

**43rd ANNIVERSARY MARTYRS DAY**  
**JULY 19, 1990**



**GENERAL AUNG SAN**

The cover of Aung San Suu Kyi's book  
'UQP-Leaders of Asia Series'

## OUR FALLEN LEADERS

Saturday, 19 July 1947

The morning was wet. But Rangoon went on its business as usual under the low- hung monsoon clouds.

The officials at the Secretariat were busy while people went in and out of the office rooms. It was the start of another routine working day.

But things happened suddenly. At 10:37 a.m. in the Chamber in which the members of the Governor's Executive Council were holding a cabinet meeting under the chairmanship of Bogyoke Aung San, there broke out an ugly, unearthly noise. The pungent smell of carbide and fumes of heavy smoke rolled out the Chamber when people rushed in to find out what happened.

Inside, there was confusion. Chairs had been turned over, tables had been upset and there was blood on the floor. Councilors were lying in different positions, dead or dying. Bogyoke Aung San, Thakin Mya, Mann Ba Khaing, Deedok U Ba Cho, the Sawbwa of Mong Pawn U Razak, U Ba Win. Councilors trusted by the people, loyal to the people, had been cruelly cut down by the bullets of dastardly assigns.

U Ohn Maung, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications, who had entered the Chamber to submit a report, was also killed on the spot. Ko Htwe, the younger bodyguard of Education Member U Razak, was shot dead on the steps of the stairs when he attempted to stop the escape of the assassins.

This was the heavy price for our country to pay. We cannot compare it with any other valuable thing.

We are certain that if these martyrs could see the situation in our country today, they would indeed be extremely sad for the terrible things the military regime has brought upon the Burmese people.



# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

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### **DEMOCRACY RULES OVER MILITARY!**

**THE MILITARY CAN NOT RULE OVER DEMOCRACY!**

On July 3, Gen Saw Maung told the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) that the military would not dictate what should be written in the new constitution of Burma but that, "necessary advice would be given and help would be provided."

Gen Saw Maung's kind offer of "necessary advice" was welcomed with a shutter from the people of Burma. To offer necessary advice suggests that Gen Saw Maung and the Slorc are well versed in democratic procedures and the writing of democratic constitutions. The past two years would suggest a very different story.

Since the popular democratic uprising of 1988, and the bloody military coup of September 18, 1988, the military under the direction of Gen Saw Maung has ruled the country with an iron fist, resorting to arrests without charge, trials without defense, executions, tortures etc. Such acts do not fit in a democratic structure under any circumstances. For the people of Burma to seek and/or accept advice from the military on the writing of a democratic constitution would be a total contradiction.

The writing of the new constitution must be done by those elected to represent the people in the new government. They must consult their constituencies to seek "necessary advice" on how the constitution should be written and what provisions it should contain. Democracies grow from the people, are nurtured by the people and are preserved by the people. Militaries serve the people because militaries are not democratic institutions. Therefore, they can not, under any circumstances, give proper advice for a new democratic constitution.

For the democratic process in Burma to grow now, Slorc must immediately turn power over to the newly elected government. When this government has power, they can go about writing a new constitution which truly responds to the needs of the people.

As long as Slorc refuses to turn power over, they are indicating that they do not trust their own people, nor do they want the people to fully participate in and take charge of, the democratic process in Burma.

The military must accept the fact that they are under the control of the people, and that they must serve the people. If they understand this, they will step back and let the people start rebuilding Burma.

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

## NEWS FROM INSIDE

Recently, a report, with, photos was received from friends inside Burma. The report contains interviews with people who were recently relocated, under duress, to areas around Rangoon called "New Towns". Few such reports have been received, so DAWN wishes to give extra space in this issue to this reality of life in Burma today.

July 5, 1990

(Interviews in Satellite Villages)

First Interview

I recently arrived in the Shwe Pyi Tha new town, which is a new satellite village in the outskirts of Rangoon. Previously, the area was all paddy fields for rice production. The land was owned by the farmers themselves. When the military took over state power,

the junta confiscated the paddy fields without paying any compensation to the farmers. Thus, the farmers now are landless, have no place to grow the rice for their survival. Even though the farmer's lands were confiscated, the farmers each had to pay 1500 kyats to the junta to build a new home in the new town. Ironically, they built their new homes on land they once owned, but lost to the military government. So, the farmers, not being able to farm any longer, have to search for work every day in order to survive.

Shwe Pyi Tha is divided by the Rangoon-Prome railway into the east area and the west

area. In the east area, there are many large comfortable houses, and the area is well decorated in order to serve the high ranking army officers and civil servants. The people call the east area the "VIP ward".

