

DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN





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HUMAN RIGHTS IS UNIVERSAL CONCEPT

The Asian Regional meeting of governments will be held in Bangkok from March 29 to April 2, 1993. The meeting will discuss regional human right issues and agenda for the UN World Conference on Human Rights. In parallel with the governmental meeting, Asian-Pacific NGO Conference will take place. The Conference will prepare reports with recommendations and submit them to the Asian Regional meeting by an NGO delegation.

The end of East-west confrontation at the United Nations has not ended controversy over the activities of the human rights program. Ethnic conflicts and political and civil strife reached the fore front after the cold war and violence resulted from the totalitarian rule, militarism and racial discrimination leads to appalling human rights violations in most part of the third world. The countries most likely to commit human rights violations have continued their efforts to keep the program small, ineffective and abstract.

Most of the rulers of Asian countries interpret human rights as a western concept which is not alienated Asian culture. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1991, said " It was predictable that as soon as the issue of human rights became the integral part of the movement for democracy the official media should start ridiculing and condemning the whole concept of human rights, dubbing it a western artifact alien to traditional values. It was also ironic: Buddhism, foundation of traditional Burmese culture, places the greatest value on man who alone of all human beings can achieve the supreme state of Buddhahood. Each man has in him the potential to realize the truth through his own will and endeavour, and to help other to realize it. Human life therefore is infinitely precious". The saying of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi indicates that the essence of human rights concept had already been embodied in Buddhist religion and culture.

We hope that Asia-Pacific NGO Conference on human rights will be an occasion to reaffirm humanity's commitment to the values and principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of human rights, the International Convent on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and other such convents and declarations which seek to promote and protect the dignity of human being. It should also be an occasion which can formulate the regional human rights mechanism for human rights monitoring and protection in this region.

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MILITARISATION

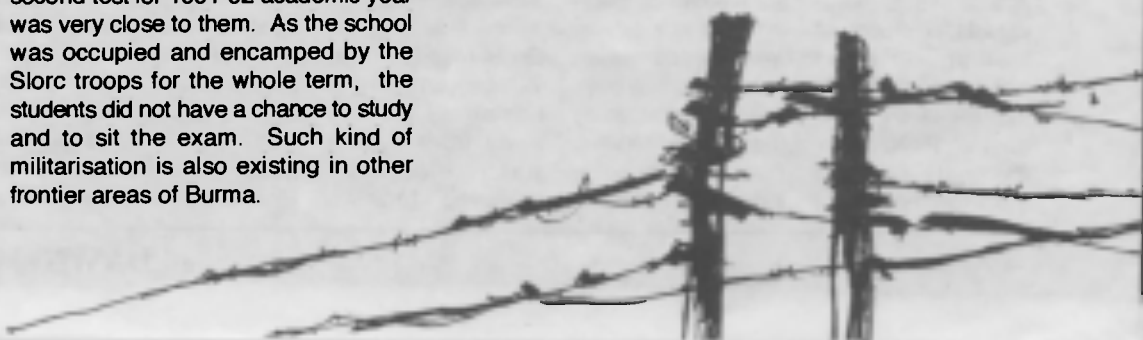
IN

TENASSERIM DIVISION.

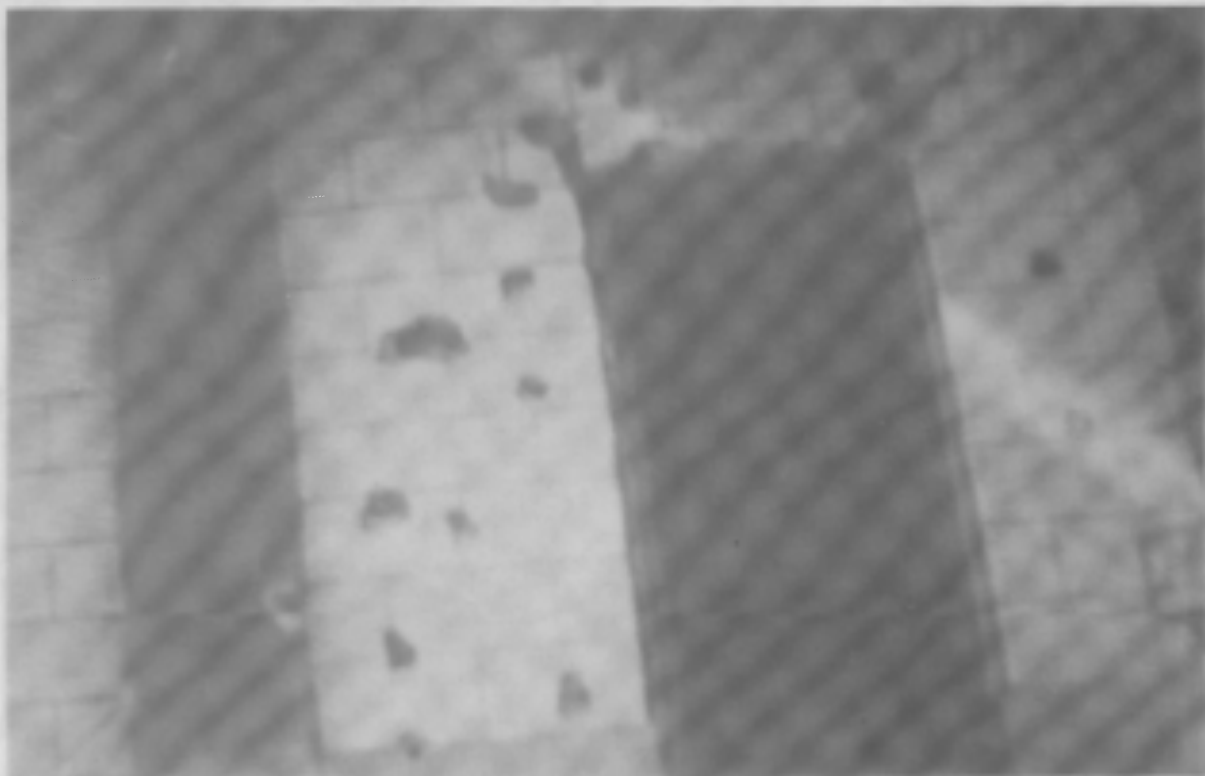
Five miles long and 3 miles wide Pyin Bu Gyi Island situated 8 miles north western of Palaw township, Tenasserim Division is composed of 5 villages — Kan Maw Nge, Phaung Taw, Kyat Chaung, Thingankye and Pyin Bu Gyi villages — of which the latter one is the biggest and it has 1,000 households with 3,500 population. Most of them are fishermen and some are farmers.

In Pyin Bu Gyi middle school, there are about 200 students and 20 teachers. In December 1991, Maj Kyi Win Tun led 90 Slorc soldiers, under the command of Light Infantry Battalion 210, LID 22 arrived that village. As soon as they landed the village, they forced the villagers from these (5) villages in making fences, digging bankers in the school as the place was a strategic one for them. Then, the troops started patrolling on the island and about 10 Slorc soldiers took position in the school compound permanently.

When the school was turned into a military camp, the students and teachers dared not go to school even though the second test for 1991-92 academic year was very close to them. As the school was occupied and encamped by the Slorc troops for the whole term, the students did not have a chance to study and to sit the exam. Such kind of militarisation is also existing in other frontier areas of Burma.



(Attached photo is a Catholic Church in the countryside where inhabitants were forced to leave their homes and farms. The Church was shelled by mortar and the roof collapsed and it was beyond repair. The Slorc machinegunned many shots at the wall and main door to destroy the Church totally. Moreover, the soldiers wrote obscene words to desecrate the Church.)



RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Under the iron-gripped reign of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), not only Buddhism but also other religions in Burma have been persecuted. In the Article 18 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights although it clearly expresses on Freedom of Religion — Everyone has the right to freedom of

thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance — it has been intensely violated by the military regime. Following are some stories on Religious

persecution occurred in Burma.

On 20 March 1991, a cross in Peking kawkhu village in Moe Bye township, Karenni State was pulled out by the local Slorc authorities.

On 14 May 1991, the village chapel of Loetamu, 3 miles away from Loikaw was ordered to be removed for the

construction of the military barracks in the same place. Many Catholic houses were also ordered to move away.

In Doungankha parish, 3 big Catholic and one baptist villages were forced to move out, leave their newly and solidly built Churches and well made houses and farms. Moreover, villagers

were order to destroy their own corps before going away.

On 3 January 1992, more than 20 acres of land belonged to the Convent in Phruso Township was confiscated and military barracks were set up. Local people were not only forced to provide materials for the construction but also to undertake the

construction. On the same day, the Catholic graveyard was desecrated, crosses were removed and then reduced to ashes by the Slorc soldiers.

On February 16 and 17, 2 crosses planted on the hills in Phruso since 10 years ago were cut down into pieces by the personal order of Capt Kyi Tin, chairman of township LORC.

Previously, the Catholic cemetery in Loikaw was also ordered to be closed down and sealed off.

On March 1, an order came out that villages from Hoya parish must move to Phruso within a week. A few days later, orders were issued for more

40 villages from the Parishes of Dolaco and Ghekaw. On March 15, villages from Dawrawkhu parish were ordered to move to Demoso township within 3 days. Otherwise those who remained would be branded as rebels and would be wiped out by the military in an attempt to crush the opposition armed groups.

From March 14 to 20, villager started to move out to the camps in Phruso and Demoso. Slorc hastily forced the local people to provide materials in setting up bamboo shelters with dry leaves roofing. As the weather there is extremely hot, water is very scarce. There was no shady trees nor firewood and

building materials. As some villages were in a very distant place, people there could carry no more than their children, clothes on person and 2-day rations of meals. Even before villager left, soldiers had been on the rampage. Two men from Hoya and Ghekaw were shot dead by the soldiers after being found in the jungle. Clergy house and Convent in Hoya was ramshackle. Paddy stores in the villages some houses were burnt down.

Hoya, Ghekaaw, Dolaco and Doraw khu are the 4 parishes where there are 90% Catholics, Churches, villages' chapels, clergy houses, convents and boarding houses for boys and girls are well established. The intention of the Slorc authorities is to cut off the core of the other people and prevent them from worshipping in the Church.

In March 1992, the Father from one of the Roman Catholic Church in Hpe Khon, Shan State, was accused of having contacts with the democratic opposition groups and the cross in front of that Church was pulled down with crane by the the order of local Slorc authorities as a punishment to the accused. (See attached photos.) Aside from the Christians, the Buddhism and Muslim are also under severe persecution. Buddhist monks were prohibited from collecting alms, propagandised as communists and troublemakers, forced to disrobe, tortured in inter-rogation centres, sentenced to jail for three to ten years, and many others were press-ganged into porterage and sent to the frontier areas. Over 20 monasteries were nationalised and the monks were expelled. More than 3,000 Buddhist monks were arrested in

reaction to the social and religious boycott in 1990. (Details: See DAWN Vol.3, No.5) In the aftermath of the coup in 1988, as an attempt of more effective military control over the population, the regime launched the operation by confiscating the land people have inhabited for generations, demolishing their settlements and forcing them to relocate into so-called new satellite towns, where there is a total lack of sanitation, drinking water and other basic facilities. Moreover, Slorc tried to distract the population from the country's political and economic difficulties, and created racial and religious conflicts among the people. Because of these persecution, nearly 300,000 people in Arakan State were forced to cross Bangladesh-Burma border in mid-1991 and 1992. (Details: See DAWN Vol.3, No.8 & 10)



So long as the military dictatorship exists in Burma, different forms of religious persecution will continue to occur throughout the country. Therefore, we request you to persuade your government by urging the Slorc to respect the outcome of the 1990 democratic election, to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and to protect the rights of people belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, majorities as well, and to stop all forms of persecution in Burma.

(Source: ABSDF Field Reporters from Huay Sedi and Aung Hum Rai Camps)

its grave human rights abuses while their visits in Thailand, and called for the release of 1991 Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all the political prisoners, called the international community not to turn their faces

the Nobel Laureates promised their demands would be forwarded to the UN Human Rights Commission.

At this point, the businessmen in afraid of losing their money and investments calculates the

SEXUAL ABUSE IN MYAWADDY

A woman named Ma Khin, 25, from No. 1 Zeyar Street in Moulmein, was gang-raped on 30 January 1993 by 2 police and 2 soldiers at one of the check points in Myawaddy.

These checkpoints are opened for the purpose of collecting the ransom from the traders who passed through Myawaddy and Mae Sod, and those who came to Thailand for seeking appropriate jobs. The persons who passed through these checkpoints had to pay 300 kyats each to the Slorc authorities.

The realities of the event is the victim who came to Mae

Sod for seeking a job gave the ransom to authorities led by U Tun, a police corporal. Her proposal was refused by saying that they did not want to get the money, only the person. Although she apologised them to spare her, she was taken to the back of the checkpoint and raped at gun points among the banana plants.

Many women who passed through these checkpoints had to offer the money or spend for one night relation with the soldiers and police there.

(ABSDF Field Reporter in Mae Sod)

2 MARCH 1993

As the monetary system in Burma is instable at the moment, the foreign investors and local businessmen inside the country suddenly withdraw the money they deposited in the Slorc banks. The roots of that instability is the condemnation of the Nobel Laureates to the Slorc of

CURRENCY INSTABILITY IN BURMA'S CAPITAL

from Burma issue as the people were oppressed by the generals at will, instead to impose economic sanctions and arms embargo on the Slorc and to expel it from the UN.

Appropriate measures to be applied,

measures from the UN or its agencies and withdraw their deposited money in Burma, according to a person who just left Rangoon.

(Source: NCGUB Office in Bangkok)

APOLOGY

WE WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY OUR APOLOGY TO ALL THE READERS FOR TAKING FOUR MONTHS TO PUBLISH THIS NEWS BULLETIN AS WE ARE FACING WITH LACK OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES. NOW, DAWN NEWS BULLETIN COMES OUT WITH ITS MIGHTIER STRENGTH AND ENERGETIC STYLE. FORTHCOMING ISSUES WILL COME OUT BI-MONTHLY AS USUAL.

[BOARD OF EDITORS]

RELEASE

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

SLAVE LABOUR CONTINUES TO EXIST UNDER THE MILITARY BOOT-HEEL

(Following stories are revealed by the victims of forced labour who were used in Saw Hta Offensives in October 1992. These accounts were revealed at an interview with an ABSDF field reporter. The Editor)

They were forced to work as labourers by carrying heavy loads for the troops. They did not have the opportunity to refuse. If they did, they would be beaten to death. They were forced to carry 6 81mm mortar shells each. They were punched, kicked and beaten with rifle butt for many times. They were never given water whenever they felt thirsty. Maximum age was 60 and the minimum was 19. They were fed only a small plate of rice with salt and a spoon of bean curry which was never enough for each of them. The plates were very dirty. They had to pass urine at gun point and were tied with ropes at night. They were not allowed to take a bath. Some were arrested by the troops under the command of LID 66.

"In every village in Burma, there is no job that can cover daily expenses. As we were forced to work as labourer and to give a ransom, our income never cover the expenses at all. ... The SLORC troops accused me of a rebel and forced into portorage as a



punishment. Although I escaped, I dared not return to my village. Before I arrived here, I had to hide in a small farm. There we solved our stomach problems by eating pumpkins."

(Nyein Swe, 19 years old Karen Buddhist from Mya Padaing village in Kawkaeik Township in Karen State)

"Since I was arrested, I had not heard about my remaining family. As a waged labourer at a farm, my daily income was very poor. ..."



When we could no longer carry the loads, we were beaten and kicked at the chests and ribs. The soldiers were very rude."

(U Hla Thein, 36 years old Karen Buddhist from Mya Padaing village in Kawkaeik Township in Karen State)

"I was arrested in Kyon Doe on my way to farm by Slorc soldiers from Infantry Battalion No 75, under the command of LID 66, and was forced to get in a military truck. As soon as I got in, I was tied up. ... They brought me to Kawkaeik and Tingannyinyang. A couple of labourers were tied with a piece of rope. When the rope was loosing, we were beaten. Every labourer was beaten with rifle butts. We were fed only a small meal once a day. We were given no more medical treatment. When we coughed, we were beaten. The troops arrested all the people who got away from defence services, sentenced to imprisonment and then used them as forced labourers in the frontline. Other labourers were from Hlaingbwe, Kawkaeik, Kyon doe and Martaban. There were about 400 convict labourers and 200-300 civilians in our group. ... I saw with my own eyes that a convict labourer was beaten to death as he could no longer carry his quota. Soldiers removed the ropes from ours to bury that man. While we were burying, the fighting broke out, artillery shells landed and a shell hit one of the guards and 2 porters. At the moment, we encouraged ourselves and attempted to escape. I don't know what I have to do. I dare not go home because I am afraid of further arrest and forced labour. They forced us to give 30 Kyats per household as a ransom. If we cannot afford, we will be rearrested and forced into the same situation again."

(U Shwe Kyi, 58 years from Ywa Thar Gone village in Hlaingbwe township, Karen State)

"Slorc troops from Infantry Battalion 64 arrived the village, rounded up the villagers and press-ganged into portorage. ... As there was no motorway, we had to pass through the mountain. When I could no longer carry, I was beaten with stick and kicked with combat boots. I was beaten twice for 3 days. As one soldier pushed me ahead, I hit with the rock and my forehead smashed. My hand became swelling. Others were also tortured. Three aged porters,

round about 60 each, were left by the road side as they could no longer carry the loads. They had no hope to be alive any longer as no medical treatment was given. Sometimes, we were fed nothing. Although I was not given anything for 2 days, I was not spared from carrying the loads.

In Mong Kai, Shan State, civilians were press-ganged into portorage 3 times a month. Anyone who wanted to spare from forced labour had to give a ransom to the Slorc at the rate of 100 Kyats once a time. As we were used as forced labourers, our farm would be ruined. In Mong Kai, a basket of rice cost 500 Kyats, a bottle of cooking oil cost 100 kyats, 1.6 kilo of salt cost 50 kyats, a viss of chicken is 250 and an egg is 7.5 kyats. Although we are farmers, we do not have enough food for ourselves. As I was away, my family might be in difficulties."

(Aik Tu, Shan Buddhist from Mong Kai, Shan State)

"I was arrested in a military raid led by Capt Win Naing Oo from Infantry Battalion No.64. I was then detained in Mong Kai police station. Those who could bribe the troops were later released. The next morning, we were forced to get in 40 military trucks forwarded to Pha Soung, Karenni State. In each truck there were 50 porters. Young porters were beaten as they could not carry 2 backpacks. Some were from central Burma. Most of them left their work behind.

... Some were kicked with combat boots when they

were asking for food or water. Daily ration for the porters was 3 tins (condensed milk tin) of rice and 1 tin of bean for 5 porters. But the troops did not give them cooking time. Those who suffered sickness were got no medical treatment nor food. When we asked for medicines, we were responded, "No more medicines for you." Those who could no longer walk were left behind. I saw 2 who were left. One was from Lecha, 50, and another was from Mong Kai, 40. One was suffered from diarrhea while the other was suffered from aminia. They had very little chance to be alive.

... My wife was in pregnancy and could no longer work. We were forced to give rice, chicken and money to local Slorc authorities. And also forced to work for them once a week. When we could not go, our wives and children were not spared from working. We had to work not only for the family but also for the Slorc. We were forced to sell farming products to the Slorc at the price fixed by them. When we could not cover the demands, the rate increased to 200 per cent. The basic commodities were at ceiling price. Although we could not afford to buy for ourselves, we were forced to send the Slorc whatever and whenever they demanded. They demanded 3-5 viss of chicken 7 times per month. Our quarter was forced to give regularly a bottle of cooking oil, a basket of rice and 2 viss of chicken for a week. Although Slorc pronounced that they would implement the rural

development programmes, hospitals and schools were built with our own money and labour, not by Slorc. Most patients died of easily preventive diseases as they could not afford to buy medicines. As the basic commodities were at high price, we could not concentrate on our children's education. Monthly, everybody had to give the Slorc 30 kyats in cash. Even though they gave the ransom, they were sometimes arrested

(Aye Ko, a farmer from Mong Kai, Shan State)

"... I was kicked with combat boot. There were many labourers who suffered from sickness. I saw a porter was abandoned by the side of Phasoung mortarway. ... As we did not have enough pans, we could not cook in time. So, we had to eat rice grains."

