

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

MARCH 1990

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THE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OF BURMA



The Martyr's
First Sacrifice



DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

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ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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JUSTICE

REQUIRES COURAGE

A WELL OF COURAGE

"I remember the day I first knew what the word suffering and oppression must mean. It was not easy for me since I, myself, had little experience in suffering, and I was definitely not one of the oppressed. Our own worlds make us more than we realize, and our experiences mold our understanding of "reality" to such a degree we often can not see the truth.

But on that day, I saw something which made me glimpse truth just slightly, and that short glimpse changed me forever. I saw people, people who had no food to eat, and no future for their children, gunned down in the streets simply because they called for justice. In that one short moment, I resolved to stand with them, for this was my new commitment. "My life for justice!" I shouted, filled with the exuberant energy of the moment.

My new 'friends', those who truly knew suffering and oppression, looked at me sympathetically, knowing that the pain of truth was still only in my head. It had not yet reached my heart where its roots needed to be embedded in order to have the courage to drink deeply of the cup with the oppressed.

Yet, they took me in and gave me opportunity to learn from them. My ears, not accustomed to learning from the poor, pained from their teachings, but slowly and simply they taught. I found that I could learn only as much as I was willing to learn, and that my learning from them was most hindered by my own desire to teach them.

To stand for justice, I learned from them, demands tremendous courage, and there are few who are willing to risk it. But the most painful lesson they taught me was that the confrontation with the big oppressors is not the confrontation which requires the most courage. Tremendous courage is demanded if we are to ever face the oppressor which lies within ourselves.

It is only when we drink of the well of courage which the oppressed have to give us will we have enough courage to face ourselves, and give up that life of benefit which we enjoy in society. And it is only when we are willing to give up this old life that we can truly join the struggle for justice."

from "Stories of Life and Other Living Things."

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

EVICTIIONS

In his speech marking the annual Armed Forces Day on March 27, Gen Saw Maung lashed out at international criticism of SLORC's forced resettlement program of people from the urban areas out to desolate rural areas where there are few facilities such as electricity, water and roads, and no work. Gen Saw Maung claimed that the program was aimed "at giving land to homeless people who had been living on religious land, cemeteries and rubbish dumps."

A letter received recently from Rangoon suggests that Gen Saw Maung is either lying, or is unaware of what the world "homeless" means.

Several communities in Insein Township, Rangoon have either already been evicted, or have faced the threat of eviction. One such community is Nga Mya Tan Gone where at least 3000 houses have already been evicted. This was predominantly an Ethnic Karen community. Another community, Taung Thu Gone in the same township has been threatened with eviction.

Both of these communities are stable communities where people have lived for many decades. The residents purchased their home plots many years ago and have since then built fairly large, sturdy houses. They have jobs as teachers, civil servants or run small shops, and have never been either homeless nor squatters.

So, why are they being evicted if the purpose of the "resettlement" program is to give land to the homeless? Two possibilities are presented by friends in Burma. One is to break up communities known to strongly support opposition candidates in the planned May elections. The second is to "punish" communities from which some of the large pro-democratic demonstrations originated during the 1988 uprising.

For the Insein Township people, the program means the loss of their land and their homes which they worked so hard to pay for, the loss of their jobs, and an uncertain future. They have been given no compensation for their land or their homes, and must bear the expenses of building their new home in the resettlement area.

The resettlement area is some distance from Rangoon, in the middle of rice fields. It is not known what happens to the farmers whose rice fields were confiscated for these new satellite towns. They must move elsewhere, or perhaps they

melt back into Rangoon where they become true squatters and homeless persons.

There have also been stories filtering out about families at the new sites having to live along the pathway in makeshift huts because the rice in the paddies had not yet been harvested.

In the future, the suffering of these people will slowly be documented. In the meantime, the military junta continues to try to convince the world that taking away people's homes, land and livelihood is solving Burma's homeless and jobless problem. Such logic is indeed difficult to follow.

YE YINT AND YE THIHA

On March 21, 1990, the Thai Criminal Court sentenced Ye Yint and Ye Thiha to six years in prison for the hijacking of a Burmese domestic airliner last October. The original sentence of 12 years imprisonment was cut in half due to the cooperation of the two students during the investigation. During the entire time, since their arrest in October last year, Ye Yint and Ye Thiha have remained uncooperative and gentle, adding credibility to their statement that they were only interested in raising international awareness about the oppressive situation inside their country.

Indeed, international awareness has grown during this time, and there is considerable pressure coming from various countries for Burma to release political prisoners, stop abusing the right of the people, and allow an interim government to be set up in order to organize truly free and fair elections.

