

DAWN

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ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

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ELECTIONS DO NOT MEAN DEMOCRACY

PEOPLE'S POWER MEANS DEMOCRACY

The elections have been held. A casual analysis indicates that, at least on May 27th, the election process had a semblance of being free and fair. People turned out to vote, and overwhelmingly elected the NLD part of Aung San Suu Kyi to represent them in the formation of a new government.

Several things, however, must be kept in mind. The process leading up to May 27th was not a free and fair process. Many opposition leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Others were barred from entering the elections through various and devious methods. People were not allowed to discuss the candidates or political parties freely. Yet, the NLD won by a wide margin indicating that the people have a strong dislike for SLORC and their NUP party, and prefer a leadership with a cleaner history.

Now the military has promised to turn power over to this newly elected government as soon as a new constitution has been written. Perhaps we should believe that they will do this, but we still feel the pain of their brutal repression of our democratic movement in 1988. We have some doubts that they will truly allow the people to run the country.

If the military is sincere in their promise to move out of the political arena and allow a democratic government to run Burma, then they should show signs of this sincerity. For example, they should immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners who have been arrested, tortured and detained during this struggle for democracy. They should also immediately withdraw all of their military troops from the ethnic areas, and end their military domination over these people.

There is little doubt that international pressure, and the continued activities of the democratic movement inside Burma play a most important role in forcing the military to allow more freedom to the people in the May 27th election. Without this pressure, the military would have been free to fully manipulate the election as they have everything in the country for the past 28 years.

This international pressure must be kept up to insure that the military will actually turn power over to the elected government. All friends of Burma should continue to follow the situation closely, and continue to apply pressure so that true democracy can finally come to Burma.

The May 27th elections were only one small step in the long journey to democracy. We have not achieved our goal yet. Together we must continue the struggle so that the Burmese people will finally have the rights and freedoms which they so dearly desire.

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

THE ELECTIONS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

Burma's first multi-party election in over 26 years has finally been held. Much to the surprise of many people, election day was surprisingly free and fair. As a result, the National League for Democracy (NLD) party of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won a resounding victory with perhaps more than 2/3s of the seats (the official results nationwide are not yet public). The National Unity Party (NUP) of the military power-elite was basically voted out of existence with only a very small number of seats won. Even though power has not yet been turned over to the NLD, (and there is a lot of speculation that the military rulers will try to avoid turning over power), the elections were a great victory for the people of Burma. Through their votes, the people declared, without a doubt, that they no longer want to be ruled by a dictator, or by a military force. The time for democracy has arrived in Burma!

However, democracy is still a long way off. Although a few international politicians and military leaders have started lauding the arrival of democracy in Burma, most countries still have a wait and see attitude. Democracy does not simply come with a one-day free and fair election. It can only come when the military goes back to their barracks and simply takes care of the business they were originally set up to take care of. Politics and the military should not be mixed.

What lies ahead for the Burmese people now? This is a question that is on the minds of all the people, and there are many ideas floating around.

Some people suggest that perhaps the military elite in Burma have seen what is happening in Europe, and have decided that it is time they give up their hold on the country. These people say that it is possible SLORC will slowly turn power over to the new parliament once a constitution has been written, and the NLD can manage the running of the country. It is not strange that only a very few people place any faith in this idea.

A second idea is that SLORC was forced, against their will, to allow the elections to come about freely and fairly by international pressure as well as because of internal pressure.

According to this idea, the SLORC began planning many months back how they could hold free elections, regain international credibility, and still

hang on to power.

Their plan was to arrest the major leaders of the opposition groups, and take them out of the political arena. With these respected leaders gone, the SLORC could allow the elections to come off freely even though they knew, without a doubt, that the opposition would win.

Following the elections, the SLORC would begin to turn power over to the opposition, while at the same time throwing numerous road-blocks in the way. They might also try to create their own disturbances throughout the country in order to convince the people and the world that the opposition is simply not ready to take control. With the strong leadership of the opposition still in prison or under house arrest, the new leadership of the opposition just might not be able to handle the situation. If enough chaos is created in the country, the SLORC could quickly step back in total control with the excuse that the opposition was losing control of the country and the military must save Burma from anarchy -- an excuse they have used for their September 1988 coup.

Having gained some credibility from the elections, it is just possible that many countries around the world would believe them, and accept SLORC's argument that Burma is not yet ready for a multi-party government so the SLORC must continue their rule for at least a few more years during which time the country can be better prepared to take on a civilian government.

Through this trickery, SLORC (Ne Win) could keep a grip on power for a long time yet, which would give them the opportunity to further strip the country of its rich natural resources, and prepare for a rich and comfortable life in some foreign country when the time comes.

This second idea seems a strong possibility to many people. They base their belief on the fact that there are extremely few examples in history that a dictator or a ruling military elite have been willing to turn power over to the people.

They feel there is further evidence that things will run this course in Burma because there is no clear process set up to transfer power from SLORC to the NLD. For example, it is not clear how a new

constitution is to be written, or how it is to be ratified. SLORC has said that they will turn power over to the opposition when an "apt and appropriate constitution has been drawn up." Who determines when the new constitution is "apt and appropriate?" If it is through a national referendum, how will this referendum be organized? If this decision is made by SLORC, what will they use to determine what is "apt and appropriate?"

