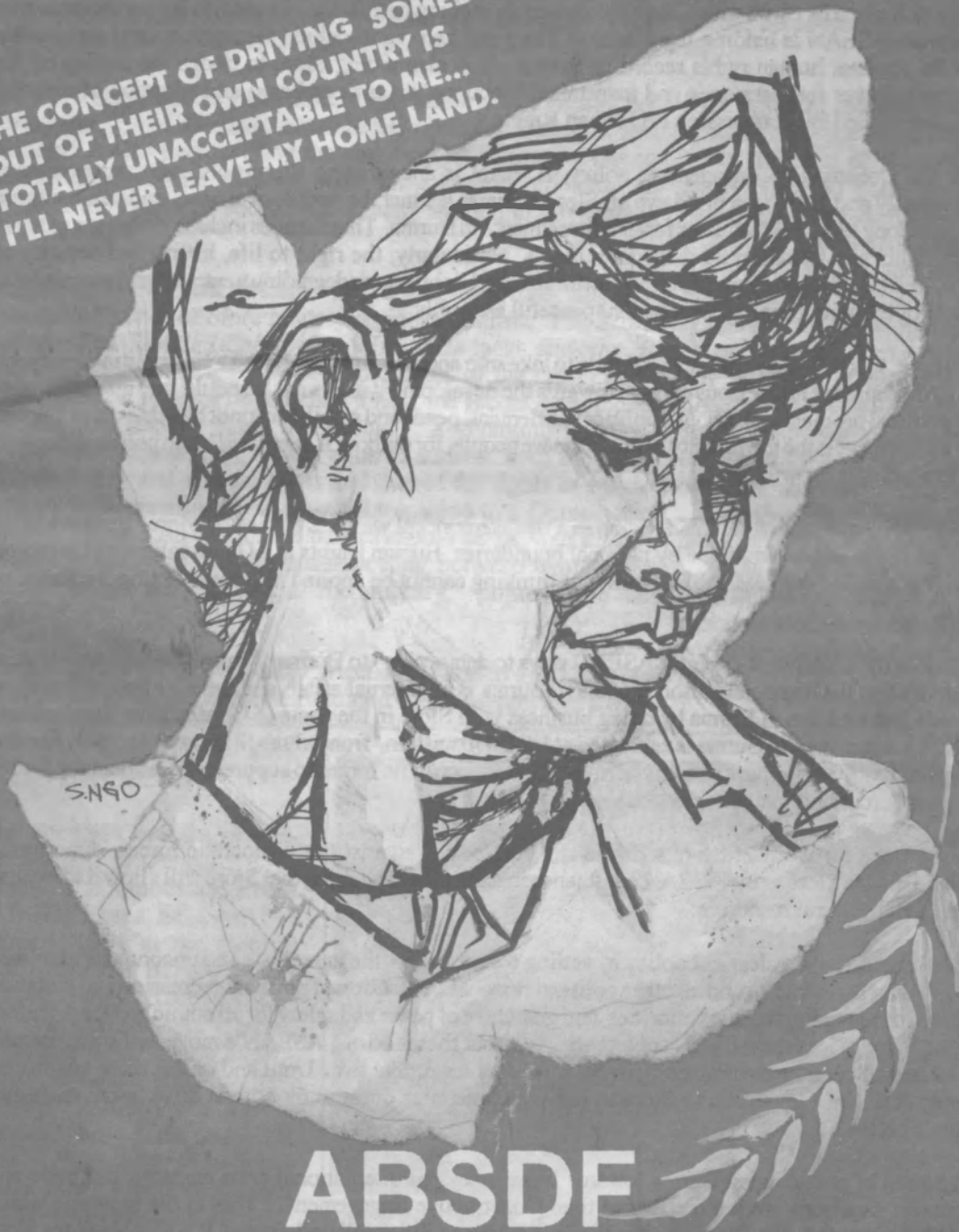


# DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

1/2 94

THE CONCEPT OF DRIVING SOMEBODY  
OUT OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY IS  
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO ME...  
I'LL NEVER LEAVE MY HOME LAND.



ABSDF

## ASEAN: DRIVING MORE NAILS INTO BURMA'S COFFIN

ASEAN's invitation to Slorc to join its 27th annual conference to be held in Bangkok must have been warmly welcomed by Slorc which has been anxiously seeking friends for its survival. By invitation to this conference, ASEAN is lending legitimacy to Slorc and helping to delude the international community about its abysmal human rights record in Burma. It is also aiding Slorc to dodge the calling of the democratic forces for: economic and investment sanctions, an arms embargo and adoption of a strong resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Under the Constructive Engagement policy, ASEAN is encouraging Slorc politically, supporting it economically and turning a blind eye on Slorc's crimes against the people of Burma, and will continue to do so as long as Slorc liberalises foreign investments in Burma. These crimes include violations of basic human rights and fundamental democratic rights, particularly, the right to life, liberty and security of person, freedom from all forms of slavery, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, freedom of thought, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly.

In this light, it is very clear that ASEAN fails to take into account Burma's long-lasting political problem. If ASEAN is sincere and serious enough towards the development in Burma, it should find means to solve these political problems. Without a political settlement, peace and stability cannot be achieved in Burma. Such a settlement is the top priority of the Burmese people, for without it, there will be no political freedom and no economic growth.

It is ASEAN that interprets Human Rights as a western concept which is echoed by Slorc. Human Rights is one and must not be restricted by national boundaries. Human Rights is a Universalism and is rooted in many pluralistic cultures. ASEAN ways of thinking cannot be applied in reconstructing the future of Burma.

Thailand is the culprit that exports "ASEAN ways to democracy" to Burma. While Thailand pronounces repeatedly that the democratisation process in Burma is an internal affair, and turns a blind eye on it, it proceeds and meddles in Burma by doing business with Slorc in the name of Constructive Engagement. ASEAN's investment in Burma is estimated at US \$ 650 million, from which Slorc gets its dearly needed foreign currency to purchase military hardware and to recruit its forces to suppress the democratic forces along the border and inside the country.

Echoing word for word of Slorc's divide and rule policy against the democratic forces, opportunist Thailand invites Slorc to the ASEAN conference in exchange for hoping that Slorc will allow it to exploit Burma's rich natural resources.

ASEAN should have a clear-cut policy by setting conditions — the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, cessation of political repression and violation of human rights against ethnic minorities, and guarantee of peace and safety for all ethnic groups — before inviting Slorc to join the ASEAN conference. Without these factors, ASEAN's move will solve nothing and its overall constructive engagement policy is counter-productive. Until and unless these conditions are met, ASEAN's invitation to Slorc to join its conference does no more than drive more nails into Burma's coffin.

As a means of encouraging Burma towards Democracy, an international arms embargo and trade and investment sanctions are more effective than Constructive Engagement. This is the language which ASEAN must speak with Slorc and it is the only language Slorc will understand. If ASEAN invites Slorc to its conference, it will completely lose credibility in the eyes of its own people and the international community.

## **ABSDF MESSAGE OF FELICITATIONS**

The Central Committee of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) extended its best wishes to all patriotic Burmese overseas and international friends on the 46th anniversary of Burma's Independence which fell on January 4.

In its message, the ABSDF said, "This historic day recalls the united struggle of all ethnic nationalities against colonialism and fascism. It also calls to mind the sacrifices of all the martyrs in that struggle.... This occasion calls for a careful reflection of whether the Burmese people are actually sharing in the fruits of independence."

Regarding the current situation in Burma, the Front fully addressed the trends of SLoRC military regime in Burma. The Front believes that SLoRC's offer for ceasefire talks lacks sincerity in addressing the underlying political problems of the current crisis; and that it will not be to achieve national reconciliation and genuine long-lasting peace in Burma. "A 'National Political Settlement Programme', which aims to address both the issue of democracy and human rights and that of the rights of ethnic minorities, is essential for a peaceful transition to a Democratic Federal Union. All concerned parties should be allowed to participate in the form of a tripartite meeting between democratic forces, ethnic minorities and the military," pointed out the ABSDF.

Moreover, the ABSDF stated, "We cannot foresee the readiness of the military in the near future to end its repression and trans-

fer power to the hands of the people. We can never dream to achieve the rights of the people through the goodwill of our oppressors. We have to liberate ourselves through our strong commitment to the cause, perseverance and sacrifice.

The ABSDF pledged to continue its struggle for a Second Independence of Burma, together with all patriotic Burmese and international friends. The Front also urged the international friends to appeal governments and people of their countries not to recognize the sham national convention or any outcome of that convention; to impose unilateral trade and investment sanctions; to call for a UN-mandated arms embargo and trade sanction; to call on the UN Secretary General to send a special envoy representative with a political mandate to Burma, and to extend moral as well as materials support to the Burmese democratic forces.

### **CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD**

The Second Central Committee meeting of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) was held on 7-8 January 1994 at the Central Headquarters of the Front (Dawn Gwin). To that meeting, members to the Central Committee and Central Executive Committee, and Alternate Central Committee members showed up. Chairman Dr Naing Aung and Vice-chairman Kyaw Kyaw presided over 2-day long meeting and addressed to the gathering at its opening session.



During the sessions, analysts on the current situation were made. Position of the ABSDF on Restoration of internal

peace in Burma and related issues were discussed, and unanimously adopted.

## ABSDF POSITION ON RESTORATION OF INTERNAL PEACE IN BURMA

*(Following position paper was released by the Foreign Affairs Department of the All Burma Students Democratic Front on 14 January 1994) —The Editor*

The flames of civil war has been raging on close to half a century ever since Burma gained its independence in 1948. Using the ongoing civil war as an excuse, successive rulers in Burma have built up their military strength, consolidated the military bureaucratic machinery, and exploited the country's resources not only to strengthen the military force but also to promote their self-interests.

These selfish deeds led to the decline of domestic production, soaring commodity prices, and a spiralling inflation. The economy plunged into a state of total devastation and the common people remain hopelessly poor. As the economic situation deteriorates and the suppression of people intensifies, the number of refugees fleeing into the neighbouring countries has also increased.

In the course of the protracted civil war, appalling human rights violation such as arbitrary arrests, summary executions and tortures have indiscriminately been carried out in the name of security. National unity has become a casualty in the process. It is therefore obvious that the root cause of the political, economic and social problems is the intensifying civil war.

Burma faces two major political problems today. The problem concerning lack of democracy and human rights and the problem of establishing a federal Union through national reconciliation. As long as the people remain deprived of democratic rights, as long as they have no rights to participate freely in the political process, as long as a federal union that guarantees equality and self-determination of all ethnic nationalities remain unattainable, and as long as injustices and an oppressive rule exist, there will be a struggle against those trends. Should these fundamental problems remain unresolved by political means, the flame of civil war, though varying in intensity at times, will continue to rage on endlessly.

All is not lost however. If there is a sincere will on the part of Slorc, there is definitely a way to resolve the present political problems through political means and thereby restore internal peace in Burma.

Throughout the course of the civil war, there have been numerous attempts to restore internal peace through a political process. All these attempts had however failed because of the lack of sincerity. If there is a genuine will to resolve political problems all the parties concerned should adhere to the following principles.

- (1) Acknowledge that there are two major political problems in Burma and that they needed to be resolved;
- (2) Accept the fact that the process of political settlement in Burma must include all the major role players on the Burmese political stage;
- (3) Pledge that the settlement talks are aimed at promoting the interests of entire people rather than an attempt to continue the hold on to power, to usurp the power, or to make personal gains out of.



We, the members of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front, believe that Slorc lacks sincerity in addressing the underlying the problems of the current political crisis and that it will not be able to bring about a national reconciliation or a genuine, long-lasting peace in Burma. In our view, a "National Political Settlement Programme" which will tackle the issue of democracy and human rights and that of the rights of the ethnic minorities is essential for peace transition to a Democratic Federal Union. The programme should be participated by all parties concerned in the form of tripartite meeting—democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the ethnic minorities, and the military.

Presently, we have learnt that the ethnic minority groups are being pressured by the neighboring countries to enter into separate negotiations with Slorc for a ceasefire. In our view, separate negotiations based on a limited agenda of achieving a ceasefire without addressing the major political issues will not be able to bring genuine peace to Burma. They will only lead to a volatile situation where fighting by arms bearing groups have temporarily been suspended and that it can erupt again any time.

ABSDF pledges to continue its struggle until the emergence of a Democratic Federal Union that guarantees the individual rights of citizens and the collective rights of various minority groups through the process of a meaningful "National Political Settlement Programme". In this critical period, we call upon the international community to set up its pressure on the military regime and to intervene in time before the voice of Burmese people gets further silenced by the ruthless "divide and rule policy" of the military regime. We would also like to urge the international community to initiate a move aimed at transforming Slorc's drive to achieve a ceasefire with the minorities into an internationally-supervised conference of all parties concerned to work toward a genuine political settlement.

## DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPENS



Seventeen-weeks long Democratic Leadership Training Course No. (1) was opened on 22 January 1994 at the Training Centre of the ABSDF Central Headquarters in Dawn Gwin. ABSDF Chairman Dr Naing Aung presided over the opening session of the training and delivered a speech to the gathering.

"We, members of the Front, must be strong enough to overcome any harrier laid ahead of us in any condition and must be able to find solutions to all problems. The leaders must adhere strong belief to our struggle and must totally oppose the regime. They must have the ability in finding solutions to the conflicts, and to analyse the divergence. They must be the outstanding mem-



bers who can sacrifice all they have for the sake of the people," urged the Chairman.

Then Vice-chairman Kyaw Kyaw addressed the gathering and explained the objectives of the training. The objectives of

the training is to educate the students in the liberated areas about democratic principle, fundamental human rights, ethnic issues and conflict resolutions of various countries and to educate the local people through these trained students.

"The aim of the training are to construct the core of the revolution which is of vital importance to achieve our goals," pointed out the Vice-chairman.

Present at the ceremony were members to the ABSDF Central Committee, camp leaders of the student camps, resources persons for the training and invited guests. The training was sponsored by the Central Executive Committee of the ABSDF and was attended by 33 students from different ABSDF student camps. It was reported that subjects on Democracy, Human Rights, Federalism, War History of Burma, Economics of Burma and People Organising and Education to the people will be lectured by the resources persons.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TRAINING FOR FEMALE STUDENTS OPEN



With the objectives to train the children to appreciate and admire democracy against the militarism and to bring up and nurture them to become the new forces in establishing the Union in the future, Pyoe Pan Wai primary school was opened on 2 February 1994 at the office of the Central Working Group in Southern Region. 18 children in that area are joining the school which provides skill in languages, historical outlook and establishing foundation of science.

A training for the ABSDF female students was also opened on the same day. The objectives of the training was to encourage the physical and ways of thinking of the female students in order to help them overcome the crises in the revolution, to pave the way for their participation in all practical fields implemented by the ABSDF, and to encourage

married students to be able to contribute their systematic participation to the Front. Two-month long training has been attended by 21 female students of the ABSDF. ABSDF's policy, constitution and laws, organising tactics, first aid, economics, self-reliance programmes such as sewing and cultivation have been lectured by the members of Central Working Group in Southern Region.



quence, Pattern Analysis, Psychological Approach to Persuade, Propaganda, Effective Design of Propaganda, The Role of Propaganda in Political Defiance and How to Use Fear As a Tool were discussed. 30 participants present at the discussions were members to the ABSDF Central Committee, members to the respective departments of the ABSDF and interest students from different student camps.

### DISCUSSION ON POLITICAL DEFIANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE HELD

A discussion on "Political Defiance and Psychological Warfare" led by friends of the ABSDF was held on 11-13 February 1994 at the Central Headquarters of the ABSDF (Dawn Gwin). Agendas on Nature of Power, Resources of Power, Nature of Obedience, Mechanism of Changing Power Relationship, Operational Confederation, Staff Study, Estimate of Situation, Strategic Planning & Control Measure, Inverse Planning Se-



## DR SEIN WIN MEETS ACTING US SECRETARY OF STATE

Washington DC— On 7 December 1993, Prime Minister Dr Sein Win of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) met with Acting US Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff who is also the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Mr Tarnoff congratulated Dr Sein Win on the NCGUB's successful effort at the United Nations.

"For the third consecutive year, the UNGA on December 6 adopted by consensus a strong resolution which noted with concern that one of the objectives of Slorc national convention is to maintain the participation of the armed forces in a leading role in the future of Burma. The resolution also requested the Secretary General to assist in the implementation of the resolution," cited the NCGUB in a press release on December 7.

In response, Dr Sein Win thanked the US Government for its continued strong support for the Burmese democratic movement. In a statement on the UN resolution, the US Government said that Slorc national convention is fundamentally flawed, that it does not have the mandate of the people and that the convention is a thoroughly contrived affair.

Mr Tarnoff reiterated the US Government's unwavering support for the Burmese democracy movement and that it will continue to look for ways to assist the Burmese people.

(Source: NCGUB)

## BYVA STAGES DEMONSTRATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Tokyo—December 10

Twenty patriotic Burmese from Burma Youth Volunteer Association (BYVA) in Japan marched to the UN Office in Tokyo on December 10 and staged a demonstration there on behalf of the people of Burma who are still oppressed and deprived of their rights by the regime. Holding placards that read "Human Rights By Now," "We want Democracy," "Down with Slorc," and "Release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Now" in English and Japanese, the protesters appealed to the UN and the international community. BYVA Chairman Ko Khin Maung Zaw handed over a letter to the UN officer, which included analysis on the realistic situation and 4-point demands wanted to be implemented by the UN on Burma. Four-point demands were to initiate a specific plan and time-table for the transfer of power to the democratically elected civilian government, to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience immediately and unconditionally, to impose more severe measures including a trade and arms embargo upon Slorc if it fails to cooperate with the mandates of the United Nations and the international community, and to terminate the membership of Burma in the United Nations since Slorc is not a democratically elected government, if Slorc fails to fulfill the conditions laid down by the deadline stipulated by the United Nations.

(Source: BYVA)

## RALLY ON THE NOBEL ANNIVERSARY







Washington— On 10 December 1993, Burmese Students Activists in the United States organised a protest to mark the 2nd anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and the International Human Rights Day. These students wearing masks of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and holding placards, chanting slogans of “Down with the military dictatorship”, “Release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all the political prisoners” staged a protest at the White House and distributed leaflets on “Burma and 40 million hostages”. The students revealed the human rights situation in Burma and Khin Ohnmar read out an open letter to US President Bill Clinton which was signed by the students. In the letter, the students urged the US Government to adopt a strong and concrete policy on Burma, to pressure the regime for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and for the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma. After the ceremony, that letter was handed over to the President.

At that night, the students lit the lanterns in front of Siorc embassy there and held a prayer ceremony for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

(Reported by Burmese Students Activists, USA)

## DAB WELCOMES UNGA RESOLUTION

Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) warmly welcomed the General Assembly Resolution unanimously adopted on 6 December 1993 and urged the UN to begin taking concrete steps to help the people of Burma achieve real national reconciliation and genuine democracy. “The DAB also strongly supports the proposed intervention of the UN’s Secretary-General in Burma as recommend by the General Assembly,” said the statement released on 27 December 1993.

The DAB said it is ready to assist the UN and its Secretary-General to the fullest with their initiatives to restore genuine peace and democracy to Burma.

On 22 June 1992, the Central Executive Committee of DAB clearly stated, “If Siorc is sincere and really wants future prosperity in Burma, it should release all the political prisoners unconditionally and immediately, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, rescind all the oppressive laws and orders, announce a nationwide cessation of all military operations against the people, transfer state power to the elected parliamentary representatives who won the 1990 general elections and rescind all past orders declaring various political parties and movements illegal.”

The DAB stated that any National Convention is meaningless and can only prolong military rule and civil war if these initiatives are absent.

The DAB further stated that only a genuine democratic government made up of representatives having a mandate from the people has the legal rights to convene a National Convention. Moreover, “No genuine representatives of ethnic nationalities or politically active opposition groups have even been allowed to attend.” On 15 December 1993, Siorc once again flatly rejected a proposal to open negotiation with the DAB.

## FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE BURMESE STUDENTS HELD

The first Conference of the Burmese students in the United States was held at the International Center in Washington DC on 30 December 1993. It was attended by 30 Burmese students who are now studying at various Universities in the United States. Prime Minister Dr Sein Win of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB); U Bo Hla Tint, Minister of Mining, Energy and Construction; Dr Thaung Htun, member of the Central Executive Committee (Foreign Affairs) of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Dr Aung Khin, Chairman of the CRDB West Coast and Mr Michael Beer from Non-violent International delivered opening speeches. On behalf of the Burmese students in the United States, Ko Chit Kyi responded with thanking speech to the leaders of the democratic movement. The meeting lasted for two days and action programme for Burmese Students Activists in United States was discussed.

A demonstration against the military regime in Burma was also held in front of Slorc embassy in Washington in that morning before the ceremony was opened. The students held placards and chanted anti-military dictatorship slogans.

Moreover, there were also demonstration against the visit of some US Congressmen and Senators arranged by the Slorc's agent former US Congressman Lester Wolff.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY RALLY

*January 4*

Independence Day rally was held in Australia outside Slorc Embassy in Canberra. Speakers included prominent members of the Australian Burmese Community, the Honourable Justice Marcus Einfeld, Sir William Keys and Senators of the Australian Parliamentary Friends of Burma. On the 3rd and 4th January 1994, Burmese students staged a hunger strike and the "Burma, An Education Kit" was on display in a marquee set up at the demonstration sight.

