

DAWN

BBC

NEWS BULLETIN



92' OLD LADY...



Mass Media and public opinion

Mass media has been described as "The Fourth Estate", next to parliament, government and the courts. The media do, indeed, play an eminently important role in modern society. Their job is to make complicated developments in all fields understandable to public and help them comprehend and control the action of parliament, government and administrators.

A free press, not controlled by state authority, nor subject to any censorship, is an essential element of the free state, in particular a regularly published press is indispensable to modern democracy. If the citizen is to take decisions, he must not only be comprehensively informed, but he must also be able to know weigh the views others have formed. The press keeps this permanent discussion going; it procures the information, express its own considered view on it and thus operate as an orientation force in public debate.

In every democratic state, freedom of expression and freedom of press is usually promulgated in constitution as basic rights. In contrast, these rights are restricted or controlled by authorities in totalitarian rule. By creation and manipulation of the cultural life of citizens through state controlled media, rulers control the people's daily life; not only their political activities, but their social life, their human relationships, their private thoughts and ambitions, their life within family circle.

Before Gen Ne Win staged a coup and seized power in 1962, Burma had a independent press of more than thirty newspapers. These were all nationalised and media have been restricted by enactment of "1962 Printers and Publishers registration Law". Writings, Film scripts, lyrics and even the words of songs have to be submitted to the "Press Scrutiny Board" established under the 1962 Law. Criticism of the government is the violation of law and people who express their opinion transgressing law are punished.

Free Press blossomed in the period of 1988 democratic uprising but it was crushed again after coup on 18 September. The SLORC formed Press Committee and news articles scrutiny Board under this. It was known that 1082 news articles had been screened by News Articles Scrutiny Board within three years up to 18 September 1991. Many journalists and poets were also persecuted for their critic writings against military. But democratic free press is still alive and developing in liberated area and among the patriotic expatriates. Today, there are round about 20 publications issued by different organisations. Very recently, Democratic Voice of Burma Radio Station was established by the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma and it is now reflecting the voice of people. These will be the seeds for independent media in future democratic Burma.

GOOD WILL VISIT OF THE PRIME MINISTER LED NCGUB DELEGATION END WITH SUCCESS

NCGUB delegation led by Prime Minister Dr Sein Win left for good will visit to Europe on 26 May 1992. Members of the delegation were U Bo Hla Tint, Minister of Construction, Mining and Energy Ministry and Dr Thauang Htun, Central Executive Committee Member (Foreign Affairs Department) of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front.

The Prime Minister and delegates on 27 May 1992 reached Lisbon, Portugal. During their stays in Lisbon, they attended the meeting of Foreign Affairs Commission of the European Parliament where they addressed the issues concerning the situation of Burma and the Democratic struggle in Burma. Then, the delegation handed over the Joint Appeal signed by the Prime Minister of NCGUB and other leaders of the ethnic groups to the Foreign Affairs Commission of the European Parliament and made discussion with Mr Richard Moore and Mr Stanley Newens from European parliament. In that meeting, it was reportedly known that the In Charge of Foreign Affairs Department of DAB and KNU Dr Marta and KIO representatives Mr Gam Seng and Mr Raw Ja were also shown up.

The Premier and delegates then called on Portuguese Foreign Ministry where they held discussions with the officials there.

On 28 May 1992, the delegates of NCGUB left

for Amsterdam, Netherlands where they attended the Burmese Conference Towards a Democratic and Sustainable Burma sponsored by Working Group for Indigenous People and (X-Y) Movement. At that Conference, Dr Sein Win presented "Building the Future State of Burma" while Dr Marta explained about "Ethnic Diversity in Burma", and KIO representative discussed about "The Example of the Kachin State" and Dr Thauang Htun presented the issue on "The Role of the Students in Burmese Democratic Struggle".



On the invitation of Swiss Aid, on 31 May 1992 the delegates left for Bern, Switzerland. On their stays there it was reportedly known that they made discussions with Swiss Parliament Chairman Mr H. R. Nesiker, delegates led by Mr G. Ducrey of the Foreign Ministry and Chairman Dr R. Rhinow of Swiss Section, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Prime Minister Dr Sein Win and Minister U Bo Hla Tint on 4 June 1992 left Switzerland for Canada where

they met with Barbara MacDougall, Federal Minister for External Affairs. At that Meeting, the Foreign Minister promised to increase lobbying NCGUB's role as a legitimate government and to get continued support among the ASEAN and at the UN. Moreover, FM said they will review Canada's policy on Burma as well as find means and ways in which to contribute the assistance on the humanitarian ground to NCGUB.

Federal Minister for International Trade Minister Michael Wilson also

discussed at the meeting with the delegates about the Patro-Canada's involvement with the Slorc and he conveyed sympathy on the NCGUB and promised that he will consult with his cabinet. Patro-Canada will review its investment in Burma. The NCGUB delegates were received by Deputy Prime Minister of British Columbia and Education Minister Anita Hagen and expressed that he was interested in sending school teachers in the field related to educational project in the liberated area.

At the meeting with Quebec Deputy Minister for International Affairs, Mr Paul Blouin; Director General for Asia; Mr Dominique Bonifacio and Counselor for South and South east Asia, Ms Francine Ares, they expressed that Quebec has no relations with the Slorc and they are well-aware of the situation in Burma. They also said that they want to establish relations with NCGUB for the future and would like to start now in the area of education and training as they can.

NCGUB delegates met with the Alberta Labour Minister Elaire Mckoy and Ontario Minister of Citizenship Elaine Zembra and her staff and with the staff of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology. NCGUB delegates also met with the Honourable Joan Neiman, senator (Liberal) who is currently the President of the Human Rights Committee of the Geneva-based Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and officials of International Committee for Human rights and democratic Department (ICHRDD), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other NGOs, Patriotic Burmese from Canada. The ICHRDD has promised that it would continue to support and assist the NCGUB as last year, it is learnt.

On 15 June 1992, on the invitation by the Norwegian-Burma Council, NCGUB delegation left for Oslo. During their stay in Norway, they have met and discuss-

ed with Mr. Egeland, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gunnar Skang and Chairman of Norwegian Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee. They have also met and had a discussion with NGOs namely Norway Trade Union, Save the Children Fund and Norwegian Church Relief.

They left for Denmark on 19 June 92 and met with Mr. Michael Sternberg, Head of Division, Denmark Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NCGUB delegation left for Germany on 22 June 92. During their stay in Germany, they have had a discussion with Mr. Hans Sterreken, Chairman of Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. Helmut Schater, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Klaus Zeller, in charge of Asia and Pacific region department. Moreover, the delegates also held a discussion with Dr. Klaus Kibler (SPD), Dr. Marha (CDU), Mr. Konrad Weib (Green), Mr. Schanz (SPD) Humbach who are

MPs of the Parliamentary Committee for Burma. Then, the delegates called on the Foundations of Fredreit Ebert Stiftung, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung and Otto-Benecke-Stiftung. On 1 July 92 they went to Parliament of Beim State and met Mr. Dieter Felix Lessle, Vice Chairman of the State Parliament.

They left for France on 8 July 92 and have had the cordial meetings with Mr. Creature, Minister for Humanitarian and Health, Mr. Levy, in charge of Asia and Pacific region, Foreign Ministry and other leaders from French Socialist Party.

All the countries in the NCGUB delegation's Europe tour would support the NCGUB and democratic opposition forces politically and assist physically for the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma. They would continue the diplomatic and economic pressure on the military junta in Burma, it is learnt.

NCGUB Ministers met with Australian senators



On July 26, 1992, Ministers from NCGUB and representatives from Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) met Australian Parliament Senators, Mr. Chris Schacht and Ms. Vicki Bourne, and cordially had a discussion. U Perter Limbin, NCGUB Foreign Affairs Minister; U Hal Pe, NCGUB Minister for Information and Culture; Dr. Thaug Htun, CEC member (Foreign Affairs) of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, Phado Arthur and Saw Kalik from KNU Foreign Relations Department, Col Zaw Baung and Mr. James from KIA, and U Maung Maung from Fede-

ral Trade Union of Burma participated in that meeting and they presented the current situation in Burma — human rights violations by SLOC, oppression on the ethnic groups, drug issue, refugees, victims of civil war along the border and view on the National Convention initiated by the SLOC. They also asked the Australian government for the continued diplomatic and economic pressure on SLOC. The Australian Senators said that they are closely watching on SLOC for its human rights violations. Democracy and human rights issues are universal issues and now dictatorial governments are on the way of collapsing one after another, they said. For ignorance of the SLOC to the calling for Democracy and Human rights by its own people and appeal by international community, as well as for blocking the way to restoration of democracy, international community can no longer be tolerated, they added. It was known that the Australian government would continue its pressure of both diplomatic and economic ways on SLOC until democracy, human rights and minority rights are prevailed.

FIELD REPORTER TRAINING OPENS



All Burma Students' Democratic Front, Information Department has organised the "Field Reporter Training" and opening ceremony was held at 10:00 a.m., on 20 July 1992 in Bangkok, Thailand. Chairman of the ABSDF, Dr Naing Aung addressed at the opening ceremony and altogether ten trainees from ABSDF and DAB will attend this training which course will be lasted one month. Courses related to news and journalism studies will be instructed by some experienced Burmese and Foreign journalists, it is learnt.

BURMA OPPOSITION RECEIVED BY SWISS PARLIAMENT AND FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

On invitation of SWISSAID, the Prime-Minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). Dr. Sein Win, has been in Switzerland for three days in order to have talks with representatives of parliament, the Foreign Department and Swiss Industry. Sein Win appealed to Switzerland to boycott the Burmese military regime and to support the democratic opposition and ethnic minorities politically and financially in their struggle to build a federal and Democratic Burma.

Dr Sein Win was received by the President of the National Council, Hans Rudolf Nebiker, as well as by Ambassador G. Ducrey, Director of the Political Secretariat of the Foreign Department. Further meetings took place with the Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs, the Inter Parliamentary Union and representatives of the private industry and the UN in Geneva.

Sein Win was accompanied by U Bo Hla Tint, NCGUB-Minister for Industry and Energy and Thaung Htun from ABSDF.

In the course of a press conference, Sein Win thanked Switzerland for the demonstration of goodwill towards the opposition. He warned "not to overestimate the recent signs of liberalization of the military regime. The civil war against the ethnic minorities has not stopped yet, nor have the leading political prisoners been released", he said. Sein Win does not see the national convention which SLORC announced as a sign for reconciliation, "because the opposition leaders and ethnic minorities are not part of the process."

Increased international pressure is, according to Sein Win, necessary in order to bring democracy to Burma and that is why he is also appealing to



Switzerland to boycott the illegitimately governing military regime and to actively support Burmese democratic forces.

The President of the Parliament, H.R. Nebiker, accepted the requests for further perusal. He shared the positive experience with federalism and protection of minority rights in Switzerland and expressed his solidarity and hope for a peaceful and lasting process for democratization in Burma.

During the press conference, a SWISSAID spokesman underlined that Burma movement for democracy has entered a crucial phase where the international community would have to support the demands for a formal cease fire between the SLORC and the ethnic minorities and the freeing of all political prisoners as a precondition for serious negotiations. An open dialogue centered on federalism and protection

of minority rights would have to be guaranteed on all levels beginning at the grassroots.

According to him, it would be particularly important to take up the requirements of the various ethnic groups and to integrate them into the process of democratization rights from the beginning. He appealed to the international community to see the elected democratic forces and the ethnic minorities as one "community of fate" and not to separate them from each other "neither intentionally nor by ignorance."

SWISSAID is a private development agency from Switzerland and has recently supported the ethnic minorities and democratic forces in Burma with a contribution of SFr. 550,000- partially co-funded by the Swiss Government. SWISSAID has included Burma into its support program. Berne, 10.6.92



SUPPORT FROM CHRISTIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN SWEDEN

The league of the Christian Social Democrats in Sweden issued the statement on Burma on 31 July 1992 during its Congress in Goteborg, Sweden between 29-31 July 1992. The Congress was attended by over 130 delegates from all over the Sweden. The statement expressed:

"The strife for human rights and human dignity is one and the same all over the world. In this respect the world is one indivisible unit.

