

# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 1989

NO. 22

When you receive our News Bulletin...

Maybe you read our News Bulletin while having your morning coffee or tea.

or...

Maybe you read our News Bulletin while lying on your bed inside an air conditioned room or sitting on a big sofa, smoking a cigar or cigarette or pipe.

or...

Maybe you read our News Bulletin with your whisky or beer or a liqueur in your hand.

or...

Maybe you read our News Bulletin while dreaming about creating your own business.

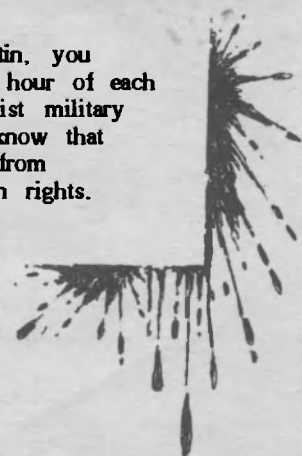
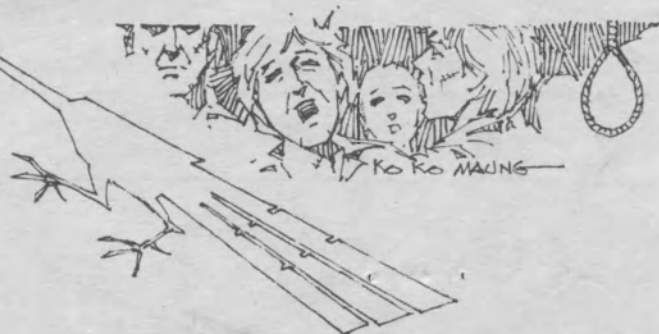
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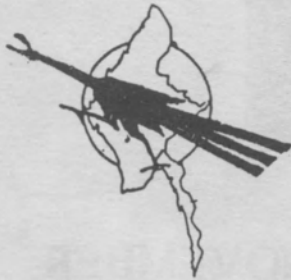
Maybe you read our News Bulletin seriously and think deeply about our situation.

or...

Maybe....

But whatever you are doing when you read our News Bulletin, you should be aware that every second, every minute and every hour of each day we are being killed, tortured and mistreated by the fascist military regime all over the entire country of Burma. You should know that while you are reading our News Bulletin, we are suffering from injustice, disease, and an acute hunger for justice and human rights.





# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE  
**ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT**

Vol. 1 No. 22

October

1989

### THE POOR

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#### SUFFER FROM OUR FAILURE TO TAKE ACTION

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron." Dwight D. Eisenhower.

#### PEACE IS IN YOUR HANDS AS WELL AS IN OURS

During the past year, Burma has opened its doors to foreign investors. Our natural resources, left almost untouched for so long, are now the envy of almost every businessperson, and every government which has an eye for quick profits. Rangoon's hotels are filled with these foreign investors, taking out their profits and leaving behind a small amount of money.

However, this money never reaches the children of Burma who suffer from cold, disease and no education. It never reaches the villages where people suffer and die from easily-treated health problems. It never reaches the universities, closed for over a year now, where young people await a proper education which will help them contribute positively to the land they love so much.

No, this money is used to buy guns, bullets, rockets and bombs to be used against the Burmese people.

Every time you fail to speak out when your government, or companies from your country, invest in Burma, you fail to speak out on behalf of those Burmese children who are suffering and dying because there is no food or medicine available. Every time you turn a blind eye to what you are responsible for, the life of the Burmese people is further threatened and peace and justice become even a more distant dream. Every gun which money from your country helps buy, every rocket purchased because your country has taken the natural resources of Burma, is a theft from those who hunger, those who are cold and those who languish in prison.

Peace lies in our hands. If we do not take action, violence will win!

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

## EDITORIAL

### WHAT IS "FREE AND FAIR" ELECTIONS?

The Saw Maung military regime has promised the world that on May 27, 1990, free and fair elections will be held. Although a few countries have openly criticized this promise, many have adopted a "wait and see" attitude. For the Burmese people, there is no need to "wait and see"

It is true that the Burmese people may have little experience in democracy. For the past 27 years, there has been no democracy in Burma and no chance to fully participate in the choosing of leaders and representatives at all levels.

However, despite our lack of democratic experience, we do know that free and fair elections requires first of all free and fair campaigning. Without the right of the opposition to campaign openly, and to move about the country to meet with the people and discuss the political and economic situation with them, there can be no free and fair elections, even if every man, woman and child is allowed to walk to the polls on election day.

Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, two of the major opposition leaders have been placed under house arrest and will be prevented from running in the 1990 elections. Thousands of members and workers of the opposition parties have been imprisoned, and those that remain are not allowed to move about the country or to engage in campaigning. If the first step in free and fair elections - free and fair campaigning - can not be given to the people, then we must assume that the elections themselves will be nothing but a farce.