(Source: Australian Burma Council)

## BSL MARKS INDEPENDENCE DAY

On 4 January 1994 at 11:00 am, students from BSL rallied in front of Slorc embassy in New Delhi, India, to mark the 46th anniversary of Independence Day of Burma. They staged a protest there to expose

Burma's genuine political and human rights situation to the international community.

"Today, the 43-million hostages of Burma are holding a nationwide silent protest by not going out of their residences for their daily work to mark the 46th anniversary of Independence Day of Burma where their freedoms are being destroyed by their own army," said in the BSL press release.

BSL appealed the international community to cut off their economic and military relationship with the illegitimate Slorc junta, reject the credentials of the junta's representatives out of hand, unseat Slorc from the United Nations until it frees all political prisoners including the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and agrees to transfer power to the democratically-elected MPs of the National League for Democracy (NLD) immediately and unconditionally, and lend full material and moral support to the pro-democracy movement for the ouster of the junta.

(Source: BSL)



## **DAB EMERGENCY MEETING HELD**

On November 17, 1993, Slorc Secretary (1), in Loikaw Town of Kayah State, revealed the position of Slorc by expressing the willingness to hold talks with the jungle-based armed organisations. The DAB regarded this as a positive development on the condition that it was intended for a true and country-wide peace. Accordingly, Chairman of DAB, Gen Saw Bo Mya, responded by sending a letter, dated December 1, 1993, to Chairman of Slorc, Gen Than Shwe, for holding talk officially between the DAB and Slorc. In response to the letter, Slorc gave a verbal answer saying that it could not hold talk either with the DAB or NDF, but it would hold talk with armed organisations only individually. Regarding the talks, emergency meeting of the DAB was held on 11-14 January 1994. At the end of the meeting, a statement was issued.

"The problem of on-going civil war, the lack of stability and peace in the whole of Burma are problems that directly concern all the political forces and entire people composed of various indigenous nationalities in the country. These problems are also directly related to the system and the basic political ideology on which the State is constituted. In addressing such problems, a correct solution can not be found by secret negotiations between Slorc and some organisations, individually. Such a process would never bring about nation-wide cease-fire nor true and stable peace. On the other hand, it would only create a situation that would bring greater danger upon the country.

Nowadays, it is urgently needed to established, in Burma, genuine unity of the nation. In the building of genuine and durable unity of the nation, it is necessary to have a general convention of all political forces, with complete freedom of expression, where justice can be derived. Contrary to this, as the secret and separate negotiation line is diametrically opposed to genuine and durable unity of the nation, it is only an exercise of deviousness.

The DAB, absolutely does not want the civil war. For that reason, the DAB believes that the political causes that have ignited and fuelled the civil war must be removed. DAB firmly believes that in the removal of these political causes, it is necessary to use political means that is in accord with the political interest and the will of entire people. Accordingly, the DAB, has sincerely made the effort for gaining true peace in the country. DAB is still persisting in this effort.

The reason given by Slorc that "as the DAB members organisations have different political objectives and, therefore, it cannot negotiate with the DAB" is not a valid one. The DAB has common political objective. It is not only the DAB but the majority of the political forces in the country and the entire people made up of various indigenous nationalities as well, though they differ on grounds of constitution, ethnicity, religious and region, have a common political objective. This common political objective is the "Establishment of a genuine federal republic based on democracy." The fact that the entire country is in opposition to Slorc shows evidently that is not only the DAB but the entire people also have a common political objective.

Negotiation and peace divorced from the basic political interest of the people is meaningless. The establishment of the true peace, in order to find solutions to political problems by political means, will be successful only by the collective effort and struggle of all forces desiring peace."

The DAB said it will continue to struggle, firmly together with the entire people and all patriots, for true and durable peace that will guarantee the basic political interest of the entire people of Burma.

## BSL APPEALS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

January 20, 1994

India-based Burma Students League (BSL) on 20 January send an earnest appeal to the Prime Minister of India, which expressed their concern and sorrow over the state-to-state relation between the government of India and the illegitimate military regime of Burma.

"We deeply feel that every relationship exercised with Slorc in terms of trade, military and diplomacy will never lead to the restoration of democracy and human rights in Burma. Instead, it will further strengthen the terrorist military dictatorship in Burma," said the letter.

BSL appealed the government and people of India to suspend all the trade and political relationship with the regime till the democratically-elected civilian government has been installed power, to pressurise the mili-

tary regime for transferring power to the National League for Democracy through India's own diplomatic channel and to look after members of BSL, who are the victims of Slorc's fascist rule, while they are living as asylum-seekers in India.

In press release issued on the same day, BSL called upon the international community "to step up its pressure on the military regime in Burma and to intervene in time before the voice of Burmese people gets further silenced by ruthless 'divide & rule' policy of the regime." Moreover, the league urged the international community to initiate a move aimed at transforming Slorc's divide to achieve a ceasefire with the minorities and an internationally-supervised conference of all parties concerned to work toward genuine political settlement.

(Source: BSL)

all regardless of religion, sex or nationality as it is the very basis of peaceful coexistence and humanitarian concern.

Touching the issues of the Burmese refugees in Thailand "They are by no means free from fear, nor entirely safe; they are constantly haunted by the threat of arrest and forced deportation," stressed the letter.

"Many Burmese refugees in Thailand, particularly students refugees, have been subjected to severe physical, verbal and psychological abuse by Thai army, police and Immigration authorities," stated the letter.

The letter revealed the situation of Burmese students which said, "With each passing day that inhumane harassment of Burmese refugee continues in the Kingdom of Thailand, so deepens our grief."

Ven U Uttara cited that if today's ugly incidents toward Burmese refugees in Thailand continue to exist, seeds of sorrow and hatred might grow one day between Burma and Thailand.

## PROTEST AGAINST MALTREATMENT

Burmese dissidents friends of Burma in United Kingdom staged a demonstration in front of Thai embassy on 12 February 1994 as a protest against maltreatment and injustice to Burmese refugees in Immigration Detention Centre (IDC), refugee camps and border areas of Thailand.

Buddhist monks from Burma, Japan, Sri Lanka and other countries presented at the demonstration and voiced for peace. A letter of protest signed by Ven Ashin Uttara was handed over to the Thai Embassy in United Kingdom. The letter pointed out that compassion should be practiced by

The monk said that would be best if this matter be carefully handled as soon as possible. He also appealed to H.M the King to bestow mercy toward fate denied Burmese refugees.

(Source: Thai Embassy Protest Committee)



## **NCGUB WELCOMES RICHARDSON'S SUCCESS**

The National Coalition Government of Union of Burma (NCGUB) welcomed the US congressman Bill Richardson's success in securing a meeting in Rangoon with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate, General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and leader of the Burmese democracy movement.

In a statement released on 15 February 1994, the NCGUB said, "The meeting is a significant result of increasing international pressure on Slorc for reform."

The NCGUB commended Bill Richardson for his initiative to promote a dialogue between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and

the military regime. "The NCGUB firmly believes that the problems in Burma can only be resolved through a comprehensive political dialogue and calls on the international community to continue the pressure on the Slorc until this end is achieved," said the statement.

In conclusion, the NCGUB called on the United Nations, the United States, Thailand and the international community to facilitate dialogue among the democracy movement led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's ethnic leaders and the military for peace, prosperity, ethnic harmony and national reconciliation in Burma.

(Source: NCGUB)

## **NO MORE MILITARY INTERFERENCE IN CIVILIAN RULE.**

diately stop the arms and economic investment with Slorc until a democratically-elected civilian government comes into power as these trades and investment help fuelling civil war, and to extend the moral and material support to the second Independence struggle of Burmese people.

The ABSU welcomed the 48th session of UNGA resolution

## **ABSU MESSAGE TO BURMESE PEOPLE AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

On 4 January 1994, the 46th anniversary of the Independence Day of Burma, the All Burma Students' Union (ABSU) sent its message to Burmese people who are under the military suppression and who are struggling for peace and harmony for their beloved motherland, and the international community.

"The Independence of our country achieved by sweat, blood and soul, regained our Independence and sovereignty

from Japanese and British imperialists on 4 January 1948," said the statement released on January 4.

The ABSU stressed, "As Burmese are staying under the military rule or Slorc, we will never feel the real Independence."

The ABSU appealed the people of Burma and the international community to condemn the peace talk calling by Slorc, which is without practice of internal peace, to imme-

upon Burmese military junta, which call for the unconditional and immediate release of 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and transfer of power to elected representatives of May 1990 election.

In conclusion, the ABSU urged the international community to accelerate work on the UN Resolution.

(Source: ABSU)

## JUST SAY NO TO TEXACO

An international rally in boy-cotting TEXACO Oil Com-pany's collaboration with the military dictatorship in Burma was held in front of the New York Stock Exchange, Wall Street, New York, USA on 7 December 1993. About 60 activists participated two-hour long demonstration which was organised by the American Human Rights and environ-mental NGOs. The theme of the demonstration was to show the support for indigenous people from Burma and Ecuador in their battle against TEXACO Corporation and boycott the cooperation for its dealing with one of the most brutal regimes in the world, name Slorc of Burma. Acti-vists called for the TEXACO withdrawal from Burma and Ecuador. Among the speakers in the rally, U Bo Hla Tint , NCGUB Minister for Energy, Mining and Construction, Edith Mirante, Project Maje, author of "the Burmese Looking Glass", U Win Khet, Chairman of NLD (LA) and Aung Myo Min, dissident Burmese student spoke out Texaco's investment in Burma and how it is supporting the human rights violations sanctioned by Slorc. In his speech, U Bo Hla Tint said, "As long as Texaco and other foreign companies invest in Burma, the Burmese people will be suffering human rights violations."

Texaco collaborates with the brutal military dictators in Burma in an offshore natural gas project. In order to con-struct a pipeline through the rain forest, the army has declared "free-fire zone" in which soldiers are authorised to shoot civilians.

## NELSON MANDELA SUPPORTS DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

At a press-conference held in Nobel Institute of Oslo, Norway, on 7 December, 1993, the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, the South African black leader Nelson Mandela said he fully support struggle for Human Rights in Burma. There were about 50 correspondents from international news agencies and Nelson Mandela told the correspondents, " We fully support the people who are oppressed because of struggling for freedom and justice, and peoples of the world's countries including our

country are in solidarity with all the oppressed people."

In his Nobel award accepting speech on December 10, 1993, Nelson Mandela, urged Slorc to immediately release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and to engage her in a peace dialogue. "We appeal to those who govern Burma that they release our fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, and engage her and those she represents in serious dialogue for the benefit of all the people of Burma," said Nelson Mandela.

## BREMEN SOLIDARITY PRIZE FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI

On December 10, an awarding ceremony of Bremen Solidarity Prize to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was held at Obrean Hall in Bremen, Germany. To that ceremony, about 1,000 representatives from the organisations working for the restoration of democracy in Burma, overseas Burmese in Germany and Michael Aris and Kim Aris, husband and son of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi showed up. This prize was awarded to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to honour her brave struggle and sacrifice for the sake of the people of Burma. At the opening session of the ceremony, ex-Ambassador of Germany to Burma Dr Per Fisher delivered a speech to the gathering and UN Representative in Germany Dr Helga Timm explained the gathering of UN's position on Burma. After that UNDP representative Frou Inge Koul delivered a speech on "Human Rights and Development". Then the session was off for 15 minutes. While the meeting was off, Bochun-based Burma Bureau exposed a photo exhibition on Burma.

When the session was on again, Mr Klaus Wedemeier, Mayor of Bremen, read out the biography of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Then, Kim Aris accepted the Bremen Solidarity Prize on behalf of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and delivered speech of acceptance to the gathering. He read out an

English translation prepared by his mother to read at the gathering for this event and a stanza of a poem composed by Ruyard Kipling which is favourite of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The ceremony was ended with songs of honour by the musicians there. Following is excerpt from her translation:

"In a country where there is no rule of law it is the duty of our democratic forces to protect the people... We are very concerned not only with basic human rights but with anything that will hurt the people and make them suffer. We have to protect them from all such matters. That is why we are saying we shall resist all unjust order and the unjust use of power. It is not that we want to create a breach of the peace — that is not something which has any appeal for us and will not benefit the people in any way. But we know that if we do not stand up against unjust and authoritarian measures which contravene just laws there will be more suffering for the people. We are conducting this campaign of civil disobedience because it is crucial that the force of democracy continue to carry out this campaign with unity.

Martin Luther King, one of the great soldier of human rights in the history of the world, once said: "I have a dream". We must all have a dream, a dream for the establishment of democracy and human rights in Burma. But a dream is not enough. We must be able to make that dream a reality. It is the duty of all us to turn the dream into reality, and because it is a duty which belongs to us all we must discharge it unitedly. I have urged this ever

since I first became involved in the movement for democracy: be united, please be united.

Our students and young people took part with spirit and courage in the events of 1988 in accordance with our national tradition. We must all struggle for their future. We must all help so they can continue their studies in peace and, when they have completed their studies, so they can work for the benefit of our country. The adult, older people must pave the way for the advancement of the young.

Now we are all engaged in building the road to democracy and if we help one another with the mutual goodwill and understanding, the road will be completed quickly. We are not building this road so that political groups may walk on it peacefully, pleasantly and proudly. We are building it so people may be able to walk on it in that manner, with honour and dignity.

We must adopt the spirit of road builders. Everywhere you look in Burma you will see that road builders are those who have to labour to the point of exhaustion. They have to break up rocks, they have to work in hot sun... We are exactly like that. We must carry out the most exhausting tasks, we must work in the hot sun, we must break up the rocks of unjust laws and reduce them to a state where the people can step on them. We have to make the road smooth. Only if we do this will we be able to make our dream a reality. Those who merely dream dreams are weak people. But if we can make our dream a reality, we are great heroes indeed."

## INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGNS FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM BURMA

Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma in 1993 intensified shareholders campaigns on oil giant Amoco, Texaco, Unocal, and other companies — Pepsi Co, Textron and Wal-Mart, and called on Corporations to abide by the call for sanctions by the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates.

Amoco was filed by the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor, Donald Ericson, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Sisters of Loretto, Franklin Research & Development Corporation, Diocese of Ft. Worth, Glenmary Home missionaries and Sister of Charity, BVM, and the resolution asked Amoco Corporation and any of its subsidiaries and affiliates shall terminate forthwith all financial and business ties to Slorc and all agencies of the military regime of Burma.

Texaco was filed by the Reformed Church in America and Sisters of Loretto while Unocal was filed by Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, New England Province of the Society of Jesus and Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the resolutions requested Texaco's and Unocal's Board



of Directors to issue a comprehensive report on their operations in Burma and these report should be available to all shareholders, be prepared at reasonable cost and proprietary information. The Coalition for Cooperate Withdrawal from Burma said Slorc gains political legitimacy and maintains financial solvency, in part, through partnerships with foreign oil companies.

Furthermore, presence of multinational oil companies has encouraged destruction of Burma's once vast teak forest and near annihilation of many endangered species. The plan for a gas pipeline from Andaman Sea across Burma to Thailand, envisioned by the consortium including Texaco, will cause more environmental destruction and harm lives and cultures of the ethnic minority people who dwell in that territory.

Texaco and Unocal were urged their report on Burma should include extent of sales, servicing and other economic ties for 1991, 1992, 1993; taxes and fees paid to Slorc for each of these years, including transfers to Burmese companies owned in full or in part by Slorc; money paid to provide social programmes and actions supporting human rights; plans to continue and expand operations in light of the call for economic and investment sanctions and impact on human rights and environment from the Andaman Sea concession which proposes a gas pipeline to Thailand.

PepsiCo was filed by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the World Division of the General Board

of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, and the resolution asked PepsiCo shall terminate forthwith all financial and business ties to Slorc and all agencies of the military regime of Burma.

In a May 18, 1993 letter and October 23 dialogue, Textron said it had sold commercial helicopter to the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) which then made them available to Burma to fight the drug trade. Textron also said since the imposition of sanctions on arms sales, it has supplied commercial spare parts but not recently. It has no employees, sales, maintenance or otherwise, in Burma.

In a December 2, 1993 letter, Wal-Mart said it had purchased late in 1992 from only one company in Burma and the merchandise is no longer in the stores. They have definitely no plans to deal with Burmese companies in the future.

Even though these foreign companies claim political neutrality in Burma, doing business with a repressive regime is inherently political. Slorc flaunts its partnerships with foreign corporations as proof of its political legitimacy. Since the Burmese economy is almost entirely Slorc-owned, corporations provide direct financial support to Slorc so that their presence in Burma contradicts the call for economic sanctions by the NCGUB and many Nobel Peace Prize Laureates.

(Source: Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma)

## AMOCO FACES WITHDRAWAL CALL

31 January 1994

To prepare for its annual meeting of shareholders in April 1994, Amoco petitioned the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to allow it to omit a shareholder resolution filed by investors opposed to Amoco's business deals with the Burmese military junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc).

The resolution was filed by Franklin Research & Development, the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers Union which represents many Amoco workers, and several religious institutions affiliated with the Interfaith Centre on Corporate Responsibility.

The shareholders called on the company to terminate all business relationships with Slorc and its affiliated business. On 21 December 1993, Amoco sent a legal brief to the SEC in an attempt to prevent the resolution from being distributed to shareholders in its proxy statement and being debated at its annual meeting.

"Amoco's filing to the SEC reveals a corporate management anxious to hide a bad business decision from its shareholders," stated Simon Billenness, senior analyst at Franklin Research & Development and chair of the Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma. "As investors, we are deeply disturbed that Amoco has spent over US\$ 100 million on a venture with a brutal military junta and has nothing to show for it but a quagmire of bad press and a growing



consumers boycott," said Billenness.

In its filing to SEC, Amoco disputed the shareholders' description of Slorc as "illegitimate". According to Michele Bohana of the Institute for Asian democracy, "Since its brutal crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators in 1988, Slorc has maintained martial law. After that massacre and the military junta's refusal to respect the results of the 1990 elections, in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi won over 80% of the seats, "illegitimate" probably too mild a word for Slorc."

Amoco's deal with Slorc was negotiated shortly after the junta's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators in 1988. Amoco has continued to expand its exploration in Burma despite Slorc's refusal to allow the NLD to take their seats and form a government. According to Amoco's filing with the SEC, the company has provided Slorc and its affiliated enterprises \$22 million in cash payments for exploration rights and in exchange for services. Since then Amoco, and other companies, make its payments to Slorc at the official exchange rate of 6.9 Kyats to the US. dollar, instead of the market rate of over 100 Kyats to the dollar, Slorc reaps a windfall of hard currency.

In its SEC filing, Amoco revealed that in the 1993 alone it received 211 letters objecting to its operations in Burma, 48 from people who said they would no longer buy Amoco gasoline. For every letter received by a company, there

are usually 200 boycotters. 48 letters is pretty substantial for a boycott in its early stages," said Todd Puttnam, publisher of the National Boycott News.

According to Sister Valerie Heinonen of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, it is unlikely that the SEC will allow Amoco to omit the shareholder resolution from its annual meeting. "In the past, corporations have tried, and failed, with similar reasons to exclude shareholder resolutions asking for withdrawal from South Africa," stated Heinonen. In the absence of a favorable ruling by the SEC, Amoco will face a debate on the resolution at its annual meeting on April 26.

Of the companies targeted on their operations in Burma, Amoco, Texaco and Pepsi Co petitioned the SEC for permission to omit the resolution. The French oil giant, Total, has not responded to questions posed by Franklin Research about its operations in Burma. In December 1993, Unocal met with the concerned shareholders and designated representatives of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB).

According to the Billenness: "The Burmese military has stayed in power, in part, through the support it has received from the foreign corporations. The Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma will continue to honor the call by the NCGUB for economic and investment sanctions on Burma".

(Source: Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma)

## **SHAREHOLDERS IN JAPAN JOIN AMOCO BOYCOTT**

On 31 January 1993, Burmese Relief Center-Japan announced that Amoco shareholders in Japan were also joining the Coalition for Corporate Withdrawal from Burma as it intensified a shareholders campaign to press the American oil giant Amoco to end all its operations in Burma.

In a press release on January 31, BRC-Japan said that Amoco shareholders in Japan strongly support the shareholder resolution filed by socially-responsible investors opposed to Amoco's deals with Slorc, the Burmese military junta, one of the most repressive and brutal regimes in the world.

Moreover, Burmese Relief Center-Japan is joining the growing international boycott of those companies doing business with Slorc, including PepsiCo International, parent company of Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pizza Hut. "Burmese Relief Center-Japan is particularly interested in targeting the Japanese corporation, Nippon Oil, which is actively pursuing its investments in oil exploration in Burma. Nippon Oil, together with the Texaco, purchased shares in Premier Petroleum's offshore concessions in Burma, owning about 20% of Premier's concessions, Blocks M12, M13, and M14 in the Gulf of Martaban which has estimated gas reserves of 2-4 trillion cu.ft," said the press release.

It is of particular concern that

Nippon Oil, by doing business with Slorc, is lending legitimacy to this illegal regime, which refused to surrender power to the National League for Democracy. Slorc has managed to stay in power solely because of revenues generated by foreign investment and trade. Since the economy is fully controlled by the military, a company such as Nippon Oil, by doing business in Burma, is providing financial support for Slorc and thereby condoning the military regime's well-documented and pervasive abuse of human rights.