SLORC has also indicated that the turning over of power must follow a systematic process, and "SLORC will draw up the rules for that systematic process." This means that SLORC, not the opposition and the people, will control the process. This being the case, one can only imagine how one-sided the process will be.

It may seem strange to many people around the world that the Burmese people are so skeptical about the road ahead after election day went off without a hitch and the opposition won such a huge majority of the seats. Let our international friends not forget that SLORC came into power against the will of the people amidst tremendous bloodshed. Their policies have further widened the conflicts which exist in Burmese society, and they have further destroyed the already failing economy of the country. During the past months they have launched terrible military attacks along the border areas, burned numerous villages, driven tens of thousands of ethnic villagers into exile, and have, through their military attacks, killed scores of students and tribal villagers. At the same time, they have continued to arrest and detain more non-violent activists, many of whom have been severely tortured and some even killed. Can the people of Burma be expected to trust this military regime to simply turn power over to the people?

If the SLORC truly wishes to turn power over to the opposition parties, they should demonstrate their desire through several concrete actions:

- 1) They should immediately release Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo, U Nu, Min Ko Naing, and all other political detainees.
- 2) They should immediately remove all their troops from the ethnic border areas in order to end the hostilities there and pave the way for peace talks.
- 3) They should allow the NLD to immediately draw up a new constitution, and allow the parliament to immediately convene in order to begin running the country.
- 4) They should bring to justice all those military

and government officials who are responsible for killing the unarmed and peaceful demonstrators during the 1988 uprising.

- 5) They should immediately begin demilitarizing the country, and send their troops back to the barracks in order to ease tensions throughout the country.

To help bring this process about, international attention and pressure is still needed. While this pressure may have played a big role in bringing about more free and fair elections, it is still needed to force SLORC to keep the few promises it has made and to speed up the democratization process.

Economic and political boycotts should be kept alive. If international companies truly respect the wishes of the Burmese people, they should stop all dealings with the military regime and wait until they can negotiate their investments directly with the government elected by the people. It is very possible that the people of Burma will not recognize any contracts made with the military elite, and those investments will simply be lost.

Human rights groups must keep up their watch on the internal situation, and continue with their reporting. The SLORC has not released any of the political prisoners, and in fact they have rather continued making new arrests. These human rights groups have been invaluable to the Burmese people, and their role has not yet ended.

It is also important that a close watch be kept on the Thai/Burma border. It is not safe for those who have taken refuge along the border to return to their homes. They can still face arrest and execution. With the close working relationship between the Burmese and Thai militaries, there is always the possibility that students and other exiles will be forced back because Burma now has "democracy". These people will voluntarily return when there is assurance that it is safe and that the military no longer controls the country.

The May 27 election was a historical moment for the Burmese people. In one loud voice they condemned SLORC and Ne Win and his cronies for their brutal and inhumane rule over the country. A new dawn is now possible for our mother land. However, we know that the election has only been the first very small step in the process. So much still remains to be done if democracy is to ever blossom in our land. The struggle will go on, and we know that one day the people shall win.

ASIA WATCH REPORT

During May 1990, Asia Watch, a human rights committee based in the United States, published an 80-page report about "HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA(MYANMAR)" written by James A. Goldston, an attorney who serves as the Orville Schell Fellow at Human Rights Watch for 1989-90 and edited by Patricia Gossman, Research Associate at Asia Watch.

The report is based largely on a fact-finding mission to Burma and Thailand undertaken in April 1990 by Mr. Goldston, as well as on information obtained in Thailand by Sidney Jones, Executive Director of Asia Watch, in May 1990.

In the report, Asia Watch condemns the violation of human rights by the Burmese government against its citizens and urges the international community to stop aid and any other dealings with the Burmese government immediately.

The report says that during the visit to Burma in April, Asia Watch received credible reports that "pro-democracy opposition parties may win substantial popular support on election day, despite concerted efforts by the government to manipulate the outcome. However, Burma's military authorities have pledged to retain control of the government-no matter the election outcome-until a new constitution is drafted, a process that could take years, if it takes place at all. Even an opposition victory in the polls may mean little in terms of real political reform in Burma, or restoration of fundamental human rights."

"Until the government of Burma takes steps to ensure the protection of human rights for its citizens, other governments should refrain from expanding trade relations with Burma or renewing programs of economic assistance. Rather, international scrutiny of human rights conditions should continue following the May 27 election. So long as the Burmese government continues to engage in systematic and gross violations of the rights of its citizens, the proper posture of the international community towards Burma's military regime is one of condemnation."

"In light of these considerations, Asia Watch sets forth below the minimal steps which the Burmese government must take to end its systematic gross violation of internationally recognized human rights. We call on the Burmese government to adopt these

measures immediately, and we urge the international community not to renew or strengthen economic or military ties with the government of Burma until these steps are taken:

- Release from jail or house arrest all persons who have been detained for the peaceful expression of their political views, including opposition leaders Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo, and allow all Burmese to participate freely in peaceful political activity.