Ye Yint and Ye Thiha did the only thing they felt they could do to finally make their voices heard. The Burmese people have been suffering under the heel of the military regime for much too long, and their frustration has continued to grow. It is no surprise that this frustration finally must make itself be heard in some way. We call on all our international friends to keep organizing effective campaigns to call work attention to the present situation inside Burma. Please do this so that more young people like Ye Yint and Ye Thiha will not have to spend important years of their lives in prison.

We also thank the Thai lawyers who assisted Ye Yint and Ye Thiha as well as the Thai judge who heard the case, for their understanding and sympathy.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Moves are underway in the United States congress to try to ban imports of Burmese teak and Burmese wood processed in Thailand. At least one American company, Smith and Hawken, has already stopped buying any wood from Burma, and has taken steps to end all imports of wood and wood products from Thailand which originate in Burma. This is a move much welcomed by the Burmese people.

Thai Armed Forces spokesman Lt-Gen Naruedol Dejpradiyuth, however, feels that this move by the US congress is not helpful to Burma's progress towards democracy, and that rather the US should find ways to encourage and support this process. After a weekend visit to Burma, Lt-Gen Naruedol said that he saw many improvements to the city, namely it was cleaner, there was more construction and improvements to roads. (Bangkok Post, March 12, 1990)

The building of new buildings and roads do not make democracy. The military junta of Burma has made virtually no steps in bringing Burma closer to democracy, and this is why the Burmese people support efforts to economically boycott the Saw Maung regime. Thousands of tons of logs are being cut and carried out of Burma daily now, and this rape of the forests and the foreign money it brings into the country also do not build democracy. The people benefit little from this money. Rather it is destroying life. The cutting of the forests is destroying the environment as well as breaking apart the life of the ethnic villagers who have lived in harmony with the environment for so many generations. The money earned from this logging is used mainly to buy more and bigger weapons to try to destroy the persistent call for democracy coming from the people.

We call on all true friends once again--ORGANIZE CAMPAIGNS TO BOYCOTT THE SAW MAUNG REGIME ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY. This is the only way the voice of the people can rise above the cacophony of military jargon and rationalizations, and finally bring about justice to our beloved land.

So many of our friends remain in prison, and other have disappeared all together. Opposition political party leaders have also been imprisoned and will be prevented from running in the May elections. This, not cleaner streets, indicates the direction democracy is taking in Burma today.

A History of Teak in Burma

Rainforest Action Network

When Burma was a British colony, the Royal Navy used Burmese teak for its ships. In order to guarantee future supplies of teak the British established an extensive system for managing and protecting teak forests.

The first thing the British did was to declare teak a protected tree that could not be destroyed in any way without government authority. After extensive research the minimum size of the average teak tree for harvest was determined. Research also determined the minimum allowable rate of the felling cycle. In order to be harvested all teak trees had to have a girth measurement of at least 4' 6" to 7' 6". Three categories of girth size were recorded and it was found that it took 30 years for the teak tree to grow from one girth size category to another. This determined the Felling-Cycle period to be every 30 years. This type of management is now considered to be based on 'sustained yield'.

British foresters developed a system of harvesting that accounted for every tree and log cut from the forest. They also established a fair and uniform scale of revenue rates for the teak trade. This system was considered to be one of the best forestry practices in the world.

Before Burma gained its independence the teak forests were managed by British logging firms. The British government imposed large fines and strict penalties on these firms if they did not adhere to the regulations established for proper logging. During the Japanese invasion of Burma the British timber firms lost all their assets. After the British recaptured Burma from the Japanese, the British government established the Timber Consortium (TCM) to revive the teak trade.

In 1948, Burma gained its independence. The new Burmese government nationalized the teak trade and the TCM became a government entity entitled the State Timber Board (STB). This board followed the procedures, rules and regulations that were originally designed by the British. This type of teak management continued to 1962 until the military dictator Ne Win took control of the country with a military coup.

The incoming military administration changed the STB to the current Timber Corporation (TC). At the same time military officers took control of the STB. This was the start of a series of events that would destroy the forests of Burma and perpetuate major human rights violations.

The rules and regulations that were established by the first independent Burmese government were ignored and the TC acted independently without any regulation by the Forestry Department. The military's motivation behind this kind of exploitation was to make as much money as quickly as possible to supply its own needs. To this day, the same military government headed by Saw Maung is intent on exploiting one of the last remaining intact forests on the mainland of Southeast Asia.

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On January 15 of this year, the Bangkok Post ran an article which quoted a Thai logging company owner as saying that pressure from the Greenpeace organization was responsible for forcing the Burmese government to reduce the size of its permits to Thai logging companies, and that these logging concessions might end all together (Dawn, Vol 2 No. 1).