In the west area, there are many huts made of bamboo with thatched roofs. The two areas are very contrasting although near together.

There are 9 wards in Shwe Pyi Tha, not counting the VIP ward. In the VIP ward, construction of the spacious houses has been going on for two years now.

The poor people were forced to shift to Shwe Pyi Tha from their old houses because the military junta told them that their old area was needed to build roads, new buildings (offices and living quarters for the armed forces officers), or to build



The VIP zone. Sound structures.  
Comfort. Good life. Security. Benefits  
gained for serving the military dictator  
without question.

the new market etc.,. Even though the poor people's houses were destroyed by the junta, the people received no compensation, and still had to pay at least 3000 kyats to 5000 kyats to get a small piece of land in the new town. These poor people have to work very hard every day to get even a small amount of money only for food. Now, they must begin their lives all over again. For example, the people build a small bamboo hut only 10 feet square which costs at least 1000 kyats. Since they can earn enough each day only for mere survival, they must borrow the money with a high interest rate from the rich people. If the people can not borrow the money, they have to move to another place called Aye Mya Tha Ya which is on the Rangoon- Prome highway road, more than 150 miles from Rangoon. Even the people in Shwe Pyi Tha new town can not go to Rangoon area for their jobs because the transportation rate is very expensive. Their average daily income is only around 15 kyats. The round trip to Rangoon area costs 10 kyats. This expensive transportation rate is due to an increase in the price of petrol from 3.50 kyats to 15 kyats for a one gallon. Now, in Burma, all commodity prices are very high because of the expense of transportation.

One boy who is in the 4th standard in school, said that previously his family lived in Sin Min ward in Alon township. Now, the junta built the new Thi Ri Min Ga La market in their old place. One day the township SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) officials ordered the people to move from their old place to one of the new towns. The SLORC told the people to give the money for the new place and the people got one week to prepare to move to the new town. On the last day given for preparations, two army trucks and two fire trucks came to their old place to force the people out. The people did not destroy their house because they did not want to move from their old place. So, the army took the head of the house (most are the fathers of the families) and detained them for one week. Although, the people did not want to move from their old place, they were forced to move to the new town.

In this boy's family, are his parents, his two elder brothers, one younger sister and two younger brothers. The eldest brother is 20 years old (eighth standard in school). The second elder brother is 18 years old (seventh standard), he is 14 years old (fourth standard), his younger sister is 13 years old

(third standard), and his two younger brothers are both 7 years old (first standard). Before the eviction, they were all in school. When they moved to the new town, their family had almost no money for survival. Thus, his two elder brothers had to leave school and find hard work to support their family. Each of the two brother's daily income is around 15 kyats. His father sells dry fish and salted fish. The young boy also works to support his family by repairing gas cigarette lighters in his spare time. His mother sells some small commodities in their house. Even though the whole family works so hard



The people's area. Bamboo structures. Mud. Poverty. No Hope. No security. The price paid for not being a "good" government servant in Burma today.

for their survival, their living standard is very low. Their daily family expenses are at least 64 kyats.

Most of the family in the new town are starving. The people are suffering from the high inflation rate.

The schools in the new town are a very sad situation. Some schools are still being built. The teachers especially face a very difficult time in traveling to and from the schools. SLORC issues coupon tickets to use for their transportation. The teachers, as well as the government workers, can use the coupons for travelling during office hours. The teachers transportation costs are at least 4 kyats for the round trip to the new town. Their salary is 650 kyats per month. But they pay 189 kyats only for travelling to the school. Thus, the government staff are also suffering from high inflation.



The hospital is being still built in the new town. There is only one clinic to care for the people. There are only a few medicines in the clinic and there is a serious lack of medicine for accident cases. The doctor only comes infrequently to the clinic.

There are four kinds of buses for transportation to the new town. Yet the people have difficulty getting rides as there are only a few vehicles available. Most of the people most work in the Rangoon area. So the people must spend a large portion of the money for transportation to go to the Rangoon area. In the evening, during the rush hour, the people pay at least 5 kyats for the bus from Rangoon area to the new town area.

In the VIP ward, the main road divides the area into the high ranking civil servants area and the armed forces staff area. Large houses are being built in both sections of the VIP ward. Although the high ranking officers build the houses here, they sell them at a very high price rather than live in them. These high ranking officers get bricks and cement at the official rate which is very low. At the same time, they use the state-owned cars for the transportation to carry the

building supplies. The army officers even use the army trucks for transportation to build their houses.