- Establish independent impartial investigations into all reports of torture, disappearances and extrajudicial executions, and prosecute those responsible for such abuses, including members of the armed forces and police responsible for the massacre of 1000-3000 demonstrators in 1988.

- Abolish the practice of incommunicado detention, and establish safeguards against torture, including the right of habeas corpus and access to prisoners for family members and lawyers. The government should also maintain a centralized register of prisoners and allow lawyers and the public access to the list.

- Suspend the use of military tribunals to try civilians and permit civilian courts to conduct trials in accordance with internationally recognized standards of due process.

- Withdraw restrictions on basic civil liberties such as freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of the press, including restrictions on access for foreign journalists.

- Abolish the army practice of forced recruitment and abuse of civilian porters.

- Establish independent investigations into reports of army abuses in the border conflict, including the arrest, torture and summary execution of suspected guerrilla sympathizers, indiscriminate attacks on civilians, and the looting and burning of private property, including houses and crop areas.

- Permit international organizations that operate confidentially, and international relief organizations to undertake the full range of their protection activities in Burma."

VOICES OF CONCERN

Good-human Rights"

Human rights poses a big problem for people in power. They wish to give the international community the impression that they observe human rights towards their people, but at the same time, they feel the need to violate those human rights at times in order to preserve their position of power.

The Burmese military regime is a good example of this. They try to impress the world that they protect the human rights of the Burmese people, yet, according to Amnesty International, Asia Watch and other international human rights organizations, there is a consistent and constant violation of human rights all over Burma.

Part of the problem stems from the fact that those in power would divide the population into two groups of humans - "good-humans" and "not-so-good-humans". Those considered "good-humans" are guaranteed full human rights, but those considered "not-so-good-humans" face a life in which their human rights can be abused at any time.

The power elite resort to such tactics when they do not have confidence that they truly have the respect and trust of the people. It also means that they do not trust the people they are in control over.

In Burma, SLORC enacted martial law in 1988 which effectively cancelled the rights which the people had under the Burmese legal system. Through martial law, the military can arrest, detain, interrogate and even sentence a person to death without giving that person the right to trial, defense or even family visits. Although this totally violates the human rights of the Burmese citizens, SLORC still claims that they recognize and protect the human rights of their citizens.

In fact, only those people which SLORC considers "good-humans" are granted human rights in Burma today, and for that reason the SLORC definition of human rights would better be called "good-human rights".

This double standard of the SLORC towards the people of Burma is at the root of the present conflict. SLORC, remaining consistent with the 26-year rule by the BSPP, has developed and

perpetrated a system which gives special benefits and protection to those who serve it without question. Those who dare to raise questions or criticize are considered "not-so-good-humans", and they are subject to arrest without charge, trial without the right to defense, and sentencing without justice. All of this is done "for the good of the people".

It is no surprise, therefore, that those who work within the SLORC system, never speak out against the injustices which they see. They can not afford to be suddenly labeled a "not-so-good-human". Through this system, Ne Win and the present SLORC, have maintained their control over the Burmese people during the past 28 years. It is a control of fear, subjugation, and dictatorship. At the same time, it is this double standard policy which is finally bringing about the downfall of Ne Win and SLORC, because those labeled as "not-so-good-humans" can not tolerate this injustice for ever. They must, and they will, finally stand up to throw this yoke of oppression off of their backs. This is what is happening in Burma today, and the tremendous win of the NLD in the May 27 elections is evidence of the courage and strength of the people who have felt the whip of injustice and now are calling for their human rights to be returned.

All those who are in authority and power positions should take heed of this reality. If all people in the society are not granted equal and full human rights, conflicts and disruptions will erupt. Even the violation of an individual's human rights done "for the good of the people" can not bring about unity, justice, and peace in the society. Double standards simply do not bring about positive results in the long run, and there is no such thing as "good-human rights". Human rights belong to every human, and these rights must be respected fully.

Those who are in positions of authority must, through hard work and serious commitment, develop trust and confidence in the people by treating all with respect and equality. Through this means, the people will also develop a trust and faith in the leadership, and that is how peace in a society comes about.

Let "All-human Rights" prevail!

ELECTION ACTIONS

PRESS RELEASE BY BURMESE STUDENTS IN BANGKOK

Date.....26th May, 1990

We, the Burmese students in Bangkok, held a demonstration against the coming elections to be held on Sunday, 27th May 1990. About 150 Burmese students, Overseas Burmese patriots and members of the Overseas Mon Patriots in Bangkok participated in the demonstration from 10:00 am to 12:00 am, this morning in front of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok.

The following are the aims of the our demonstration:

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Section 21, Paragraph 3, all the people have the right to vote freely in elections.

Since 1962, human rights abuses have been occurring in Burma. International observation teams have asked to go to Burma to monitor the elections but the State Law and Order Restoration Council of Burma has refused to accept them.

The following are the minimum requirements to ensure a free and fair election according to international election observations of the International Human Rights Law Groups.

(a) Involvement in the political movement by the people must not be restricted without any reasons.