Consequently, that which now takes place in Burma is an affront against all nations. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1991, has been deprived of her liberty by the military dictatorship of that country. She has no opportunity of addressing the world. The same regime is guilty of imprisonment of thousands of people for political reasons.

Sweden should advocate in the UN that the entire international society demand the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma. Resolute measures, including sanctions, should be imposed if the dictatorship in Burma perseveres in molesting human rights in this appalling fashion.

The Swedish government should invite the National Coalition Government of Burma, which is compelled to exist in exile, to visit our country as guests of the government. Such a gesture would offer substantial support to those forces which strive to enforce democracy and human rights in every difficult circumstances.

As part of these efforts, humanitarian support to Burmese opposition groups and refugees should be increased."

TEXT OF THE 22 JUNE BBC BROADCAST CONCERNING THE BURMESE CONSTITUTION

Lead in: Burma's opposition groups have agreed on a draft for a new constitution based on a federal system and which guarantees respect of human rights. The opposition who operate from Burma territory beyond the government's control, hope their draft will eventually become Burma's official Constitution- if and when power is transferred to a democratically elected civilian government. The announcement comes as coordination meeting is due to be

held in Rangoon for a national convention to draw up a constitution, which is supposed to be held in six months time. Larry Jagan sent this report:

Representatives of all the Burmese opposition groups living in territory outside Burmese government control have been working for over two years drafting the new constitution. During that time, the National Democratic front (NDF) and the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)

have held a series of meetings exploring various alternative models or government that might be appropriate for a future Burma. The German federal system has influenced the thinking of many of the opposition. Members of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the winning party in Burma's general elections in May 1990, and the Democratic Party for a New Society, which did not participate but claims to be the second most important party, along with the provisional government in exile, set up after Burma's military leaders refused to hand over power to the NLD after they convincingly won the elections, have also participated in recent constitutional discussions.

According to their press statement, the opposition movement hopes to build up a future federal union based on democratic principles, respect for human rights and the protection of the country's diverse cultures and traditions, thereby creating a real and lasting unity among all Burma's ethnic people.

According to one member of the drafting committee, the constitution proposes a bicameral parliamentary system. The lower House will be elected through a general election and will represent the total population of Burma irrespective of ethnic origins. The Upper House, however, will represent the various ethnic states.

At present the opposition is undecided how many states will be included in the future federal Burma, but one source says it will

be at least eight, including the Burman state. Both Houses will have equal legislative power, except in respect of the budget, which must be initiated in the Lower House. The Prime Minister and Cabinet will also be drawn from the Lower House. They must be civilian and elected members of parliament. No ethnic group will be allowed more than a third of the cabinet places.

Each state will also have own local parliament. Whilst the national government will control foreign affairs, defence, finance, commerce, agriculture, transport, communications, justice and the interior, the states will also be able to collect some forms of taxation and will be responsible for things like logging, mining and fishing concessions.

If the revised constitution is adopted at the final meeting of the combined opposition's drafting committee, it will be put to the vote in all the areas under the control of the democratic movement- in effect "a referendum" said a member of the drafting committee.

INVESTMENTS

Two More US Oil Companies signs contract with Burma

Slor's Minister of Energy signed contracts with following two US oil companies:

1. The Trend International (Bermuda) Ltd, a production sharing contract for reactivation of the suspended oil-fields at Latpando Block and Tuyintaung Block.

2. The Apache Oil Myanmar Inc of the United States, a production sharing contract for reactivation of the suspended oil-fields at Pyalo-Paukaung Block and Pyi East Block.

(Working People's Daily, Rangoon, June 18, 1992)

Singapore-Burma New Joint Venture

The Ministry of Trade of the Slorc issued the Notification No 7/92 regarding the formation of the Myanmar-Borneo Company Limited. The joint-venture was established between the Slorc Ministry of Trade and the Borneo

Company Ltd of Singapore. The paper said, the contract is to do business in marketing of Medicine and medical equipments, trading stationery, printing and photographic products, office auto-machine product, department store management and related activities, travel and resources development including engineer service, etc.

The Address of the Borneo Company Ltd is Mr Neil Rombaut, Company director, Borneo Company Ltd, 450-452 Alexandra Road, Singapore 0511.

(Working People's Daily, Rangoon, 20 June 1992)

REIGN OF TERROR IN ARAKAN

Despite the repatriation agreement of April 28, 1992, the situation in Arakan has further deteriorated with the fresh arrest, detention, torture and extra-judicial killings of the innocent Muslims including business men, social workers and young men on various false and imaginary charges.

At the night of 12 June 1992, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) personnel had arrested two Muslims leaders namely one Mr Fazal Ahamed (53), son of Mr Kalu Meah of Naya Para (Ywa Theik) of Maung Daw, an elected MP in 1990 general election from Maung Daw constituency of Arakan State representing the National Human Rights Party and the other was Mr Mohamed Elyas (a) Maung Nyo (72), son of Mr Azim Uddin of Kinda Para (Myo Thu) village of Maung Daw

who was a retired government servant and notable social worker and important activist of NLD. They had been confined in Buthidaung MIS torturing cell to extract confession to the false accusation where Mr Mohamed Elyas succumbed to the atrocities on 24 June 1992. Ma Fazal Ahamed has been still in the custody passing through the torture and agony.

In another development, MIS personnel belonging to the same unit forcibly enter the house of one Abdur Rahman (32), son of Mr Kala Meah and Kinda (Myo Thu Kyi), Maung Daw Township in the same night of 12 June 1992 and was extra-judiciary killed on the spot by gun firing. Many Muslims have gone into hiding to avoid the prevailing reign of terror.

CALLS FOR RELEASE OF DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, paid tribute on 19 July to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who on 20 July begins her fourth year under house arrest in Rangoon.

Senator Evans recalled that on 19 July, Martyrs' Day in Burma, marks the anniversary of the assassination in 1947 of several of Burma's independence leaders including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's father, General Aung San. Senator Evans called Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention, which began on July 1989, thoroughly reprehensible. He repeated his call for her immediate and unconditional release as well as the release of all remaining political prisoners in Burma.

"Her courage and sacrifice are an inspiration to all who believe in democratic principles and respect for human rights," he said.

Senator Evans said that progress to restore democracy and respect for human rights in Burma was painfully slow despite some positive development since April in involving the release of a relatively small number of political prisoners and the commencement of a process of dialogue between the remaining political parties.

He called for the full participation of all political figures in that process, and for the military to hand over power to a democratically-elected government in Burma at the earliest possible time.

Marking the third anniversary of the arrest of opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Department urged Burma's military government to release her and establish democratic rule.

"Her courage and indomitable spirit in defence of human rights and democracy have won the admiration of the world" as well as the Nobel prize. Spokesman Richard Boucher said, 20 July is the anniversary of her house arrest.

"We once again strongly urge the release of all political figures, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and the establishment of a democratically elected, civilian government."

Speech composed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Prisoner of Conscience in Burma and Nobel Peace Laureate of 1991, to welcome the arrival of the Olympic Torch in Spain on 13 June 1992 and delivered on her behalf by her son Alexander Aris.

"This fire of Olympia, brought here to Ampurias by land and sea, signifies truce- the cessation of hostilities so that men and women from all parts of the world may gather together in peace and amity to pursue common interests. The Olympic Games themselves represent an aspect of the human striving for excellence, a pursuit the ancient Greeks associated with happiness. Thus it could be said that today's ceremony is dedicated to peace and happiness, two of the greatest prizes sought by civilized man since ages past.

The Hellenic ideal which stresses the wise cultivation of physical as well as mental and spiritual qualities lies at the root of the Olympic tradition. That body, mind and spirit working in harmony can extend the boundaries of human endeavour is proved time and time again as old records are surpassed and new ones set. Superior training techniques and improved health care based on modern scientific research of course play a large part in producing fitter athletics of greater prowess. But ultimately it is the indomitable quality of the human spirit that crowns the Olympic hero with victory.

A gold medalist runner was once asked how he had trained to diminish the pain that come with the exertion of the final, winning spurt. He answered that the pain never diminished- he had simply learnt to preserve in spite of it. On the athletic track as in the arena of life it is against his own weakness that man pits himself, testing his powers of endurance to the utmost as he seeks to scale new heights of attainment.

Often it is hope of gain or fame that spurs men on to exert themselves against high odds. But the most complete victory comes when a challenge is met with that generosity that delights in giving of one's best without thought of possible reward. A true sportsman's spirit was shown by a child who gamely entered a race with much bigger boys. He stayed the course, came in after all the others and announced triumphantly: "I won last". In a race well run there can be no defeat.

The modern Olympics were founded with intention of effecting reconciliation among nations which had been at war. It is an abiding hope that the Games would contribute towards peaceful internationalism by demonstrating that "There is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth" when the world's best athletes meet in honourable and friendly, if intense, competition.

Yet ours is still a world divided, chequered by walls of fear, hate, ignorance and avarice. It is a world where men cause suffering by striving against one another rather than against forces which wound and crush humanity and threaten its very survival. It is a world where there is a great need to reach out beyond the narrow and stultifying to universal values which will invigorate the spirit of peace and cooperation.

The surest foundation of a life in which men can develop their potential for excellence is peace — not the travesty of peace which is the quiescence of people cowed by oppression; nor that which is the stagnation of minds made rigid by a dogmatic leadership; but peace that is based on justice, compassion and harmony, on a healthy balance between individual liberty and public order, between national duty and international awareness.

The Olympic flame is a symbol of enduring ideals and aspirations, of renewal and regeneration. In a month's time a great athletic festival instituted over two thousand years ago to celebrate the glory of human endeavour will be re-enacted here in modern form. As I send my warmest wishes that this Olympiad of 1992 may achieve the highest standards of international sportsmanship and understanding, I would like to express a most cherished hope that the wider struggle to win peace and happiness may also be crowned with victory for all the peoples of the world."

Aung San Suu Kyi, Rangoon

ASEAN SHOULD DISENGAGE ITSELF FROM BURMA'S SLORC

On Sunday (26 July 1992) at the 25th Asean Ministerial Meeting in Manila, US Secretary of State James Baker admonished the regional grouping's "constructive engagement" policy with Burma, saying "collectively our message to the Burmese military authorities must be loud and clear: Release all political prisoners immediately and begin a genuine dialogue aimed at rapidly transferring power to a democratically elected government."

This is a clear indication that Burma's future integration with Asean, without any improvement on democracy and human rights, could strain the grouping's relationship with the West.

Less of a monster?

Asean's excuse all this while for maintaining "constructive engagement" with Burma is that the British State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) will become less of a monster if it is given the incentive of an improving economy. The grouping's stand put forward at the January summit in Singapore asserts that poor neighbours are no asset to anyone. The problems of the poor are likely to spill over in the form of refugees, illegal migrant worker, smuggling and black markets. Therefore, helping neighbours to become prosperous is mutually beneficial to Asean.

In a rebuttal to Secretary of State Baker's admonishment, Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin said Asean had discerned "some positive developments" within Burma. These, he said, included a recent leadership

THEIR VIEWS ON BURMA: A SOURCE OF GREAT INSTABILITY

"We value the actions taken by the Myanmar government in releasing political prisoners, allowing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to see her family, but there's still room for further improvement."

(Japanese spokesman Seiji Norimoto)

In the point of view of Malaysia, it made loud and clear that it opposes Burma signing Asean's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation unless there is an improvement on its human rights record. Burma was not invited to the Asean meeting this year because it was vetoed by Malaysia, which feared that it would tarnish Asean's image.

"Malaysia will oppose Myanmar's attempt to be present at the Asean foreign ministerial meeting until its human rights record improves."
Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi told The Nation on Sunday.

The West, spearheaded by Washington, still consider that tough measures on the part of the international community, Asean included, are the only means to bring about the complete release of political prisoners including the Nobel Prize winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and recognition of the opposition parties who won the 1990 election.

