DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

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DOES THE UN THINK ABOUT BURMA?

A secret session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, heard on February 26 the long awaited report on Burma from their Independent Expert Sadako Ogata. The hearing was followed by the Commission's 43-nation members, voting unanimously to condemn Burma's ruling government.

The report criticizes Burma's military junta for failing to turn over power to democratically elected civilian officials and for detaining opposition members. It also pointed out that, "It is of utmost importance that the social and political situation of Myanmar rapidly improve so that the people might be able to exercise their personal rights without fear of any adverse consequences"

It is an indictment of the methods Btmaa-e-rulers use, when even an independent observer, representing the United Nations, has her requests turned down. She was denied access to a number of prominent opposition leaders and notes that she was not allowed to inspect detention centers and prisons, so "numerous allegations of torture and other degrading treatment" of detainees could not be investigated.

The whereabouts of National League for Democracy (NLD) Central Committee members arrested in September and October 1990, were still unknown at the time of her visit, and a well known NLD official, Maung Ko died in prison during the very week she was in Burma, (see DAWN no. 23, Dec.1990)

Human rights groups know of at least 100 people who have been sentenced to death, although it is not known if any of these sentences have been carried out.

Professor Ogata's report adds strength to the call from around the world to take action now. People in Burma are forced to deal with violations of human rights every day. 1991is the time to remove the SLORC from their seat in the UN, to see the UN impose economic sanctions against rulers who can claim no legitimacy and to see the government chosen by the people, given the opportunity to govern.

PUBLISHED BY
THE ALL BURMA STUDENTS' DEMOCRATIC FRONT
"Dawn'".PO Box.1352, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.

BUDDHISM
UNDER THE SLORC

The day before the February 23 coup in Thailand, Thai Supreme Commander Gen. Sunthorn led a delegation to Rangoon. Gen. Sunthorn said that during their meeting, Gen. Saw Maung had urged Thai authorities to take legal action against Burmese monks who engaged in "political activities" in Thailand.

Gen. Saw Maung said that some of these monks had been disrobed and had escaped into Thailand with the aim of engaging in political activities to try to overthrow the Rangoon government. They had been able to identify some of the monks from newspaper photographs taken during rallies in Bangkok.

This comment comes at a time when Burma's Ministry for Home and Religious Affairs were planning a large reception to extend honorary religious titles to senior monks from Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan and England. A senior member of the Thai Sangha Supreme Council declined the title for health reasons.

The announcement of the conferring of the religious titles provoked criticism amongst social critics and academics in Thailand as they feared the move was a ploy by the Burmese junta in Rangoon (the State Law and Order Restoration Council) to try to gain legitimacy by the presence of Buddhist figures, and whitewashing its activities.

Last August, the SLORC was strongly denounced for killing two Buddhist monks and two students who were taking part in a peaceful demonstration in Mandalay to commemorate those killed in 1988. After the incident the SLORC raided hundreds of Buddhist monasteries across Burma and arrested and disrobed more than 400 monks alleging them of conspiring with the anti-military political movement.

Thai social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa said that the offer of the religious titles had serious political implications. He said that if the Thai monks accept the offer to go to Burma, they become tools of the regime known to have abused human rights, an act that runs against basic Buddhist teaching.