(U Zaw Li, a Kachin from Man Sam village, Lashio township in Shan State)

MORE ABUSES

IN THE NAME OF SO-CALLED BORDER DEVELOPMENT

Forty nine miles long Aungban-Pinlaung stretch of 102-mile long Loikaw-Aungban rail road was constructed on 1 September 1991. A total of 139 bridges were included in the construction and 14 Stations and sub-stations were also built on the rail line. More than 799,000 local people were ordered to contribute labour at gun point of units and regiments under the Eastern Command of Slorc. Over 600,000 earth pits were dug by massive forced labourers at gun point. The rail road was constructed at a cost of 200 million Kyats, mostly forced the local people to contribute according to the amount fixed by the military junta.



Local people are forced to contribute labour



That railroad was opened on 7 January 1993. Aside from these railroads, Shwe Nyaung - Nam Sam Railroad in southern Shan State and 54-mile long PaKokku -chaung-U Railroad across Chindwin River are also under construction carried out by the local people who were used as forced labourers.

(News from inside Burma)

Following is a translation of a translation from a note forwarded to a civilian by local Slorc authority in Kawthaung (Victoria Point) in Tenasserim Division in order to collect money in the name of so-called social progress development programme and carried out by corrupt regime of Burma, namely, State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc).

Local Law and Order Restoration Council
Bayintnaung Quarter, Kawthaung
No. Date 27 November 1992

To,

U Win Aung
Kyauk Phyar Street
Bayintnaung Quarter, Kawthaung

Subject: To collect the money for TV station

Re: (1) No. 165/2-4/Tlorc of Township Law and Order
Restoration Council issued on 11 September 1992

(2) No. 160/2-4/Tlorc of Township Law and Order
Restoration Council issued on 25 November 1992

1. According to these referring letters, it was ordered that in order to build a TV sub-station in every household that belonged a TV must give the amount of money fixed as follows:

1 Colour TV 5,000 Kyats and 1 Black & White 3,000 Kyats

2. The collected money must be deposited to the Township Law and Order Restoration Council on 30 November 1992 and those who could not afford to pay on the deadline must pay a high price. Therefore, the persons who are responsible are informed to pay as soon as possible

On behalf of Chairman
Local Law and Order Restoration Council
Bayintnaung Quarter, Kawthaung

CONVENTION: SLORC'S INTENTION AND ITS DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

By Nyein Han

What are the aims of Slorc in holding the national convention to frame a new constitution? It is not such kind of constitution which will guarantee democracy and human rights in the country. Instead, this constitution will be assured of a dominant role of the military in the future Burma. Within 4 year under the reign of Slorc, all forms of human rights abuses contravened to the International Bill of Human Rights have been violated by the present junta.

The aim of the convention is just to justify or cement their existence and role as a leading one in the political life of future Burma, which is against the aspiration of the people as expressed in the May 1990 elections. Moreover, the participants to the convention are just "handpicked puppets" of Slorc, selected by so-called convention convening commission which is composed mostly of military men. Only some are ex-military men who stripped off their uniform to deceive the people.

On the first day session of the convention, Maj-Gen Myo Nyunt spent most of his opening speech justifying the armed forces' right to participate in politics by bullying the delegates, "Maintaining stability in Burma without a political role for the army would be "extremely risky and dangerous." He also warned the delegates that "military must be able to retain its leading role in politics, and for genuine multi-party democracy to flourish in Burma, it will be necessary to work hand in hand with the military." He threatened the participants to discuss within the frame work of so-called six objectives mentioned in Slorc self-declared order 13/91. One of the six objectives is for "the military to be able to participate in the national political leadership role of the future state."

Calling the military "the noble companion" of the Burmese people,

the general said Slorc looked forward to "the effectiveness and beneficial emergence of genuine democratic practice."

"In the entire history of the military, there has never been any intention at any assistance of holding onto state power with covetousness," he said in reply to widespread domestic and foreign criticism that the constitutional exercise was to perpetuate Slorc's power. Regarding the global situation, he stressed that Burma is facing internal as well as external threats and justified that the military is the only force which can control the country in time of crisis. The junta's xenophobia could clearly uncover by Maj-Gen Myo Nyunt's warning: "No alien interference or influence will be tolerated" in the exercise of discussing, coordinating and affirming the basic principles of a national constitution.

Justifying the creation of the Slorc which has held power for more than four years, Myo Nyunt said the military, "just in time saved the situation" from deteriorating security conditions following mass protests against one-party rule.

No one should forget that under the 30 years reign by the self-declared saviours of the military regime in Burma, the country was drowned the road to poverty, that is although Burma is rich in natural resources and named as rice bowl within the region in the post-war era was decreased to LDC (Least Developed Country) status by the UN. It is obvious that the root of this consequence is the misrule and mismanagement of successive regime in Burma.

Moreover, he said democracy should be practised "in a way that suits our Burmese society. The most fundamental requirement in making use of democratic rights is the

maintenance and observance of the law." Multiparty parliamentary democracy had been unable to solve Burma's problems since it became independent, he said.

The military generals said it would not hand over power to a civilian government until a new constitution was drafted. No timetable has been given for the convention and there has been no suggestion as to when the constitution-drafting process might be completed. These facts can reveal the aim of Slorc in convening the convention in degrading the democracy and established that only it has the right to exercise power.

After only 2 days in session, on January 11, Slorc abruptly adjourned the convention with the reason to allow delegates "sufficient time for appropriate study" and because Slorc felt delegates representing 10 political parties "may need time to consult," Myo Nyunt said.

Before that announcement, U Aung Toe, Chief of Justice and Chairman of the National Convention Working Committee delivered a speech. After enumerating the populations of ethnic nationalities in each state and division, he made a conclusion that there is no state or division where only one ethnic nationality lives. Various ethnic nationalities are living in intermingled fashion in every state and division dealing each other in good will and unity. He warned the participants to carefully avoid any kind of discussion which will damage the national unity. In fact, that conclusion is paving Burma the way to continue to exist as a unity state.

Regarding adjournment he told the delegates, "I would like to remind you that no time limit has been set, so that panel discussions may be carried out by the distinguished delegates to their hearts content." During the discussions, he also warned the

assembly that "it is important for suggestions and proposals not to deviate from the six objectives."

In the aftermath of the adjournment, on January 12, Lt-Col Kyaw Win said that until the new constitution is in place and a new government installed, Slorc thought it would not be possible to consider releasing Aung San Suu Kyi "unless she left the country."

So long as Slorc continue to set such kind of political ploy to cling on to power, only hatred and agony will be earned. The remedy is to turn over power immediate and call off so-called convention completely. Any constitution drafted under Slorc will not bring democracy to Burma, instead a tame civilian government kowtowing to Slorc, in which the military junta will maintain as a leading

"The Armed forces are meant for this nation and this people, and it should be such a force having the honour and respect of the people. If instead the armed forces should come to be hated by the people, then the aims with which this army has been built up would have been in vain." (GEN AUNG SAN)

role will be created.

If Slorc obviously cares for the people, it should recognise the aspiration of the people reflected in the 1990 election. Instead, the whole populace were forced under the boot-heels of the military and militarisation. The aims of Slorc is to cling on to power taken away unlawfully from the people, instead of relinquish it.

In sum, the intention of Slorc in clinging on to power is for the military developments, including the size of the military, that is danger enough for the region as well as to oppress the people through out the country, to rule them at gun point by the Burmese way to democracy with a tame civilian government and to manipulate the social economic life of the country as practised in the aftermath of the 1962 coup under the name of Burmese Way to Socialism.

MORE THAI INVOLVEMENT IN BURMA

To promote so-called bilateral trade and economic relations, Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri and Slorc foreign minister U Ohn Gyaw signed an agreement on January 21.

The following day, on January 22, The Thai Military Bank, the first foreign Bank to set up business in Burma in 30 years, opened an office in Rangoon. "We will study the business environment in Burma in the coming months and if conditions are favourable, our office will expand into a branch," TMB President and chief executive officer Thanong Bidaya said.

Such agreement and involvement under the frame work of the so-called constructive engagement will never produce any benefit or progress for the people of Burma, instead back up the Slorc to cling on to power. If Thailand concentrate on long term benefit, it is important to be seen by the people of Burma as a good and considerate neighbour, rather than a profit-hungry collaborator with their repressive regime.

Any country that cooperates with the illegal rule of the Slorc by providing it with money through trade, weapons or diplomatic recognition — which in turn allows it to perpetuate its repression — in interfering in the affairs of Burma and of the people of Burma in exercising their right to national self-determination which is supported in the opening paragraphs of the "International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights" as well as in the Paragraph (2) Article(1) of the Charter of the United Nations.

Thailand, therefore, has to realise that human lives are certainly more important than timber concessions granted to Thai logging companies. And also Thailand should never be the first country that allow the Slorc to grasp its last straw. For its dignity and credibility, this is the time for Thailand to disengage its involvement under the name of "Constructive Engagement".

SLORC INTERNAL STRIFE

The internal split among Slorc officials could no longer cover. The hard-liners wished not to negotiate with the political and armed opposition groups while the more moderate elements wished to open negotiation. Four military commanders who did not get along with Gen Khin Nyunt were recently "kicked up" to ministerial posts. Northern Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Ba was appointed as Minister of Hotels and Tourism. North western commander Maj-Gen Tun

Kyi was kicked up as Minister of Trade. Southern commander Maj-Gen Aye Thauang was appointed as Minister of Labour while North eastern commander Maj-Gen Maung Tint became Minister of Development of Border Areas and National Races. The Ministry of Border Areas & National Races and the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism were created on 24 September 1992, a day before the commanders were given their new portfolios.

ECONOMICS: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

TOTAL/ MOGE GAS DEAL

In July, the biggest investment contract ever made in Burma was signed by the French oil multinational TOTAL and Slorc. The deal is worth US \$ 2-3 billion dollars, an amount perhaps exceeding all previous Western and ASEAN investments since 1988 combined. The production sharing joint venture is to develop gas fields bearing an estimated 2-5 trillion cubic feet (TFC) of gas in the Martaban Gulf. According to diplomatic sources in Rangoon, TOTAL paid a "singing bonus" (tantamount to an open bribe) of US \$50 million to secure the contract in the face of competition from Esso, Shell and Unocal. Slorc officials were reportedly delighted at this massive infusion of foreign exchange into the state treasury- which is in a state of permanent semi bankruptcy as a result of constantly being drained to pay for Slorc's arms acquisition and expansionist programmes.

PTTEP PLANS TO JOIN TOTAL AND MOGE

The Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT) is on the verge of joining TOTAL and Slorc in the Martaban gas venture. Thailand, which is currently in the process of a major debate on what sources of energy to use to fuel its continued economic growth, plans to import

natural gas from Burma and elsewhere in the region. It has just in the past month signed deals with Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia to secure gas supplies: the signing of agreement with Slorc is imminent. PTTEP, the 100% state owned oil and gas exploration and production corporation, has "agreed in principle" with both Slorc and TOTAL to take a 30% — or nearly one billion dollar — stake in the Martaban venture. Thai energy planners hope to siphon off 300 to 350 million cubic feet of gas per day (350 MMCFD) or roughly 65% of the gas from the field for its own use, leaving 200- 250 MMCFD for Burma to use. The gas will cost around half a million dollars per day more when and if it comes on stream. Significantly, PTTEP has approached the World Bank for US \$ 1 billion to fund the project as a Thai project to get around the existing aid sanctions.

WORLD BANK IGNORES SANCTION

The World Bank, according to a letter signed by 18 western NGO's, disbursed US \$ 1.5 million dollars to two suspended projects in Burma in September. Another US \$120 million of frozen I.D.A credits has reportedly been scheduled for disbursement. This means that technically the Bank has broken the aid sanctions. It is possible that this move was endorsed by the US State

Department — which was on record as having preventing the World Bank from giving money to Burma as a high priority. For the US government to have allowed the Bank to give the in spite of the existing policy raises questions about the sincerity of the government to honour its pledge to "champion the cause of human rights in Burma". The sanctions-breaking effectively sends the go-ahead signal to Japan and other aid giving countries and institutions that they can resume funding as they like.

WORLD BANK GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The World Bank and other multilateral funding organisations were obliged to suspend all aid funding to Burma when partial sanctions were imposed following the bloody massacres and the coup of 1988. At that time there were around eighteen projects underway that the Bank was involved in, with credits of approximately US \$ 375 million pending disbursement. It may be just a coincidence, but the last project that was approved before the aid cutoff was to do with natural gas: the US \$ 100 million "Gas Development and Utilization Project" for which the I. D. A was supplying US \$ 63 million, UNDP US \$ 2.5, and the Burmese regime US \$ 34 million. The project involved test drilling,

gasfield development and the construction of an expanded gas pipeline system from the well site at Payagon to Rangoon. Payagon is very conveniently placed between the Martaban gasfields and Rangoon. The infrastructure that would be built to service either gasfield would easily service the other, particularly the new pipeline.

POSSIBLE LINKAGE OF PROJECT

It is quite conceivable that there is a relationship between the World Bank's disbursement of credits to Burma: the approaches made to the Bank by the PTTEP for funding of the Martaban gasfield development; the gas development and Utilization Project; and the proposed 3 way joint venture between PTTEP, TOTAL and Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE, Slorc dominated State energy corporation). Certainly the timing is curious.

THAI - BURMESE ENERGY PROJECTS

Other Thai - Burmese energy developments worth considerable sums of money will be strongly influenced by the outcome of the gas pipeline deal and whether the sanctions will be sustained or not. The Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), an old enemy of

the environmental movement, has agreed in principle to buy the gas from PTTEP and invest in large and expensive infrastructure development programmes to convert the gas to electricity. EGAT also has plans, some of them in advanced stages, for a series of eight hydroelectric dams on rivers that border Thailand and Burma. These dams would require massive amounts of funding from the multilateral banks - the figure of US \$ 5.12 billion dollars has been mooted.

EGAT TO BUY THE BURMESE GAS

In regard to the gas, EGAT would use it long with gas from other countries to power a series of six high-tech 'combined cycle generators' five more of which are planned. These could cost around US \$2-3 billion. Burmese gas could make up about a fifth to a quarter of the projected supply, meaning roughly US \$ 7-800 million more in

investment riding on a stable flow of gas from Burma. Combined cycle generators become much less economical to run if supplies are not regular — which they might well not be if the record of manipulation and inefficiency in the energy sector in Burma is considered. The gas would be brought to Thailand by means of a 5-600 km long gas pipeline which may go through Three Pagodas Pass — the site of numerous recent battles. Alternative routes may be considered but would be much more expensive and still not secure. Regular gas supplies would be threatened from many quarters; internal sabotage, cutoff by Slorc during border disagreements, revolutionary activities, or the well demonstrated incapability of the MOGE to supply even half Burma's gas needs let alone supply it to other countries. EGAT could easily find the reliance on Burmese gas a great burden.

HYDROELECTRIC DAMS

The planned dams combined would produce 6,397 megawatts, three times Thailand's TOTAL current hydro electric output. The largest, the Upper Salween Dam, would produce 4,540 megawatts alone. It would be perhaps the largest dam in S.E Asia, and would cost US \$3 billion. Preliminary studies for 7 of the 8 planned dams have been completed. General Chavalit, The Thai general who was first to broach the idea of the dams with his friends in Slorc, is now Interior Minister. His New Aspiration Party also holds the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry, and the National Energy Administration, responsible for energy development. Though Gen Chavalit was elected on the basis of being a strong advocate of democracy in Thailand, he has consistently shown himself to be an enemy of the pro-democracy movement in Burma. He

will probably push hard for the dams to be built. The pro-democracy revolutionaries, and ethnic inhabitants of the vast areas to be flooded would have to be removed or killed first. Slorc has already started its military offensives to clear the area Saw Hta, near where the largest dam is to be sited, where there were many camps of displaced persons (internal refugees), and where pro-democracy dissident students had their headquarters, had already been taken (10. 10. 92).

(On 5. 10. 92 Slorc troops kidnapped 16 Thais including 10 senior district officials. In spite of intense diplomatic efforts, rising tensions and calls for a review of Thailand's policy towards Burma, Slorc has not released them one week later. This will help towards the stopping of the dam and gas development projects)

(Green November 32)



**NOBEL LAUREATES' STAND ON BURMA
COMMENDED
BURMA SHOULD BECOME THE SUBJECT
OF SECURITY COUNCIL**

February - 6 — Australian Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Robert Hill on February 16 commended the efforts of Nobel Laureates to secure the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Senator said Slorc must release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. "It is shocking that Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained for almost four years in blatant violations of internationally accepted human rights standards," he said.

He also added, "The Slorc continues with arbitrary arrests, tortures and imprisonment, as well as the widespread persecution of Burma's ethnic minorities."

"The Liberal/ National Coalition commends the efforts of Nobel Laureates ... who are currently in Thailand protesting the

detention of Aung San Suu Kyi and who will go to Geneva to give evidence to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR)."

Moreover, the press release also said, "The Coalition believes that the international community must take greater action on Burma. If the efforts of the UNCHR are successful, the issues of Burma should become the subject of UN Security Council deliberations."

The media released concluded, "The international community must match the efforts of these prominent individuals whose protests are aimed at giving the people of Burma the democracy they deserve.

(Source: Media Release of Senator Robert Hill)

**BURMESE FAST
FOR LEADER'S RELEASE**

Burmese activist and their supporters started a 24-hour fast outside Slorc embassy in Canberra to support their call for the unconditional release of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from midday, January 3. Guests speakers included, Sir William Keys, Senator Janet Powell, Senator Margaret Reid, and prominent members of the

Burmese Community. The master of ceremony was Maisey Warburton, Secretary, of the Committee for Democracy in Burma (CDB).

The fast took place outside the Slorc embassy while diplomats feasted in celebration of Burma's Independence Day inside.

One of the people took part in the fast Ko Maung Maung

said, "Burma gained independence from the British 44 years ago, but that independence has been stolen by the military dictatorship in Burma. How can the military celebrate the country's independence when it is killing and abusing the human rights of thousands of Burmese people."

"The military still refuse to hand over power to the democratically elected government. It continues to detain Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and so many other political prisoners."

"While staff of this illegal embassy are having a party, their colleagues are bombing unarmed villagers in the ethnic area of Burma in their civil war against the people," he added. The military has just began its dry season offensive, despite having declared an end to military activity at the recent sitting of the United Nations General Assembly.

The embassy was condoned off by a 50 metre banner urging the military to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and respect the mandate of the elections her party won in 1990.

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her non-violent efforts to call for peace in Burma and to stop the military's abuse of human rights. She headed the National League for Democracy (NLD) which won more than 80% of the seats in the 1990 national election.

(Source: Australia Burma Council)

**ABC CALLS FOR
CLOSURE
OF AUSTRALDE
IN RANGOON**

The Australia Burma Council (ABC), on 3 January, called on the Australian government to recognise the will of the Burmese people by denormalising relation with the oppressive, brutal and illegal regime, Slorc.

In a statement, the ABC called the Australian government to impose unilateral trade sanctions and close the AUSTRALDE office in Rangoon, to downgrade the Australian embassy by recalling the Australian Ambassador, to provide humanitarian assistance for the millions of Burmese people who have fled their homes seeking refuge in Burma's border nation and to allow exiled Burmese people into Australia to study so they will be equipped to assist in the speedy reconstruction of the country when democracy is restored.

(Source: Australia Burma Council)

**PULL AUSTRALDE OUT
OF BURMA —
POWELL**

January 4 — Independent Senator Janet Powell has backed today's call from the Australia Burma Council for stronger action by the Australian Government against the oppressive and illegal military regime in Burma, the Slorc.

Speaking at a Burmese Independence Day rally in Canberra today, Senator Powell called on the Australian Government to

immediately close the AUSTRADE office.

"In May 1992, Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, told the Senate that the AUSTRADE office in Rangoon was "currently under review". While the military junta has made some minor concessions in 1992, in response to increased international pressure, they are completely inadequate. Human rights abuses continue.

"Only small numbers of the many thousands of political prisoners have been released, only a few hundred of the hundreds of thousands of refugees have been repatriated and the proposed national convention to draw up a new constitution does not guarantee representation of all parties which contested the 1990 election."

"Stronger pressure is needed and Australia should show the way."

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and leader of the National League for Democracy which won a clear victory in the May 1990 election, still languishes under her forth

year of house arrest. She must be released."

"It is a disgrace that Australia should maintain an AUSTRADE office in Burma under this Siorc regime. In fact, trade sanctions should be imposed — with Australia giving the lead and pushing for a UN mandated international embargo."

"Foreign aid to Burma should continue only as strictly targeted and closely monitored emergency humanitarian assistance."

"A tough stance by Australia would not only be the appropriate moral stance, but would also encourage the incoming Clinton administration in the US to follow through on its tough campaign statements on human rights issues and to apply them in the case of Burma."