In the new town, we can clearly see the junta's tactics of manipulating the people. The junta gives many special facilities to the officers to oppress the people. Although the people understand the junta's brutal tactics, they do not dare to speak out against

the junta during this period of rule under the military.

A police station under construction in one of the New Towns. The military regime gives no assistance to the relocated people for the construction of their new homes, but makes certain that police and other military facilities are quickly built, and good quality. Control over the people is more important than the comfort of the people.

#### Second interview

We arrived in Nyaung Pin village which is about 10 miles from Mague city in Mague division. One old man said that he was arrested in 1989. According to our conversation with him, the military junta loaned him money to grow his sesame seed crop. During this time, all the farmers are poor and lack money to invest for farming because they are also suffering from high inflation rates. Although the farmers borrowed the money from the junta, the farmers had to pay back the same value in sesame seeds plus interest to the junta who exports the sesame seeds abroad. These exports help the junta earn much needed foreign exchange to buy the ammunition which they use to oppress the people in Burma. The junta sets the sesame seed price at 34 kilo for 220 kyats for the farmers. If the farmers can not pay back the debt in sesame seeds, they must pay money which is 240 kyats for 34 kilo plus penalty. For example, if the farmer has one acre of land planted to sesame seeds, he is forced to pay the quota of sesame seed which the junta needs. When the farmer is seriously sick, faces a disaster or some other destruction, he can not cultivate his field so he can

not pay back the debts to the junta.

This farmer said that he, his two friends from his village and 26 other farmers from other villages in the area were arrested because of their inability to pay back the debts to the junta. According to Burmese traditional custom, the farmers are responsible to support their families for everything. Now, their families face starvation. Thus, this farmer had to sell the cows (the essential animals for the farmers in Burma), bullock carts and their house to get the money needed to pay back the money so that the junta would release the

This land was once used for growing rice. Now the farmers are landless, and must even pay to buy a small piece of their own land in order to build a small hut for their families. The land floods in the rainy season bring disease to the people. It is a good place for growing rice, not raising children.



farmers from detention. Although the farmers have been released from detention now, they are in a very difficult situation.

In Kwan Gyan Gone Township of Rangoon Division, after the junta took over state power, they forced the villagers to make the fence around the villager's land. One blind man in the village was very poor and could not make the fence. For that reason, the army men kicked him out of the village. When the army men came to the village, they also destroyed the Za Yart (small house to rest for the travellers) without any reason.

In this village, the villagers are not satisfied with the military junta's actions. They are very simple and do not understand politics. But they know about the brutality the military daily carries out to oppression the farmers in the village. Other villagers in the middle area of Burma are also suffering from the brutal oppression of the junta. But they

do not dare to fight against the junta.

### Third Interview

After the military took over state power, the military junta confiscated the rice fields owned by the resident farmers to use for building the new town. They did not pay the farmers any compensation. This area is about 25 miles from Min Hla city in Pegu division. The junta named this new town Aye Mya Tha Yar (peaceful and nice place). Even though the land of the farmers was confiscated, the farmers were forced by the junta to build the roads

on their own land for the new town. If the farmers could not work to build the new town as volunteers, they had to paid 15 kyats for each day. If the very poor people could not pay the money to get land in the other new town, they were forced to move to this Aye Mya Tha Ya new town by the junta. The other new areas are Hlaing Tha Ya (good smelling place), Shwe Pyi Tha (wealthy place) and Dagon Myo Thit (the name of an ancient city). The junta planned to move the poor people from the Rangoon area. But the poor people were working in Rangoon area. The junta did this because these people were actively involved in the country-wide demonstrations in 1988. After the military took the state power, the junta got the opportunity to take revenge against the poor people by evicting them from their old homes.

After the poor were moved to the new town, they faced the jobless problem. Now they face many difficulties for their survival. The people in this

A group of farmers working under duress to prepare their old paddy fields for the construction of a new town. Not only do they not receive compensation for their land, but they also must do forced-labor to prepare it for others to buy. They do not know how they will make a living in the future since they can no longer farm.



new town have a very low standard of living. Now, 90% of the people are facing the jobless problem and starvation in the new town. Their daily food is only rice soup. With food so very difficult for the poor people to get, how can they even think about education for their children?

One man said that there are six people in his family. Now, they have no jobs for their survival. His mother is 70 years old. He looks for any hard work day by day. When they have no money to buy food for the family, they have to sell even their mosquito nets, blankets and clothing. Sometimes they go without eating for some meals because of their financial crisis. Even sometimes when somebody in the family is sick, they go to the clinic and there is no medicine or doctor there. Constantly the water floods under the houses, so mosquitoes are numerous.