We call on nations around the world who truly love and understand democracy to look at the total process which the elections in Burma are following, and to speak out accordingly. We call for a total boycott of the elections, and a political/economic boycott of the Saw Maung government by

international bodies. An election built around a farce will create a democracy which is itself a farce. Prevention is better than an attempted cure which comes too late.

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### FROM CARE-TAKER GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKER GOVERNMENT

Saw Maung and SLORC have continually attempted to convince the world and the Burmese people that they are simply a care-taker government which will turn power over to an elected government following the 1990 elections. A care-taker government, as we understand it, is only temporary, and should not be making policies which have a long-term affect on the nation. It should simply take care of what already exists so that a government elected by the people can then begin planning the long-term policies for economic and political development.

Saw Maung and SLORC, however, have initiated development policies for exploiting Burma's natural resources and for opening the country up for tourism which will affect the country for generations to come. For example, at least 9 oil exploration contracts have already been signed with foreign countries with each contract good for 25 years. Other contracts in fishing and logging are also long-term endeavors. These policies have not been done in consultation with the people, nor are they a part of the development plan of a new, and freely elected government.

Saw Maung is operating as though he knows that he and his cohorts will win the elections, and will continue to run the country as they have for the past 27 years. They are once again proving that the 1990 elections can never be free and fair. On their own, they are destroying the country and the people, and thus should better be titled an "undertaker" government.

### We Will Return Home

We will return  
To bury Ne Win and his militants  
In front of the gate  
Guarded by two seated lions  
At the entrance of our mother university.

We will fly our victorious flag  
With the Fighting Peacock symbol  
From the spires of their parliament building  
Which they cherish more than the people.

Yes, we will return home!

Moe Thi Zun

## THE PA-OH

In several of the past issues of "Dawn" we have introduced some of the ethnic groups which make up a large portion of the population of Burma. In this issue, we will give a very brief introduction to the Pa-oh.

The Pa-oh are closely related to the Karen people. The highland Pa-oh live in Taunggyi and Loilim districts of Burma in an area of about 8000 square miles. (see map in "Dawn" issue #19)

They continue to adhere to their national traditions and culture despite continued attempts by the Burmese government under Ne Win to Burmanize them. The land which they occupy is a rolling high plateau, interrupted with a few high mountain ranges, stretching from the Kong Song in the north towards the Karenni border in the south.

The Pa-oh live on the Mother Earth and take good care of it. In their rudiment ways, they conserve the soil by rotation of crops and periodically leave portions of the land for animal grazing, enabling the droppings to scatter in the fields. They grow rice, wheat, garlic, peanut, potatoes and soy beans. Fruit trees flourish as well.

The lowland Pa-oh also raise cattle. The animals are domesticated, not for milk or meat, but for the soil of the Mother Earth. The cow dung and excretion of the animals are collected and heaped in a pit prepared for fermentation.

Leading a simple life, the dress the Pa-oh prefer is made from plain black colored material, preferably of high quality. Men wear a pair of pants, girdled at the waist, over a shirt on top of which is worn a jacket. The women wear a garment, a sort of camisole, under a smock-frock and over it is a cardigan of velvet or serge. Black or dark blue are favorite colors. Both men and women wear turbans of bold colors.

All lowland Pa-oh are cultivators, and therefore there is no distinction in class behavior among them. No one is hampered by any social discrimination.

Having faced oppression for many generations, the Pa-oh long for peace and self-determination. They have continually resisted attempts by the Burmese government to destroy their way of life, and have joined the National Democratic Front to work with other ethnic groups for the freedom to follow their ancient traditions and determine their own way of life.

From PA-OH PEOPLE by Mika Rolly



Burma is a land of rich ethnic diversity. Each ethnic group has a unique culture and history, and each group has the right to equal participation in building the future of our united mother land. Only when we work together in unity can Burma become a great nation.



## SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

Statement made by the Swedish delegate to the third committee of the UN's general assembly (20 November, 1989)

"There is today no worldwide momentum for progress in the human rights field. Even an isolated step of progress, however, is a piece of ground gained and helps to consolidate the forces of progress to the same extent that it weakens the forces opposed. There may, of course, be reversals. The Swedish government is particularly apprehensive of developments in Cambodia whose population, during the few years of Khmer Rouge regime, was exposed to massive slaughter and other cruelties. It is an indelible stain on the record of the United Nations that those events were ignored by the organization at the time. Today it should be made abundantly clear that the international community cannot accept a recurrence.

In Myanmar (Burma) violations of human rights have been widespread during the past years. The authorities are reported to keep a large number of political activists and other opponents under detention. Numerous observers claim that detections without charges occur frequently. We are informed that trials by military courts are conducted in a summary fashion, falling far short of internationally accepted legal standards. There is information on torture and summary executions. Other reports tell of cruel and inhuman treatment of people who have been arbitrarily rounded up and then used as porters by the army.

We have been informed that the government of Myanmar plans to hold parliamentary elections in May 1990. To our knowledge, several representatives of the opposition are still under house arrest on obscure charges. This fact as well as the conditions and limitations under which the opposition is supposed to carry out an election campaign are not conducive to the holding of free and fair elections. In order to convince the world of its ambition for an 'open door policy', the government of Myanmar will have to improve its human rights record considerably."

