

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

JUNE 1990

Vol. 2 No. 11

TWO YEARS WITHOUT EDUCATION UNDER THE SLORC!



**NO EDUCATION SYSTEM CAN BE EFFECTIVE
IF THERE IS NO PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS**



DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY THE
ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Vol. 2 No. 11

June

1990

GIVE ME NO FOOD! GIVE ME NO WATER!

GIVE ME HUMAN RIGHTS! GIVE ME DEMOCRACY!

The people of Burma do not demand much. They have never called for their country to become a NIC (Newly Industrialized Country) as is the fashion in the area now. They have never demanded that every home have a tv and a car. They have not dreamed about huge shopping malls full of expensive luxury items. Nor have they ever felt that they were behind modern times because they were not wearing the latest European fashions, or living in air conditioned condominiums.

No, the people of Burma do not demand much. They only demand human rights and democracy. Yet these two simple demands are denied them by a military junta which claims to know better what is good for the country than do the people themselves.

The May 27 elections became the greatest demonstration against the military rulers that the country has known for the past 28 years. Despite attempts by the military to rig the elections and pressure voters to cast ballots in favor of the NUP (military party), the people voted overwhelmingly for the opposition. The time of the military dictator in Burma is over!

The demands are simple. Immediately turn state power over to the NLD so that they can begin rebuilding unity in the country. Release all political prisoners so that families can be reunited. Allow the NLD to begin peace talks with the ethnic groups so that peace can be restored. Send the military back to the barracks where they can no longer harass the people.

It has now been almost one month since the elections. Yet, the military has made no move to answer these simple demands of the people. They continue to postpone and delay. How can the people have faith that they actually have the intention to turn state power over to the elected government?

For 28 years the people have struggled and suffered. There have been many uprisings. All of them have been bloody. Yet the people continue to believe that they can bring democracy and justice to their country. SLORC must surely be aware of this.

SLORC must think! The Burmese people are not afraid to rise up again. They will continue to rise up until their demands for human rights and democracy are realized. This is the right of the people. This is the dream of the people.

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

HUNGER STRIKE

This morning, at 9 am, a single protester began a lonely vigil outside the Burmese embassy in Bangkok. Holding up photographs of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Sit Aye Naing (meaning "peace will have victory over war") said he would wage a lone hunger strike to raise international attention about the lack of human rights inside his country.

He specifically called for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the release of all other political prisoners and the immediate turn-over of state power to the National League for Democracy which won an astounding victory in the May 27th election.

One of his signs said, "Give me no food. Give me no water. Give me human rights. Give me democracy."

For Sit Aye Naing, the past two years since the military coup of 1988 have been long and tedious ones. He has lived in student camps along the Thai/Burma border, has lived as an illegal refugee in Bangkok, and has wept over the war that still rages in his mother land. Feeling that armed rebellion can only bring more suffering to his people, he finally chose to make this non-violent stand outside the Burmese embassy.

It was a big risk for Sit Aye Naing, for he faces arrest as an illegal alien in Thailand, and possible deportation if the authorities feel it necessary. Also, Burmese intelligence officers from the embassy photographed him and questioned him, and now his family in Rangoon also face harassment. This is the price one person has decided to pay for speaking out against tyranny and dictatorship.

Sit Aye Naing's protest continued for about two hours when the Thai police finally took him away. He is now detained in the immigration jail to await trial and sentencing for entering Thailand illegally. He calls on all international friends to continue support for the democratic struggle in Burma so that finally his land and his people can know true peace.



According to the Bangkok Post, June 21, 1990, Sit Aye Naing, the young Burmese student who carried out a lone hunger strike in front of the Burmese embassy here in Bangkok to demand the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will be repatriated back to Burma via Victoria Point, opposite Ranong Province. The date has not yet been set. Immigration officials in Bangkok also say that they are holding more than 30 other Burmese students who will also be repatriated. We have every reason to believe that the lives of Sit Aye Naing and the other students will be in grave danger if repatriated.

Letters of concern to Thai officials would be greatly appreciated. Only after the Burmese military turns state power completely over to the NLD can there be some hope for safety for these people. International pressure is still extremely important.

REPATRIATION!

(Report from Mae Sot, Thailand following the forced repatriation of more than 1000 Burmese on June 7, 1990. The repatriation was a joint Thai/Burma military operation in which Burmese soldiers came into Thailand to help round up the Burmese exiles and take them back to the Burmese side of the border to the town of Mya Wa Di. This report is a collection of interviews made with some of the repatriated persons who escaped back to Thailand.)

A Burmese man (22 years old) said he was arrested at 9 am on the 7th of June. He and the others arrested with him were sent to a Thai combatant regiment in front of the Mae Sod airport.

He said, "I saw many people in the grounds of this Thai army camp. I knew that most of the people are Muslims. I heard that some of the Muslim's houses were destroyed by the Thai and Burmese soldiers.

On this same day, at 3 pm, we were sent to Mya Wa Di on the Burmese side (opposite Mae Sot). Then we were sent to Thin Gan Nyi Naung. I could flee from Thin Gan Nyi Naung because it is my native town and I know where to hide.