Furthermore, BRC—Japan expressed its great concern over an impending pipeline project to move natural gas fields being developed by Nippon Oil, and other companies from the Gulf of Martaban to energy-hungry Thailand. This multi-million dollar pipeline threatens Burma's last big rain forest and its wildlife, as well as putting vast numbers of ethnic minority civilians and their way of life in jeopardy.

Oil companies, including Nippon Oil, are directly benefiting from Slorc's regular and persistent use of slave labour which is morally unacceptable for the international corporation to be facilitated by the barbarous use of the manacled and chained civilians compelled by the threat of violence to provide the manual labor to — the infrastructure needed for such oil exploration work and development projects.

(Source: BRC-Japan)

## VALENTINE FOR SUU KYI

On 12 February 1994, Burmese Relief Center-Japan (BRC—Japan) held a rally in front of the Nakagyo Post Office in Kyoto, Japan, to collect signatures from passersby on a "Valentine For Suu Kyi", which they sent to encourage Burma democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who is being held under house arrest.

The demonstration was to heighten awareness among the people of Kyoto, where Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself was once a student.

About 20 members joined the demonstration, coming not only from Kyoto, but from Nara, and from other places even as far away as Okayama. While passing out chocolates, the group invited passersby to sign a giant Valentine with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's photograph in the centre, surrounded by "Human Rights," "Peace," "Freedom," and other words, written in red hearts. About 100 people signed this message which was sent from the post office to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house in Burma.

At the same time, (BRC—Japan) sent to Slorc embassy in Tokyo a packet of 305 chain letters received from around the world, calling for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release.

(Reported by BRC—Japan)

## MEMBERS OF DIET CONCERN ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS

On 30 November 1993 members of the Japanese Diet sent a letter to Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai of Thailand and expressed their deep concern about the human rights situation in Burma. The letter said they appreciated Chuan government for meeting with a group of Nobel Peace Prize winners who visited Thailand in Feb 1993.

"This was an important contribution to the cause of human rights and we encourage you to continue and increase such efforts," said members of the Diet.

The letter expressed concern on 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who remains under house arrest despite the victory of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in the 1990 May election.

"We believe that her free participation in the political process, and that of other currently detained politicians, is vitally necessary to the democratic transition to civilian rule," said the letter.

Members of the Diet, moreover, believed that the recommendations adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission on March 10, 1993 provided the framework for restoring full respect for fundamental human rights and a peaceful, rapid transition to civilian rule.

# FREE AUNG SAN SUU KYI

It also urged the government of Thailand to urge Slorc to take concrete, immediate steps to implement the United Nations recommendation.

Members of the Diet urged PM Chuan Leekpai to do everything in his power to encourage Slorc to lift the restriction orders on political leaders, free unconditionally those who are detained and release Aung San Suu Kyi; to lift restriction on the right of association and assembly, as well as the right to freedom of opinion and expression; to allow the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to conduct international monitoring in Burma of the return of refugees who have fled to Bangladesh and to investigate and bring to justice those responsible for alleged violations of human rights such as torture, abuse of women, forced labour and summary executions.

Forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 6 December 1993, adopted a resolution on Burma by consensus without a vote in which it "deplored the continued violations of human rights in Burma," urged Slorc, "to take all necessary steps towards the restoration of democracy in accordance with the will of the people as expressed in the democratic elections held in 1990, and to ensure that political parties can function freely." The General Assembly also urged Slorc "to take all 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

## UNGA PASSES RESOLUTION ON BURMA

### SLORC CRITICISED FOR RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

through the transfer of power to the democratically elected representatives."

Regarding the National Convention, based on the observation of the Special Rapporteur, it expressed its deep concern "that no evident progress has been made towards turning over power to a freely elected civilian Government," and "most of the representatives duly elected in 1990 have been excluded from participating in the meetings of the National Convention.

Moreover, the military regime was urged "to ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and assembly, and the protection of the rights of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and to put an end to violations of the right to life and integrity of the human being, to the practices of torture, abuse of women, forced labours and to enforced disappearances and summary executions," to consider becoming a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Culture rights and to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment;" to release unconditionally and

immediately the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who is now in her fifth year of detention without trial, and other political leaders and remaining political prisoners;" and "to respect fully the obligations of the Geneva Convention of 1949, in particular the obligations in common article III, and no make use of such services as may be offered by impartial humanitarian bodies."

Regarding the refugees in Bangladesh, Slorc was urged "to implement the Memorandum of Understanding of 5 November 1993 and to create the necessary conditions to ensure an end to the flows of refugees to neighboring countries and to facilitate their speedy repatriation and their full reintegration, in conditions of safety and dignity."

It expressed its regrets that "recent harsh sentences meted out to the number of dissidents, including persons voicing dissident in regard to the procedures of the National Convention," "many political leaders are still deprived of their freedom and their fundamental rights," and stressed "the importance of free and confidential access to prisoners by international humanitarian agencies."

## **US POSITION ON UNGA RESOLUTION**

On 6 December 1993, Ambassador Victor Marrero, United States Alternate Representative to the 48th session of the United Nations General Assembly, made a statement in the Third Committee on Agenda Item # 114 (C), Human Rights Situation and Reports of Special Rapporteur and Representatives: The Human Rights Situation in Burma.

The statement said that the United States joined the consensus to adopt the third General Assembly resolution on the continuing deplorable human rights situation in Burma and the resolution contained important information on many aspects of the human rights situation in Burma.

The United States strongly urged Slorc to restrain its military forces in Arakan state from resuming their human rights abuses which led to the massive outflow of the Rohingya refugees.

"We urgently support the unconditional and immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners," said the statement.

Regarding the national convention, "The National Convention does not have the mandate of the people and is not contributing to progress toward putting political power in the hands of a freely elected civilian government," said the statement.

In the view of the United States, the resolution was not strong enough as it did not fully

address the human rights situation in Burma. The United States pointed out as an example that the resolution should have requested the Secretary-General to use his good offices to promote a peaceful resolution of the outstanding issues among all the concerned parties. Moreover, the United States favoured the appointment of a special envoy to focus on resolving conflicts on the basis of national reconciliation and the restoration of democracy in Burma.

"We very much regret that the resolution does not urge member states to consider what policies they might adopt voluntarily to lessen the ability of Slorc's military forces bolstered by continuing arms purchases to brutalise the religious and ethnic minorities and to oppress the rest of the citizenry," expressed in the statement.

The United States strongly felt that this concept needed to be included in a comprehensive human rights resolution on Burma this year.

Moreover, the United States viewed that the resolution should have urged the UN specialised agencies operating in Burma, which represent the last remaining major source of grant international assistance available to Slorc, to use special care to ensure that all of the funds expended in Burma reach the intended grass roots level recipients, who so badly need assistance, and do not enrich Slorc leaders or the military forces.

(Source: Press Release of the US Mission to the UN)

## **SLORC URGED TO RELEASE DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI**

In January, a Bipartisan group of 39 legislators urged Slorc to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest. In an appeal sent on January 24 to Slorc Chairman Gen Than Shwe, Bangladeshi legislators said that the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a violation of human rights. They also asked Slorc to hand over power to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy that overwhelmingly won elections held in May 1990.

## **US CONGRESS CALLS FOR CLEAR POLICY TOWARDS BURMA**

The Congress of the United States called on President Clinton to clearly state the US policy with respect to Burma following Senate unanimously declared in S. Resolution 112 passed on 1 February 1994 stated that it does not recognise the ruling military junta in Burma since the people of Burma gave the National League for Democracy (NLD) a clear victory in the election of May 27, 1990.

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a leader of a National League for Democracy, has been under house arrest since July 1989. Many of her colleagues who were able to escape imprisonment or death have taken refuge in Thailand, where they have organised to work peacefully to bring democracy to Burma.



In the Sense of Congress, the resolution stated, "Congress urges the President to adopt the policies called for in S. Res. 112 and to clearly enunciate the administration policy with respect to Burma." Congress is concerned that element of the Clinton Administration has not articulated its position regarding United States policy toward Burma.

Regarding the position of Thailand, Congress stated that despite pressure from Slorc, the Government of Thailand should allow many Burmese who were forced to flee the brutal repression of Slorc regime to operate within its borders, and urged the Government of Thailand to continue to allow the democratic leaders of Burma to freely operate within Thailand and to grant them free passage to allow them to present their case to the world at the United Nations and other international gatherings.

Congress was concerned by reports that the Government of Thailand may adopt more restrictive policies towards the Burmese have raised considerable concern. In particular, Congress was concerned by reports that Dr Sein Win and other Burmese dissidents may not be allowed to return from their trip to the United States and United Nations to secure support for their democratic aspirations.

Concerning peace in Burma, the resolution said, "Congress is deeply interested in seeing the peaceful transition of power to those elected in 1990. Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior National League for Democracy leaders imprisoned in

Burmese jails, are unable to conduct political activity inside Burma and have never been allowed to take their elected positions. Those who were able to escape must rely on Thailand's continued hospitality."

Even though Congress welcomed the Government of Thailand's efforts to eliminate forced prostitution, it pointed out that there is considerable concern that Thai border officials and police were involved in the transport of those women from Burma, and at time, directly in the brothel operations. Thailand was urged to prosecute those responsible for the trafficking, forced labour and physical and sexual abuse of those women. If Thai officials are found to be involved, that should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law; and to protect the civil and human rights of these Burmese, and to refrain from further victimising those women by subjecting them to arrest and forced deportation.

### **SUPPORT FOR SEAFARERS**

The Asia/ Pacific Seafarers Regional Committee meeting of London-based International Transport Worker's Federation (ITF) was held in Manila on February 2-3, 1994. At that meeting, recommendations toward Burma were adopted.

They decided that ITF affiliates should continue to pursue the policy agreed by the APRC in Singapore and endorsed by the executive board of taking general action against the economic interests of Slorc and in particular to boycott Burmese registered ships.

"In line with existing ITF Flags of Convenience (FOC) policy, affiliates should whenever possible, boycott all ships including those manned by Burmese seafarers, which do not fully meet ITF standards," said the recommendation.

As it is of serious difficulties to verify Burmese Seafarers on ships covered by ITF approved collective agreements that in fact receiving their full entitlements, ITF affiliates and inspectors decided continue to subject such ships to special scrutiny.

"ITF affiliates concluding ITF approved collective bargaining agreements for FOC vessels should, whenever possible, avoid using Burmese crew members unless they receive adequate guarantees that the seafarers concerned will receive their full entitlements under the relevant CBA," decided at the meeting.

It also recommended that ITF affiliates should support the activities of the Seafarers Union of Burma (SUB) including securing employment for SUB members.

(Source: FTUB)

### **HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURMA**

On 3 February 1994 US State Department issued a country report on Human Rights situation in Burma. In the introductory part of the statement, regarding the political parties inside the country, it said that Slorc attacked the coalition of winning political parties through detentions, house arrests, and intimidation.

Regarding the national convention, "Slorc officials stage-managed the proceedings and overrode even limited opposition, interrogating and harassing delegate who attempted to deviate from the regime's position, and even sentenced one prodemocracy delegate to 20 years in prison for distributing information critical of the convention proceedings. It seem clear that the Slorc's domination of the convention, which has no mandate from the people, is to ensure adoption of a constitutional blueprint effectively guaranteeing the military's continued hold on power," said the report.

Concerning the economy, the report said that Slorc has hindered development of the private sector, however, by failing to address fundamental problems: restrictions on private commerce; constantly changing rules and regulations; overcentralised decision making; a bloated bureaucracy; a greatly overvalued currency; poor civilian infrastructure; and grossly disproportionate military spending.

Touching the human rights situation, "There was no marked increase in the level of human rights abuse in 1993, in large measure because Slorc had already been so successful in the intimidating the Burmese people. At the same time, Burmese authorities took only limited step to correct long standing, serious human rights violations. Slorc's use of forced labor - especially as porters for the army - as well as forced resettlement of civilians continued, causing hundreds of deaths due to disease, harsh treatment, and overwork. Five hundreds or more Burmese

remained in prison for political reasons, including more than 40 parliamentarians elected in 1990; approximately 200,000 Rohingyas (Burmese Muslims from Arakan State) remained in refugee camps in the Bangladesh; a few thousand of students and dissidents continued as exiles in Thailand; and roughly 71,000 Burmese live in ethnic minority camps in Thailand near the Burma border."

The report stressed that Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remained under house arrest, her fifth year of detention by the Slorc, without being charged or having access to legal proceedings. Slorc persisted in the denying the basic freedom of speech and assembly, and arbitrary intrusions into private life remained pervasive. In a closed trial, in October 1993, the regime sentenced 12 dissidents, including one of the delegates to the National Convention, to 20 years in prison for distributing anti-Slorc information.

Slorc ignored a comprehensive resolution on Burma adopted by consensus in 1993 at the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) calling for an end to human rights violations in Burma, the unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, and the implementation of the 1990 elections.

"In view of the persistent abuses by Slorc, including its use of forced labour, its wholesale denial of basic political rights, and blatant manipulation of the national convention, Burma must continue to be judged a serious violator of international human rights norms," cited the report.

## HAVEL SUPPORTS DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Czech President Vaclav Havel, the prominent author and defender of human rights, said on February 13 he was sorry that Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi is still under house arrest. Mr Havel told a press conference at the end of four-day state visit to Thailand that he hoped she would be released. He nominated Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 out of "esteem" for her struggle for the cause of democracy.

Asked about the struggle for democracy in Burma at the press conference, Mr Havel affirmed that he mentioned Suu Kyi's situation in discussion with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and deemed it "appropriate" to do so.

"I did mention Madam Aung San Suu Kyi in my discussion with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai. I consider it my duty because I have felt sympathy for her effort and she is currently under house arrest in the neighbouring country. I deemed it appropriate to mention her struggle.

I was also waging a struggle for freedom in my own country. I have naturally felt deeper sympathies for all those who have waged similar struggles. For those standing alone or are facing superior adversaries, they deserve respect and support because of their struggle and sacrifice."

## SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR PRESENTS FINAL REPORT

Special Rapporteur on Burma Professor Yozo Yokota On 24 February 1994 presented his final report on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma to the 50th session of the Commission on Human Rights held in Geneva, Switzerland. The Special Rapporteur said that Slorc should consider accession to: the International Covenants on Human Rights; the Convention against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the two protocols additional to the Geneva Convention of 1949.

Burma law and practice should be brought into line with acceptable international standards regarding protection of the physical integrity rights, including the right to life, protection against disappearance, prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, providing humane conditions for all persons under detention and granting the minimum standard of judicial guarantees. Freedoms of thought, assembly, and expression, including a free press and media, should be fully guaranteed.

Regarding the political prisoners in Burma, Special Rapporteur said, "All political leaders including elected political representatives, students, workers, peasants, and others arrested or detained under martial law after the 1988 and 1990 demonstrations or as a result of the National Convention, should be tried by a properly constituted and independent civilian court in an open and internationally accessible judicial process. If found guilty in such judicial proceedings, they should be given a just sentence, or alternately, they should be immediately released, with the responsibility of the Government to refrain from all acts of intimidation, threat or reprisal to them or to their families."

He also cited that Slorc should release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi immediately, and at any event, she should not be kept under house arrest or any other form of detention after 20 July 1994 when Slorc will have no legal basis to continue her detention. Moreover, he said that Slorc should withdraw recent announcement that her house arrest would be extended until 1995.

Regarding the acts of soldiers, including commanders and officers, Special Rapporteur said Slorc should take necessary steps to bring them "in line with accepted international human rights and humanitarian standards so that they will not commit arbitrary killings, rapes, confiscation of property, forced portage, forced labour, forced relocation, or any other ill-treatment of innocent villagers and peasants."

He also urged Slorc that military and law-enforcement personnel, including prison guards, should be thoroughly informed and trained as to their responsibilities for the treatment of all persons in full accord with the standards as set out by international human rights instruments and humanitarian law.

All acts - including all acts of intimidation, threat or reprisal - by authorities involving human rights violations should be given the magnitude of the abuses and official condemnation should be made by Slorc. The Special Rapporteur added that such acts should not benefit from the present system of complete denial and impunity of Slorc.

The report urged Slorc to consider the revision of the 1982 Citizenship Law to abolish its burdensome requirements for citizenship. The law should not apply its categories of second-class citizens in a manner which has discriminatory effects on racial or ethnic minorities.

Moreover, the report also urged Slorc to cooperate fully with the UNHCR for facilitating and ensuring voluntary and safe return of Rakhine Muslims from Bangladesh.

## CUT OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SLORC.

*In the hope of supporting its members who are victims of the war, ABSDF initiated social care projects such as the Rehabilitation Centre where the writer found hope for the people who are handicapped by the civil war. -- The Editor*

The unspoiled Salween and the dense green forest evoke in me a sense of peace and calm as the motor boat I was in sped through the river towards the Rehabilitation Center. It is hard to imagine that a civil war is gripping the people of Burma.



## A Trip to the Rehabilitation Centre

what the objectives of the centre are. He said, "The primary aims are to raise more confidence on our democratic struggle, to uplift our morale and to rehabilitate us through vocational training for our future. I have been here for about a year and I am gradually regaining confidence of my existence and the contribution I can still make towards my organisation."

The boat soon drew to a stop and I was met on the riverbank by the person who is in charge of the Rehabilitation Centre, Maung Maung Teik. He welcomed me warmly and led me towards the Rehabilitation Centre. Then I caught my first sight of the disabled students. The apparent calm of the environment was shattered. Yes, a civil war is indeed raging through Burma. The students are the unquestionable proof of the brutality of the civil war.

medical care. As I looked around, I saw that some were paralysed in the hand or shoulder or leg. The physical handicap however, did not seem to kill the determined spirit that I saw in their eyes. I turned to the student nearest to me. He had injured his left hand and shoulder. I asked him

A student with leg injury joined our conversation. He pointed at the sewing machines and started to explain about the training programmes. "We started the training at the end of 1992. At the beginning we only had three sewing machines. Later friends and well-wishers contributed generously

To Page (59)

I was introduced to six students and Maung Maung Teik explained that they were injured in the battlefields at the Sleeping Dog Mountain and in Karenni territory. Some of them were hospitalised in Mae Sot and others in Mae Hong Son Hospital for months before they came to this centre for rehabilitation and further





*Harn Yawng hwe travelled to Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Manerplaw from January 13-25 to access the situation. The following is his assessment. This trip was made at the request of the Oslo Group, Prime Minister Dr Sein Win of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma and Chairman U. Win Khet of the National League for Democracy — Liberated Area. Harn Yawng hwe was accompanied for a portion of the trip by Jack Sterken from Canada.*

---

## SLORC'S CEASEFIRE TALKS



### THAILAND AND BURMA

In the past, at least five different departments of the Thai government have been responsible for the policy towards Burma — the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Foreign Ministry (FM), the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), the National Security Council (NSC) and the military.

Coordination among the various departments has always been problematic because of the vested interests of powerful individuals within the establishment. It was generally accepted that the PMO and FM were more sympathetic to the Burmese democracy movement than the MOI, NSC or the military. The visit of the Nobel Peace laureates to the Thai-Burmese borders in 1993, which was a tremendous international success, unfortunately changed the power structure in Thailand.

The FM was blamed for allowing Thailand to be used by the Burmese democracy movement. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) in Rangoon also embarked upon a campaign to undermine the influence of the FM by ignoring initiatives proposed by the FM. The Thai Foreign Minister himself visited Rangoon in September 1993 to improve his standing but returned empty handed. In contrast, visits to Rangoon by the military and NSC achieved great success.

MOI also lost its influence as General Chavalit, the Interior Minister, became more and more

pre-occupied with his own political survival. This has left the field open for the NSC to push its own Burma policy forward as the national policy. Although the PMO and the military deny that Thailand has changed its policy towards Burma and the Burmese democracy movement, the NSC's policy is definitely the de facto policy in force today and accounts for the hardening of the Thai position toward the Burmese democracy movement within the last 6 months. There are indications that a special joint-operations task force will be set up to implement NSC policy. This will prevent the MOI from directly influencing Burma policy on the ground.

### THAI NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

According to the NSC, the three most pressing problems faced by Burma today are:

- (a) National reconciliation between the Burman and other ethnic groups,
- (b) Democratisation,
- and
- (c) The illegal drug trade — opium production.

The NSC concedes that, in the long run, a democratic system of government is required to sustain national reconciliation in Burma. However, it maintains that democratisation and the illegal drug trade are Burma's internal problems and do not concern Thailand. For the time being, the NSC is only concerned with national reconciliation in Burma because it poses a possible threat to Thailand's security. It postulates that, if the fighting in Burma continues, the situation could deteriorate as in Bosnia and result in a massive influx of refugees into Thailand.

The NSC is, therefore, determined to stop the fighting and strengthen Slorc's position so that it can remain in control and prevent Burma from breaking up. To achieve its goal, the NSC is prepared to use whatever means it has at its disposal to encourage the Karennis, Karens and Mons along Thailand's border to negotiate ceasefire with Slorc. It would also like to see all Burmese dissidents - students and others - leave Thai soil. The NSC would like to send all Burmese students to the 'safe' camp or back across the border into the jungles. The NSC has proposed to Slorc that it announces an amnesty and takes back dissidents. The NSC would be prepared to expel foreigners and NGOs that oppose its policy or attack the Thai Government.