There are only tricycles for transportation for the people.

One young man (16 years old) said that he is a tricycle driver. There are 7 people in his family. His father was a carpenter and his mother was a hard laborer in a construction site. He attended school until the 8th standard. When their family moved to the new town, they became faced with no jobs and with starvation. So, his elder brother joined the army to support his family. Now, his parents are jobless in the new town. The SLORC sells 1.4 kilo of rice to his family for a week. When there is a lack of rice, even the SLORC can not sell the rice to the people.

Burma is a rice-cultivation country. Rice is the main export of Burma. Yet, the people are starving. The rice exports is for only the military expenses. Now, the junta is using about US\$1,500,000 for each day in the civil war.

#### Fourth Interview

When the military took over state power, the junta confiscated the rice fields in order to build the new town area called Hlaing Tha Ya which is on the other side of the Hlaing river in Rangoon.

Even though the rice fields were confiscated, the farmers did not get any compensation from the junta. The junta violated the 1963 law which was written to protect the farmers' rights (this law was drawn up by the revolutionary government led by former Gen. Ne Win). According to the law No.3/2, act No.1, the government can confiscate land only ii:

(a) the farmers took a loan from the government and can not repay it; (b) the settlement of an inheritance can not be done peacefully; (c) law and state order have been violated.

The life of the farmers is only planting and harvesting paddy for survival. When they are landless, their survival becomes almost impossible. Since the BSPP (Burma Socialist Program Party) ruling period, the farmers have had to pay a very high tax in the form of paddy. Because the military



and the BSPP are virtually the same thing, this high paddy tax simply goes to support the military. The government corporation sets a very low price for the farmer's paddy, and this makes the tax very high for the farmers. If the farmers want to purchase back their own land to build a house on after their rice fields were confiscated (without any compensation), they have to pay 1500 kyats (about US\$250) for a plot 40 feet by 20 feet.

The people from many different areas were forced to move to this new town. The junta gave many reasons to the people why they had to move, such as they were living in an eviction area needed to build a new road, market etc.,. Although the people's old places were confiscated by the junta, the people had to paid 1500 kyats to get the new place in the new town. While the people were moving to the new town, they ran into many troubles. For example, the Hlaing river can be used only during the high tide when boats large enough to carry trucks to the other side of river can float. So, the people had to wait for long hours for high tide in order to move their possessions. They had nothing to eat during this time.

There are more than 5000 people living in this new town.

Now, 50% of the houses still have no walls in the new town. Forty per cent of the people are jobless and facing starvation. One dweller said that in his old place, he could do any job and his daily income was from 15 kyats to 20 kyats. Now, in the new town, although he also looks for any kind of hard

work, he can not get the job for his survival. Currently, he is jobless and facing starvation. There is only one clinic in which two nurses attend to the health needs of the people with only a few medicines. The hospital is still being built in the new town. Some serious patients died because the transportation is very difficult to go to the hospital on the Rangoon side. One medical doctor said that he knew of a patient who died for lack of 5 kyats (US\$.60).

There is only one high school and 50 very small schools for basic education. One basic school teacher said that there are three teachers for the 50 students in his school. One high school student said that there are insufficient desks in his school.

There is no cemetery in the town. The people can not take the body to the Rangoon side because of the difficult transportation. So, the people made a cemetery in one rice field.

#### Fifth Interview

On the 27th of March 1990, one sergeant, his 10 privates (from Regiment No. 70) and five policemen entered Than Kyo Village of Kwan Gyan Gone township in Rangoon division. Their reason to come to the village was to check the visitors and to look for one thief who stole a cow from another village. At this time, the villagers were raising funds to build a basic education school by playing betting games in the village. When the soldiers arrived in the village, they saw many villagers in the village. For that

These "New Towns" can not give a "new life" to the people. There is no work, no proper education, no good health care, no bright future. Under these circumstances, how can the people respect the military junta which claims to be working for the good of the people? Words from the military are meaningless to these people. They only know that now they must face severe suffering.



reason, the sergeant commanded his privates to shoot into the sky. After that, one private sent a message to the sergeant that one villager, Ko Win Kyi, was hit on the thigh by one of the bullets. It was clear from this situation that the soldiers shot into the village rather than up in the sky. Then the sergeant commanded the private to bring the wounded villager to him. He asked the villager if the wound was really a bullet wound or only something caused by a sharpened object. Then the sergeant said that the wound was not so serious, so not to worry. He said the soldiers would come again the next day and take him to the hospital.

