

# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

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

Vol. 1 No. 24

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1989

### **1989 COMES TO AN END**

### **WELCOME TO 1990, A YEAR OF HOPE**

#### **1989 - a year of sadness and of hope.**

- 1) Thousands of our comrades inside Burma remain in prison, and many more have disappeared.
- 2) Leaders of the opposition parties who heralded a new hope for Burma have been placed under house arrest, imprisoned or otherwise eliminated from the political arena.
- 3) The hope for free and fair elections has crumbled into dust.
- 4) More and more foreign companies have invested in Burma, feeding the coffers of a military dictator who has no respect for the lives and well-being of the Burmese people.
- 5) Burma's rich natural resources, the heritage of all the people of Burma, are being sold off at an alarming rate to profit-hungry governments and companies who care nothing about the hope and happiness of the people of Burma.
- 6) Several more camps have been over run by the Burmese military, and students and villagers have had to flee for their lives once again.
- 7) Universities throughout the country remain closed, depriving the youth of an education which is essential to the future of the country.
- 8) ABSDF has met many new friends and supporters.
- 9) The second ABSDF conference has been successfully held, with qualified leadership elected to lead the group through 1990.
- 10) People all over Burma have gained a deeper understand of how the military dictatorship works and why united action is needed to bring peace and justice to the country.
- 11) ABSDF has faced many problems and conflicts during the past year, but has made much progress in overcoming them and developing the total organization.
- 12) Many of the students have begun moving out of the camps and into the villages where they can live with the people and provide much needed services in health, education and development.

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

## LET JUSTICE BE THE LIGHT WHICH GUIDES OUR PATH THROUGH 1990

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With this issue, "Dawn News Bulletin" becomes one year old. We wish to thank all those who have supported us during the past year with financial gifts and helpful suggestions. We will continue to try to improve "Dawn" during the coming year, and hope that through its pages our readers will gain a better understanding of our struggles and our dreams.

We wish each of you a very successful 1990. May it truly be a year of peace, justice and improved human rights throughout the world.

### 1990 - Our hopes and dreams

- 1) It is our hope that our international friends will see the need to involve themselves more courageously in pressuring their governments and companies to boycott the military regime so that there will be less bloodshed in our motherland.
- 2) It is our hope that, like Romania and Czechoslovakia, the Burmese military will finally choose to stand with the people in order to establish true democracy which will benefit all the people of Burma.
- 3) We dream of enlarging the health and educational work in the villages so that fewer of the children will have to suffer so much.
- 4) We hope and believe that 1990 will be a year in which peace comes to our land and the prosperity of the people will start to grow.
- 5) We dream of a Burma in which all ethnic groups will be able to live together in peace, and together develop the country so that all benefit equally.
- 6) We dream of a Burma in which children no longer suffer from hunger and fear, when they no longer spend much of their time in bunkers and hiding out in the Angles. We dream of a time when these children will finally know what the word "peace" means.
- 7) We hope that during 1990, the peasants will be able to harvest their rice in peace, and will be able to eat the fruits of their labor.
- 8) We hope that this year, our friends who now languish in prisons will be freed and can return to their families.
- 9) We hope that during this year truly free and fair elections can be held under the guidance of an interim government, and that a government elected by the people and willing to serve the people will finally sit in our parliament building.
- 10) Above all, we hope and dream that the poor and oppressed all over the world will gain new courage and strength in their struggles for justice and human rights, and we pledge ourselves to this struggle.

"I hope that on my dying day I will be able to say that, even when I stood alone, I had the courage to do everything I could for justice to prevail."

# THE 1988 UPRISING REVISITED

## CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS RELATED TO THE 1988 UPRISING

5th Sept. '87: In an order signed by Sein Lwin, the Secretary of the Council of State, 25, 35, and 75 kyat banknotes are demonetized without compensation, wiping out 80% of the country's money in circulation.

500-1000 students go on a rampage in Rangoon (RIT & RASU) protesting this demonetization.

6th Sept. '87: The government closes down all universities and colleges. Students in Rangoon who come from up-country are bused back to their homes.

14th Oct. '87: The Pyithu Hluttaw, or parliament, approves the 5th Sept. demonetization. New 45 and 90 kyat banknotes are going to replace the invalidated 25, 35 and 75 ones.

26th Oct. '87: The educational institutions re-open.

29th Oct. '87: The UN recommends "least-developed country" status (LDC) for Burma.

2nd-3rd Nov. '87: Students at the regional college in Sittwe, Arakan State, demonstrate and shout anti-government slogans.

7th Nov. '87: Students from the local Ye Zin agricultural college and veterinary students in Pyinmana, Mandalay Division, demonstrate against the government and burn portraits of Ne Win.

11th Dec. '87: The UN's General Assembly approves LDC status for Burma. IMF figures show that Burma's foreign exchange reserves have fallen to US \$28 million.

December '87: Sporadic disturbances are reported from the Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) and threatening letters are sent by the underground student groups to the police in Mandalay.

## 1988

2nd Feb: The state-run radio announces that cooperatives, and private Burmese citizens, will be allowed to export rice and broken rice.

12th Feb: "The goal of the socialist economic

system is to build a new and prosperous society...the party, the state machinery and the class and mass organizations are to strive to win the cooperation of the indigenous people in carrying out these tasks," president-San Su says in his Union Day speech.

7th March: A bomb explodes outside the Czech Embassy on Prome Road at about 9:30 pm. Aung Gyi, retired brigadier-general, writes an open letter to Ne Win, suggesting economic reforms and a new cabinet.

12th March: Some students from RIT clash with local people at Sanda Win teashop in Gyogone West Ward, a Rangoon suburb. One RIT student is injured and the culprit arrested.

13th March: The culprit is released and about 200 RIT students march down to the local People's Council officer to protest. Lon Htein riot policemen clash with the crowds. One student, Maung Phone Maw, is shot dead and an estimated six to seven more students die from gunshot wounds a few days later.

14th March: RIT students distribute leaflets on other campuses in Rangoon, condemning the brutality of the Lon Htein and the demonstration on 5th Sept last year.

15th March: Troops enter the RIT campus and the government issues a communique, blaming the students for the unrest. Scores of RIT students are arrested.