In the NSC's view, if all Burmese dissidents are returned to Burma and ceasefires are negotiated between Slorc and the ethnic groups, Thailand's security will be assured. Ideally, the NSC would like all parties involved in the Burmese conflict to talk and negotiate a settlement but in its view, that is an internal Burmese matter. The NSC, however, would ensure that Slorc makes some concessions to the ethnic groups.

### SLORC'S CEASEFIRE OFFER:

Based on previous Slorc settlements with ex-Communist party of Burma(CPB) forces and the Kokang, Wa, Shan, Pa-O, Palaung and Kachin ethnic groups, it is expected that Slorc will first negotiate separate ceasefires with the Mon, Karenni and Karen. The negotiation period could be very short as was the case with the ex-CPB, Kokang and Wa groups or extended as was the case with the Kachin.

At an appropriate time, the military could "legally" seize power and once again "save" the country for disintegrating.

There is a definite possibility that the various negotiations will be concluded before the ASEAN meeting in Bangkok in July 1994. At the very least, some 'significant' announce-

ment will be made before then. It is expected that Slorc will grant some measure of the local autonomy to the various ethnic groups. According to Thai sources, Slorc will adopt the "Yunan" or China model where, for example, the Karen National Union (KNU) would be allowed to contest local elections in the Karen state and become a state government with limited powers. However, the KNU will have limited input into national politics which will continue to be controlled by the military.

This means that a federal system of government is not negotiable and the ethnic people will be relegated to the status of second-class citizens. Ethnic state will also be further divided along ethnic lines into sub-regions with local autonomy to further weaken their political influence on national politics. The consensus of the various groups along the border is that Slorc will use the National Convention and the ceasefire talks to demonstrate to the international community that it is making progress in democratising the political process in Burma. This claim will be made sometime before the ASEAN meeting. Once it is accepted by ASEAN and its dialogue partners, Slorc will appeal to the international

community for aid to develop the country in order to maintain the peace.

Slorc is already using Kachin ceasefire talks to encourage foreign NGOs to come and help develop the border regions. The Kachin Baptist Convention was allowed to invite a numbers of foreigners to visit the Shan and Kachin states recently. There is also the strong possibility that Slorc will move against Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army (MTA) to demonstrate that it is not involved in the drug trade. Slorc has already moved up troops to block the MTA into an area between the Salween river and the Thai border. The US Drug Enforcement Administration is reported to have warned the Thai government not to allow Khun Sa to retreat into Thailand. Once Khun Sa is sacrificed, the US DEA and the UN will be hard-pressed not to step up their drug eradication aid programmes to Slorc.

Whether or not Slorc succeeds in removing Khun Sa, it has nothing to lose by launching operations against him. Khun Sa is the product of the Burmese military's strategy to undermine the Shan nationalist movement and the military has long benefited financially from Khun Sa. However, his recent "nationalist" tendencies have become problematic to Slorc. And although Khun Sa is known internationally as the "Drug King", the drug trade in Burma is now controlled by other Slorc allies - the ex-CPB, Kokang and Wa forces. Khun Sa has, therefore, become expendable. Once foreign aid to Burma is restored, Slorc will consolidate its position and try to weaken the democracy movement. When this threat diminishes, it will withdraw some of the concessions granted to the ethnic groups (the right to bear arms, etc.)

A government elected under the guidelines drawn up by the National Convention could also be set up to win international approval and to negotiate difficult issues with the ethnic groups. At an appropriate time, the military could "legally" seize power and once again 'save' the country for disintegrating. General Ne Win sized power from elected government in 1962, claiming that the proposal to amend the 1947 constitution to a federal constitution was leading to national disintegration.

## OBSERVATIONS:

The current Thai policy to cooperate closely with Slorc is a very dangerous once because it leaves Thailand with no other option should it prove unsuccessful. While it may be possible to argue that the current policy is good for Thai security at the moment, it is dangerous to allow short-term security considerations to override a nation's long-term foreign policy options.

The Thai government may feel that it can distance itself from the NSC should the policy prove unsuccessful or claim the credit if it succeeds. The NSC may feel it can adopt the same tactic since the current policy is being implemented by a Thai businessman who is personal advisor to the chairman of the NSC. A similar arrangement was used by the NSC chairman and his advisor in Cambodia for the

Khmer Rouge. However, neither the NSC nor the Thai government will be able to deny responsibility for the current policy if it fails, as was demonstrated in Cambodia.

While the NSC policy is based on security

reasons, personal motivations cannot be ruled out altogether. Both the NSC chairman and his advisor resent US and western influence in the third world. Like Slorc, they subscribe to the view that Asians should resolve Asian problems. In the advisor's opinion, Thailand initiated the Cambodia solution and invited the UN to help resolve the problem but, instead of resolving it the Asian way, the UN agenda was hijacked by western nations and Thailand became the culprit. Therefore, he does not want the UN to become involved in yet another neighboring country. The advisor has also had a business and personal relationship with the Burmese military since the 1960s. He was agent for the US\$1 million Thai fishing trawler which was blown up in January 1991 by dissident Burmese students.

The Thai NSC's analysis of the situation in Burma is seriously flawed. Based on its familiarity with the poorly organised Burmese democracy movement on the border, the NSC has underestimated the strength of the movement within Burma. It assumes that Aung San Suu Kyi has no real support and that she is only being used by western nations to advance

**The current Thai policy to co-operate closely with Slorc is a very dangerous once because it leaves Thailand with no other options should it prove unsuccessful.**

their own agenda.

The NSC views the Burmese military as a potent political force with 350,000 discipline members plus their immediate circle of beneficiaries. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy with its 2 million members and the fact that it won 80% of the contested seats in the 1990 elections is conveniently ignored. Based on this mistaken premise, the NSC has concluded that only the Burma Army has the capability and organisation to "save" Burma.

The NSC further assumes that Burma is about to disintegrate because the Burma Army's control is not strong enough. The reverse is true. Burma is about to disintegrate because the Army has progressively tighten its control on the Burmese population since independence in 1948. The Army is the largest it has ever been and the threat of disintegration has never been greater. Strengthening military control in Burma will accelerate the process of disintegration.

The NSC is assuming that the ethnic conflict in Burma is one of racial hatred. Although various ethnic groups are involved and most resistance groups are organised along ethnic line, the basic issue in Burma is not a racial one. Apart from isolated incidents, the ethnic armies do not systematically massacre other ethnic populations. In general, they attack Burma Army units and government installations and the Burma Army itself is multi-ethnic. The Burma Army, however, does commit atrocities against specific ethnic and religious populations. Racial hatred and mutual distrust do exist but, from the very beginning in 1946, Burma's ethnic leadership has campaigned for equal political rights. Only when their rights were repeatedly denied and they were suppressed by force of arms, did the ethnic groups resort to armed struggle. Even secessionist movement were fueled, not by a desire to be ethnically pure, but by a desire to be able to control their own destiny. Ceasefire with a token freedom to engage in trade without real political concessions at the national level will, therefore, not solve Burma's problems.

The NSC is assuming that the Burmese population is poor and is suffering primarily because of the fighting. It is claiming that if the fighting is stopped, people will enjoy new economic benefits and suffer less. The Burmese

**Stopping the fighting while ignoring the root cause for the suffering and poverty will only aggravate the situation and prolong the suffering.**

population has resorted to armed struggle because 31 years of military rule has impoverished the land and reduced the people to beasts of burden at the mercy of the military. Stopping the fighting while ignoring the root

cause for the suffering and poverty will only aggravate the situation and prolong the suffering.

The NSC is assuming that, given a strong SLOC, ceasefires and increased investments, Burma's economy will begin to develop enough to satisfy everyone and both political and ethnic issues will be forgotten. In order for a nation to be able to absorb investments and develop, its economy and infrastructures have to be functioning. Unlike other developing nations, all infrastructures that undergird Burmese society and economy have been destroyed by the military in over 30 years of unchallenged rule. Only a facade, which is used to impress uninitiated foreigners, remains. Even the military, which was once the only functioning institution, has deteriorated into a gang of petty warlords. Increased investments will not rebuild the economy. The increased cash flow will only benefit the power elite and serve to further alienate the impoverished population. To have economic development, the military's stranglehold on power has to be broken.

#### ANALYSIS:

Given the fact that since 1948 the Burmese military has always opted for a military solution to Burma's political problems, the fact that it is now offering to negotiate a ceasefire with the various ethnic groups, is something to consider. Ceasefires are of course nothing new. Ceasefires have been negotiated and broken numerous times in the past as political negotiations failed. What makes this ceasefire different is the fact that the ethnic groups are being allowed to retain their arms and territory while they negotiate for some form of recognition. In the past, the military had always insisted that the ethnic armies had to surrender first before any negotiations could be broached. This condition no longer seems to apply. Considering the fact that the Burma Army is numerically the strongest it has ever been in its entire history and it now has the most modern weapons it has ever possessed, this change in tactic is significant.



Why is Slorc not pursuing the military solution that it has always advocated? The clue to that may be continued in the speeches made by Slorc Secretary 1. Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt inviting the ethnic groups to ceasefire talks. He repeatedly asserted that the invitations are not being extended "because Slorc is facing difficulties in political, military and economic spheres".

In spite of its increased repression of the civilian population, Slorc has not been able to suppress dissent. Sporadic outburst of violence in different parts of the country attest to the tenuous control Slorc has. The recent knifing of a student by pickpockets in Rangoon gave Slorc nightmares about a student uprising, promoting it to fire senior police officials to appease dissatisfied students. An automobile accident in Mandalay also became a cause for rioting. Slorc may have turned Burma into a nation of 40 million hostages but, in turn, it has become a besieged invader in its own country. In spite of having relocated millions of villagers to ensure its safety, Slorc is safe only in the cities and behind the barbed wire of its fortified military garrisons.

Slorc is also aware that its National Convention has fooled no one domestically nor internationally. The 20 December 1993 unanimous resolution passed by the UN General Assembly made it clear that the international community would not accept Slorc's continued manipulation of the political process.

Compounding Slorc's problem is Burma's economy. In spite of rosy forecasts and reports of growing foreign investments, Slorc has not been able to attract enough investments to make up for the loss in foreign aid. Burma's foreign debt has mushroomed to US\$7.5 billion while foreign exchange reserves grew to US\$ 137 million in 1993 from a low of US\$10 million in 1988. The foreign investment Slorc has been able to attract has created its own problems. The cities are experiencing a mini-boom but the people in the country are worse off than they were 5 years ago when Slorc took over. Even the army units are having to resort to living off the land.

To make matter worse, most of the small foreign businesses investing in Burma are owned by overseas Chinese from Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan and elsewhere. This visible Chinese presence, coupled with the massive influx across the bor-

der of traders from China, is causing even Burmese within the military to question Slorc's economic policies. There are indications that the military is also becoming increasingly restive as General Ne Win grows older and his health deteriorates (he is 84 years old.)

All these factors lead to the conclusion that Slorc is not in as strong a position as it would like the world to believe. It is important to realise that Slorc is not entering into negotiations with the ethnic groups from a position of strength.

It is also important to know that Slorc is negotiating in order to find a solution to the problems it is facing in order to ensure its survival. Slorc is not yet seriously looking for a solution to Burma's problems. Slorc will negotiate with the ethnic groups but concede only enough to ensure its own survival. Remaining in power is Slorc's bottom line.

Another important conclusion to be drawn from Slorc's change in tactics is the fact that Slorc is vulnerable to international pressure. If Slorc had been able to gain international recognition and foreign aid, it would not have bowed to pressure from Japan, China and Thailand to negotiate with the ethnic groups.

## PROPOSED STRATEGY

Given the conclusion that Slorc is vulnerable to external pressure and that it will negotiate with the ethnic groups only to ensure its survival, the following strategy is proposed.

From the way Slorc is conducting the ceasefire negotiations and from the above analysis, it is clear that Slorc wants to divide the Burmese democracy movement into those fighting for ethnic rights and those fighting for democracy. Slorc knows that it cannot hope to continue to survive if the various groups work together as a single movement fighting for their basic rights and putting aside ethnic differences.

In conducting separate negotiations, Slorc is hoping to exploit the divergent views and interests of the various groups and completely separate the two issues of ethnic rights and democracy. It is further hoping to weaken the position of the ethnic groups by exploiting differences that exist between the various ethnic groups.

Any strategy that is adopted, therefore, must seek to preserve and strengthen the unity that already exist between the ethnic and other

groups within the democracy movement, communication is vital.

It is also clear that Slorc's negotiation strategy is to concede as little as possible while extracting maximum political mileage internationally. Slorc is willing to grant limited autonomy to the ethnic groups if this will ensure its survival and it can retain control of the national political process. In other words, if Slorc's strategy succeeds, democracy in Burma will be postponed.

The negotiation strategy of the democracy movement, especially the ethnic groups, must underline the fact that the basic rights they desire include the right to determine the national political system.

In other words, local autonomy without a say in national politics, is unacceptable. As full citizens, the ethnic people must have the same basic human and political rights as their fellow citizens. Ceasefire negotiations must lead to negotiations about Burma's political future and all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or political backgrounds, must be allowed to participate in the process.

Another obvious aim of Slorc's ceasefire negotiations is to gain a measure of international acceptance and, with that, the loosening of economic purse strings. While the people of Burma need assistance, the premature of granting of aid will inhibit the process of negotiations, necessary if the problem in Burma is to be resolved. Aid should be withheld until separate ceasefire negotiations become a full-fledged political dialogue between the military and the ethnic and other groups in the democracy movement. Unlike other countries, the "government" in Burma does not provide for the people. They survive in spite of the government. Aid to the government does not mean aid to the people. To ensure aid to the people, it must be delivered directly to the people or the government has to be changed.

Economic aid, whether private or public, must not be resumed prematurely. Ceasefire negotiations do not necessarily guarantee that political talks will follow. Aid should resume only with political change.

#### POSSIBLE DANGERS:

The main danger in the ceasefire negotiation process is that Slorc might succeed in dividing the democracy movement. The incident between the Karens and the students which was

reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation is a case in point. Fortunately, the issue was resolved quickly and peacefully by the National Council of the Union of Burma.

The second danger is that Slorc might refuse to move from individual ceasefire negotiations to a broader-based dialogue with all parties involved in the conflict in Burma.

The third danger is that donors nations and well-intentioned NGOs might prematurely resume aid to Slorc before it commits itself to political dialogue and agree to negotiate with both the ethnic and other groups in the democracy movement.

The greatest danger, of course, is that Slorc may be able to achieve all three of the above.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Although the various ethnic groups have to negotiate separately with Slorc, communications between the groups must be maintained and enhanced to ensure that Slorc cannot play one group off against the other.

2. Pro-democracy groups, especially those in Democratic Alliance of Burma and the NCUB, should refrain from publicly criticising member organisations in their negotiations. Support and understanding for each other's position should be encouraged. Dialogue is essential.

3. The ethnic groups should insist on wider participation in political negotiations to resolve Burma's problems and not just negotiate ceasefires.

4. A clear message should be sent to international community to continue their efforts to bring about change in Burma in spite of the ceasefire negotiations. The process needs to be extended beyond the ceasefire negotiations Slorc is hoping to conclude.

5. Given that the ethnic groups will not be able to travel overseas this year to lobby for their cause internationally, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma must represent the ethnic interests by lobbying both as the NCGUB and the NCUB. The main focus will be the United Nations, ASEAN and Japan and the main request will be for the holding of tripartite talks between the military in Burma, the democracy movement and the ethnic groups.

6. All concerned should help to maintain unity

among the ethnic and other groups within the democracy movement. Visits and expressions of concern would be useful, as well as material assistance.

7. The status of students and other democracy groups in ethnic areas during negotiations with Slorc needs to be clarified. This freedom of movement and ability to function should be guaranteed.

8. Bangkok-based embassies should be encouraged to visit the border areas to assess the situation on the ground and show concern for the democracy movement as a whole.

9. Thailand should be asked to review its policy. It should be commended for its desire to bring about national reconciliation in Burma. But in the interest of its own future relations, it should be encouraged to help bring about real change rather than merely supporting Slorc's agenda.

10. Thailand should be encouraged to continue being tolerant towards members of Burmese democracy movement. Many of the students in exile will in the future become leaders of Burma. Their safety and freedom of movement are prime concerns. The freedom of elected representatives to travel is another key issue.

11. Japan and ASEAN nations should be requested to assist Thailand in persuading Slorc to have a dialogue with leaders of the democracy movement as well as the ethnic leaders in order to find a long-term solution. Ceasefires alone are not sufficient.

12. The United Nations should be requested to implement the 1993 UNGA resolution by bringing about tripartite negotiations (the military, ethnic groups and other in democracy movement).

13. The UN, Japan and ASEAN should be requested to refrain from premature aid to Slorc. If any aid is to be given, cross-border aid directly to the suffering population should be considered.

14. NGOs should be educated and requested to refrain from rushing to Burma until real change take place. They too can start by working across the border if they really wish to alleviate the suffering.

15. The US government should be encouraged to complete their Burma policy review as quickly as possible and to decisively implement a policy that will facilitate all the above.

---

## FRIENDSHIP AS AN IDEOLOGY

---

Everyone knows what friendship is. It is the basic cement of human relationship. It is a quality, a frame of mind, which makes it possible for people of different background, upbringing, educational level, class, culture, language, from different regions of a country and from different parts of the world, etc., to live together as human beings.

Friendship is a magical quality which induces tolerance, co-existence, compromises, understanding, and love or *metta*. For example, one may strongly disagree with the politics of a friend, or with his/her habits, morals, tastes, actions, and etc. Nonetheless, friendship is seldom terminated because of such differences and disagreements.

The point here is that the strength and utility of

---

*As enemies, the only way to settle disputes/differences is to fight to the death, until one side is defeated. Even then, those defeated will one day rise up to fight another day.*

---

friendship or feelings that underlie friendship has been grossly underestimated, especially in politics. Or more to the point, friendship has been misused to exclude those who are not regarded as friends (even if they are one's compatriots).

Friendship, or the feelings (mind-frame) underlying friendship, can in fact be a highly efficacious political tool. That is in rebuilding Burma, it



would be very constructive for us to view everyone, as potential friends. Just as opposition activists/leaders have friends in the military, those in the military too have friends in the opposition camp. Also, all Bama probably have Kachin, Shan, Karen friends, and vice versa.

Without any doubt, there are serious problems, based on grave differences in ideology and positions, among people in Burma. They are definitely insurmountable if we view each other as enemies. As enemies, the only way to settle disputes/differences is to fight to the death, until one side is defeated. Even then, those defeated will one day rise up to fight another day.

The truth however is that, despite our differences, albeit grave and serious, we are not enemies. We are compatriots. Our future is linked. Whether we like it or not, we are all in the same leaky, sinking boat. As such, in attempting to solve problems, we would be more successful if we adopt as our first principle, the ideology or mind-frame of friendship.

This means viewing /treating everyone involved in politics as potential friends, and operating/ thinking within a mind -frame that underlies friendship. An adherence to the ideology of friendship would produce better results in both the short-and long-term, than a strict adherence to such notions as nationalism, the rights and wrongs of politics, national unity — which are, at any rate, all multifaceted, multidimensional, contested.

That is, questions/issues such as how nationalism or national unity is to be defined (and adopted), what kind of political system is best suited to Burma (i.e., democracy, semi-democracy, pseudo-democracy, dictatorship, despotic rule), what kind of state arrangement/ organisation shall we adopt (i.e., unitary, semi-unitary, federal, semi-federal, confederation, etc.) — all these can be settled only if we first embrace the ideology of friendship as our basic ideology. In other words, without the adoption of an ideology of friendship by all concerned, the above questions/issues can never be settled peacefully or rationally.

---

*What Burma needs urgently and crucially is not political formulas, slogans, ideologies, etc., but a basic mind-frame which makes possible the resolving of important issues and questions.*

---

---

*The ideology of friendship is especially crucial in the achievement of the goals which the people of Burma aspire to democracy, peace, harmony, prosperity, and freedom.*

---

What Burma needs urgently and crucially is not political formulas, slogans, ideologies, etc., but a basic mind-frame which makes possible the resolving of important issues and questions. The most simple and effective of all-mind frames is the ways of thinking and acting which we routinely practise among friends.

Once we are able to visualise everyone in Burma as potential friends, and when we begin to treat and interact with each other as friends, problems which have divided us and which has caused us so much bloodshed, sufferings, hardships will all appear very resolvable. At the root of our problems is our underestimation of the mind-frame that underlies relations/interactions between friends.

Friendship, the feeling/mind-frame which routinely informs relationships between friends, is not only socially effective, but it is a basic component of problem-solving at national level. It will help us understand each other better, to fear or mistrust each other less, and help us in seeing problems in a more rational, less emotional manner. This, in turn, will enable us to understand each other's viewpoints, exchange views, discuss disagreements/differences coolly and rationally, and it will help us, ultimately, to explore all variables and options, dispassionately and with the use of reasons.

Also, the beauty of it all is that all of us knows what friendship is. There is no need for anyone to undergo training in friendship. All that which is required for the adoption of the ideology of friendship is for us to simply extend to all compatriots the same kind of tolerance, patience, understanding, affection, forgiveness, we routinely and unthinkingly extend to our friends everyday.

The ideology of friendship is especially crucial in the achievement of the goals which the people of Burma aspire to democracy, peace, harmony, prosperity, and freedom.