(b) There must be freedom of association, assembly, publication, speech, and campaigning.

(c) A clear and correct voting and counting system must be adhered to.

(d) There must be a right to submit the analysis to the media by the election observation mission.

The facts mentioned in the above paragraph have not been achieved and the regime has not allowed the observation mission to observe the elections in Burma. The military has recently allowed foreign journalists in, but they were selectively chosen by the military. We believe that they will not be allowed to go freely in the country and will be strictly controlled by the SLORC.

So it is clear that the election will not be free and fair though it has not even started yet. To be more distinct, we would like to illustrate this by analyzing the electoral process of the coming election.

1. Nearly all of the people-supported political leaders have been put under house arrest or are serving long terms in prison with hard labor, such as U Nu, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

2. The election commission or election administrators are formed by the persons who are proposed and appointed by S.L.O.R.C., not by representatives of the people.

3. There still exists martial law order 2/88, which bans more than 4 people gathering and sets a curfew between 10 pm to 4 am. Order 8/88 bans activities of the political parties and order 3/90, bans free speech, free campaigns, free assembly and free publication.

4. The winning parties can not form a new government because there is no constitutional law on how to form the government. This was carefully instigated by SLORC who will try to retain power while the winning parties will not be able to administer the country.

5. The SLORC announced that they will not transfer power until there is a strong government after the constitution has been proved.

Therefore, according to these causes, the election will not be free and fair. The following are our slogans:

"Release all detainee, political and student prisoners"

"We don't believe the election"

"Dissolve SLORC!"

"Form an interim government"

"Democratic revolution must win"

Burmese Students(Bangkok)
26th May, 1990

Note: We would like to inform you that we will continue our demonstration tomorrow at 10:00 am, 27th May, 1990.

ELECTION PROTESTS IN THAILAND

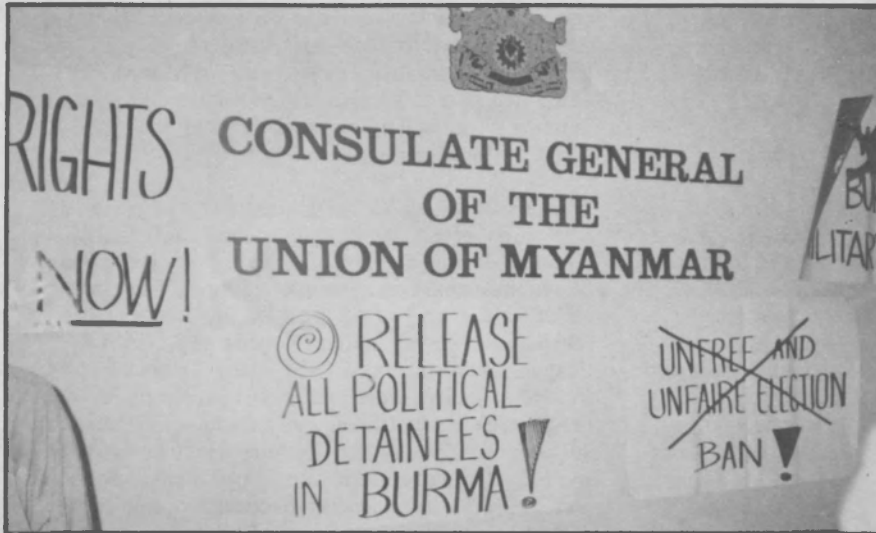


About 300 Burmese students, representing several organizations, place protest posters on the walls of the Burmese embassy in Bangkok. The students held their protest for two days - May 26 and 27.

The gate leading into the Burmese embassy in Bangkok was totally covered with posters calling for democracy, the release of all political prisoners and the dismantling of the military leadership. No one from the embassy came out to talk with the students.

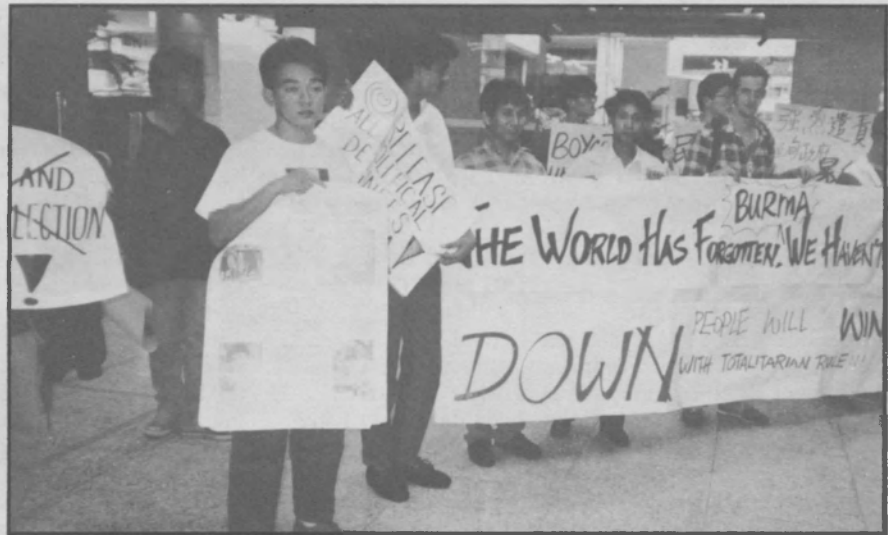


ELECTION PROTESTS IN HONG KONG



The office of the Consulate of Burma in Hong Kong became a "Democracy Wall" as students from many countries gathered to protest the brutality of the Burmese military regime and to demand that the military listen to the call of the Burmese people for human rights and justice.