16th March: Students from Rangoon University's (RU) main campus march down Prome Road towards the Hlaing Campus and RIT. They are blocked by the Lon Htein as well as regular army units near Inya Lake. Approximately 200 students are killed. Troops enter RU.

17 March: Thousands of people rally outside Kyandaw monastery for Maung Phone Maw's funeral, just to find out that his body has already been cremated secretly elsewhere. The government announces that it is setting up an Inquiry Commission to look into the cause of his death, but it does not mention the other casualties. The RU Students' Union is formed at a meeting on the main campus. About 1,000 students are arrested and sent to Insein Jail north of the capital.

18th March: Thousands of students march down to Sule Pagoda in central Rangoon and are joined or cheered on by thousands of others. Army units -the 22nd, 66th and 77th LIDs- are called in. Thousands of protesters are arrested. Scores of people are killed by the Lon Htein as well as by the army. The day becomes known as "Bloody Friday" and Sein Lwin, the commander of the Lon Htein, as the "Butcher of Rangoon." Schools and universities are closed down.

27th March: "While constructive tasks are being carried out under BSPP leadership, disruptive elements, both above ground and underground, are resorting to all sorts of disruptive acts to hamper the progress of the people," Chief of Staff Gen. Saw Maung says in his speech to the Armed Forces Day parade in Rangoon.

11th April: Ne Win and his entourage leave for West Germany and Switzerland.

9th May: The government-appointed Inquiry Commission states that three students were killed during the March riot, 625 arrested and 141 are still in custody. Aung Gyi writes a 40-page open letter to Ne Win, reiterating the need for economic reforms.

10th May: Amnesty International publishes a 71-page report saying that the Burmese Army is responsible for summary executions, torture and rape in the frontier areas, and for forcing villagers to act as porters and walk ahead of troops as human mine-detectors during campaigns against ethnic insurgent.

26th MAY: Ne Win returns to Rangoon from his trip to Europe.

30th May: Schools and universities re-open with an attendance rate of about 30%. Anti-government leaflets begin appearing on all campuses. The students who have been released from Insein Jail return with tales of torture, beating and electric shock treatment. There are also reports of girl students having been raped by Lon Htein men while in custody.

8th June: Aung Gyi writes one more letter to Ne Win, highlighting the economic and political crisis, and human rights abuses in March.

(to be continual in the next issue of "Dawn")

From OUTRAGE, by Bertil Linter



These logs await transportation into Thailand. They were cut in an area inside Burma near the Three Pagodas Pass crossing. Some of the teak logs are over 6 feet in diameter.

There are now reports that many of the logging companies who bought concessions inside Burma are having difficulties. Ethnic groups who control the areas in which the concessions are, have been demanding payments in addition to that demanded by the Burmese government.



It is also reported that The Burmese government is coming under pressure from Greenpeace environmental group and other environmental groups, and may cut back on the logging concessions they have been selling.

This is evidence that your support is very helpful. We request you to keep up your protests against this logging. It is very important for peace in Burma.

# DATA ON BURMA

From FEER, 1989

	BURMA	THAILAND
AREA (000 sq km).....	675.5.....	513.1
% Cultivated.....	15.....	47.4
% Forest.....	47.....	29.1
% Pasture.....	2.....	8.1
POPULATION		
Total 1988 Cm).....	41.1.....	54.7
% Average Annual growth " 80-" 87.....	2.1.....	2.1
Projected year 2,000 (m).....	51.6.....	66.4
Urban population as % of total.....	24.....	17
Death rate per 1,000.....	13.....	8
Birth rate per 1,000.....	34.....	29
Want mortality per 1,000.....	103.....	52
% Under 15 years.....	39.....	36
Life Expectancy.....	53.....	64
STUDENTS		
Primary.....	5.06m.....	7.1 m
Secondary.....	1.36m.....	2.0m
University.....	211,493.....	180,556
WORKFORCE		
Total (m).....	15.8.....	28.7
%Manufacturing.....	7.6.....	11
%Agriculture, fishing.....	64.....	58
SOCIAL		
Persons per hospital bed.....	1,502.....	744
Persons per doctor.....	3,668.....	5,568
Literate rate (%).....	81.....	86
Length of railways (km).....	4,466.....	3,735
Length of paved highway (km).....	3,200.....	147,000
PRODUCTION & PRICES		
Per capita income C 87, US\$).....	190.....	881
(Japan pa` capita income.....	20,833)	
Agriculture as %GDP.....	27.9.....	15.9
Manufacturing as %GDP.....	10.7.....	24.1
PUBLIC EXPENDITURE		
Central govt, expenditure (US\$b) 1987.....	3.7.....	9.6
Defense as % budget.....	20.7.....	15.5
Education as % budget.....	11.....	16.5
FOREIGN TRADE		
Merchandise exports (US\$m) 1987.....	300.3.....	11,693
% food and farm products.....	41.....	40.2
% metals and minerals.....	7.....	3.9
Merchandise imports (US\$m)		
198 7.....	644.....	13,111.4
198 8.....	585.....	17,600
Service receipts (US\$m)		
Tourism 1986.....	5.5.....	1,481
1987.....	6.33.....	1,962
Number of visitors 1987.....	41,904.....	3.4
Foreign reserves (US\$m).....	68.8.....	5,304
Public foreign debt (US\$m).....	4,400.....	12,175

# INDEPENDENCE DAY?

## STATEMENT CONCERNING BURMA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY JANUARY 4, 1990

The Central Committee, on behalf of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), make this declaration for the 43rd Anniversary of Burma's independence which will be on January 4, 1990

when the Burmese people freed themselves from the yoke of British colonialism. On this day we would like to analyze carefully whether or not the Burmese people actually share in the fruits of this independence. Are they really free? Are they sharing the benefits of the country which is rich in natural resources and fertile lands?

Since the 2nd of March 1962 when Gen Ne Win staged the coup de etat, the Burmese people have, instead, lost their independence and have fallen again into the hands of the Fascists who make slaves of their own people. There is no freedom of speech, no freedom of assembly and no freedom of press. Corruption, abuse of power and violations of all human rights are rampant. The military regime has also intensified the civil war against the ethnic minorities who seek only for autonomy and self-determination. Nearly 80% of the national budget is used for this civil war. Due to the misuse of the "Burmese Way to Socialism", the Burmese people must suffer bitterly from inflation, scarcities of necessities and high prices of basic commodities.

