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REVOLUTION IS NOT ABOUT VIOLENCE

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OPPRESSION IS VIOLENCE!

REVOLUTION

"Many people fear the word revolution. It brings visions of violence and bloodshed to their minds. In reality, revolution is not about violence. Revolution is simply the process of revolving power back to the people where it belongs. When any party, any military or any individual takes power into their own hands, violence has taken place and revolution is necessary. Power and participation belong to the people, and no one has the right to take monopoly control of these rights. When the people stand up to take responsibility for what belongs to them, a revolution is in process. For this reason, revolution must be an ongoing process. We must never cease our efforts to revolve power back to the people. Only through this continual struggle can violence be averted."

"Aung Mvien"

OPPRESSION

The story of violence begins with the story of oppression. Oppression is not always an overt act, but it is always an act of violence. The oppression children face when they do not have enough food to eat, or when their bodies shiver from cold because they do not have a coat, or when they live in fear are terrible acts of violence. The oppression of police states, martial laws, military tribunals, summary executions, and dictatorships are brutal acts of violence against a people who have the right to be free.

Oppression also takes the form of decision-making without the free and true participation of the people affected by the decision. It takes the form of arrogance and insensitivity to those who suffer and call for support. It takes the form of manipulation of the situation for personal gain of any kind. These too are terrible acts of violence even if done with good intentions.

We can never truly participate in revolution against these violent oppressions if we do not develop such a love for the victims of oppression that we become their servants rather than their leaders. When we truly side with the victims of violence, we listen to them with our full heart, and let them tell us what actions will help their revolution and how these actions should be carried out. If we demand the right to keep control of our supportive actions for the oppressed, we contribute to the violence which oppresses them.

The victims of violence know what they need and what they want. If we can not hear their pleas, but rather demand the right to do whatever we want, are a part of the problem rather than the solution (revolution) and thus we are a part of the violence.

Revolution or violence. Which side are you on?

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

ABSDF ON THE ELECTIONS

STATEMENT OF A.B.S.D.F. ON THE COMING ELECTIONS

PREFACE

We, the student representatives, at the Second Conference of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, discussed from political and legal angles, the elections scheduled for May 1990. Based on the reports submitted to the conference by our student camps, we came to the unanimous conclusion that the elections to be held by the military government can never be fair. Elections are but one of the many political problems that Burma faces today, and this statement is made to clarify the Front's stand.

I. POLITICAL ASPECT

A. HISTORY OF ELECTIONS HELD BY THE MILITARY CLIQUE

Since Ne Win came to power in 1962, the people of Burma have been subjected to repression and ruled with great injustice. A constitution was drafted in 1973 and elections were held the following year. The constitution that was drafted was merely a tool to ensure that the military retain its hold on power. In the ensuing elections, only the members of the Ma-Sa-La (the Burma Socialist Program Party) were allowed to run, and Bo Ne Win, who was then the chairman of the Revolutionary Council, became the president.

The elections to be held this May will be conducted without a constitution, and this being the case, the government that will be elected will have power in name only. Bids will then be made to draft another constitution -- one that will protect the military government and enable it to continue wielding power.

B. INTERNAL PEACE

Of the many political issues in Burma today, the main problem is internal peace. This is something that we must not forget. The flames of civil war have been raging on since the very first day of independence in 1948, and none of the successive governments have been successful in building peace at home. The civil war, which intensified under the Ma-Sa-La, is the key reason why our people are in deep trouble and our country bankrupt.

REASONS FOR INSURGENCY

The reason that the civil war has continued all these years is because of the reactionary policies of successive governments. A closer look at the policies will reveal that the interests of the entire people, including those of the minority national races, have always been ignored by successive governments. Reviewing the history of peace efforts in the country, it is apparent that political repression by reactionary governments led to the failure of two peace talks. In 1958, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League Government introduced the principle of "exchange arms for democracy" and thereby created a kind of superficial peace in the country.

In 1963, with the Ma-Sa-La regime in power, the military initiated another round of talks to put up the pretense that they were indeed in favor of peace. People held demonstrations nationwide in support of peace negotiations which, however failed because of the one-sided political repression against the ethnic minorities and also because the Ma-Sa-La was only in the game to make political gains. The true face of the military dictators regarding their reluctance to share power was exposed when they turned their backs on peace. The reason that they want to continue perpetrating the civil war by spurning peace is because the ruling military clique has benefited from the war. As the military dictatorship became stronger with war, democratic rights and freedom diminished for the people.

The question of peace in the country and the deprivation of democratic rights of the people cannot be dealt with separately. These are issues that must be resolved together and at the same time. The military regime has not tried to tackle these issues but is unilaterally planning to conduct elections -- a small part of the overall democratic process. This is but an attempt to further complicate the political situation.

The fundamental reason why Burma became one of the world's least developed countries while the people became impoverished under the Ma-Sa-La regime is because of the civil war. In the same way, it is also the civil war that has made the Saw Maung regime sell off at cheap prices the country's natural resources, such as minerals, timber and agricultural products so that it could prolong its

rule. As long as civil war rages on and peace remains elusive, people will continue to face poverty even if political facelifts take place in the country.

In the past 40 years, successive reactionary governments have resorted to violence and the use of arms to bring the civil war to an end. That this has been a futile exercise has been proven by history. The only way to achieve internal peace is by guaranteeing full rights to the entire people, including the ethnic national races. This being the case, the issue of building peace in the country and the problem of building a Union where all the national races enjoy genuine equal rights can be said to be an inseparable question. Repression through the use of arms and the fanning of the flames of civil war will hence only drown the entire people in a sea of difficulties. That being the case, the historic task of the entire population today is to strive for peace in the country.

Elections without peace in the country will not help save the people. Such elections will only be a tool to further the interests of the military regime.

C. POWER

That the military government will not give up power easily is obvious. Without fail, it will keep holding on to power either directly or indirectly through a sham government that it can manipulate or compromise with. The facts below show that the military clique will not transfer power because of the fate that awaits it if it loses power:

-- It continues to perpetrate the civil war and rejects peace.

-- All popular political leaders have been arrested under various charges.

-- Long-term commercial contracts have been signed with foreign firms.

In principle also, it has rejected an interim government because it means the temporary transference of power. The military regime that is reluctant to surrender power, even temporarily, will not even dream of giving up these powers on a permanent basis.

D. PATH TAKEN BY THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT TOWARDS ELECTIONS

1. The military clique has detained opposition and student leaders who dare to openly champion the cause of the people in defiance of the military clique. Several political parties have been declared unlawful associations.

2. The military clique, instead of building internal peace, has been perpetrating the civil war to annihilate the national races. This is to enhance the role of the military and to propagate the thinking among the people that the military is the saviour and protector of the lives and property of the people.