"Recognition of the will of the Burmese people, democratically expressed in May 1990, must be a priority for the Australia Government in 1993 Senator Powell concluded

(Source: Media release of the Senate, Parliament of Australia)

CATHOLIC STUDENTS PROTEST NATIONAL CONVENTION

Students from Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students wrote a letter on February 10 in protest against Siorc's so-called National Convention. In their letter that was sent to the Siorc embassy in Hong Kong expressed their deep concern about the human rights situation in Burma. The Statement also said, "rights situation under Siorc regime. The students feel outrage with suppression on peaceful means of expression carried out by students which led Moe Kyaw and other 9 student activists arrested. Regarding the participants to the Convention, the students said that they were tightly controlled.

The open letter concluded with their demands that the Siorc to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners unconditionally and

We refuse to recognise this undemocratic National Convention and any of its outcome."

The students also believe that National Convention was just a mask to legitimise Siorc's power. Moreover, the statement also expressed "no improvements of human immediately, to transfer power to the elected representatives and stop any attempt to legitimise Siorc's power in the country and to release Moe Kyaw and other students arrested in anti-convention action unconditionally and lift all oppressive measures against the students and other ethnic groups inside the country.

(Source: Open Letter from Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students)

ACTIVITIES OF BURMESE COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Renaming ceremony of Liverpool University Bar as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in honour to the national figure, organised by the Liverpool University — Society was held on 16 October 1992, attended by Vice Chancellor, Madam Mayor of Liverpool as well as over 100 students. On behalf of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's family, Liverpool Burma Support Group Chairman Irene Fancastes presented Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's photos to put up in the Bar.

After Liverpool Burma Support Group, Burma Affair Monitor, All Burma Student Relief Fund, Burma Action Group, CRDB, Burma Solidarity Democratic Front and other Burmese organisations in the United Kingdom had lined up and collected signatures from Burmese expatriates and friends of Burma, they sent a letter to British Prime Minister John Major to intervene for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Liverpool Burma Support Group could



collect over (1600) signatures.

On October 26, Liverpool Burma Support Group, Burma Affairs Monitor, All Burma Student Relief Fund gathered in Birmingham at a Buddhist religious ceremony organised by Dr Shwe Htun Kyaw and there they gave advice to Dr Myint Thein who left for Germany to urge the Europe Burma Support and Action Bodies to cooperate together.

(Reported by Liverpool Burma Support Group, UK)

It also expressed its deep concern on "the continuing problem of large numbers of refugees and called upon the military junta to create the necessary conditions to ensure an end to the flows of refugees to neighbouring countries and to facilitate their speedy repatriation and to cooperate fully with the relevant United Nations organs on this matter.

Moreover, the military regime in Rangoon was urged "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the protection of the rights of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities" and "to respect fully the obligations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the obligations

UNGA PASSES RESOLUTION ON BURMA GRAVE CONCERNS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION EXPRESSED

Forty-seventh Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1992, adopted a resolution on Burma in which it expressed its "grave concern about the continues seriousness of the human rights situation in Burma," urged the Slorc "to take all necessary steps towards the restoration of democracy, fully respecting the will of the people as expressed in the democratic elections held in 1990," "to take every appropriate measures to allow all citizens to participate freely in the political process in accordance with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to accelerate the process of transition to democracy, in particular through the transfer of power to the democratically elected representatives."

in common article III, and to make use of such services as may be offered by impartial humanitarian bodies."

It also called upon the junta "to extend its full and unreserved cooperation to the Special Rapporteur and to ensure that he has free access to any person in Burma whom he deems it appropriate to meet for the conduct of the mandate."

The UNGA deeply regretted that "many political leaders are still deprived of their freedom and their fundamental rights" and called upon Slorc "to release unconditionally the Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, and other political leaders and remaining political prisoners."

RESOLUTION ON BURMA UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED UNCHR HITS SLORC ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights hit the Slorc for the "continued seriousness of the situation of human rights" there and extended for a further year the mandate of Special Rapporteur Prof Yozo Yokota.

In a resolution adopted by unanimously on March 10 — thus with the approval of China — the Commission called on the Slorc to allow the country to return to democratic rule and to release "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as other detained political leaders and all political prisoners."

Slorc was "strongly urged to restore full respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, to restore protection of persons belonging to minority groups, notably against discrimination concerning them, especially in the framework of citizenship laws, and to put an end to violations of the right to life and integrity of the human being, the practice of torture, abuses of women, forced labour and enforced disappearance and summary executions."

Regarding the Nobel Laureates who were refused to enter Burma to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the resolution expressed its regret.

RELEASE

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The Commission extended Yokota's mandate while deploring that "he has been denied access to some persons, in particular detainees including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and that a number of persons wishing to provide testimony have been subjected to intimidation or harassment."

It urged the junta to take "firm steps toward the establishment of a democratic state" to "allow all citizens to participate freely in the political process" and "to accelerate the process of transition to democracy in particular through convening of the parliament elected in May 1990."

Regarding the National Convention, it noted with "concern that one of its objectives is to maintain the participation of the armed forces in a leading role in the future political life of the State."

The commission expressed "deep concern at the violations of human rights in Burma which remain extremely serious, in particular concerning the practice of torture, summary and arbitrary execution, forced labour, including forced portering for the military, abuse of women, politically motivated arrests and detention, the existence of important restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms and the imposition of oppressive measures."

It said the situation had "resulted in flows of refugees towards neighbouring countries" notably by Muslims who have fled to Bangladesh."

It appealed the Slorc "to consider becoming a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture Rights and to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment."

TOMBS BULLDOZED AND RAZED TO THE GROUND

Slorc authorities in Monywa, Sagaing Division, on 20 December 1992 ordered the local people to move all the tombs in the graveyards there, and if not all would be bulldozed and razed to the ground. The deadline was December 31. According to their tradition, Chinese nationalities regularly worship their ancestors every year, and they could repair the tombs only before and after 10 days of that festival. As the festival will fall on April 5, they pleaded Slorc authorities to give them more time. Slorc responded that they did not want to see graveyard at the beginning of the city any longer. "To break down and reconstruct within (10) days is very difficult as the tombs have already built concretely. Since the coffin was cremated and tomb was built, I had no idea to break down. My grandmother died when I was 5 years old. So, I had to break it down 70 years later. As some tombs are still new and the condition of coffins are not so good and bad smell comes out, they had to burn down them. To move these tombs were not only expensive but also felt miserable as they were of our ancestors. Not only the graveyards belonged to Chinese nationalities and Buddhists but also graveyards of Christians and Muslims were also forced to move out. Christians and Muslims have the tradition of no rearrangement for the coffins after being cremated. When they refused to move, they were ordered to raze all the tombs to the ground," said an aged woman.

In the heart of the city, local people were also forced to ditch. When one local people asked the authorities



Destroying tombs in Monywa

about running water system, they scolded him by saying, "It does not concern with you. Your duty is to dig the trench, not to worry about the running water system. Would you like to go to jail?" All the ditching process and pavement construction were done by the local people themselves. All houses along the main road were ordered to roof with zinc plates. Those who did not have money to purchase zinc plates were forced to move inside. Moreover, Slorc authorities added that all houses and buildings on that road must be the bricked one within 3 years. Those who cannot afford must move out to other places.

All the private home industries in the heart of the city were forced to move outside where every owner had to buy a plot, cost 100,000 Kyats, from the Slorc. The owners appealed Slorc authorities to allow their industries at the old places to continue their currently circulating projects because they could not afford for the expenses, and if they were moved all their business sectors came to a stop. Brig-Gen Hla Myint Swe said, "We want to cooperate only with those who have the funds, not with the have-not."

All the households sheltered in the monastery compound were forced to resettle outside the city according to Municipal Act. Eight hundred households were forced to relocate in the fields before they could start any construction. They were moved out desert-like places and farms which were confiscated by Slorc. Although the farmers asked Slorc to wait until harvest time, their proposal were turned down and all the farms were bulldozed and new settlers were abandoned in the mist.
(Sources: News from inside Burma)

TORTURE CONTINUES IN BURMA

Torture against the people in Burma is still widespread under the brutal and cruel reign of the military junta although it is clearly stated in the **Article (5) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"**.

Following is the exert from an interview with Hlaing Myint, a torture victim by an ABSDF student field reporter.

Hlaing Myint, aged 18 from Rangoon, came to Tavoy in Tenasserim Division, Southern Burma in the first week of February, 1992, to trade motor car batteries. She was waiting to buy an air ticket at Tavoy airport.

Sometimes people have to wait for 2-3 weeks for an ordinary ticket, even if he/she has good connections with the township LORC. While she was waiting at the airport, one man named Aung Thein and another man came and told her that money was easy to

make in Thailand and that she could get 1500 Baht per month working at a mini-mart at Kawthaung (Victoria Point), southern Burma. To gain her trust, he gave her 18,000 Kyats (2 packets, each contains 100 ninety Kyats notes) at a tea-shop near the airport and told her to return the following day in order to accompany him to Kawthaung.

The next day, Aung Thein, Hlaing Myint and another woman were arrested at Tavoy Harbour for not having travelling permits. They were detained for 4 days and released after paying a 10,000 Kyats bribe to the local Slorc. They were then taken directly to Ranong and sold to a brothel there. She was forced to work there for 3 months before she was released on 10 June 1992 when Thai police raided the brothel.

The police found 33 Burmese women, who had been virtual prisoners for periods of up to 3 years. Three of them were suffering from a brutal beating they received following a

recent attempt to escape. They had been whipped with coat hanger wire until they fainted. The police also reported that one of them had been forced back into prostitution only three days after giving birth. (The Nation, 11 June 1992)

In mid-August 1992, Hlaing Myint and five other young women who had been rescued in the above-mentioned raid were accompanied by a Burmese student back to Ranong Province after spending 2 months in Bangkok. One of the women returned to her home in Kawthaung, while Hlaing Myint and the other four women left Ranong by boat to Tavoy, Moulmein and beyond.

The boat took 3 days and 4 nights to reach Tavoy. On arrival there, 2 of them stayed behind and a friend of Hlaing Myint's bought 3 travelling passes for 300 kyat each for the remaining 3 women, including her. The passes were for travel from Tavoy to Ye. Although none of them had done anything wrong, they knew it was necessary to invent a story to tell the authorities that they had not been to Thailand, as if they were suspected of being involved with students on the border their lives would be at risk. So they made up a story and practised it before leaving Tavoy.

Between Tavoy and Ye, all passengers had their papers been checked. These three women were asked why they had no ID cards. They explained that it was because they were so young. In Ye, they were questioned at length by local police who asked them for their home addresses and again whether they had been to Thailand. Fortunately, their practice in the previous night paid off and they were able to pay a small bribe in order to be permitted to

continue their journey.

In Moulmein, they were interrogated by police and taken to a local police station where they were detained in separate rooms. Hlaing Myint was again interrogated regarding suspected contacts with students in Thailand. She was detained for one night on the charge of suspicion and was released after paying 3,00 kyats to the police. It is not known that happened to the other two women, who were to have been released five days later.

After her release, she went to Rangoon, arriving at her home in the early afternoon. That evening, while she was eating dinner with her family, 3 intelligence officers arrived at her home and asked her to accompany them to the police station for a short while. Outside, two police officers were waiting and she was taken away, a police officer at each side, firmly holding her arms. She was then handcuffed, photographed and blindfolded and taken to a local police station. Her father followed the police car to the station but was refused entry.

At the police station, she was again interrogated about possible contacts with the students. The Burmese authorities probably believed that she had made contact with the dissidents because a close relative had been involved in dissident activities in 1988 and was now living outside Burma. Since the 1988 uprising, the police have been regularly visiting this relative's house to check if he had returned. During the interrogations, she was asked about the location of this man and his friends. She was interrogated by a total of 10 people in three different sessions. She was slapped, kicked and punched — she thinks by the same man, although she can't be sure as she was blindfolded during interrogation.

All along the Burmese authorities were interrogating a completely innocent person — Hlaing Myint had not had any contact with dissidents at the border while she was in Ranong. She had, however, along

with millions of other Burmese people, attended some of the mass rallies in 1988, something which she believed the authorities knew. The interrogators told her that they had many documents of her involvement with the dissidents, but the only possible information that the Slorc intelligence might have had some photos of her taken during 1988 rallies. They never produced any of the documents they claimed to have.

Early the next morning, she was handcuffed and blindfolded and taken to Insein prison. For three days she was kept in a tiny cell, which measured just 70 CM in height, and perhaps 60 CM in length and width (1/4M3). The cell was not wide enough for her to sit cross legged or with a straight back. She could only kneel with a slightly bent back. Taller people would of course be more uncomfortable. She was blindfolded and her hands were handcuffed behind her. She was not fed and was given only half a cup of water three times a day. There was a small hole at the bottom of the cell for defecant to flow out, but she had to urinate as she kneeled. The cell had a door at the front and a lid that was opened when the interrogators came so they could easily beat her.

Her section contained about 55 to 60 people — 21 women and around 35 men. Like Hlaing Myint these people were temporary prisoners. Many of them had recently been imprisoned at Insein and there seemed to be the possibility of buying your way out of prison if you had enough money. The maximum prison term handed down to people in Hlaing Myint's section was just one year. Hlaing Myint saw many prisoners who were suffering from battered faces and broken bones.

On the first day she was at Insein, 5 prison officers — 4 men and a women — came to her box-like cell to interrogate her. She was interrogated frequently for three days she was there. She was slapped and punched, especially around the head until she even forgot her parents' names. She was kicked at the back three times

causing her to cough up blood and was beaten with a cane rod. They even beat her on the side of a recently broken arm causing her arm to swell so much that they had to take her handcuffs off. They also rolled an iron bar over her shins. Her head was pushed into a bucket full of water until she felt like she might drown and she was not fed or allowed to wash during the first three days. She was given half a cup of water three times a day. At one stage, she was tied to a chair and beaten. Three of the five interrogators, all men, were involved in the torture and abuse.

She was asked for the names of students and Karen National Union people she had come into contact with while in Thailand. She was also asked if she had made contact with her brother, what kind of organising activities she had been involved in at the border and what information she had brought back with for the underground movement. She continued to tell them the truth — that she had no such contact and had never been actively involved in the underground movement.

IN fact, because of her plight as a Burmese woman forced into prostitution, she had come into contact with Thai and Burmese social groups concerned for the welfare of Burmese women in Thailand, but she had never been a political dissident in Thailand. She told the interrogators that she had lived in Tavoy all this time. Fortunately for her, the woman interrogator finally realised this fact, saying that in her opinion Hlaing Myint had not been involved in students' political movement in Thailand.

After Hlaing Myint had been in prison for three days she was transferred to a bigger room and charged with "political activities". Her handcuffs and blindfold were removed, but only at the time of her father's visit. He had to pay between 2000-3000 kyat in order to visit and talk with her. At that time, he agreed to pay a large sum of money if she was released from prison. The beatings and other forms of torture stopped at that time, but the police still used their feet to

shove her around. Her father decided that on her release, Hlaing Myint should be sent to Moulmein to stay with a friend, so he paid 500 kyat for a travelling document from Rangoon to Moulmein.

A few days before her release, Hlaing Myint was visited by a lawyer and questioned by two policemen who especially came to the prison for that purpose. One of the other prisoners commented that she was indeed lucky as usually no lawyers and police officers were allowed to visit the prisoners.

On the last day of her detention, her father returned and altogether gave 10,000 kyats to the prison and SLORC officials in bond money and gifts. On release, it was necessary for Hlaing Myint to recover from her ordeal at home with her family before making the trip to Moulmein. However, a couple of days after her release a letter signed by a judicial officer from Insein arrived at her home, warning them that if she failed to answer all questions asked while she was in prison, by a certain date, she would be re-arrested without trial. She subsequently received more information from a police informer friend that a judge at the high court, Aung Toe, had sent a letter to the police station to re-arrest her within a few days if she did not reveal her clandestine activities to the police before the said date.

After more than a week of saying and recuperating at her parents house in order to recover from her injuries and all-health, Hlaing Myint and her family decided that she should leave Burma for her safety. She bought a letter which served as a temporary ID from a local township office in Rangoon for 300 baht as she had lost her real ID card, and would face arrest if she was caught without identification. A friend of hers was able to buy a Rangoon — Tavoy air ticket on her behalf. The ticket bore a false name, presumably to protect her friend, and was valid only for that day. Fortunately, another friend of Hlaing Myint's works at the airport, so after

paying 900 kyat she was able to board the Rangoon — Tavoy flight the next day with a ticket not bearing her name. She changed the destination on her travelling pass by adding the words "and then on to Tavoy" after the original Moulmein destination. Fortunately, she was not stopped for questioning.

She took the Tavoy — Ranong boat, leaving Tavoy at night and arriving

Ranong four days later. She and everyone else on the boat had to pay Burmese authorities 500 kyat each, immediately before arriving Ranong. Once in Ranong, she was able to make contact with a man who is working with the issue of Burmese prostitution and later return to Bangkok where her broken arm has been treated and now is staying.

MANIPULATION OF THE ECONOMY BY THE MILITARY IN BURMA

BY MAUNG DOE

The 2nd annual general meeting of the "Union of Myanmar Holding Company Limited" a military-run investment company, was held at Kone Myint Thar Yar, Rangoon. At the meeting, which covered the 1991-1992 fiscal year, the Director of Procurement and Minister of National Planning and Economic Development Maj. Gen. David Abel said that in 1991-1992 every shareholder who has a share will obtain a 10% profit on their investment.

As Burma's economic policy has been changing to a market-oriented economy, it may seem natural for a company which is doing business in the investment sector to generate a healthy profit, thus allowing payment of such a dividend. However, the public is for the most part unaware of the source of this capital from which such profits have been derived. The populace may be deceived into understanding that the shareholders in the SLORC's company can benefit from such considerable profits within a comparatively short period of time due to the skillful investments of the directors of the board. In reality these profits were achieved through the misuse of funds rightfully belonging to the public and the State. This, as will be explained, is not without precedent.

The aim of this holding company, in which such vast amounts of capital have been invested, is to fulfill a

long-term plan of the military rulers: to control the economy of the future Burma.

The Myanmar Holding Company was established in accordance with the SLORC's Ministry of Trade's Order No. 7/90, issued on 19 February 1990. Its starting capital was 1,000 billion kyats (US\$1,666,600,000), the biggest investment in the history of Burma. Even if the inflation rate was balanced, the amount won't be decreased from its initial milestone. At that time even the biggest venture with either local or foreign corporations amounted to no more than 500 million Kyats (USD 83 million). It is of great interest as to how the military regime got hold of such an enormous amount of money while at the time the country's foreign debt was US\$4,500 million and the official inflation rate inside the country was 35%. (See Appendix — Major Economic Indicator: Burma)

According to Paragraphs 4,5, and 6 of the SLORC's Order No. 7/90, 40% of the invested capital was to be provided by the government, while the rest was to be sourced from members of the military and their families. The government department referred to in this order was the Office of the Director of Procurement, a department responsible for arms purchases and headed by Maj-Gen

Abel. This clearly revealed who in the field of government was involved and what their intention was (is). It is certain that the military and their breed, including war veterans, could not legally have amassed such a large amount of money according to their official incomes and the real cost of living. In reality, state funds were withdrawn under the name of the government. Some 400 billion kyats of public funds was used in the capitalisation of the Holding Company; capital that was taken from the state coffers as an indefinite interest free loan. According to Paragraph 2 (A) of the Order, the decision for the allocation of the money was made by senior military officers from the Defence Ministry.

The remaining 60% of the funds invested in the company, excluding those taken by the more wealthy individuals within the military institution, were shares bought by groups such as a Military Commands, Infantry Divisions and Intelligence Units. Such groups approaching the state banks for loans are in an undeniably powerful position - no bank or banker would dare to go against the will of the Burmese military. As an example of this power, during the 8888 uprising, 60 million kyats was appropriated by the military from the Burma Foreign Relations Bank that was clearly stated at the time as being used for the activities of the military. Needless to say, all the Banks in Burma are still under the effective control of the military. The establishment of the Myawaddy Bank by Order No. 16/92 issued on 29 December 1992 with an investment of 1,000 million kyats (USD 166.6 million) is an example of this. Through this bank military top brass using the name of Myanmar Holdings and others as depositors launder the black money that they have acquired by various means.