In response to this report, we received the following information from Project Maje in the USA.

"I should clear up misconceptions about Greenpeace. In January, a spokesman for Chao Phrya Irawaddy Company was apparently trying to scare off competitors in the timber business and/or drive up prices, by predicting that Burma logging would soon cease due to pressure from Greenpeace. In reality, it will cease when there is no more wood left (all too soon). Greenpeace has not yet been involved in the Burma logging issue at all! The Chao Phrya Irawaddy Company executive apparently just used their name because they are a famous environmentalist organization. Until very recently, Greenpeace was just involved in issues involving the oceans, such as whaling, overfishing, and island nuclear testing -- they were not involved in forests at all. I was in touch with them about the Andaman Sea overfishing, but not the forest issue. So when the Thai newspapers mentioned Greenpeace as active about Burma's forests I called their HQ office. I learned that they have just recently started a tropical forests project, and spoke to its director, Mr. Cambell Plowden. He said they had never even sent a letter about Burma, and he was very surprised when I read him the Thai press reports. He did not know much about Burma at all, and said their Asia project planned to concentrate just on Malaysia and

Indonesia. I told him that Burma was currently the number one emergency situation, as Asia's largest remaining tropical forest is being destroyed in a matter of weeks."

It seems likely that the Chao Phrya Irawaddy Company, and perhaps other logging companies, simply want people to think that logging will soon be ending in Burma so that any protests against this logging will end. We urge all friends to increase the pressure on all logging companies to immediately cease logging inside Burma. Logging trucks now pour out of Burma (through areas recently taken away from the ethnic minorities by the present Burmese military offensive) with little opposition. The forests are disappearing rapidly with no controlled cutting and in a short time huge areas of the once lush mountain areas will be bare, dry and useless.

You can support the boycott of all wood and wood articles originating in Burma by urging Greenpeace (Mr. Cambell Plowden, Greenpeace, 1436 U St. NW, Washington DC 20009, Tel. 202-462-117) to make this issue one of their priorities.

Friends should also be aware that several bills are before the US congress which would ban all imports of wood articles and sea foods which originate in Burma. People from all countries can express support for the Senate bill (SB822) by writing to Senator Lloyd Bentsen (Texas), US Senate, Washington DC 20510. He is chairman of the Finance Committee which will decide on the bill. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, (464 Russel Building, Washington DC 20510 attention Andrew Samet) and Rep. Robert T. Matsui, (2419 Rayburn Building, Washington DC 20515 attention Matthew Hamill) have introduced these bills, and letters of encouragement and support are also very helpful.

Write letters! It does not take much time or effort, and it is helpful. There are some politicians and influential persons who are supporting the Burmese people's struggle for justice, and your letters to them can encourage them to do even more.

Dawn News Bulletin will try to continue to supply you with names and addresses of these people, and your support by writing letters to them is a positive sign of your solidarity with us. We thank all of you for your efforts.

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

Recently we received a statement from the AFL-CIO dated 21st Feb 1990.

The All Burma Federation of Workers Union, including workers, teachers, doctors, scientists, technicians, artists, government employees and intellectuals of all levels, appealed to all countries which respect democracy and human rights to "help end suppression in Burma by the so-called People's Army and to help restore democracy" on the 31st October 1988.

Before, during and after pro-democracy demonstrations in Burma, almost all factory workers, several ministries and even members of the Burmese Socialist Program Party Headquarters participated in the demonstrations. Many of the workers were killed by the military regime after the coup in Sept 1988 and many others were forcibly dismissed from their jobs and some of them have been detained in prisons. (See.. "Dawn" issue no.23)

Following is the statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council On Burma, dated February 21, 1990, by Bal Harbour, Florida. We would like to say that the ABSDF sincerely appreciates this kind of support for our struggle for democracy in Burma.

"At a time when much of the world is being swept by a democratic revolution, the Burmese military dictatorship continues to pursue policies that systematically violate basic human and trade union rights.

In the spring and autumn of 1988, Burma's security forces suppressed a series of pro-democracy demonstrations by massacring at least 3,000 students, workers and monks. The military arrested, threatened and tortured and terrorized thousands more, including leaders of newly formed unions. The brutal crackdown in Burma was the government's reply to the legitimate democratic demands of a peaceful movement for change.

In an attempt to rally some popular support, Burma's military authorities---constituting themselves as the "State Law and Order Restoration Council"--- have set a nationwide election on May 27 for a new National Assembly that is to draft a new constitution. But that election, the country's first in 29 years, will be a charade.