3. The military clique plans to set up a puppet government that it can control while continuing to promote the importance of the military by fanning the flames of civil war.

E. THE CORRECT PATH OF THE PEOPLE TOWARDS THE ELECTIONS

The key problem of Burma -- building internal peace -- must first be politically resolved, and efforts must be made to bring about an interim government acceptable to all overt and covert political parties and organizations. An interim government must convene a national convention attended by political leaders, well known personages, legal experts, and others to draft a new state constitution. After that constitution is approved by the people through a plebiscite, an election law based on that constitution shall be drafted and legislated for the holding of multi-party democratic elections. Such is the only path towards elections which can genuinely safeguard the interests of the people.

Since, at the moment, the Saw Maung government has done nothing to promote peace in the country or to form an interim government, the elections of 1990 to be held without a state constitution as a basis must be seen as they really are -- an attempt to cheat the entire nation.

II. FROM THE LEGAL ANGLE

A. ELECTION LAW WITHOUT THE CONSTITUTION

The Union of Burma Constitution drafted in 1947 under General Aung San's leadership was abrogated in 1962 by the Ma-Sa-La and the 1974 Constitution drafted by the Ma-Sa-La was dumped in the garbage heap of history by the people during the mass protests in 1988. There is no prevailing constitution in the country today. This being the case, how will the country be governed? How will the government be formed? Will the administration be unitary or will a genuine federal system be practiced? A constitution which has the answer to all these questions does not exist. Holding elections in the absence of a constitution to enact election laws is like building a roof of a house without the foundation and posts.

Saw Maung and his cohorts are not ignorant of this fact. They know about it. But they do not want to grant the rights which are the aspiration of the people or to give the rights to the national races. They do not want to, nor are they capable of, politically putting up a political magic show to prolong their rule and safeguard their accumulated wealth and luxurious lives.

B. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MASSES AND THE HIGHEST POLITICAL BODY

Different countries have different names for the representatives of the people and the highest political bodies. For example, the United States has the Congress; Norway, the Storting; Japan and Lichenstein, the Diet; Israel, the Knesset; Czechoslovakia and Switzerland, the Federal Assembly; Argentina and Brazil, the National Congress; Algeria, the National People's Assembly; China, the National People's Congress; Cuba, the Federal Republic of Germany, Thailand, the Philippines, and Bulgaria each has its own National Assembly and Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Sri Lanka, Sweden, England, Canada, Fiji, Finland, France, India and Malaysia have parliaments.

Section 65 of the 1947 Constitution, says "The legislative power of the Union shall be vested in the Parliament which shall consist of the President, a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Nationalities and which is in this Constitution are called 'the Parliament' or 'the Union Parliament.'"

Therefore under that Constitution, the Parliament represented the highest political body. But according to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma -- the law of the Ma-Sa-La -- the term "Parliament" was no longer used and was replaced by the term "Pyithu Hluttaw" or the "People's Assembly". Today, the Saw Maung military clique has followed Ma-Sa-La's lead in its usage of legal terms, and the Election Laws prescribed refer to the house as the "Pyithu Hluttaw".

C. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UNICAMERAL AND BICAMERAL

Many world nations, such as Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Fiji, France, the FRG, India, Ireland, England, Italy, Japan, the United States, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia practice a bicameral system. Austria, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, the FRG, India, Switzerland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and the others have separate representative parliaments for their ethnic groups.

Under the 1947 Constitution of the Union of Burma, our country had the Chamber of Nationalities, made up of representatives from all the races, and the Chamber of Deputies whose representatives were to be elected according to population. Although the 1947 Constitution was not able to avail full rights to the nationalities, it cannot be denied that the existence of the Chamber of Nationalities enabled the nationalities to protect their rights to a certain extent.

The 1974 Ma-Sa-La constitution ignores the role of the Chamber of Nationalities and only permits the formation of a People's Assembly, which is based on population. Therefore, the assembly is dominated by the elected representatives of the Burmans. If a comprehensive account could be prepared at the end of Ma-Sa-La's reign in 1988, it would reveal that among all the nationalities, the Burmans were the most affected, tortured and killed by that regime. Despite this, there is much animosity for the Burmans by the ethnic groups. The way the people's assembly is set up is one of the reasons for this.

Again, the Saw Maung military clique has cunningly kept silent on the role of the Chamber of the Nationalities in its Election Laws for 1990. It obviously plans to set up a parliament based on population in accordance with the Ma-Sa-La constitution. Section 2A of the Election Law stipulates that, "Hluttaw means the Pyithu Hluttaw" or People's Assembly. For this reason, misunderstanding and suspicion will continue to persist among different racial groups and the civil war will rage on.

D. POPULATION AND SIZE OF CHAMBER

The size of a popular house depends on two points:

1. Geographical and environmental situation of the nation, and
2. Population of the country.

Elected representatives should represent both the urban and the rural populations. Groups that have different economic, cultural, religious and vocational backgrounds should also be represented. Only then will the House reflect the views and feelings and become the voice of the entire nation. The Election Law of the Saw Maung regime fails to take this point into consideration.

E. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

One of the major problem of an electoral system is the allocation of parliamentary seats between candidates and political parties. There are two basic systems:

1. The majority system, and
2. The proportional system

The latter, depending on the number of votes received by each candidate, allocates parties at the expense of the smaller ones. It leaves less opportunity for the local and ethnic minorities to get elected.

The majority system has been practiced for a very long time, unlike the proportional system which started around the second half of the 19th century. A few examples are the canton elections of Switzerland in 1891-92, the 1893 elections in Belgium, the 1906 elections in Finland, and the 1909 elections in Sweden. The practice spread

almost all over Europe after the Second World War. Outside Europe, the proportional system is used in Israel and in India when electing the Upper House. The FRG, Japan and Mexico make use of both the majority and the proportional systems. Saw Maung's draft Election Law does not mention the system that will be adopted nor does it attempt to educate the people. The regime also does not make any effort to study how best the various systems that exist in the world today can be beneficially applied to the concrete conditions of our country. It is almost certain that the majority system, that has been practiced since independence, will be used.

F. PERSONS ENTITLED TO STAND FOR ELECTION

In any election law, the most important point that must be clarified is who is entitled to stand for election. Section 10E of the Saw Maung military government's Election Law prohibits anyone from running in the elections "who are under any acknowledgement of allegiance or adherence to a foreign Power or are subjects or citizens or entitled to the rights and privileges of a subject or a citizen of a foreign Power".