Eugene Thaike Yawnghwe





wise "advised to travel only to the main tourist centers of the Rangoon, Bagan, Mandalay, Taunggyi and their vicinities," because "there are some restricted areas." They neglect to mention that the restricted areas cover two-third of the country; the few recommended destinations, all centrally located well away from rebel ethnic territories bordering on Thailand, Laos, China, India and Bangladesh, are the very same ones previously approved for group tours before the new "open door policy.")

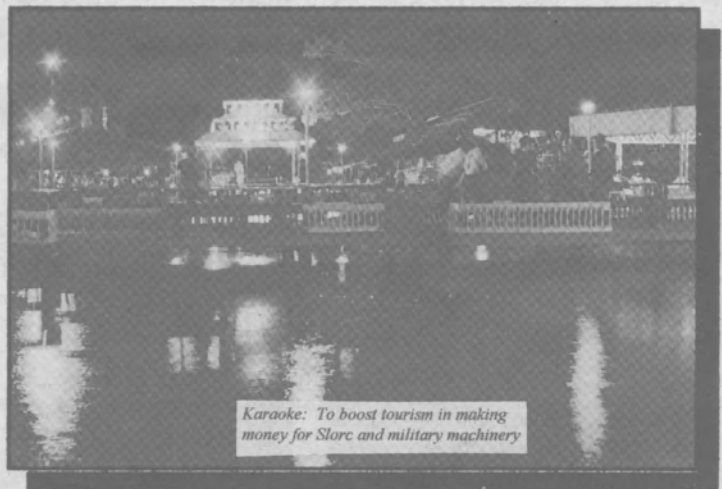
## YEARNING FROM RANGOON COMMERCE COPEs WITH BURMA'S MILITARY MUDDLE

Burma is changing, they would have you know. The Golden Land now welcomes Foreign Independent Travellers (FITs), who can make their own fourteen-day tour and lodging arrangements through any number of licensed travel agencies. And as of April 1, there are even duty-free shops in Rangoon Mingaladon Airport. You'd almost never know there's a civil war on.

Aside from all the soldiers everywhere, the first hint of anything amiss comes when converting money at the window just inside the customs counter. The compulsory minimum \$200 fetches a packet of Foreign Exchange Certificates (FECs), "issued by the *Central Bank of Myanmar* for the convenience of tourists" in handy domination of "equivalent to US\$ 1," "equivalent to US\$ .5" and "equivalent to US\$ 10." In the accompanying pamphlet, you are "requested to ignore touts" whose attractive offers

for local currency "could get you into trouble and spoil your visit." Roughly translated: this February's new FEC scam has done precious little to prop up the official exchange rate of six *Kyat* to the dollar; now you can also change FECs on the street at real rates seventeen times that, tendering one-hundred *Kyat* or more.

(Reading further, you are like-



Heading into town, billboard advertising Lucky Strike cigarettes and Sony stereos proclaim that the isolationist Burmese Way to Socialism, instituted three decades ago by General Ne Win after his 1962 military coup, has finally arrived at the market economy. Downtown Rangoon, the whitewash decay of its Victorian rowhouses still worlds away from the mirror-glazed

skyscrapers of Bangkok, now boasts an electronics retailers street: Just look for all the illuminated Toshiba, Goldstar and Sanyo signs east of the Sule pagoda Road India neighbourhood. Hawkers spread Billy Idol, Madonna and Bon Jovi cassettes on the pavement, while Burmese "brothers" strut by in their *longyi* sarongs to the beat of rap music. A short jaunt west by three-wheeled taxi along the busy artery of Anawrahta Street, a massive new "international" shopping center is under construction. In Rangoon's Chinatown, shoppers throng to the stores on Mahabandoola Street late into the evening ever since the 11 pm curfew was lifted last year.

In Rangoon, all signs would seem to indicate things are indeed opening up. What gives that message a surreal twist are the huge red-and-white slogans still posted at strategic intersections: ONLY WHERE THERE IS DISCIPLINE WILL THERE BE PROGRESS, THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION LIES ONLY WITHIN, and TATMADAW AND THE PEOPLE, CO-OPERATE AND CRUSH ALL THOSE HARMING THE UNION.

They, the *Tatmadaw* — or State law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc), as the generals are calling themselves in their latest incarnation — are the very same regime that "crushed" the popular pro-democracy movement of 1988, virtually cutting their own throats in the foreign aid department. And in 1990, with the hold on domestic politics as sure as their grasp of language, they were the ones who sponsored nationwide elections, lost overwhelmingly to Nobel prize-winner Aung San Suu



Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD), then ignored the results with no pretext whatsoever. Five years on, Slorc spends an estimated 35-45% of the national budget on its "disciplinary" army of 300,000 strong, embroiled in a relentless struggle to Safeguard National Independence — presumably again from the will of the people.

Still, citizens are bearing up under the vise. Determined not to give the junta another excuse to crack down, no one is complaining. Neither is anyone afraid to be seen talking to foreigners; many you meet will jest in faltering English that Burma is the "forgotten country of Asia," though their hopes are far from "exotic." In Rangoon, people dream of normal lives, of free speech and free trade — everything marketed under the name "democracy". So, for the meantime, every copes with living under what are essentially wartime conditions.

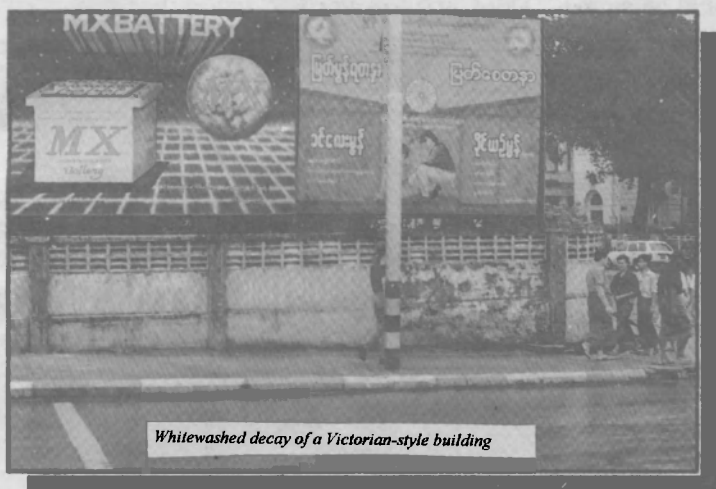
Inflation has soared to an alarming 36% and nearly all staple foods cost at least double their 1990 price, though no one looks hungry — at least not in Rangoon. Petrol (gasoline), which is supposed to cost K60 a gallon from the *Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise*, is not only rationed — it's simply not available. The



Forgotten civil war in this country

stands are never open, unless you happen to drive a government car, or one of the *Myanmar Travels and Tours*' limousine buses. Instead, you have to find the local black marketeer who sells "surplus" fuel siphoned off the military for K220. Yet difficult as things are now, everyone remembers even darker, starvation times in the late-'80s, when the economy plummeted a grim-11%. This past year, by official reports, the gross domestic product actually rose slightly over 10%.

Slowly, the iron grip may be starting to rust. Slorc's new "open-door policy" to promote foreign investment and limited private enterprise is basically a conciliatory measure. Half-heartedly initiated in 1989, when the regime was most strapped for hard currency, momentum has since picked up dramatically. While giant foreign hotel projects — such as the Japanese MCG Corporation's *Yangon International Hotel* — must still clear funds through the state-owned *Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank*, a rash of smaller tourist inns newly converted from upper class homes in Rangoon's Windemere district has been financed in part by the country's first private bank, opened last August. There



Whitewashed decay of a Victorian-style building

has even been a minor boom in business schools teaching accounting, foreign languages — chiefly American idiom — even word-processing and computer data management. Anticipation runs high that foreign investment and jobs are on the way.

Already arriving visa the port of Rangoon are cars. Lots of them, typically reconditioned models, mostly from Japan. Auto imports are one of the fastest growing businesses in Burma today: the volume of car shipments to the port of Rangoon has quadrupled in the last two years, from around 300 cars a month in 1991 to well over 1200 a month in the first half of 1993. At present, some 20 companies in Rangoon import, most operating out of somebody's yard; only four have regular access to maker parts and after-service facilities.

At Lwin Shoei Motors in the shadow of the golden bell-shaped Shwedagon Pagoda, Rangoon's holiest shrine, owner-salesman Lwin Aye (33) counts his blessings. The spirit of private enterprise has smiled on his new showroom, one of three in the city, built on family property at a capital investment of K1 million

(approximately US\$ 9500 at street rates). Nissan flags bedeck the simple concrete hangar, where gleam eight "like-new" Japanese machines. Yes, conditions have improved considerably, the young entrepreneur acknowledges, but the struggle is nowhere over: "The government keeps changing its policies. Before, three-quarters of what we imported had to be trucks, though last year what sold most was four-door saloon cars (sedans). Now as of April, duty is up to 400% for 2000-4000cc passenger cars, 500% for anything over that. Then we're told we have to include new cars in every shipment. But at least there's no limit any more on the number of cars one proprietary can bring in. And here we can sell as many as we import. "Lwin Aye sources most of his cars in Nagoya, where he participated in a work-study programme in the mid-'80s; Shoei's stock this month ranges from an '87 Toyota Corolla Ltd for K100 thousand, to a '93 Nissan Super Saloon for K250 thousand — almost 10 times the statistical Burmese annual per capital income. Real bargains, however, compared to K650-700 thousand for a brand-new factory import, or an incredible K4 million for a Toyota Surf 4WD off-road vehicle.

Somebody in this country must have money. You get the same impression at the Meis Ocean Centre, an unassuming appliance warehouse down on Merchant Street near the American Embassy. Perpetually packed with would-be-customers who came to ogle the merchandise and enjoy the air conditioning, the gray interior is a post-socialist epiphany of the all-electric home. Shelves of audio and video components vie with washing machines and refrigerators, all light gray, all Japa-

nese-brand, all imported from Singapore. Prices are in dollars, while a "tax" in *Kyats* varies erratically from item to item: a Pioneer *karaoke* vediodisc player run \$718 plus K6045 tax; a Pioneer car stereo, \$596 plus K7050; a Hitachi 29" television costs \$930 plus K11,000; the top Hitachi rice cooker, \$294 plus K2475. Obviously Slorc's two-currency system has some rather large black holes.

Meanwhile, the Slorc party line keeps wavering on commerce-related issues. The '92-93 *Yangon Directory*, "a first-of-its-kind English-language business listing, devotes an introductory page to "Causes and Principles." The three National causes — in Burmese only — "Nondisintegration of the Union," "Nondisintegration of National Solidarity," and "Perpetuation of National Sovereignty" — perch uneasily above the Three Basic Principles of Trade — "1. Trade activities should be aimed

at the interest of the State and people, " 2. Trade activities should not be a burden to the people," and "3. Trade activities should be aimed at Structuring a long-term Viable Trading System rather than to gain short-term profit." Inspiring words from a regime that has managed, despite a wealth of natural and human resources, to reduce this Golden Land to one of the ten poorest countries in the world.

Ultimately Slorc cannot choke back trade, though they remain extremely wary of creating an affluent middle class, the likes of which successfully ousted the military regime in Thailand last year. For as they themselves admit in the latest Slorc-speak slogan to appear around Rangoon: The opposite of democracy is anarchy.

(This Article was composed on 26 January 1993 by a traveler to Rangoon)





# **GAS PIPELINE UPDATES**

## *Slorc activities in the gas pipeline development areas*

While the negotiations for the signing of the gas supply deal appear to have stalled, there are indications that the plans are still active and both the companies and the Thais are simply binding their time. Slorc however, according to a large number of sources interviewed and consulted before during and after a trip to Sangkhlaburi and Nat Ei Taung, is reportedly active in trying to consolidate its hold in the occupied territory without making overt military attacks. This is understood to be part of the junta's psychological warfare tactics designed to pressure the Mon into the ceasefire. They have deployed an extraordinary number of troops into the areas around and between Ye and Tavoy, the area through which the gas pipeline is likely to go. According to the Mon intelligence officers there are 15 battalions stationed there, including offensive LIBs 334, 401, 402 through to 410, and the regular IBs 25, IB 104, IB 106 and IB 61. Slorc operatives have been talking and distributing pamphlets throughout the towns and villages urging the people to call for an end to the warfare and to concentrate on the "development" of the economy or face years more of the conditions that they are currently suffering (which includes stepped up demands for forced labour)

There are reports of substantial resources being poured into rapid infrastructure development in the Tenasserim Division. Slorc is currently having a track cleared for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy railway following the route of the old British telegraph line. For this they are using villagers from miles around as force labour to clear the foliage for some 20- 30 meters from either side of the track, and they said to have brought at least five bulldozers to work on the track. The route runs parallel at about 8

Kilometers distance to the existing Ye-Tavoy highway which has according to Mon source recently been repaired and upgraded. The railway is reported to be part of Slorc strategic planning for rapid troops deployment in the area and to make movements of revolutionary forces from the hills to the seas more difficult. As of the second week of December 1993 cleaning of the foliage had proceeded down as far as Natgyizin, a village some 40 Km north of where it is believed the gas pipeline will eventually be laid.

According to very well placed Mon military sources, prisoners brought in six truckloads from Moulmein in September 1993 have been forced to clear a track for a surveying teams that runs from Kaleinaung, through Kanbaut to Paung Daw at the coast. This is directly west of Nat Ei Taung and is thought to be the route by which the pipeline will go. The prisoners wear white prison clothes and some are shackled. They are being kept in LIB 409 compound at Kaleinaung. Two bulldozers were brought to Kaleinaung at the same time as the prisoners and are apparently not yet being used as of mid December 1993.

## *Thai actions relating to the gas pipeline plan*

The Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai on 7 September 1993 urged Slorc to "help execute the transaction (for the supply of gas) as soon as possible", and it was said by the Deputy Industry Minister that the Thais "excepted to cut a deal by the years end for the supply of 300 million cubic feet of gas per day." This has not transpired however. Instead, Thai energy officials have been quite silent (to our knowledge) since EGAT general manger Somboom Manenava said in mid-November 1993 that EGAT had "replaced Martaban gas-fuelled power projects in its "priority" implementation programme with conventional generators that can run on fuel oil and gas". According to the report on his statements this has resulted in the scrapping of the multibillion dollar, 1,800 MW Bang Saphan new thermal generator plant in Prachuab Khirikan area, and affects "up to four combined-cycle plants, each with 700 megawatts of generating capacity in the western and central regions " that were due to be commissioned in 1996.

Some environmentalists are skeptical about the deprioritisation of all such plans however, seeing

this as a ploy by the Thais in the negotiation of the gas price, and to put activist groups offguard. Some Thai environmentalists feel that most of the gas is slated to get to the petrochemicals industries (plastics, fertilizers, etc) who are a major consumer of gas products anyway and that cancelling. An Environmental Impact Assessment has been commissioned by EGAT for a proposed power plant at Ratchaburi — which is according to the September 8 article in the Nation quoting Thai ministers where the gas will be used, indicating that the plans have not been abandoned. Furthermore, Mon sources also claim that the Thai military showed them copies of a contract agreement between the oil companies and the Thais, and warned that they should not do anything to interrupt the gas pipeline plans as these were very important for the interests of Thailand. (Note it is possible that the documents shown by the Thai were fraudulent). The Mon have been threatened repeatedly by the Thais over the past three years that if they refuse to cooperate their people will suffer. These threats have been backed with actions such as being repeatedly relocated to inhospitable and remote areas where water is scarce and malaria common and deadly. At the present time the Mon have been given an ultimatum by senior Thai 9th Army officers that if they do not sign a ceasefire with Slorc, virtually all the refugees will be forcibly repatriated across into Burma, they will not be allowed to set foot in Thailand, and that they will not be allowed to get rice from Thailand. The majority of the refugees have already been ordered to relocate back over the border into a highly insecure area within shooting range of Slorc. From these

actions it can therefore be assumed that the plans are still very much active, and that the Thais are simply waiting for what they see as an appropriate time to take further action.

The Thai military, as part of its plan to gradually increase pressure on the various groups, has recently targeted NGO's giving cross border assistance to displaced persons. The Thai Military Intelligence (MI) and possibly the interior ministry have apparently also focused on Green November 32 and groups involved in campaigning against the Thai-Slorc energy projects. Thai environmentalists coming to the border to inspect possible dam sites were blocked by Thai police. 13 Burmese student leaders attending a meeting in Bangkok organised by the Students Federation of Thailand amongst other groups were arrested and imprisoned under harsh conditions after discussing ways to oppose the Thai-Slorc energy projects. GN32 activists have been watched by the Thai MI and they and others questioned about GN32's activities. Pressure has been applied to block funding of GN32 and other groups activities.

---

## Multinational oil company movement

---

There have been several reports of developments of significance in recent months in regard to the multinationals in Burma, although further verification is needed for the sources.

A very senior Shell Oil Co official is reported to have recently visited Bangkok and told Thai officials words to the effect of "Natural gas is the future, world oil supplies are limited, and oil is seen as too much of a polluter. Gas on the contrary is seen as being a cleaner fuel, and there are still plentiful reserves of it in the world." A sizable percentage of these reserves are in the South East Asia region, therefore Shell is preparing to invest up to US\$ 4 billion dollars in gas development in the region. Countries, they are looking to invest in include Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Burma. In relation to these development plans, Shell has recently bought a fleet of LNG tankers.

These factors may have special significance for Burma. Natural gas development in Burma as it stands at the moment is essentially dependent on finding a market for the gas in Thailand through a pipeline (or two), so delays in finishing the pipeline would cause major economic losses to the companies who have invested in the gasfield developments. Building a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant which would enable shipping of the gas to Europe or elsewhere would get around this problem and the gas would possibly bring a higher price. U Pe Kyi, the director of MOGE (*Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise*), announced in February 1992 that MOGE had been considering developing an LNG plant for years, and had held talks with "some parties that are very much interested in the LNG project" (Bangkok Post 28/2/92). He refused to name the parties, but at the time Slorc was negotiating with Royal Dutch/Shell, Total, and Unocal on the Martaban Gas Field and pipeline development plans. U Pe Kyi at that time

said the LNG project would require a "very heavy investment" of several billion US dollars which they could not raise because of "the high financial burdens" it would impose on the country. MOGE had already chosen a site for the LNG plant at the tip of the Delta region.

It is conceivable that Shell has already returned to Burma, or that it never really pulled out — in the same way that Unocal did. Shell, like Unocal, announced that after "disappointing results" they were pulling out of Burma. Unocal later reappeared on the Burma oil scene as a 47.5% partner with Total in the Martaban venture. Royal Dutch Shell, the world's biggest oil company, previously held a large concession in central Burma, and it was the only company out of all those who looked for onshore oil resources that found commercially viable deposits. However, only months after finding the field Shell announced its pullout from Burma saying that the find was "barely commercial" and that they "had looked at other places but ... have not been able to reach mutual agreement with the government ... so our business here is finished". However, Shell's "barely commercial" find is now said to be producing some 40 million cubic feet of gas per day even under Slorc management, and these recent moves indicate a continuing involvement by Shell. It is even possible that Royal Dutch/Shell, perhaps in partnership with Total, Unocal and MOGE, already has a secret agreement to build the LNG plant.

Relevant to this development is that Total and Unocal are now reported to be laying an undersea gas pipeline ashore to the delta from the Martaban Gas Field. Total's gasfield exploration programme was due to be completed in July 1993, and it is understood that they managed to find more substantial amount of gas. Although GN32 does not at present have figures for the daily production from the field, it is assumed that hundreds of millions of cubic feet of gas per day are being released as pollution into the atmosphere as there is as yet no way to get it to shore and there is unlikely to be any way to stop the flow. Slorc is still having numerous problems supplying fuel to power the electricity generating plants, as well as to supply the fertilizer and manufacturing plants in Burma. Both Slorc and the companies are no doubt anxious to have the gas sold and put to some use as soon as possible.

Lending even further relevance to this theory is the role of the World Bank in Burma. It appears that the World Bank in a major energy policy seminar report called "Fuel Options for Power Generation" (National Energy Policy Office, 15 October 1993) has recommended to the Thai government that they "intensify negotiations with... *Meaner* regarding the import of gas" and "conclude agreements by mid 1994 if gas import from (Burma) is viable option". The World Bank has been promoting gas as "the fuel of choice for many years to come", defining it as cheap, clean, and generating good energy for quantity. In the report there is a contradictory statement worth noting that says "... given the recent signing of a production sharing agreement between PTTEP and Burma, gas imports from Burma seem increasingly likely. It is expected that by 1998 about 300 mmcf of gas from Burma should begin flowing into Thailand ..." It is

likely that this is an error on the part of those who prepared the report as the rest of the report contains so many more references to continuing the negotiations. PTTEP did sign a production sharing agreement with Unocal and Slorc for an onshore block in 1989 or 1990, so it is possible that there is some confusion here. However, it could be that there is really an agreement...

Further to the World Bank's position in Burma, in 1987 the President of the World Bank, Barber Conable approved a US\$63 million credit for a project known as the Gas Development and Utilisation Project. This involved the further development of the Payagon gasfield in the lower hrawaddy Delta; the laying of a 103 Kilometre 18 inch diameter gas pipeline from Payagon to Rangoon and refurbishing of the existing 10 inch pipeline; design and installation of a gas distribution system for Rangoon; a training and technical assistance programme for MOGE personnel; and an LPG/CNG pilot programme. The Payagon Gasfield is approximately 150 Kilometre from the Martaban gasfield and is in line with Rangoon, so the length of gaspipe the Total/Unocal consortium would have to lay would be much shorter. There would be much greater market for the gas in Rangoon because of the World Bank support for the Burmese regime which is still ongoing. The World Bank as of 1987 was due to disburse some US\$ 374 million to projects in Burma, funds that it has continued to pay out despite the aid sanctions imposed in 1988.