Of the major opposition leaders, most are either in jail, under house arrest, or in hiding. The government's latest blow against the pro-democracy forces came on January 16, when it ruled that Aung San Suu Kyi, general secretary of the National League for Democracy, could not be a candidate. The most popular of Burma's leader to emerge from the 1988 demonstrations, she has been under house arrest since July 1989.

Last year, the U.S. government suspended aid to Burma, and in response to an AFL-CIO petition charging workers rights violations, canceled Burma's duty-free trade privileges under the Generalized System of Preferences(GSP).

Shamefully, as the U.S. was moving to exert new pressure on the Burmese dictatorship, Japan, Burma's largest supplier of foreign aid, resumed its assistance program. At that time, democratic leader Suu Kyi criticized Japan's business-first policy, and said: "There can never be real progress on the economic front until the economic situation has been sorted out." Still, several multinational corporations are starting to do business with Burma's bloody regime, thus bolstering tyranny.

The United States has applied great pressure on the Burmese government. Now it is time for America's allies--particularly Japan, Singapore and Thailand---to cut off their support for a regime so fearful of democracy that it murders its own people by the thousands."

"Gen Saw Maung says he is doing what is best for the country. If that is so, why must he invest so much in the military in order to control the people? A happy and trusting people do not rebel. It is only those who can no longer bear the burden of oppression that Gen Saw Maung fears, and that my friend, is almost the entire population of Burma!"

Leut Myauk Ye

PRESS RELEASE

YE CITY BOMBED

On the 22nd of March 1990, from 5am to 2pm, the New Mon State Army (NMSA) and ABSDF members entered 'Ye' township, Mon State, Southern Burma. The same day, between 5pm and 6pm, Bel 205 helicopters and other aircraft flew over 'Ye' township and dropped many bombs. The Burmese airforce continued dropping bombs until 10:50am on the 23rd. Meanwhile, the Burmese navy also shelled 'Ye' township. About 300 Burmese military soldiers from Battalion 61 were in "Ye" at that time and were under the control of South-Eastern Command Commander Maj General Nynn Lin.

During the fighting, 6 NMSA members and 5 ABSDF members were killed. These 5 ABSDF members are Shwe Ba, an ex-military soldier Lance-Corporal, Tint Lwin from Mu Dont high school, Kant Soe, high school student from Mu Dont township, Tin Tun high school student from Mu Dont township, and Win Maw, an ex-airforce soldier. All of them fled to the Thai-Burma border after the bloody military crack-down in Burma in Sept 1988. The sources did not mention exactly how many civilians died and how many casualties were realised in the township, but they mentioned that it is believed to be over a hundred civilians dead and many houses set fire because of the bombing and shelling from the Burmese airforce and navy. Seeing the carnage being brought on the people of 'Ye', the Mon and students retreated from "Ye"

township. Many of the military soldiers from Light Infantry Division 61 were killed by the bombing as well.

The Burmese military's own Broadcasting Station, BBS, announced on the 23rd night that the NMSA attacked 'Ye' township and the Burmese military fought against them killing 43. Four Burmese military soldiers were killed during the fighting said the broadcast. The Working People's Daily also reported the attack on the 24th of March 1990.

The terrible bombing and shelling of 'Ye' by the Burmese airforce and navy must be a severe blow to the morale of many of the Burmese soldiers at the border area. They were sent to the border to eradicate the ethnic minorities and the students, and then their own airforce and navy bomb and shell their homes and families in 'Ye'.

During the first week of March 1990, the Burmese army attack Kyar Aine Sat Kyi township, Karen State southern Burma. About 50 ABSDF members had previously been living together with the villagers in this area. After the Burmese army occupied that township, they set fire to the whole township because these villagers supported the students. All of the villagers from that township left from their homes after the military arson. However, the military continues to say that they will hold the elections in Kyar Aine Sat Kyi on the 27th of March 1990. They do not say who will be there to vote.

WHO OWNS THREE PAGODAS PASS

Three Pagodas Pass is named after the three small white pagodas which stand near the border line. It has long been a tourist spot for Thai travelers who visit the western border of Thailand.

A vague line marked the accepted boundary between Thailand and the Mon State in Burma. Just across this border line the ABSDF had established several camps. These camps were over run by the Burmese military several months back.

Almost immediately, a problem arose. The Burmese military claimed that the three small white pagodas were in their territory, and they showed an old 1945 British map to prove it. According to one Burmese officer, the famous pass belongs to Burma and "we want our land back."

Although the Burmese military has received a lot of support and encouragement from the Thai military, this little dispute indicates that things are not so smooth between "friends".