In explaining why, it was stated that these restrictions are from Section 74, sub-section (1), clause (a) of the 1947 Constitution. They say it is not fitting for people who are under acknowledgment of allegiance or adherence to a foreign power to become candidates because, should these people be allowed to enter the race, foreign powers will intervene. According to legal terms, "any person who is under any acknowledgement of allegiance or adherence to a foreign Power, or is a subject or citizen or entitled to the rights and privileges of a subject or a citizen of a foreign Power shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being a member of either Chamber". After studying 83 countries, only 7 countries, such as New Zealand and Australia -- the biggest of these seven -- Zanzibar, Zambia, Kenya, Fiji, Malawi, and the Solomon islands have similar stipulations.

How is one going to determine who is under the acknowledgement of allegiance to a foreign power? The implication is too expensive to be of effective use. Moreover, no other country that we came across has any ruling against "persons who are entitled to the rights and privileges of a subject or a citizen of a foreign power". This ruling is even less specific than the first to be of practical use. It also poses a grave danger to those who have anything to

ABSDF ON THE ELECTIONS...cont.

do with a foreign government or anything alien because the election commission can give them trouble at any time it wants to. They have interpreted the constitution in a way that would suit their purpose particularly in interfering with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

These stipulations were included in the 1947 constitution because Burma had just gained independence from Britain and it was necessary to prevent imperialist influence from being spread directly in the country. The stipulations are already out-dated and no longer serve the interests of the people.

Section 10C of the Saw Maung military government's Election Law states that a person serving prison term having been convicted under sentence of the court for any offense will not be permitted to run.

At the moment the military government has imposed martial law and has been jailing political prisoners through summary trials conducted by military tribunals. A summary trial means that only the prosecuting side can file charges while the defendant has no right to defence under existing laws.

Hence, the military government has retained the right to easily send opponents to jail and has, under various pretexts, also been imprisoning popular opposition leaders who are potential winners in the 1990 elections. As things stand, the military government can prevent any candidate it does not like from running in the elections by jailing that person.

Although it is true that the law that prohibits people serving sentences from running in the election is mentioned in Section 74, Subsection 2, of the 1947 Constitution, we must take into account that when the elections were held then, there was no martial law in force and summary trials were not being conducted by military tribunals. The insincerity of the military government becomes even more obvious over the fact that it has failed to include in the election law the exception to the ruling in Section 74, Sub-section 2. This proviso states that the president may overrule by issuing a pardon to a person provided that the jail term being served by that person does not exceed two years.

G. COUNTING OF VOTES AND DECLARING CONFIRMATION

In any election law, once the clarification of who is eligible for candidacy has been made, the next important thing to do is to deal with the process of vote counting and confirmation.

During the time of the Ma-Sa-La regime, elections for the People's Assembly and different levels of the People's Councils were only opened to the Ma-Sa-La party members. Ordinary citizens were denied participation, so there was no real need to manipulate the counting of votes or the process of confirmation. An example was the national referendum for the Ma-Sa-La constitution held in 1973. The Ma-Sa-La did everything it could to cheat at the polls. The election results, therefore, turned out exactly the way the Ma-Sa-La wanted.

Based on studies of that national referendum in 1973, the possibility of irregularities occurring in the Saw Maung military government's vote counting and confirmation process can be enumerated as follows:

1. Since the administrative structure is in the hands of the Saw Maung military clique and the Law and Order Restoration Council, members of electoral commissions at township, state and division levels and at polling booths are bound to be people under the influence of the military clique. This being the case, all problems that may emerge -- they always do in every election -- will definitely be settled in a way that is in the interests of the military clique.
2. During the 1973 national referendum, people who could enter the polling areas to inspect the ballot boxes were the people under the military clique. They, therefore, could do whatever they liked with the ballot boxes then.
3. Since the people in the electoral commissions are under the influence of the military clique, they can manipulate votes cast in advance or the votes sent in from overseas.
4. Since the ballot cards are to be transported from the wards to the townships, from the towns to the states and divisions, and from the states and divisions to the center, voting results can be falsified in any one of the stages of transportation.

In conclusion, we are of the opinion of that the elections supervised by the military government cannot be fair or free. Free and just multi-party democratic elections can only be held when administered by an interim government that is set up after peace is established in the country.

BACKGROUND ON THE ELECTIONS

Following the student demonstrations in March and June 1988, several hundred students were killed by the Lon Htine (Riot Police), some female students were reportedly raped by jail warders at Insein jail in Rangoon, several thousand students were arrested by the military, many of them were dismissed from their schools or their Universities and most students prisoners were tortured inside the jail during their interrogation by the military intelligence service (DDSI).

On the 23rd of July 1988, a Burmese Socialist Program Party Extraordinary Emergency Congress convened in Saya San Hall, in Rangoon, called by the 26-year chairman of the BSPP, Gen Ne Win.

On the first day of the Emergency Congress, Ne Win (77) said in a speech "I will explain the reason for convening this extraordinary party congress and the matters that will be submitted, deliberated and approved at this congress." He claimed that, "I believe that the bloody events of March and June show a lack of trust in the government and the party that guides it by the people who were either directly involved or were lending their support to the events. But it is necessary to find out whether it is the majority or the minority that support the people showing this lack of trust. Since it is our belief that the answer to the question--a multi-party or a single party system--can be provided by a referendum, the current congress is requested to approve a national referendum...if the choice is for a multi-party system, we must hold elections for a new parliament ". (During the past 26 years in parliament, no representative can speak contrary to Gen Ne Win's suggestions. Every people used to speak out their report which has already written by the BSPP rulers.)

However, on the second day of the party congress, (24th July 1988), Lanang Bawik representative from Kachin State said, "The entire indigenous working people from our Kachin State Party Regional Committee area have absolute confidence in the party chairman and other state leaders and I believe the multi-party will not work at all...a single party system is most appropriate at a time when efforts are being made to build up the economy of the state." Many other representatives from different places e.g Kyaw Hlaing from Kayah state, Khan

Mang from Chin State, Maung Maung Naing from Tenasserim division, etc, said that the "national referendum on the multi-party election should not be held. A one-party system should continue to be practiced. A multi-party system would result in anarchy and disarray, causing disunity between one state and another, between one class and another and even among one another in the same family, the same ward and the same town."

On the 3rd day of the party congress, the party congress did not permit the holding of the national referendum. The congress did, however, permit the resignation of Ne Win from Party chairmanship and San Yu from Party vice-chairmanship. (Ne Win had also said in his opening speech "As I consider that I am not totally free from responsibility, even if indirectly, for the sad events that took place in March and June, and because I am advancing in age, I want to request party members to allow me to relinquish the duty of party chairman and as a party member." He requested to allow not only his resignation, but also that of San Yu Party vice chairman and State president, Aye Ko Party General Secretary, Sein Lwin Party Joint general secretary, Kyaw Htin Defence Minister and Tun Tin Finance Minister.)

Most of the people of Burma were pleasantly surprised by this emergency party congress. They very much wanted the government to change to a multi-party system. But, their dream lasted only one day.