Asian students stand together against dictatorship and oppression.



AMNESTY REPORT

On the 2nd of May 1990, Amnesty International issued a 10-page document entitled, "Myanmar: Prisoners of Conscience and Torture" (AI Index: 16/04/90).

Following are some excerpts from the report:

Since the coup, severe human rights violations, including mass arrests of prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience, widespread torture, summary trials, and extra-judicial executions continued to occur at very high levels. Recent testimonies obtained by Amnesty International describe these human rights abuses and indicate that real or imputed critics of Myanmar's military government run a high risk of being imprisoned, interrogated, and tortured for the peaceful expression of their political views.

Possibly thousands had been detained by the military government by March 1990, many of them prisoners of conscience. Prisoners of conscience included the main opposition leaders, many of whom were arrested in July 1989 and officially disqualified by the SLORC from standing in the elections.

Shortly after the coup, the SLORC issued Martial Law Order Number 2/88 and Notification Number 8/88, which respectively prohibited gatherings of more than five people and public criticism of the military regime. Within a few months, many leaders and supporters of the newly registered political parties were arrested and imprisoned for breaking these martial laws.

Summary trial procedures were formulated in July 1989 when Martial Law Orders 1/89 and 2/89 bestowed judicial authority on the military commanders in Yangon and the Central and Northwestern Military Commands, empowering them to conduct summary trials. People who opposed martial law authority by "violation or defiance of the orders issued by the SLORC, the government or (military) commanders" could henceforth be tried only by military tribunals. Order Number 2/89 also established special procedural norms to be observed by military tribunals in the summary trials of martial law offenders. They were to "waive unnecessary witnesses", "indite an offender without hearing prosecution witnesses" and "reject the recalling of witness who have already testified". The tribunals were instructed that those found guilty of offenses

against martial law were to be awarded: "(a) the death sentence; (b) life imprisonment; or (c) a jail term of not less than three years with hard labor". Order Number 2/89 also declares that "decisions and judgments passed by military tribunal shall be final". There is no judicial appeal.

The arrests of up to 3000 supporters of political opposition groups and parties were unofficially reported during the last six months of 1989, many of whom remain in detention. Those detained included the leaders of most of the major, legally registered political parties, notably the National League for Democracy (NLD), the Democratic Party for New Society Party (DPNS), the People's Progressive Party (PPP), the League of Democratic Alliance (LDP) and the National Politics Front (NPF). The report also mentioned that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General Secretary of NLD, was placed under house arrest on 20 July 1989 under the 1975 State Protection Law for "endangering the state", and the SLORC said she would be held "incommunicado" for up to one year. U Tin Oo, the chairman of NLD and retired general, was placed under house arrest at the same time and sentenced on 22nd Dec 1989 to three years' imprisonment with hard labor for "inciting the people to misunderstand the government". U Chit Thaung, an 84-year-old ethnic Padaung, and veteran Political activist, who is said to have been imprisoned at least ten times since 1962, was arrested on 20 July 1989. He has been held at Mandalay prison, where he is reportedly denied family visits. He is said to be in poor health due to his age and the beatings inflicted on him during his previous detention.

U Nu, 82 years old, was prime Minister at the time of the military coup led by General Ne Win in 1962. The league for Democracy and Peace (LDP) was founded by his supporter and legally registered on 21 November 1988, its stated aim 'to safeguard the fundamental rights of mankind'. U Nu has been held under house arrest since 29 Dec 1989. He and five of his supporters continue to refuse to resign from their normal positions in the parallel government which was formed a few weeks before the coup and still remain in custody.

Toe Kyaw Hlaing, a third year medical student at the Institute of Medicine Number 1 in Yangon (Rangoon), was rearrested on 11 March 1990 in connection with the second anniversary of the deaths

of student demonstrators. He had been arrested on 18 March 1989 and was apparently released. Baw La, a 40-year-old lawyer and ethnic Kachin from Myitkyina, the capital of the Kachin State was arrested in September or October 1988. He is said to have been severely beaten in the prison and tortured with electric shocks. Zaw Min, a 30 year-old physician, was arrested at his home in Insein township on 13 July 1989 by a mixed team of soldiers and Military Intelligence Service personnel. A witness said they searched his house thoroughly and covered his head with a blanket as they took him away. Since his arrest his family has reportedly received no news of him and do not know whether he is dead or alive. According to his fellow detainee who was released from Ye Kyi Aing detention center, he was, when last seen, emaciated and had marks on his body from blows. Zaw Min acted as an advisor to the All Burma Federation of Student Unions and DPNS.