This has resulted in the Burmese falling into the status of Least Developed Country. It can be said that the past 27 years of military rule is the dark ages for Burma.

The political volcano which has been sealed up for 26 years, erupted once again in March, August and September of 1988. Thousands of students and monks and civilian all over the country took to the streets and demanded democracy and human rights. During the demonstrations, they usually carried the portrait of Bogyoke Aung San, the Father of the Independence of Burma. They chanted the slogan "Unless we get independence through peaceful means, we will fight". This is a quote from one of the speeches given by Bogyoke Aung San. But the brutal military regime responded to the people's

demands with bullets. Burma, the land of Pagodas, became soaked with the blood of nearly 8,000

students, monks and civilians. If you look at the history of the struggle against British colony rule, you will see that only student leaders Bo Aung Gyaw and the 17 Martyrs of Mandalay sacrificed their lives due to the suppression of the loyalist police who supported the British. Compare these two incidents and you can see how much more brutal and corrupt this military regime is! Actually, it is a genocidal regime which kills its own people.

On the 18th of September 1988, Gen Saw Maung used the military to seize the power of state and ignored the people's demands for the formation of an interim government. The dream of the people for democracy was shattered into pieces.

On this 43rd anniversary of Burma's independence, the Burmese people are living in a terrible condition of fear, threatened daily by the military intelligence forces. Nearly 4,000 political dissidents and students activists are imprisoned and have been tortured in inhuman ways. Political activist of opposition parties are harassed by the regime. What is the meaning of independence in Burma when the people are treated in this way? The Burmese people have never been free. But it is certain that the Burmese people will never give up their struggles. We will continue our struggle for our 2nd Independence by sacrificing their blood, tears and sweat.

We appeal to all the Burmese people and the Democratic forces to:

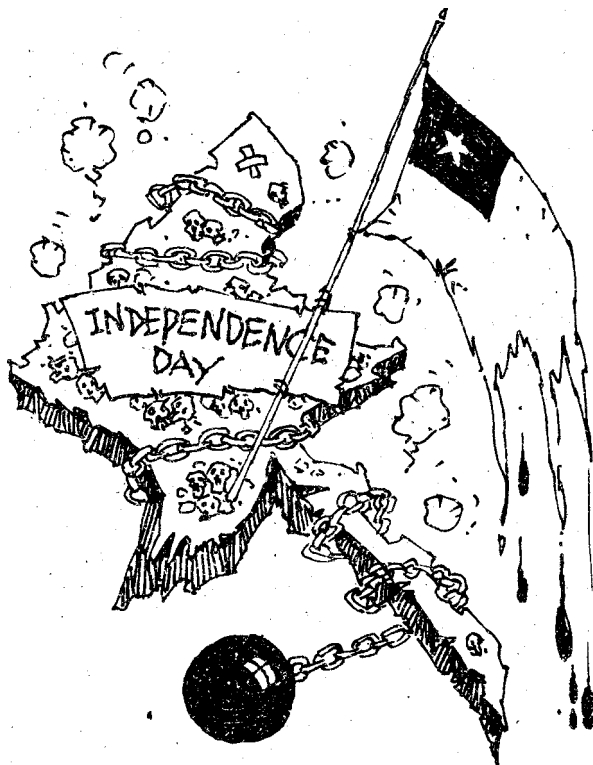
1. continue the struggle in unity for democracy, human rights, justice and peace in our country until we are successful.
2. organize and participate in civil-disobedience against unlawful and unequal orders and laws issued by the SLORC which is not the lawfully elected government of the country.
3. demand an immediate end to the civil war, the formation of an interim government, and the convening of a National Assembly in order to bring about internal peace and stability.

We also appeal to all democratic governments,

friends and organizations around the world who believe a peaceful world is possible to:

1. support the struggle of the Burmese people for freedom, peace, justice and democracy in creative and practical ways.
2. avoid any relationship with the military regime which abuses the power of the State for their own benefit at the expense of the common people.
3. demand the withdrawal of all economic investments from Burma by both private and government companies until there is true freedom and democracy in Burma.
4. boycott all commodities product by these companies if they refuse to withdraw their investments immediately from Burma.

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Central Executive Committee  
AH Burma Students' Democratic Front  
December 28, 1989



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## CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF ABSDF

The second conference of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front attended by representatives from all student camps, selected the following 22 members to be on the Central Committee.

Ko Moe Thee Zon.....(Chairman)  
Dr Naing Aung.....(Vice-Chairman)  
Ko Kyaw Kyaw.....(General Secretary)  
Ko Thiri Nyunt.....(Joint-General Secretary)  
Ko Aung Htoo.(Secretary for Politics and Organizing Committee)  
Dr Thuang Tun.....(Foreign Relations Committee)  
Ko Khin Maung Win.....(Information and People Relations Committee)  
Ko Sun Lin.....(Supply Committee)  
Dr Kyaw Thet Oo.....(Health Committee)  
Ko Mun Tun.....(Finance Committee)  
Ko Hla Htay.....(Inspection Committee)  
Ko Yu Nwe.....(Judge Committee)  
Ko Tun Oo.....(Security-Committee)  
Ko Ko Oo. (Joint-Secretary Political and Organization Committee)  
Ko Kyaw Kyaw.....(Foreign Relations Committee)  
Ko Tun Thein.....(Information and People

Relations Committee)  
Ma Thet Thet Lwin.....(Supply Committee)  
Ko Tun Myat Thu.....(Health Committee)  
Ko Aung Hein.....(Finance Committee)  
Ko Maung Maung Gyi.....(Inspection Committee)  
Ko Than Win.....(Judge Committee)  
Ko Kyaw Htin.....(Security Committee)  
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We wish Ko Moe Thee Zon and his team the wisdom, unity and energy needed to lead ABSDF through 1990. The task is not an easy one, but with the right kinds of international support, and with hard work and cooperation from all ABSDF members, much can be accomplished in the struggle to bring peace and human rights to Burma.