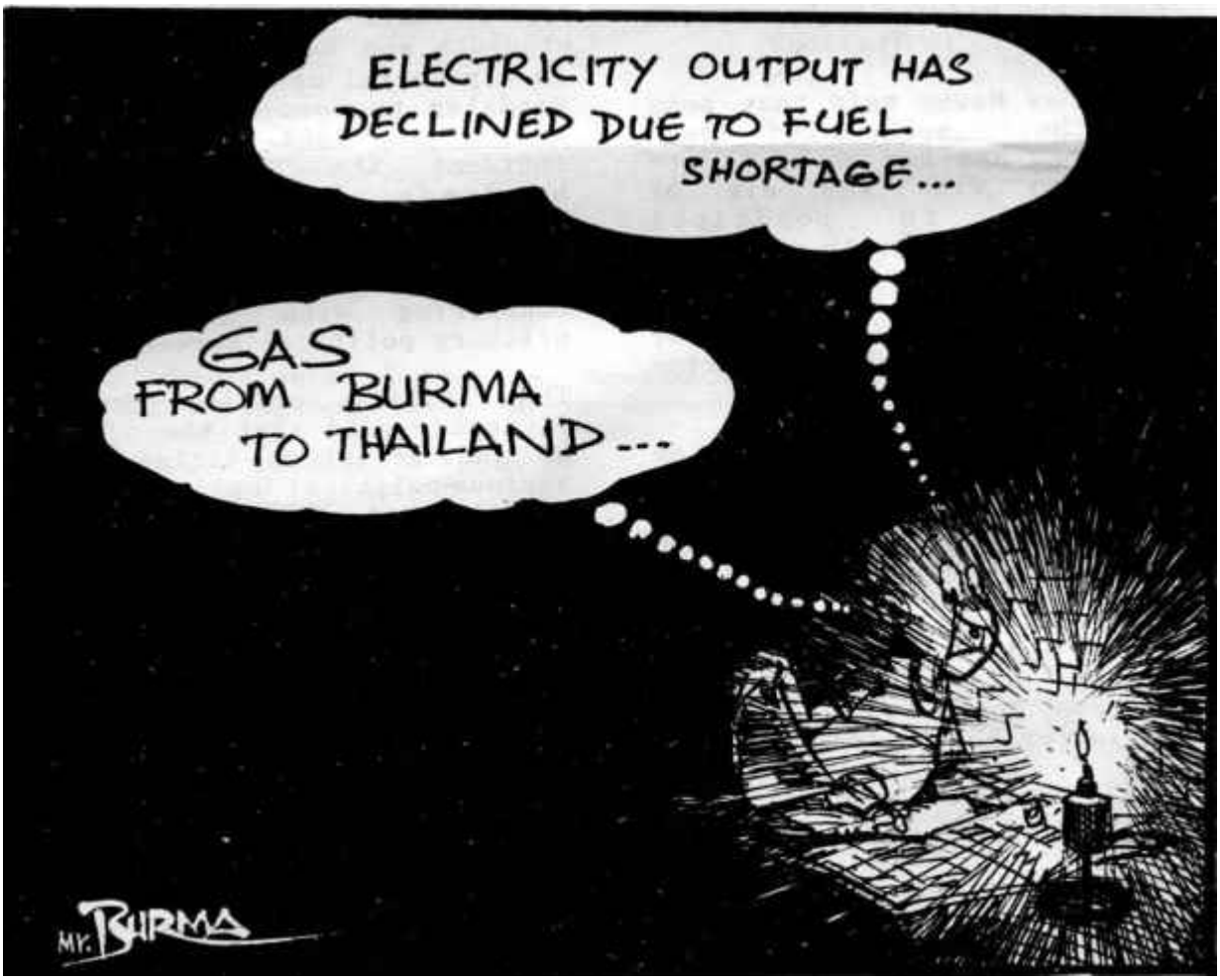
Of the 68 senior monks invited to the ceremony, 4 from foreign countries attended. One from Thailand, two from Sri Lanka and one from Japan. The ambassadors from Thailand, Sri Lanka and West Germany also attended.

GAS FROM BURMA TO *THAILAND:*

On February 23, the Bangkok Post reported that during a visit to Rangoon, by General Sunthorn, Thai Supreme Commander, the previous day, Thailand had asked the Rangoon regime to help protect a gas pipeline it is planning to build to bring Burmese natural gas to feed power generators in Kanchanaburi Province.

Gen. Sunthorn said the 500 km. pipeline would be laid from the Gulf of Martaban in Burma to Three Pagodas Passon the Thai-Burmese border.

The Petroleum Authority of Thailand's Exploration and Production Department (PTTEP) is negotiating with Rangoon to invest in offshore facilities to explore for and produce natural gas. PTTEP President Thongchat, who accompanied Gen. Sunthorn to the meeting with the Chairman of Burma's ruling council, Gen. Saw Maung, said that the gas field in the Gulf of Martaban was expected to yield 250-500 million cubic feet of natural gas a day. He said a further round of negotiations on the investment plan, would be entered into with Rangoon in March.



INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AT THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION:

CANADA
Pointed to gross and systematic human rights violations and noted that building democratic institutions depends crucially on the protection of human rights.

INDIA
Hoped that the authorities would respond to the urge of the people to establish peace and a democratic order.

AUSTRALIA
Calledon countries in the Asia-Pacific region to cooperate on human rights issues as a focus of international concern and notes that in Burma, the military regime has disregarded the will of the people.

UNITED STATES
Called for the international community to urge the regime to release all political prisoners and to carry out the results of the elections.

AUSTRIA
Recommended that human abuses in Burma should be brought into open session in the Commission.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
Called on the regime to transfer power to the election winners without delay.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
Expressed concern about frequent mass arrests of suspected government opponents, many who have been detained without charge or trial and others who have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment by military tribunals, whose procedures do not conform to international standards for a fair trial, and in the case of death sentences there is no appeal to a higher judicial authority.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES
Called on the regime to release the detained leaders and to convene the National Assembly to transfer power to the elected government.

DEFECTORS

Seven Burmese army troops defected and joined the ABSDF at Pobatha. camp on February 11. They said they .had lost confidence in the military government under Gen. Saw Maung which has kept delaying the transfer of power to the leaders elected by the people last May.

The group belonged to the 515th Battalion and are aged between 25 and 30 years old. Karen intelligence reports indicate that the Burmese troops who have been assigned to launch military offensives against the armed ethnic resistance along the Thai-Burmese border are facing severe food shortages and the likelihood of heavy casualties, but that the SLORC has tried to suppress news about that situation.