The Venerable U Kawira, is a Buddhist monk who was the chairman of the "Kalon Ny" (magic bird) strike committee in Mandalay in August 1988 and arrested in Feb 1989.

Evidence recently gathered by Amnesty International reveals that there is widespread torture by army, police and other state security agencies' personnel of political detainees, including prisoners of conscience. In the light of this new information, Amnesty International is seriously concerned that any person arrested for political reasons in Myanmar must be considered to be at risk of torture by government security forces. This is backed up by the testimonies of 16 recently released people believed to have been victims of torture as well as on dozens of other detailed reports of torture received by Amnesty International over the past two years.

Torture and ill-treatment usually take place at the earliest stage of the detention process. Most people arrested on political grounds in Myanmar are initially held in incommunicado detention for investigation and interrogation. In almost all of the cases documented by Amnesty International, torture or ill-treatment took place during these sometimes prolonged periods in which prisoners were completely isolated from the outside world at the discretion of their interrogators. Victims have said that torture was used both to punish them and to compel them to cooperate with interrogators. Torture and ill-treatment in the course of interrogation was carried out in conjunction with demands that prisoners confess to unlawful activities, implicate others, and respond to questioning about the activities, structure and personnel of illegal organizations and opposition movements.

The reported methodology of torture has been relatively consistent in Myanmar over many years, from the isolated army camps in the areas of insurgency to the urban detention centers of the security services. Beatings, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, were a common denominator of the treatment described by former detainees interviewed by Amnesty International. They included slappings, punching in the face or the body, and kicks with combat boots or elbows with the knees in the sides, chest or back. Detainees have also reportedly been struck in the face, the chest or the back with wooden sticks, truncheons or rifle butts. Beatings in many cases were reportedly carried out after the body was protected with several rice bags, reducing external marks but providing no protection against internal injuries. Prisoners were often blindfolded or hooded with a black cloth or a rice bag.

One typical account of torture and ill-treatment was received from a man detained in Feb 1989 as a suspected collaborator of Kachin insurgents. He was held for nearly three months during which time he was reportedly tortured at the army's Northern Military Command Headquarters at Myitkyina, in Kachin State: in his case, "ordinary beatings" were succeeded by beatings with a truncheon while he was "riding the motorcycle" (being forced to maintain a crouching rider's position). He was also nearly suffocated by having a large plastic bag placed over his upper body and he was subjected to the "iron road" whereby an iron bar is rolled up and down the victim's shins with increasing pressure.

Information was obtained by Amnesty International from a wide range of prisoners whose times and places of imprisonment have differed greatly. Even the disabled have reportedly been subjected to torture or ill-treatment. Myo Myint, aged 26 and unmarried, is a former soldier who was seriously wounded in action in 1987 in counterinsurgency operations near the Chinese border with guerilla forces of the Burmese Communist Party. He reportedly lost his right arm, up to the elbow, and his right leg, up to the knee and all the fingers of his left hand after he stepped on a mine. At the time of his arrest he was a committee member of the Mingaladon township NLD section responsible for organization. A relative told Amnesty International he was arrested on 8 July at his room in Thauk-kyant township, near the airport. Transfer to the custody of military intelligence was reportedly followed by systematic interrogation under torture: "He spent the day and the following night there, during which he was interrogated. They suspected him of being a communist agent, an accusation he kept denying. As a result of his denial of this he was beaten. They tied him up by

his valid arm to the cell window bars with a pair of handcuffs and kicked him with combat boots and body punched him. He was also hit on the face and his mouth and face were swollen for several days. He kept denying, did not confess anything and did not sign any statement. Before being taken to Insein prison, they tried to make him sign a statement saying that he had not been mistreated, which he refused to do....His current situation is not known.

Former detainees frequently described walking on their knees on sharp gravel (known as "walking on the seashore") and motorcycle riding which means squatting for prolonged periods in a position suggesting driving a motorcycle. Electric shocks were reportedly applied to finger tips, toes, ear lobes, penis or testicles. Some described prolonged standing in water, prolonged exposure to sun or to intense cold, burning with cigarettes, rolling of iron or bamboo rods or bottles along the shinbones, hanging by the feet from a ceiling fixture or a rotating fan (the "helicopter") and beatings with whips and clubs while suspended. Salt, salted water, urine and curry powder have reportedly been applied to open wounds after whippings or shallow cuts with a knife.

U Soe Myint, a 50-year-old merchant and leader of the local branch of the Democratic Party for New Society was reportedly arrested in mid-May 1989 by MIS personnel in Molumingyun. An account of his treatment was provided by a person who saw him in Bassein Prison, where he is thought to remain in detention: "He was interrogated by MIS personnel in Bassein...and was severely tortured. He was beaten and put in a large rice bag and kicked all over with combat boots. They also rolled an iron bar over his shinbones until his skin peeled off leaving the bone bare. He was in addition nearly drowned; his head was pulled under water to force his confession.

