of habitats from balmy coral seas to dense tropical rainforests to freezing mountain scapes swept with snow. The forests, rivers and seas are rich with life - a wealth of species some of which remain unknown to science - the numbers due to the wide range of ecological niches. There are mangrove swamps, huge delta areas, lakes, coral reefs, surf beaches, deep waters and shallow paddy fields, teak plantations, and an especially diverse and extensive variety of forests ranging from dry deciduous dipterocarp forests to Himalayan rhododendron forests.

7. In Burma are some of Asia's largest remaining wild elephant herds - up to 300 gather in Sept-Oct in the Southern Tenasserin forests around hot mineral springs to lick the salts. Karen observers think there are 3 distinct species - an exceptionally large tuskless elephant, medium sized tusked elephants and a small tuskless kind.

8. The forests shelter many endangered animals - the Sumatran rhinoceros, the clouded leopard, the

Asiatic jackal, the red dog, the hog deer and the masked finfoot. Some are endemic to the region like Feae's barking deer and the plain pouched hornbill. There are around 300 species of mammals, 900-1000 approximate bird species including eagles, vultures, green peacocks, hornbills with 5 foot wing spans, pheasants and many rare and endangered species.

9. Other animals rare in neighboring countries and threatened with habitat destruction are, to name a few, tigers, leopards, panthers, Asian tapir, gibbons, macaque monkeys, wild water buffalo and the Asian hare.

10. There have been very few, if any scientists, researchers and photographers allowed into Burma over the last 3 decades, during which time the forest area of Burma has been reduced by about 20% (FAO)

11. Poaching is rampant - mainly by Thai poachers and not uncommonly by Burmese soldiers. Thailand is said to be one of the 4 worst offenders in trade in endangered species.

12. The Burmese military government openly trades in tortoise shell, tiger and leopard skins among others. They recently auctioned off \$25,000 US worth of ivory from elephants killed in the war zone.

13. Due to widespread poverty, the high price of rice, the population explosion and the unavailability of fish due to loss of fishing rights to Thai and other concessionaires, more people are hunting in less area for wild food, further pressuring wildlife numbers.

14. In some areas of the country, local weather patterns have changed and droughts have been experienced where there were never any previously. This is due to over-harvesting, and intensive logging operations which are encouraged by the government in order to earn much needed foreign exchange.

"The silence felt at the loss of only one bird in the forest, is enough to shake the entire world."

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

### WHAT THIS MEANS

The coastlines of Burma are home to hundreds of thousands of villagers who make a living catching shrimp, squid, fish and other marine life. They use small boats and shallow nets. Since the Burmese government has sold fishing concessions to foreign countries, these small fishing villages are unable to make a living.

They claim the foreign fishing boats use nets as small as 2-3 inches which catch everything, leaving nothing for them. They also claim that for every Thai boat given a concession, at least two other boats appear in Burmese waters with the same registration numbers, same colors and same names. By paying a small bribe to the Burmese coastal authorities, these extra boats also are allowed to exploit the Burmese seas.

Many of these villagers are now moving inland, seeking new areas to live. They say fish are now scarce and extremely expensive. They no longer know where to live, where to work, and what to eat.

At least 50 different companies have been negotiating for concessions. In March of this year, only eight contracts had been signed, earning the Burmese government about US\$17 million. Of these eight companies, four were from Thailand. Singapore is also seeking some of these concessions.

As these foreign countries get wealthy from the exploitation of Burmese waters, the Burmese fishing people starve, and Burma's rich marine life disappears.

### HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

In Burma today, people are hungry - even starving. This should not be so because Burma has everything needed to feed its 41.1 million people. A country's resources belong to the people of that country. To sell them off so that a few of the elite can get rich while the majority suffer is a violation of the human rights of the citizens of that country.

The worst violation of human rights is that the children who live near the ocean and its vast resources, must suffer from lack of protein and thus must grow up without the chance to develop normally physically and mentally.