CHRONOLOGY

1 Feb: Earthquake hits at 05:09 local time (2139GMT) with its epicenter 80 km (50 miles) north of the northwestern Burmese town of Homemalin and it registers six on the Richter scale.

5 Feb: Speaking about the Gulf War, Lt-Gen Phone Myint, Minister for Home & Religious Affairs, says that the Americans are following their dogma of bullying and domination and are testing their new technical weapons, not in their own country but in the soil of another country.

The US State Department's annual human rights report sites Burma's record as among the world's worst and its government as among the most repressive.

Some Burmese army soldiers incurred into Thai territory, Ban Kone Kane village and looted two motorcycles, a water pump, an insecticide sprayer and a television set.

6 Feb: The field manager of Sirin Technology Timber Company, Boonpen Kavoewat, 45 and Suvit Vejchakij, "38 a sub-contractor were shot dead by suspected Burmese minority groups, near Mae Hong Son Province at night.

The Australian Ambassador to Rangoon, Mr. Geoffery Allen presented 242 books to the English Language Department of the University of Rangoon and to the library of the University of Mandalay under the Australian Government's official cultural exchange program.

On the opening of "The National Theater", a gift from the People's Republic of China, the Working People's Daily says, "The joint efforts made in the construction of this great theater will surely contribute towards further enhancing the cultural exchange programmes between the two countries. As we accept this magnificent theater, we make a vow to further consolidate and develop good neighborly relations between the two countries and Pauk Phaw [blood brother] friendship between the two peoples of China and Myammar".

8 Feb: Thai Deputy Permanent Secretary, Chamnan Pojana says all Burmese living illegally in Thailand must report to the Interior Ministry's Displaced Persons Center beginning on April 1 to be sent to a holding camp in Ratchaburi.

The election commission outlaws the National Political Front for Youth for having contact with the Burma Communist Party.

The Bangkok Post newspaper reports the death of U Tin Maung Win, NLD candidate and U Nay Win, a well-known novelist and local correspondent for the Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun.

10 Feb: The Bangkok Post reports in an interview with the Director-General of the Forestry Department, U Ba Thwin, that the Burmese government gave logging concessions"onlytotheThaibecause we share the border, so that we can work together and get the logs into your country."

11 Feb: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) describes claims by-Burmese students detained at Bangkok's immigration jail of beatings by Thai authorities as exaggerated.

The Multi-Party Democracy General Elections, Union of Burma, cancels the registration of the Patriotic Democratic Youth Front (PDYF).

The group aged between 25-30 led by Sgt. Kyaw Khine from the 515th Battalion defected to join the students of the ABSDF, at Pabatha camp, opposite Tha Song Yang district of Tak Province, Thailand.

12 Feb: The two Burmese hijackers, Ye Marn, 24 and Ye Htin Kyaw, 22 who forced a Thai International Rangoon-bound flight, to land in Calcutta, were given bail of 1,000 rupee each from their prison in Calcutta, India by Daw Than Than Nu, a daughter of former Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu.

13 Feb: The Dissident Burmese students who blew up a Thai fishing vessel returned electronic equipment and fishing gear taken off the vessel, to Thai Fisheries Department.

14 Feb: Dr Tin U, Director of the Health Department of Ministry of Health says in Burma, 1,358 people infected with the AIDS virus were found as of the end of 1990.

The Indian Embassy in Rangoon sent an open letter to the government-run Working People's Daily, protesting against false reports of Indian interference in Burmese affairs. [The military regime did not print the letter, but it was posted on a notice board in front of the Indian Embassy in downtown Rangoon.]

15 Feb: The three representatives of the Democratic Forces, U Peter Linbin of the National Coalition Government, Em Marta, secretary for Foreign Relations Department of the KNU and Dr Thaung Htun, secretary of Foreign Relations Department of ABSDF delivered speeches in Stockholm, Sweden, during their tour abroad to inform European governments and organizations about developments in Burma.

18 Feb: Minister for Livestock Breeding & Fisheries and Agriculture & Forestry, Lt-Gen Chit Swe opens an irrigation development training center in Pegu, 100 kms north of Rangoon, worth US $18 million and totally funded by the Japanese Government.

20 Feb: The leader of the Kachin Independence Army and KIO party chairman, Mr Brang Seng strongly rejected Western allegations that the KIA has supported or was involved in lucrative drug trade, reports in the Nation newspaper.

The Indian Government announced it had released 300 prisoners, including 59 Burmese citizens, under an amnesty programme.

22 Feb: Supreme Commander Sunthorn Kongsompong, in his capacity as chairman of the Thai-Burmese Border Policy Committee, leaves for Burma for a one-duy visit accompanying a 40 member delegation.