Statement by Mr. Sten Andersson, the Foreign Minister of Sweden, before the UN's General Assembly, 26 September 1989.

"There is a wide discrepancy between the human rights standards subscribed to by governments and the reality existing in many states. At the same time we are witnessing in many parts of the world the strength and vitality of popular faith in human rights and in democratic principles. This is true even when these rights and these principles are violently suppressed, as they sadly, not to use stronger words, have been in China and Burma this year."

"There are nine fundamental human needs: permanence (or subsistence), protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity (or meaning) and freedom.

Any fundamental human need that is not satisfied reveals a poverty: poverty of subsistence is due to insufficient income, food, shelter, etc.; poverty of protection is due to violence, the arms race, and so on; that of affection is due to authoritarianism, oppression and exploitative relations with the natural environment; of understanding, to bad quality of education; of participation, to marginalization and discrimination against women, children and minorities; of identity, to imposition of alien values upon local and regional cultures, forced migration, political exile, etc.; and so on.

LIVING ECONOMY, edited by Paul Exins

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## NEWS FROM INSIDE BURMA

During the 1988 uprising, almost every sector of Burmese society gave support and encouragement to the democratic movement. Now the SLORC is slowly and steadily taking revenge against these people who dared to dream of justice and human rights.

It has been reported that as many as 245 teachers, university lecturers and officials of the educational institutions have been punished for giving support to the movement. Among these was University Affairs Department Director U Kyaw Myint. Two faculty deans at Rangoon University, Chit Swe and U Khin Maung Thint have also felt the SLORC wrath.

Those government officials and teachers who had tried to stop the uprising were rewarded with passports to study abroad or with free tours to Thailand and other nearby countries.

A further development which may have a serious effect on students living along the border and inside Thai boundaries is the agreement between Thai and Burmese officials for the extradition of criminals on a case by case basis. They did not indicate what charges they would consider criminal, but the Thai authorities were immediately asked at the meeting to find and extradite two Burmese now hiding somewhere in Thailand. In October, the Burmese government charged two student leaders living on the Thai/Burma border with associating with rebel groups. It would seem that if the Burmese government wanted to force some student leaders to return to Burma, they could now charge them with criminal charges and request that the Thai authorities find and extradite them. We call on the Thai authorities to reconsider this agreement at this time as it gives the military dictatorship of Burma too much freedom to further exploit those who stand for democracy.

As 1988 draws to an end, the price of rice in Rangoon has finally fallen from 20 to 30 kyats per pyi to about 15 to 20 kyats per pyi. For the people of Rangoon, this is good news. However, if we look closer at the reason for the drop in price, we see that the farmers now must suffer even more. This is the harvest time in much of the countryside. Since they are so poor, they have to sell their rice to the government, even if the price is very low. They are not only selling all their rice to the government, but also are selling their cattle and

their farm equipment in order to get some money to survive on. Our students who visit villages along the Thai/Burma border often report this news to us. They say that the farmers are getting poorer and poorer all the time, and even though they are the producers of the food, they have not enough to eat.

This means that our country is entering a very dangerous time. In three or four months, the majority of the people in the rural areas will have run out of rice and money. They will have no chance to survive.

At the same time that the military government has lowered the price of rice, the price of other commodities continue to skyrocket. Their new "open door policy" can not benefit the people - not even the small private businessmen who do not have enough money to enter the new economic stream.

Most people do not trust the Burmese currency because in the past it has been demonetized so often. In order to try to protect their earnings, they will invest in land or gold because they never know when their paper money will suddenly be worthless. If they keep it in the bank, they have a problem when they want to withdraw it. Sometimes they are not allowed to withdraw the amount they want, and often they have to wait a long time before their withdrawal is approved.

People are also allowed to only buy a fixed amount of petrol at the government price of about US\$2.28 per gallon. If they need more, they must buy on the open market at a price of about US\$10 per gallon in Rangoon. In the countryside the price is double or triple this price.

Transportation in the country is also very bad. There are many restriction placed on the people by the military such as a 10pm to 4am curfew, a ban of any gathering of more than 4 people, military check points everywhere, etc. In this atmosphere, how can the Burmese people run a small business? How can they compete with foreign businessmen who come in to exploit the natural resources with little control on them?

Now the price of the kyat is once again being reset. The official price is 6.5 kyats per dollar, but the black market price is at least 65 kyats to the dollar. Inflation is thought to be at least 40%.

Only the military or their relatives can benefit from this "open door" economic policy, because they can control all aspects of the life of the country.

Many reports are coming from inside the country, that the situation now is very similar to March and June of last year. Groups of 50 or 60 students try to make demonstrations against the military every day. They suddenly appear on the road shouting anti-government slogans and then disappear as soon as the military comes. Many high school students join in these non-violent demonstration, sometimes even inside their school campuses or in their class rooms.