For the villagers along the coast who have made their living for centuries by fishing, being forced to move and to have to try to survive by farming or by selling themselves as cheap labor is also a serious violation of their human rights.

The villagers are simple people. They do not demand much from the government, nor do they seek to exploit and destroy the oceans resources. They have learned to live in harmony with nature, and know that if they harvest the ocean carefully, it will provide them and their future generations with plenty for survival. Forcing them away so that foreign countries can become rich, is not justice!

The oceans and their resources are the inheritance of all the Burmese people. They must be protected so that the future generations can also benefit from them. Now, while a few Burmese government and military officials, and a few foreign fishing companies get rich, the Burmese people must get poorer and more hungry.

The environment in Burma is being destroyed for military purposes. Large areas are being cleared for increased visibility, alongside transport routes, industries and military installations. This makes "islands" and severely restricts wildlife movement. Deforestation is used as in Vietnam to deprive "insurgents" of cover - it does the same to wildlife.

There is, under the Burmese military regime, no apparent official body monitoring, researching or policing wildlife habitat loss or environmental destruction. Indeed, the concept is still largely unheard of by the great majority of the people.

There is no education about environmental protection, no trained ecologists, and zoologists can find no official outlets for their skills. Due to the universities been closed for over a year now, no new people are being trained in these (or any other) fields.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The country has recently been opened to foreign investments and development. Mining, logging, fishing and oil production all have a great impact on wildlife and the environment. There are many companies from many countries with poor environmental records who would love to exploit Burma's rich natural resources. At present there are no controls, no environmental standards to be adhered to and no efforts by the government to do anything but attract any company to spend money in Burma.

Companies like G.S. Corporation in Singapore import animals from Burma for re-export to Europe and the United States. They import parakeets and hill mynahs at a rate of about 1,000 birds every two weeks. They also deal in Rhesus monkeys, most likely sold to European and American labs for experimental purposes.

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### ABSDF CALL FOR ACTION

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The ABSDF is gravely concerned about the exploitation of the Burmese waters, and the destruction of the lives of the fishing people who live along the coasts. Burma and her resources are being sold off at an alarming rate for the sake of a few dollars profits which only go to those in power.

We need international support to stop this rape of Burma. You represent various environmental organizations and action groups. Your voices, when blended together, can be heard, and can make a difference.

We call upon you to voice your protest against the selling off of fishing concessions by the Saw Maung government. We also call on you to protest to the Thai government about the way in which their fishing boats are completely depleting our waters of the fish we need for our own families.

If possible, try to find out what companies import fish from Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore. It is very likely that the marine products which these companies sell originate in Burma. Boycott these products and protest to the companies about their direct and indirect support of a brutal military regime which continues to kill innocent people in order to remain in power.

If enough people boycott, protest and alter lifestyles, the environment can be protected. Burma still has so much of her environment intact. During the past

26 years, there has been little exploitation of it. Now, however, Saw Maung has begun destroying it so rapidly that within a few years Burma may begin turning into a waste land. Join with us to make certain this does not happen.

Burma's natural heritage is one of the greatest inheritances the people of Burma have. Its protection is of the utmost importance and urgency. You can help protect it.

Find out all you can about products being sold in your country which originate in Burma, or which may have been re-exported via Thailand, South Korea, Singapore and other Asian countries. You can raise the awareness of other people to these issues, and encourage them to join in a boycott of these products.

Please share any information you can find with the ABSDF. It is difficult for us to do proper research because of our present status on the border, so we must depend on friends like you to get us the information we need to carry on this struggle.

More information, and suggested actions can be found in previous issues of "Dawn" news bulletin which is produced by ABSDF every two weeks. "Dawn" attempts to share information on the human rights situation, environmental issues, and other areas of concern. Your solidarity with us in our struggle is needed and appreciated.

"To live in harmony with the environment is the only hope for survival of the world."