## ABSDF 2ND CONFERENCE

The Second conference of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front was successfully held from November 9 to December 3 of 1989 at Minthamee Camp in Burma opposite Kanchanaburi Thailand. It was attended by 59 representatives from 13 student camps which are situated in Karen territory, Mon territory, Karenni territory, Pa-O territory and Kachin territory. Central Committee members elected in the first conference, invited honorable guests and observers also attended the conference.

During the conference, annual reports of the respective camps, the territory committees and the Central Committee were submitted. These were reviewed and unanimously adopted by the conference. Political stands, organizational lines, future working programmes, and amendments to the constitution of the A.B.S.D.F. were also adopted. Rules and regulation of the A.B.S.D.F., election laws and penal laws were promulgated. Petitions submitted by various groups and individuals were discussed and acted on. Then the new Central Committee was elected for the term of the second conference by secret ballots.

The conference held a brief ceremony in honor of U Soe Myint, a representative of Ye Kyaw Camp, who expired during the conference due to malaria at the Sankhala missionary hospital.

On November 12, 1989, General Saw Bo Mya, chairman of the D.A.B. and the K.N.U. arrived at the conference and freely and frankly discussed with the representatives the support of the D.A.B. and the K.N.U. to the student movement.

During the meeting, we emphasized our stand on the ethnic minorities and their revolutionary movements for autonomy and self determination. All the representatives agreed that the struggles for tire basic rights of the minorities are just, and we continue to fully support those struggles. Hie conference recognized the five principals proposed by the National Democratic Front which is basically needed for a genuine federal union. These principals are as follow:

1. to abolish the present unitary type of union and to form a genuine federal union based on the equality of all states. This will be composed of a central government and state governments.

2. to form a parliament composed of two parts...
  - (1) National parliament (senate) to which every state will have the right to send an equal number of representatives.
  - (2) People's parliament (congress) composed of congressmen elected on the basis of state population.

The Joint meeting of both houses is the highest authority of the state.

3. to share the power between the central government and the state government.

The Central Government will have the authority to manage the ministries such as Defence, Foreign Affairs, Communications and Transportation, and the printing and distribution of bank notes, etc.

4. to establish a multi-party democratic system,

5. in each state, the state government will be formed by a fully democratic election process and the state government will apply the administrative system of self-determination.

A.B.S.D.F. will continue to play a key role as mediators among all democratic factions in the process of forming a genuine union which will lead to the unity, stability and prosperity of future Burma.

We decided to promote mutual understanding and good will between the A.B.S.D.F. and all ethnic minorities to strengthen the united front and to continue our struggle in hand with ethnic the revolutionary forces.

During the discussion on political trends, we decided to adopt a "National Politics " stance. We analyzed that the political problems in Burma are rooted in the contradiction between the handful of military dictators and the entire oppressed people of all classes and nationalities. So our movement should not be based on the state of one social class, one political ideology ("ism"), one religion or one nationality. So it is correct and practical to adopt a "National Political Stand" aimed at forming a broad united national front composed of all classes, all nationalities and all peoples of various ideologies who are opposed to the military dictatorship, in order to settle our national problems collectively.

During the conference, the representatives expressed

their views on the elections promised by SLORC to be held in May of 1990. All the representatives agreed that the elections will not be free and fair due to the deteriorating conditions in Burma and increasing oppression on the registered political parties by the SLORC. The coming elections are not a feasible outlet for the oppressed people who are demanding democracy and human rights. It is only an outlet for the military regime to gain recognition and economic support from other countries. All the representatives agreed that the military regime is simply trying to play a political game by which they can establish a puppet government which can be totally controlled by the Burmese Army. So all the representatives decided not to recognize the elections

which will be held by SLORC. All accepted that genuine democracy can be achieved in Burma only by the following process:

1. cease fire of all armed forces,
2. holding a national convention attended by the representatives of all the political parties and the ethnic groups,

3. formation of an interim government,
4. the drafting of a new constitution which will guarantee the democratic rights and human rights of all people including the rights of the minorities,
5. free and fair elections convened by the interim government.

The democratic education programme, rural development programme and self-reliance programme were discussed in detail. We also decided to intensify the work of organization and the mobilization of the people and adopted the strategy and tactics of the movements of the A.B.S.D.F.

All are determined to continue our struggle in various ways until we achieve genuine democracy and internal peace in Burma.

Central Executive Committee  
All Burma Students' Democratic Front



Out-going Chairman, Htun Aung Kyaw (left) shakes hands with new Chairman, Moe Thi Zun during the 2nd ABSDF conference held in Minthamee camp.



Delegates from all ABSDF camps along the Thai/Burma border share in discussions on the future strategy of the ABSDF, and look into the future to the new Burma they are committed to building.

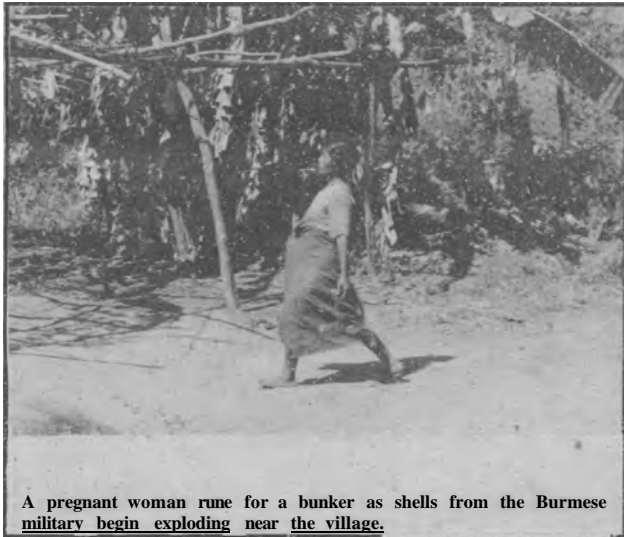
## REFLECTIONS AFTER ONE YEAR

In the early morning, the sun slowly rises like a brilliant ruby over the tops of the mountains, stretching the shadows of the trees across the harvested rice fields. The mist hangs low, protesting the warmth of the sun's rays as they break through the night's chill. Once again the earth flows to file in a cycle of wakefulness and sleep which has patiently, and unchangingly ruled over this land for time untold. It is a new day in the southern region of Burma.