After that, the soldiers arrested 19 villagers, including three women. The three women had been selling some snacks near the betting games. The next day, one captain and the privates came to the village to check the wounded villager. The captain said that the wound was not so serious so it did not need attention. He then asked the villagers if there was a clinic in the village. The soldiers did not want to take the wounded villager to the hospital because they did not want people in other areas to know about the incident.

The captain then told the villagers that he wanted one villager to treat the wounded man (in Burma, there is no doctor in most villages, so some people attend a very short medical training course and then provide treatment to the other villagers. The people call these people "Sa Ya"). The Captain told the Sa Ya to take responsibility for treating the wounded man. He said that if the Sa Ya would treat the villager, the captain would do something to help the detained villagers. The Sa Ya answered that he had no experience for the treatment of bullet wounds and if he did something wrong to the villager, what would happen to him? The captain said that if anything went wrong, the Sa Ya could inform him.

The next day, the detained villagers were sent from Kyaik Taw (about 4 miles from Than Goy village) to Kwan Gyan Gone. The soldiers took the three detained women to Kwan Gyan Gone township SLORC office and the three women were detained in different detention rooms. Later, Lieutenant Hla Maw (from regiment no.70) told one of the women that if she would sleep with him that night, he would help clear her from charges. Although the woman refused, the lieutenant raped her. On the same night, the other two women were also raped by the soldiers. The women's names are Ma Pha Ma, Ma Htay Lon and Ma Sann Aye.

The next day, the soldiers asked for bribe money amounting to about 1800 kyats (US\$156) from the villagers to release the villagers from detention. So the villagers gave the bribe money to Lieutenant Hla

Maw. But, on the following day, the soldiers gave back the bribe money to the villagers. Although the three women were released, the men are still being detained without charge. The wounded villager still not receiving treatment from the military.

Lieutenant Ba Hein, one sergeant and five privates came to Ka Nyin Gone village of Kwan Gyan Gone township in Rangoon division at 9:30 pm. (the villagers could not remember the exact date). The soldiers entered U Tun Hlaing's house in the village and took U Tun Hlaing out of village. After 15 minutes, the villagers heard three shots and U Tun Hlaing suddenly disappeared from the village. Although his family asked the authorities about U Tun Hlaing, they never got an answer. Some time later, a fisherman found the body of U Tun Hlaing, riddled with bullet wounds. It was floating in the sea. Even the township authorities did not care about U Tun Hlaing' death. After two weeks, Lieutenant Ba Hein was promoted to the rank of captain and left the village. Now he is in Rangoon.

#### Sixth Interview

There are more than 1000 prisoners in Tha Yet jail in Pegu division. During the summer of 1990 (now monsoon weather in Burma), the prisoners with handcuffs and legcuffs, were forced to pull heavy rollers in place of machines. Sometimes the prisoners replaced buffalos to pull wagons which carry heavy logs. Most of the residents in the area are eyewitnesses to these incidents.

During the BSPP ruling period, this prison has been used to treat and rehabilitate drug addicts. Now, the junta changed the prison into the jail to torture the political prisoners.



# EXERPTS FROM SPEECHS

## General Aung San's speeches

"Is politics dirty? In reality, politics is *not* dirty. Only people can make politics to be dirty, and they are disgusting."

17th of January 1946

(The following three comments were made in a speech given by General Aung San, on the 18th of Dec 1941 in Bangkok, Thailand while he was forming the Burma Independence Army.)

"Comrades!, if you cannot scarify your life, your family, your home and your belongings, do not join the Burmese Independence Army. If you cannot sacrifice, you can resign from the Burmese Independence Army right now!"

"Comrades!, this army is not built up for only one man. It is for the whole country. This army is not only for one party or one organization or one group. It is for the whole nation."

"This army is not like the actions of the British mercenary army. It protects the nation and the country. It has to improve the country and the nation. Our loyalty for the nation must be reality. How can you be loyal to the nation? Now, you have your leaders who were appointed by rule. They are representatives of the country and the people. You have to be loyal to them. That way you are loyal to the country and the nation. So, you have questions about your leaders. If they are selfish and against the benefit of the country and the nation, they cannot rule long terms. You can see in history that if anybody, no matter how high their rank, must resign from duty if they do injustice to the people. When that kind of leader orders you to do something that does not concern your duties or is not good for the nation or the country, you must think whether or not you should carry out that order. If you are not clear in your mind, you can ask the other leaders who are higher than him. At that time, you know what is right and what is wrong."