In one case, the students asked the teacher to take down the picture of General Ne Win from the classroom wall. The teacher said that was illegal, but then left the room. The students took the picture down themselves.

In another case, the students raised the Fighting Peacock flag in their campus and refused to, say who did it when the military arrived and demanded to know who was responsible. They also refused the order of the military and their teacher to take the flag down.

In one other case, the students began shouting the slogan "Every human must be a Ba-Ka-Pa (Burmese Communist Party), and every dog must be the Ma-Sa-La (Burma Socialist Party)" Most of the members of the old Burma Socialist Party are also members of the military.

Now, over 10,000 military troops are inside the city. People from Rangoon say that if you do not look carefully, you will not see all these soldiers. They are hiding very carefully. Many of them are especially hiding in the Mahabandula section of town which is the center of the city.

For the students, the situation is very dangerous. Most effective opposition political leaders have been arrested, and now the military tribunals are looking for every students leader, or anyone who shouts anti-government slogans and demonstrates. If they are caught, the military tribunals will sentence them to death, life imprisonment, or hard labor without giving them the right to a fair trial. For the past five months, foreign journalists have been banned

from the country so that they will not see and report these violations of human rights.

Every week, about 150 Burmese leave the country legally. Most of them are university graduates, and many are specialists such as doctors, teachers from the universities and other skilled professionals. Many of them are hoping to get jobs as seamen with foreign shipping companies. Even though this job pays a low salary, it is one of the most popular jobs for people from our country.

Another report from some hotel staff members in Rangoon says that San Dar Win, daughter of Ne Win, and her husband Aye Zaw Win, have begun a prostitute business for the foreigners who come to Burma for business. Burma is not like Thailand. There are no massage parlors, no brothels, and no bars. The people are very religious and most of them want to live peacefully and quietly. Now the military is trying to destroy our culture and our people.

Many people also report that there are problems within the military. It seems that many military officers dislike Bri-Gen Khin Nyunt, (secretary of SLORC) because he is very junior to most other military officers, but now is one of the most powerful men in the military. He is second only to Ne Win. Even Ne Win has become angry at him occasionally because his barbaric ideas appear in the world press and discredit the country. Some of these cases are the Moe Thi Ha case ("Dawn" #15), the 500 porters used by the military and then killed ("Dawn" #16), and the hijacking ("Dawn" #19).

People suspect that something will happen before the general unfree and unfair elections to be held the end of May 1990. As the people face more difficulties such as lack of food, unjust arrests and sentencings etc., they become more and more angry, and this anger must break open soon.

The working people, the students and the ABSDF believe that the military must immediately solve the internal political problems and bring about an end to the civil war. If they do not quickly solve these problems, there will be a strong reaction from the oppressed students, working people, and indigenous groups in the very near future.

### MILITARY TRIBUNALS

Bohmu Aung - sentenced to 20 years in prison.

U Ye Tun - sentenced to 19 years in prison

The conditions that produced those riots (in 1988) are not just still there. They are worse."

(a quote by a foreign diplomat in Rangoon reported in The Economist, November 18, 1989)

# ACTION

## Free and fair elections require:

- ( ) An immediate end to the civil war
- ( ) Withdrawal of all military troops back to their barracks
- ( ) Immediately end the curfew
- ( ) Release all political prisoners and students
- ( ) Provide for a free press and the right for the people to freely assemble
- ( ) Allow people of all ethnic groups to participate freely and fully in the elections
- ( ) Dissolution of the SLORC
- ( ) Dissolve all military tribunals





# ALERT

## WRITE LETTERS TO:

General Saw Maung  
SLORC Office  
Rangoon, Burma

Ask that he:

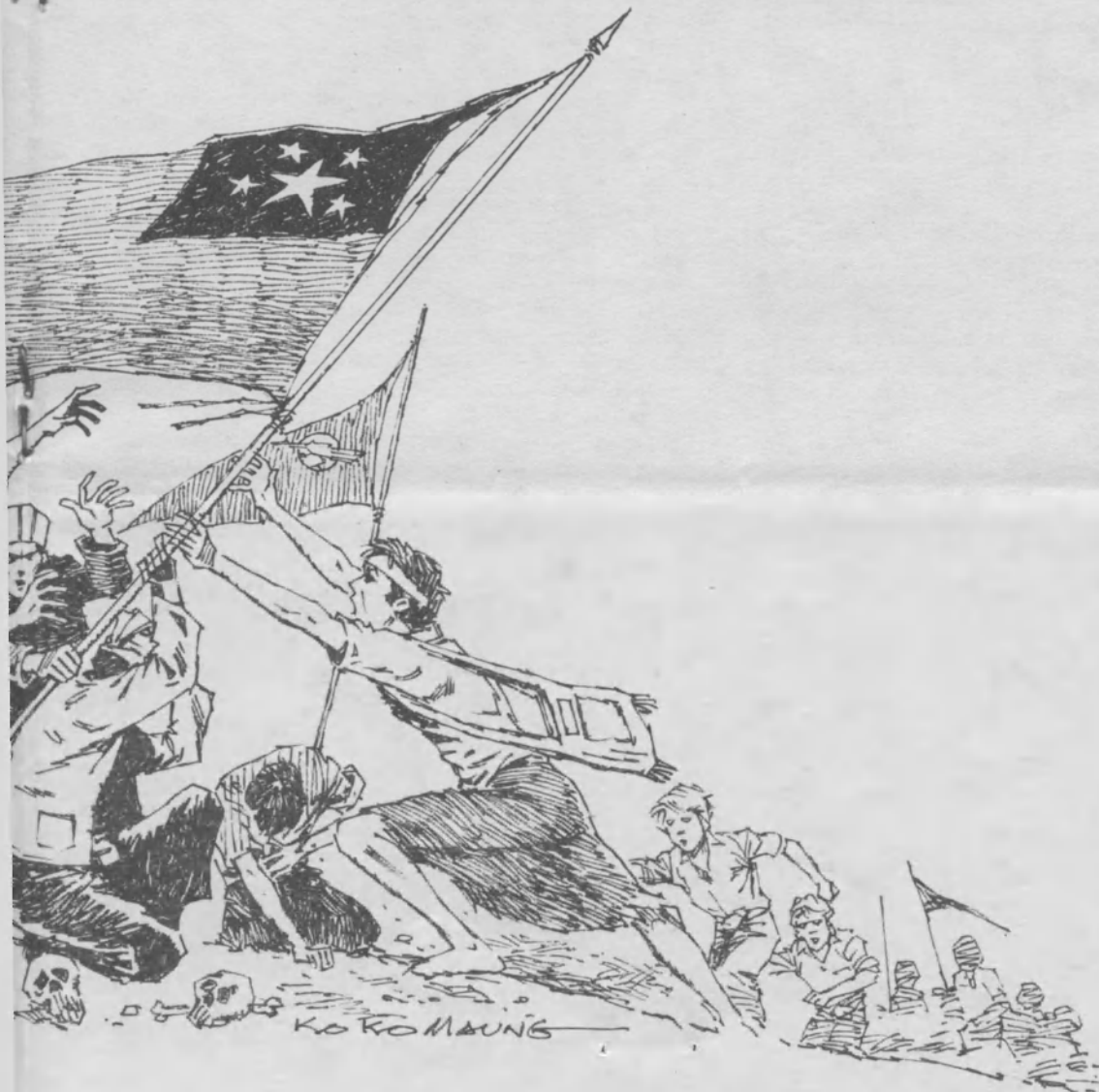
- () Immediately end the civil war
- () Immediately release Aung San Suu Ky, U Tin Oo, and all political prisoners and students
- () End military tribunals
- () End martial law
- () Provide free press and the right of assembly to the people

## WRITE LETTERS TO:

Gen Chatichai Choonhavan  
Government House  
Bangkok, Thailand

Ask that he:

- () End Thailand's economic support to Burma until after a democratically elected government is established and all present economic structures reviewed
- () Look carefully at Thailand's policy towards the Burmese students along the border, especially those cases in which students are being forced back into areas controlled by the Burmese military
- () Put pressure on the Saw Maung military government to free all political prisoners and students, end the civil war and give the Burmese people full human rights



## HWEZEDI CAMP

Hwezedi camp is located in the Karenni area across the border from Mae Hong Son Thailand. In September of this year, the camp was attacked by the Burmese military and several of the students killed. They fled into Thailand and established a new camp near Mae Hong Son. Now, they are facing eviction from this camp. Following is a brief report which they have made concerning their situation.

"After hundreds of students, workers, peasants and monks were gunned down in the streets of Taunggyi (capital of the Shan State) during the democratic anti-military demonstrations, and following the military coup in 1988, students and civilians began leaving their homes to seek ways to continue their struggle for the restoration of democracy in Burma. Our flight from the repressive military took nearly three weeks as we roamed through the deep forests, up and down the Shanyoma mountain ranges and forded the creeks and the Salween river. Most everyone suffered malaria along the way, and even some of our friends gave up their lives in this thick jungle far from home and family. Finally we arrived in the Karenni revolutionary area where we could rest and recuperate.

Shortly after arriving in the Karenni area, we organized ourselves and formed a student camp which we named Hwezedi. Later, when all of the students along the Thai/Burma border held the first meeting in November 1988 at Kawmura, we became one of the members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front under the banner of the Fighting Peacock.

The Karenni welcomed us into their area warmly. We were supplied with rice and temporary shelter, and later we built our own bamboo dormitories. Presently about 250 students occupy the camp under the leadership of Richard, a final-year veterinary student. Most of us are from Taunggyi in the Shan State.

Life has been difficult, but we continue to keep our spirits strong and never give up our aspirations for restoring democracy in our mother land. Now, about 50% of our food and medical needs are met by international relief groups and religious groups. This assistance is important to us.