(Research of Steve Thompson, Green November 32, 10 January 1994)



concern "that most of the elected representatives of the people were not included in the National Convention and called upon Slorc "to allow all citizens to participate freely in the political process", but this criticism came after the National Convention concluded its initial work.

The soldier-rulers of Burma ignored the UN demand and, as 1994 began, Slorc reassembled the members of the National Convention and gave them new instructions on what details to add to principles it already had adopted.

---

## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE POLITICAL CHANGES IN BURMA

---

There have been important changes taking place in Burma and Thailand which are reshaping Burmese politics. While appearing to be separate and independent of each other, these changes are related and mutually reinforcing.

Past UN resolutions calling for freeing all political prisoners, seating of the members of parliament who were elected in 1990 and transferring power, were ignored by Slorc while it systematically eliminated opponents to military rule in areas under its control.

In January 1993, Slorc felt confident enough in its unchallenged control in the Burma heartland, brought into existence a National Convention of hand-picked delegates to draw up the basic principles of the future constitution of Burma; in a clear signal to the people that the election of 1990 would be only a footnote in Burma's history, Slorc included in a small minority of those who were elected, filling the rest of the seats with representatives of social and economic groups whom it could count upon to do its bidding.

In September, the delegates completed their works to the satisfaction of the soldier-rulers by including the principle that the military shall be the leading element in the future government of Burma. The 1993 UN resolution "noted with

*Slorc probably sees this as the forerunner to a political organisation playing a role in parliament similar to the one GOLKAR plays in Indonesian politics.*

With the political principles it wants forming the basic of the future constitution, Slorc moved ahead with a second phrase of its plan — the creation of a nonpolitical party of functional groups to mobilise the populations in support of its leadership. Slorc probably sees this as the forerunner to a political organisation playing a role in parliament similar to the one GOLKAR plays in Indonesian politics.

The outlines of a GOLKAR-like party are apparent in the several social and economic groups included in the National Convention. Such a future party also is consistent with the 1962 mass organisations of workers and peasants created by Ne Win's Revolutionary Council to mobilise the people and give backing to the leadership of the military.

In 1970s, the mass organisations were displaced by an ideological political party, Burma Socialist Programme Party; but it failed to become the leader of the people. In the peaceful revolution of 1988, it was swept aside.

The new Slorc nonparty mass organisation of functional groups is called the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). One of USDA's first acts is holding mass meetings to rally support throughout the country for the constitutional principles adopted by the National Convention.

If it becomes Burma's GOLKAR, it will contest elections on behalf of the military rulers and seek to become the leading party in parliament dispensing patronage and providing access to the power holders.



Slorc's consolidation of power in the Burma heartland allows its freedom to concentrate on the civil war. For four decades the army has been battling the minorities without resolution. In 1989, Slorc found a way to negotiate a settlement with ethnic groups who broke a way from the Burma Communist Party threatening to carry on the fight under their own banners, according to their own interests.

Slorc offered a cease-fire to end the wars against the state in exchange for allowing the enemies to hold their weapons, administer their territories and control their economies. Political questions were put off until a government was in place. The approach worked better than warfare and gradually most of the smaller minority groups in revolt accepted Slorc's terms.

Toward the large ethnic groups in revolt, Slorc used its ever-growing army, new weapons and a more systematic applications of its "Four Cuts" policy to wear down the enemy, and demoralise its supporters.

Little attention has been paid to the effectiveness of Slorc's harsh policy against civilians. Reporters from NGOs on the Thai border say that in December 1993, more than 73,000 refugees crossed into Thailand to escape. General Khin Nyunt confirmed these reports in his November speech at Pa-an by saying that once prosperous villages in the Karen State were deserted and once fertile land was now lying fallow due to the absence of peace and people to till the soil; but he gave no hint that the situation resulted from the Army's "Four Cuts" policy, which included making war against non-combatants and driving them out of the country as refugees or into army camps at the mercy of the soldiers.

Using these tactics against the civilians and fighting the Kachin Independence Army in 1992, Slorc drew the Kachin leaders into ceasefire talks in January 1993. In the spring, Slorc permitted the Kachins to relay a ceasefire offer to the other minorities in revolt and even agreed that talks could be bilateral or multi-lateral, so long as they were held inside of Burma. The DAB — the organisation of the minorities and Burmans — rejected the offer and denounced the Kachins for holding unilateral talks with Slorc.

Following its success in consolidating power in the heartland and shaping the political system of the future, Slorc's approach to civil war

changed. General Khin Nyunt gave three speeches in November in the minority areas which included changes in language and content. He no longer referred to his opponents as bandits and terrorists; instead, he called them "armed groups" and "national brethren".

Khin Nyunt spoke no longer of a ceasefire as the first step to ending the civil war. Instead, he presented several new themes emphasising the success of Slorc in upholding three causes (perpetuation of national sovereignty, national solidarity and the nondisintegration of the union), the "emergence of an enduring constitution" for which the "National Convention has already laid down fundamental principles" and economic and social development in the minority areas once war ends. He called upon the "armed groups to join the legal fold" and ".... not miss the chance to join hands with the Government and strive for regional development ".....

The military rulers now see themselves as the legitimate holders of power, taking leadership in rebuilding nation. They no longer see their rule as temporary under martial law and are acting as the legal government of Burma.

Khin Nyunt urged the minorities to join them, saying nothing about the political issues which caused and sustained the civil war: Federalism vs central authority, preservation of local culture, control and exploitation of natural resources. Instead, he urged the minorities to hold talks individually with Slorc and learn how they could join in this enterprise under Slorc leadership.

There is a second major change in Slorc's campaign. Its plan for dealing with the minorities allows no place or role for the Burmans who were allied with them in the DAB. Slorc has never recognised the Burman students, monks and politicians, who took refuge in the hills after 1988, as anything other than troublemakers.

The rival government the elected Burmans formed, the aid it receives from foreign

---

*Thai officials accepted Slorc's analysis that the Burman refugees were troublemakers who were determined to continue the war as long as it took to restore civilian rule to the land.*

---

---

***So long as it does not have the backing of the people, Slorc is not the legitimate ruler of Burma, regardless of what it orders to be written in the new constitution.***

---

governments, the ability of its members to travel freely, see world leaders, plead its cause in world fora and its alliance with and support of the minorities who have sheltered it has been a constant irritation to Slorc, but one it could not eliminate by itself. In Thailand, Slorc found an ally in eliminating the problem.

Thailand has not announced a policy change toward Burma. Government leaders still claim to pursue a policy of constructive engagement and noninterference in Burma's internal affairs. But even before that policy was announced in the early 1990s, Thailand was involved.

After the Burma Army violently suppressed the peaceful revolution in 1988, it quietly permitted Burman students, monks and political figures to take refuge in Thailand and to move freely in and out of the border area of Burma. Also, for years, it saw the minorities on the border as buffer between itself and Burma. Together, the Thais and minorities participated in the illegal border trade by passing goods through the minority-controlled trading gates to the Burma black market; Thailand also permitted the weapons and ammunition to cross its territories to the minorities.

In December 1988, Thailand balanced its relations with Burma when its military leaders openly recognised the Burma military junta and Thai business was rewarded its contracts to cut teak and fish in Burma's waters.

Thai support in all sides in Burma affairs changed in 1993. The February public visit of Nobel Laureates to Thailand and effort to cross the Burma border to publicise their protest against the continued house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, embarrassed Thailand and brought open protests from Slorc. Later, Thailand faced internal problems from its business community when Slorc announced that it would not renew Thai contracts to cut teak and fish when they expired at the end of the year.

With the refugees problem threatening to grow

worse if warfare is renewed in the border areas, Thailand sees little chance of recovering its once prosperous cross border trade. Meanwhile, China has replaced it as Burma's leading supplier of consumer goods. With warfare suspended in northern Burma since 1990, the Chinese have been able to build new roads and bridges into Burma and expand trade and investment while Thailand's ability to complete has been hampered at the same time by the civil war. Today, threat of renewal of fighting continues to block its development and commercial plans for Burma.

By November, the Thais decided that it was in their interest to support Slorc's peace campaign. Thai officials became convinced that peace in the civil war will never come so long as the Burmans in the border area remain allied with the minorities. Thai officials accepted Slorc's analysis that the Burman refugees were troublemakers who were determined to continue the war as long as it took to restore civilian rule to the land. If they were removed from the minority areas, it was argued, the ethnic minorities would be inclined to accept Slorc proposals.

The Thais came to believe, that Slorc is the only power in Burma; that it is in the process of creating a strong government which could enforce peace, unity and order. In such a state, Thailand's interests in trade and investment could be furthered. Therefore, Thai policy makers concluded that it is in the nations' interest to assist Slorc.

Closing off the free movement of the Burmans through Thailand on the basis that the Burmans were without proper papers and were transiting Thailand illegally, Thai officials found an easy way to separate the Burman refugee leaders — many of whom were abroad at the UN and elsewhere — from their minority allies.

With the Burman refugee leaders out of the minority areas, the Thais added their pressure to that of Slorc in getting the minorities on their border to halt the war and begin talks with Slorc. The Thais made three persuasive arguments: (1) No more weapons and ammunition (2) the threat to push the minority refugees back across the border and into the hands of Slorc if the war continues and (3) an offer to give aid to the minority and fund development projects in the

To Page (44)

A training seminar aimed to train the Burmese students on how to campaign peacefully for democracy and human rights and to work for conflict resolution using peaceful means jointly organised by two Thai student organisation and a Thai NGO — Student Federation of Thailand (SFT), Students Committee for Human Rights in Burma (SCHRB) and Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (ACDB) — was scheduled on 2-5 December 1993. The Thai NGOs initially organised for the seminar to be held at the Student Christian Centre (SCC) in Bangkok, but some days before the seminar was begun, police kept an eye on SCC so that the venue was changed to the Hazakawa Wettrain centre in Don Muang, near the Bangkok International airport. It was felt that the students would be safe there because the centre is on military leased land and the centre is run by a member of the Thai royal family.

Of the 13 Burmese students who came from different parts of Thailand, some were on leave from holding centre at Ban Maneeloy in Ratchaburi province, run by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) of Thailand while others were travelling on passes issued by the Thai authorities giving them permission to travel to Bangkok from the border. They arrived at the Hazakawa Wettrain centre on December 2.

The second day of the seminar was restricted to Burmese students to allow them to get to know each other and to discuss their common concerns. Only one Thai NGO staff member attended the meeting together with the students on that day. Other Thai NGOs and university lecturers were to take part in the programme scheduled December 4-5.

However, on the second day of seminar, Thai Immigration and Special Branch police raided the centre and arrested all the 13 students, even though one of the students, Lay Lay Nwe, had a letter from the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights (CPCR) to inform the authorities that she was working together with

this Thai NGO as a volunteer. Lay Lay Nwe has been assisting the CPCR by collecting information concerning the trafficking of women and forced prostitution and has helped as a Burmese to Thai translator for this and other NGOs as well as the Anti-Prostitution Unit of the Crime Suppression Division of the Thai police. This letter taking responsibility for her was not accepted.

Arrested Students were Soe Lwin and Aung Khaing from Peace and Development Organisation (PDO), Min Nay Htoo and Nai Aung Hinn from Overseas Mon National Students' Organisation (OMNSO), Maung Maung Than, Par Pa and Kyi Htay from Overseas National Students' Organisation of Burma (ONSOB), Tin Maung Htoo, Toe Kyi and Hla Win from All Burma Basic Education Students' Union (ABBESU), Saw Oo and Kyaw Lwin from Democratic Youth Front (DYF) and Lay Lay New from Burmese Women Organisation (BWO).

## BURMESE DISSIDENTS ARRESTED AT HUMAN RIGHTS SEMINAR

All of them were charged with illegal immigration and sent to the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in Bangkok. On December 6, they were sent to court and found guilty of illegal immigration and sentenced to 40 days detention or a fine of 2,800 Baht.

Thai authorities categorised different procedures to handle these students. Students recognised as "persons of concern" by the UNHCR and residing in Maneeloy holding centre had to subject either of the sentence and sent back to the holding centre.

Students who are "persons of concerns" but not residing at the holding centre were either fined or detained and sent to the holding centre. Students who fall neither of these categories would be deported to a relatively safe part of the Thai-Burma border after being fined or detained.

Of them, Kyaw Lwin, Saw Oo and Lay Lay Nwe paid the fines so that they could be freed

from detention and then deported to a relatively safe part of the Thai-Burmese border at Sangkhlaburi province. They were due to leave for deportation on December 9. All three were processed for deportation (fingerprinting etc.) but as they were boarding the deportation bus, the two male students were asked if Lay Lay Nwe was also one of the 13 students arrested on December 3. When they answered that she was, Lay Lay Nwe was told that she could not be sent for deportation and was then returned to her cell. The two male students were allowed to continue their journey.

Lay Lay Nwe and the other ten students were held at the IDC till 4 February 1994. Immigration officials, Khun Sawaeng and Khun Thasawat, said that they would be transferred to the Special Detention Centre (SDC) at Bangkok Police Training Academy, a detention centre which is usually used for the arrest of the political nature, e.g. when Burmese students have been arrested for holding demonstrations outside Slorc Embassy or when Thai pro-democracy demonstrators were arrested during May uprising in 1992. In the past some Burmese have been sent to SDC and held without due process or charges for months. The immigration officials said that the 11 students would be screened and that those deemed to be troublemakers would not be released from the SDC except to a third country. According to the SFT and SCHRB, under Thai Immigration law, the authorities do not have the right to detain them beyond 40 days or send them to SDC.

Of the remaining students, Maung Maung Than, Par Pa, Toe Kyi and Tin Htoo, Nai Aung Hinn, Hla Win, Tin Maung Htoo and were mentioned by the names as "troublemakers" and sent to the Special Detention Centre (SDC) on 4 February 1994. There they are facing indefinite detention.

On the same day, Lay Lay Nwe, Aung Khaing, Soe Lwin, Min Nay Htoo and Kyi Htay who are not classified as "troublemakers" were transferred to Maneeloy a holding centre where about 167 students are now being held "until it is safe for them to return to Burma". Most of the 167 asylum seekers there were coerced to enter the camps because they were sent forcibly from the SDC, or given no choice but to face indefinite detention in the SDC or go to the relatively more comfortable and open "holding centre".

From Page (42)

border areas after peace is achieved.

Thailand's help has already paid a dividend; Burma relented its total ban on Thai logging by certifying 5 Thai's logging firms for new contracts and is reviewing others for the same reward.

With the nations of the world unwilling to do more than pass resolutions at the UN which they do not seek to implement, with no organised opposition inside of Burma to Slorc's plans for permanent military rule, and with the minorities, divided and alone, to negotiate on Slorc's terms, it would appear that the military rulers are on the verge of achieving the upper hand in their struggle to bring the whole country under their dictatorial rule.

But, if there is no ceasefire, unconditional release of non-combatants in the war zones, the release of political prisoners in the heartland and formal end to the war, and if there is no national convention for the freely chosen representatives of the Burmans and the minorities to meet and participate fully and freely in trying to find permanent solutions to the problems which propelled the former into a peaceful democratic revolution in 1988 and the latter into a civil war decades before, the "victory" of the Slorc could be short-lived and empty.

So long as it does not have the backing of the people, Slorc is not the legitimate ruler of Burma, regardless of what it orders to be written in the new constitution. And Slorc's policies of quick sales of Burma's natural resources to the highest bidder are no solution to its long-term economic structural problems.

Thailand's involvement in Burma's politics on the side of Slorc, at the expense of its long-time friends and neighbours — the ethnic minorities of Burma, may prove more costly to its economic and political interests than if it had continued its older policy of friendship to both sides.

There are changes going on in Burma and Thailand but they do not appear to be the kind to bring real peace and development in Burma and genuine cross-border unity between neighbours.

PROF JOSEF SILVERSTEIN



## UNPRECEDENTED MEETING

US Congressman Bill Richardson, a member of the House Intelligence Committee and the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, held an unprecedented meeting on 14 and 15 February 1994 in Burma with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been held under house arrest by Slorc. The delegation that came to her door led by Congressman Richardson, is the first group of visitors Slorc has allowed her to receive apart from her family and her doctors.

Richardson's objective was to promote a dialogue between the military regime and the democratic opposition, and he undertook this mission as a member of US Congress and a member of the House Intelligence Committee.

In the course of the visit he spent six hours, two meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and four hours with Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt. Moreover, he also spent about two hours at the Insein prison where he inspected some cells and medical facilities, and met with 4 political prisoners — Dr Ma Thida, Min Ko Naing, U Win Tin and ex-Captain Win Thein.

In the hope to improve its abysmal human rights image abroad as it seeks new international aids and foreign investments Slorc grudgingly allowed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet

---

*"History is on the side of freedom and I remain confident that your cause will prevail..."*

President Bill Clinton

---

## I'LL NEVER LEAVE MY HOMELAND

with Richardson. Richardson conditioned his meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi to emphasize concerns for human rights and democracy. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi agreed on condition that Richardson be accompanied by Jehan Raheem, the representative in Burma of the UN Development Programme, attending on behalf of the United Nations; and New York Times reporter Phillip Shenon. The US embassy in Rangoon was allowed to send a diplomat to take notes on the session.

### US POSITION

In his meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Richardson emphasized the strong support of the US government and people for her and for a democratic Burma. He also carried a letter from President Bill Clinton to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that applauded her "remarkable courage", and pledged "continuing US support for the struggle to promote freedom in Burma."

In this letter, President Clinton said, "We strongly condemn the effort to deny you the right to participate freely in the political life of Burma." President Clinton also praised Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for her courage, which he said was a source of inspiration to people around the world, and expressed concern about her welfare. "Obviously, the path to democratic change must be worked out by the Burmese themselves who have assigned you a key role in bringing about such a democratic transition," President Clinton said.

President Clinton told Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that he was confident her struggle for democracy would succeed. "History is on the side of freedom and I remain confident that your cause will prevail," said the President in his letter. He further added that the recent resolution by the UN General Assembly and United Nations Human Rights Commission made "clear the international community's outrage over your continued detention as well as that of all other prisoners of conscience in Burma."

On 20 July 1993, the fourth anniversary of her imprisonment, President Clinton called upon Slorc to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, to respect the result of the 1990 elections, and undertake democratic reform.

Due to President Clinton's strong advocacy for human rights concerns, there is widespread speculation that the ongoing review of US policy towards Burma might take a tougher stance against Slorc. This policy serves to confirm the speculation that US relations with Burma will improve only if Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners are released without condition and a genuine democratisation effort takes place.

### NEVER LEAVES HOMELAND

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was allowed to speak with the visitors for three hours on February 14 under an agreement with Slorc. Regarding their meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that Slorc was "unpredictable" and that officials had probably agreed to the meeting only because "they were under a lot of international pressure".

The soldiers at the gate were removed just before Richardson's visit, but the guards patrolling the garden lingered outside the windows of her home on the afternoon of February 14.

Slorc, which clearly feels that her release could re-ignite the democratic movement, has insisted that she could be released from house arrest any time provided she leaves Burma and refrains from involvement in politics, but she said, "That is never going to happen."

"The concept of driving somebody out of their own country is totally unacceptable to me," Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, said in a calm, resolute voice that betrayed none of the suffering of her isolation. "They have tried to pressure me to leave the country in ways that no self-respecting government should try. Whatever they do to me, that's between them and me; I can take it," she told the delegation. "What's more important is what they are doing to the country."

She denounced the generals who have imprisoned her, both for their deceit and for their brutality toward the democracy movement members. "It must be very exhausting for them to go on lying,"



---

*"It must be very exhausting for them to go on lying... Elections were promised, elections were held, and yet the military held onto power despite its defeat at the polls. The people feel cheated"*

---

she said. "Elections were promised, elections were held, and yet the military held onto power despite its defeat at the polls," she said. "The people feel cheated."

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi made clear her determination to remain in Burma, and pursue efforts to establish a democratic representative government responsive to the need of the people. She told the visitors repeatedly that she had no intention of leaving her homeland but was ready to negotiate with Slorc on other issues. "There is nothing else that I've refused to talk about except the question of leaving the country," she said. I've refused nothing else."

### GENUINE DIALOGUE

During her years under house arrest, she said, she had never once received a serious offer from the military for negotiations over Burma's political future. She believed that a substantive dialogue between Slorc and the country's democratic forces is the only way out of Burma's current political impasse. "They have made no moves to have a dialogue of

---

*"They have made no moves to have a dialogue of any kind except on the terms under which I would leave Burma... And that is not a dialogue. That is a monologue."*

---

---

***"I'm not interested in any sort of personality cult or personality politics. This is what you've got to avoid from the beginning. We want to see a democracy based on social principles, not on personality."***

---

any kind except on the terms under which I would leave Burma," she said. "And that is not a dialogue. That is a monologue."

Asked whether she would consider a proposal from the army to relinquish her political role in exchange for her right to stay in Burma, she replied, "They must talk to me, but it will depend on what they mean and the guarantees they offer."