## Notes from Aung Sann Suu Kyi's speeches

If any politicians (who help to achieve democracy) later take benefits from their political position, I will condemn these politicians on behalf of the people.

Shwedagon(West)  
On 26 Sept, 1988

Everybody can own human rights. Not only you. Even your enemy has a chance to own human rights. So, one day, when we win our struggle for democracy, the people who lose, should also own human rights completely. This is our democratic duties.

NLD Office  
Tha-Thon  
14-12-88

When we joined the struggle for Democracy, it does not mean that we want power. We joined because we want to carry out our duties. The main word for the NLD and also for the people is not the word, "Tower". According to our responsible duties for the nation and for the people, all of us are in the movement for democracy.

NLD Office  
Kyon-ma-ney  
15-1-89

We formed the National League for Democracy Party to win the struggle for democracy that the people want. If we cannot work together with the people, we have to destroy the NLD. So, the members of the NLD have to understand the people's desires. We have to act according to the desire of the people.

NLD Weekly bulletin, 13/90

Recently Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest was extended for another 6 months, with possible extension to 2 years. The reason for this extension is that she continues to get foreign assistance from foreign countries. She was suppose to have been released on July 20, 1990.

# TRANSFER OF POWER

## PROBLEMS IN THE TRANSFER OF POWER

Although the NLD won a landslide victory in the May elections, there is little evidence that the military regime is going to transfer power in the near future. They are raising various objections to a quick transfer of power, the present one being the need to draft a constitution and form a strong government first.

This is a very critical issue, not only because it benefits the military clique, but also because it directly affects the NLD. Saw Maung's recent speech indicated that his true intention is to prolong the rule of the military, and perhaps even keep it indefinitely, by demanding that the NLD draft a constitution and get it approved by a national referendum before the military will allow the NLD the right to rule the country.

### 1 The problem of time.

There is still not internal peace in Burma. The civil war rages on, and the military continues to demand total and unconditional surrender of the ethnic groups before peace negotiations can start. This simply means that there will be no immediate end to the civil conflict.

With the civil war continuing, it will be very difficult, perhaps impossible, for the NLD to draft a constitution which can be approved by all of the ethnic groups which make up Burma through a national referendum. A constitution which does not include the concerns, ideas and wishes of all the ethnic minority revolutionary groups, as well as those groups in areas controlled by the present military regime, can not be strong and just.

Thus, the demands of the SLORC that a constitution with the full approval of all the people be created before a transfer of power is clearly a ploy of the military to keep power. They know that it can not be done, and they know that they can keep the civil war going as long as they like, to prevent the NLD from getting the support and cooperation needed from the ethnic minorities.

Secondly, Saw Maung has indicated in one of his recent speeches that the SLORC will, themselves, not easily accept a constitution of the NLD, even if the NLD can draw one up quickly.

If the NLD agrees with the SLORC demand that they draw up a constitution before getting state power, they must first wait for some time until the SLORC allows the meeting of the newly elected People's Assembly. In this meeting, a commission for drafting the new constitution must be formed. Saw Maung will play a major role in deciding who should be a member of this commission.

The commission, if actually formed, must then ask for suggestions from various national groups, academicians and the different sectors of the society. From this information, the first draft of the constitution could be drawn up. If there are no obstacles to this process, it might take as long as three months.

This first draft of the constitution must then be presented to the People's Assembly. Calling a meeting of the People's Assembly is, in itself, a very complicated affair. Members live in all parts of the country, so for them to come for such a meeting takes much time and effort. The time between meetings must, therefore, be considerable.

In this second meeting of the People's Assembly, the draft constitution will be discussed in detail by all the representatives of the people. If they pass this first draft, the details of the constitution must be taken to the people throughout the country in every quarter, village, township, district and state. This will take a very long time due to difficulties of travel and communications.

From this discussion with the people, the drafting commission will have to make more changes and additions to the draft constitution. This second draft will also have to be presented to the People's Assembly.

Finally, if all goes well, the constitution will be presented to the people for approval through a national referendum. For this process to work properly, a long period of time is needed.

The total process will probably take from two to three years to be carried out properly. During this time, the military clique will likely try to create many conflicts among the leaders of the NLD, will continue to sell off the country's precious natural resources, will establish itself more strongly

throughout the country, and will step up its attempts to annihilate the revolutionary groups in order to prolong its power.

## 2. The problem of power

During this most important task of drawing up a new constitution for the country, the people should not have to face harassments and burdens so that they can concentrate more intently on making the constitution just and fair.