Malaria is one of the big enemies which we must

face. In the university we once learned about the "3 ms" of colonialism which are malaria, mines and military. Now we understand what those mean and they stand as a constant warning to us.

We often go with the Karenni revolutionaries to the villages deep inside Burma to help teach the children and to give some medical care to the people. We try to help the villagers in every way we can and provide some protection to them from the Burmese military. The people have suffered a lot. So often they are forced to serve the Burmese military as porters and as human mine sweepers. The women face rape and disgrace from these soldiers. For over three decades they have had to live under this humiliation.

In the middle of September this year, the Burmese military suddenly attacked our student camp. They moved in on us in two columns. One column came from the Salween river, and the other moved in from the Thai side of the border. We were caught, and unable to defend ourselves effectively. Three students, J.P., Dolbiya and Deko sacrificed their lives in that attack.

The rest of us were finally able to flee across the border into Thailand where we set up a new camp next to a Karenni refugee camp. Here we continue to help the Karenni people. We have opened a school for the Karenni children and try to provide some medical help to the people.

With a deep memory of the tears, sweat and blood which our friends, and relatives have shed, we will never give up our dream of democracy for our mother land. We, too, must be willing to give up our lives so that future generations might be free."

### The Bloody Record

Though covered with white lime,  
The new history of Burma  
Written with our blood  
Will be read for eternity.

Moe Thi Zun

## VICTIMS OF HIGHER POLITICS

On the 20th of November, 1989, Mr. Maung Ann, age 21, died of a serious mine injury to his leg. He was from Hwezedi camp.

More than 2 months earlier, the Hwezedi camp had been attacked by the Burmese military. The military used at least 500 porters to carry their supplies into battle. More than half of them were reported to have been killed, and some foreign photographers have seen the decomposing bodies of a few of the unfortunate victims of the Burmese military's brutality.

Following this attack, the students fled into Thailand and established a new camp near Mae Hong Son.

In the first week of November, Thai immigration officers came to this new camp and ordered the students to move off of Thai soil by the 18th of November or face arrest as illegal immigrants. Since the old camp inside Burma was still occupied by the Burmese military, it seemed an inhuman act by these immigrations officials to force the students back. Perhaps some high political agreements had been worked out.

Consequently, a group of students made a trip back to the area to see where the camp could be

relocated. As they were nearing the area, an explosion suddenly broke the calm of the jungle. When the dust cleared, Maung Ann was lying on the ground shouting in agony. His hands gripped his thigh where blood was spilling out. A land mine, set by the Burmese military had taken a victim.

The students tried to rush Maung Ann back to the Thai border since they had no medicines to stop the bleeding and ease the pain. However, he died on the way due to severe blood loss.

Such a bitter experience is not new to the Burmese students. It is already etched deep in our minds. Many of our friends who were among the 374 students repatriated through the Tak repatriation center were killed by the military regime once they were back in their mother land. This repatriation program was set up following a visit by Thai General Chavalit in December 1988 to Burma. Again, high political games resulted in the death of innocent students even though they protested their repatriation through a hunger strike.

We do not like being used as pawns in these chess games. Life is too precious. Politics should protect life, not destroy it.



The Hwezedi camp near Mae Hong Son Thailand where the students took refuge after their camp inside Burma was attacked by the military, killing three of the students. Now they are being forced to leave this camp and return to their old camp inside Burma which is still occupied by the Burmese military. Their fate is very uncertain now as they become victims of "higher politics".

## DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE

The rains are over and the cold season is moving in. The winter season brings on a new set of problems to the students. Lacking enough blankets and warm clothing, they will suffer from the cold in the jungle camps and malaria will increase. However, these are minor problems compared to the dry-season offensive which the Burmese military will certainly launch against the student camps as well as against the ethnic minority villages.

According to a report in the *Bangkok Post* of November 28, between 3,000 to 5,000 Burmese troops have been transported to areas along the Thai border during the past week. Many of these have been placed in military camps near Mae Sot Thailand which means that they may attempt new attacks against Pha Lu and Wan Kha, as well as possibly attacking Thay Bow Boe student camp. The Burmese operation is code-named 443 Operation and is headed by Col Aung Thein.

These dry-season campaigns not only signify a threat against the Burmese students taking refuge along the border, but are also a serious threat to ethnic villagers in the area. The Burmese military is well-known for its policy of forcing villagers to serve as porters and human mine sweepers. When the Burmese military begins to move into an area, villagers flee in terror, many crossing the border into Thailand to escape this new form of slavery. If those arrested by the Burmese military have enough money, (US\$400 to \$700) they can bribe their way out. The brutality of Burmese military policy can be seen by viewing those who flee across the border into Thailand for safety. It is not only the young, able-bodied men who flee, but also old men, young women, pregnant women and even children. No one is safe, and this is one of the many reasons why the Burmese people dislike and distrust the military government so intensely.