THE FUTURE OF OUR MOTHERLAND



A large field of logs in a logging concession near Kanchanaburi awaits transportation to saw mills in Thailand. After heavy fighting in this area, the Burmese military overran camps of the Mon ethnic

A truck of the Union Par Co. passes through a checkpoint on its way from a logging concession in Burma to a sawmill near Mae Hong Son Thailand. Students living in the area say that about ten trucks pass through the checkpoint each day carrying heavy loads of teak and other hardwood trees.

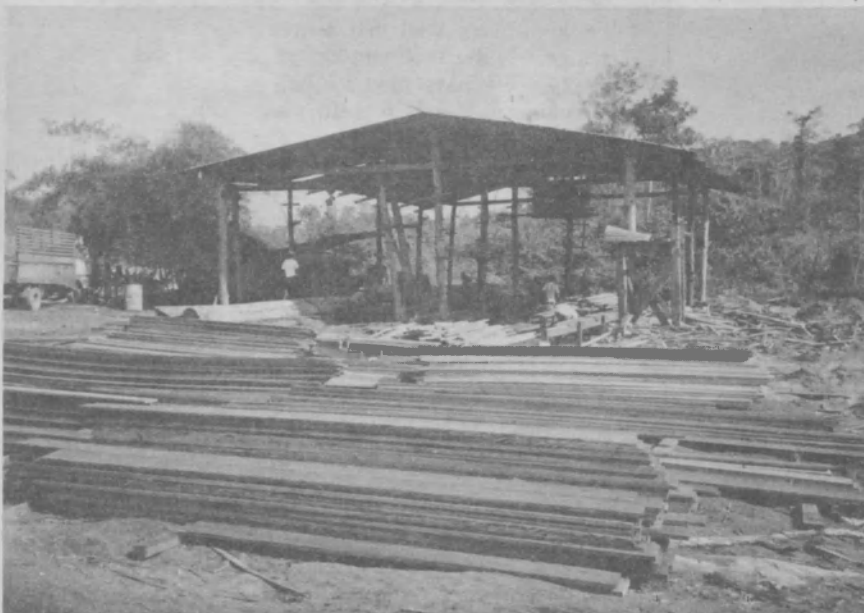
The Burmese military is making heavy attacks against ethnic camps in areas where Thai logging concessions have been sold. It is clear that they want to clear out the ethnic minorities so that the logging by Thai companies can go unhindered.



WHO BENEFITS?



group and several student camps. Almost immediately, logging trucks started moving into the area to take out the cut teak trees.



The trees in Burma, especially along the Thai/Burma border, are being cut down at an alarming rate. There appears to be no selective cutting. Logging contracts are generally for three years which means that the logging companies will try to take everything they can during this short period because there is no assurance that their contracts will be extended after the three-year term is up. Areas once rich with trees and wild life are rapidly becoming desert-like. The tribal people who have lived in harmony with the environment for so many years, are losing their way of life and their very chance for survival.

Sawmills like this one symbolize a dying way of life and a dying environment.

THOUGHTS FROM THE JUNGLE

Liberation is won through struggle
Not given as a gift

The road to liberation is not created in meeting rooms, seminars, university halls or intellectual exchanges. The road to liberation is created by the oppressed who begin seeking a release from their oppression from the first day they become aware of it. For this reason, we can never liberate anybody. The oppressed must, and will, liberate themselves.

The question we must always consider very carefully is whether or not we have taken the time, the interest and the true sincerity to understand the road to liberation which the oppressed are taking. It does not mean that we will always agree with their approach. The oppressed have the individual and collective freedom to make bad as well as good choices. However, if we do not sit down and listen to them with open hearts and minds, we can never understand what road they are taking, why they are taking it, and what they truly wish to achieve along this road, nor can we act in such a way that we help build up the liberation movement. It is very easy, even with the best intentions, to hinder the people as they move along this delicate path towards full human dignity and freedom.

At the same time, it must be understood that if we wish to get involved in this liberation process, we have only two choices: work in such a way that we encourage the process for liberation, or in such a way that we support the oppressive structures. There is no third way. Even our best intentions do not necessarily mean that our help is leading to the true liberation of the oppressed.

The oppressed know the dangers and pain of violence. It is for this reason that they seek every non-violent path to liberation which they can think of. When they feel they have no alternatives left, they finally turn to armed struggle, knowing better than others what suffering this approach must bring them. However, to those seeking liberation, this suffering is sometimes less painful than living under the oppressive heel of a dictator.