After the emergency party congress, Sein Lwin was appointed as party chairman and president and the congress did not permit the national referendum. Sein Lwin has a long history of brutality in Burma. He is responsible for the killings of students and working people during past demonstrations for democratic changes. These brutal killings have earned him the name "Butcher of Burma" When he was appointed Party Chairman and President, the Burmese people were shocked and angered.

After that the students called for a nationwide demonstration against Sein Lwin on the 8th of August 1988. Hundreds of thousands of people appeared on the streets in Rangoon and some other cities. Several thousand students, people and workers

were killed by the military and several thousand students and people were arrested. But the general strike still went on all over the whole country.

Due to these mass demonstrations by the people, on the 12th of August 1988, Sein Lwin resigned as Party Chairman and President of Burma.

On the 19th of August 1988, Dr Maung Maung was appointed the new president and BSPP chairman. The Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Congress) set up a commission, headed by the chairman of the Council of People's Justice, Tin Aung Hein, to "ascertain the desire and aspirations of the people".

But, on the 22nd of August, a nation-wide general strike was proclaimed to press for the formation of a new, interim-government that could rule the country pending general elections.

On the 24th of August 1988, Dr Maung Maung promised a referendum to choose a one-party or a multi-party system for the country. He dissolved the special committee set up to "ascertain the desire and aspirations of the people". He ignored the demands of the people to form an interim government and that the government hold the general elections and dissolve the BSPP government. The people no longer had any trust for the BSPP government.

Hundreds of thousands of students, workers, farmers, teachers, doctors, police, monks, and even some military soldiers all over Burma joined the daily demonstrations. The people asked the government to resign and form an interim government.

On the 11th of Sept 1988, the BSPP convened a second emergency congress and decided to hold general elections under a multi-party system, thus cancelling the referendum suggested earlier.

On the 18th of Sept 1988, Gen. Saw Maung (Army chief of staff) announced over the state radio that the military had assumed full power and set up the "State Law and Order Restoration Council" (SLORC) to run the country temporarily.

Following the military coup, thousands of unarmed demonstrators were shot to death by military soldiers, several thousands of people were arrested by the military and about 20,000 students and working people fled to different border areas near China, Thailand, India and Bangladesh to seek refuge.

On 20th of Sept, Gen. Saw Maung formed the SLORC into a government with himself as prime minister, foreign minister and defence minister.

On the 26th of September, the BSPP formed themselves into a political party but changed the name to the "National Unity Party."

On the 27th of Sept, Aung Gyi (Chairman), U Tin Oo (Vice-Chairman) and Aung San Suu Kyi (General Secretary) registered as a political party called the "National League for Democracy Party" (NLD) with the General Election Committee.

The Election Committee is composed of 6 people, U Ba Htay (Chairman), U Saw Kyar Doe (member), U San Maung (member), Saya Chae (member) and U Kyaw Nyunt (Secretary). They were appointed by the second emergency party congress (BSPP) on 11th Sept 1988.

At the same time Bohmu Aung and Thu Wai (associates of U Nu, former prime minister of Burma from 1948 to 1962) established the "Peace and Democracy Party".

On 28 Feb 1989, the Election Committee stopped registration of political parties. Two hundred thirty three political parties had registered with the General Election Committee.

Sources from Rangoon say that there are over 200 political parties registered because many of the people who actively took part in the demonstrations fear arrest by the military and seek some protection in the guise of a legally registered political party. The sources added that there are over 60 political parties supported by the military and they get money secretly from the military.

Although the military regime allows the formation of political parties, they harass any opposition parties, especially those who receive most of the people's support like the NLD. For example, from the 30th Oct to 10th Nov, Aung San Suu Kyi (General Secretary of the NLD) toured more than 50 towns and villages in Pegu, Margwe, Mandalay, Sagaing Divisions and the Shan State and attracted crowds of tens of thousands. But the military announced in the villages before she arrived that the people can not give her flowers, can not listen to her speeches, and made many other restrictions. After she returned to Rangoon from those villages, many of her local supporters were arrested by the military. Also, on 27 Jan 1989, when she returned from a tour of the Irrawaddy Division, army units were accused by the NLD of having harassed her, of arresting 34 NLD workers and of intimidating the people who had come out to welcome her in Bassein, Henzada, Maubin, Labutta and other places in the Irrawaddy delta region.

Since the NLD has become the main opposition party, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo and their members have toured the whole country of Burma.

Several millions of people have joined with the NLD. The NLD has been harassed by the military regime several times. Now, nearly all of NLD CEC members have been arrested since July and over 1,000 NLD members have also been arrested by the military since July, according to a report by an NLD spokesperson.

On the 20th of July 1989, U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were put under house arrest by the military.

Not only did the military harass the NLD, but they also harassed the other political parties which most people support. For example, Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, chairman of the AFPFL was interrogated by the military intelligence for about 24 hours on the 21st of June 1989.

Many party leaders from other opposition parties have been arrested, thus disqualifying them from running in the elections. This is one method SLORC is using to make certain that their pet parties win in their "free and fair elections".

Further harassment came on the 20th of Sept, when 3 political parties, the People's Progressive Party, the National Politic Front and the Evergreen Young Men's Association had their registration cancelled by SLORC

On the 3rd of Nov, a spokesman from SLORC told a press conference "The government today declares four major ethnic groups as unlawful associations." They are the Kachin Independence Organization, the Karen National Union, the New Mon State Party and the Karenni(Kayah) National Progressive Party.

The General Election Commission finally produced Announcement No. 326 on November 10, 1989 which set the dates for the election process. According to this announcement, the dates are:

- 1) 27th May 1990 for the multi-party democracy general elections.
- 2) 28th December 1989 to January 3, 1990, the candidates for nominations of the Pyithu Hluttaw (parliament) for various constituencies can be put up.
- 3) From the 5th to the 9th of January, the nominations of the Pyithu Hluttaw candidates will be scrutinized.
- 4) January 22 will be the last date for the

withdrawal of the nominations of pyithu Hluttaw candidates if they so wish.

To date (February 4, 1990) the Election Commission has not yet announced officially who will be allowed to run. However they have announced that a total of 2276 candidates from 100 political parties and 83 independents have registered.

All of these political parties and candidates will certainly be cause for confusion if the elections are actually held. Presently, it is known that of all the parties, only 6 will be fielding candidates in more than 300 constituencies. The Pyithu Hluttaw has 491 seats. Presently the NLD will run in 326 constituencies, and the NUP (formerly BSPP) will field 450 candidates. The other four parties with more than 300 candidates are the Democracy Party, the Union National Democracy (Aung Gyi) Party, the Coalition League for Democratic multi-Party Unity Party, and the League for Democracy and Peace Party (U Nu). This situation means that it will be almost impossible for any party to get a majority. The many parties which are directly and indirectly connected to the present military junta can thus serve as a tool of the military to keep itself in power. The elections, therefore, are not so much a democratic multi-party election, but rather a political game by the military to convince the world that they (the military dictators) are democratizing the society while still making certain that they will remain in complete control.