As long as there is no democracy or better treatment of the Burmese Muslim refugees, Burma will remain "the centre of instability" in South-east Asia. James Baker, US Secretary of State, warned.

change, the release of some political prisoners and talks between the military and opposition leaders indicating that Burma "may be going in the right direction".

Arsa also said Burma had shown interest in becoming an observer at Asean ministerial meetings and had signaled a willingness to sign the Asean Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, seen as a prelude to full Asean membership. "We do believe that we should encourage them (Burma) to move in the right direction," he added.

It would be best served to remind Asean that Burmese repression has lasted for the past 30 years, since General Ne Win took over power in 1962 in a military coup that ended parliamentary democracy. The economic effects of his "Burmese Way to Socialism" cruelly transformed one of Asia's richer nations, endowed with educated people and natural resources, into one of the world's poorest.

The Siorc military junta formally took over power in September 1988, after an estimated 2,000 people were killed when the military crushed pro-democracy demonstrations led by students. Under Siorc, the military jailed thousands of dissidents and any else who directly or indirectly challenged its rule. An election called in 1990, produced a landslide victory for the opposition National League for Democracy, but the army ignored the vote and detained hundreds of opposition politicians, including Aung San Suu Kyi who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year. Alone and determined, Suu Kyi last week began her fourth year under house arrest for defying Burma's generals and daring to stand up for democracy.

The "some positive developments" that Foreign Minister Arsa points to occurred in April when Saw Maung, the leader of Siorc, was replaced by another military man, Gen Than Swe, and when the government released 180 minor opposition figures from Rangoon's Insein prison, while thousands still languish in jail. The

talks Arsa refers to between the military and opposition leaders indicating that Burma "may be going in the right direction", were the dialogues Siorc began late in June with the opposition, saying that they were a prelude to a formal constitutional convention and the convening of a bicameral parliament.

Asean should not be blind to the fact that Siorc wants to create a Burmese parliament similar to that of China's National People's Congress in which hundreds of representatives of many ethnic groups would attend, but would lack any real power.

Also, Asean should not forget that besides the human rights abuses against ethnic minorities, students and members of opposition political parties, the latest targets of Burmese military atrocities are the Muslims from Arakan state in western Burma.

Since late 1991, these Muslims, known as Rohingyas, have been streaming into neighbouring Bangladesh at the rate of several thousand a day with stories of rapes, killings, slave labour and destruction of mosques and other acts of religious persecution. By mid-March, the Bangladesh government had registered over 200,000 refugees and the exodus is continuing till today.

"We now have to ask this very important question: Does Asean really think it can put the Burmese junta on the righteous path through its continuing policy of "constructive engagement"? Can leopards be asked to change their spots?

Clearly, Asean and several Asian countries hold the key to any effective international strategy to exert pressure for an end to human rights violations in Burma. Burma's major trading partners include China, Thailand, Singapore and Japan. Asian nations that have supplied Siorc with arms or strategic materials reportedly include Singapore and South Korea. China is also responsible for keeping Siorc in power and for subsidizing its repressive rule through arms sales.

"We have seen some positive developments... but in the last year, he said during a meeting with the 15 Asian foreign ministers."

"A handful of political prisoners has been released... A few small steps have been taken which might lead to a constitutional convention. But the military progress cannot obscure the reality that Burma is a human rights situation remains deplorable. Right now, there is a state of gross instability and tremendous religious tensions."

"Collectively, our message to the Burmese military authorities must be loud and clear: Release all political prisoners immediately and begin a genuine dialogue aimed at rapidly establishing power to a democratic newly elected government."

"Mr Barker said: "We have seen much progress in the human rights field. We see some progress for democratic politicians who participated in the 1990 elections have not been permitted to take office and effectively were under house arrest."

"In your view that the United Nations General Assembly action taken last year with respect to ensuring Burma for its lack of attention to human rights should be repeated."

"Canadian Foreign Minister Barbara MacDougall, in her opening speech to the session, urged participants to call for a public embargo on arms to the U.N. General Assembly. She expressed disappointment with China's apparent continued support for the repressive regime in Rangoon. She said she appreciated ASEAN's good policy towards Burma but added, 'the time is ripe for more vocal and concerted action'."

"The Australian foreign minister called on ASEAN to exert similar energy in helping solve the situation in Burma as in Cambodia."

Engage the opposition

Asean's "constructive engagement" would be better spent with the opposition as the brutish Siorc is not expected to last forever. Already, the signs are there. According to diplomats based in Rangoon, there is an increasing frustration among younger military officers, and they seem committed to get out of the halls of government.

Thailand too, in its bid to improve its image abroad after the May bloodbath, must have a vision of social justice at home and a moral commitment abroad. It is not enough just having honest caretakers running the country till the Sept. 13 general elections. Thai entrepreneurs too have to be shown that they are destroying their neighbour's environment after rapaciously depleting everything in their own home.

The Nation July 29, 1992

CHAIRMAN DR. NAING AUNG AND EC MEMBERS TOUR STUDENTS' CAMPS IN KARENNI TERRITORY, DISCUSSIONS WITH KNPP

On 15 June 1992, ABSDF Chairman Dr Naing Aung along with Central Executive Committee members Dr Myint Cho (Health and Education Department) and Ko Htay Aung (Business Department) made a tour to Aung Hum Rai and Huay Sedi Students' Camps, situated in the area controlled by the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) on the opposite of Mae Hong Son Province in Northern Thailand. It was reportedly known that during their stay in these two camps they inspected the activities of the camps and the situations there. On June 18, 2-week long "Organising Training (1/92)", under the supervision of the Central Committee

and organized by Central Organising Committee, was open in Huay Sedi Camp. To that Training, 22 students attended and was instructed by Ko Htay Aung and Central Committee Member Ko Soe Khaing on the subjects mainly focused on ABSDF's political stance and the Constitution of ABSDF while ideologies, Human rights, Political Affairs, Law and Economic subjects were added as minor ones.

At the discussion between ABSDF Chairman led Central Committee members and the students there, Dr Naing Aung addressed the gathering, "ABSDF is the Front formed not by the majority of Burmese but

by people in different nationalities and religion from all walks of life, and by its National Political Stand ABSDF is struggling for the liberation of the entire people of Burma from the suppression of military dictatorship and on this cause we will afford to consolidate the solidarity between the democratic forces as well as among us." Dr Myint Cho also held discussion of health care with the student medics.

On June 25, ABSDF Chairman and Central Committee Members held official talks with Gen Aung Than Lay led KNPP representatives. At that meeting, both organisations revealed their regards on each other's activities in struggling for the restoration of democracy and respects on each side's historical events, agreed to extend relations and consolidate alliance based on common aims and objectives. Moreover, leaders from both sides also discussed openly on the issues concerning the role of strong leadership and fundamental means and ways which are needed for an allied solidarity, and consulted for joint activities between ABSDF and KNPP. To that meeting, Lt Col Aye Myint and student leaders from Huay Sedi were also participated, it was reported.



MEMORANDUM OF CONCERN ON THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN BURMA

Kuala Lumpur- June 7, 1992

The recent development of extensive violations of human rights and the intensive slanderous genocide of innocent civilian lives in Burma by the present military regime should be deplored and condemned by the international community.

Practically every man, woman and child throughout the country have been terrorized without mercy and are deprived of their basic needs including food. So intense and extensive have been the calamities that the whole population of Burma has virtually turned into a perpetual operation of horror by the military forces.

In this light, we, members of various Non-Government Organizations (NGOS) throughout Southeast Asia (Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand) express our solidarity with oppressed people of Burma and we urge that:-

1. The brutal killings of innocent lives by the present Burmese military regime be totally demolished with immediate effect and that the leadership of the country be duly determined by the people of Burma through a fair and impartial general election.
2. The United Nations take more concrete actions in containing the brutal act of barbarism by the military forces. These may include military sanctions on the present regime, dispatching of United Nations Peace Corps to Burma in order to ensure the safe return of democracy, refusal of participation in any international concerned events or congregations for the Burmese military government etc.
3. The peace loving nations throughout the world under the supervision of United Nations extend humanitarian aid, material and/or moral support to the Burmese people in their sacred quest to seek unity, peace and justice for their beloved land.

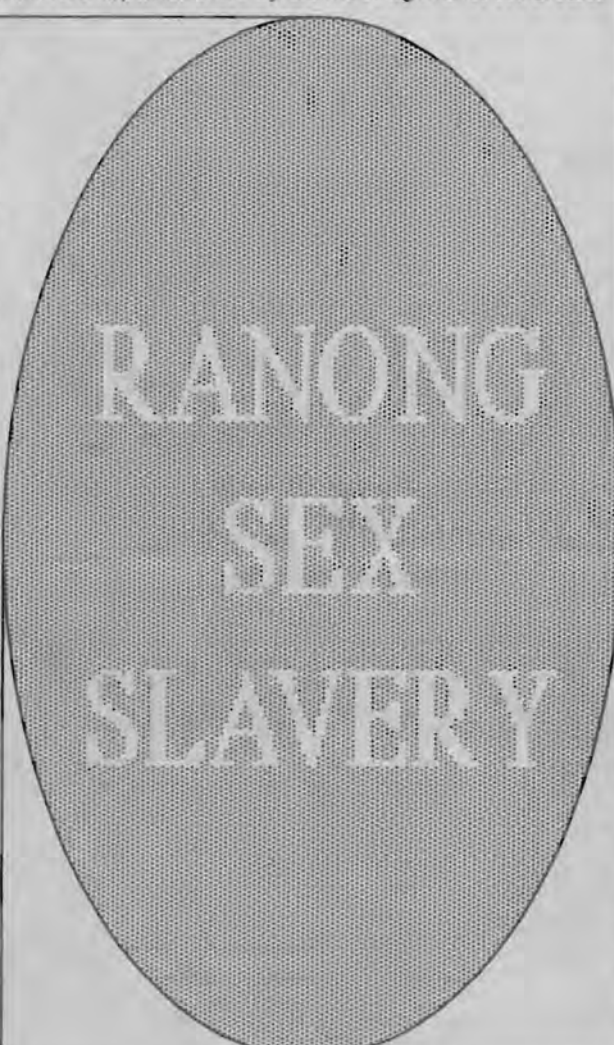
33 Burmese women were rescued from Wiang Sawan brothel, a brothel in the docks area of Ranong town in Ranong province earlier this month. The single store house surrounded by barbed wire can best be described as a slave camp.

It is thought that most of the women come from villages and towns in Tenasserim division in southern Burma, although some women were from Rangoon and other parts of Burma. All were tricked into becoming prostitutes. Some of the women took the risk and crossed into Thailand to look for work in Ranong. Many had arrived first in Kawthaung (Victoria Point), the major trading point in the area in order to look for work. Some then crossed to Ranong despite the known risk of being forced into prostitution to look for various types of work e.g. rubber plantation work, labouring, selling goods in the market, cleaning, etc and were captured there by Burmese agents of the brothel

or the Burmese pimps themselves. Other women were lured to Ranong believing that they would find "respectable" work in order to send money back to their impoverished families in Burma.

Some thought that Ranong was part of Burma and did not realize that they were being taken over the border until some time later. The women were soon tricked or captured by the pimps and quickly discovered a situation of enforced slavery. They were not allowed to leave the brothel. They were beaten at different times if they did not do as they were told. Just prior to being freed from the brothel, three women were whipped with coathanger wire until they fainted. If ever they needed medical treatment, they were taken under guard by the pimps to the local clinic where they had to pay for medicines or treatment out of tips they may have collected from customers. One woman said that a statement made by one of the pimps summed up their predicament: "If I beat you it might hurt my hands. If I kill you, it will only cost me 35 Baht to have you buried." The owner of the brothel is Thai and escaped at the time of the raid.

The women had only two



RANONG SEX SLAVERY

meals per day. They had to pay for drinking water out of their tip money. Sometimes they would be allowed to leave the brothel and eat at a nearby restaurant accompanied by one of the pimps.