During the meeting, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi focused the conversation on her concern over her imprisoned supporters and to a larger sense for democracy. "I'm not interested in any sort of personality cult or personality politics," she said. "This is what you've got to avoid from the beginning. We want to see a democracy based on social principles, not on personality." She said that simply releasing her would do no good unless there was a change in the attitude of those in power. She said she was not persuaded by Slorc's recent efforts to portray itself as moving towards democracy.

Regarding the National Convention, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said, "It is an absolute farce... It makes no sense at all because if people are not allowed to speak and if they are just there to nod their heads, there's nothing. It's not a convention. I cannot accept it as something that seriously repre-

sents the will of people at all."

## STICKS NEEDED

Asked whether the United States and other nations should consider economic sanctions against Slorc to protest its human rights policies, she said that "foreign governments should consider whether their trade with Burma is really helping the people or is it simply helping Slorc to dig its heels."

Too many nations, she suggested, used economic carrot, and not sticks, to encourage improvements in Burma's human rights record. She asked her guests if "you can stuff a mule to death with carrots."

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also stressed on the need to maintain international pressure on Burma as the international pressure is vital and effective in changing the system of any country. She also said that she can never accept Slorc's imported Indonesia Style democracy and Asean ways of thinking in reconstructing the future of Burma.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her thanks to the Clinton Administration, which has repeatedly called for her release, but she also said that American policy toward Burma "has not been very clear-cut", and that she hoped to see a "more clear-cut policy in favour of the movement for democracy". She also said the sending of the US ambassador to Burma is not the main issue, but it should be done only when genuine and important dialogue between she and Slorc can start. Concerning the Burmese opposition groups, she urged, "If there's something on which they cannot agree, put it on ice. We must be united if we want to get democracy."

## JUNTA'S RESPONSE

During his meeting with Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Richardson urged him to open negotiations with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and relayed "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's desire for a high-level dialogue with Slorc". "The key to Burma's ability to improve its international reputation with the US and the outside world is Aung San Suu Kyi," stressed Richardson.

Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt stated in reply that the matter is not for him alone to decide and that "Slorc will consider authorising him to engage in talks with her." "Even if there is any talk with her, it should not be regarded as the initiative of Slorc, but because of the request of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi," said Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt. Slorc also made clear to Richardson that any talk between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt cannot be interpreted as a "political dialogue".

"Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt asked Richardson to tell Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to leave the country for 5 years and Slorc will allow her access to free participation in politics when she returns," said Mr John D. Finny, Director, Office of the Thai-Burma of the US State Department, on February 24 at a meeting with the representatives of NCGUB and FTUB.

---

***"It is an absolute farce... It makes no sense at all because if people are not allowed to speak and if they are just there to nod their heads, there's nothing. It's not a convention. I cannot accept it as something that seriously represents the will of people at all."***

---

Richardson pressed for the unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners being held because of their convictions. Richardson wanted to see evidence of human rights and democratic improvement and believed his meeting with Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could produce lasting results.

The Congressman said Slorc wanted to normalise relations with the US. In this regard, Richardson stressed that "words have to be followed by deeds" for US policy towards Burma to change.

The US government urged Slorc on February 15 to build on a small step of Richardson's meeting by having a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and moving toward genuine democratic reform.

#### PRISON VISIT

During his two-hour long visit to Insein prison where he met Dr Ma Thida, Min Ko Naing, U Win Tin and ex-captain Win Thein, Richardson said U Win Tin has been detained in a separate cell and he is allowed to get out of his cell for only 15 minutes everyday. According to Richardson, U Win Tin has been denied access to reading even books on religion, letters and stationery. U Win Tin said he cannot accept Slorc's national convention, and he strongly believes that political problems in Burma can be solved only by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

---

*"Foreign governments should consider whether their trade with Burma is really helping the people or is it simply helping Slorc to dig its heels."*

---



*U Win Tin in Insein Prison*

Ma Thida and 2 other female political prisoners were detained in a cell. Before that, she was detained incommunicado for about 3 months. Ma Thida said she will continue to fight, and expressed strong adherence to her belief.

Min Ko Naing's health condition was the worst among them. Even though he was detained incommunicado for 3 years, his belief is as strong as before. Min Ko Naing said that restoration of democracy is more important than good relations between governments. Moreover, he told Richardson to encourage members of the democracy movement along the Thai-Burma border and in Thailand.

#### THAILAND'S POLICY

On his return from Burma on February 16, Richardson met with Thai Deputy Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan and National Security Council (NSC) secretary-general Gen Charan Kullavanijaya and addressed Thailand's relations with Slorc. Richardson discussed the Thai-Burma bilateral relationship and considered options for US involvement. Additionally, Richardson requested the Thai Government to continue to allow the Burmese Government in-exile to conduct its peaceful activities from Thailand. Asked Thailand's policy toward Burma, NSC secretary-general said Thailand believes that ceasefire should come before the restoration of democracy in the country. NSC will help in Slorc's national reconciliation process, and in line with its policy, Thai government will no longer accept anti-Slorc forces using Thai soil.

Asked about Thailand's invitation to Slorc to attend the 27th annual ASEAN conference in July, Richardson said "My view is that if there are no talks (between Slorc and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi), it would be premature to invite them."

Richardson also urged the UN and Australian Government to help facilitate the peace process in Burma and called for the UN Secretary-General to send a special envoy to Burma. He said he also made a request that other visitors be allowed to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in particular UNCHR Special Rapporteur Professor Yozo Yokota.



# STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NAME OF DEVELOPMENT

To make movements of the revolutionary forces from the hills to the seas more difficult, Slorc, in the name of so-called development programme, has been implementing strategic plans for rapid troops deployment in Tenasserim Division. Of these infrastructure, it includes construction of Ye-Tavoy rail line, upgrading of Ye-Tavoy Highway, Kawthaung--Boke Pyin--Lay Nyar Highway and a number of High Way and construction of Gas Pipeline. Many people have been forced to contribute corvee labour at gun point while villages near the strategic areas have been forced to move out.

Slorc has deployed a number of fresh troops into the areas around and between Ye and Tavoy, the area through which the gas pipeline is likely to go. 15 battalions LIB and LIBs 343, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410 under the command of Regional Tactical Command and IBs 25, 104, 106 and 61 are stationed in that areas. Slorc is going to deploy another 10 light infantry battalions which are preparing to form under the command of 102 LID.

## YE-TAVOY RAIL LINE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Since January 1994, following the route of the old British telegraph line, Slorc has been carrying out the construction of over 100-mile- long Ye-Tavoy rail line and press-ganged over 15,000 local people from Ye, Tavoy, Thayetchaung, Laung Lon and Ye Byu to contribute corvee labour -- digging earth pitch and building an earthen embankment four metres wide and 2 metres high -- at gun point. The rail line runs parallel at about 8 Kilometers distance to the existing Ye-Tavoy highway which has recently been repaired and upgraded.

Slorc searched track of rail line from 30 July 1993 to 11 August 1993 and detail measurement was made from 2 September 1993 to 18 December 1993. A track clear for the rail line and digging earth pitch started on 31 December 1993. Building of earthen embankment was scheduled to be completed in 1994 and rail line was scheduled to be finished in 1995.

Section	Area	Miles	Needed earth pitch	Needed labourers
A	Ye-Paukpinkwin	16.53 miles	501578 257528 244050	25269 5 bulldozers
B	Paukpinkwin to Tavoy river	23.08 miles	(9-25 December 1993)	
C	Tavoy river to Zin Ba	15.00 miles	(26 December to 16 January 94)	
D	Zin Ba to mile stone no. 30	7.5 miles	(7-16 January 94)	
E	Mile stone no. 30 to Tavoy	30.00 miles		

Section	Area	Miles	Needed earth pitch	Needed labourers
A	Kyonloungi to milestone no. 9	4.47 miles	81881	7876 (9 villages)
	From milestone no. 9 to foot of Ma Hlwe mountain	3.56 miles	67992	7199 (9 villages)
	Foot of Ma Hlwe mountain to Paukpinkwin	4.47 miles	39963	3857 (7 villages)

From Paukpinkwin to Yar Phoo  
From Yar Phoo

6000  
6000

## HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTRY

From Ye to Paukpinkwin there will be 3 station and 33 over 100-feet long bridges, 44-80-feet long bridges and 21 under 20-feet long bridges will also be built on the rail line. From Paukpinkwin to Tavoy there will be a 300-feet long Tavoy bridge, 225-feet long Zin Ba bridge, 4 over 40-feet long bridges and 84 bridges less than 40 feet. These bridges will be supervised by No. 904 Field Engineering Corps of Slorc.

23 miles of proposed rail line from Paukpinkwin to Tavoy River is covered with 300 feet wide plain area and it has already been cleared.

At least 200 porters from every quarter/village in these townships have been forced to contribute

labour for 15 days in minimum, bringing their own food. Quarters in respective townships have been put under certain serial number and they have to work simultaneously. Although the numbers of the local people who were forced to contribute corvee labour from some villages are still unknown, the statistics collected from the first week of January to the first week of February 1994 in Ye township of Mon State and Ye Byu township of Tenasserim Division indicated that there were 13493 labourers composed of men, women and children regardless of their age. Of them a number of pregnant women were also founded as they were not spared from contributing labour.

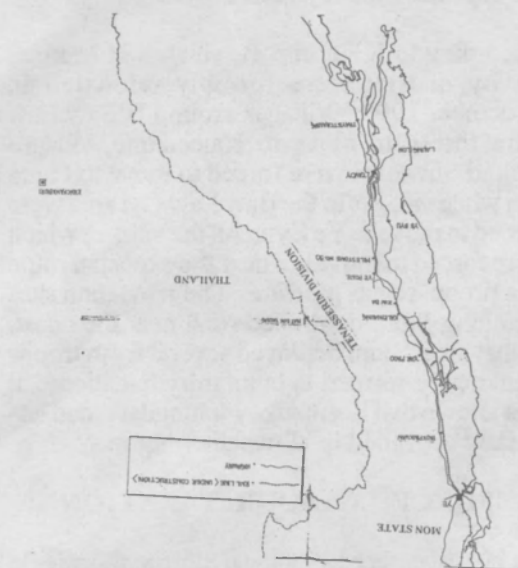
### NUMBERS OF PEOPLE PRESS-GANGED TO CONTRIBUTE CORVEE LABOUR

(Ye Byu and Ye townships)

Date	Township	Village	Nos. of Porters troops	Responsible Slorc
30/12/93	Ye Byu	Talai Par	59	LIB 410
30/12/93		Pein Shin	165	LIB 410
30/12/93		Tanyin In	43	LIB 410
30/12/93		E Kani	250	LIB 410
30/12/93		Kanbawk parish	1001	LIB 410
30/12/93		Kanbawk parish	654	LIB 409
30/12/93		Kanbawk parish	1063	LIB 410
30/12/93		Ya Nge	137	LIB 410
31/12/93		Na Bu Leh		
		Kaleinaung	2063	LIB 410
01/01/94		Na Bu Leh		
		Kaleinaung	787	LIB 410
30/12/93		Khamauk Chaung	153	LIB 410
30/12/93		East Uttaran	37	LIB 410
30/12/93		West Uttaran	27	LIB 410
30/12/93	Ye	Hnyin Htwe	15	LIB 410
30/12/93		Kalon Htar	120	LIB 410
29/12/93		Kanbawk	562	LIB 410
30/12/93		Kanbawk	439	LIB 410
29/12/93		Kanbawk	1400	LIB 406
30/12/93		Kanbawk	1040	LIB 406
13/01/94		Hnitkarin	450	LIB 343
13/01/94		Kau Dook	500	LIB 343
13/01/94		Taungbyin	500	LIB 343
13/01/94		La Maing	1248	LIB 343
13/01/94		Mok Kanin	780	LIB 343

Total numbers 13493

(Note: Have not received numbers of porters from Ye, Lhaung Taung, Han Gan, Kalaw Gyi, Taungbon, Ayu Taung, An Dim, Thangangyum, Abaw villages.)



**Pin Gwin villages of Ye Byu township on 10 January 1994 went back to their villages by their own decision. In knowing that Slorc security forces berated concerned persons at local authorities and forced them to call the labourers back. Labourers who fled from the work site were recaptured and put into prison.**

As an emergency plan to rescue the shortage of food, Slorc troops on 10 January 1994 trucked 200 sacks of rice from Ye and sold the porters on credit. As Slorc run out of rice over night, they ordered the local Slorc authorities to collect and transport the demand in urgent. Labourers were forced to cut down timbers for rail line sleepers, build barracks, meeting halls and hospitals for Slorc troops along the route, dig earth pitch and clear the foliage for some 40-feet from either side of the proposed rail line.

**Slorc issued orders that each family has to supply 20 railway sleepers and each villager who own an elephant has to covey 10 tons of logs to the rail line. The orders specified that any family which fails to meet the demands will be punished.**

Those who cannot afford to contribute labour had to hire somebody else at the price ranging 3000 Kyat. They had to pay not only the hire but also certain amount of money equivalent to 2 sacks of rice. If a family failed to meet either of them, action was taken against him or her under Slorc's self-imposed law. As the hired hands (hirelings) become fewer, the price is rising day-by-day. For the poor, if one's husband or wife is in turn to contribute labour, the other too has to work as the hire to facilitate their earnings for living. Therefore, for the poor, both of them had to go for work simultaneously.

**As Slorc did not provide food, the labourers had to bring their own food from their houses or villages covering their own expenses. Labourers got no pay and had to find their own pickaxes, mattocks, chopping hoes, grab hoes, axes, bedding and plastic sheets.**

**In taking Slorc at its word that they had to contribute labour only for two weeks, the labourers brought food covered only for the scheduled term. Even though they worked for three weeks, Slorc did not allow them to go back so that they were facing with shortage of food. In this situation, conscripted labourers from Wet Chaung, E Kani, Khamauk Chaung, Paya, Ohn**

Even though Slorc propagandised that it has been providing health-care for the labourers, in practice the labourers did not get any treatment and had to buy medicines which costs four times of normal price at Slorc-run drug stores at the work site. Moreover, each household was forced to pay 300-350 kyats to Slorc to buy medicines for the labourers. Reports of beatings were common. Due to lack of health care, of proper sanitation, shortage of medicines and adequate food, labourers were suffering from diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and dysentery. These diseases become contagious and death tolls have been rising seriously because of Slorc's failure to provide for sufficient health-care.

**Afraid of being press-ganged into portage, hundreds of villagers who fled to the Burmese side of the Thai-Burma border revealed that almost there is no medicine and medic at the work site.**

**On February 15, a villager from Nan Kin village of Tavoy township died on the spot as a tree fell down and crushed him. His family did not get any compensation from Slorc. On February 20, during the break of the labourers, Slorc authorities at the site kept some of them in the scorching sun for 3 hours as a punishment.**

In that area, Slorc troops from LIBs 343, 410, 409 and IB 104 are in control of the project. This tracked have already been reached to Zin Ba village in Ye Byu township. Local people from Zayat Pyin quarter of Tavoy were forced to contribute labour for the second round.

Before the rail line is finished, local people from Ye, Tavoy, Thayetchaung, Laung Lon and Ye Byu will have to be forced to contribute corvee labour, bringing their own food.

### **GAS PIPELINE & FORCED RELOCATION**

In December 1993, cleaning of the foliage had proceeded down as far as Natgyizin in Ye Byu township, a village some 40 Km north of where it is believed the gas pipeline will eventually be laid.

According to NMSP, prisoners in six truckloads were brought from Moulmein in September 1993 and have been forced to clear a track for a surveying teams that runs from Kaleinaung, through Kanbawk to Phaungdaw at the coat of Ye Byu township. This is directly west of Nat Ei Taung, and is through to be the route by which the pipeline will go. The prisoners wear white prison clothes and some are shackled. They are being kept in LIB 409 compound at Kaleinaung. Two bulldozers were brought to Kaleinaung at the same time as the prisoners and are apparently not yet being used as of mid December 1993.

According to KNU source, work on the proposed gas pipeline project are in progress and pipes and devices of machines and appliances have been in Phaungdaw village. Local people there have been forced to contribute corvee labour -- digging trenches and bankers for Slorc troops -- and move out from the project site. Without any compensation, farms and gardens possessed by the villagers for generation have been destroyed by Slorc. A number of village were reduced to ashes by Slorc troops. Due to this, influx of refugees to the Thai-Burma border has been increasing day by day. It was reportedly known that pipeline from Yadanar gasfield (M 6) in the gulf of Martaban and Yetagun gasfield 1 & 2 (M 14) to Nat Ei Taung village in Kanchanaburi will pass through Phaungdaw, Kanbawk, Kaungmu, Eindaryarzar and Michaung Hlaung villages in Ye Byu township of Tenasserim Division. It was reportedly known that survey of

the area were made in April 1993.

According to KNU report, villages in Mergui/Tavoy district were forcibly relocated in December 1993. Villages around B'Saw Law were forced to move to Kaleinaung, villages around Shwetapi were forced to move to Huan Gyi while villages in the Baw Law Gyi area were forced to move to Ye Byu. All the villages which were forced to move are near the expected route of a proposed gas pipeline. The relocation sites are along Slorc-controlled road near the coast. In that area, Slorc deployed several fresh troops from newly-formed light infantry battalions. It was known that Kanbawk-Phaungdaw road has already upgraded to all-weather highway.

### **FORCED LABOUR/ TAXATION**

On 19 November 1993, local Slorc authorities in Ye Byu township issued an order that each family would have to pay "porter fees" of 100 Kyat for every week. Since then, the villagers have to pay these fees even though average monthly income of a family in this area is only 100 kyat. "Porter fees" supposed to be used as wages are never paid to the military labourers. Penalty for each family which fails to give the fees is to send one of the family members to work as labourer. Several hundreds of villagers from the area have already fled to the Thai border to escape this taxation.

On 10 January 1994, Commander of No. 2 military column of Slorc IB 17 issued an order to Kywe Khae village to send its representative to Palaw township Trade Corporation bringing cash which was equivalent to the baskets of rice as demanded. Each villager was forced to give 8 baskets of rice per acre and was threatened that action would be taken against him/her if he/she failed to give.

### **BOKE PYIN-LAY NYAR-TAVOY HIGHWAY**

Over 30-Kilometre-long road that link Boke Pyin and Lay Nyar in Mergui township was under construction and since December 1993, Slorc LIB 358 under the command of Maj Chit Maung has forced local people from 5 nearby villages -- Taung Din, Taung Yai, Chao Mun, Bong Kun, and Lay Oo Thauang -- to contribute corvee labour at gun point. Every family is assigned to complete 10 feet of road and most of the work involves



breaking up and carrying rocks, and it takes 15 to 20 days to complete their assignment. They had to come from 3-4 Kilometres away of their village to the roadside and shelter until their assignment complete. As Slorc does not provide any food or ration, the labourers have to bring their own food covering their own expenses. If they fail to meet Slorc's demand, they are threatened to pay a fine of 7,000 kyat. Some families have hired somebody else to work in their place at the rate of 3,000 Kyat. Recently Slorc ordered local people from Monora village to contribute corvee labour for the construction of the road, but the villagers did not go or pay the fine. As a result, Slorc fired 5 artillery shells into the village, killing one villager and wounding 3 others. The villagers then had no alternative, and went to work there. The construction of this road is still going on up to now and about 10,000 more families will have to be enslaved as labourers to finish the road.

Since the first week of March 1994, Thai police and immigration officers have hunted illegal Burmese in Ranong, and 30-40 Burmese were arrested daily. At 7:00 am, nobody dare to go for shopping in Ranong as Immigration and police in civilian dress raid and arrest the illegal Burmese. Most of the women who are on the way and selling groceries were also arrested. Immigration and police arrested Burmese, jerked their hair, beat them and put into detention. Some got injuries due to beatings.

On March 10 alone, over 100 Burmese were

deported to Kawthaung (Victoria Point) by 6 boats. When they arrived Burma, they were taken to the work site for the construction of Boke Pyin-Kawthaung Highway and Ye-Tavoy Rail line and forced to work there at gun point by Slorc. Boke Pyin -Kawthaung Highway was scheduled to open on March 27.

### ROAD EXPANSION

As Slorc extended roads at Shan Ma Leh Swe and other quarters in Tavoy township, prisoners from Tavoy prison were forced to work as labourers there. All of them were fettered. Brick walls, fences and eaves of some houses were destroyed in certain places. Moreover, local people were also press-ganged into portering to subject back-breaking forced labour for the expansion of these roads and construction of a railway station at Pyaw Taw Wa village in Tavoy.

### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

On March 16, tombs from Muslim cemetery in Kawthaung were destroyed by Slorc. Muslim leaders there were summoned by Slorc and faced harassment for transmitting the information to the international community that tombs from Muslim cemetery were uprooted by Slorc.