The most popular opposition party, the National League for Democracy, have chosen their president, retired Gen. Tin U and party secretary Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burma's independence hero Gen Aung San, as two of their candidates. However, U Tin Oo has been sentenced to three years in prison with hard labor by a military tribunal with charges of attempting to divide the military.

Aung San Suu Kyi has also been disqualified (although the military junta has not yet had the courage to announce this officially) and is under house arrest. Members of the National Unity Party (former BSPP) charged that she was not qualified to run since she is married to a foreigner and thus had connections to a foreign country. Although it is true she has a British husband, she has always retained her Burmese citizenship, and has never received any special privileges from the British government. She also is not allowed to vote in Britain.

Aung Gyi of the United National Democratic Party, in cooperation with 6 others parties, recently wrote a

letter to the Election Committee complaining that the NUP (formerly BSPP) was using money and property of the old BSPP for the NUP's political campaign. This gave them an unfair advantage over other parties. However, the Election Committee rejected their letter on the 30th of November saying that the NUP had the right to use BSPP money and property if they wanted.

People who rent their buildings to opposition parties for use as office facilities, are often harassed by the military. It is, therefore, difficult for many of them to find office space in which to organize their campaigns.

A senior Western diplomat in Rangoon recently told Michael Bociurkiw of the Los Angeles Times, "The government seems to be clearing the field of anyone in opposition. People who were active last year continue to be picked up." (Los Angeles Times, October 15, 1989)

All of these political prisoners needed to be kept someplace, so prisons were emptied. It is estimated that about 17,000 hard-core criminals were freed

from Rangoon's prisons in November of 1989 to make room for the coming crackdown on the opposition. One army lieutenant colonel explained the crackdown to Michael Bociurkiw this way: "People need to learn discipline before they can have democracy."

This is the attitude which is molding the present undemocratic process for the May elections. The military wishes to force the people into a framework of "democracy" dictated by the military which will insure the continued dictatorial power of the military while at the same time giving the world the impression that the people have actually been able to elect their new leaders. The "discipline" of the military is a discipline of complete obedience and subservience, and with that kind of discipline, democracy is not even a necessity anymore.

It is for this reason that the world should not be fooled by what the Saw Maung regime calls "free and fair" elections and why the Burmese people reject them as a complete farce.

During a recent football match between a British team and the football team from Monywa township in Mandalay Division, the spectators gave their excited support to the players. But to show their true feelings about the coming elections, they all appeared at the game wearing a bamboo hat which is the symbol of the National League for Democracy (Aung San Suu Kyi's party). This is surely proof that the people support the NLD and still have a strong spirit of protest against the SLORC oppressive military regime.



THE LIFE OF THE FISHING PEOPLE

The fishermen from the southern part of Burma live a very difficult life. They live in small villages, and there is no road linking one village to another. They have no clear vision for their future.

If we, the students of Burma, forget or ignore their situation, our history will speak against us. Therefore, I would like to relate about their real situation and the problems of their lives to our friends round the world. Perhaps you may join with us to help them.

These fishermen have worked in this area for two decades now. For generations they have worked as fishermen. One small boy wearing only a pair of short pants told me "My father is a fisherman, and I will be a fisherman too". The children have no schools and no education and they know only how to catch fish in the sea. Many of the people died in the sea, because they only use very small boats that have no engines. They have no modern instruments and they have no choice to stop their work even during bad weather. They have never received any support from the government. Instead, the government buys the fish from these fishermen with a very low, fixed price. They work very hard but they get only a little money. For this reason their living standards get worse and they have no guarantee for their future.

After the military coup on the 18th of Sept. 1988, the money-hungry military regime sold our own waters to foreign fishing companies. Although the military regime did not allow the local fishermen to use engines in their small boats, placed many restrictions on their fishing activities and bought the fish at a very low price, the foreign fishing companies have no restrictions placed on them for catching fish. They use modern techniques and the military sells the fish to these companies at a very low price to try to get more investments. Now, the local fishermen have no more place to earn a living.

Another problem is that after the regime gets a lot of money from these fishing concessions, the

fishermen and the Burmese people get no benefits from the military regime with that money. They are getting poorer and poorer. Although the people have to pay the regime personal tax, land tax, fire tax and even wastage tax, etc, the people get no guarantee for their life from the military regime.

It is very clear that the military regime gives no hope to the people of Burma. They are not working for the people. They are working for themselves and for their own power. They are not a legitimate government for our country.

The small Thai town on the Thai-Burma border which is opposite Kaunthaung (Victoria Point) Burma is developing more by using Burmese sea products. The price of fish in Kaunthaung (Burma) and Ranong (Thailand) is not so different, but in the capitals of both countries, the difference can easily be seen. In Rangoon it is difficult to find shrimp and fish which are getting extremely expensive now. However in Bangkok, fish and shrimp are abundant and can be bought with a fair price. These products come directly from Burmese waters.

There will be many questions:

Why did the military regime make contracts with foreign fishing companies even when they knew what this would do to the local fishermen?

Why did the foreign businessmen make contracts with the military regime when they had to know that the military regime is oppressing the people?

Did they want to help develop the Burmese economy, or did they want the Burmese people to get more and more poor?

I would like to urge our neighboring countries not to simply think about themselves. Care about the people of Burma! Care about the poor fishermen of Burma! Hunger and oppression is burning in their hearts, and they need help and compassion from you as well.

"All our lives we have fished these seas. We always had at least a little something to eat. Now we have nothing! What is the meaning of life if we can't fish and can't take care of our families?"

ECONOMIC NEWS

BHP OF AUSTRALIA

"Mr R. W. Volk, the general manager of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP) and U Aung Min, Managing Director of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise has signed an exploration and production Sharing Contract of Petroleum in the Union of Myanmar and Rear-Admiral Maung Maung Khin handed over the permit of the Union of Myanmar Foreign Investment Commission and Notification No 8 (Special/89) dated 24 November 1989 for permission to carry out the work issued by the Minister of Energy to General Manager of BHP Petroleum." (A report by the military regime's own newspaper, "Working People's Daily", 24th November 1989.)

The news added that " the Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise would now be joining hands with BHP for 3 to 5 years initially in exploration phase and possible development period of additional 20 years, in case of hydrocarbons discovery of commercial magnitude."