Two of the testimonies of the women are enough to show the brutality and callousness with which these people operate. One woman had been tricked into working at the brothel three years ago. After three months, a man had been coming to have sex with her for some time, asked if he would buy her out as he wanted to marry her. He was told that if he paid 5000 baht he would take this woman. He returned soon after with 5000 Baht and a gold chain. As soon as he entered the brothel, the door locked. He was beaten badly, the money and the chain stolen, and he was then thrown out of the place, never to return. The women stayed at the brothel for the past three years.

Another woman had been warned by her husband never to go to Ranong because of the dangers of her being captured by the pimps. He knew about the prostitution as he is a Burmese fisherman (the main client at the brothels). One day when he was out at sea, the woman and a

friend of hers went to Ranong just to see what the place was like and were captured. Her husband searched for her and found her at the Viang Sawan. He was told that he could have his wife back if he returned to the brothel with another woman to swap her with. He went back and found one woman who was willing to do this. When he went back to the Viang Sawan, he was told that he would have to bring two women. While he was back looking for another woman, the brothel was raided and so now she is in the hostel in Bangkok.

Enchained by a military dictatorship which ruthlessly suppresses dissent, Burma today is gripped by a silent AIDS epidemic. Burma, mainland southeast Asia's largest nation, with an ethnically diverse population of some 42 million people, is a country with only one newspaper, The working People's Daily. The muzzled Burmese press gives out little word of the presence of AIDS, and foreign journalists and scientists are barred from investigating it. But it is apparent that the people of Burma are suffering a rapid spread of the disease, and that Burma is the conduit for the "AIDS Route" which carries infection from Thailand to remote tribal areas of India and China.

It is probable that AIDS reached Burma from the border towns of

China's border region Yunnan, where heroin trafficking and prostitution have become rife in recent years. 493 Chinese had tested positive for HIV in mid-1991, and 397 of those were in Yunnan. Manipur, an isolated state of northeast India, neighbouring Burma, also has an AIDS epidemic, with 1,076 people testing positive for HIV in 1991, most of them are heroine

the raw material for heroin. Increasingly, opium is refined into heroin in Burma, with military authorities turning a blind eye to the processing, or actively engaged in trafficking the product. Narcotics corruption up to the highest levels of the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) junta has been alleged. SLORC officials openly allow known drug warlords like Pheung Kya-Shin and Lo Hsing Han to operate freely in the notorious Golden Triangle region, which is now under government control. Increasingly, drug addicts are turning from opium smoking to injecting heroin. Intravenous abuse is now common among laborers in the north, and young people in Burma's cities, including Burma's capital, Rangoon. Student dissidents had led a 1988

BURMA'S AIDS EPIDEMIC

Thailand, through the international trade in prostitutes and heroin. In 1991, it was estimated that 300,000 Thais were infected with the AIDS virus, and according to the World Health Organization, up to 15,000 Thais will have died from it by 1997. Other projections are higher, with over a million predicted dead by the year 2,000. Intravenous drug abuse and prostitution are the major factors in AIDS infection in Thailand, with an especially high rate along Thailand's northern border with Burma. A study conducted in the northern Thai city of Chiangmai found that 70% of prostitutes who had been working for over a year tested positive for HIV, the AIDS precursor.

The AIDS Route has found through mountainous northern Burma, to

addict. Manipur is estimated to have over 15,000 heroine addicts, and India as a whole is an AIDS crisis country.

The people of Burma are being exposed to AIDS in several ways, including heroine injection, prostitution, medical procedures, and indigenous customs. Burma is the world's primary producer of opium,

uprising which nearly toppled Burma's dictatorship, but was suppressed by a "coup" in which the SLORC asserted its power. A Burmese student who recently escaped to Thailand has reported, "Heroin can... be bought openly at the Rangoon Institute of Technology, the Institute of Medicine, and in every township of Rangoon. The situation has gradually worsened since the military coup in September 1988. The SLORC is less threatened by people on drugs than by youths agitated for political action to ensure democracy for the country." Heroin addicts routinely group together, sharing single dirty needles, in Burma.

The traditionally high status of women in Burma, and the lack of flashy nightclubs, discos or massage

parlors, has led some foreign visitors to believe that prostitution is nonexistent there. But there are numerous brothels, and street prostitution is more and more common. Additionally, there is large-scale trafficking of people from Burma, including young girls and boys, for prostitution in Thailand. With the collusion of police and military personnel from Burma and Thailand, gang bring young victims across to Thai border towns like Chiang Rai, Mae Sai, Kanchana-buri, and Ranong, where they are sold into forced prostitution for from US\$ 100 to US\$ 560. The slave-prostitutes include ethnic Burmese from the south (some are immigration detainees bought out of Thai jails by brothel owners) and northern ethnic groups like Shans and hill tribes people. Imprisoned in the dark brothel rooms, speaking no Thai, the prostitutes from Burma have little chance for escape. They are in demand because Thai customers perceive them as "AIDS Free", coming from a relatively closed country. In reality, they do not remain AIDS free for long. Speaking at a seminar in Bangkok on "How to End Child Sexual Exploitation", the Deputy Commander of Thailand's Crime Suppression Division, Police Col. Bancha Charuchareet, commented, "These places are sometimes equipped with secret underground rooms. The girls are tortured and forced into prostitution. The Burmese mostly come through the border on a day-pass permit. We cracked down on a place in Ranong where these girls were locked in a

house with a sign in front of it reading, "AIDS Free Zone". Ironically, the Public Health Ministry officers gave them a medical check and found all of them had HIV."

In June 1991, the Bangkok Post newspaper reported a raid on a brothel in Kanchanburi, in which four young Burmese, including a 13 year old girl, were rescued and found to be "suffering from several diseases." Thai public health campaigner Mechai Viravaidya spoke in 1991 of a rescue of 19 teenaged girls from Burma's Shan State in a Chaing Mai brothel, stating that "none of the girls had any knowledge of (AIDS) but 17 were found to be infected with the HIV virus." Often, prostitutes diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are simply sent back to their home villages in Burma, where they may continue to spread the disease due to ignorance of the means of infection. Very few were ever "rescued" or "saved" from the brothels that imprison them.

Medical care in Burma is in dire straits. Political oppression has forced many medical practitioners into overseas exile, and Burma's educational system is in disarray. Over 60% of Government funds goes to military purposes. Ethnic minority areas, some of which are in rebellion, are neglected by government health services, and the SLORC keeps international aid programs away from rebel zones. There is little if any screening of blood for transfusions. Disposable syringes are hard to get even in city hospitals.

Intravenous drip solutions are widely used for rehydration in cases of malaria and diarrheal diseases (both endemic throughout Burma), without regard for the sterility of the drip needles. Quack doctors travel from village to village, giving vitamin shots to malnourished people, and often causing infections from their unsterile syringes. Even trained nurses and doctors use only boiling water to clean their syringes and drip needles. All of these procedures have immense potential for spreading AIDS virus throughout cities, towns, and the most remote villages.

Tattooing, usually as a magical charm, is common for men of most ethnic groups of Burma, and for women in many. It is a ubiquitous practice among the Shan and Mon ethnic groups, and for indigenous tribes like the Karens. The tattoos are generally a magic potion, injected ritually with a brass-tipped rod, by a specialist in charms and spiritualism. Ear-piercing, for infant, adolescent or adult men and women, is also common throughout Burma. Tattooing and ear-piercing are rarely performed with sterile instruments, and are an unsuspected way for the AIDS virus to spread, even among Burma's more isolated ethnic groups.

Means of prophylaxis against the virus are difficult to obtain in Burma. The government has discouraged all forms of birth control. Condoms from China or Thailand are available on the black market, but are in questionable condition and impoverished people in

Burma find them too expensive. The chemical barrier, nonoxynol-9 is unavailable except at exorbitant black market rates. Even household laundry bleach, used in other countries to rid needles of AIDS contamination, is hard to procure in Burma, even in areas close to the Chinese or Thai borders.

Attempt at AIDS testing in Burma have been haphazard. Rebel-held areas, where dissident medics often provide a relatively high standard of health care, have yet to obtain equipment with which to test for the HIV antibodies which herald the onset of AIDS. The SLORC has conducted several AIDS tests, with government monitoring as far back as 1985. Burma's first AIDS case was apparently discovered in 1988. In April 1991, General Khin Nyunt (a SLORC intelligence officer linked to Golden Triangle heroin traffickers) declared the fight against AIDS to be "a national task". State-run radio reported in July 1990 that among 25,701 people given random blood tests, 324 were HIV positive. Tin U, Chairman of the government's Central Committee for the Prevention of AIDS, states that in testing conducted between May and December 1990, 81% of patients in Rangoon's Intravenous Drug Addiction Treatment Department were found to be HIV infected. An even higher rate of infection is said to exist at Insein Prison, where a large population of political prisoners is held. In Burma's northern Kachin State, the government has claimed that tests conducted on unspecified people

in the town of Bhamo showed a 96% HIV infection rate in 1991.

There does not appear to be much of a government effort to educate Burma's people about the disease or provide ways to slow its encroachment. Persistent reports have arisen regarding Slorc police or military personnel executing persons with AIDS who have been forcibly repatriated by Thailand to Burma. There has been no proof of these reports, but they may be taken in the context of a regime which routinely tortures prisoners, uses civilians for slave labor, and razes entire villages under its control. A Thai anti-AIDS campaigner, Sommart Troy, has said, according to the Bangkok Post, that "some Burmese girls found to have AIDS, when sent back to their country, are allegedly reported to have been given cyanide injections to execute them. Another Bangkok Post report quotes an un-named Rangoon police official as stating that Burmese officials, with cooperation from local (Thai) health officials, recently rounded up five or six (Burmese) women who tested positive for AIDS and were brought back to Victoria Point (Burma). There is an unconfirmed report saying that all of them were executed. People say there is no reason for the Burmese to provide these people with treatment.

Medical treatment for AIDS patient is totally lacking in Burma, and the Slorc has been accused of letting the disease run rampant among segments of the population it considers security risks, such as

students and rebellious ethnic minorities. Burma's military rulers have used various tactics to depopulate "buffer zones" in border zones such as the tribal southern Shan State and the Muslim north of Arakan. The Burmese army has terrorized villagers until they flee en masse to neighbouring countries as barely tolerated refugees. Such policies have led to accusations that the Slorc regime uses AIDS the way early North American settlers presented smallpox-contaminated gift blankets to Indian tribes, to wipe out an indigenous population through disease. In a letter to Hong Kong's South China Morning Post, an exile from Burma wrote, "The military dictators, of course, suppress the existence of the 'AIDS route' as it serves their purpose... what better way to eliminate troublesome ethnic minorities without wasting a single bullets! This is a tantamount to an extremely cruel and sophisticated genocide."

AIDS threatens the entire population of Burma, but it may doom the very survival of some ethnic groups, like the 1.3 millions Kachins, who live in the mountains around Bhamo. It could eradicate small tribes like the Dulong, who live on the China/Burma border and already number only in the thousands.

Burma today suffers from mass forced relocations by the military, social decay as the regime undermines traditional religious authority, and warfare in which 250,000 strong Slorc force equipped with Chinese fighter-bomber jets stages

scorched earth campaigns in the forests of frontier tribespeople. These conditions are conducive to the growth of public health crises of any kind: cholera, typhoid, plague, malaria, AIDS. These conditions must end, if there is to be any control of the spread of AIDS through Burma and neighbouring regions. Recently, a UNICEF memo has called for "massive educational efforts, in the languages of the ethnic minorities, on AIDS awareness", as one way to begin to deal with the crisis. This could be done in rebel-held ethnic minority areas, if international agencies were willing to distribute their AIDS education materials to such anti-government groups. Also, shortwave radio, widely listened to by Burmese people, such as the BBC World Service, Voice of America, and All India Radio, can increase their AIDS education programme for their Burmese audiences. Other efforts, such as testing facilities, condom distribution, and humane treatment programmes for AIDS patients, will require creative and radical approaches, if they are to actually reach Burma's endangered populations.