However, if power remains in the hands of SLORC, there will be no internal peace, and the people will not have the freedom to work carefully on the constitution. With most of their sons and daughters in the jungle or in prison, the internal atmosphere is not conducive to hard and energetic work on the constitution.

Under SLORC's total militarization of the country, the people are also afraid to discuss openly and freely their thoughts on the new constitution. For example, they can not safely suggest that the new constitution curtail the powers of the military, or limit its size and budget. Such suggestions would put them in danger of arrest and imprisonment.

At the same time, SLORC and its political arm, the NUP (National Unity Party), will use this time to create confusion in the minds of the people in the villages and townships throughout the country. Under military rule, movement of the people is restricted, so even the drafting commission may have difficulties moving about the country to discuss constitutional issues with the people. The SLORC and NUP, however, can travel about the country freely, thus giving them an advantage to manipulate and control the drafting process.

A further issue of power concerns the size and makeup of the military. If the new constitution is to be truly democratic, the size and power of the army must be reduced. This the military will never accept. At the same time, it will be necessary to restructure the military, making it into a federal army consisting of army units made up of the various ethnic groups. This federal army structure is essential to prevent the formation of a military clique which can seize state power and create a dictatorship as was done by Ne Win in 1962. History and experience has shown that, in Burma, a federal army is necessary to prevent one person, or one group from developing full power over the military.

As long as power remains in the hands of the military junta, Saw Maung will not accept the basic principle of a Federal Union which will guarantee the equal rights and self-determination of all the indigenous states, including the Burmese state. So long as a true Federal Union is not established, there can never be internal peace, and without internal peace, the people will not be able to achieve genuine democracy, human rights and justice.

If the NLD agrees that state power will be turned over only after the drafting of a new constitution, the position and power of the military will remain unchanged. Peace talks will continue to be an impossible dream, the civil war will continue and the valuable lives of the people will be destroyed. Poverty will continue to be a way of life for the people of Burma. This is a most sorrowful situation.

In this situation, if the NLD would desire to establish internal peace, they would have to amend the constitution to limit the power of the military and establish a federal army. Should they attempt to do this, Saw Maung would immediately stage another coup. His justification for such a coup to his soldiers would be, "Comrades, we preformed our task after the 1988 coup with dignity. Abiding by our promise to the people, we held free and fair elections, transferred power to the elected government, and returned to our barracks. Nevertheless, the elected government is trying to destroy the constitution, and is planning to amend it to satisfy the demands of the rebels in the jungle. That is why, now, we have the historic task to once again preserve the unity of the indigenous people and the union".

In conclusion, the present strategies of the NLD are extremely critical. If they agree to follow Saw Maung's process to first draw up the constitution and then accept a transfer of power, all the progress which the people have made during the past two years could be quickly lost. It is better that the NLD and all the Burmese people demand that first state power be transferred to the new government. Then the process of drafting a new constitution can be done in a healthy and productive atmosphere. This will move the process of democratization ahead. The NLD must consider these issues very carefully.

ALL BURMA STUDENTS<sup>1</sup> DEMOCRATIC FRONT

## INVESTMENTS

In response to protests about Petro-Canada Inc.'s investments in oil exploration in Burma, the Public Affairs director prepared a letter to justify their pouring money into the hands of a brutal military dictator.

We are continuously seeking new opportunities to broaden our production base and as you may know many of the most attractive opportunities are in less developed countries of the world. We have signed a production sharing contact with the Government of Myanmar and intend to conduct business operations according to our own very high operating standards which we employ around the world.

Petro-Canada strives to be politically neutral in the areas in which we operate and we are attempting to develop natural resources in the best interests of both the host country and our Company. We will always strive to act as responsible guests in foreign countries and reflect an exemplary role as Canadian expatriate business operations.

(signed) Sheila O' Brien, Director  
Public Affairs, Resources

It was with great joy that we read this response from Petro-Canada. We highly respect individuals and companies which can truly "strive to be

politically neutral".

The term "politically neutral" suggests that the individual or company will not choose sides in a conflict, but will treat each side equally.

That being the case, if Petro-Canada is truly "politically neutral", they must treat both the military dictator of Burma and the opposition groups in the same way.

Petro-Canada has funnelled funds in the amount of millions, into the military regime which has ruled Burma illegally for the past two years. If they will stand up to their claim that they are politically neutral, then they must provide an equal amount of funds to the opposition groups which legally won the May 27th elections, and have the right to rule the country.