Detainees undergoing interrogation have been deprived of sleep, food and water and some have been held for prolonged periods in solitary confinement in dark cells. They have also been intimidated with pistols, threatened with execution and humiliated while stripped naked for interrogation. In other instances, psychological pressures have been used to break the prisoner's will and force confessions. Several prisoners have teams of interrogators. This technique has sometimes been combined with deprivation of sleep, food, water or washing facilities. Numerous deaths in detention reportedly occurred between March and September 1988 as a result of severe beatings or untreated gunshot wounds received during street demonstrations or after arrest. Myanmar

authorities have been accused by student activists and opposition parties of concealing information relating to these deaths. Other deaths in custody are alleged to have occurred in the aftermath of the Sept 1988 coup and in 1989. Some prisoners reportedly died as a consequence of torture.

A former medical worker in Insein Prison's clinic described the case of a 15-year-old boy who he said died after torture in March 1988: "On 17 March, a 15-year-old Muslim, son of U Khin Maung Oo, a famous history teacher in Yangon, got severely burned on the abdomen and upper legs in an incident during which a 'Hilux' Toyota car was set on fire by demonstrating students, in front of the Tourist Burma office. It is not clear whether he was involved in the incident or whether he was just passing by when the car exploded. He was taken to Yangon General Hospital for treatment. After a few hours, security personnel, possibly from the Special Branch, came in and took him away. The next day he was handed over to the doctor in Insein prison's hospital. When the doctor examined him he discovered that both his upper limbs, from fingers up to the elbow, and lower limbs, from toes to knees, had been fractured several times, broken into pieces. The security people had suspected him of being involved in the bombing incident and interrogated him despite his already severe burns.

The boy reportedly died 17 days after he was turned over to the prison's hospital. His relatives were reportedly not permitted to see him and his body was not handed over to them but instead was reportedly cremated in Insein prison's hospital.

In a series of reports published in 1987, 1988 and 1989, Amnesty International has documented evidence that army units conducting counter-insurgency operations in the country's ethnic minority areas carry out arbitrary executions. The most recent evidence suggests that the army's counter-insurgency forces continue to torture suspects during interrogation and to carry out extrajudicial executions. Many of the reported victims were people seized seemingly in conflict areas and obliged to serve army units indefinitely as porters. A man arrested by soldiers of the 22nd Light Infantry Division in Hpa-an, capital of the Kayah State, in early 1989 said that he was repeatedly beaten during three days and nights of virtually non-stop interrogation by military intelligence officers until: "I was unable to walk. I had to be

supported by two men in order to be able to move."

They reported in 1989 in the context of military operations in communities alleged to support ethnic insurgencies. On 1 Dec 1989 troops reportedly assaulted the Kayin village of Thetkaya at about 9am as most of its people were assembled to watch a film and fired indiscriminately upon them. Three young girls, two older women and a 15-year-old monk at the village monastery were reportedly killed outright, shot without warning or provocation. Many of the villagers then sought refuge across the Moei river in Thailand.

A former soldier interviewed by Amnesty International in Dec 1989 discussed the treatment of porters at length. He said he had himself been involved in the beating and killing of porters, a practice he said had been going on "for years". He explained that killings of porters who were unable to proceed was a consequence of a standard operation procedure, in fear that released porters might reveal the whereabouts of government troops to opposition forces:

"...the reason porters who cannot perform their duties are executed is because if we let them go away, since we are supported to march secretly in the forest to an enemy position to attack it,

the porter may go and inform the insurgents of our presence and movements." As a porter could become too exhausted to proceed, and "we cannot carry them", they are killed so that they do not "put soldier's lives at risk".

Soldiers could themselves decide to shoot a porter, he said, but they would afterwards have to report this and justify it to their officer.

Evidence emerged in 1989 that students and others detained in Myanmar's cities have also been arbitrarily sent to remote areas and forced to serve army units as porters on counter-insurgency operations, an apparently punitive practice without basis in law.

In the aftermath of the September 1988 coup the authorities had announced that the army had been seizing "petty criminals" and other alleged "unsavory elements" in the capital to serve as porters for rural counter-insurgency operations. Other sources report that those detailed to operational army units were political prisoners: hundreds of Yangon residents, including students and others active in the campaign for multi-party democracy, were reportedly rounded up and sent out, seized in order to punish them for having participated in non-violent pro-democracy demonstrations and to prevent them from engaging in further anti-government activities.

BECAUSE YOU ALL KNOW

I have seen a civilian who lost a leg
As he stepped on a mine
While mushrooming in a forest.
Is this the outcome of the eternal war?

I have encouraged an orphan
Whose parents were killed
By a shell from a battle fought on their hill.
Does this mean "protection" for the people?

I have heard of a family that took poison
Because it suffered from extreme famine.
I wonder whether our country is poor?

I have eye-witnessed the innocent people being
gunned down
For demanding what nature provides.
Is the task of the People's Army to slay its own
people?

I have consoled a mother whose beloved son
Joined the resistance

With a purpose to restore justice.
Is this because there's injustice in our land?

I have read the obituary of a soldier killed In a war
in which neither side conquers.
Did he really sacrifice his life for the nation as
"they" say?

The answers for the questions need not be Told
Because you all know.

As long as the civil war exists
It will always be like this.
As long as despotism persists,
The oppression will always subsist.