Interestingly, even as Burma is threatened by the disease, a hope for a treatment, or even cure, may lie in Burma's forests. Many of today's medicines are derived from forest plants, and scientists are interestingly able to extract botanical medicines, or to create copies of them when they are discovered. In China, significant research is being done in the use of botanical medication for

AIDS. In 1991, Asia week magazine reported that "at the Sino-Japanese Friendship Hospital in Beijing, Professor Jin Siyuan has found fourteen traditional herbs that he says can suppress AIDS Development. Chinese medicine is also being used in some US experiments. Burma's Kachin State is renowned in Asia for the herbs used in traditional Chinese medicines, and the rainforests of southern Burma may contain important medicinal plants as well. Unfortunately, these resources for the world's future are disappearing fast. According to the satellite mapping, Burma has reached the world's third highest rate of deforestation under the Slorc. The regime sold off logging rights to foreign firms which are rapidly clearcutting the frontier forests and trucking the timber for sale in Thailand, China, and overseas. The southern rainforests have been ravaged in the first decade of the 1990s, and the Kachin State's ancient forests may vanish in the next few years as well. Burma's living pharmacy is being sacrificed so the Slorc can gain hard currency through timber sales, with which to purchase high-tech weaponry.

Like the prostitutes in their cellars, and the prisoners in their cellars, all of the people of Burma must suffer in silence under the Slorc. The world outside of Burma should try to break down the Slorc's barriers, so that there can be some treatment for Burma's people who have AIDS, and some hope for those who still do not.

Edith T. Mirante

FREE TRADE UNION OF BURMA GETS STRONG AND CONCRETE SUPPORTS

On the invitation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), FTUB Secretary U Maung Maung on 3 June 1992 left for Switzerland to attend the International Labour Conference which was held in Geneva where the Inter-national Union of Food and Allied Workers Association also invited him to participate in its delegation. FTUB Secretary, on June 15, got a chance to address the gathering at the Conference (Speech is as attached) and then held discussions with officials from Labour Unions of EC member countries, Norway, Africa, Japan, American, Israel and India. At that Conference, U Maung Maung requested Director General of ILO to take action for the withdrawal of investments in Burma as those do not benefit the people, and not to accept the participation of the Storc's employers and employees' representatives as they were appointed under the principles of one-party rule. FTUB gets strong and concrete expression of supports from International Free Trade Unions, it was learnt.



"Representative of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Association, it gives me pleasure to join other speakers in

congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election at the 79th Session of the International Labour Conference.

First of all, on behalf of the trade union members and the democratic movement, I would like to thank the IUF for giving the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma, the honour to attend this Conference as an observer on their delegation and giving me the mandate to speak, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the FES, the AFL-CIO, all the brothers of the ITS and the ICFTU for doing their utmost to get the Burma issue in the proper legitimate perspective.

As the only United Nations agency with a tripartite character comprising governments, employers and workers, who together cover all the population of a nation, this is the best meeting through which to sent messages to all the 157 member nations. I will be speaking about Burma, hoping that this message will reach your peoples and your governments.

The theme for the 79th Session of the International Labour Conference is Democratisation and the ILO. It underscores the importance the Director-General attaches to democracy and the ILO's commitment to the processes of change that are taking place in many parts of the world today. Also in his Report, the Director-General has called on the international community to respond positively to recent political, economic and social changes in the world.

We would like to emphasise that democracy does not stop with political and civil rights but has also to be achieved in social rights, such as the right to freedom of association, the right to freedom of religion, trade

unionisms and equal opportunity in the distribution of wealth.

In Burma there is a elected Government. This Government won 92 per cent of the seats during the general election in May 1990 but has been denied the right to enter office by the junta which is using its troops as an effective anti-democratic-machine. The military has imprisoned over 2,000 political activists, dismissed over 10,000 civil service personnel and has refused to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy-the biggest opposition party-who nevertheless during her detention was awarded the 1990 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

The junta, in violation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (no.87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (no.98), has abolished all free trade unions and has warned the public services sector that anybody who tries to associate or make any move favourable to a free trade union is to be considered a traitor to the country.

Not stopping there, in violation of the right to freedom of religion and from opposition based on racism and culture, the junta has launched genocidal campaigns against ethnic minorities who live in the border areas. In their campaign, they have driven out no less than 200,000 of our Muslim brothers to

Bangladesh, 20,000 of the Kachins to China, and more than 300,000 Karens, Mons and Burmese to Thailand.

Despotism has caused Burma, which used to hold 28 per cent of the world market in rice, to become a least developed country. Sad to say, during the years the junta has been in power, international agencies have reported that the production of opium has grown so much that Burma is now recognised as the world's largest exporter.

Although the GNP of the country has declined very badly, the strength of the military has grown to 280,000 from 180,000 in 1964. According to the *Asia Week* magazine, it has the 16th largest world population. And one important fact that can be seen regarding the growth of the military is that it is in direct proportion to the increase in the production of opium.

Nevertheless, in December 1990, in order to establish a democratic government in Burma, with respect to the wishes of the people who voted for them, some elected members of Parliament formed the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma with the help and support of ethnic brothers who had been waging a fight against the junta for their rights and equality.

The union members, who were dismissed for their activities but were able to move away before the military jailed them, formed the Federation of Trades Unions of Burma (FTUB), and are seeking moral and physical help from the

international brother unions and trade secretariats. As no rights whatsoever can be asked for before a democratic Government is governing the country, the FTUB is supporting and working in coordination with the true elected Government to establish a democratic system in Burma.

In the *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations*, it is stated that the junta has not sent in reports on seven cases that the Committee has asked for. On behalf of the union members of Burma, in accordance with the procedures for other international and regional instruments, I would like to urge the International Labour Office to communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for transmission to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the violations in Burma in respect of freedom of association and of religious and cultural rights so that the United Nations General Assembly can take appropriate action.

In Chapter 6, reports on ratified Conventions, under practical applications, paragraph 135, page 44-the Committee of Experts has noted that "provisions concerning sanctions to secure observance of measures taken under the provision of Conventions taken to ensure their application are often inadequate because the sanctions laid down do not have a sufficiently dissuasive effect, particularly where violations of basic human rights are concerned." The Committee "once

again draws attention to the importance of establishing effective sanctions and of adopting monetary penalties, particularly in countries with high rates of inflation, in order to ensure that they exert an effective preventive influence against acts contrary to the guarantees laid down by international labour Convention."

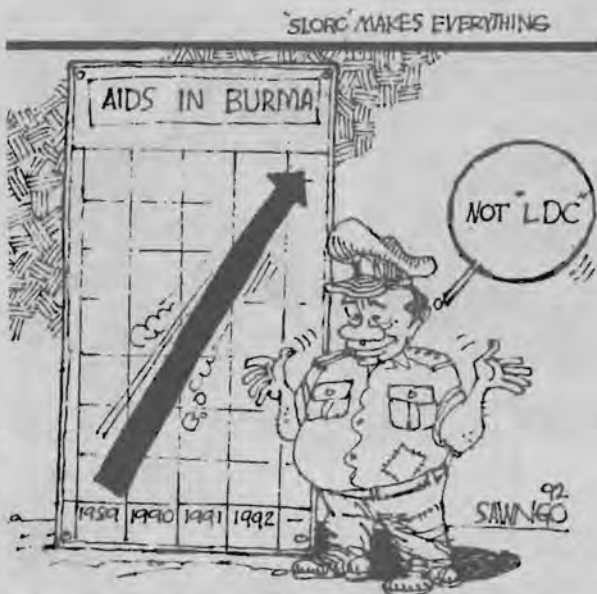
Allow me to mention the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) which reported in a speech at the 48th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in their report to the Chairman, that "neither under the international law nor the constitutional law of Myanmar has the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) any right to hold power after the people has expressed their wishes in favour of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Government."

With regard to the situation that I have described and the reports on Burma by the Committee of Experts, their insistence for effective

sanctions, and the report of the ICJ, and in order to help build a democratic government that will uphold the rights of its people, we would like to appeal to the Director-General to urge all member States to:

1. As reported by the International Commission of Jurists, no longer recognize the junta and instead to recognize the "Legitimate Elected Government"
2. As indicated by the Committee of Experts, to impose effective trade sanctions and monetary penalties on the junta until they transfer power to the Government elected by the people which will uphold the Conventions and ratifications.

Before I conclude I would like to appeal to the delegates attending this session of the Conference to take the Burma issue back to your respective governments, employer associations and unions and to help the democratic movement in Burma as much as you can."



STATEMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE OF BURMA
REGARDING THE NATIONAL CONVENTION
TO BE CONVENED BY THE STATE LAW AND ORDER RESTORATION COUNCIL

22 June 1992

1. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), by its order No. 1/90, refused to transfer state power to the elected Members of Parliament who won the May 27, 1990 elections.

2. Instead, the SLORC has only continued its campaigns of flagrant human rights violations, arresting and torturing elected MPs and other dissidents, and raping, torturing, murdering and enslaving thousands of civilians. Tens of thousands more are being forcibly relocated by SLORC troops attempting to stifle the population's support for the opposition as they escalate the civil war on all fronts.

3. To quell the mounting international pressure caused by their actions, the SLORC has launched an attempt to mislead the international community and divide their opposition by issuing Announcement 11/92, stating their intention to hold a National Convention.

4. In Announcement 35/92, the SLORC restricted the function of the National Convention to the writing of a constitution acceptable to the SLORC. According to the announcement, the meeting they have scheduled with representatives from political parties for June 25 will be held strictly within this framework. Thus, the representatives will not have the right to free and open discussion and the meetings will be a complete sham.

5. The SLORC itself is only the continuation of the Revolution Council, which came into existence with General Ne Win's coup on 2 March 1962. This Council evolved into the one-party military dictatorship which, during and after the 8/8/88 uprisings, was responsible for massacring thousands of university students, monks, and people from all walks of life, and in the process transformed itself into the SLORC. No "National Convention" convened by such a military clique could be acceptable to the people of Burma, including the Democratic Alliance of Burma, no matter what disguise the SLORC presents it in.

6. If the SLORC is sincere in its stated aims for the Convention and truly wants to work for the future prosperity of the country, it should include the following in its immediate initiatives:

- (a) release all political prisoners unconditionally, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- (b) rescind all oppressive laws and orders.
- (c) announce a nationwide cessation of all military operations against the people.
- (d) transfer state power to the elected parliamentary representatives who won the 1990 general election.
- (e) rescind all past orders declaring various political parties and movements illegal.

Furthermore, only a genuine democratic government made up of representatives having a mandate from the people has the legal right to convene such a National Convention.

7. Therefore, the Democratic Alliance of Burma declares that any National Convention conducted in the absence of the above conditions is illegitimate and illegal.

Central Executive Committee
Democratic Alliance of Burma
(DAB)

in its report that actions by Asian governments had had an affect on Rangoon, which had made "significant and unexpected concessions." The report pointed out that actions Burma ranked as a leading producer of opium in the

mese Muslims seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

Arms Embargo Urged

Congress also warned that the Chinese military transfers "have served to strengthen the ability of the

Weapons Aiding Repression

India Abroad (Washington), June 5, 1992 — A congressional mission says that up to 500 million US Dollar worth of Chinese military equipment sold to Burma has apparently helped that country in its repression of ethnic minority groups. The staff study mission said the equipment, sent over several years, included tanks, fighter aircraft, rocket launchers, assault rifles, armored personnel carriers, patrol boats and anti-aircraft guns. It established a prima facie connection "between provision of Chinese arms to Burma and what appears to be a stepped-up military campaign by the regime against ethnic minority groups."

Concern Over Refugees

The mission went to Japan, China, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, a trip largely made in response to Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's concerns about influx of refugees. It maintained

world with an annual output of 2,400 tons per year, and that the ruling junta had made agreements with ethnic minority groups like Wa and Kokang Chinese that in exchange for rice, development aid and other conditions, the minorities "are permitted to rule their areas and conduct the opium trade." It is also believed that local army commanders protect some caravans and received some of the narcotics profits," the report said.