The newspaper claimed that " the Block "H" which BHP is awarded is a geologically virgin area almost totally unexplored. BHP is also seeking other economic interests in the Union of Myanmar, the newspaper said and BHP is the eighth in a series of Joint Ventures for exploration and production of Petroleum in the Union of Myanmar. (The Dawn News Bulletin has already mentioned some of these Oil Companies, including Amocol and Unocal from US, YuKong from South Korea, and Petro Canada from Canada in past issues.)

The BHP is the largest petroleum company in Australia and in the top 12th among the World's listed oil companies. In Asia, BHP had taken up exploration permits in Indonesia, China, India, Papua New Guinea and now in Burma.

The signing of the contract was also attended by Ambassador of Australia to the Union of Burma, Mr G. C. Allen and officers from the Defence Ministry of the Union of Burma.

The agreement signed is apparently a very broad contract which may also include the exchange of goods between the two countries. The value of the good exchanged may equal US\$40 million. BHP will provide road paving materials (tar), crude oil, etc.,

while the military regime will give australia fertilizer, cement, rice, beans and a variety of other food items (BBC report January 4)

The All Burma Students' Democratic Front strongly criticizes this kind of joint venture. The military regime in Burma is not a legitimate government. It was elected by the people through a democratic election, and therefore it does not have the right to make long-term contracts such as this one.

Before our country can have true and just economic development, the issues of internal peace must first be solved. The military must solve make the solving of this problem their top priority. During the meeting between the military regime and the BHP company, Mr R W Volk said, "in conducting our operations we feel a great sense of responsibility not only to the government of Myanmar and the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise but also to the people throughout the country." He added that 'the contracts will greatly benefit all the people by creating employment opportunities and by providing a sources of domestic petroleum production."

We are very much encouraged to hear that the BHP cares about our people in their search for profits. But the search for oil and gas is not our first priority. We, the people of Burma, have been oppressed by the Burmese military regime for over 27 years now. This military regime has never worked for the people of Burma.

The BHP has made a contract with the military regime. That only means that they are using precious water to nourish poisonous weeds.

REQUEST FOR ACTION

Write letters of protest to:

Mr R. W. Volk
General Manager
Broken Hill Proprietary Company Ltd (BHP)
Petroleum International
Melbourne, Australia

JAPANESE INVESTMENTS

On the 29th of January, 1990, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) announced that the Burmese Ambassador in Japan, U Mya Thin, had agreed that parts of the Burmese Embassy in Japan had been sold to Japanese Companies."

Mr Christopher Garnet reported that the Burmese military regime has sold 60% of the total area of the Burmese Embassy in Japan to two Japanese companies; Sanawa Tread Company and GMC Company. The total area of the Burmese Embassy in Japan is about 9,000 square meters.

These Japanese companies paid the Burmese military regime about Yen 34,000 million, or about US dollars \$233m, on 5 Jan 1990.

That amount of money is equal to the Burmese foreign exchange used now. The total amount of foreign currency in the country has now reached 400 million US dollars. According to a report of the International Money Fund Organization, foreign currency available in the country was 250 million US dollars in August 1989.

The Burmese Ambassador in Japan said that the reason for selling parts of the Embassy is to support the Burmese economy.

Mr Christopher Garnet claimed that the diplomatic sources in Rangoon said that most of the money has been used by the military for fighting against ethnic minority groups and for internal security.

COCA-COLA

Recently "Dawn" news bulletin received a letter from Mr. Robert P. Wilkinson, vice president for international external affairs of the Coca-Cola Export Corporation. The letter was in response to Dawn's questioning of the alleged agreement between Coca-Cola and the Burmese military regime to produce and distribute coke in Burma. The letter said in part:

"The Coca-Cola Company has no business presence in Burma, either through Company-owned operations or licensed local bottlers. Any reports that we have signed an agreement for the production and distribution of our products in Burma are inaccurate."

Dawn and the ABSDF are very please to receive this assurance from the Coca-Cola Company that they are not involved in Burma. However, we remained confused by the photo in the Working

People's Daily of Burma showing Mr. Stuart Eastwood of the Coca-Cola Company signing an agreement. The caption clearly says that he is signing a note "for the production and distribution of coke.... in the country". Perhaps it is only the Burmese government passing on incorrect information in an attempt to gain a little more international credibility.

The Forest Industry Organisation, a Thai government organization, is expected to begin logging inside Burma in mid-February. Three private companies are said to serve as sub-contractors for the FIO: Udomnan Co will be responsible for felling the trees, Khon Thong Co for transporting the logs to the depot and Tab Sakae Business Co for transport services between the depot and the FIO's sawmills. Nine Burmese officials are suppose to run the logging operation on the Thai side of the border.

A source said the FIO was expected to be able to import 10% more logs than the contract quota of 30,000 tons or 5,400 cubic metres a year. The agency has a two-year contract.

The source said 10% of the imported logs would be given to Thai Plywood Co, a state enterprise under the Agriculture and Cooperatives Ministry and wholly owned by the FIO, for use as veneer and the rest would be auctioned for use by boat builders. (Bangkok Post, January 30, 1990)

Thai Deputy Prime Minister Pong Sarasin met Burma's military rulers during a recent visit to promote economic relations between the two countries. Mr. Pong Sarasin is the head of the most senior Thai delegation to visit Rangoon since the September 1988 crackdown. He was accompanied by Commerce Minister Subin Pinkhayan.

Thailand has secured timber and fishing concessions from Rangoon at a time when Western governments, especially the European Community and the United States are isolating Burma for human rights violations and suppression of the 1988 democracy movement.

A SLORC council member, Lt.Gen Than Schwe said "Thailand has been one of our close friends which showed sympathy and understanding during the period of anarchy that ruled our country internally." (Bangkok Post, February 3, 1990)

THE 1988 UPRISING REVISITED

From OUTRAGE by Bertil Lintner

(continued from last issue)

22 July: A state of emergency is declared in Prome township and the local administration is transferred to the army.

23 July: The BSPP emergency congress begins. Ne Win makes a speech and says he is going to retire along with BSPP vice-chairman San Yu, secretary-general Aye Ko, joint secretary-general Sein Lwin and central committee members Kyaw Htin and Tun Tin. He also proposes economic reforms and the holding of a referendum on the issue of a one-party or multi-party system.

24 July: A number of delegates urge Ne Win to stay on and oppose the idea of a referendum "since this would be detrimental to the economic reform programme."

25 July: Aye Ko proposes sweeping economic reforms and notes that the congress is opposed to the idea of a referendum. The congress concludes it has "permitted" Ne Win to resign from his post as BSPP chairman.

26 July: The BSPP central committee holds a meeting and elects Sein Lwin as new party chairman after Ne Win. San Yu is also "permitted to resign" but Kyaw Htin, Aye Ko and Tun Tin are re-elected. Prime Minister Maung Maung Kha is removed along with Myint Maung, the chairman of the Council of People's Attorneys.