24, Feb: The National Coalition Government of the Union of Myanmar (NCGUB) and Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB} set up an Anti-Military National Solidarity Committee {AMNSC), which comprises 14 members, the

(Continued on Page. 8)•

SOVIET CONCERN ABOUT BURMA'S ENVIRONMENT Radio Moscow reports:

Radio Moscow has added its voice to the outrage at the loss of Burma's forests. "Massive Burmese forests have been exploited by foreign logging companies without rules and limitations," it said in its Burmese language program on February 21.

The radio announced that the logging companies from Thailand, Japan, South-Korea, the Philippines and Singapore have been issued licenses for cutting trees but, there are no government officials monitoring their activities. Teak, hard wood and other logs have been cut by the companies, without rules, orders or limits.

This broadcast followed a visit on January 17 and 18, by a Soviet delegation to Burma, headed by Dr. Sedunov, the First Deputy Chairman of the USSR State Committee on Hydfometeorology. The delegation discussed questions and signed a contract related to "Myanmar-Soviet Bilateral Cooperation on Scietific and Cultural Exchange Programme". Dr. Sedunov also spoke at an environmental affairs seminar, in which he addressed the issues of the danger of ozone depletion, climatic change and other matters related to environmental affairs, which are threatening the social and economic safety of mankind.

The impact of indescriminant logging in northern Burma is now being acknowledged. Vast areas of northern Burma have been particularly affected by deforestation at the hands of Chinese timber workers. A number of reports have confirmed the use of Chinese army trucks hauling logs from the Burmese border into Yunnan province. In northern Shan State, deforestation is also the result of clearing for opium poppy cultivation and other forms of agriculture.

But Thai logging companies, who have started pushing roads through the border forests, to gain access for their bull-dozers and timber trucks are to blame for an incredible acceleration in the deforestation rate. Refer to figures produced by British forest scientist, Norman Myers, in DAWN no.24, Dec. 1990.

Environmental group, Greenpeace, supports that view. "It is obvious that the only management system currently

•(Continued from Page. 7)

DAB chairman Gen Bo Mya as **a chairman, and U Win Kett as general-secretary.**

26 Feb: Only four Buddhist high priests from the three countries out of 16 from five foreign countries, arrive in Rangoon to receive SLORC Buddhist honorary awards. One monk from Thailand, two from Sri Lanka and one Burmese monk from Japan attended.

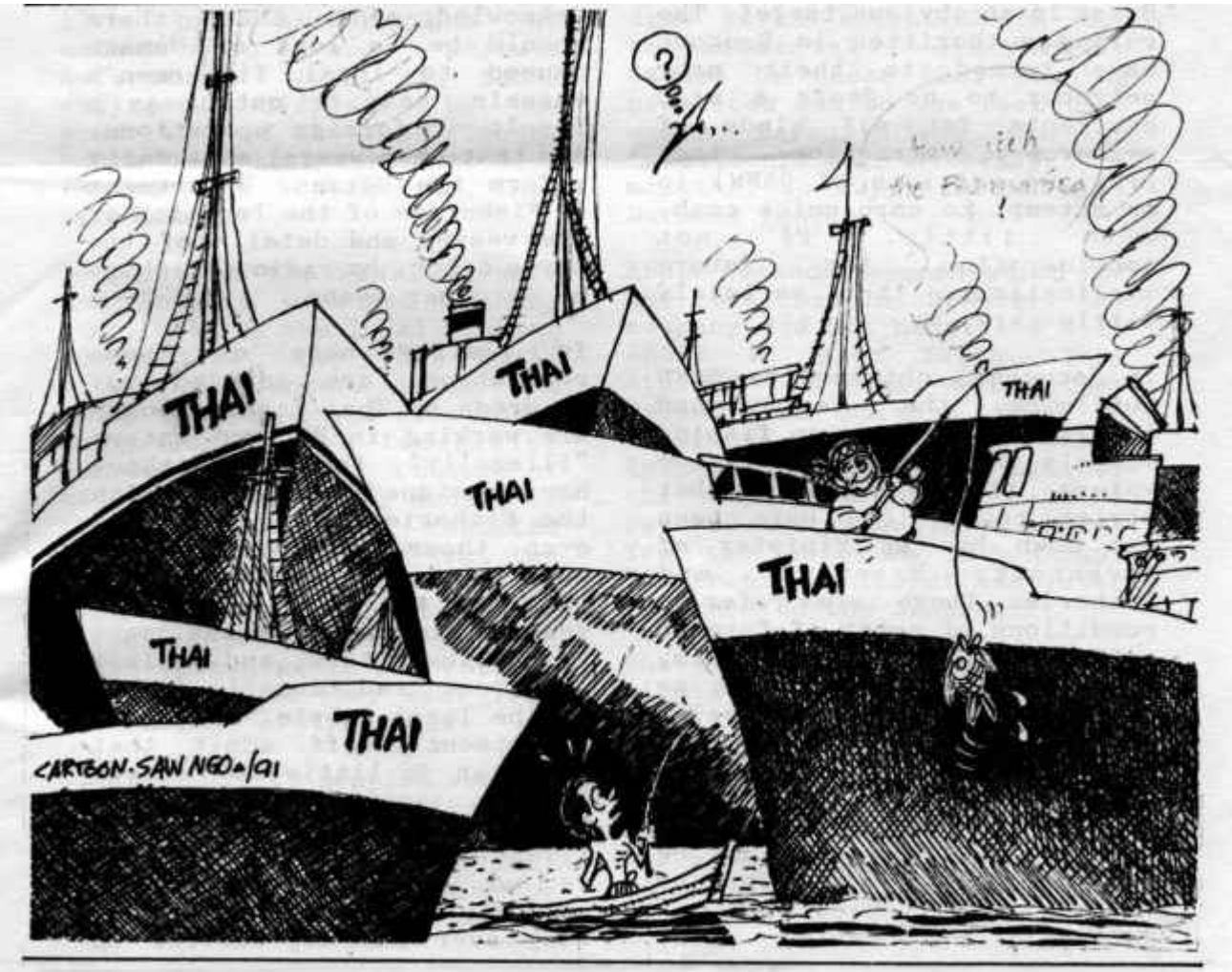
Burmese broadcasting Service (BBS) announces a group of 18 students who fled to Thai-Burma border, after the military coup, on 18 Sept 1988, gave themselves up at the Burmese Embassy in Thailand on Feb 16 and arrived back in Rangoon today.