The music of laughter comes from voices both large and small, gathered around a small fire to ward off the night's discomfort. The day's work must be started, for the rice harvest needs to be threshed and stored.

The people move through the village and the fields as they have for decades, feeling at complete ease in this setting of natural beauty. They are farmers. They were born of this soil and this toil, and they belong here. They know the whims of nature, and with this knowledge they live in harmony and peace with all that surrounds them.

They have, perhaps more than the so-called modern world, found peace, happiness and fullness with their lives. They are the simple people who never sit in seminars to discuss politics with intellectual arrogance, or speak in self-defined eloquent terms of socialism, capitalism, democracy, despotism, federalism and a host of other 'Isms' which the present fashion



A pregnant woman runs for a bunker as shells from the Burmese military begin exploding near the village.



The early morning sun breaks through the mist rising from the freshly harvested rice field. A new day has dawned in Burma.

dictates. They have no idea what these terms mean, and are looked upon with sympathy and paternalism (and sometimes scorn) by those who think the knowledge of these "isms" demonstrates intelligence and relevance. Yet, in their simple relationships with each other and their natural environment, and with the experience inflicted on them by those who place virtue on knowing, understanding, and manipulating these "isms", these peasants perhaps understand clearer and deeper than all others what is reality and truth, and what the future must be like for justice, peace and human rights to flourish. They should, indeed, be the teachers to lead us into the future.

Yet this land which they love so deeply, and which sustains and nourishes them, has no peace. It has been made into a battle ground by a handful of men who wish to control through manipulation and fear. Its soil is defaced daily by the disruptive explosions of artillery shells, mines and bombs which this handful of manipulative men can purchase because the leaders from some other countries and some rich businesspersons care nothing for these people, but care only for money with which they think they can buy happiness. Thus, the people who live in peace end up being the victims of this greed, and their land which gives them their happiness and their daily life, becomes the fields of slaughter for the sport and egotism of those few who wish to be a god over others. The rest of the world sits brooding in silence, involved in their own narrow lives and trying to close their ears to the cries of suffering and pain



The first education children receive is how to run to a bunker and how to hide from in-coming artillery.

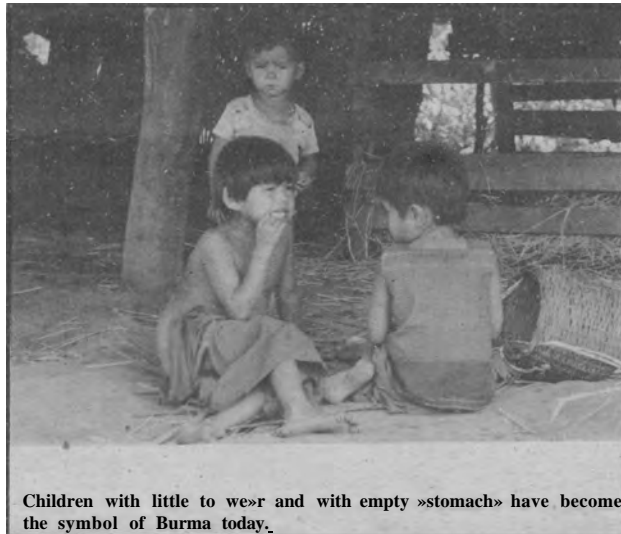
which they would prefer not to know anything about.

But the cries cannot be silenced, for they are the cries of the suffering people all over the world. They are the cries of the people who could probably lead the world into a more sane and just future. They are the cries of the God who created a world that was once good and filled with peace and justice. They are the cries which will one day drown out the blaring silence which the rich, the intellectuals, the comfortable and the blind do-gooders try to surround themselves with.

The world one day must know that the lives of these simple people, living far from the glitter and flash of modern society, are much more valuable and precious than all the condominiums, hotels, fancy cars, stylish clothing, consumer goods, university degrees, golden bank accounts and cheap thrills which can be built over the blood, sweat and tears of the poor and oppressed. One day the world must realize that the blood of these distant villagers flows just as red as that of the most worshiped movie idol, and that God tastes the bitterly salty tears which flow from the eyes of the hungry and terrified, and weeps with them even when the rest of the world celebrates with their eyes and ears closed. It is indeed a truth that when one of the poorest of these villagers suffers injustice, each person in the world too suffers from that injustice, and that is why each and every person is responsible and must listen and act.

You cannot sit around your table and comfortably enjoy a sumptuous meal while one of these small children suffers hunger, for that small child is your child. You cannot spend money on expensive and fashionable health products while people in these villages suffer and die from a multitude of treatable diseases, for these people are your brothers, your sisters, your fathers and mothers. You cannot sit in comfortable rooms discussing this suffering intellectually while your country supports, in any way, the purchase of weapons to harm and kill these people, for you are then supporting the harm and death of your own family. There is no middle ground in this relationship. With your actions you stand on the side of the people, or you support the forces of violence either through your action or through your inaction. Every minute wasted as you hesitate to act upon those issues for which you are responsible means another minute of suffering and death for these people who remain the victims of the powerful and the uncommitted.