Praises Bangladesh Efforts

Based on the report, Congress has lauded Bangladesh for assisting refugees, and has called on China to end arms sales to Burma. In a resolution passed unanimously last week, the House of commons commended the extraordinary effort of the government of Bangladesh to provide assistance to Rohingyas refugees," and urged the Bush administration to increase aid to the nearly 250,000 Bur-

regime to undertake combat operations that have fostered the refugee exodus." President Bush was urged to "support and promote a mandatory international arms embargo against Burma." Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, was cautiously optimistic about the recent steps taken by the Burmese junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council. While it would be highly premature to view these developments as more than modest steps in the right direction, they do appear to reflect an uncharacteristic measure of conciliation by the SLORC on both political and human rights issues," he told a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. In view of the US ties with Bangladesh and the urgency of the situation, the New York Democrat urged the Bush administration to make an additional pledge of at least

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NOTES ON BURMA'S CURRENT SITUATION AND AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVES

Burma once again stands at a crossroads. Just as many times before when Burma's military regimes have followed massacres with promises, now the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) junta has followed its brutal dry season offensives against all its people with "initiatives" which some world leaders misinterpret as "progressive": namely the change in leaders, the releases of some political prisoners, visitation rights for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's family, the planned National Convention, and the suspension of the offensive in Karen State. Almost no one in Burma sees these moves as anything but the usual deceptions. However, it is crucial that the international community realize this as well as act accordingly, as a "wait and see" attitude now is exactly what the SLORC wants, to allow it to consolidate its power militarily and thereby condemn the people to decades of further suffering.

In a June 11, 1992 interview with the BBC, powerful intelligence chief Major General Khin Nyunt stated that the recent initiatives reflect no basic change in government policy. Regarding Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and National League for Democracy leader already held under house arrest for three years, he said, "She is still too dangerous to be left unrestricted". The SLORC's persistent refusal to release her makes their release of dozens of others an empty gesture. Thousands still remain in their political prisons, and they have publicly stated that they will release no one who poses any

"danger to the State"; that is, any threat to the SLORC's hold on power.

The planned "National Convention" appears to be another attempt to appease world opinion, either by setting up a puppet civilian government, or by beginning an endless series of empty negotiations aimed only at stalling international action while the junta consolidates its hold on power militarily. The steering committee for this National Convention has already been announced, comprised entirely of SLORC functionaries and assigned the power to dictate the agenda of all future meetings. Only delegates approved by the SLORC may attend the Convention, and the list of parties invited is notable for its omission of any member of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) or the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). In fact, no person or party currently active in opposing the SLORC politically or otherwise has been invited. On July 10 1992, Major General Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Steering Committee, stated that ethnic peoples demanding the establishment of a genuine democratic federal union of states must surrender unconditionally before they can participate, thereby barring them from any input to discussions on a new constitution.

On April 28, seeing that the massive offensive against the KNU and other opposition groups at Manerplaw had failed and that his troops were about to be bogged down by rainy season, Commander Major General Maung Hla announced the suspension of the Karen State offensive in the name of "national solidarity". However,

since that announcement, the SLORC troops have fortified their offensive positions and escalated their campaign of mass forced relocation of Karen villagers to concentration camps where many are dying of starvation and disease. Many Karen villages are still being looted and burned, and many villagers are still being enslaved, arrested, tortured, and killed. Masses of villagers have fled these relocations and attacks, and there are now an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 displaced people living destitute and desperate lives in the mountains and forests of Karen areas alone. The KNU is currently attempting to help many of these people, with no outside support whatever. Meanwhile, the SLORC has greatly increased its "defence" budget and is clearly preparing to launch a fresh offensive against the KNU and other nationality forces after the rainy season.

Given all the above circumstances, it is clear that the SLORC has no interest whatever in national unity, peace, or democracy, and their National Convention can bear absolutely no meaning.

Right now, the struggle of Burma's people for freedom and democracy faces the most serious threat it has ever faced. To restrict the SLORC's massive offensives against all its democratic opponents which appear imminent in the coming year and to prevent even further government-instituted genocide and suffering, it is imperative that all forms of international pressure against the SLORC continue to increase. All UN and other foreign aid must stop, and international arms and trade embargoes must be considered, if the SLORC is to be forced to decrease the armed might which it only uses to crush its own people. Furthermore, the right of the SLORC to represent Burma at the United Nations should

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PRESENT SITUATION IN KACHIN STATE

On April 28, the Slorc publicly announced that they would suspend all their offensive attacks in Karen State to "expedite attainment of amity among all national races for national unity with a view to strengthening national solidarity."

However, there was a speculation that the real reason had more to do with a military failure to overrun Mannerplaw as well as to exhaust the international criticism by appearing to bring about an end their losing civil war. The Slorc has been launching major offensive attacks in every part of Kachin State.

On 9 May 1992, 17 trucks of raw jade stone were robbed near Mo Gong and on May 11, 37 trucks of raw jade stone were again robbed between Shadau and Nam Koi villages, near Myitkyina by the Slorc troops. Out of those jade which were belonged to the people there, the first and second grade were immediately sent to Rangoon while the third grade was exchanged with 40,000 sacks of cement in China. For the fourth grade, the owners of jade were forced to purchase back from Slorc army at the price of 500 Kyats per kilogram.

After overrun the 3rd Brigade of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the Slorc planned to mount another offensive attack at the 2nd Brigade of KIA. Their main target was to capture the KIA 2nd Brigade post at Pinawng along the Burma-India border. In May, the Slorc had deployed 4000 soldiers who were ready for action.

In that situation, KIA hurriedly devised a course of action to counter the Slorc's operation before it started. On 5 June 1992 at 5:30 p.m., KIA troops attacked Nam Yung and Pang Sau posts simultaneously. Nam Yung was captured at 6:30 a.m. and the latter was captured at 11:40 a.m. on the same day by KIA troops.

At Pang Sau, the Slorc army lost six dead and seven captured. Eleven pieces of assorted arms, 8,000 rounds of ammunition, 40,000 Kyats of Burmese currency, 7,000 Rupees of Indian currency, two tons of rice and some other documents including a proposed offensive plan, were captured by KIA troops. Eighteen persons led by Maj Than Soe, commander of Pang Sau post, escaped into India territory and surrendered

to the Assam Rifles stationed at Nam Pong along with their arms and one wireless set.

At Nam Yung, the Slorc army lost 14 dead including two majors and 24 others were captured. KIA also captured 84 pieces of assorted arms including German made G2, G3, G4 Automatic Rifles; US made M16 Automatic Rifles; China made 60mm, 120mm mortars, 57mm recoilless rifle, 84mm rocket launchers and 103 artillery, over 10,000 rounds of ammunition, one wireless set, 40 tons of rice, over 1.4 millions Kyats of Burmese currency and some documents. It was reportedly known that KIA also downed either PC6 or PC7 bomber. Moreover, KIA captured 27 POWs of which 5 were released on June 21 and the remaining were released on June 30.

Infantry regiments: 37, 74, 86, 238, 260 and, 318; the artillery unit, PC6 and PC7 bombers were deployed to launch a massive counter-attack against KIA troops and later fierce fighting took place at Dagap Bum.

On June 6, jet bombers from Slorc Air force started bombarding on Pang Sau,

Nam Yung and nearby villages. On the following day alone, 200 airborne commandos were reinforced at Dagap Bum, where a World War II heli-pad is stationed, by three helicopters.

Along with the artillery shelling and aerial bombardment, KIA intercepted the Slorc radio transmissions about the use of a yet to be unidentified chemical weapons. Transcripts of the radio transmissions related the Slorc officials ordering porters and the frontline troops to drop back 300 metres as they prepared to use gas weapon for the first time.

The Slorc troops and its 1800 pressed-gang porters were transported by helicopters to the frontlines with difficulties and they started constant artillery shelling and aerial pounding by the help of jet bombers, heavy artillery and rocket launchers.

While some of KIA troops were fighting with the advancing Slorc troops, some demolished Nam Yung post and Slorc's buildings, and burnt down all godowns before they abandoned Nam Yung on June 15. The same was done to Pang Sau post on July 2. Eleven major clashes at Pang Sau, Nam Yung, Dagap Bum, Yung Ngwi, Nam Lip, Nga Lang river, Talung river and 14 minor skirmishes were taken place during the Pang Sau and Nam Yung operations.

The result of this operation was, on the Slorc side, 110 dead including two Majors and 12 other officers, 260 wounded, 31 captured,

Ninety assorted arms, 18,000 rounds of ammunition, one wireless set, 1.8 million Kyats of Burmese currency, 7,000 Rupees of Indian currency, some documents and 42 tons of rice were captured by KIA troops. Barracks, godowns and other Slorc's building at Pang Sau and Num Yung were destroyed. Casualties on KIA side were 20 dead and 24 wounded while seventeen houses of villagers were reduced to ashes affected by Slorc's air raids.

Over 1,000 Burmese refugees were forced to flee into India due to those fighting were later deported by the Indian authorities.

While the Slorc is promising for safe-guard and security to the country, the people in Kachin State are being forced to drive out from their villages and kept at the concentration camps where they face deaths, every day of suffering malnutrition and diseases. Thousands of people facing with difficulties are hiding in the jungles and moving from one place to another with fears. It is the way of Slorc always does as their MOTTO saying: "As if fish cannot survive where there is no water, insurgents cannot survive where there is no villagers."

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US Dollar 5 million for refugee relief.

UNDP REDUCES ASSISTANCE TO BURMA

FIGHTING AT THREE PAGODAS PASS

On June 4, there were four fighting between MNLA (Mon National Liberation Army) and that of the Slorc troops around the Three Pagoda Pass. MNLA suffered no casualty and the toll of the dead or wounded numbers of the Slorc troops were unknown.

On June 9, at 10:00 p.m., under the command of

Lt-Col Pan Nyunt, 80 soldiers from No. 111 Battalion of Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) launched a surprise attack on the outpost of the Slorc stationed near the former stronghold of New Mon State Party (NMSP) near Three Pagoda Pass opposite of Kanchanaburi Province. In that action, the Slorc suffered 3 men dead and 7 other seriously

wounded. A Slorc hospital and commanding office were highly damaged. During that major clash, 3 abandoned houses were reduced to ashes in the explosion of artillery cross-fire from both sides, but no casualty of the civilian was reported by the operation troops. No casualty on MNLA side.

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be reviews in light of its persistent refusal to hand over power to the government elected by the people.

The Karen National Union warmly welcomes the concern shown by the Australian Government and people regarding the situation in Burma, particularly through the Australian parliamentary resolutions, embargo on military equipment, and strongly voiced pressure on

China to stop arming the SLORC. It is such action that has already forced the SLORC into its current concessions. Now that such pressure is finally beginning to the results, it is not the time to "wait and see", but to press even harder to force the SLORC into real re-forms. Only when it loses UN aid and political recognition, and when foreign military, economic, and diplomatic sanctions become strong enough to cut off its lifeline, will the SLORC finally have

to listen to the voice of the people of Burma; a voice which is already screaming that a peaceful and prosperous Burma can only come about in the absence of the SLORC.

We thank the Australian Government and people for your active support, and hope we can continue to rely on you to provide a model for the rest of the world in this respect.

July 20, 1992

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been carrying out a variety of projects in Burma under a five-year plan initiated in 1991. These programmes include the Border Area Development Project, and Drug Eradication Project among others. In a recent UNDP meeting with donor nations, the UNDP representatives of Burma presented a US\$93 million Budget for their next five-year plan. Apparently their project plans include large "development" projects which were probably initiated by the military junta rather than

based on the needs of the urban and rural poor of the country.

Donor countries, including the United States, reacted strongly against the UNDP work in Burma citing increasing international criticism and Slorc's use of the UNDP work to legitimate their power in the country as reasons to reconsider the value of these development efforts in Burma. Consequently the UNDP work in Burma has been drastically reduced. This will be a strong blow to Slorc which depend on these United

Nations programmes to help give them credibility in the international community. The Burmese opposition groups has called for the UNDP and other development agencies to withdraw from Burma until a truly democratic and representative government is established. Under the present repressive regime, it is impossible for NGO involvement of foreign investments to be carried out in Burma without being a part of the present political struggle shaking the entire country.