employed in Burma is for Thai companies to cut as many as fast as possible."

The regional forestry officer of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Y.S. Rao, agrees. He is also quoted as saying' "It's heart rending to see how short-sighted they can be". Rao, who inspected concession areas last year, and others say that despite official denials, Thai loggers are voilating vertially every rule of logging.

The FAO estimated that the production of teak and other hardwoods in 1989 was about 944,000 tons, and that export earnings from teak rose to some $200 million. The main importers are the United States, Japan, Denmark and Italy.

Currently a bill is sitting before the US Congress, calling for a to.tal ban on the importation of all hardwoods including teak, from Thailand. But Burma's teak forests face an insecure future - since teak is such a highly prized commodity, found in a country which possesses about 70% of the world's supply and is controlled by military rulers who badly want hard currency to keep itself well armed. We call on all countries who deal in timber from Burma to enact a total ban.



THAI FISHING IN BURMESE WATERS:

Thai waters were over-harvested long ago. In fact Thailand's waters are dead now. While attempts are being made to bring life back to the seas in Thai territory, Thailand is following a stated policy to exploit the still rich seas of neighboring countries.

"Burmese waters are very wealthy in terms of food resources, in contrast with Thai waters. Therefore it is necessary for Thailand to search for wealthier areas." (Thai Fisheries Department)

Burma is an obvious target. The ruling authorities in Rangoon have turned to their near neighbor to do deals & sign contracts for all kinds of resource extraction (see previous editions of DAWN) in an attempt to earn quick cash, with little, if not consideration for future implications, then certainly little care.

In documents obtained by DAWN outlining the terms and conditions for foreign fishing vessels operating in Burmese waters it is obvious that strict regulations have been set down by the Ministry of Livestock Breeding and Fisheries. These terms refer to conditions of entry of foreign vessels into Burmese waters, outlining regulations such as the identification of vessels, such as required markings and license numbers clearly shown; they outline that the license for each vessel details the species of fish that can be fished for, the catch size and fishing methods used within a particular concession area; disturbance of other marine life is prohibited; as is the use of poisonous or explosive substances or chemical or electric devices for the purpose of fishing; vessels may only fish in their assigned areas and no foreign vessel may fish inside the 12 mile limit from the shoreline.

These regulations need to be agreed to by the fishing company seeking to operate in Burmese waters and by the Fisheries Department before a concession is signed. The agreement also includes acknowledgement that there should be no loss or damage caused to local fishermen's vessels, gear or catch, as a result of foreign operations, and that each vessel must daily inform the Burmese Department of Fisheries of the location of the vessel and details of the day's catch, by radio telephone or by other means.

In reality none of these regulations are adhered to. Hundreds of Thai fishing boats are working in Burmese waters "illegally", that is, without having signed agreements with the Fisheries Department, and even those who have signed agreements work completely outside their rules. Many vessels fish close to the coast in shallow waters, and exploit the areas traditionally fished by the local people. Fisheries Department staff admit that they can do little to control fishing activities - that fishing will go on legally or illegally, no matter. The trade is out of their hands. The ruling military authorities only ever pay lip-service to

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environmental concerns, and only pay interest to the contribution fishing concession and royalty fees make to their foreign exchange earnings.