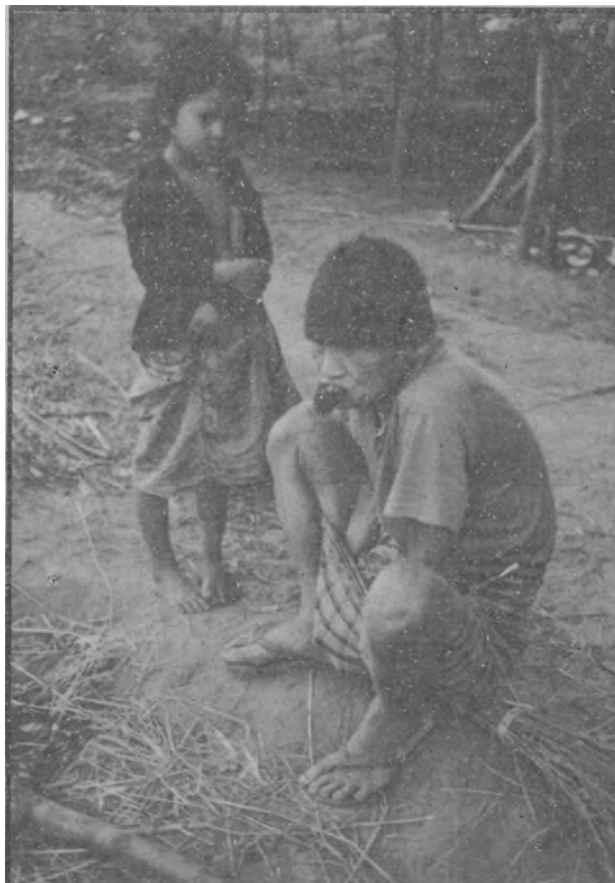
The forces of violence move relentlessly and rapidly, using every minute of our hesitation to their own good advantage. Every minute we sit silently while others suffer, we must be responsible for. Every bit of money which flows from our country into the hands of a dictator which he can use for the oppression of the people is our responsibility. Every child which must learn how to run to a bunker before he can learn to read or write, is an indication that we have moved too slowly. Wars never end by discussing theories. Wars end when people take action at the right time, at the right place, in the right way. Peace and non-violence are active endeavors which can only be successful when we are willing to sacrifice and suffer in harmony with the poor and oppressed



Children with little to wear and with empty »stomach» have become the symbol of Burma today.

The eyes of those who have suffered through so many years of fear and danger tell us what we must do. The lives of the young who have just begun their pilgrimage in this world lead us to the kind of commitment needed to carry out this task. These eyes, and these lives do not plead with us to send vast sums of money, to build universities, to bring in modern development or to organize international discussions to analyze them inside and out. Rather they plead with us to stop the flow of money used for more guns and shells which destroy their land and their lives. They plead with us to change our own power structures which aid and abet their suffering. They plead with us to stand up in open, opposition to every act which destroys their lives and dignity. They simply call us to be responsible for that which we are a part of. If we fail to do this, for whatever reason, we fail to heed the voices of the oppressed, and that means we stand against them.

The sun rises and sets over these villages in southern Burma. Every sunrise and every sunset brings more experiences of pain and agony to the villagers who struggle to survive here in these fields of slaughter which, at times, stand so peaceful and calm in the morning mist. The same sun rises and sets over your homes and families. Each time you see the sun rising and setting, think about those things you wish for your children, for your brothers and sisters, for your parents and relatives. The people in these villages have the same wishes for peace, happiness, prosperity, freedom, and dignity. Never forget, they are a part of your family too. Your peace and happiness depends on their peace and happiness. Together we can halt the progress of the forces of evil, and give birth to the smile of peace.



The future of these members of our family it a responsibility we can not close our eyes to. When we have helped the least of these, we have stood with God



To live in peace with ones neighbors; to harvest the crops and enjoy the fruits of the harvest; to know that the children will have enough to eat, clothing to wear and medical help when needed; to know that the nights rest will not be interrupted by the explosions and death of incoming artillery - these are the simple New Year's wishes of the peasants. May 1990 bring them these few dreams.

## A SPECIAL TRIBUTE

On January 4, as Burmese government officials were celebrating Independence Day, (and the rest of the Burmese people continued to suffer from the lack of independence), Ms. Yi Yi Tun passed away. Her poem and part of her story were printed on the last page of "Dawn" issue. #20.

"Dawn News Bulletin" would like to thank all our readers who sent letters and cards of encouragement to Ms Yi Yi Tun. Your

consideration and concern was much appreciated.

Ms Yi Yi Tun was indeed a committed person to the struggle for peace, human rights and justice in our motherland, and her life and struggle will continue to give us encouragement and hope for many years to come. She was an example which will help light our pathway to freedom.

Ms Yi Yi Tun died on the 4th of Jan 1990. She had completed her B.Sc (Physics) and was attending the International Foreign Language Institute in Rangoon where she was learning the Chinese language in the first year.

During the 1988 pro-democracy uprising in Burma, she also took active part in the demonstrations. After the military brutally cracked down on the democratic struggle on the 18th of Sept 1988, she fled to the Thai-Burma border. She arrived at Three Pagodas Pass in the Mon revolutionary area on the 10th of Oct 1988.

After the formation, of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front on 5th Nov 1988 along the Thai-Burma border, she worked in the Three Pagodas Pass at Nam Coat camp No.101 as an office worker, served as a member of the Audit committee in the camp and make food for the students who got malaria and other diseases.

Unfortunately, in the early weeks of February 1989, she got sick. Even though medical students from her camp tried to treat her, her condition did not improve. On the 18th of February 1989, she was sent to the Mission hospital at Win Ka Town in Thailand. However, there was still no improvement and doctors from the Mission hospital said she had cancer and could not be treated in their hospital. Therefore, she was sent to St. Louis hospital in Bangkok on the 4th of April 1989. After one month treatment, she was better than before. But they went to the hospital for regular checkups and treatment once every three weeks. Later she increased her visits to the hospital, every two weeks, and finally every week. Her condition began to worsen. At last the doctors and nurses gave up hope for her. One month before her death, she could not breathe easily, could not eat orally and she was confined to her bed.

During the time while she was suffering from cancer,

she was injected with a lot of medicines. After that, she could not flex her fingers. Still she tried to hold a pencil and write some poems and letters to encourage her comrades in the camps. Some of her poems expressed her deep feelings especially, "The Last Time" and "The True Feelings Deep Inside my Heart".



What makes us very sad and moved is that she never said "I want to see Ah May, Ah Pe and Nyi Ma Lay", (her mother, father and her sister) until just before her death. Instead she always said, "I will go back to my motherland together with my comrades after we get human rights and democracy in Burma".

On the 4th of Jan., at 10pm, she moaned, " Ah May, Ah Pe and Nyi Ma Lay". At that time, some students and even some foreigners were beside her bed and they cried. They cried because Yi Yi Tun expressed the real feelings of all of us. Even though we left our families because of military brutality, we never forget our parents and relatives. It can not, however, be our first priority. Our first priority is to restore our basic rights, freedom and democracy in our country.