We call for an international campaign to pressure Petro-Canada, and all other corporations which claim to be "politically neutral", to prove their claims and thus protect their integrity. If they will not carry out politically neutral actions, then their statements to protesting groups are nothing but lies.

Test them. See if they are honest enough to live up to the image they try to portray to the world.

Foreign investment last year (1989) brought at least US\$1.03 billion into the impoverished pockets of the Burmese military, according to Rangoon-based diplomats. In early 1989, they were basically broke. Therefore, there is little question that these foreign investments have made it possible for the military to launch blitz-like attacks against villages of the minorities, and continue their reign of terror over the people inside Burma.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC JUSTICE

## NDF STATEMENT

### THE STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT (N.D.F.), BURMA ON THE SITUATION AFTER THE ELECTION

The National Democratic Front (NDF.), being ever in touch with the current political situation in the country of so called "Myanmar", realizes that now is a decisive stage in political developments which could lead to a general crisis.

In such a tormented situation, the NDF, which comprises eleven ethnic parties and organizations together with eleven armies, finds it necessary to issue a statement concerning its attitude.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which came to power by way of barbaric acts, has lost lace and has been severely set back by the landslide victory of the opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). By casting their ballots for the opposition party, the people of Burma have clearly shown undaunted spirits and firm determination to oppose, by any means permissible, the inhumane oppression practiced by the ruling Saw Maung military junta.

To redeem its lost prestige, the SLORC has adopted secret plots and carried them out by hook or by crook. Only by accepting the constitution drafted by SLORC will the NLD be given a chance to form a government, but that kind of government would be no more than a puppet, or a sham. As long as the military junta exists, there is no possibility to establish a legal and dejour government.

Continuous efforts, and a strong up-rising, are needed to pave the way for a democratic government with full power. There is no peaceful way at all to regain state power from the Saw Maung junta which took control by force.

The people of Burma, including soldiers who cast ballots for the NLD, ought to notice that the landslide victory in the election is not enough to gain full state power. The big monster, the main enemy of democracy, the military junta, still exists and is active.

Under this situation, the soldiers, the students, the monks, and the people who voted for the NLD and all other pro-democracy forces, must be unified to build up a huge People's Power movement to grab back state power from the SLORC and the hand it

over to the already mandated NLD government. At the same time, the People's Power movement has to set free all the political prisoners including U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The NDF will wholeheartedly participate with the people from Burma by any means available to struggle for the release of all political prisoners, and for the establishment of the legally mandated NLD government.

The NDF strongly believes that only after the establishment of a legitimate government in Burma, will there be possibilities to stop the civil war, to set up peace, and to establish the Federal Union. June 20, 1990 Central Executive Committee  
National Democratic Front

### ALERT

U Tin Oo, leading member of the National League for Democracy (NLD) remains in prison with a 3-year sentence to hard labor. He is suffering from thrombon- phlebitis, and has been denied medicines by prison wardens and SLORC. His health is deteriorating rapidly, and he is in desperate need of an operation which can only be done in a foreign country.

His wife must search all over Rangoon for medicines to help relieve the symptoms of his ailment. She is extremely concerned about his situation.

Zargana, Burmese social critic and comedian, has also been re- imprisoned and has been sentenced to 6 years. He had earlier been released following international pressure, but then quietly re-arrested and imprisoned. He was arrested in Yinkin township in Rangoon on the 26th of May 1990 together with his partner, Ah-Yine. It is reported that he is kept in a very small cell, in isolation from other prisoners.

Both of these cases require immediate attention. Please write letters to the Burmese embassies in your country, to Gen Saw Maung, SLORC office in Rangoon, and to your own governments urging action on these cases.

## ELECTION RESULTS

In early July, the results of the May 27 election were finally officially given to the public. It must have been a difficult day for the SLORC as they finally had to concede that, not only did they lose the elections, but they were so soundly defeated that they almost totally lost their voice.

Of the 485 parliamentary seats, the National League for Democracy won 3%, over 80% of the total. The National Unity Party which represents the military junta, won only 10 seats, or a little over 2%.

In the months leading up to the May election, the military had tried, through various methods, to swing the election in their favor. One of their strategies was to arrest Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, the two strong leaders of the NLD. By taking them out

of the election process, the SLORC hoped to break up the strength of the NLD.

At the same time, the SLORC limited the campaigning activities of all opposition parties while spending vast sums of money on their own.

Despite all their tricks, the Burmese people showed their true desires to be rid of military rule once and for all.

We congratulate the NLD on their victory, and we congratulate the people of Burma for having the courage to make their voice heard all over the world. May this be one of the first big steps towards the building of true democracy in our motherland.