How long will the waters of Burma sustain such rampant exploitation? Not only do the unrestricted activities of Thai fishing boats have disastrous environmental consequences but as noted in previous editions of DAWN, the fishing communities who have relied on local fishing resources for generations are now literally facing starvation. Local fishing families who have an interest in maintaining the richness of the oceans they live by, show signs of malnutrition and protein deficiency. Many of these villagers, displaced by the activities of the Thai fishing boats, have been forced to move inland to seek a new livelihood.

Compared to the small vessels and locally produced fishing gear, used by the local fishing communities, the Thai boats with their modern sonar and radar equipment and electronic communications facilities completely change the nature of catching fish. Heavy mining of the seas has been reported killing all species in the area, and destroying the ecosystem for years to come. Using explosive devices, the boats then come in and collect the large fish they want from the surface of the water.

Ethnic minority peoples such as the Karen (KNU) and the Mon (NMSP) have long protested about these practices to Thai fishing companies. In working with these local villagers, ABSDF has also been able to witness the poverty imposed on them as a result of SLORC deals struck with Thai fishing companies. Local fishing communities asked ABSDF to stop Thai boats destroying their livelihood, but Thai companies would not respond to these issues,

To express the seriousness of this protest ABSDF troops took over a Thai fishing vessel, belonging to the Narong Canning Company. ABSDF demanded the company abide by the rule of staying outside the 12 mile limit and stop threatening the rights of the local people. The ABSDF troops also wanted to draw world attention to the environmental destruction caused by these Thai fishing practices and to the fact that money earned from foreign investments goes directly to a military to suppress and kill Burmese people.

ABSDF demanded compensation for the local people. However, the company did not negotiate with ABSDF in good faith. They stalled for time, while they called the Burmese Navy to intervene, When the Navy launched an offensive against the student held boat, ABSDF removed the valuable equipment from the vessel and blew it up. Electronic equipment was later returned to the owners.

Who stands up to protect the rights of people in Burma? ABSDF calls on the world to boycott economic contact with the SLORC regime. While they sign contracts with foreign corporations and governments, the people and the environment of Burma are being destroyed.

MILITARY COUP IN THAILAND

The Nation, reported that "Burmese junta leader Saw Maung, who has been critised by the international community for his dictatorial rule, congratulated his Thai counterpart, Gen, Sunthorn Kongsompong, for his 'noble performance... in saving the [political] situation in Thailand'".

The message was conveyed through Burmese Ambassador to Thailand U Nyunt Swe who made a courtesy call on Sunthorn, at the Supreme Command Headquarters, 6 days after the coup.

Burma was the second country, after China to have extended defacto recognition to the National Peace Keeping Council which seized power on February 23,

The envoy quoted Sunthorn as expressing his appreciation and pledging to work for better ties between the two countries. The Burmese envoy said he was "quite confident that our bilateral relations are improving all the time." U Nyunt Swe also thanked Gen. Sunthorn for making a one-day visit to Rangoon on February 22 - the day before he staged the coup against the government of Gen. Chatichai Choonhaven.

A well-known elder statesman, an ex-prime minister in Thailand, Gen. Kukrit made a number of comments relating to the setting up of a civilian interim government, following the coup in Bangkok. He is also quoted as saying that he hopes Thailand would not be another Burma, and that open elections can be held soon.
Are Thailand and Burma the same now?

*The main reason given for the military coup in Thailand, was that military intervention was needed in order to remove a corrupt administration and reintroduce democracy for the people.

In Burma,the coup only enforced the totalitarian power of the previous rulers,

ˆBefore the coup, Thais could participate in a multi-party, parliamentary system, they could gain the benefits of an open, decentralised economic system, and they could enjoy basic human rights.

In Burma, even when elections were promised, tight restrictions were placed on any form of political organisation or activities, the economic system has for many years been deteriorating due to corrupt and incompetent military control, and Burmese have long been denied basic human rights, including freedom of expression and association, freedom from arbitary arrest and torture, even the right to life itself.

*In Thailand, the coup was bloodless.
In Burma, Amnesty International estimates that more than 1000 people were killed in the immediate aftermath of the coup, shot dead on the streets or dragged from their homes or tea shops and executed.

*Thai members of parliament are to have their financial status investigated.

(Continued on Page. 13)*

DEATH OF A BURMESE JOURNALIST:

U Nay Win, local correspondent for the Japanese newspaper, the Asahi Shimbun, died of cirrhosis of the liver in January. Diplomats say his condition worsened after he was interrogated late last year and his government-owned house was taken away.

"It was not because of physical abusses during his interrogation. But it seems that he was so disheartened by his treatmentand the loss of his house that the old problems resurfaced,"one diplomat said. The Working People's Daily, reported during its coverage of SLORC's 106th Press Conference (Oct. 19, 1990), that U Nay Win asked if the SLORC had made any arrangements to issue a schedule as regards its Declaration No.1/90. He also asked the SLORC to release news in connection to rumours that 4 people, Myo Khin, Hkun Sai, Sithu, and Kyaw Htay had died in a commotion in Insein Prison, when security unit members tried to bring the situation under control.