27 July: The Pyithu Hluttaw convenes. Sein Lwin is elected chairman of the Council of State (President). Kyaw Htin elected secretary to the Council of State. Tun Tin becomes prime minister and Dr Maung Maung chairman of the Council of People's Attorneys.

28 July: A curfew is imposed in Myaayde (Allanmyo) 354Km north of Rangoon following rioting there. It is the Full Moon Day of Waso (the beginning of the Buddhist Lent); students and anti-government protester gather at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda.

29 July: Students demonstrate outside the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Dissident Aung Gyi, Associated Press correspondent Sein Win and nine other retired army officers are arrested late that night.

1 August: Leaflets are circulated by the All Burma Student Democratic League, calling for a nation-wide general strike on 8 August.

2 August: Sein Lwin and other state and party leaders meet to discuss plans for reviving the collapsed economy. Students hold meetings and give speeches outside the Shwe Dagon.

3 August: Martial Law is announced in Rangoon at 6:00pm. Ten thousand demonstrators defy the ban and march through the center of the city.

5 August: Hundreds of people are arrested for defying martial law but the demonstrations continue.

6 August: An agreement is signed between the official export-import corporation of Yunnan, China and the Burmese Trade Ministry to open official cross-border trade between the two countries. Demonstrations continue upcountry; curfews are imposed on Yenangyaung, Thannatpin and Pegu.

8 August: There is a general strike and also massive street demonstrations in Rangoon. Tens of thousands of demonstrators demand democracy, human rights, the resignation of the BSPP government and an end to the socialist economic system. Simultaneously, similar demonstrations are held in all major cities and towns. The army remains in the background until 11:45pm when heavily armed troops spray automatic rifle fire into crowds of unarmed demonstrators outside the City Hall in central Rangoon.

9 August: Mass demonstrations spread to more than 40 places all over the country. Army units from the 22nd LID fire on demonstrators in Rangoon. The government say five had been killed-independent sources claim the number of dead is in the hundreds. Thousands of people are arrested. But the demonstrations continue. All schools are closed down.

10 August: Scores of people are killed by troops in the capital as armored cars equipped with Bren machine-guns fire on demonstrators. The demonstrators fight back with molotov cocktails, jinglees, swords and spears. Troops fire on staff at Rangoon General Hospital. The first policemen--in North Okkalapa--are beheaded by enraged civilians.

11 August: Rangoon remained paralysed by the general strike. Barricades block troop movements. Western diplomats estimate that at least 1,000 demonstrators have been killed in Rangoon alone. Troops and policemen open fire on the demonstrators in the northern town of Sagaing, killing at least 100 people. The US Senate unanimously approves a resolution condemning the BSPP regime as well as the killing in Burma.

WHAT THE PRESS IS SAYING

HIJACKERS OF BURMESE PLANE PLEAD GUILTY

Ye Yint and Ye Thi Ha who have been charged with hijacking a Burmese airliner from Burma to Thailand, changed their plea in court from not guilty to guilty. According to their lawyer, they admitted to all charges filed by the prosecutor.

"The students' action was motivated by the undemocratic situation in their country. They did it because they wanted the outside world to know the situation so that Burma could be pressured into democratic rule," their lawyer said. He urged the court to show leniency. (The Nation, February 1, 1990.)

The military government said yesterday it will not agree to demands by a US congressman that foreign observers be allowed into Burma to ensure the May 27 election is free and fair.

The election is to be the first multiparty vote since 1960. But in the past month, the three main opposition figures have been banned from participation.

Government spokesman, Col Aung Thein told a news conference, "Where is the need to come and observe the election, since he (US congressman Daniel Patrick Moynihan) has already presumed that it will not be free and fair?"

At least 2,392 candidates are contesting for seats in the election. (The Nation, February 1, 1990)

A group of Burmese soldiers yesterday crossed over into Thai territory and requested Thai border authorities to notify Burmese nationals taking refuge in Thailand that they would be welcome when they return to Burma.

They said the Burmese government was ready to take the responsibility of resettling the returnees, and asked that Burmese soldiers in Thay Baw Bo be allowed to purchase food supplies from the Thai side. (The Burmese military has not only been destroying villages and killing the people, but they

have also been cutting off their own supplies of food. Once the villages are burned and the villagers flee into Thailand, who will grow the food the soldiers need to eat? This is why they are seeking permission to buy food inside Thailand, and why Thailand should refuse them this right. Dawn)

The largest Burmese resistance group recently appealed to countries selling weapons to Burma to stop the practice saying the arms were being used to kill innocent people.

The Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) based on the Thai/Burmese border, declared in a statement received here yesterday that "(we) have been informed Pakistan, Singapore, South Korea and Israel are supplying weapons to the military junta of General Saw Maung.

The DAB deeply regrets that these countries are indirectly encouraging the torture, persecution and killing of the ethnic nations and the annihilation of monks, students and people from all walks of life fighting for democracy." (Bangkok Post, February 1, 1990)

Burmese and Thai officials yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding to form a joint trade commission to promote bilateral trade, state radio announced. Thai Commerce Minister Subin Pinkayan and Burmese Trade and Finance Minister Abel signed the agreement.

Subin arrived in Burma with a Thai goodwill delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister Pong Sarasin. Thai businessmen accompanying the delegation held talks yesterday with Burmese Trade Ministry officials.

(ABSDF protested this visit by the Thai Deputy Prime Minister because we believe that all economic involvements in Burma at this time simply strengthen the military and its oppression against the Burmese people.)

NEWS FROM THE CAMPS

On the 29th of Dec 1989, one of the Karen camps, Phalu, which is only 15 miles from Mae Sot District in Thailand, was taken by the Burmese military troops. (See..."DAWN" issues No.24).

On the 24th of Jan 1990, the Burmese army captured Thay Baw Boe camp. About 200 students were moved to Ban Maw Kar camp, 2 miles south of Thay Baw Boe camp. The hospital, Jungle University and all the self-reliant projects had to be abandoned.

On the 25th of Jan, the students crossed the Moei river and entered Thai soil, just opposite their Ban Maw Kar camp. On 26 Jan, the Ban Maw Kar camp was captured and destroyed by the military troops.

Now, about 200 students live inside Thailand, about 1.5 miles from Ban Maw Kar camp. They do not have enough food, medicine and clothing. Their security is very much in danger. Their camp in Thai soil is very near the Burmese army which is only about 1.5 miles away.

The students who had moved inside Burma to give medical aid and education to the poor

villagers have been cut off from easy communications. They are in need of medicines and other supplies, and it is very difficult and dangerous to carry the supplies in.