At 9.00 pm, some people fled from Thin Gan Nyi Naung (Burmaarmy battalion No.44 set up in the town) to different places in Burma. So the army sent all the people back to Mya Wa Di. The army put the people into the school compound near the Moe Goat Set Wine Buddhist monastery compound. During the next two days, the people ate nothing. The army didn't try to provide food for the people. So, when the residents of Mya Wa Di heard this information, they send food to the people. The Mya Wa Di SLORC threatened to charge all the detained people with crossing the border illegally. Then the Burmese soldiers asked the people for money to be released from detention. So, on the 9th of June, about 200 people who could give the bribe money to the military were released from detention."

Another Burmese man said that he and another 21 Burmese people who work in a factory in Mae Sod were arrested. "On the 7th of June, at 8.00 o'clock, we were arrested by Thai soldiers and 3 Burmese soldiers. When they arrested us, they spoke in Burmese. Then, we were carried by truck into the Thai Combatants's regiment in front of the Mae Sod airport. In that place, I saw about 3000 people and some women who carried small children. Then, the

Thai authorities put a stamp on our arms so that we could easily be identified as detainees. The Thai authorities accused two young men who are Zaw Min (from Kauk ka Raite) and San Thein (from Shwe Gon) of being students. When their friends, Ko Nyein Chan and two other men came to the detention place to solve the problem, they were also detained by the authorities. So, the other people gave bribe money amounting to 900 baht or 1000 baht to the authorities to release these people from detention. While in the Thai military camp, we wrote our brief biography and gave it to the Thai authorities. Then we were sent to the Mae Taw riverside opposite Mya Wa Di. Later, we were sent to Mya Wa Di. We again gave our brief biography to the Burmese authorities in Mya Wa Di. At 3 pm., we were carried by trucks from Mya Wa Di to Thin Gan Nyi Naung. There were 10 trucks and each truck carried about 50 people. On the trucks, we waited a long time under the very hot sun shine. At 8.00 o'clock, we were carried again from Thin Gan Nyi Naung back to Mya Wa Di. We paid bribe money of at least 50 kyats to 2000 kyats to the Burmese authorities to release us from detention. I saw 12 Indians, 1 Chinese and 2 other men in the Prison Detention Center of No.97, regiment of the Burmese infantry, but I do not know what they were being imprisoned for."

Another man reported that on the 7th of June, at 5.30 am., one Thai police officer and one Thai Intelligence kick the house door loudly and shouted at him to open the door. "They entered into my house and shouted at me to collect everything I needed. Then they told me to get in their car. Starting at 3.00 am., the Thai soldiers seized people around our community. The Thai combatants were very rough. In another community, the Thai soldiers shot into the air with their guns and shouted "Don't anybody run. Your wife will be a widow and your child will be an orphan if you do!" in Burmese. In some of the houses, some women had babies only 2 or 3 days old. The Thai soldiers pushed these women roughly into the truck. Then, we were collected in one place and carried into the Thai combatant regiment in front of the Mae Sot airport."

Another man said that he and another 69 people were arrested in the same place. They also were sent to Mya Wa Di. They gave the bribe money to the Burmese Military men to release them from

detention in Mya Wa Di. Sixty four of them were release, but 6 were left in Mya Wa Di. The military accused one man, Maung Nyein (age 22, from Pha An) of being a student and beat him with their rifle butts and tortured him. In Kauk Ka Krait, sergeant Zaw Htiat and his privates from No.1 and No.3 company of No.2 Light Infantry Regiment under control of No.44 Battalion, raped three Karen young women whose names are Ma Ni Ni, Ma San Aye and Ma Hla Kyin from Me Zi village in Karen state. Ma Kauk and her 4 friends (from Naung Lon

village) and Ma cho (from Ain Nu village) disappeared in Kauk Ka Rait village. Some eye witnesses said that sergeant Zaw Htiat and other military men told the women that they would be released from detention and then they took the women to some other place. The 9 women disappeared then.

On the 7th of June, the Burmese authorities checked all the visitors in Mya Wa Di and some people were taken as porters to the frontlines.



Some of the houses in Mae Sot which were destroyed during the repatriation program. Many of the people lost most of their possessions.

REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES

STATEMENT CONCERN DEPORTATION OF BURMESE INSIDE THAILAND

Date.....23rd June 1990

We, the members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front would like to call on the Thai government to immediate stop the deportation of Burmese to Burma by the Thai military.

Following the bloody military crackdown in Burma on 18th Sept 1988, half a million ethnic minorities, including Karen, Kareni, Pa- and Mon, and thousands of students, crossed into Thailand to escape threats against their lives. On the 21st of Dec 1988, the Thai officials and Burmese Red Cross (mostly from military intelligence) opened the Tak repatriation center and forced nearly 300 Burmese students back to Burma. In Sept 1989, Thai officials in Ranong, southern Thailand, deported 871 Burmese who ran away from the threat of arrest by the Burmese army to be used as human mind sweepers. On Dec 28, another 200 Burmese from Mae Sot were deported to Burmese authorities in Myawaddy.