This kind of military dominated enterprise has been set up before in Burma. In 1957 a finance company called the Defence Services Institute was established. When General Ne Win took over power in 1958, the regime expanded the DSI through

taxes collected from the people. They then purchased the A. Scot Bank which they renamed the Awa Bank. As under the reign of Slog in which many households were forced to move from Rangoon to the so-called satellite towns of Hlaing Thayar and Shwe Pyithar —in 1958 under the reign of Ne Win, many households were forced to move to North Okkalapa, South Okkalapa and Tharketa after being accused of violating the Municipal Act. The military top brass then officially confiscated the remaining land, demolished the homes and built multi story brick buildings with money loaned from the Awa Bank. Furthermore, they set up two companies, the Five Stars Shipping Line and a construction company to take up the contracts for the construction of the Theingyi Bazaar, both of which proved highly profitable for the military due to the unofficial taxes, protection rackets and extortion. As economic activities performed by the military are exempted from taxation in Burma the DSI's profits were very considerable.

Within a short time, the DSI had established and operated the following fourteen big enterprises:

1. DSI General Store for armed forces personnel.
2. Poultry, fisheries and fish products, manufacturing and distribution to the public
3. International Trading House, a general import / export business.
4. Ava House, sellers of books and stationery to the public.
5. Five Star Line, shipping.
6. Ava Bank, general banking business.
7. Burma National Housing and Construction Co., contractors for construction of government and army buildings, roads and bridges.
8. Burma International Inspection Co. Ltd., a joint venture company with INTECO, an American inspection firm doing business in Burma since 1952.
9. City Transport Co., Ltd., running a new bus line in Rangoon. (A 1953 survey estimated that 278,000

Rangoonians used buses. The DSI buses carried 30,000 passengers daily. Thus the DSI buses took 10.79% of the passengers from the existing private and co-operative buses.)

10. Row & Co., Ltd., biggest department store in Burma with 62 branches, bought by the DSI. (The English firm, founded in 1867, was almost defunct because the Burmese Government restricted import licenses to foreign firms. Soon after the takeover, it became a thriving store. DSI had bought many big British firms including East Asiatic Co. of Burma, John Dickenson & Co., Oppenheims, and Steel Brothers. These firms that controlled the economic power during the British colonial rule were almost out of business after the nation had become independent. They were more than happy to sell their assets to the inexperienced military officers with a sack of big money.)

11. Burma Hotels, Ltd., merged with Strand Hotels Ltd.

12. Rangoon Electric Workers, radio and electrical equipment assembly works and motor workshops.

13. General Trading Co., supplying coal to the state.

14. Continental Trading House, distributor of fuel and fish products to the public. Manufacturer of coke; foreign trade; general trade.

Such kind of DSI-manipulated enterprises came to a stop only after the second military coup on 2 March 1962 in which Socialism was officially installed in Burma. If we compare DSI's profits with those of the Myanmar Holdings Company with its over 1,000 billion Kyats of capital they are relatively small. However the DSI should be seen as a successful test model in Ne Win's early dabbling in the manipulation of the economy.

In setting up its military-bureaucratic economic model, the military dictators commonly use two methods. The first is to extend their business to the utmost extent like Noriega, Ne Win, Marcos, etc. The second is to establish organisations like Myanmar Holdings, as also occurred in the

Philippines in 1976 through the setting up of a company called RSBS by the corrupt President Ferdinand Marcos. The RSBS's main objective was to gain support from the military top brass in the Philippines by allowing them to become involved in business, in turn enabling him to continue his reign. Marcos, therefore, issued an Order which allocated 220 million Pesos (Approximately USD 9 million) for the establishment of the RSBS. Of The salaries of 150,000 military men were cut by five percent in order to cover the needed funds for the establishment of the company. The overall capital value of the RSBS in 1983, 954 million Pesos, increased to 2,706 million Peso by 1988. In the beginning, it provided loans for setting up small "private" companies. Later, the RSBS purchased shares and invested widely in Steel Companies, a Mineral Water Brewery factory, Banking and even in Pepsi Cola. The amount of shares bought by the RSBS was 2,400 million Peso. Within 13

years the tax-exempt investment of the graduate military officers increased until they became one of the most significant economic elites in the Philippines from modest beginnings a few years before.

Slorc's Myanmar Holding Company (MHC) is similar to Marcos' RSBS company in that it was set up in order to by the loyalty of the generals by giving them an opportunity to use vast amounts of state funds for personal gain. It is simply a formalised way for Slorc generals to become involved in Burma's economy so as to grab the capital that has been taken from the ordinary soldiers and the people of Burma. Now Slorc's Holding Limited which started with investments in trading, fisheries, shipping co-operation and renting freezer rooms is now extending its economic involvement by setting up the Myawaddy Bank, Clothing Factory (1) (Mingaladon), Waterproof Factory (Mayangone), Silk Factory (Maymyo), Rubber Slipper Factory

(1) (Inn Taing) and Coffee Plantation under the Industry Ministry (1) all of which were confiscated in the aftermath of the military coup in 1988 so that they could be "managed" by the MHC.

The Myanmar Holding Company Ltd is simply another facet of the SLORC's attempts to extend its hold on power. However, due to exploitative schemes such as this, the regime is facing great opposition from the people, whose level of dissatisfaction increases daily. Slorc complains when the rest of the world tries to isolate them, even on a superficial level. In fact the Burmese regime faces complete isolation from the Burmese people as the country's economy continues to deteriorate. The MHS is just the economic section of the regime's overall plan to be in a position to completely manipulate the next government to the point of it becoming simply a puppet without any means of meeting the real needs of the Burmese people.

Major Economic Indicators: Myanmar

		1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Gross Domestic Product	% change	-11.4	7.4	5.1	5.3	5.6
Agriculture	% change	-12.8	11.3	5.0	5.0	5.0
Industry	% change	-15.3	15.6	7.0	7.0	7.8
Services	% change	-8.6	0.3	4.5	5.0	5.7
Gross Domestic Investment	% of GDP	11.4	12.6	13.5	14.0	15.0
Gross Domestic Saving	% of GDP	10.5	11.6	11.6	12.0	13.0
Resource Gap	% of GDP	-0.9	-1.0	-1.9	-2.0	-2.0
Inflation Rate	% change in CPI	16.9	27.2	35.0	35.0	30.0
Merchandise Exports	\$ billion	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.9
	% change	24.5	67.5	31.7	15.0	10.0
Merchandise Imports	\$ billion	0.6	0.8	1.2	1.4	1.7
	% change	3.6	49.2	40.1	25.0	15.0
Trade Balance	\$ billion	-0.2	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.8
Current Account Balance	\$ billion	-0.2	-0.2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.6
	% of GDP	-1.5	-1.2	-2.3	-3.1	-3.3
External Debt	\$ billion	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.7
Debt-Service Ratio	%	34.9	30.4	26.0	30.0	30.0

Note: All data except external debt and debt-service ratio are on a fiscal year basis. Data on inflation and trade may differ from the series contained in the Statistical Appendix (see Statistical Notes for further details).

Sources: Data provided by the Ministry of Planning and Finance, Union of Myanmar; World Bank, *World Debt Tables, 1990-91*, Vol. 2 (Washington, D.C., 1990); and staff estimates.

(Source: People Power Journal No. (9) U Ne Win and Merciless Executioners (Kyemon U Thaug) Working People's Daily Slorc's Activities (1988-91)

OPIUM TRADING BLOOMING ON NORTHWESTERN BORDER

Poppy seeds are being sold to India in large quantities daily via Tamu township in Chin State. These seeds are produced as a by-product in the poppy fields in North-eastern and eastern Shan State and transported by trucks from Lashio in Northern Shan State to Mandalay and Monywa in Central Burma and then to Tamu. They are sprinkled on the top of a wide range of Burmese snacks and in India they are crushed with spices and used in daily cooking. Now, these seeds are being transported about 60,000-kilo s-into India. How and from where exactly are such a large quantity of seeds being obtained?

The Slorc granted permission for poppy cultivation to some ethnic groups who surrendered to them. In Chin State, there are two Slorc outposts, one at Rekota (Rileik) and another at Shwee Bwe, near the Indo-Burma border, under the command of Infantry Battalion No. 89. Between these two outposts, there is a secret route which reaches the border at Mizoram, India. The troops have planted land mines along this route, so no human nor animal could pass or go near it. It is also patrolled by 4 armed soldiers in uniform and 2 in

plain clothes. Along this road, the Slorc troops contact groups in India and transport packed goods. Out of every 20-packages, half of them are certain to be heroin.

There is poppy cultivation near Kyi Tha village in Tun Zun township, Chin State. In Tamu township, there are also poppy fields on both sides of the borders, west of Kammagyi village, guarded by the Slorc troops. There is a refinery near Kham Pet village in Tamu township. There the opium is refined into heroin No.3 under the joint cooperation of U Law Kyu, Chinese nationality and Slorc ex-Major Phillip. Moreover, the local Slorc Chairman in Tamu is also involved in refining opium into heroin.

During the reign of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), each local BSPP member carried 10 packages of heroin every time he made a trip from Kalaywa to Tamu. There are two trading routes from Kalaywa to Kalay township. One is by road and the other is from Yu Wa village on the Chindwin River along the Yu stream by water-way. Every time they carry the heroin, at least one Slorc sergeant has to escort the packages: there is no

checking at any outpost.

Those who want to trade more profitably negotiate with the local Slorc chairman and local military commanders and then they are carried by military trucks. Acid used in refining the opium into heroin is manufactured in India, as are other raw materials used in the process. As the acid is very strong, its smell can be detected from a distance, and cannot be masked in anyway. When the plastic gallon strikes other hard materials, it explodes, making it difficult to carry secretly. The Infantry Battalion No. 89 carry this acid and also the drug phensedyle in bottles together with military supplies under the pretense of moving its Battalion from one location to another.

It is quite common to find the local Slorc authorities and military commanders at the house of Chinese nationalities who are well-known for their involvement in drug trafficking.

On 25 May 1992 Maung Ni, one of the henchmen of the local Slorc Chairman in Tamu was arrested red-handed carrying heroin. However, he was let off with a guarantee of no further arrest.

LOG TRADING

Opium baron Lao Sit Han purchased teak in Ka Baw valley in 1990. When he went to visit the site, it was in the company of Slorc Chairman Than Shwe in an army helicopter.

On 21 April 1991, his nephew was robbed and gunned down on his way back from buying teak. He died in Tamu hospital. It is known that a foreigner was also with him. The teak he had bought has not been claimed up to this day and is now stored at Kameik port.

Illegal teak trading is also flourishing along the route from Sedi and Aung Ze Ya village in Tamu to Home Lin—Ukhru high way. The traders have to bribe the local Slorc Chairman in Tamu with large sums of money reportedly amounting to 600,000 Kyats or more, and collaborate with Lao Sit Han. The Slorc Infantry Battalion No. 228 in Sedi region takes responsibility for smooth transportation.

(Source: India-based Burma Students Democratic Front, BSDF)

A HEROIN DEALER CALLED SLORC

The uniformed criminals who run Burma's ruling junta have not only made a mockery of human rights and democracy. In league with their partners and protectors in Beijing, they are also threatening the stability of their region and flooding American cities with cheap heroin.

If only for its role in heroin trade, the junta, which call itself State Law and Order Restoration Council, or SLORC, should be defied as the threat to America's vital interests.

The State Department has reported on SLORC lucrative arrangement with poppy growers, refiners and traffickers. An estimated 75 percent of all heroin reaching America's big cities comes from Burma. Since SLORC seized power in late 1988, declaring martial law and torturing or killing opponents, the production of opium and heroin has doubled.

In 1988, 1.9 million Americans had tried or used heroin. As a consequence of SLORC's partnership in Burmese heroin trade, by 1991 there were one million more, according to a conservative estimate from multiple federal agencies. SLORC's export of heroin has caused terrible casualties among American's urban youth. It is an export of AIDS, crime and corruption.

In comparison with the Burmese generals, Manuel Noriega's effect on the narcotics business was an negligible as a street dealer's. Yet President Bush invaded Panama to capture Noriega. He has done practically nothing to disrupt SLORC's profitable commerce in heroin.

The passivity Bush has shown toward the Burmese junta may be attributed largely to the junta's status as a protege

of Beijing. Bush's desire not to perturb the Red mandarins who perpetrated the Tianamen massacre has led him into ignore their complicity in SLORC's heroin trafficking.

The Chinese regime benefits in several ways from its partnership in the Burmese drugs trade. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration, China has become the second-most important transit route for heroin reaching America. The enormous quantities of Burmese heroin transported through China's heavily militarised southern region could not reach their destination without official Chinese knowledge and complicity.

Not only do Chinese rulers take their cut in payment for safe passage. In the words of Senate resolution on the Burmese junta, "The SLORC military regime used proceeds from the sale of illegal narcotics to purchase \$1.2 billion of arms in 1991 from the People's Republic of China."

The Chinese partnership in SLORC's drug business cannot be dismissed as an operation by uncontrolled rogue elements in the military or in distant provinces. The same Senate resolution says: "SLORC purchased these arms through the Chinese Polytechnologies Corp., which is managed by Deng Xiaoping's son in law."

The weapons bought from Deng's firm are used in SLORC's savage assaults on democratic activists and ethnic minorities in Burma. The atrocities committed in the Burmese killing fields have driven hundreds of thousands of refugees into Bangladesh, Thailand and India.

SLORC's war on a population that voted overwhelmingly against the

generals in the election of May 1990 has had destabilizing effect on neighbouring countries. From India's perspective, even more destabilizing is a potential Chinese threat from Burma against the Indian heartland.

Since SLORC is an illegitimate regime that seized power by force, the starting point for a new US policy toward Burma should be a phased derecognition of the generals and official recognition of the democratic forces that won the 1990 election. This would advance democracy, human rights and America's interest in peace and stability in Asia and would save many young Americans in our cities.

(from Boston Globe editorial 14 November 1992)

Opium output from the Golden Triangle straddling the border of Burma, Laos and Thailand will be about 1725 tons for the 1992-93 harvest season, Northern Narcotics Control Office director Banpote Piemdee said yesterday. He said an estimated 1500 tons of raw opium is expected to be produced in Burma, 200 tons in Laos and 25 tons in Thailand. (Bangkok Post Thursday January 21, 1993)

Federation of Trade Unions, Burma (FTUB) Secretary Maung Maung and (Seafarers' Union of Burma) SUB Secretary Zaw Tun attended the Third Committee of the ASIA/PACIFIC Regional Committee, International Transport Workers' Federation held in Singapore from February 16-19. Trade Union rights was the principal theme of the Conference and featured in a range of country reports which were presented to the Conference's plenary session as well as in the detailed debates which took place in sectional meetings for the Seafarers, Dockers, Civil Aviation and Inland Transport Sections held on February 17. More than 200 delegates from transport workers' unions through the Region agreed to take co-ordinated protest action against the military dictatorship in Burma. The meeting heard a detailed report about the situation in Burma from representatives of the SUB. It decided to recommend to the ITF's Executive Board that the SUB be accepted as an affiliate to the ITF and that transport unions worldwide should be asked to participate in a boycott of ships and aircraft registered in Burma.

The meeting also adopted a resolution on Burma, condemning the SLORC for its brutalities and monumental arrogance, fraudulent attempt to mislead world opinion, continued violations of the freedom of thought and expression, the denial of self-determination to the entire workers and the people of Burma.



Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of ITF

FTUB AND SUB SECRETARIES PARTICIPATE REGIONAL MEETING

They demanded for the release of the 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu and all the political activists immediately, and that the SLORC in accordance with the international practice, transfer state power to the elected representatives of the 1990 general election.

The delegates also called upon the foreign investors to withdraw their investments and to cease all their business activities in Burma under the regime until a democratic system has been instituted.

"The International Trade Secretariats, the National Trade Centers, the ICFTU and its affiliates to help and support the Seafarers' Union of Burma in their

struggle of trying to solve and raise up the social standards of Transport workers in general and seafarers in particular, and to take concrete action against the regime using all their influence for boycotting the ships and planes flying the Burmese flag" they called upon.

(Source: FTUB & SUB)

ITF OBJECTS TO BURMA

The ITF has formally objected to the international Labour Organisation's (ILO) inclusion of Burma as possible reserve members in a forthcoming meeting. In a letter to Bjorn Klerek Nielson, chief of the Maritime Industries Branch

of the ILO, ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis has expressed "strong reservations" about the inclusion of this state in the forthcoming ILO Tripartite Meeting on Maritime Labour Standards:

"Burma is rightly an international pariah state. The military leadership refused to recognise a democratically elected government and has instead detain for some three years date the leader of the duly elected opposition. Furthermore, its human rights record is deplorable. It is our view that the inclusion of Burma gives spurious legality to a brutal and illegal regime.

"We hope that you will note our formal objections to the

inclusion of this regime and ensure that it is replaced by alternatives," wrote Lewis.

(Source: FTUB & SUB)

SLORC VICTIMISES BURMESE SEAFARERS IN COLLABORATION WITH UNSCRUPULOUS SHIP OWNERS

Victims	Posts
Phone Myint Swe	Third engineer
Maung Aung	Bosun
Zaw Myint	Able seaman
Kyaw Thuang*	Oiler
Myint Thein*	Radio Officer

Above-mentioned seafarers from the M.V. TRANS DIGNITY contacted the International Transport Workers Federation for mistreatment by the ship owners. With the help and support of the ITF, the owners had to compensate the due amount. In retaliation, the company informed to SECD (the seafarers wing of the Slorc). The SECD ordered the seafarers to return the compensations or risk facing criminal action.

Of the five, Myint Thein* and Kyaw Thuang* went back to Burma. On their arrival, they were sued by the SECD. As they would not surrender their compensations, the SECD refused to endorse their income documentation, which made them unable to acquire the automobile, TV, Video and refrigerator which were brought with their income. They were threatened with jail but after giving bribes, were able to live on bail.

Worse, when they asked the SECD to endorse their papers for re-application of passports and certificates of competency needed to board ships again, they were again told that nothing would be done until they surrendered the compensations. This indirectly lead to the stopping of them earning their living and supporting their families.

The other three who did not go back to Burma found that the Foreign Ministry had sent out circular to all Slorc embassies not to renew or endorse their passports and to send them back to Burma immediately. As a result, all of their passports have expired and they have become stateless, unable to board ships to earn their living.

Myint Thein and Kyaw Thuang crossed the border on 20 March 1993 to join the Seafarers Union of Burma which was formed to fight for democracy, justice and equality.

Above violations were done blatantly regardless of the fact that Burma had ratified ILO Convention 87 (Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise) since 4 March 1955.

This is one of hundreds of cases that we can present regarding abuses and violations done by Slorc to its own people in collaboration with unscrupulous foreign companies in spite of all the sham nationalism they are showing.

The Federation of Trade

Seafarers are among the Burmese workers who are taking a lead in fight against injustice and tyranny in Burma by organising against the military dictatorship. The underground "Federation of Trade Unions" was formed at the end of 1991. There are 18 constituent

Unions, Burma, condemns Slorc for all its inhuman, cruel acts and calls upon all the free trade unions of the world to join the International Transport Workers Federation in boycotting Slorc until democracy is achieved in Burma.

(Source: FTUB & SUB)

the democratically established labour unions and installed labour organisations run by their lackeys," say the SUB.

Many Burmese are forced by poverty to take jobs at sea — the SUB reckons that 30,000 are registered with the state run "Seamen

ITF BACKS NEW BURMESE SEAFARERS' UNION

unions, including Seafarers, Deep Sea Fishing, Stevedores and Railway workers.

The Federation and unions have an underground inside Burma — which must, for obvious reasons, remain secret — and are working closely with the forces of the Democratic Alliance of Burma and the ethnic minority groups. The ITF have had lengthy discussions with the Federation, and are supporting the underground unions in their struggle. The Federation of Seafarers' Union (SUB) is in regular contact with the ITF. In letters to ITF General Secretary Harold Lewis, the union's Central Executive Committee have given a bleak profile of the status of Burmese seafarers: "When the military regime took power in Burma, they banned all

Employment Control Division, SECD". The Slorc — through the SECD — has total control over the placement of all Burmese seafarers. The SECD exists "with only the self-centred aim of raping the foreign exchange earned by the seafarers and does not abide by nor emphasise ITF regulations. The Burmese seafarers have to work with whatever pay and conditions the flag of convenience ships offer," says the union.

Before boarding a ship, Burmese seafarers are forced to sign a contract saying that they will not contact the ITF. Even if the Burmese crew receive an ITF settlement because of the intervention of other crew, they are required to pay the cash back to the SECD. If they refuse, their registration is revoked and they may face imprison-

ment.

In at least one case of ITF intervention, the Burmese crew of a flag of convenience ship were told that their families would be hurt if the action was not called off. The savagery and brutality of the Slorc is well known to Burmese seafarers.