Over 2,000 Burmese military troops have taken Thay Baw Boe camp and Ban Maw Kar camp and about 10,000 military troops are holding Phalu camp.

Before the military attack on Phalu camp, on 27 Dec 1989, several thousand civilians had taken refuge inside Thailand. They fled because the Burmese army always takes the villagers as a porters or human mine sweepers. When the military attacked Phalu camp, about 5,000 more villagers moved inside Thailand to escape from the war.

On the 30th of Dec. 1989, the Nation newspaper reported that the Thai authorities had handed over

The ABSDF as well as the DAB have always been open to seeking a settlement to the conflict through peaceful means. Recently, Gen. Bo Mya, chairman of the DAB, wrote a letter to Gen Saw Maung suggesting peace talks. His suggestion was rejected by Saw Maung. Earlier, Thailand had proposed peace talks which would take place in Thailand and which Thailand would help mediate. The DAB immediately set up a negotiating team. However, the Burmese military regime responded that "We are winning! Why should we talk?"

The Saw Maung military junta is receiving the money and political recognition which they need from some of their neighboring countries as well as other profit-oriented countries to carry out the vicious military campaigns along the border which are now under way. This is resulting in the loss of life, the destruction of villages, and the displacement of many thousands of villagers.

This will not end until economic pressure is placed on the Saw Maung regime. The call for negotiations will be fruitless as long as he is getting the money he wants to carry out his war against the Burmese people. Good intentions are not enough! Concrete and effective actions against economic investments in Burma essential.

200 Burmese civilians, including women and children who took refuge on the Moei river bank on the Thai side, to the Burmese authorities." (Reported by a Burmese Catholic priest in Mae Sot on Dec 29.)

On 1 Feb 1990, the Nation newspaper reported that the Burmese army also captured Waley camp opposite Phop Phra District on 30 Jan. About 2,800 Karen villagers had to take refuge in 7 Thai villages along the Thai side in order to escape the fighting.

On the 28th of Jan, the Burmese army started a heavy attack on one of the Karen camps, Kawmura, opposite Mae

Sot. This is one of the major strongholds of the Karen along the border area, and it will be difficult for the Burmese military to dislodge the defenders as long as they are not allowed to attack the camp from the Thai side (which happened in Phalu). The Burmese military did make one attack against this camp from the Thai side last year, but failed when their attack caused a Thai village to be burned to the ground and thus rousing a Thai outcry against the Burmese invasion of Thai soil.

REPORT FROM THE KACHIN STATE

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) reported that several thousand Burmese military troops have grouped in northeast Burma on the China border and started attacks against the KIA since the beginning of this year. The soldiers are from the 33rd Regiment, 88th Regiment, and the 99th Regiment.

Mr Brang Sang, chairman of the Kachin Independence Organization stated that "I strongly believed that we, the KIA, will fight against the Burmese Military troops successfully."

On the 4th of March 1989, near the east of Ba Maw village, fighting broke out between Burmese army LID 40 and KIA Tactical Column 2. KIA troops captured Lt-Col Thein Tun, the Commander of LIT 40, Capt Tin Oo, Capt Nyunt Shine, Lt-Capt Aung Myo Win, 21 soldiers and a lot of ammunition. The captured soldiers were sent to the KIA headquarters to receive primary health care since most of them had been wounded, and to explain the real situation. Then they were sent back to their mother camp. (See... "Dawn" issue No. 21)

Mr Brang Sang said, "I strongly condemn the Burmese military rulers for trying to solve the political problems by military means instead of through political means."

He added that the military regime has been arresting the political leaders inside Rangoon and also the military are attacking the Karen and KIA, etc at the border area. How can there be free and fair elections under these conditions?

He also said that the Burmese military has protected the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) for the past 26 years. It is very clear that they are still protecting the National Unity Party (formerly the BSPP) and they are trying to help the NUP to win in the coming elections. Therefore, the elections cannot be free and fair anymore.

A dozen ethnic minority groups have been fighting with the Burmese military for over 40 years. After the collapse of the BSPP on the 18th of Sept 1988 which resulted in the bloody military coup, the fighting with the minority groups remains active and unchanged.

We, the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, also believe that our internal political problems should be solved by political means.

REPORT FROM THE MON STATE

Over 1,600 military troops (base in Motkanim a village of Kya-Inn Sate-Kyi) from Battalion No.106 of Light Infantry Division No.77, Battalion No.31 and Regiment No.32 and Battalion No.61 under South-East Command area under Bri-Gen Nynn Linn (South-East Command Commander) are moving to the southeast of Burma to attack the New Mon State army and 2 of the students camp, 101 and 102 at Three Pagoda Pass and one camp from Nat Aein Htaung. The military troops have divided into 3 groups with one group coming from Kay-Inn-Sate-Kyi, one group come from Ye and another group from Keyudoo which is only 3 hours walking distance from Three Pagoda Pass.

The military troops are also bringing 120mm, 84mm, 81mm and a lot of heavy ammunition. They arrested 1,000 villagers from Kyar-Inn-Sat-Kyi and 700 villagers from Ye and have forced them to carry their ammunition and food and they use these villagers as human mine sweeper as well.

A lot of villagers are moving away from the Burmese army. But about 350 students from ABSDF camp 101 and 102 are still there and they have had to stop their plans to provide medical health care for the villagers and education training for the children.

Now, the military troops have arrived at ChaungSonn, only 29 miles from three pagoda pass.

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

A group of about 30 students from Thay Bow Boe camp had gone deep inside Burma to provide medical help and to organize the villagers. On January 28, they arrived in Minathan village, about 30 miles from Kawcarake. Shortly after they arrived in the village, the Burmese military surrounded the village and began a heavy attack around 5:25 pm. The students had only medicines, and few guns to defend themselves. They immediately began withdrawing from the village. One student, Nan Lwin, was killed by gunfire. Two other students, Than Hlaing Oo and Khin Maung Yee, were captured by the Burmese troops and Ko Ko Naing disappeared.

A short time later a radio message of the Burmese military was intercepted. It was an order from the headquarters to kill the three unarmed students by beheading.

After going to press, DAWN received the news that these students are still alive. We will give details in our next issue. Editor

VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

THIS IS UNSTOPPABLE!

-When old things cease to exist
New ones spring up.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable!

-When old leaves fall
And are thrown by the wind
New ones blossom out.
This is natural.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable!

-When layers of brick collapse
New stones are substituted.
This is progress.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable?

-One the other side of atrocity, evil, oppression
Are bravery, revolution and freedom.
This is natural.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable!

-Change the old to the new!
This is the task of the new generation.
Take charge of the victory.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable!

-The clear, sharp eyes
Are the true gem of triumph.
This is unstoppable!
This is unstoppable!

Maung Maung Teik
(written in Insein prison in 1982)