At the beginning of 1990, during the dry season offensive by the Burmese army, over 6,000 Karen fled to Mae Sot, Tak Province and 8,000 Mon fled into Thailand through 3 Pagoda Pass along with several hundred students. On the 7th of Jun 1990, over a thousand Burmese in Mae Sot were handed over to Burmese military authorities in Myawaddy and Thai Deputy Commander of Task Force 34, Col Boonlue Srimek said, "The situation in Burma is favorable for them to go back now. They have democracy."

According to the Nation newspaper of 22nd June 1990, Col Boonlue also said, "About 10,000 illegal Burmese believed to be staying in Mae Sot and four other border districts of Mae Ramat, Phop Phra, Tha Song Yang and Umphang will be deported after Burmese army officers in Myawaddy are ready to accept them." Those who will not be sent back are the Burmese political asylum seekers who entered Thailand before 1976 and those whom Thai authorities judge will not be safe if sent back.

We, the members of the All Burmese Students' Democratic Front believe that all those Burmese who fled into Thailand are victims of the war which has burned in our land since 40 years ago. We are

sure that those men who are deported into the hands of the Burmese army are killed or hauled off to serve as porters, women are beaten and raped, and children orphaned. We received a report that several hundred of the Burmese who were deported from Mae Sot on 7th June were put in prison, seven Karen women were raped and many others were already sent to the front line as porters.

We call for an end to the forced deporting of Burmese from Thailand who are victims of war and who face danger if returned to Burma.

We, the members of ABSDF, believe that the Thai Government is violating the International Declaration of Human Rights by these actions. The International Declaration of Human Rights says that "All of us belong to one family—the human family. Every one of us has the same fundamental and equal rights. Each of us is entitled to have those rights respected and each one of us has a responsibility to protect the rights of other people. Differences of race, sex, language and color do not changes these rights."

We would like to call on the Thai Government to immediately stop the deportation of Burmese victims of war from inside Thailand until after the State Law and Order Restoration Council has transferred the power to the people's elected government. Nothing has changed since the election day. The people of Burma are still under the oppression of the Burmese fascist military regime.

We would like to urge the Thai Government to consider providing these Burmese victims of war a temporary camp inside Thailand at a safe place.

The International Declaration of Human Rights' article 14 says "Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution."

We would like to urge the International Red Cross, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the US Committee for Refugees, Amnesty International, Asia Watch and all international communities to put pressure on the Thai Government to give temporary asylum inside Thailand for those victims of war and closely observe the arrest of Burmese inside Thailand and their situation.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

The Defoliation of Burma

"The forests of Burma, if they have not already done so, are rapidly reaching the point where they could be said to be in crisis like those of neighboring Thailand and China. This does not seem to be generally recognized, especially by the military dominated State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which currently rules the country. In fact, the regime blithely claims that forests cover 57% of the land, a figure that was produced by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in 1957 and that is obviously far out of date.

Recent estimates based on reports by eyewitnesses, timber export figures and common sense analysis of the various elements consuming the forests put the remaining forests at between 40% and 20%.

Bertil Lintner, a journalist specializing in Burmese issues who has flown over much of Burma and travelled widely in the border areas of both China and Thailand gives a figure of 25%. Others expressing concern at the wholesale logging say variously that millable timber will last between two years to at most 10 years. The author's estimate of remaining forest is around 33% but with the qualifier that only around 10% of this would be considered relatively undisturbed while the rest would have been heavily logged over, is recovering from shifting agriculture and firewood harvesting or has been ravaged by uncontrolled and excessive burnings.

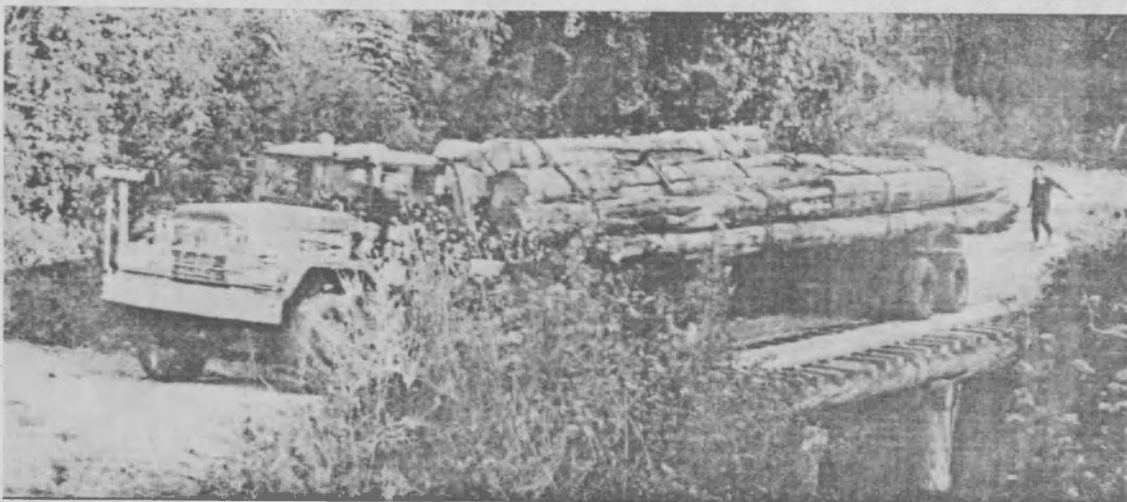
It seems that no one in power considers Burma's forests to be in any need of conservation measures. Instead, felling activities have been stepped up with

new concessions being granted (now there are 48 Thai timber concessionaires — BANGKOK POST 2.3.90).