This dry-season offensive which will probably result in terrible destruction of the homes and lives of the villagers living in the area, and new hardships for the students, is possible because the Burmese military has been able to collect desperately need cash from the selling of teak wood, fish and other natural resources in Burma. Without money Saw Maung can not mobilize his army to attack the people. With money, he can fairly well do what he pleases.

This situation emphasizes once again the need for our international friends to seek every way possible

to prevent their country and their companies from investing in Burma. If an effective international boycott had been initiated last year, this dry-season offensive would have been impossible. Now it is becoming a reality, and prevention is no longer a possibility.

We can not emphasize this point too much. We need your actions to help isolate Saw Maung politically and economically. We need these actions so that Burma will not have to suffer more civil war. We need these actions because they are crucial to bringing about a non-violent solution to the problems facing our country.

We seek peace for our land, and we seek your solidarity in making peace a possibility.

### ACTION-ACTION

Economic boycotts are still an essential part of our non-violent struggle for justice, peace and human rights in Burma. Please join with us to boycott Coca Cola, oil companies investing in Burma, logging and fishing companies and all other companies from your country which have begun supporting Saw Maung economically (see past issues of "Dawn" for names of many of these companies)

Actions you can take include:

- 1) Publicly announce your support for these boycotts through the mass media, stating your support also for the non-violent struggle in our country.
- 2) In some cases, especially for Coca Cola, you can organize boycotts on university campuses and in shopping centers.
- 3) Help us do research on the companies from your country which are investing in Burma. To carry out a struggle without good information is like walking through the forest in the night without a light. We need your help. Please join with us.



## OPIUM IN BURMA

The Golden Triangle is known world-wide as a major opium-producing region. Burma, along with Thailand and Laos, is home for this famous triangle. Although major efforts have been initiated over the years to stop, or at least slow down, the production of opium, it continues to flow from villages high up in the mountains to drug dealers all around the world. Of the three countries which make up the Golden Triangle, Burma produces the largest amount of opium. Attempts to eradicate the poppy fields which flourish here have not only proved to be ineffective, but have also brought many new hardships on the Burmese people.

"In 1988, Burma produced over 1,200 tons of raw opium, which is nearly half of the world's supply and 20 times more than is needed to supply U.S. heroin consumption. The United States has provided over \$80 million in anti-narcotics assistance since 1974, but opium production has continued to expand. Burma's estimated opium production increased nearly 270 percent between 1985 and 1988 despite U.S.-supported efforts to eradicate opium-producing poppies and to interdict raw and refined opium." (Report from the United States General Accounting Office, September 1989)

The assistance which the US has provided the Burmese government to fight drug production includes 28 helicopters, 6 fixed-wing transport aircraft, and five Thrush spray aircraft. The Thrush spray aircraft are used to spray herbicide 2,4-D over the poppy-growing areas. Switzerland has also been involved in this program. From 1975 to 1978, the Pilatus Company of Switzerland delivered 7 PC-6B2/H2 Turbo Porter aircraft to the Burmese Air Force.

According to some international media, and to reports from inside Burma, these aircraft are often used in the government's fight against the ethnic minority groups rather than to fight drug production. The helicopters are used to transport supplies and troops to battle areas, or are sometimes used for reconnaissance and photography missions over ethnic areas. It was recently reported in the Thai press that Burmese military aircraft were allowed to use Thai airspace in order to photograph the border areas under the control of the ethnic groups as well as student camps. It could not be confirmed whether or not the aircraft used for these missions were those supplied by the US for the anti-opium program.

Between January 1979 and April 1980, the Pilatus Company delivered at least 16 PC-7 Turbo Trainers. "The Pilatus PC-7 Turbo Trainers are used

at this time for training and operations against insurgents. Sent in a non-military model, they have been equipped with arms after arrival in Burma," stated Paul F. Hatch in the respected aviation journal Interavia.

The herbicide 2,4-D is a major component of Agent Orange, a herbicide used widely by the US in Vietnam. It is reported to have caused death to a high percentage of the people in areas where it was sprayed heavily, as well as severe deformities in children born to women who were affected by the herbicide. In Burma, the Thrush spray aircraft often fly at high altitudes when spraying the poison in order to avoid being shot at by insurgents and villagers. Thus the herbicide not only falls on the poppy crops, but also on villages, the villagers themselves, as well as their rice and fruit crops.

Bertil Lintner, a Burma expert who writes for the Far Eastern Economic Review wrote after spending 18 months in regions targeted for the anti-drug campaign, "Endless people have ailments related to the spray. I found 12 cases of elderly women, who traditionally cultivate the poppies, who had died or been infected after spraying. Younger people vomit or say they have acute nausea. I visited one 20-hectare field that a DEA Turbo-Thrush had sprayed 50 times, completely poisoning the area."

In September of 1988, following the brutal suppression of the democratic movement in Burma by General Saw Maung, the US suspended all of its support for the opium eradication program. However, the aircraft remain in the hands of the Burmese military, and with the present military campaign to eliminate all opposition groups in the country, these aircraft will certainly be kept busy.