The local "lackeys" who call themselves a seafarers' union are nothing but Slorc puppet, say the SUB:

"To defend our rights, we have formed the Seafarers' Union of Burma. As the first step we are writing to the ITF so that through you all brother seafarers and their respective unions will know of our plight."

The Union believes that the only way to establish equality, human rights and democracy is to overthrow the so-called "State Law and Order Restoration Council" (Slorc) and they have joined forces with the democratic opposition to further this aim.

The Federation describes the present

situation in Burma as "very bad". The Slorc is cracking down on all internal opposition and has launched "intensive genocidal campaigns" against the ethnic minorities. The Federation is building the underground trade union movement with the aim of launching a non-cooperation campaign against the dictatorship that can aid in the toppling of the regime.

Transport workers' unions in the ITF will give whatever practical assistance they can to their Burmese counterparts. Meanwhile, the ITF continues to give what support it can to Burmese seafarers who have been imprisoned and harassed after joining ITF actions in order to claim their rightful wages (the ITF always warns Burmese seafarers wishing to claim their money of the possible consequences).

The military regime's refusal to grant passports or travel documents to crew who have already served prison sentences for taking part in ITF actions means they are prisoners in their own countries. Even those

seafarers who have not returned to Burma find it difficult obtaining work once their travel documents have expired.

The ITF has also joined the "Free Suu Kyi, Free Burma" campaign which seeks to obtain the unconditional release of Nobel Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Burma. The ITF joins the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Union of Food and Allied Workers' Association (IUF) and a host of religious organisations who have united behind this international campaign.

Aung San Suu Kyi's struggle has helped focus the world's attention on the plight of Burmese people. The ITF's experience of the Burmese military regime's terrible treatment of its own seafarers reinforces the need for a concerted international effort to isolate the Burmese military regime and campaign for justice and democracy in Burma.

(Source: FTUB)

THAI WORKERS ARRESTED

On February 21, Slorc detained nine Thai workers from a logging camp that operated in Burma to bargain for the release of 2 armed Slorc soldiers arrested on February 20 in Tha Song Young of Tak province on charges of illegal entry and possession of war weapons. Lt-Col Tun Tun Lay led Slorc troops from Infantry Battalion 357 which based near the Moei River demanded Thailand to free their comrades first. On February 22, Slorc released 4 of the captives after being promised by the Thai authorities to release the arrested soldiers. The rest five were released on March 2 after being fined 7,500 Kyats for illegal entry.

SLORC URGED TO TRANSFER POWER

Jan-28 — Japan urged the military regime in Burma to transfer power to civilian rule as soon as possible and to try to respect citizens' human rights. The request was conveyed to Slorc's ambassador to Japan by a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official. The ambassador promised to convey the request to the Rangoon regime.

Their meeting was held before the reopening on Monday of a national convention aimed at discussing plan to draft a new constitution.

(Source: NHK, Japan)

THAI VILLAGE BURNT DOWN

About 15 Slorc soldiers from Palu Camp, opposite of Ban Mae Kon Men, about 20 km south of Mae Sot, on February 26 crossed into Koh Manow area and burned down 3 huts. While the huts were on fire, the Slorc troops on the other side of the border pounded the area with mortar rounds and M 79 grenade launchers.

Awarding ceremony of The AIF Rose 1993 ceremony to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was held on February 28 in Denmark. To that ceremony, PM Dr Sein Win (NCGUB) and Ko Maung Maung, Secretary of FTUB attended. Opening speech was addressed by the Danish Burma Committee, Mr Anton Johannsen, President of the NNF — the National Union of Food and Allied Workers. Social Democratic Party's position on Burma was delivered by MP Ms Lotte Henriksen. Then AIF Rose 1993 and 25,000 DKK to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was presented by Mr Steen Christensen, the Social Democratic Party. Acceptance speech was addressed by Madame Ma Than E on behalf of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

PM Dr Sein Win also addressed a speech to the gathering. PM Dr Sein Win expressed, "on behalf of the NCGUB and the democratic forces in Burma I would like to take this opportunity to praise the A.I. Forum for its great foresight and wisdom, partly because by bestowing the AIF Rose Award to our national leader.

"The people were not only impoverished materially, but they had also generally been deprived of all hope and morale by the totalitarian system," he added.

He concluded, "What we can be certain is that they will be eventually defeated and crushed under the onslaught of international pressure led by the civilised world, and the defiance of

the people and armed resistance led by the democratic forces.

VICTOR JARA INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

The Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law honoured Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with the Victor Jara International Human Rights Award at its sixth Annual Human Rights Dinner held on 11 March 1993 at the Blitmore Hotel, Los Angeles. Betty

Williams, 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates for her work to end violence in North Ireland presented the awarded to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's son, Alexander Aris.

At that Diner, Ms Williams spoke of her experiences in Thailand and provided an update of the situation in Burma. Moreover, Ms Williams issued the press statement prepared by the Nobel Laureate delegation working to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Her remark

focused on what the Clinton Administration can do to pressure the military junta in Burma to transfer power to the democratically elected representatives.

Other honorees to the ceremony were Father Luis Olivares, longtime Champion of LA's immigrant poor; Reverend Chip Murray, Pastor of the First A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles, and Robert E. Juceam, New York Civil Rights attorney.

MORE AWARDS FOR PRESTIGIOUS LEADER



Awarding of AIF Rose Prize

CHAIRMAN DR NAING AUNG

PARTICIPATES ASA GENERAL CONFERENCE

DISCUSSION WITH BURMESE STUDENTS

ABSDF Chairman Dr Naing Aung participated the 12th General Conference of Asian Students Association (ASA) held from 10 to 16 December 1992 in New Dehli, India. Sixty delegates representing 28 organisations from 18 countries at the conference discussed various issues. The Conference reiterated its commitments to fight against imperialism, neo-colonialism and religious fundamentalism and to wage a united struggle for national liberation, right to self-determination, democracy, peace and progress.

Chairman Dr Naing Aung presented the situation of Burma under Siorc rule and the struggle of the students on the border and in Thailand. ABSDF is promoted as a permanent member of ASA. The Conference strongly condemned the Siorc and demanded it to: respect the outcome of the 1990 election and transfer power to the democratically elected representatives of the people, release all political prisoners including 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung Sun Suu Kyi and student leader Min Ko Naing who is now serving a term of 20 years imprisonment, respect the right of freedom of association of student unions and the academic

freedom on university campuses, ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Burmese people, cease the military operations against the students and ethnic camps along the Thai-Burma border and China-Burma border.

ASA also condemned so-called constructive engagement policy of ASEAN towards Burma which is enforcing the existence of military regime, and requested the

government of Thailand not to force the Burmese students refugees to enter so-called safe camp but to recognize them as political refugees. ASA concluded its condemnation on the regime of the People's Republic of China for giving military assistance including the help to set up naval base in Andaman Gulf.

The Conference ended with renewed dedication and resolution to fight against imperialism and broaden the platform for

pro-people's struggles.

After the Conference, Chairman Dr Naing Aung met with Burmese students in India and explained ABSDF's activities in exchanging view with them. Chairman found way for closer contact between ABSDF and India-based students, and explained ABSDF's firm position on Siorc's so-called National Convention. Moreover, discussions with MPs who are sheltering in India were also made.



DR MYINT CHO ATTENDS EUROPEAN-BURMESE CONFERENCE

Representing the Burma Medical Association (BMA), ABSDF Central Executive Committee member (Health & Education) and BMA Secretary Dr Myint Cho attended the European-Burmese Conference held in Hamburg, Germany, on 29 October 1992. About 50 Patriotic Burmese and Europeans joined the conference in which issues on Burma were discussed. Agendas on to extend effective political pressure on the SLORC, to provide the humanitarian assistance to Burmese refugees who fled the border areas in case of civil war, to fight against the destruction of environment in Burma and to encourage forest reservation, and to set up plans to condemn the SLORC of its human rights violation were discussed.

Dr Myint Cho added the obstacles of health care activities caused by the shortage of medicines and insufficient financial assistance, and difficulties of hospitalization of chronic and emergency cases in Thailand. Participants to the conference supported what Dr Myint Cho discussed. To get appropriate assistance on health care, Dr Myint Cho also discussed with MISSIO, MISSEIO and NEDICO INTERNATIONAL.

Moreover, he also met with CRDB (Germany) Chairman U Nwe Aung and other overseas Burmese in Cologne, and urged them to fight against the military regime by all ways and means that they can afford.

On November 8, Dr Myint Cho joined a conference organised by "Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims" (RCT) held in Copenhagen, Denmark, as representative of the ABSDF. To which (23) representatives from (12) countries attended and issues on torture were discussed. Dr Myint Cho explained torture of the military regime with photos and slides' show. Moreover, a paper on "Torture and Repression in Burma" that he presented was distributed to the gathering by RCT. When discussions on opening more rehabilitation centres was continued, Dr Myint Cho paved the way to open one for Torture Victims in Burma in collaboration with the NCGUB.

At the invitation of the ABSRF and BAG, Dr Myint Cho on November 14 left for England, there he met with the Burmese community and explained present situation. He also attended Burmese Culture Show in Liverpool organised by the Amnesty International. At that show, he

Dr Myint Cho discussing in European-Burmese Conference



explained about the situation in Burma, ABSDF's activities and difficulties to the gathering, composed of (100) Burmese and foreigners. Moreover, he also met with Burma Affair Monitor, Liverpool Burma Support Group, Burmese Doctors Association-United Kingdom, Burma Action Group, Christian Aid, Child to Child, Prospect Burma and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Office and interviewed by BBC.

In a gesture to counter the Slorc-sponsored National Convention in Rangoon, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, the Democratic Alliance of Burma, the National Democratic Front, the National League for Democracy and other democratic forces in Burma held a joint meeting from January 4 to 7. This meeting denounced the convention saying it was just a ploy to deceive the world.

NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win said, "the Slorc still will not release Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi." Karen National Union Chairman Gen Bo Mya presided over the meeting and announced the civil war in Burma and human rights abuses by Rangoon will not be terminated while no peaceful coexistence will be achieved as long as Slorc refuses to transfer power to a civilian government despite the general election in 1990. He also said a national convention will be acceptable by all parties only on grounds that it is in line with the Geneva Convention in 1949 under which Burma should be ruled in the form of a federal union. KIO chairman Breng Seng said the UN should play a role in a bid to end the civil war in Burma by creating an agency like UNTAC in Cambodia.



DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION GROUPS DENOUNCE
SLORC CONVENTION

Conference to denounce the sham National Convention which would be held in Rangoon on January 9 by the Slorc, was held by the democratic opposition groups on January 8 at the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU) Manerplaw. NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win, KNU Chairman Gen Saw Bo Mya, KIO Chairman Breng Seng and NMSP Chairman Nai Shwe Kyin presided over the conference to which about 2,000 local people and representatives of different organisations joined by chanting anti-convention slogans. During the conference, 7-point demands which reflected the will of people from all walks of life were presented by the leaders of the democratic opposition groups.

Chairman Dr Naing Aung
addressing the Conference



On January 9, about 100 Burmese protesters rallied and marched in Ranong against the Slorc's national convention. That rally called for the release of 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and the Slorc to step down and transfer power to an elected civilian government.

About 300 Burmese students, children and Karen staged a rally on January 23 in Tak's Phop Phra district denouncing the Slorc's so-called national convention.

BDSF RALLIS IN INDIA

Students from Burma Student Democratic Front (BDSF) on January 4 rallied in Moreh denouncing against military regime's so-called National Convention. A wallposter and photographs exhibition was also held during the ceremony. To that ceremony, people from Tamu townships in Burma, Burmese students in India, representatives of Manipur students (AMSU), distinguished guests from foreign countries participated.

The students highlighted, "Although Burma got her Independence from the British since 45 years ago, as people through out the country have been

suffered from various forms of crises, arrests, torture and execution, the meaning of independence could no longer exist. To obtain internationally-accepted human rights standards and democratic rights, we must overthrow the military regime by joining hands in hands with the revolutionary forces. We strongly denounce the National Convention that is to draft a constitution which will justify the military regime to cling on to power. Political atmosphere won't be changed unless Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners are released and the winning party NLD is turned over power. We will never surrender nor kneel down to the Slorc. We will continue our struggle."

photographs and posters" from January 6-9 at the Press Club of India, New Delhi. The paintings, posters and photographs reflected the human rights violations in Burma and activities of NCGUB and revolutionary forces. The exhibition was inaugurated by the eminent and elderly statesman Mr P. N. Hasker. He highlighted that the human spirit which unceasingly strives for the freedom and democracy could not be suppressed by any military power, how powerful it may be.

INDIA-BASED BURMESE ORGANISATIONS JOINTLY RALLY "SAVE BURMA FROM CIVIL WAR" EXPOSED

Wall poster photographs exhibition, namely, "Save Burma From Civil War" was jointly organised by all the Burmese organisations in India — All Burma Young Monks' Union (ABYMU), Burma Democratic Students' Front (BDSF), the All Burma Students' Union (ABSU) and Burma Students' League — from January 4-9. The Burmese students urged all democracy-loving people of India and the world not to be deceived by the deceitful sham National Convention. As part of the programme, all Burma students' organisations and All Burma Young Monks' Union (Arakan) jointly

organised "an exhibition of paintings,

Mr Kamal Mitra Chenoy, President-elect of J.N.U. Teachers' Association, expressed his full solidarity with the Burmese democratic and assured the Burmese people the the sooner or later the military junta will have to surrender to democracy. Prof B.D. Arora and Prof Dharendra Sharma, both of J.N.U., said that united struggle will definitely achieve democracy in Bur-ma. Then Tun Tun expressed the unflinching determination of Burmese students to fight for the democracy and human rights, however difficult and painful this fight may be. After that Myat Thu emphasised the fact that under the Slorc reign, opium/heroin production and HIV-infected numbers in Burma has increased. Rev U Thi Ha, President of ABYMU (Arakan) then addressed the gathering and promised all appropriate support for the struggle.

On January 8, more than one hundred Burmese students, carrying placards, paintings and posters, and chanting anti-Slorc slogans, again staged a demonstration in front of Slorc embassy in India to protest against the sham convention. The students believe that the National Convention is only part of the oppressive and deceitful holding of power by Slorc. They strongly believe that for a genuine national convention such conditions — immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, cessation of all military operations by the Slorc and transfer of state power to the elected representatives of the 1990 general elections — must be fulfilled. After the protested week, the Burmese students held a press conference and highlighted their stance on convention and brutal reign of the Slorc.

(Source: India-based Burma Students' organisations)



With the aim for more People Power in the 21st century, People Plan for 21 Century (PP21) was held in Chulalongkorn University. Youth and Student Forum was one of the Forum in PP21 and was held from 1-5 December in Hua Hin, Thailand. To that Forum, over (50) students from 12 countries participated. ABSDF Alternate Central Committee member Win Naing and Member of Foreign Affairs of the Front Minn Aung Myint represented the Front and joined the Forum. In that Forum, the movements of the students at international level and regional level, especially movements of the Burmese students, Thai

against the democratic opposition groups were also presented. ABSDF representatives also urged the international community to impose trade sanctions and arms

and other ethnic groups inside the country and to cancel the National Convention that is to be

Participants to that



Win Naing addressing the gathering

ABSDF PARTICIPATES PP21 YOUTH AND STUDENT FORUM

forum
were
students
from:
Australia
(Network
of Overseas
Students
Collective in Australia),
Bangladesh, Burma
(ABSDF, ON
SOB), Hong Kong,
India, Indonesia
(Jakarta Progressive
Student Alliance)
Japan, Malaysia, New
Zealand, Philippines,
Singapore, Sri Lanka,
Thailand and the Asian
Students Association
(ASA).

PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION ON BURMA FACED POLICE HARASSMENT Bangkok Dec 6, 1992

students, East Timor students and environmental issues were discussed.

Representatives of the ABSDF explained the role of the Burmese students in the political movement, ABSDF's National Politics, aims & objectives, international movement and campaign, its role in lobbying at the UN and joining hand in hand with the ethnic minorities in against the Slorc. Moreover, issues on the education under the boot-heels of the Slorc military regime, human rights violations and Slorc's conduct of forced labour during the offensives

embargo against the Slorc and to oppose the so-called National Convention that was intended to be held on 9 January 1993 by the military regime.

On December 6, that Forum joined to the Main Forum at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, and Participants to the Youth and Student Forum sent an open letter to the Slorc. In this letter, they demands: to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo, Min Ko Naing and all the political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, to repeal all laws that contravene the International Bill of Rights, to lift all oppressive measures against the students

he'd on the 9 January until the power has been transferred to the elected representatives.

Moreover, the participants also demanded the international community to withdraw all the economic investments in Burma and to apply appropriate pressure on the countries like China, Pakistan, Poland and Singapore to stop their involvement in arms sales to the Slorc. On that day, the participants, in expressing their will against the so-called National Convention, rallied in front of Slorc embassy in Bangkok and staged a demonstration.

About 30 students from 11 countries, all attendants of the PP21 — People' Plan for 21 Century — International Conference in Bangkok, were harassed by the police officers and nearly taken to arrest during a demonstration outside the Slorc Embassy at 10 a.m., on 6 December 1992.

The demonstration was a solidarity action by the international students demanding for improvements of human rights situation in Burma and also to demand the Thai government to refrain from sending the Burmese students in detention. The latter policy will mean that Burmese students will be

under further dangers of being repatriated to Burma, and faced dangers of prosecutions.

The demonstrators read out their statement in front of the embassy and students from several countries made short speech. While the students were preparing to proceed peacefully to the main gate of the embassy from the side gate, they were stopped by the police officers who asked each of them to show their passports.

Three Thai students were taken to the police car and one student from Hong Kong was also forced away from another 4 police officers, without given any reasons. The student refused to show their passports since this is clearly a harassment against a peaceful demonstration.

"We think that the Thai government should be gentler to peaceful demonstrators as democracy should have been restored to Thailand after elections in September, 1992. What we see here is instead a total negligence of the rights to protest and a willingness to collaborate with the military regime in Burma to crack down activities here in Thailand,"

Chow Wing Hang, one of the demonstrators from Hong Kong said.



"What also worries us is the situation of more than 400 Burmese students here. If the Thai police can act so aggressively to foreign students, what will they do on the Burmese exile students here whose status as political refugees are not recognised here?"

The students have decided to send information about the harassment to their home countries. It is hoped that a meeting can be arranged with the Thai Foreign Minister or his representative on the accident. It is believed that the incident clearly contravened the democratic image that Thailand is promoting abroad.

PP21 Participants rallies before Slorc embassy

— Australia, Bangladesh, Burma, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The Asia Pacific NGO Conference on Human Rights held from 24 — 28 March in Bangkok was attended by Min Aung Myint, Member of the Foreign Affairs Department, and Mi Sue Pwint, Member of the Information Department, on behalf of the ABSDF. To that Conference some 240 representatives from 110 NGOs in 26 countries across the Asia-Pacific Region participated. During the Conference, the representatives reviewed the current human rights situation in the region and formulated strategies for the future promotion and protection of human rights. Issues concerned with human rights and democratic development from the region — representing women, children, indigenous peoples, workers, community development

ABSDF PARTICIPATES REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

and other concerns were discussed. The BANGKOK NGO DECLARATION set out the human rights

challenges facing the region and a series of recommendations designed to meet them. Among the principal



challenges identified by the NGOs were the need to stress the universality of human rights, the indivisibility of political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. The gathering was motivated by the need to offer, in a spirit of international solidarity, ideas and suggestions in the lead-up to the Asian inter-governmental conference on human rights (Bangkok, 29 March — 2 April 1993), the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, June 1993), and beyond.

NCGUB DENOUNCES SHAM NATIONAL CONVENTION

The so-called National Convention organised by the military generals was suddenly halted and adjourned to the 1st of February on January 10, the second day of the meeting. Within 2 days on which the convention was held no discussion was existed, instead all the delegates were forced to listen the speech given by Maj-Gen Myo Nyunt. The NCGUB and other democratic forces denounced that convention and branded as a sham staged by the military, said in a press release on January 9. NCGUB said: "How did the Slorc manage to know that the delegates need to study?" and "Did not the Slorc know that at this stage a 20-day discussion would be a better way to improve the knowledge of the delegates in constitutional matters rather than 20 days of book study?"

Although that convention was much publicised by the Slorc to mislead world opinion, it was boycotted by the EC countries which saw it as a fraudulent attempt by the Slorc to legitimise the military grip on power. US and Australia sent their low-level officials to find what the junta meant exactly by its insistence that any new constitution must enshrine a leading role for the military in Burma's political life.