THE UNBUDDHISTIC CULT OF LEADER—WORSHIP

In Burmese society, even at the threshold of the twenty-first century, the universe of politics is still firmly in the grip of the superior-inferior oriented mind-set, derived in parts from the tradition of a hierarchically ordered social value and system. That is, in such societies or value systems, **there is almost totally absent the notion of equal individuals.** One is either "superior" or "inferior" to someone else, according to one's age, kinship and social status, power position, wealth, and, for Buddhist, one's karmic merits.

The superior-inferior oriented mind-set has in turn exerted a considerable influence on, and as well, shaped politics. For example, politicians, especially those with positions and power, are automatically regarded as "superior" beings who populate a higher sphere, far above the common

folks. A leader is thus, not only considered as possessing a special power or pon, awza, arna, and as well, extraordinary karmic merits. In consequence, the leader becomes a parent-figure, a powerful, semi-sacred personage who must be followed/obeyed blindly, and who cannot be criticized or disrespected in any way.

Hence, politicians and leaders in Burma (and the third world) become, as it were, super-human beings, and are treated like medieval royalties. They are always surrounded by secretaries, assistants, body-guards, servants, flunkies, and hanger-ons who scrape and bow, salute, open doors, fetch shoes or glasses of water and drinks, pull chairs back, huff and puff to keep mere mortals at a respectable distance from the leader, and so on, both at home and wherever they go. The sight of VIPs dressed up in quaint fancy costumes, or

In the west, politicians and leaders are regarded as mere mortals. They are not, by any means, viewed as superior or heroic saviors, but as individuals who are accountable to other individuals for their political actions. In short, in democratic political systems, politicians and leaders are regarded mere as individuals, differentiated from the rest only by their public responsibility.

This difference in the attitude towards politicians/leaders is, politics-wise, a very crucial and important one. It is one which draws the line between political systems where the people are supreme, on the other hand, and where they are subordinated to, and dominated by, the few at the top, on the other.

The tradition of feeling inferior, especially vis-a-vis politicians and leaders, or of worshipping heroes and heroines, and thus elevating skillful politicians, or specially gifted leaders, to the status of demi-gods, Minlaungs,

saviors, and etc., is not only infantile and dim-witted, but extremely unhealthy not only for the country, but for everyone else, as indicated by Burma's current history.

Leaders and politicians cannot however be blamed for claiming special and superior stature and painting themselves in heroic colours. This is what politicians/leaders everywhere do in order to win votes and to avoid losing their offices and parks. They cannot be blamed for attempting to perpetuate, reinforce the superior-inferior orientations and a hierarchical order and value-system, for these are the weapons of those on top, whose goal is but to maintain power and dominance and/or a particular kind of status-quo advantageous to them.

with chest-full of fruit-salad ribbons, strutting about with self-important, pompous airs, in the midst of fawning courtiers is indeed ridiculous to behold.

Contrast this with the treatment accorded by satirists, cartoonists, comedians, and even the general public, to George Bush, Dan Quayle, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Brian Mulroney, and scores of globally known politicians and national leaders of the western world. They are made the butts of ridicule, and transformed, with black and caustic humor, into buffoons and clowns with impunity. In addition, those who possess quick wits and sharp tongues are highly paid, not thrown in jail, and beaten and tortured like Burma's Zagana.

WHO DARE WATCH



For those advocating or fighting for democracy in Burma, and for those wishing to build a sustainable democracy, it is wise to be conscious of the above fact. What has passed for ages as an essential component of our Burmese-Buddhist culture, especially the superior-inferior orientations and a sense of hierarchical order, is in fact, nothing less than a form of brain-washing designed to keep common and ordinary folks at the bottom as oppressed and flattered, apathetic, fatalistic mass of passive, leader-worshipping sheep.

The above discussions necessarily raises, on a practical plane, the

question of our attitude toward Burma's most promising popular leader, the Nobel Peace Laureate, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

There can be no doubt at all that she deserves our full support and loyalty. She is not only the leader of the moment, but is, as well, truly democratic as can be seen from her speeches and writings. Definitely, she is the one destined to "save" Burma, and lead us in the task of reconstructing a free, democratic, and federal Burma.

However, it must also be remembered that the future of Burma as a democratic and free society is not Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's

responsibility alone. It is wise to note that we too must be as committed to democracy as she is. And this means that we must not fall into the trap of leader-worship, for leader-worship is but one small step in the the slide on the slippery slope toward all sort of unforeseen, to put it mildly, unpleasantries.

In short, we must forever banish from our psycho-mental system, the sense of being dependent on someone superior, older, more gifted or fortunate than one is. We must cease being, as U Thant once said of the Burmese, "infantile adults". In the final analysis, each man/woman is the master of his/her destiny,

and is solely responsible for his/her plight.

Also as Buddhists, we must remember the teachings of the lord Buddha which urged us to be responsible for oneself, to ponder and question all given truths and received wisdom, to be self-reliant (not to be dependent on others), and for each of us to seek our own salvation.

We staunchly maintain that we are Buddhists. We say our daily prayers, engage in "power enhancing" meditation, give alms, donate lavishly to monasteries and monks, preform costly Shin-Byus, build pagodas, perform magic and other rites to gain or reinforce merit (or to ward off misfortunes), travel afar to pay homage to extra-holy monks (or alleged Yahandas), and etc. Despite the above practices, we cannot in truth, claim that we are good Buddhists. This is because we ignore the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

That is, in our daily lives, and in matters pertaining to politics, we behave like primitive heathens. Instead of being self-reliant, responsible, inquiring, analytically, etc., we crane our necks expectantly for "heroes and saviors" to lead us to a promised land, for exceptional leaders to rescue us from the mess we find ourselves in ... a mess which we created ourselves because of our unwillingness or inability to grow up into adults and develop into genuine followers of the Lord Buddha.

Eugene Thaika Yawnghwe

BURMESE SET THAI TRAWLER ABLAZE

(Bangkok Post: 10 June 1992)

Ranong—A Thai trawler with fifteen crew members was set on fire by soldiers

throw the government of Burma which he said had turned the country into a mass, poverty-stricken concentration camp. In an investigation of Asian refugee trouble spots, judge Marcus Einfeld said he found in Burma mass

Hong Kong and Burmese refugees in Bangladesh and on the Thai-Burma border. He concluded that Hong Kong, largely unaided by the rest of the world, was making a genuine effort to carry out its international obligations

said, to overthrow the regime. The Burmese junta is largely armed and supplied by China and financed by the drug trade, by democratic countries and by their commercial enterprises. But he said up to now, businessmen of



while in Burmese territorial waters on June 4, police reported yesterday. Police said one crew member was found dead while the others, including trawler captain Prapas lam-chookun, are still missing. Police identified the trawler as the P. Chokeeg Samutchai No.9, which encroached on Burmese territorial waters in the Andaman Sea earlier this month.

The trawler was then reportedly seized by Burmese soldiers and set on fire. Police said one of the crew who was not identified died in the fire. The wreckage of the boat was found yesterday by P. Choke-eg Samutchai No.8 which was sent to search for the trawler on the day it went missing.

BURMA TURNED INTO BACKWATER HELL

(The Nation: 18 June 1992)

An Australian judge on 17 June called for western and Asian countries to over-

throw the government of Burma which he said had turned the country into a mass, poverty-stricken concentration camp. In an investigation of Asian refugee trouble spots, judge Marcus Einfeld said he found in Burma mass

atrocities, human rights violations and a government policy of exterminating Aids victims with cyanide injections. Like Cambodia's Pol Pot, he said, Burmese leaders "have turned Burma into a backwater hell and disguised it all as a pantomime of charming touristic folklore. "There should be widespread outrage at what was once a free and rich country being turned into a mass poverty-stricken concentration camp."

If the world had done to Burma even a fraction of what it had done to South Africa the government of Ne Win would not have been able to hold on," Einfeld said. Instead, it had taken refugee in withholding official aid while allowing the private sector to hone in on the opportunities thrown up by a regime "whose priority is the repression and vandalizing of peaceable and kind human beings." Einfeld, a judge of Australia's Federal Court, spend weeks last March and April studying at first hand the plight of Indochinese boat people in

towards Vietnamese boat people.

But he described the situation in Bangladesh, which had received 268,000 Burmese refugees, as one of the most serious refugee problems in the world. Nevertheless, Bangladesh had developed a "generally excellent capacity for disaster relief." Einfeld's investigation was commissioned by the Australian refugee aid organization Austcare. The Australian branch of the International Commission of Jurists was also involved. Apart from the brutality and repression, he said there was also evidence that to counter an Aids epidemic the government was killing infected people by injecting them with cyanide. This was done "apparently in the vain hope of eradicating the disease" which was growing out of control in Burma. "This monstrous policy dramatically manifests yet another reason why this regime must be removed."

The active intervention of Western and Asian countries would be needed, he

democratic countries were still operating "their peculiar brand of exploitative amoral or immoral profiteering" in Burma.

AUSTRALIAN BIRTH- DAY TRIBUTE FOR DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

(The Nation: 20 June 1992)

Australian paid a birthday tribute in Canberra on 20 June to imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who remains under house arrest in the Burmese capital Rangoon. The tribute was paid in the parliament's upper house Senate in a motion by all parties and independents that was timed to coincide with the pro-democracy activist's 47th birthday. The Senate reaffirmed its admiration for her "courage and determination in continuing her resistance to the Burmese governing regime's repression." It called on Burma's SLORC to immediately

release her to prove the sincerity of its recent tentative steps towards reform.

The Australia Burma Council had earlier presented a petition to MPs and senators calling for trade sanctions to be imposed on Burma. Foreign Minister Gareth Evans asked his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen during talks in Canberra to support an arms embargo on Burma to protest breaches of human rights. But Qian said China did not want to interfere with the internal affairs of one of its neighbours.

BURMA ASKED TO LET UN HELP ON REFUGEE ISSUE

(The Nation: 20 June 1992)

The European Community has urged Burma to let the United Nations supervise the repatriation from Bangladesh of tens of thousands of Burmese Muslim refugees, the official BSS news agency said on 19 June. "The EC has expressed concern.... and asked Burma to cooperate with Bangladesh and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure safe and orderly repatriation of Rohingya refugees" the agency said. "The EC observed that the agreed arrangements (for repatriation) are not being implemented as planned and urged Burma to allow the presence of the UNHCR on their side of the border during the repatriation."

The agency said the EC

gave Dhaka assurances on 18 June of its full cooperation in sending home the refugees, known as Rohingyas. Burmese Muslims began flooding into Bangladesh early last year from west Burma's Arakan state, alleging widespread military persecution. Many refused to go home unless UNHCR supervises the repatriation to prevent persecution. Rangoon refuses to allow this. There are now more than 275,000 refugees in Bangladesh and the number is still growing, an official in the town of Cox's Bazar said on 19 June. "We are very worried by the uncertainty over their repatriation" he said. Unofficial sources put the number at more than 300,000.

Under an April 28 agreement, the repatriation of the Rohingyas was to be completed in six months from May 15, with 5,000 refugees going home every other day. The process could not be started for "technical problems" government officials said. More than 85,000 refugees were still without shelter despite the onset of the rainy season, one official said. Nearly 1,200 refugees, mostly children and old, had died of diseases and malnutrition, relief officials said.

BURMESE IN NEW DELHI RALLY AGAINST CONVENTION

(The Nation: 24 June 1992)

New Delhi — A dozen Burmese students chanting anti-junta and pro-democracy slogans demonstrated in New Delhi on 23 June

against military plans to hold a "national convention" witnesses said. "Down with military rule" chanted the placard-waving protesters, who were stopped by police barricades about two kilometres from the Burmese embassy in the Indian capital's diplomatic enclave. "Release Aung San Suu Kyi," they shouted, holding up portraits of the detained pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Five students were escorted by police up to the embassy gate to deliver a petition denouncing the national convention sponsored by Rangoon's military government, the SLORC. The petition which embassy staff refused to accept, sparking another round of chanting, said the "political motivation" for the convention was "neither genuine nor sincere. We cannot ever accept the auspices of SLORC for holding a national convention due to its record of oppression, abuses of human rights and its disregard of the wish of the people," it said. It said the military junta was trying to beguile the Burmese and the international community while trying to consolidate its hold on power.