Source: New Mon State Party (NMSP)  
Karen National Union (KNU)  
Reporters of the ABSDF  
Free Trade Union-Burma

*Corvee labourers at Ye-Tavoy Rail Line Construction Site*



## ON-GOING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

To save its tarnished image as much criticised and pressured by the international community due to its abysmal human rights records since it came to power a military coup in 1988, Slorc halted its annual dry season offensives against the Democratic Forces, including the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). Although no major clash with the Democratic Forces broke out, the people inside the country are still ruled at gun point and power is still gushing from the barrel of the gun. Forced labour, Forced Relocation, Arbitrary Execution, Arbitrary Detention, Harassment, Rape, Attacks on the Civilian Target and Torture against the people in Burma are still widespread under Slorc regime which goes against the Article (5) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that clearly states: "No one shall be subject to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." This can be clearly revealed by Slorc's brutal and atrocious deeds which have been done to the people living in Shan, Mon, Karenni, Karen States and Pegu and Tenasserim Divisions. (The Editor)

### FORCED LABOUR

(1) Since January 1994, villagers in Mone township, Nyaunglebin district have been forced to dig an irrigation canal at Tha Htay Gone village for 150 troops of Slorc LIB 73 led by Capt Ha Sein and company commanders Lt Aung Nai and Tun Tun Oo. All the villagers in that area have to take turns in doing 3 days rotating shifts of hard labour on the canal. When a village is on its turn, 200 people from that village must go for 3 days, bringing their own food. They receive no pay or compensation.

Throughout the KNU-controlled area, all the local people living near military supply lines are

now regularly forced to work in maintaining the road and sweeping it to clear mines, often several days a week. All villagers at hand of Slorc outposts were forced to send labourers on a rotating basis to do all manual labour -- digging trenches and bunkers, building fences and barracks, chopping firewood, fetching water, cleaning, and serving as runners -- at the outposts. Moreover, the villagers were forced to send not only all required construction materials but also meat, vegetables, and rice to the outposts. (Source: KNU)

### FORCED LABOUR & TAXATION

(1) January 26 Kya Inn Seik Gyi township, Mon State

Because of the construction of 'Shwe Lin' motor way to link Chaung Hna Khwa village-Kya Inn Seik Gyi town-Taung Bauk village, many local people were press-ganged to contribute as corvee labourers by Slorc and were levied taxes in the name of 'porter fees'. Each household was forced to send one family member and there were more than 5,000 labourers from 40 villages in that township. Light Infantry Battalion No. 32 and local Slorc authorities are in control of the project. In the name of this project, Tactical commander Col Thiha Thura Sitt Maung of Slorc South Eastern Command on 25 October 1993 forced the people from special area covering Taung Bauk, Naung Balit, Myin Wah Gone, Paw law Gone, Naung Bauk villages to pay 265750 Kyats at gun point. Each village was allotted 50000 Kyats. At the same time, Slorc has also been carrying out the project for Htee Paw Kalo-Hpar Tale new motor way.

Mi Yee, 35, daughter of Nai Wan from Win Yaw Seik Gyi village was on 5 January 1994 abducted and brought to Chaung Nha Khwa village by Slorc troops from LIB 32 as she failed to pay the demand. She was released only after her village head men paid a sum of 52500 Kyat to Slorc. (Source: New Mon State Party)

(2) Strategic Slorc Command 2 of Central Command, led by Operation Commander Lt-Col Win Maung stationed its command office at Bawgali village in Thandaung township of Taungoo District. Since then, surrounding villages of the command have been demanded so-called monthly "porter fees" as fixed by Slorc.

Village	Porter fee per month
1. Bawgali	64,000
2. Ler Ko	8,000
3. Wah Tho Kho	12,000
4. Kaw So Kho	12,000
5. Saw Thay Der	8,000
6. Klay So Khee	8,000
7. Gah Mu Der	8,000
8. Der Doh	8,000
9. Pai Koh Der	8,000
10. Maw Ko Der	8,000
11. Ku Ler Der	8,000
12. Maw Per Der	8,000
13. Klaw Mi Der	8,000
14. Hu Mu Der	8,000
15. Ler Kler Der	8,000

Other villages in that area were ordered to pay monthly "porter fees" of 6,000-8,000 Kyat for each porter, depending on the size of the village. None of this money is ever used to pay or feed porters whose lives depend only on a clenched hand of rice a day and never paid.

In the name of so-called "development project", a hospital is being constructed by the Slorc troops in Bawgali village where the villagers have been forced to contribute money for the whole demand of the project. Funding originally allocated for the project has already been flowed into the pocket of the Slorc military officers.

The villagers were also press-ganged into back-breaking forced labour in a construction of a road that linked Bawgali and Pa Lay Wa village. They had to work not only as corvee labourers but also bring their own food covering their own expenses. The funds originally provided for this "development project" have already been flowed into the pocket of the Slorc military officers who forced the local people to contribute labour at gun point. (Source: KNU)

## ARBITRARY DETENTION

(1) On 18 October 1993 at 11.30 pm, in Dimowso and Dawngankha, Rev Fr Mariano Tarry and Rev Fr Petru Pii were taken away by a group of armed Slorc soldiers to Military Intelligence Unit in Loikaw. The victims were detained and questioned for three nights and two days.

It was reportedly known that 2 Toyota Hilux cars

owned by the priests as well as two drivers were also taken along and are still kept up to date. These drivers are detained in different jails while the cars are seen being used by the soldiers.

The military intelligence accused the priests of allowing their cars to be used for the transportation of arms and ammunitions belonging to the rebels. This false accusation was invented by three men who have been caught by Slorc soldiers in Loikaw on 16 October 1993. Some illegal arms and ammunitions were founded possessed by these three men who are known to be of doubtful character.

As soon as the Bishop of Loikaw was informed of the sad news he went straight to the chairman of Kayah State Law and Order Restoration Council but he was not welcomed. By the evening he managed to go directly to the office of MIs, and met the officer in charge. The MI officer allowed him to speak to two priests almost for one hour. They were shown the picture of the three arrested men whom none of them recognised. They were informed that priests called for questioning in connection with the statements made by these three accused.

For the next two days the Bishop was not allowed to visit his two priests. He gave instructions to all his faithful to keep calm and pray for a quick and happy ending of this sad event. They started to hold concelebrating of Mass joined by a large number of Catholics, and recitation of rosaries before the Blessed sacrament. On October 21 at 8.00am, the Bishop was called to MIs Headquarters. There he met the two priests again and the officers in charge told him that the priests could be taken back home.

But 2 cars and 2 drivers have not returned up to now. The number plates of the cars are turned inside out and cars seen being used all over the town by the soldiers. When they inquired they always insist on patience on the part the religious persons. The Bishop and priests hoped Slorc troops would be polite enough to free the drivers and return the cars soon.

On October 27, the Bishop and priests dispatched protest notes to different offices concerned. They do not expect much of a solution as all are in the same pot.

*(Reported from a reliable source in Loikaw on 28 October 1993)*

## HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTRY

(2)

Name	Sex	Age	Father's name	Date of arrest
1. Saw Soe Win	M	20	Saw Hla Maung	12/1/94
2. Saw Maung Ni	M	46	Saw Aye Maung	13/1/94
3. Naw Sher Ma Ma	F	20	Saw Maung Ni	16/1/94
4. Naw Myit	F	50	Saw Pai	16/1/94
5. Naw Mi Thein	F	25	Saw Koe Toe	16/1/94
6. Saw Lar Set	M	30	San Min	16/1/94
7. Saw Toe Dee	M	35	Saw Aung Htoo	16/1/94
8. Saw Maung Thaung	M	40	Saw Maung Shwe	16/1/94
9. Saw Win Maung	M	24	Saw Maung Karr	16/1/94
10. Saw Ber Lar	M	22	Saw Maung Karr	16/1/94

Above-mentioned innocent villagers from Naw Yu village in Kyauk Kyi Township were arrested and imprisoned by Capt Khin Maung Oo of Slorc IB 60.

All of them have been confined in Kyauk Kyi township. Slorc troops have threatened that they will be executed if their families fail to pay a ransom of 20,000 Kyats for each of them. The same troops also stole 14 cattle from this village. (Source: KNU)

(3) On 2 February, 1994, Slorc troops from LIB 60 commanded by Capt Nyi Soe arrested Saw Cho Cho, son of Saw Chit Ngwe of Tor Por village in Kyauk Kyi Township. The victim was accused of being an informer of the KNU and was severely beaten, and kicked with combat boots. Slorc troops tried to force him confess of being a Karen informer, but the victim refused. The victim was taken to Kyaut Kyi and put in prison there. His parents were then informed that their son would be released if they paid a ransom of 20,000 Kyats. The victim's parents are poor farmers and they cannot afford to raise the money fixed by Slorc troops so that Saw Cho Cho is still detained in Kyaut Kyi prison. (Source: KNU)

### ARBITRARY EXECUTION

(1) On 12 September 1993, Slorc troops from 55 LID raided Nong Tao village, Murg Luem parish, Murg Nong Township in Southern Shan State and searched for the porters. As the villagers tried to escape to their farms, the soldiers opened fire into the crowd and hit Loong Tsita, 60, male, and died on the spot.

(2) On 13 November 1993, Slorc troops from IB 67 stationed at Murg Yai arrested the Lai

Tsuen La, 56, son of U Aw & Maenai Mwe, from Wong Tsaan parish, Murg Yai Township in Northern Shan State and accused him of not willing to collaborate with the Slorc troops. The victim was forced into portage, and later was beaten to death.

(Source: SHRF)

(3) On 18 December 1993 at 10 p.m., Naw Lah, a Karen woman aged 36, was shot dead by Slorc troops from IB 234 in Ha Taw Pah village of Taungoo District.

(4) On 25 December 1993, Slorc troops from IB 17 commanded by Maj Kyaw Kyaw reached Byin Bu Gyi village in Palaw township, stole some belongings and shot dead Naw Say Heh (female) and Maung Shwe Win (male).

(5) On 31 December 1993, in Paw Autaw village of Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division, Slorc troops from LIB 60 commanded by Capt Nyi Soe arrested Saw Ther Toe, son of Saw Tin Shwe, and accused him of being a KNU sympathizer. The soldiers tied him up, stabbed his arms and legs with knives, burned out both his eyes and dragged him through the streets of the village. On 6 January 1994, the victim was executed while still alive.

(Source: KNU)

(6) On 27 January, Company (2) commander Soe Win of IB 24, under the command of Tactical Operation Command 331 of Slorc 33 LID, penetrated Lay Kay village and shot Po Li Kee, aged 20, and caused him seriously wounded. Moreover, Slorc commander arrested Naw Psaw Po and Nar Hser Chit, (daughters of Ti Per Kyaw), tied them up, blindfolded them, and then raped the whole night.

(Source: KNU)



(7) On 19 February 1994, Sai Be, 30, son of U Lon Ann and Daw Mai, from Ma Khae Kham village in Lwe Paw parish of Hpe Khon township, was arrested by Slorc IB 336 led by deputy Battalion Commander Chit Than with the accusation of possessing of illegal firearms. The victim was beaten at Hpe Khon military outpost and on February 22 he was brought by the military column to Lwe Paw. On that day, Maung Pa Loke, 25, son of U Ho Lwa and Daw Mu Larong, from upper Karen Tike village in Hpe Khon township was also arrested with the same allegation. On February 24, both of them were tied up under Lwe Paw monastery, punched, beaten with rifle butt, jumped down on abdomen and stroked with rocks at the back. Both of them were beaten to death on the hilltop located in the eastern part of the village and buried together. (Reported by members of the ABSDF)

### HARASSMENT, TAXATION & ROBBERY

(1) On 24 December 1993, Slorc troops from IB 30 ordered the village heads of Kyo Waing and Noh Kaneh villages in Thaton district to take responsibility for "security" of their village tracts. They were forced to sign papers assuring that if one shell explodes in their entire village tract, they will pay 50,000 Kyat, and if one Slorc truck is damaged by a land mine, they will pay 100,000 Kyat as compensation to Slorc.

(2) On 25 January 1994, Slorc troops from LIB 119 led by Capt Aye Myint took 7 baskets of paddy, 1 basket of hulled rice and 32 Kilos of jaggery (boiled and crystallized cane sugar) from the villagers in Tar U Ni Village in Thaton Township.

(3) On 29 January 1994, a Slorc truck hit a land mine and was destroyed. In retaliation the two nearest villages, Tor Klor Khee and Tor Klor Po Khee were fined 300,000 Kyats by Slorc IB 120.

(4) On 2 February 1994, Slorc IB 84 of 99 LID, commanded by Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Min and Maj Nyo Min Thein, issued orders to 9 villages -- No Lor Plaw, No Aw Ler, Pyor Gor, Kyu Kyi, Pyo, Her Ter Rai, Met Thai, Met Ker Ner and Tee Kyor Khee villages -- in Thaton district that each village must send them 1,000 viss (1,600 Kilograms) of jaggery. Village which could not produce the required amount of jaggery were

ordered to pay a fine of 2,700 Kyat in cash. The battalion also imposed severe restrictions on the movements of the villagers. All villagers who worked in the surrounding forests had to register at the battalion headquarters and pay 500 Kyat for a permit.

(Source: KNU)

### RAPE

(1) On 18 September 1993, Slorc troops from IB 67 raided and ransacked Wong Maak village, Wong Maak parish, Taan Yaan Township in Northern Shan State, raped Nang Ying, 40 and took one of her pigs for their ration without any payment or compensation.

(2) On 10 November 1993, Nang Tsaam, 40, Nang Aye Paang, 24, Nai Nang, 48, Nai Lee, 60, and Nai Kyong, 60, from Wong Paang-law village, Lashio township in Northern Shan State were gang-raped by Slorc troops from IB 41. The victims were beaten and poked their sex organs with sticks. Slorc troops robbed one gold ring, a pair of gold earring, six gold buttons and 100 Kyats of money in cash from them.

(Source: SHRF)

### ATTACK CIVILIAN TARGETS

(1) On 25 December 1993, while villagers of Bee Cha village in Ner Bu Leh Township, in Tavoy district were preparing their Christmas celebration, Slorc troops from IB 17 commanded by Maj Kyaw Kyaw approached the village. Most of the villagers managed to flee before the troops arrived. The soldiers entered the village and without any reason they opened fire into the first house they saw which still had people in it. That house was riddled with automatic rifles and M79 grenade launchers fire. Naw Weh Ber, 50, and son Saw Ko Poh, 27, were killed while Naw Weh Ber's daughter Naw Mu Sghee, 12, and her friend were severely wounded. The villagers later took these wounded girls to Tavoy hospital, but Naw Mu Sghee died on the way. Her friend's condition was very serious and there has been no reports whether she is still alive. Soon after the killings, Slorc troops arrested the pastor of the village and forced him to bury the corpses at gun point. Three military trucks were then brought in from their outposts to loot properties of the villagers. Slorc soldiers ransacked every house, took everything and loaded on the trucks. Before they left, they scratched the sign with charcoal in

front of the church, "Be careful-next time we'll burn down the village."

(Source: KNU)

(2) On 24 January 1994, 40 Slorc troops from IB 39 led by Capt Mya Shwe opened fire into a group of cattle traders near Kyautager and Maw Khee village in Taungoo district. One of the traders was killed and 26 cattle were ransacked by Slorc troops.

(3) On 23 January 1994, Slorc IB 73 reached Kyauk Tan and Hsaw Wah Der villages in Nyaunglebin Township and ordered the villagers to leave the village immediately. Slorc troops then burnt down all the houses. The villagers were not allowed to harvest their rice in the field. (Report by reporter of ABSDF)

## BRUN DOWN HOUSES AND PLUNDERING

(1) On 9 January 1994, IB 24 under the command of Tactical Operation Command 331 of Slorc 33 LID, commanded by Maj Thaug Win, penetrated Lay Kay village in Thaton district. The troops burnt down houses belong to Toe Par Thwe, Kyaw Bu, Kor Ler, Por Ther Khin, Maung Nyunt Tin, Ti Kyaw Ko, Tee Ler Ner, Maung Win and Naw Muh. They slaughtered an ox belonging to Ma Chaw, two oxen belonging to Tha Du Mo, an ox belonging to Maw Kwai, a cow belonging to Mor Than, one cow belonging to Maung Kyi Kot, and a buffalo belonging to Maung Nyunt Tin.

(Report by reporter of ABSDF)

(2) On 21 January 1994, Slorc IB 39 reached Shah Lo village in Taungoo Township and stole Mahn Sun's properties worth 700,000 kyats. Slorc troops then burned down his house.

## TORTURE

(1) On 28 October 1993, Slorc troops from IB 64 raided Wong Yang Nang village, Won Yaath parish, Mung Kung Township in Southern Shan State and arrested Tsai Htun La, 30, and forced him into portage for one month. Being a porter, they tied him with a load forced him to walk and when he refused they beat him with stick.

(Source: SHRF)

(2) On 3 February 1994, five villagers -- Maung Chit, Maung Shwe Lher, Saw Thay Ler, Saw Per Klai and Por Ker Ra -- from Kyu Kyi village who returned from a funeral service were arrested and severely beaten by Slorc troops from IB 84 of 99 LID.

(Source: KNU)

Note: LID = Light Infantry Division  
LIB = Light Infantry Battalion  
IB = Infantry Battalion

## From Page ( 24 )

towards the installation of various training facilities. Because of sufficient materials we were able to run the training smoothly until the middle of the training." A student who was a tailor before he joined ABSDF, and is presently the trainer in the training, added, "We start daily schedule with morning class from 8 to 9 o'clock. After one hour, we have practical sewing sessions which involve cutting cloth into designs right up to completing one clothe. We started from very basic level -- how to iron the glued cut cloth before going to cutting. I cut the designs and let the trainees start with ironing first. By the middle of the training, they (the trainees) can tailor shirts, trousers, jackets, hats and some front-line equipment such as bag packs and canteen holders. In the second part of the training, we worked for orders from ABSDF camps and the shops in Mae Sam Lap. The camps' demands are mainly trousers and shirts

and the shops in Mae Sam Lap used to order sports suits." Then he went back to the daily timetable again -- 9 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. is practical tailoring, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. is lunch break, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. is practical tailoring. Maung Maung Teik added that they have physical exercises every morning and evening. Weekdays, they have English classes in the evening. They have weekend evaluation on training processes and finding solutions to difficulties and problems. Occasional briefing on the current political situation is organised by Central Committee of ABSDF. Although these students are occupied with daily tight schedule, they are able to take care of animal husbandry -- rearing chickens and pigs. In fact, when I think that there are only eight persons in the centre and they are so well organised in their work, I can't help but be impressed with the fact that they are still productive for their struggle.

To Page ( 59 )

***"She is a woman of towering intellectual ability and strength of conscience. She is a woman of passion and commitment. She is a woman that stands for the best ideals of democracy. She is a woman that is ready to engage in talks. In my judgment Aung San Suu Kyi should be let free."***

Congressman Richardson

Professor Yozo Yokota's task of establishing direct contacts with Slorc and the people of Burma has been frustrated by a number of setbacks including his inability to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. He was twice refused a visit to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi during his trips to Burma in 1992 and 1993.

Commenting on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Richardson said, "She is a woman of towering intellectual ability and strength of

conscience. She is a woman of passion and commitment. She is a woman that stands for the best ideals of democracy. She is a woman that is ready to engage in talks. In my judgment Aung San Suu Kyi should be let free."

#### TIME TO PRESSURE

In January 1994, Slorc announced the existence of a so-called three-member central body comprising of the ministers of foreign affairs, home affairs and defence which has the power to restrict a person from political participation for up to one year. It is believed that the creation of this new body is to continue to detain (Slorc argued that it was only a "restriction") Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, whose detention expires in July 1994.

Because of intensified lobbying of the NCGUB and the democratic forces for economic and investment sanctions and arms

embargo against Slorc, the regime allowed the US Congressman to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to thaw the pressure of the international community and to dodge adoption of a strong resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights. Moreover, it is one of Slorc's tactics to delude the international community in order to gain legitimacy and to resume aid.

In light of its need for foreign aids and above-mentioned factors Slorc would allow carefully selected people to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in the future. But Slorc will reveal no sign that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will be release soon. Therefore, it is the time for the international community to maintain its pressure on Slorc until Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is free and genuine talks between she and Slorc can be held.

(by Board of the Editors)

They convinced their society that "disability is not inability".

It was about noon and we moved for lunch. I saw a female student who is the wife of the trainer. She is assisting the training by contributing labour in cooking. She is from Yaung Ni Oo camp. I was greeted with her sweet smile and she seemed so friendly that I played with her one-year-old baby girl before the lunch was ready. Chit-chatting while we were having lunch helped me to form a wider picture of their lives there — shortages of materials sometime halt their practical classes — they had to use papers to enable them to continue improving their skills when cloth ran out. Supply shortages also forced them to drop out of the market and they missed the opportunity to start the relationship again. Their hope to extend the market in order to promote self-reliance was thus destroyed. Anyway, they picked up these experiences positively and they are working collectively to overcome this setback. They hope that after they conclude the

training in December 1993, the experiences in the first training programme will help promote better methodologies for forthcoming training process. Learning how their dreams are and the obstacles around them made me recall the destruction under the civil war.

After lunch, we talked in general. I got to know how they long for the time of peace in Burma. I was impressed with their strong morale and unstoppable desire to contribute to their cause. As I was in the boat returning to Mae Sam Lap after waving good-bye to all the friends I met there, the picture of brave young students were around me all the way back.

The news of fighting upstream of Salween interrupted my thoughts and I wished no more persons will be handicapped by the fighting. Although the Rehabilitation Center is a good example of the courage of people who are disabled, there should not be more people handicapped by the war.

MA THET

SAUNGO/94



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED.

PRINTED MATTER

VIA AIR MAIL



IF UNDELIVERED,  
PLEASE RETURN TO GPO BOX 1352, BANGKOK 10501, THAILAND.