The statement also said some students succeeded in distributing pamphlets denouncing the convention in the Rangoon Central Station and Theingyi Bazaar. A number

of persons were arrested for sticking up posters in Rangoon and Mandalay.

Furthermore, it also said, "To eavesdrop the conversations of the delegates, many hidden microphones were planted in the assembly hall and anterooms where the delegates went to rest at break times." To retain the freedom to remove or detain any delegates which it thought were not subservient enough, Slorc did not announce the names of the delegates to its sham convention.

The NCGUB denounced the power-mad Slorc of doing the most irrational things as indicated by its over-reactions to opposition or criticism such as the incarceration of Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi without trial over three years, genocidal war against ethnic nationalities, snubbing the UN Special Rapporteur by not allowing to see important political prisoners, the increase of military strength far beyond the defence need of the country and the capacity of the economy to support it, and the holding of a sham national convention with the expectation that the world would legitimise it and resume massive financial and economic assistance with the military has misused for enriching itself and waging the genocidal war since it seized state power in 1962.

(Source: NCGUB)

CONVENTION AT GUN POINT NOT BRINGS ANY POSITIVE RESULTS ABSDF CALLS TO CONTINUE STRUGGLE

With extensive publicity, the Slorc's National Convention was held on Kyiak-Ka-San ground on 9 January 1993, to which 702 delegates were invited. The selection of representatives to that convention was made by National Convention Convening Committee and it did not reflect the will of the people. The exact list of delegates were not made public. This made people to suspect that Slorc had a plan to remove delegates not towing the line and replace them with its handpicked-puppets during the course of the convention. On the second day, Gen Myo Nyunt surprisingly announced the adjournment of the convention. That is why Slorc was afraid of losing control of the convention in front of diplomats attending as observers.

In a statement issued on January 18, the ABSDF Central Committee said, "If the speeches of Gen Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the Convening Committee, and U Aung Toe, Chief of Justice and Chairman of the National Convention Working Committee, are analysed, it is clear that Slorc is explicitly interfering in the constitution making process and trying to legitimise the role of military in political life of Burma by convening the national convention at gun point. Conclusion made by the latter one in respect of ethnic population in each state and division indicates that Slorc is driving towards a form of Unitary State instead of genuine Federal Union which guarantee the autonomy and self-determination of all ethnic nationalities."

The Central Committee also pointed out that "adjournment of the national convention is just only a trick to get time for applying more intimidation and pressure on the political opposition until Siorc think that there is no more threat to their plot."

ABSDF strongly believes that national convention held by the SLORC will not bring any positive result for democratisation in Burma other than the prolonging the rule of military dictatorship. We fully support the activities of our colleague students who are opposing the undemocratic national convention of the SLORC.

The ABSDF mentioned the present time as "critical period of Burma" and urged the students and people from all walks of life to continue their struggle against the national convention of the SLORC.

ABSDF also reminded all ranks of armed forces who joined other democratic people during 1990 May general election that "it is golden opportunity and last chance for them to join democratic forces again in liberating our country from military dictatorship."

Moreover, ABSDF also urged the elected representatives of the people to keep the will of their voters in their mind and oppose against the sham national convention. The Statement concluded by urging the international community to condemn and not to recognise the undemocratic national convention of the Siorc, to express their grave concern for activists who were arrested by the Siorc for free expression of their position on national convention and to impose political and economic pressure on the military regime.

ANTI-CONVENTION RALLIES IN THAILAND STUDENTS ARRESTED AT GUN POINT

In Bangkok, 15 students from All Burma Basic Education Students' Union (ABBESU) rallied outside the Siorc embassy on January 8 to denounce the national convention to be held in Rangoon. The students staged a hunger strike on the pavement opposite the embassy, which was cordoned off. The students demanded the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and appealed to the international community to isolate the junta. The students said they would continue with the hunger strike until their demands were met. They called the convention a sham and urged international condemnation. The participants in the convention are nothing more than "handpicked puppets" of the military regime, said their statement issued on January 8.

On the third day of hunger strike, January 10, police broke up the hunger strike of these students. They loaded into a pickup truck at 5:15 pm and transported to the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in Suan Phlu.

On January 13, 24 students from Bangkok-based ONSOB students staged a demonstration outside Siorc Embassy here. In the evening, they were arrest by Thai police and sent to IDC.

On January 13, they were sentenced to 70 days of imprisonment with fined 4,900 Baht. On February 3, they were transferred to Special Detention Centre. Shein Myint and Shwe Myint, out of four, who managed to escape in changing person were recaptured and tortured.



Those who arrested from ONSOB are:

Khun Shwe Thaike	NI	2927 (Central Committee Member)
Zaw Ne Ya	-	1306
Htin Paw	-	3127 (Central Committee Member)
Tin Pe	-	5756
Aung Soe	-	2534
Moo Tha	-	2472 (Adviser to ONSOB)
Hla Oo	-	3224 (Adviser to ONSOB)

Maung Zaw	-	5868
Myo Naing	-	987
Tun Tun	-	3128
Hoke Sein	-	4692
Kyi Win	-	5200
Hla Kyi	-	2614
Ye Chan	-	4515 (Central Committee Member)
Pai Htoo Chit	-	5130 (Central Committee Member)
Win Myint	-	2093
Win Pe (Peter)	-	5859
San Oo	-	4274
Thet Tun	-	1854
Zaw Min	-	1608
Myint Oo	-	1183
Thet Oo	-	4708 (Office In Charge)
Aung Myint Kyi	-	1864 (Central Committee Member)
Shein Myint	-	2517 (Central Committee Member)
Shwe La	-	1359 (Central Committee Member)

Arrested students from ABBESU are:

Soe Oo	NI	3309
Nyi Nyi Lwin	-	3218
Min Khin Kyaw	-	3386
Aung Lwin Oo	-	3134
Thant Zin	-	4166
Kyaw Htike	-	4727
Zaw Latt	-	1370 (CEC)
Tu Tu (Loke Shu)	-	4204
Naing Naing (Myint Naing)	-	5751
Soe Soe Oo	-	4486
Tun Naung Than	-	5609
Tin Zaw Tun (Toe Kyi)	-	2500 (CEC)
Aung Zaw	-	5850
Tun Tun Oo (Toe Toe)	-	1883
Maung Maung Oo	-	3350 (CC)

(Source: ABBESU & ONSOB)

KACHIN DELEGATION IN PARIS

Kachin Delegation, led by Gauri Zau Seng, Assistant General Secretary of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Chief of KIO delegation to the National Democratic Front, Bawn Wang La Raw, KIO organiser and Lahpai Seng Raw, International KIO Liaison officer, attended the international symposium on "Illicit Drug and Global Geopolitics." This conference, organised by Geopolitical Drug Watch with the support of the Commission of European Community, was held from 10 to 12 December at the "Grande Arche de La De'fense," Paris.

Gauri Zau Seng explained the anti-drug policy in Kachin State since 1964. Bertil Lintner spoke about the politics of drug trafficking in Burma. He explained how the opium production in the Golden Triangle increased significantly and concluded that the drug problem will not be solved as long as the civil war is going on.

On December 15, the Kachin Delegation met with Assistant Director of Asia-Oceania Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madame De Bourmont. She assured that France, being very committed to human rights, democracy and freedom, will go on trying its best to put pressure on the Slorc and to help Burmese people, within the group of European countries and in the Human Rights Commission of UN. France together with Sweden recently pushed a new resolution urging the Slorc to respect the outcome of the 1990 democratic elections and to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners unconditionally.

The Kachin Delegation was also interviewed by the daily newspaper Liberation upon its anti-drug policy, and met with representatives of Aide Médicale Internationale (International Medical Help) to whom they could expose the health problems (drug, malnutrition, malaria and blindness) that the people faced in Kachin State

(Reported by Association France-Birmanie)

Following is the original statement on peace talks issued by the Department of News and Information of the Kachin Independence Organization released on 25 February 1993 in the aftermath of various rumours that the KIO intends to meet with the SLORC in Myitkyina. To make known the international community of its stand on such a way of peace in Burma, we expressed in this News Bulletin. (The Editor)

STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT OF PEACE TALKS IN BURMA

Since the foundation in 1961, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) has resolutely and unflinchingly struggled for peace, democracy and equality for the Kachin people as well as all the other nationalities in Burma. Equality means full and equal rights in the political, social, economic, linguistic and cultural fields and the KIO has always recognised that these rights are equally important to all the different ethnic nationalities of Burma. Burma will always remain in internal conflict until democracy is restored and so long as one nationality or party seeks to impose its will on others by force. The KIO has therefore always allied itself and worked closely with other ethnic nationalities, parties and organisations which support the same goals.

However, though the Kachin people have always maintained their right to armed struggle and to defend themselves in their long struggle for democracy, liberty and equality, the Kachin Independence Organization has always recognised that the Only solutions to Burma's many deep problems will be political. The first requisite will be a real peace where all parties can get together round the table to discuss and settle their differences in a spirit of real understanding and reconciliation. To this end, despite the many terrible sufferings of the Kachin and other ethnic nationalities of Burma, the KIO has several times in the past 32 years become engaged in a process of talks and dialogue in the sincere hope that such a process, once instituted, will eventually lead to the full peace, equality and justice that the Kachins, their allies and all the other nationalities of Burma so fervently desire.

Tragically, to date all such peace efforts have failed. Meanwhile, the deaths and sufferings of the Kachins, the Karens, the Karennis, the Mons, the Shans, the Was and all the other peoples of Burma only continue while the

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ANNUAL AWARD OF "LES NOUVEAUX DROITS DE L'HOMME"

On 10 December 1992, the ceremony of annual award of "Les Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme" was held at Hotel de Lassary Paris, resident of the President of the National Assembly (Parliament) of France. This award for 1992 was given to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by Mr Henri Emmanuelli, President of the National Assembly. In the absence of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Mrs Marie-Laure Aris, sister-in-law of Michael Aris, accepted the award on her behalf.

Also attended to the prize-awarding ceremony were Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of Association France-Birmanie, International Network for Democracy in Burma, German-Burmese Association, Kachin delegation who were in Paris for a symposium on drug, family of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"Les Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme" (New Human Rights) literary prize was created nine years ago for further human rights.

President of "Les Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme", Pierre Bercis, in his speech: he hoped adding this award to many others she received will help apply more pressure on the SLORC.

President of the Jury Mrs Janine Alexandre-Debray mentioned about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's life, principles and political thoughts as was published in her popular book "Freedom From Fear".

Mrs Marie-Laure Aris spoke on the family's anxiety about the health of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi: how Daw Aung San Suu Kyi refused to accept funds either from her captors, or from her husband, and as her funds are nearly depleted she will soon have no more means at all to sustain her life.

(Reported by Association France-Birmanie)

political crisis in Rangoon and central Burma remains deadlocked.

Now in early 1993, as the whole world is aware, Burma remains in deep crisis. Parties on all sides speak of the need for peace, reconciliation, justice and a new constitution. However, many formidable obstacles remain in the way of the lasting reconciliation and peace which is needed for a just settlement to Burma's many political problems. After so many years of war and conflict, a great shadow of fear and distrust has come over the country paralysing many people and parties from any action at all.

Nevertheless, if peace is ever to be achieved and Burma's nightmare and tragedy is ever to be ended, the Kachin Independence Organization recognizes that bridges have to be crossed and that new initiatives have to be tried by those who sincerely seek peace.

Thus despite the many sufferings of the Kachin people and their ethnic brothers, sisters and allies, the Kachin Independence Organization, while ever giving up on its right self-determination and the right to bear arms, will continue to explore each and every avenue which leads to the prospect of real peace, democracy and justice for all the nationalities of Burma. As all the KIO's friends and allies know, this is the same goal the party has always pursued since its foundation in 1961.

After the bitter experience of Burma in the past 45 years since independence, we recognised that the road to peace will be a rocky one. The whole world should know that many political and ethnic problems in Burma, both nationally and locally, have become exceedingly complex and, as a result, need handling with great delicacy.

Kachin Independence Organization, 25 February 1993.

CLOSING SESSION OF BASIC MEDICAL TRAINING HELD

The Closing session of the Basic Medical Training Course organised by the Burma Medical Association (BMA) was held at Battalion (21), Brigade (7) of KNU, on 18 December 1992 at 10:00 a.m. Attending the closing session were such leading figures as by Dr H.M. Singh, Chairman of BMA, Dr Cyntia Maung, Vice-chairman of BMA, Padoh Phu Elh, Chairman of Doopalaryar District, as well as the trainers and trainees. After the speeches by those leading figures was addressed, outstanding medics were awarded prizes; first prize going to Ma Min Min Aung (ABSDF), while second prize was awarded to Naw Htoo Htoo Wah (KNU) and the third prize went to Saw Du Du (KNU). Fifty students from ABSDF, KNU, WNO, PSLP, Arakanese, KNLP, NLD and DPNS attended the training which lasted for 4 months.

KNPP HANDS OVER POWS THEY CONFESS VARIOUS FORMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES



The PoWs captured on 1 September 1992 during an offensive attack against its former headquarter by the Karenni Army, armed-wing of the Karenni National Progress Party (KNPP) were handed over to one Thai NGO on December 27. The ceremony was attended by the KNPP officials, Dr Goban led Thai NGO, local Thai authorities, leaders from PPLO and Canadian correspondents. Nine PoWs, including Commanding Officer Phone Tint, out of 13 were handed over to the Thai NGOs after being asked their will. The ceremony was followed by an agreement, to which the officials from both sides co-signed. Four PoWs who do not wish to return are now sheltering freely in Karenni territory. Nine PoWs who wished to return are: ➡



Capt Phone Tint ,Company Commander	Serial No. 22666	Company (4)
Corporal Soe Naing	Serial No.658240	Platoon (2), Coy (3)
L-Corporal Wai Lin	Serial No.623548	Platoon (2), Coy (4)
Pvt Aung Kyi Soe	Serial No.654795	Platoon (2), Coy (4)
Pvt Myo Tint	Serial No.706612	Platoon (1), Coy (4)
Pvt Thet Khaing Oo	Serial No.775732	Platoon (3), Coy (3)
Pvt Kyaw Kyaw Win	Serial No.813300	Platoon (1), Coy (3)

Win Tun and Myint Thaug (a) Thuang Naing, and four who remain are.

Pvt Soe Thein	Serial No.704834	Platoon (1), Coy (3)
Pvt Thein Mya	Serial No.770438	Platoon (2), Coy (4)
Pvt Tin Shein	Serial No.770441	Platoon (2), Coy (4)
Pvt Min Min	Serial No.775783	Platoon (1), Coy (3)

Following extracts were revealed in an interview by PoWs who were from Infantry Battalion (102) which took position in Huay Pon Laung Camp.

ROOTS IN JOINING MILITARY SERVICE

They said among other services, only the military could earn a good income and get many privileges easily. They joined the service, not because of their wishes or belief in it. Phone Tint said being a graduate he joined the service because he wanted to support his family, and didn't want to waste the time by seeking other jobs. The rest said they joined because of economic crises and persuasion of their friends. Some were seeking other jobs before. But as other jobs were scarce, they decide to join the army.

RELATION WITH THE PEOPLE

Some officials and soldiers, especially who are from battalions under the command of Divisions, were very rude in relation with people living in the frontier areas. Generally, only soldiers, police and civil servants can be spared from forced labour. But in some places, civil servants, ex-military and policemen, and students were arrested and press-ganged into portorage. When the necessary numbers of the labourers were low, they demanded 300-400 Kyats to 1500 Kyats as a ransom for the release of one person. Usually, some commanders summoned maximum numbers with the intention to make money.

Labourers were forced to carry heavy loads and fed up only a small meal whether it was enough for them or not. Maximum age of the labourers were 60 and the minimum was 15-16. Generally, labourers were fed up with rice package, collected in the villages

where the military temporarily encamped. They stood witness that no labourer, who were allowed to return after being used, got any wage. Instead, labourers were kicked, punched, beaten on the way. Suspected villagers were tortured and shot to death.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

According to them, most of the officials and soldiers from No. (102) Infantry Battalion have been violating human rights severely. They committed raping to all the girls in the villages, whether they were married or not, and even wives of their comrades, as they were lack of discipline and their moral was deteriorating. Some sexual abuses committed by the Slorc officials are:

Capt Win Oo of Company (2) committed sexual abuse to Ma Hla Yee from Kayah Quarter of BawlaKae while he was in service as Company commander at BawlaKae outpost. When she got pregnant, he forced her to marry with his personal assistant Pvt Aye Ko. While he was in service for the security of Kanny logging camp, he punched the forestry official U Tin Hlaing, smashed his head and tied him up in the jungle for three days.

Capt Khin Aung, while he was in service as an Adjutant official, summoned Ma Win Than, wife of Coporal Than Nyunt from Company (3), to his dwelling and committed sexual abuse. While he was Commander of Company (3), he summoned a construction worker named Ma Thida for questioning, and when she arrived she was raped. He demanded 500 Kyats per logging truck that passed through Htoo Chaung bridge. Moreover, he also forced every driver who carried pigs from Loikaw to Phasaung to sell a 20-viss-weigh pig at the price of 300 Kyats, and those who carried the chickens were forced to give 4-5 of them without any money. He was also involved in illegal logging in Loikaw.

While troops led by Capt Ohn Lwin from Company (4) and Capt Zaw Htun from Company (5) temporarily encamped in Dawdamagyi village in Demoso township, headmen from (6) villages in Dawdamagyi parish — Dawdamagyi, Dawnyaykhu, Dawsawpya, Dawsawkalae, Dawtacha and Dawkawk — were summoned and harassed that 2 cows from each village must send unless they want their villages moving near by Demoso. When they sent 2 cows each, the money got by selling (12) cows were shared between two captains.

Lieut Maung Toe, while he was commander of company (3), committed sexual abuse to a married nurse who was on duty at Markharawshe village of Phruso township. While he was in Htoo Chaung logging camp, Bawlaek township, he forced U Karlu, Saw Jel Lay and Saw Lay Htoo to give 5,000 kyats for each logging camp. While the troops encamped in Dawkhule village, Phruso township, he ordered Pvt Soe Thein to shoot a 10-viss-weigh pig. When the owner asked for the dead pig in crying, Lieut Maung Toe fined her to give 500 Kyats as a compensation for the bullet. When she could not afford, the pig was not returned. While he was Commander of No. 5 Company, he robbed a Mae Se — Loikaw car that carried illegal goods at Kaemarshe village for Tactical 2 Commander Col Maung Kyi. He ordered a villager who was back to Demoso after selling honey to stop his bicycle. Then, he ordered Pvt Thaike Tun to gundown the villager alleged with not stopping the bicycle. That villager was shot at the head and dead.

2nd—Lieut Sai Aung Lay, while he was a military intelligent officer, accused 6 villagers from Nam Mae Khom parish of Demoso township, including the headman, of the rebels who had attacked the headquarters of the Light Infantry Battalion No. (427) in Ngwe Taung, Demoso. They were covered with plastic sheet at the faces and then punched. Moreover, they were lost of consciousness as they were rolled with 2 inches mortar at shin bones.

Source. ABSDF Field Reporters)

ABFSU CALLS FOR KEEPING THE TRADITION OF UNION

The All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU) on 6 December 1992 called to oppose the sham national convention convened by the Slorc and urged all the democratic forces for the unity in joining hands to struggle until democracy is attained.

In its statement, it accused Slorc's intention of affirming through coercion the leading role of the military in the nation for continuous domination and manipulation of the country. It also said that so long as the military clique is given the right to manipulate the

country, Burma will continue to be a pauper without any national prestige in the international arena.

It also demanded the Slorc, if it had the attitude for the establishment of a genuine democratic nation on a firm basis, to release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, without any conditions, to grant freedom of speech, assembly and complete freedom of the press. Negotiations with all revolutionary and political forces for peace-building in the country should be introduced and

calling for a genuine convention was also demanded.

The statement concluded: "ABFSU, in accordance with our tradition, will courageously carry out our struggle to achieve our aims and objectives." It also urged the students to bring about a mass struggle by making use of all available opportunities and through the unity with the people from all walks of life.

(Source: ABFSU Statement)

ABSDF EXTENDS WARMEST WELCOME TO NOBEL LAUREATES

MESSAGE OF FELICITATION TO NOBEL LAUREATES

ABSDF conveyed its warmest welcome to the Nobel Laureates Dr Oscar Arias, The Most Reverend Desmond Tu Tu, Ms Mairead Maguire, Sr Adolfo Perez Esquivel, His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Betty Williams, Ross Daniels and the Peace Mission's campaign for the release of 1991 Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. ABSDF Central Committee was also grateful to the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development for its sponsorship of the mission and its concern on situation

in Burma.