He was interrogated because his reporting was considered to be too sympathetic to the National League for Democracy. His son is a member of the party and has been detained by the authorities.

U Nay Win, aged 60, was also a well-known novelist.

• (Continued from Page. 12)

In Burma, the rulers for the past 3 decades continue to enjoy special financial privileges, and are amassing great personal fortunes.

*Within 2 weeks of the coup, an interim government headed by a man regarded for his integrity and principles was formed.

Burma is yet to see any change in government rule, almost two and a half years after the coup, and 8 months after the main opposition party (the National League for Democracy) won an overwhelming 80% of the National Assembly seats.

In a speech given by Gen. Saw Maung, just before the May 1990 elections, he said, "The multi-party system... emanates from the force of law. That force of law was ineffective. What we are using is the force of power. However, we use law as much as possible. We are using both force of law and force of power. We are not demons. We are soldiers."

LIFE IN BURMA TODAY

Myanmar Just After the Election
By Shinichi Asabe

"The government is a thief!" cried U Than Win (fictitious name), a former navy captain who has been to Japan about 20 times, clenching his fists with all his might. Three years ago, three denominations of bank notes were suddenly abolished and in an instant the savings of ordinary people became rubbish. "I thought big notes could be dangerous," he continued, "so I kept a lot money in twenty-five kyat notes which went ' poof and vanished into thin air!"

The Burmese people were infuriated by this abrupt action, and their anger over the 1987 demonetization helped fuel the demonstrations from July to October 1988.

During the recent election campaign, U Than Win was disgusted by an accident that happened to him. "A candidate of the ruling party called at my ones. How dirty their tactics are!" U Tha Win's house is surrounded by tropical trees in a high-class residential area of Yangon. Since he served for more than 40 years both in the navy and with merchant ships, Captain Than Win has gotten by financially without any great difficult even during the impoverished years of the Ne Win regime.

Just in front of this affluent neighborhood there is a squalid slum. There, U San Maung (fictitious name), a 35 year-old bricklayer, lives with his family of six in a small house with a nipa roof. Their only light is from an oil lamp. U San Maung's smoothly salary is 800 kyats. His brother works as a shop attendant and earns 250 kyats. His sister beings in 300 kyats from her work as a maid. They all live together. Their combined income of 1,350 kyats is equivalent to only 4,000 yen on the black market. "Even putting all our salaries together, we can't buy anything except food." U San Maung said. In contrast. Captain Than Win has a car, a stereo, an electric fan and many other modem appliances, all made in Japan.

A Japanese watch costs five times the bricklayer's monthly salary. A television costs as much as his income lor three years. Slums and houses full of imported items are neighbors standing side by side. This great disparity in wealth is constantly faced in the streets of Yangon.

The captain's family, rich by local standards, nevertheless has an aching worry. Their daughter who supported the "star of the Democratic Movement." Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. is in prison even now for her "political crimes." A Burning Vote

"Please follow my car," a young man whispered to my driver. Forty minutes later we were still driving around to make sure we were not being followed. We saw the same lake on our left three different times. At last we arrived at the house of Dr. Hla Aung (fictitious name), a 52 year-old lawyer. *Nine* executive committee members of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions were already there.

"Stand up!" someone suddenly shouted. The teacher gallantly read aloud their demands. "One: to call a first session within one and a half months. Two: to invest the Diet with full power. Three: to legalize the union of the students and workers. Four: to stop the civil war immediately. Five: to form a civilian Cabinet. Six..." They were resolved to send this letter to General Saw Maung, who rose to power in the brutal 1988 coup.

"Even before we ever appear in court," said Dr Aung, who has been advising citizens and students since the demonstrations two years ago, "it is transparently clear that we will lose every case. Although we inherited our civil and criminal legal system from the English, our courts are powerless in the face of martial law." Thoughtfully, he began to peel mangoes for the student leaders who seemed just like his own children.

As the election date drew near, tremendous fires mysteriously broke out in numerous places around Yangon. Those conflagrations destroyed thousands of homes and seemed to be centered around houses which were giving shelter to students. The residents of the burned-out dwellings were moved to new satellite zones outside the city. Other city-dwellers were forced to move under the guise of "urban redevelopment."

We visited Shwe Pyi Thar ("Village of Happiness"), a satellite town to which many people were relocated after one of those unexplained blazes. It is a full 30 kilometers from Yangon. A 37 year-old state factory worker talked to me as we stood in a vast expanse of rice fields.

"I went to vote," he said, "but I had to go back to the polling place near where my old house had stood because my name wasn't on the roll of this place. That day my wife and I left at five o 'clock in the morning with many of our neighbors. We had to go to the polling station."