If we wish to join in this struggle for the liberation of the oppressed without being an obstacle to the oppressed, we must take the time to know and understand how the oppressed feel about their oppression and how they are striving to throw it off

their backs. If we add our support to their non-violent efforts, we can strengthen those efforts and make them more of a positive option. If we refuse to work together with the oppressed on these actions which they themselves have identified and are trying to use, we help destroy these options, and add our weight to the side of the oppressor.

We can never liberate the oppressed no matter how experienced and knowledgeable we are. We can only join with them in a positive response to their calls, or we can stand against them in our demands to do our own thing in our own way. The oppressed will find liberation one day, and we must decide now which side we desire to be on.

OUR COMMITMENT

"Some visitors have criticized us for 'being committed to an armed overthrow of the Burmese government.' Although I can understand their concern, I want to say that they do not understand us very well. We are not committed to an armed revolution. We are rather committed to making our country democratic. This is our commitment, and this is what we strive to do. We must do what is effective to achieve this.

We know very well that a non-violent change will be best for our country and our people. We have pled for help from all international friends to help make such a change possible. The response has often been silence.

Now our camps are being over run because the Saw Maung military has gained so much power through economic dealings with other countries. This is why some of our students now want to fight back.

If our friends believe a non-violent change in Burma is to be possible, then we ask them to work closely with us so that it can become a reality. We believe it is possible. Do they?"

VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

"The Last Hour"
Yi Yi Tun

With revolution in mind,
I left my loved ones,
all the people I care,
for a foreign land.

My dreams remain unattained.

This strange disease
prevents me from reaching
that goal of democracy.

No longer can I continue
that revolutionary march.

Soon, I'll keep
my appointment
with death.

No remorse, worry or fear.
A female revolutionary am I
not.

But one regret is that I have
not been able to press ahead
for my goal.

Listen my comrades,
this is my last request.
Pray continue the struggle,
one more step forward
on my behalf.

(Ms. Yi Yi Tun died from cancer in
January of this year. Her poems continue
to inspire and challenge us..."Dawn")



INVESTMENTS FOR OPPRESSION

ARMS AND AMMUNITION

A recent report from West Germany says that on January 30 of this year a German tv program, "Report" on channel ARD, concerning Germany's involvement in gun-running was aired. The program, which lasted for 45 minutes, showed scenes of the 1988 massacre in Rangoon in which the Burmese soldiers could be seen carrying G3 guns which are produced by the German Fritz Werner company. There were also pictures of Fritz Werner's cargo of large wooden boxes destined for the ministry of defense in Rangoon. The large wooden crates were being loaded on the SS Megway of the Burmese Five Star Line.

The Fritz Werner company runs an arms and ammunition manufacturing plant in Rangoon. They produce the guns commonly used by the Burmese military in their campaigns against the ethnic minority groups living along the border areas of Burma.

According to the tv report, Germany is the leading exporter of G3 (guns commonly used by the Burmese military) and the 5th largest weapon exporter in the world.

The president of Germany, Herr Weizaker as well as the Chancellor were reported to be quite upset by the tv program, and demanded more details about the affair from the Ministry of Commerce.

Letters to the German government, as well as German newspapers, condemning the arms sales to Burma and the support for the Fritz Werner weapons plant in Rangoon would help build up the pressure on this company. It just might help save some lives.



TOURISM

The Golden Triangle resort is now becoming a reality. Recently a foundation stone-laying ceremony was held at the site. It was presided over by senior Thai and Burmese officials. Fifteen Thai government and opposition MPs, including Piyanat Watcharaporn also attended.

The resort is situated within the Golden Triangle, a large mountainous area straddling Thailand, Burma and Laos that is said to be the world's largest source of heroin.

The PP Group of former deputy finance minister Prapat Bodhisuthon and his younger brother Prasit, will build a luxurious hotel, bungalows, a golf course and other entertainment facilities in the area. There are also plans to build a small airfield.

The deal calls for the Thai investors to pay the Burmese government about US\$32 million for a 30-year lease on the area.

The Burmese Financial Investment Commission, meanwhile, has granted the resort firm privileges, including a three-year income tax and import duty exemption, with a 15 per cent income tax to be collected in the fourth year of operation.

The planned resort is in Burmese territory, across the Ruak River. It is not far from the area on the Thai side where a large hotel owned by Anuwat Wongwan, son of Solidarity Party leader Narong Wongwan is located.

The Burmese government will allow Thai and foreign tourists to travel to the border resort from Chiang Rai and stay there as long as they want. Only a border pass will be needed and no passport or visa will be required.

Three golf courses are being planned for the resort, and they will be only for members, who will pay approximately US\$50,000 for life.

Mr. Prasit said that the planned casino would not yet open at the resort, but he claimed that gambling is common in Burma and that Rangoon does not regard it as illegal.