It also appears that there are now timber trucks crossing into China, India and Bangladesh as well as the unabated shipments of auctioned-off timber to Japan, Europe, Hong Kong, the United States, Singapore and elsewhere. Traditional activities of the people that contribute to forest degradation have also increased with the swelling of the population from 33,000,000 to around 40,000,000 in the last decade also adding to the intense pressures on the remnants of forest.

Taken all together, these factors show a marked escalation in the amount of pressure on the Burmese environment in the 10 years since the last FAO forest resources analysis was produced. This article does not even attempt to deal with the other factors leading to environmental decay within this afflicted country, many of them stemming from the decision of General Ne Win, the dictator of Burma for the last 27 years, to abandon "The Burmese Way to Socialism" and to replace it with the worst elements of exploitative capitalism and a pseudo "democracy". The new policy in Burma that commenced with the appointment of General Saw Maung to power, comprises a massive sellout of Burma's plentiful natural resources in return for arms, foreign exchange and what will quite possibly be a short but bloody rule."

(An excerpt from a longer article written by an environmentalist researching along the Thai/Burma border)



THAI TRUCK LOADED WITH BURMESE TEAKS

HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER SAW MAUNG

COLD BLOODED MASSACRE ON HILL 1778
(As told to the writer on the 24th of January, 1990).

Name.....Maung Ye Htoon
Age.....28
Army Personal No.....529873
Speciality.....Mine Detecting
Address.....Sa Ah Ya
 No:912 Kwe Kha (Branch B)
 Taing Ta Ya, Thaton.

"I joined the Army in Meiktila at age 18, in 1980.
Now I am on home leave to go back to Pakoku.

I was trained in mine detecting and whenever there
is mine clearing business in battle I was included.

About Nov 1988, I was included in the attack of
Methawaw. Many were killed in the battle from
both sides, however, more on our side and we did
not announce the correct figure.
We used the captured students and villagers as
porters to carry foods and ammunitions for us.
Food for them is limited to boiled rice and nothing
else. If they lack a little in carrying out orders, we
beat them with our boots, feet and butt of guns. If
porters are weak or sick after suffering from malaria
they are left beside the tract to work out their own
fate. Bed for them is the dusty road and dry leaves
are blankets for them. No medicines, no spare
clothing and no shoes for them. They are just
beasts of burden for us and nothing else.

Bathing or washing is out of the question and they
usually get only about 3 hours of sleep a day. If we
are suspicious of a Karen village (KNU's spy), we
just drive the villagers out and we set fire to the
village. All the pigs and poultry we come across
during our operations, we devour as we like. We
bear no question of any kind whatsoever.
Everything is fair in war and we do what we like
with the village girls.

The Burma army has been trained to be merciless
when dealing with the enemies or suspicious
persons. For the Ne Win-Saw Maung military
regime to be stable, we soldiers obey the orders
without question. We are always ready to die for
them whether they are right or wrong. We have
been trained that way.

Our army discipline is; "If I want water, I don't
want to hear any excuses that the bottle has holes"
(No wonder Ne win carried water in buckets with
holes for his so called BSPP for 26 years and got
nothing).

About 12 female university students suddenly
appeared from no where in the intense cross fire
zone of hill number 1778, while Methawaw was
under attack. We called them and questioned them
thoroughly.

They were carrying pots and pans. We found fish
paste, ajinomoto, clothing etc., but no arms and
ammunition whatsoever. Some were pregnant and
really pitiable.

For the Burmese army, it is treason for anyone to
appear in the cross fire zone. No questions, just the
death sentence was passed on the women by our
major hastily. Two girls from Thaton, pleaded with
us to inform their parents about their situation.
Some cried, some sobbed and some called out loud
to the lord Buddha to save them.

We just ordered them to dig their own graves. No
appeal, no mercy, no jail-- nothing. We found out
that they were altogether 22. The other 10 died
from shells and mines.

We, battle hardened soldiers, are very much used to
finishing off people with live bullets in war and in
peace (like in Rangoon during the 1988 uprising).
We had little problem to finish them off with our
automatic G3, G4 and pistols. We were very
straight in shooting, for our army father, Ne Win,
told us to always shoot straight at the people.
Bullets went into the skull of each. Sweat, tears
and blood mingled together and the women's lifeless
bodies tumbled down one after the other. Smoke
and then silence in a few minutes. We simply
buried all the 12 of them in their own freshly dug
graves.