In Yangon, the turnout for the election was as high as 70 percent. The people of the new satellite towns overcome many obstacles to cast their "burning votes."

RESPONSE FROM EUROPE

People from around the world recognize that SLORC is not the legal government of Burma, and that the SLORC, through the military, continues to carry out arrests without evidence, trials by military tribunals, executions and long- term prison sentences.

Following is the response of the European Parliament to this situation in Burma.

Common motion lor a resolution on the democratic crisis in Burma by the European Parliament. September 12, 1990

The European Parliament.

A. Recalling that 8,000 civilians were killed in 1988 during demonstrations calling for free and fair elections in Burma,

B. Noting that, as a result ol the general election. which we eventually held on 27 May 1990. 80% of the votes cast, as well as a substantial overall majority ol the seats in the Constituent Assembly, were won by the National League lor Democracy,

C. Noting that U Tin U, the President of the National League for Democracy is currently being held as a political prisoner, serving three years hard labor, and that the General Secretary, Aung San Suu Kyi, is still under house arrest,

D. Concerned at reports ol the widespread use of torture by the authorities and of prisoners being sentenced to death alter summary trials.

E. Deeply concerned that, three months alter the holding of these elections, the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council has failed to convene the Constituent Assembly or hand over the government to the National League lor Democracy,

F. Aware that 18 September has been set by the National League for Democracy as the deadline by which the Constitution must be implemented and the Constituent Assembly convened,

G. Noting the frustration of the Burmese people who voted in free and fair elections for multi-party democracy:

H. Fearing a repetition of the violence of 1988. unless democracy is instituted;

1. Calls on the State Law and Order Council to transfer the government, without further delay, to the elected representatives in the Constituent Assembly and to release U Tin U, Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners immediately;

2. Condemns the killings of peaceful demonstrators and of members of ethnic minorities by the security forces and calls for independent investigations into the reported extra-judicial executions and for the commutation of all death sentences;

3. Calls on its President and on the Council and the Commission to intervene with the Burmese military rulers to demand that all political prisoners be released and that the Constituent Assembly be established, and on the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve to use diplomatic pressure to secure a peaceful transition to multi- party democracy;

4. Calls on the Japanese and Thai Governments to do all in their power to dissuade their nationals from continuing to destroy the Burmese tropical forests; and on the Thai Government to ban the export of arms to Burma, at least until power has been transferred to a democratically elected government;

5. Calls on the Commission to impose a temporary ban on the import of Burmese hardwoods, including hardwood products processed in Thailand, until this logging is properly regulated;

6. Calls on the Commission to establish contacts with a new elected government of Burma, as soon as it has been established, with a view to elaborating a comprehensive program of development aid and trade cooperation;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Foreign Ministers meeting in Political Cooperation and to the National League for Democracy and the State Law and Order Restoration Council in Burma, as well as to the Government of Thailand.

AN INTERVIEW

One of the NLD members who left Rangoon to avoid detention by SLORC authorities, recently arrived in Bangkok and was interview by *Dawn.* Following are some of his comments.

"In Burma today, the people feel hopeless. In May they expressed their true feelings through the elections, but have never been able to reap the benefits of this election. The people were very courageous during the elections. On Coco Island which is under very tight control of the SLORC, the man who ran in the elections under the NLD banner, won a resounding victory in the polls. This is what the people wanted to show SLORC. The people do not want SLORC in power!"

"Concerning foreign investments, the people know that these investments only benefit a few of the top ruling people. All the majority of the people can do is look at the consumer goods which are now appearing in the country. I would say that over 99% of the people oppose these foreign investments. Economic sanctions against SLORC are good and necessary."

"All of the people in Burma are "prisoners of conscious". Not only those in prisons. Nobody can openly say what they want to say, so they are prisoners

away."

"The anger of the people against SLORC is growing. Someday the fury of the people may explode. Dictators rule by fear, and the people allow dictators to rule because they are afraid. They feel alone, and this makes their fear unbearable. When they start to unite, they lose their fear and gain strength. That is when the dictators lose their iron grip over the country and must step down."

"There is a rumor going around Rangoon that the SLORC leaders are preparing to move to an island in the rivers which outline the Golden Triangle. This island has been leased by a Thai company for 30 years, and the Thai company is going to build a large resort there. Actually the island is in Burmese territory, but will be owned by the Thai company for 30 years. When the SLORC can no longer hold onto power, the rumor is that they will all flee to this island where they can live comfortably and safely, and probably get involved in the opium trade there."

"We must develop alternative leaders for the people. Then SLORC can not manipulate things so easily by arresting the national leaders. If we develop more leaders, we can always tell SLORC, ' We still have more leaders. You can destroy our movement simply by arresting us."

"Dr. Sen Win (The Prime Minister of the new coalition government) is a very good man. He is one of those alternative national leaders. He can help unify us."