She died at 11:18 pm in St. Louis Hospital in Bangkok while struggling for democracy and human rights in Burma. She did as much as she could do for our country. She held on to her beliefs strongly until she died. We will never forget her sacrifice for the country and we will never give up our struggle until we die.

We salute Ms. Yi Yi Tun.

## FOR WHOM THE WAR RAGES

Recently, General Bo Mya, leader of the Karen National Union, sent an open letter to General Saw Maung of the ruling military junta in Rangoon. The letter said in part:

"The Karen people have to go on waging the revolutionary war up to this day, because on all these occasions the governments in power, instead of settling the problems rationally, always forcibly demanded...unilateral surrender. The experiences of 40 years of civil war have proven beyond doubt that the civil war, which is basically a political problem, cannot be settled by military means.

It has consistently been the conviction of the KNU that the most correct and suitable means of achieving its political goals is the settlement of the civil war politically, in a just and rational manner.

If SLORC misinterprets our present action as an indication of weakness due to some political or military problems, and steps up military offensives, then the KNU will be left with no alternative but to continue the revolutionary war of resistance, hand-in-hand with the oppressed people of all the indigenous nationalities, for the achievement of full democratic and human rights, the restoration of national unity and the establishment of a genuine federal union."

This is not the first time the KNU, as well as the other ethnic groups and democratic forces have called for a peaceful settlement of the present civil war. Yet every time the response from the military government has been an increase in military attacks against the people.

During a recent visit to Thailand, Brig-Gen. Maung Hla who is in charge of Burmese military operations against minority groups along the border with Thailand said that Rangoon is determined to wipe out minority rebels. A SLORC spokesman, Lt-Col Ye Htut confirmed this official stance by stating, "we shall continue to fight them (the ethnic groups) until they are eliminated."

You may wonder why the military regime is so determined to militarily wipe out these ethnic groups rather than negotiate with them for a political and peaceful settlement. Brig-Gen. Maung Hla perhaps gave the clearest answer in a statement to Thai Maj-Gen Somchit Boontnap who is chief of the border coordination center of the Thai side. Brig-Gen.

Maung Hla said, the ongoing suppression operations aim to bring about peace at the Thai-Burma border to facilitate joint economic and social development. How soon this objective will be achieved depends on Thailand's understanding of Burma."

What does this mean? Thailand has received at least 40 logging concessions from the Burmese military regime, and many of these are in areas controlled by ethnic groups. Many of the companies who have gotten these concession have direct and indirect connections with Thai influential military leaders. To eliminate the ethnic minorities from these areas would free up all of these concession areas which would be economically beneficial to both the Burmese military regime and the Thai companies, especially those with connections to the military. Thus the minorities are being eliminated for the economic advantages of those in authority and power positions. In this kind of situation, a political and peaceful solution to the civil is an "impossible dream".

The cooperation between the two militaries is sometimes astonishing. In late December, as the Burmese military prepared to launch an attack against the Karen Phaloo camp, Burmese field commander Col Maung Maung Ohn proposed that two five-man, Burmese teams be posted inside Thai territory in order to monitor the fighting when Rangoon launched attacks against Phaloo and Kaw Moo Ra. Maj. Gen Somjit Boonyasap declined to say if permission was actually given, but when Phaloo was attacked, about 500 Burmese soldiers entered Thai territory in order to attack the camp from the rear. One unconfirmed report even said that Thai military trucks were used to transport the Burmese military to the area. It was because of this attack from the rear that Phaloo was overrun by the Burmese military.

A Nation newspaper report on December 30 suggested that the assault on Phaloo was possibly launched in order to clear a passage for a Thai logging firm, Sirin Technology Co Ltd., to remove logs it had felled in several Karen-controlled border areas. The Thai language paper, Poojatgam says that the owner of Sirin Technology enjoys close ties to high military officers.

The Burmese government is now clearing mines from the area and plans to resettle Burmese there, thus cementing their control over the area. They

have stated that they will clear out the entire area opposite the Thai Mae Sot province in the near future.

The struggle along the Thai/Burma border, thus seems to be an economic one. The Karen, Mon, Karenni, Pla-o and Shan who have lived here for many generations are being forced out so that other people can make profits off of the rich resources in their areas. The civil war can end, if all sides truly wish to see national reconciliation. However, there are those who care more for money in the pocket than for justice in the land, and so the civil war will continue and will grow. Who will cry out for... justice?



An aerial view of Phaloo camp. The Burmese military launched their attack from inside Thailand on the left side of the photo.

## SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS



A dozen representatives of the Asia-Pacific Students Association (ASA) Thursday night staged a protest outside the Dusit Thani Hotel where the Burmese Embassy held a reception for its expatriates and the diplomatic corps to observe its 42nd Anniversary of independence from Britain.

The students from Burma, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand and other countries in the region, waving placards and banners demanded that an interim government be set up in Burma and that it be

allowed to organize free and fair elections in the country.

ASA also demanded that the Saw Maung regime stop "prostituting" Burma's natural resources and concentrate more on people-interest projects. (Nation, January 6, 1990)

ABSDF appreciates this sign of support from these representatives of ASA. We hope that this kind of cooperation can continue.





## **WHEN PEOPLE STOOD UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE**

For the past year, "Dawn News Bulletin" has been trying to inform friends from around the world what is happening inside Burma. It has not been an easy task. Military dictators are very clever in covering up their deeds of injustice. Collecting news, therefore, requires a lot of patience and hard work.

However, the images which still remain fresh in our minds of the 1988 democratic uprising, give us the determination to continue with this work.

In 1988, hundreds of thousands of people stated their desire for democracy by marching peacefully in the streets. The crowds were made up of young children, old people, the educated and the uneducated, the skilled and the unskilled. All had the same dream, and all truly knew what it was they were marching for.

Even though we can no longer march peacefully through the streets, or meet together to discuss our dreams and wishes, we still hold on to the desire for democracy and peace. We will never give up this dream, for it is a just dream.

We hope that all of our international friends will also never forget the images of our 1988 uprising. May it also give you the courage and wisdom to keep supporting us in the struggle. Together, we can win, and then the world will become a little bit better, and a little bit more just.