(Bangkok Post February 23, 1990)

(investments...continued)

One of the biggest investors in Burma today is the South Korean company, Daewoo. Their most recent investment plan is to build a 5-star luxury hotel in Rangoon at a cost of about US\$60 million. The project will take 4 years to complete.

The have also signed a joint-venture with a Burma economic holding company to produce and market textiles for local consumption and export.

A further US\$4 million investment by Daewoo

involves the production of electronic products. The Burmese Ministry of Secondary Industries is suppose to provide the remaining US\$6 million for this project. The plant will produce 10,000 color TV sets, 200,000 black-and-white TV sets, 160,000 audio sets and 210,000 refrigerators every year starting in December. (Bangkok Post, March 31)

According to the State-run Rangoon Radio, foreign investments in Burma has topped US\$156.49 million since last year.

REFUGEES

According to the Associated Press, at least 20,000 ethnic civilians have been driven out of their villages in Burma and into Thailand by the recent Burmese military campaigns. This doubles the number of people living in make-shift refugee camps along the border.

These villagers flee the shelling which always precedes the military attacks, as well as the fear of being used as porters or being raped and killed. An unknown number of villages have been burned to the ground by the military.

Although several relief agencies are trying to provide these refugees with basic necessities, the tremendous increase in their numbers has made it a very difficult task. Fear, fatigue and hunger have lowered their resistance to disease, and many are now suffering from a rare strain of malaria which requires special drugs.

According to the US Committee for Refugees, almost 100,000 villagers have been displaced by the fighting in the past two years. This includes 32,000 Karen, 6,400 Mon and at least 52,000 Kachin people.

If the fighting continues, up to 10,000 more refugees may stream across the border in the next few months. The few relief agencies working with them will have to struggle hard to meet these new needs.

The military campaign follows a pledge by Gen Saw Maung that the Burmese military would completely control the border area before the May elections.

Although several major ethnic camps have fallen, the use of an extremely large number of soldiers along with large artillery and occasional airpower by the Burmese military have been unable to completely dislodge the Karen, Kareni and Mon forces.

Saw Maung not only wants to "clean up" the border so that he can convince the world that before the elections are held he controls all of Burma, but also because he wants to open up all border crossings between Thailand and Burma so that logging concessions can be worked without interference from the ethnic forces and from the student camps. This logging business is extremely important to Saw Maung as he desperately needs the money it generates to keep his iron-fisted hold over the country. Should he lose this income, he might find it hard to continue buying the loyalty of his army which is the only thing keeping him in power.

The villagers who have had to flee into Thailand for safety are the sad victims of this military policy which puts its own power above the rights and happiness of the people. How long this will go on depends, to a large degree, on the continued economic and political support which certain foreign countries give to Saw Maung. Should he finally be convinced to sit down at the table for serious talks about peace, the people of Burma could quickly solve the civil war and get back to the task of rebuilding the country and the economy.

It is the voice of the refugees, not the military, which should sway world opinion.

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR WHOM?

March 27 marks the day, in 1945, that the Burmese people rose up against the Japanese who had taken over the country for three years. To mark the 45th anniversary of this uprising, Gen Saw Maung gave a long speech to his forces following their parade, in which he attempted to defend his rule over the country since September 18, 1988 through the SLORC (military government).

Throughout his speech, Gen Saw Maung criticized those individuals and organizations, both within Burma and outside, who continue to raise the issue of human rights. He often suggested that outside organizations and governments were trying to manipulate local opposition groups, and that any voice from inside raising the issue of human rights abuses must certainly be instigated by these outside "powers". "When there are people who want to be puppets, it is natural that there is a puppeteer ready to pull strings", he exhorts. Perhaps he was referring to himself as it is well known that he is at the beck and call of his mentor, Gen Ne Win.

In his speech, Gen Saw Maung further complains that many organizations and governments have also criticized his military for abusing the human rights of the Burmese people. "Human rights for whom?" he laments. "We are accused of making strong military offensives against the KNU and KIA, who only desire autonomy. Human rights for the KNU, KIA and a group of lawless insurgents? Or for drug traffickers and blackmarketeers? Or is it for the millions of people who live within the law peacefully? Then why was anti-apartheid activist Mr. Mandela, who was released only days ago, detained for 27 years?"

The problem is that the Burmese people are not free to discuss openly, or in the mass media, their true experiences in a society in which the military is free to abuse their rights. The people seek every means they can to let the world know their realities, and yet the military of Saw Maung tries to cover up the truth.

A cartoon appeared in the Working People's Daily on March 21 which illustrates this problem. A Burmese shouts out against international human rights groups for criticizing Burma's human rights

record, while apparently ignoring human rights abuses that appeared in Indian newspapers.