VOICES FROM THE JUNGLE

MOTHER'S CRAVING

Though I see your deeds,
As I do not have enough strength,
Though I hold my peace,
as I feel my heart wrenched,
Though my bosom bursts,
As I can not help holding out,
I have to make my voice heard.

You are my son
And so is he.
You are my grandson
And so is he.
You are siblings
Whom I bore from my
womb.

The strong bully the
weak,
Depriving them from
"essential rights".
The strong brutalize the
weak,
Lessening their might.
So the flames of the
civil war
Have gone a long
journey.

There is disunity among
my children.
The war has waged on.
Corpses are piled on top
of corpses,
And the limbs have been
maimed.
The country's economy
is sunk in a quagmire,
And the people become
poorer.

Whenever I look around,
I feel my heart torn away.
Whenever I can not look away,
I always lament.

Deserting their land,
Some of my sons and grandsons,
Melancholy and frightened,
Have forsaken their loved ones,
And live in exile in another land
As the war is still unquietened.



Should equal rights
sprout,
And the people prosper--
This is the responsibility
of those who administer.

He who is unable to
fulfill the people's
cravings
Must not be a king,
Must not govern the
nation.
Now...
You abdicate your
throne!

For days, months and
years,
Threatening with swords
and batons,
By the use of power of
weapon,
You have ruled my
home.

Oh, many of my off
spring
Whom I bore and adore,
Their conditions
pauperized and worsened
By your whimsy law.

Now again,
There is a nasty scheme.
But do not you devise another reign,
Pulling the strings behind the dark curtain!

Toe Zann

TWO YEARS WITHOUT EDUCATION

STATEMENT CONCERNING 2 YEARS CONTINUOUS CLOSING OF ALL UNIVERSITIES IN BURMA

Date..23rd June 1990

After the Burmese army brutally cracked down on the peaceful demonstrations of the students who were protesting against the killing of hundreds of students, arrest of thousands of students and expelling thousands of students from Universities in Rangoon in March and June, the Burmese military (Burma Socialist Program Party) closed down all universities and schools throughout the country on the 23rd of June 1988. The military has now suspended all Universities in Burma for 2 years.

Although the military regime reopened primary and high schools after one year, thousands of students were dismissed from their registration because of their activities in the struggle for democracy and freedom.

Several thousand students were killed by the army in the country following the coup on 18th Sept 1988. Thousands of students have been put in prison without trial. Some of them have been sentenced to death by military tribunals and many are serving long terms in prison. Most of them are believed to have been tortured during their interrogation by military intelligence.

After the coup, Dr Pe Thein was appointed the Education Minister and he was given the army rank of Lt-Col. Ever since the Burmese military seized power on the 2nd of March 1962, most of the Education Ministers have come from the army and strongly oppressed the student's activities.

During Lt-Col Pe Thein's attendance at the "Education for All" conference in Thailand in March, he said, "We have no plan for education. Because we (SLORC) are just like an interim government. This is the work for the people elected to be the government." What this means is that the military has never been interested in providing a strong education for the people, for Ne Win and his cohorts fear education. An educated people is a critical people, and this is a threat to dictatorial powers.

We, the members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front feel that the education under the

fascist military regime is completely lacking in freedom. It is like a colonialist's education system. We feel that now the education level in the country is steadily falling. It is a direct effect of the severe human rights violations carried out by the Burmese military regime. We believe that any education system can not benefit the students if there is no freedom, no human rights and no democracy.

Now some of the students are learning lessons with continual fear of arrest, torture and death. Some are serving long prison terms without benefit of continuing their education. They fear torture, execution or being sent to the front line as porters. Others are sacrificing their lives for democracy and freedom for their country by struggling both inside and outside the country.

Although the military has closed down all universities in Burma, we, the ABSDF, have formed 2 Jungle Universities in They Bow Bo and Three Pagoda Pass for continuing our education which can not be achieved under the oppressive military regime. But after several months opening, both Jungle Universities were burned down by the Burmese military during their dry season offensive at the beginning of 1990.

We, the ABSDF, strongly believe that our educational system will never be effective under the rule of a fascist military regime and most of our students will not have opportunity to continue their education.

We, the ABSDF, would like to urge all international organizations providing aid to the military regime for education, including UNESCO, to stop giving aid until the military hands over power to the government elected by the people.

We would like to call on all international communities to prevent the attendance of Burmese education teams in any meeting and conference in any country until the military transfers the power.

PLEA FOR HELP

Date.....18th Jun 1990

Subject. Appeal for release of the Burmese Students from Suan Plu (immigration) jail

We are Burmese students who have been accepted as "person of concern to UNHCR". We were arrested by Thai police as illegal immigrants. Usually persons arrested on this charge have to stay only 40 days and are then deported to border areas. But for us, we have already been here for 4 months. So we have been arrested and detained for much longer than the time normally required for illegal entry.

We have received our release papers since one month ago and we want to leave as soon as possible because we have no chance to eat enough, no proper medical care, and no chance to get good health due to poor ventilation and lack of drinking water in here. We asked the police about our release and they answered that UNHCR prefers us to wait for several weeks before we are deported.