Well, now.....
What you must do need not be told,
Because you all know.

Naing Lu Aung
(Thay Bow Boe DCamp)

ABSDF ACTIVITIES



A student medical worker gives medical treatment to a villager suffering from malaria. Many villagers have never had a chance to see a doctor, or get proper medical care. The students give priority to medical treatment for the children, but medicines and equipment are in short supply.

A simple, roofless bamboo shelter serves for a school in a distant village. An ABSDF student teaches the children. The students are eager to learn, but have had little chance to see or own books.



On April 12, 1990, 11 students from Salween camp entered the monkhood. Their purpose was to help develop and maintain the Buddhist religion, and to pray for safety for the people who are suffering under the heel of military dictatorship.

During the ceremony, gifts of food and supplies were given to the temple.

STORIES FROM THE JUNGLE

"Lives without rights"

Paung Long village tract is one of the nine village tracts of "Ye" township where 90,000 people make their living. Among the 19 villages of the village tract which are known to the military regime as "Brown Territory" (not under full control by the military regime), are Ka Nec, Upper Phalan, Mid Phalan, Lower Phalan, Upper Chaung, Lower Yei Chaung, Kan Ni, We Baung, Myintapyei, Kaing Jaw, Ahrutaung, SoneNatha, Taung Son, Wa Ywehai, Kyaun Paw etc.

Almost all the population work their own farms and gardens. The whole family has to work for their daily lives. Paddy is only for their own use but betel nut, rubber and limes are for the exchange of other basic needs for the family.

They send their products to "Ye" and exchange them for other household goods and clothing for their families.

The people are of the Mon indigenous group, and long term suppression and ill treatment by the army has lead them to support Revolutionary groups such as the New Mon Liberation Army and the ABSDF.

These native people are the source of information about the moves of the military, as well as food and shelter for the revolutionary groups.

When the villagers hear that the army is coming, all the children and the old men and women leave their homes and hide because when the army raids the villages the soldiers arrest all men for use as porters, guides to help find the revolutionary camps and as human mine sweepers. When the army knows or suspects that a villager is an informer or has a close relation with revolutionary groups, the villagers, and sometimes the entire village must suffer great misery. The village is burnt down and the villagers tortured until almost dead, or taken away never to be seen again.

Three years ago, the wife of a committee member of the Mid Phalan village was arrested and sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment. She was so badly tortured that her relatives could not even recognize her after her release.

Soldiers take away any property of the villagers

(pigs, chickens, cows, clothing and household goods) without permission. This is a common scene in the territory when the army arrives at the villages.

When villagers go to "Ye" to sell their products they have to pass four check points of the army where they are asked to tell about the revolutionary movements. If the military suspects that they are lying or pretending not to know any information about the revolutionaries, the villagers are beaten and their products confiscated. When the villagers are returning to their village from Ye, they must pay a gate-pass fee of about 350 kyats to the soldiers.

Articles such as dry cells, medicine and torch lights are under strict control and even kitchen materials such as oil, kerosine, tablet salt and rice are not allow in large quantity in order that the revolutionaries can not be given these supplies. After the attack by the Mon and ABSDF in Ye, a counterattack against the revolutionary forces by the Burmese air force was carried out in violation of all international laws of waging internal war.

Indiscriminate bombing, 0.5 machine gunning and 2.75 air-to-ground rocket attacks by PC 7 jets was carried out on the villages (Duya, Kaing Taw, Upper Phalan, Mid Phalan and Lower Phalan). These were a great threat against the villagers. The one-week attack by the air force killed two villagers; one a 30-year-old women of Kaing Taw and the other an old man.

This year, on the 20th of April, for the second time in four years under the government's "4 cut strategy"; cut human contact, cut information, cut supplies, and cut electricity, all the villages in the territory have to move to Kyamg Ywa where there is a platoon army outpost. All the villagers have to leave their farms and gardens on which their lives depend. This forced relocation comes at the time the people must prepare their farms, paddy fields and gardens for the rainy season. The villages would like to stay in their homes until their rice is planted and their gardens prepared. But, by the order of the army, if they do not move by the 20th, they will be consider as insurgents and action will take accordingly.

This situation is critical for the native people. If they do not move to the government's village (Kyamg Ywa), action will be taken against them, but if they move they can not work in their farms and gardens to get food and clothing for the coming

year. In the government's village, the people know only one thing for certain, they will have nothing to eat and wear next year.

What a sad life in these villages!

What a poor life in this area!

What are the rights of the people in this territory?

What is the meaning of life for these people born without rights?

These people lose the right to live where they would like to. These people lose the right to choose their way of living and to earn for their living as they would like to.

They lose the right to enjoy free ideology, the right to keep their ideas and the right to act upon their ideas.

They lose the right to enjoy peaceful gatherings, organizations and peaceful demonstrations.

They lose the right to vote in the elections and the right to a candidate in the elections. (Because they live in "brown areas" they are not allowed to vote in the election.)

What is the meaning of life for these people with no in-born rights?

(From the report of one student working with villagers deep in the jungle.)



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