Police hustled the demonstrators into a waiting jeep and drove them away, witnesses said. The protesters were expected to be held briefly and released later. India has called for Aung San Suu Kyi's release and the transfer of power from SLORC to her National League for Democracy, which won May 1990 elections. India is home to Than Than Nu, daughter of recently-released opposi-

tion figure U Nu, as well as scores of Burmese refugees.

BURMA IRKED AT US RULING ON SUSPECTS

(The Nation: 26 June 1992)

Burma's ruling generals, isolated by world opinion after a bloody 1988 crackdown on democracy advocates, on 25 June criticized a US Supreme Court decision allowing the United States to kidnap criminal suspects from other country. The state-owned Working People's Daily, the country's only newspaper, quoted a foreign ministry spokesman as saying the Supreme Court ruling would violate accepted norms of international behaviour and principles contained in the UN Charter. The statement followed criticism by neighbouring Thailand last week of the court decision. America's top court ruled that the United States could kidnap a criminal suspect from a foreign country over that country's objection. Thailand and Burma are potential targets of US Lawmen because of the heroin trade originating in the Golden Triangle, an opium growing area where the Thai, Burmese and Lao borders meet.

In March 1990, an indictment was issued in the United States against Khun Sa, accused of being the world's single biggest producer of heroin, for trafficking drugs smuggled to the United States. Khun Sa's stronghold is at Homong, in Burma's eastern Shan State, 25 Km from the Thai Border. The

Burmese military spokesman said Rangoon had not interfered in the internal affairs of other countries and would not permit others to do so in Burma. "We are convinced that this decision will be opposed by all countries," he said.

HONORARY DEGREE FOR QUEEN, DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

(Bangkok Post: June 1992)

Thammasat University Council agreed on Friday to confer an honorary doctorate degree in journalism and mass communications on Her Majesty the Queen. Burmese democracy campaigner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will receive an honorary doctorate degree in political science, Rector Noranit Sethasabutr said yesterday. Five other people to receive similar honours are Dr Amorn Chantarasomboon (in law), Arthorn Tidiranda (commerce and accountancy), Chulachomklao Military Academy Col Dr Ni-orn Sanitwongse na Ayutthaya (liberal arts), Prof Dr Prasert na Nakhon (liberal arts) and Maj-Gen Bancha Minthakhin (social science and humanities).

UN HONOURS DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

(The Nation: June 1992)

Paris (Reuter) — Detained Burmese opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded UNESCO's Simon Bolivar Prize yesterday for her human rights

campaigning, sharing the award with former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere. The \$25,000, awarded every two years, rewards action which contributes "to freedom, independence and dignity of peoples and to the strengthening of a new international economic, social and cultural order." Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest for the last two years, won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent opposition to Burma's military rulers.

BURMA TAKES DELIVERY OF 12 COPTERS

(The Bangkok Post: 25 July 1992)

Burma's military junta had beefed up its arsenal with at least a dozen helicopter gunships or troop transporters from newly-democratic Poland, political sources said on 24 July.

The aircrafts were seen being transported through the streets of Rangoon on July 10 and are apparently intended for use in the military force's battle against insurgent groups, said the source in the Burmese capital, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The junta has built up the strength of the national army from about 180,000 in 1988, when it took power by crushing a nationwide pro-democracy uprising, to between 250,000 and 300,000 personnel today, diplomats said. It has begun taking delivery of arms worth at least US\$500

Health Education Materials Preparation Training Closes

Closing ceremony of "Health Education Materials Preparation and Usage Training" was held on 22 June 1992 at 2:00 p.m. in Manerplaw. The closing ceremony was chaired by DAB Chairman General Mya, and Nai Shwe Kyin, Chairman of NDF and Dr San Aung,

NCGUB Minister for Health and Education delivered the speeches. Leaders from revolutionary forces, 2 observers and 25 trainees were also shown up at the ceremony. U Ye Tun, in charge of ABSDF Central Education Department conveyed thanks on behalf of the trainees. Gifts were presented to training in charge, Ms Ane Haaland and Mr Ack Kaw, Headmaster from Hti Thaykhi school who helped as an interpreter by Daw Cho Cho Thein and Naw Babe Wah on behalf of the trainees. The training term was from 12 to 22 June. It was reportedly known that the closing ceremony was successfully ended at 2:50.

million from neighbouring China, thought to include tanks, armoured personnel carriers, patrol boats, artillery, small arms and ammunition, they added.

Burma already has a number of Polish helicopters and used them as gunships and troop carriers in battles against ethnic Karen insurgents in the southern Irrawaddy province last year, diplomats said.

Those seen this month in Rangoon were either Russian-designed Mi-2s or more modern W-3 Sokols, an all-Polish aircraft, the Rangoon sources said. Burma has also purchased weapons, mainly small arms, from newly-democratized Czechoslovakia, they said.

The junta, roundly criticised by the West for human rights abuses, is unable to purchase weapons from the United States or European Community countries and has been forced to rely on inferior arms from the former East Bloc and China. These countries, receiving Wes-

tern aid and for their own political and economic transformation, have drawn Western criticism for selling arms to Rangoon.

International condemnation of Rangoon's generals intensified after the award of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize to detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest since July 1989 and the junta has given no sign that it will release her despite freeing many political prisoners since April this year. Her British husband Michael Aris and their eldest son Alexander are currently making their second visit to her since May.

EXPLOITATION OF LABOUR UNDER THE NAME OF STATE



Slorc proudly announced in June 1992 that they have successfully implemented their so-called paddy cultivation and fish breeding projects. Some questions are raising on their projects which they claimed that for the sake of people's economic life: how did they operate these projects and with which objectives they are doing so?

The exploitation of labour is still existing under the claim of the Slorc — afford for the blooming of economic in 1992 as it is economic year.

Let's have a review on the voluntary service ceremony for the paddy culti-

vation and fish site project in Oaktwin Township in Pegu Division, Burma.

Firstly, the Township Law and Order Restoration Council Chairman issued an order — half of population in each village at the minimum rate must show up on the deadline. All 47 villages in this township are under this order. After that the military and police summoned the villagers for gathering at the gun point issued orders on how many persons must come to their work site by their own programme, but did not mention how long it would take as even themselves might not know the specific period.

Under that forcible order, after that gathering, the villagers had to select and prepare for this service, some who could not afford to go, had to bribe. All who have only one option to go, have to abandon their works from which they were earning for their living. A toll of over ten thousand people were forcibly worked in that one month-long voluntary service which wage is equivalent to not less than fifty million Kyats.

As most of them were daily-wage labour, had to put aside for earning of their own families while they were in the forced labour site.

The villager could not afford to hire another one as the wage was between 400 and 500 Kyats in average and as their daily income was only 15 kyats in minimum.

Their lives are in dilemma — if one did not serve in this labour site, he would be faced arrest, and if he did, no one would look after his family. Therefore, for living, all the family members had to go out for work. As the labour site was situated in the open field where there was without any shelter nor water some faced death affected from these hardships, and some pregnant women had to give birth in the site. That is an interesting question: Why the pregnant women are in the

labour site instead in hospitals?

Such sufferings were occurred not only in Oaktwin townships but other townships are suffered as well. For example people living in Htantabin Township, opposite of Oaktwin Township just separated by Sittang River, were ordered to work for road construction and digging dam project along the Sittang river. All villages in the township under the order and villagers living there had to participate in the labour site. Similar to Oaktwin, villagers were forced to work, abandoned their daily works which could give their daily income. Some have to hire workers which cost up to 1000 Kyats for one person. Sometimes as the hired workers run away, they lost the money had to work by themselves again.

In reality, people never benefited the fruits of such labour site instead forced to work for suffering from hardships and diseases. Similar events also occurred in the 100 Lakes and 100 gardens project before.

This hardship is one of the miseries that the Burmese people under the dictatorship suffer. All the people know that all the blossoms of these projects are channelled into the pockets of military in many ways.

BARE FOOT STUDENTS ARMY ON THE SCREEN OF ABC

Barefoot Student Army



Duration 55min

Produced by
OPEN CHANNEL
in association with
LYNDAL AND SOPHIE BARRY

"BARE FOOT STUDENT ARMY", a documentary film, produced by Open Channel in association with Lyndal and Sophie Barry, came out on the T.V screen in Australia on the 10th of May.

Lyndal and Sophie Barry, two young Melbourne film-makers, spent a year living with and recording life on the border with the Burmese students. **Bare Foot Student Army** uses their video and footage as the basis for a contemporary document about Burma. It is a very personal approach interviewing Lyndal and Sophie's story with the story of students and their struggle for democracy in Burma. It presents a new and captivating perspective on an age old struggle-fighting for democracy.

It was known that between three and five million people watched the documentary on the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC).

The reaction of the people was fantastic. Lyndal and Sophie received letters from all around Australia. Most of the letters were so supportive of the ABSDF and the pro-democracy groups, and expressed surprise at the situation in Burma. Lyndal and Sophie also presented evidence on the human rights abuses in Burma as well as the evidence on how the recent changes by the military are cosmetic.

A premiere night where the film was screened to the Burmese community in Melbourne and Australians were also organized on the 5th of May. Gary Woodard, the former Ambassador to Burma and China, gave an opening speech. It was known that 250 people turned up on the night. Burmese food were hosted and information concerning Burma, such as "DAWN" and the latest AMNESTY report on Burma were distributed. At the Premiere, \$ 3,300 was raised for the ABSDF and for the CRDB fund to support diplomacy training in Australia.

NOT THAT I LOVED CAESAR LESS. BUT THAT I LOVED ROME MORE. HAD YOU RATHER CAESAR WERE LIVING, AND DIE ALL SLAVES, THAN THAT CAESAR WERE DEAD, TO LIVE ALL FREEMEN? AS CAESAR LOVED ME, I WEEP FOR HIM; AS HE WAS FORTUNE, I REJOICE AT IT; AS HE WAS VALIANT, I HONOUR HIM: BUT, AS HE WAS AMBITIOUS, I SLEW HIM.

[Exert from William Shakespeare's Juliet Caesar]

Seminar on Constitution of Future Burma was held



Third Seminar to draft Future Constitution Burma organized by Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) was held from 11 to 19 June. Thirteen experts from United States, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, England, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand, one lawyer from International Human Rights Lawyer Group and other 44 including Ministers from NCGUB, leaders from revolutionary forces

and National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) participated in that seminar.

During the meeting, draft constitution of DAB was discussed and international experts contributed their ideas and gave their suggestions. Constitution Drafting Committee appointed by DAB has started its duty since March 1990. The draft constitution submitted in this seminar

was included the third addendum. After the seminar, the drafting committee would ask for comments and suggestions from every person and organization and will feed back in the drawing of draft constitution.

After finished the drafting process, the drafting committee would submit it to the DAB Conference for approval. Then they will forge ahead to get the constitution which reflects the will of the Burmese people and democratic forces and will conduct it to be the future constitution of Burma, it is learnt.

The constitution by the DAB is based on the genuine federalism and guarantees for democracy and human rights. The next addendum will be consisted of "Transitional Provisions," that is concerned with the transition to a new democratic country, it is learnt.

EXPOSITION IN FRANCE

Le Bourget, Paris

The first "International Forum for Development - Terre d'Avenir" organised by the "Catholic Committee against Hunger and Development - C.C.F.D." under the patronage of Mr Boutros-Ghali, General Secretary of the United Nations was opened in Paris on June 5, 6, and 7. The C.C.F.D. proposed Association France-Birmanie, to take a stand for Burma. Pictures on Burmese culture were exposed on one panel, Jungle University, Jungle Hospital, the wounded on another and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the 1988 demonstrations in the front panel were exposed. About 50,000 thousand people including students visited the exposition "Terred' Avenir" everyday. Many people showed their despise of the Siorc's treatment to its people and sympathy to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, political prisoners and prisoners of conscience and wished that they hope Burma will have its democracy and freedom soon. It was a great success.

SLORC'S WAY TO DEMOCRACY



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