We respectfully request your assistance in obtaining our release from Suan Plu Immigration Detention Center. We feel that any delay only increases the chance that we will be turned over to Burmese authorities. Instead, we request that you encourage our release at a safe place and, as we are persons of concern, please obtain proper assurance that we will not be sent back to the Burmese authorities and please physically monitor our release.

We have not yet received our allowance money for this month and this money would assist all of us in surviving here. We regret our situation makes difficulties for you, but we can only trust in your best efforts.

Yours Sincerely,

No	Name	NI Number		
1.	Tha Kyaw Maung	1159	16. Aung Naing Oo(2)	1361
2.	Mayt Soe	1205	17. Soe Wai	1265
3.	Kyaw Swar	929	18. Ne Zar Aung	1447
4.	Aung KoKo	1211	19. Ne Soe	1881
5.	Thein Tun Than	1195	20. Than Hlaing Kyaw	1882
6.	Aung Thant	--	21. Lin Aung	--
7.	Ko Moe	1449	22. Soe Moe	--
8.	Win Thein	1410	23. Aung Moe	--
9.	Aye Khant	1320	24. Tun Tun	1328
10.	Tun Thein	1851	25. Latt Ko	--
11.	Kyaw That	1474	26. Win Myint	--
12.	Aung Htoo	1287	27. Saw Nyan Shwe	1838
13.	Ba Than	1408	28. Aye Kyaw	1123
14.	Myint Than Tun	1257	29. Hla Htut	--
15.	Aung Naing Oo(1)	1258	30. Ma Sanda(female)	--

THE CIVIL WAR AND THE DISABLED

General Ne Win's military rule which started in March 1962 through a military coup, effectively came to an end during the democracy movement in 1988. However, following another bloody military coup staged on September 18, 1988, Ne Win and his cohorts have brutally continued to try to hang on to total power. Even though Ne Win claims to be retired, everyone knows that he remains the "power behind the scenes" and thus his clutches over the country have manipulated and controlled everything for almost three decades now.

During his reign over Burma, there have been areas of decline as well as areas of development. I will not say much about the declines as these are well known to everyone. However, I would like to make some mention of the areas of development which Ne Win has brought to our country.

The developments which have come to Burma under Ne Win are:

- 1) an increase in unemployment
- 2) an increase of factories which have stopped operating
- 3) an increase of corruption and demoralization
- 4) skyrocketing of prices
- 5) an increase in the rate of poverty
- 6) an increase of military power and militarization
- 7) an increase in the number of disabled.

Of all these areas of "development" I would like to briefly discuss the last one as most people fail to recognize it as an issue facing our country today.

The causes of the increase in the number of disabled are:

- 1) disablement from birth
- 2) Polio disablement
- 3) accidental disablement
- 4) the disablement caused by the civil war

The number of people disabled by the civil war far out-numbers those from other causes. It is said that, "If some one loses a finger or toe, he becomes lifeless. If someone loses a limb, they are no better than a dead person."

Today in Burma, there are many soldiers from both sides of the civil war, who have been wounded seriously in battle or have lost limbs due to stepping on land mines. Civilians caught in the battle zones

have also suffered these same calamities. This is a meaningless loss of precious life on earth.

The fire of eternal war has blazed in Burma for over 40 years now. Yet the military regime has tried to hide this reality from the Burmese people and from the world. All along the border areas, the firing of guns can be heard everyday in a frightening symphony. These terrible noises are pushing our brothers and sisters from the national groups into the abyss of poverty and disablement. The military, if it truly loves the country and the people, should endeavor to restore peace to the land, and seek ways and means to develop the life of the people in a positive way. What we see instead, is that the military is trying to exterminate the minorities, and expand their military rule even more harshly over the people. This is a protection of their dictatorship existence. Thus the civil war has the opportunity to continue to debase peace and the nation's economic power. The result of the 40 year-old civil war has sent Burma into the status of Least Developed Country, although it is rich in mineral resources, has abundant labor, vast and fertile lands, and has the opportunity to extend economic relations with many countries around the world. Even worse, the civil war has created a huge group of disabled people who can no longer make their strong contribution to the development of the nation.

From the point of view of social welfare, we feel deeply for those who have fallen into the problem of disablement. Moreover, even those who are healthy must face severe problems when they become old. Just imagine the problems the disabled will face when they reach old age.

From the economic point of view, this terrible increase in the disabled also diminishes the productive force of the country. Thus the country must suffer even more economically. This is the fruit of the 40 year-old civil war.

Medical science in the world is unbelievable. It is now even possible for human organs to be transplanted. In Burma, the art of making artificial limbs is accelerating in order to catch up with the ever increasing number of civil-war-created disabled. What a sad commentary on life in the 20th century.