As Gen. Saw Maung continues in his attempt to destroy the ethnic minorities and to wipe out the student camps, opium production in the country continues to increase. Total acreage cultivated for opium poppy increased from an estimated 175,000 acres in 1985 to an estimated 290,000 acres in 1988. (GAO report) If the Saw Maung government were truly concerned about this issue, they should stop their attacks against minority groups and villages, and instead concentrate on helping these villages develop new productive crops with good marketing. As it is, those villagers who grow the opium are extremely poor, and the attacks by the military against their poppy fields and against them physically create even more poverty and anger. There can be no solution to this problem because the present military government has no interest in ending it.

## ECONOMIC NEWS

Thai International Tour Co plans to operate charter flights to Burma in February next year.

The first flights will operate between Chiang Mai Airport and the ancient Burmese capital of Pagan.

The price of a package tour of Burma is high at about \$100-120 per person per day.

The company also plans to join the Burmese Government in building a hotel in either Pakyan or Taung Yi provinces, probably next to a lake.

Bangkok Post, November 28, 1989

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Between October 3 and November 17, seven companies signed production-sharing contracts with the State Myanmar (Burma) Oil and Gas Enterprise, and two more contracts are expected to be signed before the end of the month.

Each company has to invest between \$5 million and \$8 million for its contract, and with up to ten companies set to sign, Rangoon stands to make more than \$50 million from the transactions.

The oil potential of Burma is estimated at three-five billion barrels.

Companies which have already signed contracts are South Korea's Yukong Ltd, Dutch Shell Exploration BV, Japan's Idemitsu, Petro-Canada, Amoco and Unocal of the USA, and Britain's Croft Exploration. Australia's BHP is expected to sign soon and Britain's Kirkland is also planning investments.

Bangkok Post, November 25, 1989

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The local Thai-Burmese Joint Coordinating Committee has agreed to propose to its Burmese counterpart the setting up of a body to coordinate economic and trade activities at the border.

The proposed body would comprise representatives of the private sector, provincial councilors, local public-private sector coordinating committee representatives and the provincial chamber of commerce chief.

Bangkok Post, November 24, 1989

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The Communications Ministry (of Thailand) is planning to trade a fleet of 1,000 used buses for Burmese teak.

The trade is expected to be very beneficial to Thailand given the current shortage of wood for local construction.

The Nation, November 20, 1989

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Thailand is becoming a nation of brewers. Following the announcement of two new breweries on Thursday, details have been released of Thai investor setting up beer production ventures in Burma and Laos.

Pattara Thurakit Co Ltd has received agreement in principle from the Burmese government to conduct a joint brewery, while sources say another Thai business has been granted a concession in Laos.

Bangkok Post, November 20, 1989

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A cattle market at Phothong in Mae Sod district, Tak province, seems to be a very lucrative business at present, especially with the growing flood of cows from Burma.

Most of the cattle at Phothong are brought over from Burma.

Cattle from Burma are illegal because they do not have certificates of sale, which give the merchandiser's name and a description of the cow. So the buyer must bribe officials at Baan Hua-bong, Mae Sod district, Tak Province (Thailand), giving about 100 baht to 200 baht for each trip he makes on the return to Thailand.

At Phothong market, cows to be sold are tied up to poles, often as many as 2,000 of them.

The Nation, November 19, 1989

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## VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

While the military destroys life, the members of ABSDF are engaged in saving life.

On November 21, 1989, four students from Three Pagoda Pass camp 102 successfully delivered a baby girl to a local village woman. They are Myo Aye, Aung Zay Ya, Chit Pwe and Nynn Lin Aung. None of them are medical students, but they are received some medical experience and training after their arrival at the camp a year ago. According to a letter from the students, the mother and baby are both healthy and strong. The baby girl whose weight was 7 lbs 1 oz was named Ma Su Su Moe.

Camp 102 has one medical student, but this student was out visiting villages and giving health care to the peasants there which is a part of the strategy of the ABSDF. Thus these four students had their first experience in delivering life into this world.

Even though there is a shortage of medical workers, medicines, blankets and food, the students share what they have with the oppressed villagers.

We welcome Ma Su Su Moe to this world. We pray that she will have a chance to grow up in an environment of peace, that she will have enough to eat, have a good education and good health care. We sincerely pray that she will have a happy childhood as all children require, and we pledge ourselves to the struggle to make this all a reality. We do this for the sake of Ma Su Su Moe, and all the other children whose future now is so uncertain.



### HOPE CAN NOT BE DESTROYED

After a fire sweeps the forest  
The bleak landscape reflects  
Hoplessness  
Fear  
Grayness.

Scattered among the charred stumps  
The bodies of fallen creatures  
Great and small  
Tell of death.

Where in all of this  
Can hope and peace lie?

Then a small shoot appears  
Heralding new life.  
Its energy thrusts it above  
The destruction and death  
To bring about new  
Hope  
Happiness  
Color.

Hope can never be silenced for long.  
Not even by a military tyrant!

Nyien Chan