The ABSDF viewed the Peace Mission could "make tremendous impact on ABSDF and its continuing struggle to liberate itself from iron-fist rule of the military junta". The ABSDF appealed the Mission to keep an eye on today's Burma and urged not to miss the golden opportunity.

The statement concluded "Release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and liberation of Burma are intertwined and the Mission's effort to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is consequently a helping hand to liberate the entire people of Burma from the suppression of military

dictatorship, achieve democracy and human rights, restore internal peace and establish a genuine Federal Union of Burma."

MEETING WITH THE PEACE MISSION

On behalf of the Central Committee of the ABSDF, Min Aung; In charge of the Information Department and Minn Aung Myint; member of the Foreign Affairs Department met with the Peace Mission in Bangkok on February 17. During the meeting, the current situation of Burma and view of the Slorc on their sister Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were highlighted by the ABSDF

representatives. Moreover, papers on Human Rights Violations and statement of the ABSDF on Peace Mission's campaign trip were also handed over to the Laureates

On Feb 20 Mahn Htun, In charge of the Foreign Affairs Department and Win Naing, Alternate Central Committee Member attended a roundtable meeting, entitled, "Human Rights and Peace in the Regional and Global Perspectives," organised by Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Law and Political Science, Union for Civil Liberty, Mahidol University and The Nation.





The international campaign, the first ever by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, to kick off a campaign for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was done by the 8 Nobel Laureates in Thailand from February 13 to 20. The Mission was sponsored by the Canada-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD) and Laureates on the Mission are:

The Most Reverend Archbishop Desmond Tu Tu of South Africa
Former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez

His Holiness The Dalai Lama of Tibet
Mairead Maguire and Betty Williams of N. Ireland
Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina

Ross Daniels, representing the human rights group Amnesty International
Donna Kyle Anderton, representing the US



A MISSION OF PEACE

Quaker organisation American Friends' Service Committee

The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates originally planned to go to Rangoon. But Slorc barefacedly turned down the proposal to visit. "Our request to go to Burma was refused outright," said Peter-Andre Goblensky, a representative of ICHRDD. So, they decided to visit Thailand instead where its members visited Burmese refugee camps in Tak to get personal accounts from refugees of human rights violations in Burma. But with all the security around them, they had little privacy to collect information for their testimony to the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva. However, Thai authorities in Mae Sot refused to allow the Nobel laureates to visit the Cynthia Clinic, where Burmese refugees are given treatment.



RESPONSE FROM THE SLORC

Moreover, Maj-Gen Khin Nyunt on February 11 strongly criticised the Nobel Laureates' mission to Thailand.

The Slorc on February 23 repeatedly said Nobel laureates' campaign against the regime would not force it to change its policies. "The activity of the Nobel Laureates is an abnormal act with the intent of destroying Burma's stability and peace," Khin Nyunt said in a speech.

Khin Nyunt, referring to statements made by members of the Nobel mission and others in the international community, said such allegations were intended to create political and economic difficulties for his country. Khin Nyunt said that no matter what

foreign organisations did to create difficulties for Burma, it would firmly stand on its own principles and objectives.

Khin Nyunt also said the Nobel Peace Prize Winners were "using the land of a neighbouring country to attack Burma's internal affairs." "We have no plan to change our internal political and human rights policies" because of their actions, Khin Nyunt told a meeting with Slorc officials in Myintkyina, Kachin State.

On February 26, Slorc-run newspapers charged the Peace Mission as "secret organisation of powerful countries." It also said, "The laureates are nothing more than pawns" and their campaign on behalf of the jailed Aung San Suu Kyi deliberately timed to coincide with a constitutional convention



"IT IS TOO AFRAID OF CHINA TO SUPPORT THAILAND'S STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, IN BOTH BURMA AND CHINA. HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM HAVE NO BORDER. (THAI STUDENTS)

underway in Burma "to distract attention from its success."

UNDER TIGHT PRESSURE

The Nobel Peace Laureates' mission on February 18 pledged an all-out effort to bring the weight of world opinion against the repressive rule of the Rangoon military regime. The Nobel Peace Laureates were closely watched by Thai security and intelligence men, both plainclothed and uniformed, during their visit two Karen refugee camps — Maela camp in Tha Song Yang, Tak province and, and Huay Kaloke camp in Moe Sot. At Maela camp, they were welcomed by more than a thousand people, mostly children, holding small placards calling for the release of opposition leader Daw Aung Suu Kyi. Tu Tu addressed the gathering of students and villagers there. Then, Mairead Maquire vowed that she and Nobel Laureate colleagues would press for a United Nations' resolution calling for economic sanctions and a ban on arms sales to Burma. During their visit to the border, Dr Arias' plan to

meet members of the NCGUB was denied by local Thai authorities.

COWARDS OPPOSE THE MISSION

Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri opposed potential efforts by the Peace Mission to put pressure on the Slorc for its human rights violations while on Thai soil as it has good relation with the Slorc. The Peking regime spokesman Wu Jianmin told on February 11 news briefing in Peking that "we hope Thailand will reject the Dalai Lama's visit. "The Dalai Lama is not purely a religious figure. He has been engaging political acts of splitting the motherland for a long time," he added. That warning was followed as PM Chuan Leekpai pointed out that Thailand, as a Buddhist country, could not refuse entry to a high-ranking, widely-respected Buddhist monk.

ACM Gun Pimarnthip of Thailand said he was concerned that China would be convinced the Thai government gave tacit support to the campaign: "I'm worried. If the Chinese believe it's us who brought them here, we will have trouble."

Army Commander-in-Chief Gen Vimol Wongwanich on February 14 voiced strong opposition to the government's decision to allow Nobel laureates to use Thailand as a platform from which to press for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. He said Thailand risked jeopardising relations with China and Burma by saying, "It's like inviting the battle into our house. We agree with human-



itarianism, democracy and environment. But it's not necessary to let other countries do anything in Thailand."

Those who opposed the laureates' trip based their argument on two points — the visit would damage Thai-Chinese relations and it would affect Thailand's ability to handle the border situation with Burma.



On February morning, a group of student leaders submitted a letter to Vimol at army headquarters, along with the book on human rights.

"Soldiers always talk about the military's pride and dignity. But this time it has shown that it has no pride or dignity left," the letter said. "It is too afraid of China to support Thailand's stand on human rights abuses, in both Burma and China. Human Rights problem have no border. They are problems that the world must know." The letter asked the Thai military to stop expressing "obsolete ideas which condone dictatorship and human rights abuses in any part of the world."

The Thai military has been playing an important role in propping up the Slorc since 1988 because they are the one who helps render legitimacy to the Slorc.

Regarding the Burmese students, Pol Lt-Gen Pibul warned on February 13 not to try to take advantage of the peace visit by demonstrating in front of the Slorc embassy in Bangkok because "they would be immediately arrested."

As a free and democratic country, Thailand should never fear or be worried about being embarrassed with the visit of Nobel Laureates. Thailand must be bold, and must show some moral courage.

HUMAN RIGHTS HAS NO BOUNDRIES

This theme came out clearly from the visit and efforts of the mission.



Desmond Tu Tu, on his arrival at Don Muang airport declared, "The release of Aung San Suu Kyi is what all of us hope for." "From our visit, the international community will focus more on Burma and such pressure will eventually bring about the kind of results we wish," he added.

Regarding the aims of the Peace Mission, Desmond Tu Tu said, "We want her to know that the world cares, we care and we support her and that she should derive some strength and encouragement from that fact."

Commenting on the view that the Laureates' mission was an interference in the internal affairs of Burma, the Dalai Lama maintained that human rights had no frontiers. "I came here for peace. The main objective is for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi," said the Dalai Lama. "I believe there is no national boundaries, human rights is beyond national boundaries. In the long run, human rights will be beneficial to Burma."

This kind of concern is actually helping Burma," he said.

Former Costa Rican President Dr Oscar Arias Sanchez said: "Democracy begins with free, fair, and plural elections. It embodies division, checking, and balancing of powers. Democracy requires tolerance and dialogue, the promotion of individual human rights and freedoms. It needs peaceful participation by the people in all political, economic, and social processes."

"Ninety-five per cent of our trip here is for Aung San Suu Kyi, to let her know that we support her and will do anything we can for her release, while five per cent is to draw attention from the world to what the military is doing in Burma," said Betty Williams. "We have to work at all levels because peace is not only an absence of violence. It is much deeper than that," said Williams. "You have to look at the world as a human family ... The way for justice, the way for peace cannot be found from the barrel of the gun. It must be found within individuals." "We must try to stop the brutality in Burma completely. This is only our first visit, a beginning of something we will go on with," she said. Daniels declared, "Well I have a message for the SLORC: this is just the beginning."

Commenting on SLORC's fear on their visit, Betty Williams said SLORC's reaction showed that "they are terribly frightened by a small woman." It also showed that the junta's



Donna Kyle Anderson

"cowardice," she added. Mr Edward Broadbent,

President of ICHRDD said, "Human Rights issues go beyond issues of national sovereignty ... Governments of the world have an

the chances of the mission's success.

THOSE WHO SUPPORT THE MISSION

Those who support the Peace Mission's visit are



The Most Reverend Archbishop Desmond Tu Tu
Former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sanchez

obligation to say something when fundamental human rights are being violated." The SLORC is "one of the most repressive regimes in the world" said organiser Ed Broadbent, speaking of

democracy-loving people who feel honoured to welcome the Nobel Laureates, who as a group enshrine the rare qualities of dignity and integrity in their efforts to ease human

suffering in various part of the world.

The United States and Foreign Diplomats in Bangkok voiced strongly support for the Thai government's decision to allow the visit to Thailand by Nobel Peace Prize Laureates seeking the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"We welcome Thailand's support for this distinguished group, as the world community seeks to improve respect for human rights. The effort of these Laureates should have everyone's support," US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

A reception to honour the Nobel laureates was held on February 17 afternoon at the residence of Canadian Ambassador Arthur Perron, who also expressed admiration for the Chuan government's determination in handling the visit. Although the reception was attended by senior Foreign Ministry officials, representatives of NGOs and many Bangkok-based envoys, SLORC envoys stayed away from the reception.

Dr Oscar Arias said autocracies like Burma's have no place in the new world order. He said he believed the most important task of the Thai government was to support the worldwide quest for freedom, democracy and human rights. Commenting on whether the Nobel Mission would stir up trouble for Thailand, he replied that the struggle for human rights was "much more important than having good relations with foreign

countries."

Dr Arias, regarding concerns the Laureate's action might affect Thai-Chinese relations, said: "Perhaps our main task will be to persuade those who fear ... that they have to be more courageous." "We are concerned about the lives of courageous people who are simply in jail for defending ideals. It is a matter of priority. I don't see any more important priority now ... than to fight for freedom and democracy and respect for human rights of people all over the world."

"I am really moved by Premier Chuan in taking the positions he had to for reasons of principle, despite the pressures exerted by the military," Donna Anderton said.

Dr Arias also supported the PM's stand and his courage to stand up to the military.

"The military is the same everywhere. They are repressive, they are corrupt," he added.

The Students Federation of Thailand on February 16 lashed out at the military top brass for their opposition to the visit of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and other Nobel Laureates. The SFT said in its statement the opposition shown by high-level military personnel showed their lack of thorough understanding of human rights problem in this region and their being under the influence of China which is well known for its violations of human rights. The statement said the opposition also showed

the Thai government's lack of true sovereignty.

EMBARGO ON SLORC

In an unprecedented open letter, 13 Nobel Laureates jointly urged the Slorc to release opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi "without condition and without delay", and expressed "grave concern" over her continued detention with three of them — the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tu Tu and Dr Oscar Arias — on February 17 called for an arms embargo. They accused the Rangoon junta of violence and cruelty and called on it to honour the result of the 1990 general elections.

"Military forces, weapons create problems," he said. The idea of an arms embargo therefore is "practical and morally speaking ... very right and worthwhile considering." Dalai Lama expressed he had a "fruitful discussion" with the Supreme Patriarch, who received him as his guest at Wat Bovorn Nives.

"Sanctions are what the junta fear most. It is the most effective strategy. It has worked in South Africa," said Tu Tu, adding that the Slorc was using whatever arms it could acquire to suppress the people. "To say that sanctions don't work, that they affect people rather than those who rule them is twaddle of the first order," Tu Tu said.

Arias said arms sanction would help pressure Rangoon into releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. "What can be done is to put

an end to the sale of arms," he said.

At a press conference at the Foreign Correspondent's Club of Thailand on February 17, Dr Arias, speaking for the laureates, described Aung San Suu Kyi as a symbol of liberty throughout the world who remained courageously committed to the principles of freedom and democracy. He expressed confidence that her steadfast commitment to freedom and democracy would ultimately overcome those who hold power not "by the force of free elections, but by the force of arms."

Regarding democracy and demilitarisation, Dr Arias hit out, "... With the end of the Cold War, we should really be fighting for democracy in every part of the world and not just paying lip service to it. What we should call for is the demilitarisation of developing countries. Otherwise, because of huge military expenditures, we won't find the funds to invest in important areas like health and education."

"We invite the citizens of the world to join with us in demanding the end to oppression in Burma and the release of the woman who has become a symbol of the world," said Dr Arias.

"Burma's human rights violations are unacceptable by all standards ... Certain countries have to take a hard look at their relations with Burma," Ross Daniels of Amnesty International said.

"Getting rid of the people who don't want to change, get them to change,

obviously, and if they don't want to change, get rid of them," said Tu Tu.

EXPULSION FROM THE UN AND DISENGAGEMENT OF ASEAN

Seven Nobel Laureates on February 19 demanded Burma's expulsion from the UN and called on the Asean to end its so-called "constructive engagement" policy with the military regime for human rights abuses.

"We recommended that the UN move to suspend the membership of Burma," said the Nobel laureates.

"Asean has to realise that it must get Slorc out of this region, in the interests of protecting the Burmese people against the gross human rights abuses carried out against them by the Burmese military," Ross Daniels said.

Moreover, Daniels also added, "Asean government have to bite the bullet and accept the fact that these human rights abuses carried out on the Burmese people cannot be allowed to continue." "This is a matter of regional urgency, and none of us here buy for one minute that so-called constructive engagement by Asean with the Slorc will make the military rulers any less brutal," he said. "We asked the Asean governments to put their money where their mouths are and looks seriously at the question of Slorc."

The Nobel Laureates, moreover, on February 20 urged PM to take the lead in pushing for a change in Burma.

NOBEL LAUREATES CALL FOR SUU KYI'S RELEASE

(Following is an open letter from the Nobel Peace Laureates to the State Law and Order Restoration Council of Burma appealing for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Editor)

We, the undersigned Nobel Peace Laureates, write to express our grave concern over the continued detention in Burma of our sister laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the State Law and Order Restoration Council's denial of her fundamental rights of free speech and political association. Along with hundreds of other political prisoners, she remains illegally detained in Burma and must be set free.

The resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations demonstrate the strength of world opinion concerning Aung San Suu Kyi's plight. We join the international community in calling for her immediate and unconditional release and for the restoration of democracy in Burma.

In awarding the Peace Prize in 1991, the Nobel Committee commended Aung San Suu Kyi for her particular integrity and self-sacrifice, and her consistent and effective practice of Gandhian principles of non-violence in the face of severe threats to her life and to those of her followers. The Committee singled out her insistence on the primacy of human rights and equality of justice for all of Burma's ethnic minorities. It is indeed tragic that these values and practices have resulted in Aung San Suu Kyi's detention.

In 1988, the Slorc's predecessors in the military government acquiesced to the requests of the people of Burma to hold democratic elections and engaged in the democratic process. No sooner had our sister laureate Aung San Suu Kyi become leader of the National League for Democracy than she was jailed for her political activities, eight months prior to the elections.

Despite the imprisonment of their leader, the democratic party she led while in the detention won an overwhelming majority of seats in the national Parliament. Soon after these elections the Slorc also incarcerated many democratically elected politicians for taking part in the democratic process.

Despite an indomitable spirit and courage, she languishes under house arrest — silenced for her desire to serve her people and imprisoned for her ability to do so.

The isolation of Aung San Suu Kyi for three and a half years belies the Slorc's declared intention to allow a transition to civilian rule. During most of this period, she has been denied access even to her immediate family. Following Gandhian precepts, she has fasted in protest not only against her own detention, but also the imprisonment of her followers.

It is time the Slorc realised that the current repression sustained by violence, cruelty and torture only prolong the uncertainty of Burma's future as a nation.

With the support of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal, Canada, a number of our fellow Nobel Peace Laureates intended to travel to Rangoon, Burma. Their objective was to meet with the highest officials of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, and to secure the immediate and unconditional release of our imprisoned sister laureate and the hundreds of other prisoners of conscience who only crime against the State has been the non-violent expression of their beliefs.

The visas to enter Burma were denied by the Slorc regime and today, the Mission is travelling to the Thai-Burma border in order to receive personal accounts of the continuing human rights atrocities occurring in Burma.

As fellow recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, we are honoured to affirm our admiration and

support for Aung San Suu Kyi, and for the struggle for human rights in Burma which she personifies. She has written that, "those who wish to build a nation ... must first free their own minds from apathy and fear."

We call on the State Law and Order Restoration Council to honour its commitment to the elected National Assembly, to free Aung San Suu Kyi and all the Assembly members currently imprisoned, to allow the democratically elected civilian government to rule in its own sphere, and trustfully to permit the constitutional process to begin anew.

If the State Law and Order Restoration Council is truly committed to the future of Burma, they must free Aung San Suu Kyi without condition and without delay.

Institut de droit international/ Institute of International Law (Switzerland, 1904)
American Friends' Service Committee (United States, 1947)
Linus C. Pauling (United States, 1962)
Mairead Maguire and Betty Williams of (Ireland, 1976)
Amnesty International (England, 1977)
Adolfo Perez Esquivel (Argentina, 1980)
Desmond Tu Tu (South Africa, 1984)
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (United States, 1985)
Elie Wiesel (United States, 1986)
Oscar Arias (Costa Rica, 1987)
His Holiness the Dalai Lama (Tibet, 1989)
Mikhail Gorbachev (Russia, 1990)
Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala, 1992)



Statement of the representative of the National League for Democracy to the National Convention

This national convention was convened to deliberate upon the fundamental principles declared by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) under Order No. 13/92--principles that would guide the drafting of the state constitution and determine the fate of our nation.

The following are the six fundamental principles that were enunciated by the SLORC under paragraph(4), sub-paragraph(b) of that order:

1. Non-disintegration of the union
2. Non-disintegration of national unity
3. Strengthening and perpetuation of national sovereignty
4. Development of genuine democracy
5. Emergence of *lawkapala* social virtues such as justice, freedom and equality in our nation
6. The participation of the military in leadership role of the nation

In accordance with permission legally granted by the SLORC to allow convention delegates the freedom to systematically express their opinions and make suggestions at the national convention, I would like to take this opportunity to express my critical and analytical opinions particularly on the sixth fundamental principles that calls for the participation of the military in the leadership role of the nation.

In doing so, I shall try to use a ¹**Method of analysis** that is both objective and fair to both the sides. My ²**Mode of Analysis** will also be made in the most sincere, clean, goodwill, and courteous manner.

It is natural that depending on one's own circumstances different views will emerge in any given argument. I wish to recall a fable that teaches us about nature in this regard. At a certain time in history, a huge shield was hung at a place on the road to the cemetery. Once, two knights from different nations arrived at that place. The first knights exclaimed loudly: "What a solid bronze shield that is!" Hearing the remark, the second knight countered: "What a solid shield this is!" Angered by each other's remarks, both the knights got into an argument and were on the verge of a fight to death. It was then the watchman of the cemetery came out and said: "Hey, you two, why don't you change positions and take a view from each other's side." They found that there were in fact two shields--iron and bronze--stuck back to back together.

Depending on circumstances and stance, there can be different views over a single phenomenon. It is only when we go in depth in our studies and discussions that we can overcome our doubts and dissatisfactions. Before I continue I would like to ask for forgiveness if you do not find me tactful and courteous in my discussions.

For genuine democracy to emerge we must understand exactly what the term democracy means. What is democracy? Some might find this question strange, and most people would say: "Democracy means freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to publish, freedom of religious faith, freedom to march, and so forth." The fact is, none of these defined democracy in essence. They are merely fruits of democracy.

What then is democracy? Democracy means a government elected by the majority--the people. This being the case, can the idea of developing a genuine democracy be in

¹This phrase was rendered in English in the original statement

²This phrase was rendered in English in the original statement

harmony with that principle of permitting the military to take play a leadership role of the nation? If someone were to ask me if the two concepts are in harmony, I would say they are in total contradiction to each other.