Toe Zann

REFUGEES

Precarious Future

The military junta, which became bankrupt following the crackdown in 1988, has endeavoured to find ways to jump out of their unstable financial situation. The junta had expected a lot of foreign investments in Burma after opening the country following their bloody coup, and this, they thought, would save them, and help them protect their power. However, foreign investments fell short of their expectations as many countries have shown more concern for human rights than for quick-profit investments.

To finally get the money they so desperately needed to continue their suppression over the people, the military leaders decided to sell off the dense teak wood forests along the Thai/Burma border area. They faced a serious problem however, for those forests were under the control of ethnic minorities who have been fighting against the military junta for many decades.

In order to secure these areas and sell the teak quickly to hungry buyers, the junta launched heavy military attacks against the strongholds of the minorities, starting at the end of 1988. In early 1990, they had made some progress.

Armed minority groups lost some of their camps. However, the greatest burden fell on the civilians living in the area. Fleeing the war areas, they had to take refuge inside Thailand, where their suffering continues.

Thai authorities, seeing this difficult situation, allowed them to stay temporarily on Thai soil. Yet, the people did not want to establish their homes here where culture, language and customs are so different from theirs. They yearned to return to their ancestral homes and villages.

Since the Burmese military planned to wipe out the minorities along the border in order to make the cutting and selling of teak to foreign countries more easy, it is not likely that they will remove their forces from the border area. They will, instead, try to plant their feet more strongly in the area in order to give free reign to foreign countries to completely rape these areas of precious trees. The people, thus, must plan to live indefinitely in this foreign land as refugees without a home.

Of the many refugee camps along the border, Moe

Koe, about 65 kilometers south of Mae Sot (Thailand) is one of the largest. It has a population of about 5000 refugees, and some students also live here.

They struggle daily against the shortages of food and medicine. A refugee committee provides what they can, but it is never enough. Deadly malaria threatens the refugees as does other diseases caused by the dirty drinking water which the people get from a nearby stream. Dirty rubbish scattered around the camp creates serious health hazards for the children. A French medical team aids the refugees, but it can not cope with the conditions alone.

I would like to raise several questions. "How can the refugees survive in this terrible situation?" "Where and how can the youth receive an education?" "What kind of future can the children look forward to?" "What work can the adults ever get in this foreign country in order to provide for their families?"

The Thai government has also never stated a clear policy on these refugees. Will they allow the people to settle here permanently so that they can begin farming and caring for their own lives? Or will they send them back into the hands of the Burmese military? How long will the simple basic needs be given to them in this sad camp?

The total number of refugees along the border is now well over 40,000 and is growing. The burdens which these refugees and the support groups will face in the future is unimaginable.

The cause of the refugee problem is the civil war which has raged uncontrolled between the military regime and the minorities for over 40 years. The absurdity of the military regime is that it does not intend to stop the war at all. Instead, the army is accelerating their quest to conquer the area so that they can reap the benefits of the natural wealth which exists here.

As far as I can judge, the longer the war rages on, the more the innocent people will become homeless refugees, and the country will sink into poverty. This, I want to proclaim, is the entire responsibility of the regime which, without scruples, is plunging the country into the abyss of death only so that they can personally profit.

Naing Lu Aung

SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS

June 12, 1990

WASHINGTON DC, UNITED STATES

Two environmental groups, Greenpeace USA and Rainforest Action Network (RAN), co-sponsor a demonstration on Thursday, June 14, at noon to protest Thailand's role in the destruction of tropical forest in Burma.

The demonstration took place in front of the Royal Thai Embassy, then moved to the Burmese Embassy and finally ended in front of the White House where President Bush was meeting with the visiting Prime Minister of Thailand.

The demonstration featured several "elephants" pulling logs chained to their legs.

The two groups said, "Following the military crackdown in Burma in 1988, the U.S. and other western countries suspended foreign aid to Burma. Around the same time, deforestation-related flooding in Thailand killed more than 300 people. Thai and Burmese military officers then struck a deal which subsequently led to Thailand banning logging in Thailand and provided Thai companies more than 40 concessions to cut massive amounts of teak and other rainforest timbers in Burma. The Burmese military is now using the new Thai logging roads to increase attacks on ethnic groups such as the Karen. The increased fighting near the border has also forced thousands of Karens and other Burmese to seek refuge inside Thailand, but the Thai government is now forcibly repatriating these people back to Burma."

"In response to the grave environmental and human rights abuses occurring in Burma, RAN and Greenpeace USA have endorsed a bill pending in the US Congress which would ban the imports of Burmese teak for use in making luxury yachts and furniture," the statement added.

The statement pointed out the fact that the last expanses of Southeast Asia tropical rain and monsoon forests are in great jeopardy. Desperate for funds to continue its brutal military regime, the government of Burma is selling off its forest resources as fast as it can.

The statement charged that "Following deforestation-related flooding which killed more than

300 people in late 1988, Thailand proclaimed its concern for tropical forests by banning logging inside Thailand. Thailand is now engaging in crass hypocrisy by leading the charge to destroy the forests of neighboring Burma."

The groups have understood that the people of Burma have voted to get rid of their military rulers, but the human rights abuses and environmental destruction go on.