The point should be clear to everyone. International human rights groups, including Amnesty International, cover all countries, including India in their reports on human rights violations. Burma is not criticized alone. Secondly, an important point to remember is that in India the newspapers are free to report these abuses, but in Burma SLORC sees to it that no information regarding the sad realities inside the country appears in the papers.

Gen Saw Maung's speech, and the SLORC cartoons perhaps say more than they intend to.



The cover of this issue of DAWN was produced by a group inside Burma to commemorate the March 13th anniversary of Phone Maw's death.

RECENT POLITICAL ARRESTS

Maung Kwaw Moe

Father.....Kyaut Ba Luu Tin Maung Shwe
Age.....25
Education....BSc.IC NLD Youth Leader, Card Section
Address.....Goy Kone, Insein Road, Rangoon

He was arrested by the military when they raided Aung San Suu Kyi's house. When he was arrested by the military, the military soldiers beat his head until it bled. He was carried to Insein prison with his head covered with a black bag. After 4 or 5 months in prison, his relatives were allowed to see him. But, during the 1st week of March, we received information from his close friend that now nobody can see him and jail officers told his family "You don't need to give him food anymore."

According to the same sources, nearly all of the students from Aung San Suu Kyi's house were beaten by the military when they raided her house and their heads were covered with black bags while they were carried to Insein prison by the military.

Zar Ni Ko Ko Kyi

Age.....27
Education.....BA.Hons History
Occupation.....History tutor, Rangoon University, History Department

He was arrested by the military inside Aung San Suu Kyi's house.

U Ko Yu

Age.....62
Occupation.....Lawyer, CEC member of NLD

He was arrested by the military at the beginning of this year. Sources say that, before his arrest, his relatives and family received a letter from Maj Gen Phone Myint. The letter was written to U Ko Yu and asking that he surrender to the military and if he would not surrender, action would be taken against his family. At that time U Ko Yu had hidden somewhere and the military could not arrest him. Now, he is still held in Insein prison without trial.

Maung Thaw Ka

He was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment with hard labor. At night when Saw Maung's speech was carried over radio telling of the charges against Maung Thaw Ka and U Ko Yu, the wife of Maung Thaw Ka had a heart attack and died.

Maung Thaw Ka was allowed to go to the funeral.

U Than Sein

Age.....77
Occupation.....CEC party of LDP
Address.....154/ Kaba Aye Pagoda street, Rangoon,
History.....He was a parliament secretary during the government of U Nu (1947 to 1962). When Gen Ne Win took the power on 2nd of March 1962, he was a parliament secretary and he escaped arrest and went into hiding. Later he was arrested by the military and put in prison for about 5 years. He was put in prison again by the military every time there were demonstrations. Now he is still under house arrest by the military without trial.

Yan Mvo Thein

Age.....22
Education.....Final part I, Institute of Medicine (2).
Member of All Burma Federation of Student Union
Address.....Yin Kin, Ward No.2, Rangoon

He was imprisoned by the military since March 1989 and is still in prison without trial.

U Thu Wai

On the 12th of March 1990, U Thu Wai, chairman of the Democracy Party gave a speech over radio and television. Mr. Christopher Gunness, BBC correspondent, said that U Thu Wai's speech was heavily censored by the SLORC authorities.

He mention that before U Thu Wai sent his speech to the authorities, he had used the term "dictators", when refering to the past 26 years of one party rule by Gen Ne Win. In those sentences, "dictator" was cut out.

(Recent Political Arrests...continued)

Also, one entire paragraph was cut off. In this paragraph, U Thu Wai had written that "Thailand is drinking the blood of the Burmese people by exploiting and controlling our national resources."

Another paragraph was also cut off because he wrote that "the military dictators have created the military intelligence forces and use them to control power."

Mr. Christopher Guinness said that the government censors only left those words which did not say against the military directly.

According to some diplomats in Rangoon, this is one example of unfair laws preventing free and fair elections among the many which exist. They added that the Burmese people have not received full democracy and human rights like the people from other countries around the world.

During this time, the campaign trips of the political parties should be started. But there are too many

restrictions. Some of the restrictions are not mentioned clearly: e.g the military said a party's representative can give a speech for 3 hours, but they did not mention if that is 3 hours per day, per week, or only once before the elections.

Nobody wants to protest against the military because of threats of arrest by the military. Foreign diplomats say that several thousand opposition people are still in custody, some have been put under house arrest and there are still effective unfair and unjust laws. Because of these things, there is no chance for both the Burmese people and the international community to say there will be free and fair elections.

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Address correction requested