Paragraph 4 of the SLORC's guide-lines on the drafting of the constitution deals with the objectives of creating condition for the emergence of a genuine multiparty system. Once again, this contradicts the sixth fundamental principle of allowing military participation in the leadership role of the nation. They are different paths leading in two different directions. In the same ways as two adult male lions cannot reside in a single cave, there cannot be a military government if a democratic government is to exist.

If a military government is to exist in conjunction with a democratic government, then there can be no genuine democracy. Democracy under such a condition can only be a sham democracy. This is because a government by the military is not based on elections which is the essence of democracy.

Defence Services are bound by military discipline and rules to ensure unity and are designed to work for a single entity under a single command. The general's command is obeyed without reservations by the lieutenant generals, the lieutenant general's by the major generals, the major general's by the brigadier generals, the brigadier general's by the colonels, the colonels by the lieutenant colonels, and the chain of command goes on so forth until it reaches the privates. There can be no reservations in accepting the command and never has there never been any precedence of disobedience. Military discipline is indeed very strict. Once an order is out to occupy a hill, it must be carried out immediately without any excuses about how life-threatening it is or how strong a resistance the other side is putting up from that hill. A well-known saying in our Defence Services is: Don't complain about the holes in the water bottle, just bring back the water. This means to demonstrate strict obedience when orders are given. In order words, there is no democracy in the military. If we talk about democracy in the ranks, it would mean the end of the military. This is a peculiarity of the military, something different from the civilians. Soldiers who have grown over years in an environment where taking order is the second nature and who clearly grasp the effectiveness of commands, may well understand the value of democratic freedoms but I believe they will find it difficult to resolve problems under that situation.

Humankind have progressed and evolved not because of a centralized, unitary command system but because it has based upon the freedom of thought, freedom to propose and criticize, and freedom to reform and construct. It is the principles of genuine democracy that encourage analysis, study and progress in every new phase of human history.

The intricate international political situation today has seen the fall of socialist and communist empires based on dictatorial systems. We must understand that in practice, ideologies based on dictatorial systems like socialism and communism do not serve the country and the people. We are witnessing an era where people have turned their backs on the dictatorial socialist and communist systems and are building democratic nations. In the same way as the dynamic 1988 democratic movement in Burma has brought about an end to the socialist left dictatorial system, there have also been similar upheavals in most East European countries--Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Romania, and others, including the grand daddy of communism, the USSR--in Asia. A new era of democratic nations are being built and a new era of democratic revolution has begun.

As in the saying, seek and ye shall find, we can claim that the new era of democratic revolution started in our country, Burma. This is true. It is here, in our country, that the very first challenge that ushered in an era of democratic revolution was made against a one-party dictatorial socialist system. I do understand that some people will not agree

to my assertion that the 1988 movement was a democratic revolution. I do understand the nature of the universal truth; that there will always be an opposite to a phenomenon--agreement and disagreement, acceptance and refusal, asking and giving, etc. I blame no one and am merely stating my personal views.

I do not deny the fact that the 1988 crisis saw beheading, destruction and looting, all of which shamed the nation and our race; we saw the irresponsibility of the Burma Socialist Program Party, the opportunistic adventures of the insurgents while the country was in turmoil, and the dark influences from abroad and in the country.

This being said, we cannot also deny the fact that the glorious movement of the Burmese people is now enshrined in the annals of the revolutionary history and in the opening pages of the book on the new era of world democratic revolution. Whether one agrees with this or not and whether one likes it or not, it is history and no one can change that.

The SLORC has acknowledge on record that the Burmese people have an ardent wish to build democracy. While on this topic, I must explain that there were two aspects to democracy--democratic economics and democratic politics. If we are to conclude that economic hardships started in our country only because there was no free economy, then we can only be half right. We have seen a revolution erupt because there was no democratic means of bringing down a government that the people dislike.

I do understand the underlying reasons for prescribing the guide-lines for the emergence of a genuine multiparty democratic system. The leadership role of the military has been included as a fundamental principle because there is a goodwill toward the nation. There is also a great deal of concern that the union might disintegrate, that national unity might be broken, and that our sovereignty might be lost. Some might raise the point that such a system with military leadership is already in place in Indonesia. We must however bear in mind the incident in our neighbouring country, Thailand. Remember what happened in that country when high-ranking military officials refused to enter the democratic elections and instead set up a feudal system and drafted their own constitution to confirm their right to rule? I have stressed this point only to remind ourselves of the lessons that should be learned and that it will be only be the SLORC which will be held responsible should a similar situation occurs in our country.

The emergence of lawkapala social virtues--justice, freedom and equality--in the nation has been marked the fifth guiding principle. Assuming this is to be true, how can there be justice, freedom and equality if high-ranking military officials are to take up leadership posts without entering elections? This is something we should reconsider. In a democracy, any citizens regardless of race, religion or class can enter the elections. No one can obstruct this right nor can anyone demand any special right. Justice, freedom and equality are democratic rights made available to every person. Hence any military officer or private can become an election candidate once he turns in his uniform. I believe that this is what they should do. The practice would contribute to the development of a genuine democratic system. Certainly, people will be according a warm welcome with open arms if those accomplished high-ranking military officials enter the political arena in a democratic

The SLORC has ruled that all public servants should stay clear of party politics. If public servants are to avoid party politics, all soldiers, from the officers down, should also stay clear of politics. This is because soldiers are public servants. At this point, I would like to recall the speech of SLORC Chairman General Than Shwe delivered on June 23 1992. It was with great respect that I heard him say that Defence Services personals are public servants, that they will remain loyal to the upcoming democratic government, and that soldiers will make an honest effort to faithfully discharge their defence, law and order, and regional tranquillity duties.

That the Defence Services should stay away from politics is a indisputable fact. What is the rule preventing this? I refer to the 1959 Defence Services Act. Act 190 and regulation No. 19 (11) prescribe that the Defence Services shall not get involved in or are banned from politics. I also recall the speech of ³Divisional Chairman Major General Myo Nyunt, presiding Chairman of this national convention, delivered on March 4, 1992. He referred to these same legal ruling when stressing that the Defence Services should refrain from politics.

On many an occasion, the SLORC has tried to differentiate party politics from national politics. It is not fair nor is it legal to say that when the people get involve in politics they are resorting to party politics and when the military does so, it is engaging in national politics. There is no ruling in the Defence Services Act that the military can get involve in national politics and not party politics. The very word "politics" encompasses all, and the Defence Services Act does not permit soldiers to engage in any sort of politics.

We do not forget the fact that the SLORC desires to uphold the law as reflected by its action in issuing the directive asking the people to respect the law.

Mr Chairman:

We must not for one moment forget that as far as showing respect for the law is concerned, the SLORC should be the role model. This being the case, I wish to say that we should reconsider whether the sixth guiding principle that requires the military to play a leadership role in the nation is in violation of the law. As Chairman Major General Myo Nyunt had said at the preliminary meeting for the national convention, ⁴*the law maker should not be the law breaker.*

Hence, the leadership role of the military in the nation as stated in the sixth sub paragraph, Paragraph 4.B, of the SLORC's guide-lines on the drafting of the state constitution, violates the basic principles and the existing laws and the leadership role is not the true concern of the military. I therefore move to drop that from amongst the guiding principles.

How best can the SLORC serve then? Let me explain it in general. The 1988 crisis was a confrontation between the people and Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) government. The BSPP government had ruled the country under a one-party socialist system, and for 26 years, the country was beset with political, economic, social and other set-back everywhere. No longer being able to tolerate the situation, the people rose up and revolt spread nation wide. That crisis occurred because there was lack of democracy for 26 years, and the crisis assumed the form of a revolution because there was no democratic means of effecting changes.

In all sincerity, people want democracy and do not to go through that bitter experience again. But they do clearly want the rights to choose the individual, the party and the government they want and reject the people, the party, and the government they dislike.

What did the SLORC say when it assumed the responsibilities of the nation in 1988? It said it would hold free and fair elections, contribute to the building of a democratic nation, and permit the formation of a government following the elections. Whenever there are elections in many of the world nations, there are always report of murder, violence, bloodshed, problems and accusations of elections not being fair. In our country despite unfounded allegations that they would be not be fair, elections were successfully held on May 27 1990. They were the most free, fair and clean with no

³chairman of Rangoon Division Law and Order Restoration Council

⁴phrase render in English

reported incidents about conflicts, violence or bloodshed. The very reason for holding the elections as everybody, even children, knows is to hand over the power to the party that won the elections.

We are truly grateful to all those who made sure the elections fair and free. But following the elections, the SLORC was seen to slide back from its earlier commitments on the elections, the state power and winning party.

It reminds me of the fable and I read when I was young. Once, two otters caught a fish at the same time from a stream. They tried to pull the fish away from each other and argue over who the rightful owner should be. A fox on the hunt for food then appeared from the jungle and the two otters decided to ask it to arbitrate their dispute over the fish. Acting as the judge, the fox divided the fish into three parts. Giving the head part to the first otters and the tail part to the second otter, the fox took the most tasty middle part of the fish and ran away into the jungle and that was the end of the story. When I read the story as young child, I did not know if the fox was truly fair as a role of the judge. It was a tale more of laughter than sadness. I considered it fortunate that at least the head and the tail parts were there for sharing because one could not do anything if the fox had taken the whole fish and went away into the jungle.

After witnessing the breaking up of Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, we can understand the concern that the Defence Services are having about Burma's future. Not only do we understand the goodwill that the Defence Services have toward the nation, we also respect the concern that the high-ranking officials have shown. If we are to make the observations, the union of Burma under today's situation is not under the threat of breaking up and none of the governments that will assume the power in the future will permit it to happen. Even if such a situation does arise, we doubt that the Defence Services will stand idly by and let it happen. I dare say that they will find a way to get out of that.

We have seen that those who joined the Defence Services do so with the aim of defending the lives and property of the people and, if need be, to give up their lives willingly. It is quite evident then that the soldiers are not there to enjoy the privileges but more to make the sacrifices. The main task of the Defence Services are to protect lives property of their parents--the people-- while political and administrative affairs are only their secondary duties. It is my conviction that if religious leaders are to be kept out of politics then, military personal should also stay clear of politics.

The philosopher Confucius said: "If the son performs the duties of the son, the father, the duties of the father, the farmer be a farmer, soldier be soldier: ministers be minister and the emperor be an emperor then the country will be the best there ever be." In the same manner, we should do our own duties. How good will it be if we practice this to make the country prosper and develop.

I wish to make an analytical study of the SLORC's guide-line that requires the military to take part in the political leadership role of the country. The political leadership role of the country is by no means trivial; it means the top leadership posts of the country. By the definition, "the military" I presume they mean the top commanders who will represent the military. To elaborate further, the guide-line means that we are to draft a constitution that would legally enable the high ranking military leaders to assume the posts of the prime minister, the defence minister, the foreign affairs minister, the home affairs minister, and all other important cabinet posts without them entering any elections.

Let us compare that requirement with the other guide-lines mentioned in paragraphs 4 and 5 and see if they contradict each other. There are two parts to the guide-line mentioned in Paragraph 4 concerning the emergence of a genuine democratic system and the second part deals with the emergence of a genuine multiparty system.

Is the requirement that enables the military to play the leadership role of the nation in harmony with the emergence of a genuine democratic system? The two are in fact directly contradicting each other.

A genuine multiparty system means the abandonment of the single-party system, the legal right for parties to be formed on the basis of one's own beliefs as well as the right of the parties to compete against each other in elections. For arguments sake let us say that under that system, elections have been held and parties have emerged as winners and loser, and a parliament has been convened. Under a state constitution which would allow the military to assume the leadership role, it means all important cabinet posts will then have to be given to the high-ranking military officers. This will destroy the essence of the elections and nullify the principle of fostering a genuine multiparty democratic system.

Positively speaking, the Defence Services are subordinate to the government. The very argument that the union can disintegrate would be have no truth whatsoever if the Defence Services are to serve the government loyally and dutifully. I therefore regret to say that I cannot accept the postulation and that the state constitution should legalize the right of the military to assume the leadership role on the basis of a fear that the union would disintegrate. This very supposition remains contradictory to the genuine democratic system that the people so desire and the genuine multiparty democratic system that the SLORC hopes to foster.

There are many special characteristics about the 1990 elections. It signifies changes from a one-party system to a multiparty system, from a feudal economy to market economy, and from a capitalist system to a democratic system. In other words it was a national event that concerns the interest of the whole nation.

The lame excuse that fair and free elections have already been held as requested will not do because this is not a trivial matter that can be forgotten easily. One should remember that it is an event that concerns the interest of the whole nation. It must be recalled that the pet slogan of the SLORC is: "The Defence Services never betray the interests of the nation."

It is the national duty of the Defence Services to unfailingly takes steps to democratically transfer the state power once the elections were held. Should there be any attempts to deny the transfer of the power and to effect changes to the law toward that end, then the people will start to question the sincerity of the claim that Defence Services never betray the interests of the nation. It would also tantamount to disregarding the sincere belief of the people that a transfer of power will take place and that a democratic nation will emerge after the elections.

As the saying goes, forgetfulness is the trait of learned men. Valuable indeed are the advice of those ancient sages. Humankind is error prone, mistakes are made, and that is nature. For these very reasons, even the pencil makers include erasers on the end of the pencils. If left uncorrected, errors will remain errors forever, once corrected they quickly become rectified. It is necessary for the SLORC to be brave enough to meet its responsibilities as well as to right the wrongs with courage. A saying goes: "When one remain faithful to one's pledges, the authority grows, and even the grass and the weeds transform into herbal medicine when commanded by such a person." So saying, I can see the SLORC's authority growing if it remains faithful to the nation and the people.

The BSPP which had ruled the country for 26 years had turned it into economically ailing state. Once, Burma stood proud and prosperous in Southeast Asia but following the socialist era it became listed among the impoverished nations. For instance, throughout history, we have never had to look up to Thailand but today, we stand with our heads bowed meekly before it. I cannot tolerate such a situation.

What do we do to get our country out of the list of less developed countries? We urgently need to develop our economy. To do so, we must find markets for our export goods. Which would make better markets between the rich and the poor nations? It is quite clear. Poor countries seek investment opportunities while keeping their doors closed to each other. Nothing will ever come out of such ventures. Rich country can pay more for our goods, which in turn can lead to development. Only when we have good political relation with the rich nations will we be able to benefit economically.

The world today has come democratic. No one wants to work with a nation where there is no democracy. What our country urgently needs is a genuine democratic political system that will contribute to the prosperity of the nation. For the country to gain more income, we need greater foreign investments. With those investments will come foreign currency, modern machinery and modern technology which are all necessary for the development of the nation. More jobs will then be created and incomes will increase. For foreign investments to come in we need to have a political system that is acceptable to the world.

We shall do our utmost and utilize foreign assistance in the national projects to develop the country. We must strive to obtain the status of a Most Favoured Nation. We shall grow our nation out of the list of Less Developed Countries through these efforts and gain the right join the four Asian economic "tigers" as a politically influential and economically strong nation. I believe that we have been weak in the implementing above. I do not want the people to wither under the law and barriers imposed by the military government.

It is the unquestionable duty of the SLORC to legally transfer the state power in accordance with the result of the elections it had organized. The country will suffer greatly if this is not followed through. As an elected representative entrusted by the people I believe that I have the duty to legally state this truth.

Mr Chairman

I shall legally table two motions of this conference. Here is the first. The guiding principle proposed by the SLORC in Order No.13/92 to allow the military to take part in the leadership role of the nation contradicts Principle No. 4, which calls for the emergence of a multiparty system, and Principle No.5, which aims for the development of social virtues such as justice, freedom and equality, and also violates Act 191 of the Defence Services Act and Rule No.19 (11) of the military regulations. This being the case, I call upon this national convention to nullify that proposed guiding principle and at the same time, as a manifestation of loyalty to the country and the people, to convene a Parliament so that power can be transferred in a justice manner to the National League for Democracy as it had won the elections.

Here is the second motion. If in case the SLORC cannot transfer the state power, a national referendum be held to determine the people's wish on whether the state constitution should embody the right of the military to participate in the leadership role of the nation. Should the people decide against the military taking part in the leadership role of the nation, that guide-line on the drafting of the state constitution should be nullified.

If in case, the people decide to let the military take the leadership role, then to embody that decision in the state constitution.

Letting the majority decide on issues is a democratic practice. It shows the Importance placed on the decision-making role of the people. Following this, those dissatisfied will not be able to say anything. The people will be pleased, we will be happy, and the

Defence Services will have the opportunity to work for the emergence of a strong state constitution that will decide the fate of the nation.

I table these motions with a prayer that those courageous heroes who can successfully fulfil their national duties will come to know that the military never betrays national politics, that it is always loyal to the people, and eternally upholds the wish, role and decision of the people.

This statement is translated from Burmese text.

ANTI-CONVENTION PROTESTERS ARRESTED

RANGOON — Protesters who wrote anti-convention slogans on the buildings' and stores' wall at the corner of Shwedagon Pagoda Road and Strand Road on December (9) were arrested by the SLORC troops. They were Ne Lin, son of U Tin Oo, from Tamwe township, Kyaw Soe Win and Kyaw Soe Lin, son of U Aye Myint, from Dagon New satellite township, Nai Ko Ko, son of U Thein Win, from Thingangyun, Thein Tun, 44, son of U Htay, from Thegon in Pegu Division and Sain Myint (a) Mohammad Ridwat, son of U Hia Din, from Kawthaung, Tenasserim. The latter two were accused of having contacts with democratic opposition groups and of instigating for mass rallies. Moreover, U Aung Myint, 57, son of U Thein Maung from South Oakkalapa, Daw Khin Mar Aye, 53, son of U Ba Thaug, from Thingangyun and Htay Myint (a) Khin Soe, 37, from Thingangyun were also arrested on December (16) with anti-convention leaflets from All

Burma People's Worker Solidarity League and All Burma Federation of Student Unions and being accused of having intention to distribute these leaflets.

MANDALAY — Anti-convention leaflets were distributed to the Universities, Colleges, Industries and SLORC offices in Rangoon, Mandalay and other cities by mail or by person. Fourteen peaceful protesters who wrote and distributed anti-convention were also arrested in January. Out of them:

Name	Age	Father's Name	Address
U Shwe Htoo (a) Aung Zeya	49	U Be Phyu	Ah-hnake taw Quarter, Mandalay Northwest
Moe Kyaw Oo	28	U Win Lwin	Bon-taw Toe Quarter, Mandalay Northwest
Ma Ye Ye Myint	24	U Kyaw Myint	Zun street, Civil line, Mandalay Southeast

(Source: News inside Burma)

Ye Ye Myint



Shwe Htoo (a) Aung Zeya

CUT OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SLORC REGIME

SLORC SOLDIER DEFECTS TO DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT



Name: Maung Tun Tun
Win
Age: 19
Position: Private
Serial No. 795530
Battalion: Infantry Battalion
No. 34, Kyauk
Phyu Township,
Arakan State.

FTR/5137/79, 5 magazines and 105 of its rounds, defected on February 10, 1993 to the Justice Minister U Thein who was there for organising tour to the frontline of the National League for Democracy (NLD) at Hmone township, Nyaung Lebin District, Pegu Division.

He, bringing 1 G3 automatic rifle, 1

Following is excerpt from what he said to the democratic government:

"Among Slorc soldiers all forms of injustice deeds were occurring and lack of administrative power. Corporals and Lance-Corporals can easily be promoted within a short time. Each section is composed only of 5 soldiers.

Military personnel at all levels were concentrating only for their privileges. When they entered the village, all the villagers run away. The military personnel are no more than the robbers. They took away cassette recorders, sewing machines and other materials by which the villagers earned for their living. Moreover, they took all the properties and animals of the villagers. It is like robbers were moving around freely in an ancient city. They had no respect to the local people.

In December 1992, they killed Maung Aye who was arrested near Lamai Phya village. In January 1993, while we were patrolling near Ohn Pin Chaung, we saw 3 Karen villagers and ordered them to come. The man obeyed the order, but 2 women run away. We reported the situation to the commanders. What I knew was the man that I myself arrested was only an innocent villager, not a rebel. But commander Ohn Khaing accused him of a rebel and shot to death on the way to Bawgali.

While we were encamping at Bawgali tactical hill, soldiers from Infantry Battalion (39) who transported rations for us arrested 4 Karen women and tied them up. Out of the victims, the youngest girl, who was in 16, was raped and shot to death.

Before I left, the army issued orders to recruit the soldiers. Every village was responsible for sending 2 villagers. At that time, 700 villagers were forced to serve the military service."

(Source: NCGUB)