Greenpeace and Rainforest called for an end to Thai involvement in the Burma teak war, and called for an end to environmental and human rights abuses in Burma while the Prime Minister of Thailand was visiting in Washington, DC, on June 14, 1990.

Burma has 80% of the world's teak reserves. But if all these 40 concessions continue to exploit teak wood from Burma, there will be no teak left in the next two years.

We, the All Burma Students' Democratic Front have constantly called to all these logging companies (which are cutting trees in Burma) to immediately stop cutting our trees from our motherland. We very much appreciate the two advocate groups, Greenpeace and Rain Forest Action, for joining with us in our struggle for democracy in Burma.

The resources of Burma belong to the Burmese people, not simply to the ruling military junta. Therefore, the use of these resources should require discussions with the people, and financial earnings from the sale of these resources should benefit the people.

Instead, the military unilaterally decides whom to sell to, how to sell, and for what price. The money earned is then used by the military to protect its own power over the people.

We urge all people around the world to support a boycott of all goods such as teak, fish and minerals which originate in Burma, until after state power has been turned over to the NLD and a truly nationally-accepted plan for the use of Burma's natural resources worked out.

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

The following companies and countries continue to support the military junta in Burma:

ARMS SUPPLY

Norinco	China
Fritz Werner	West Germany
Allied Ordnance Co	Singapore
Chartered Industries	Singapore
Hurper Co.	Singapore
Pakistan Ordnance Factory	Pakistan
Shipments Via	Holland
Unnamed	West Germany
Intermediaries from U.K., Belgium, Yugoslavia, Italy, Israel	

TIMBER COMPANIES

B & F Co.	Thailand
Thai Sawad	Thailand
Santi Forestry	Thailand
Sirin Technology	Thailand
Thai Pong	Thailand
South West Amex Co.	Thailand
Atlantis Corp.	Thailand
Tippathong Co.	Thailand
Mars & Co.	Thailand
and numerous others....	
Woodwork & Construction Pte. Ltd	Singapore
Chinese Timber Corp.	China

(This list is endless, the forests of Burma are not)

MINING & COMMODITIES

Daichi Co.	Japan
Mitsubishi Corp.	Japan
Mitsui & Co.	Japan
Sanwa Trading Co.	Japan
Hyundai	South Korea
G. Van Den Brink Co.	Holland
Korean Mine Promotion Corp.	South Korea
Daewoo	South Korea
SKS Marketing	Singapore
Myanmar Singapore International	Burma/Singapore
Burma Holdings	Malaysia
Thai Mining Co.	Thailand
Pepsi Cola Inc.	USA
Central (Hotels)	Thailand
M.C.G. Corp.	Japan

OIL COMPANIES

Kirkland	UK
Croft	UK
Amoco	USA
Unocal	USA
Petrocanada	Canada
Idemitsu	Japan
Shell	Holland
Yukong	South Korea
Elf	France
Petronas	Malaysia
Exxon	USA
Japex	Japan
BHP	Australia
Premier	UK

FISHING COMPANIES

Numerous companies from Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong

AID PACKAGES

Japan
U.N. (ESCAP)

BOYCOTT ACTION

The struggle for democracy in Burma has made some progress. The May 27 elections were a great victory for the people.

However, election alone do not create democracy. The military still holds power, and is using that power to suppress the people through arrests, detentions, military tribunals, death sentences and military campaigns against the ethnic camps and refugee villages.

Help bring democracy closer to the Burmese people by boycotting companies investing in Burma with the military junta.

THE ARREST OF WIN NAING OO



On May 22, Win Naing Oo (30) along with Aung Thu and Wai Lin Tun were arrested in Rangoon by the military regime. All of them are students from Rangoon Institute of Technology. According to the "Working People's Daily" of May 26, they have been charged with planning to disrupt the May 27 elections. Their sentence is not yet known.

In fact, Win Naing Oo, who was a former Central Committee member of the All Burma Students' Federation Union, was not interested in disrupting the elections. His goal was to encourage people to make use of their democratic rights in the elections by voting for the person they truly wanted to represent them in the government, rather than giving in to SLORC pressure to vote only for NUP candidates. He is committed to a non-violent struggle for democracy in Burma, and had no intentions to create chaos or disharmony. When he and his friends were arrested, they had no weapons or

explosives. Instead they had a camera and some documents of the opposition political parties. The charges made against them by SLORC are false, and suggest that SLORC is paranoid enough to fear even those who wish to work non-violently for peace and democracy in Burma.

We believe that Win Naing Oo and his friends have been tortured severely while in detention, and forced to give names of people they know. These people will then also face military harassment, even though they may also be innocent.

We call for your help in pressuring the military regime to release Win Naing Oo, and all other political prisoners in Burma. As long as the military arrests, detains and tortures people in this manner, there can be no progress in the democratization of Burma. Write letters to: General Saw Maung, SLORC Headquarters, Rangoon Burma and express your concern for Win Naing Oo, and all other political prisoners still being held in prisons throughout Burma. Encourage him to immediately turn power over to the NLD so that peace talks can start and the civil war ended.