"Dawn News Bulletin" staff

## ABSDF PRESS RELEASES

### Press Release Concerning the House Arrest of U Nu

The Central Executive Committee, on behalf of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, strongly condemns the recent house arrest of the former Prime Minister U Nu and 13 of his political party's other members by the SLORC.

We would like to give the SLORC a warning that they must bear responsibility for all their illegitimate, unjustified, and oppressive behavior which will never silence the voices of the people.

We also suggest that anyone who is interested in economic and trade relations with the military regime should take this opportunity to withdraw their agreements before getting more deeply involved with this corrupt military government which covers the true and terrible realities of present Burmese society by putting up a false beautiful facade which seems to attract the international community.

We demand that you withdraw all economic and trade relations with the military regime which cannot bring any benefits to either you or the Burmese people.

We urge all people who want to support the just struggles of the Burmese people, to take political action against the military regime on January 4, 1990, which is the 42nd anniversary of Burma's independence from British colonialism. Together we can build up the struggles of the Burmese people for

### MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO THE NATIONAL SALVATION FRONT. ROMANIA

On behalf of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, the Central Committee would like to express support for the revolution against Nicolae Ceausescu and for the Romanian people's struggle for democracy.

We can understand very clearly the desire of the Romanian people for freedom and democracy, and we appreciate the efforts of the leaders of the National Salvation Front to stand on the side of the people.

We support this struggle because the people of Romania and the people of Burma are both struggling for a similar cause - the end of the clannish rule by Ceausescu and Ne Win respectively.

In Romania, Ceausescu built up his own private security police, the Securitate, to ensure that he and his family could remain in power. In Burma, the Directorate of the Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI) serves the same purpose.

*For* years, Ceausescu managed to dupe the international community into believing that he represented a more "liberal" form of communism. The trick was to launch a foreign policy designed to impress the west. In this policy, Ceausescu openly criticized the Soviet Union, maintained diplomatic relations with Israel and sent a team to the 1984 **Olympics** in Los Angeles. But on the home front, the repression against the people was worse than in any other European country.

In Burma, Ne Win also conducted a foreign policy which pleased the West and thus made them "forget" about domestic repression. Ne Win pulled Burma out of the non-aligned movement in 1979 claiming that it was no longer non-aligned. He claimed that his army was fighting narcotics and thus got support from the US for this military effort when in fact his army was protecting drug traffickers such as Khun Sa. The DEA did not seem to mind that as long as Ne Win provided the American drug agencies with impressive statistics.

Consequently, Burma, the most repressive fascist state in Asia was seen as a friendly country in the same way that the equally repressive Romanian government got away with its human rights violations because the carefully orchestrated foreign policy pleased the West.

Now, in Romania, the people are very lucky to win this victory because the army sided with them against Ceausescu and his Securitate. Unfortunately this has not yet been true in Burma. The army still blindly obeys the orders issued by Ne Win and his DDSI.

However, we believe the same inevitable thing will happen in Burma sooner or later. When another uprising rocks Burma, the Burmese people expect the support of the Romanian people's support and solidarity because the final overthrow of the Ne Win regime is also going to be bloody. The DDSI will fight for its survival against the wrath of the people, just as the Securitate is doing today.

So we of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front now living along the Thai-Burma border, who fight against the Ne Win military regime for the

December 27, 1989

Mr Pong Sarasin  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Government House  
Bangkok, Thailand

Your Excellency:

The Central Executive Committee, on behalf of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, are very sorry to hear that you have already arranged to visit Burma to improve economic and trade relations in early February.

We appreciate the interests and efforts of your government to build peace and prosperity within your country and in the region. We support all efforts to build good relations between the peoples of different countries if it will mutually improve the lives of all the people. However to visit Burma at this time can only be seen by the Burmese people as a support for their bitter suffering under an oppressive military regime.

The Burmese people, who have lived under autocratic rule for so long, are now struggling for peace, democracy and justice. The State Law And Order Restoration Council, which is in fact an illegitimate government, seized state power without the consent of the common people and continues to oppress the people who show dissatisfaction with its policies and demand economic and military changes.

We are certain that the benefits gained from the economic and trade agreements which you will make with the military government of Burma will not benefit the ordinary people in Burma at all, and will, in fact, encourage the military regime to intensify its oppression of our people. These agreements will not bring stability and prosperity to your neighboring country, but will most certainly increase the civil war which is tearing it apart. This will have a negative effect on the situation in both countries.

Therefore we would like to appeal to you to cancel your visit and reconsider your country's relationship with the military regime in Burma. This you should do for the sake of the Burmese people who have already suffered so much. We further appeal to you to withdraw all of Thailand's economic and political support to this government Until the people can truly elect their own democratic government.

We are certain that you understand the very important role your government can play to help bring about peace in Burma. Thus we appeal to you to help pressure the Rangoon government to take steps necessary to build peace and democracy in the country according to the voices of the Burmese people.

May 1990 bring peace and prosperity to you and your nation.

To.  
Mr. Jiri Dienstbier  
Foreign Minister  
Foreign Ministry  
Czechoslovakia

25th December, 1989

Your Excellency:

We, the Central Committee of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front would like to strongly support the struggle of the Czechoslovakian people for freedom, and to give our full respect to you for the leading role of your government in the democratic rally for the society.

We still continue our struggle demanding the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma by seeking refuge on the Thai-Burma border as symbol of our belief that the desire of our people for freedom must one day be successful as it has been for your people.

The victory of your people is strong evidence of the people's power over any kind of oppression and that can help promote our peoples' belief in our movement as well.

Now, your government has achieved a great success and now has the chance to lead the people to bring about a new better society for the sake of the people.

We hope that you can support our struggle for democracy and freedom against the oppressive, military junta even as the previous government of your country had strong relations with the Rangoon delacto government through the selling of arms and ammunition.

May 1990 bring prosperity to your country.

Central Executive Committee  
All Burma Students' Democratic Front

ATTENTION

We have recently been informed that the Czechoslovakia government is planning to sell an airplane to the Burmese government. ABSDF strongly protests this kind of support for a the Saw Maung military dictatorship. We ask our friends to write to the Czechoslovakia government to request that, for the sake of peace and freedom in Burma, they reconsider this deal.

# THE REGRESS OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA DURING 1989

