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BACKING SLORC LET THE PEOPLE OF BURMA SUFFER?

In the light of SLORC's history of corruption and poor management of resources, a number of multinational oil companies, including US, Japanese, British, and French firms, signed investment exploration deals with the military dictatorship in Burma. The moneys paid by the oil companies for exploration and development rights are used principally to procure more arms from overseas. ASEAN member countries have also continued development and investment projects with SLORC, under a policy of appeasement called "constructive engagement". This policy which is rigorously defended by both oil companies and the ASEAN nations has been backing SLORC in maintaining a firm grip on Burma and to build its army, now the largest in Southeast Asia.

Since it came to power by a military coup in 1988, it is estimated that SLORC has received 65% of its financial support from oil companies. In order to secure areas for oil and gas exploration, the military continues policies of intimidation and "counter-insurgency", including Four Deprivations Strategy (Deprivation of information, food, finances and communications) against the ethnic populations and democratic forces, including the parties that won the 1990 elections, and are thus the legitimate leadership of the nation.

SLORC's war against the ethnic nationalities of Burma, many of whom live on lands targeted for exploration and for the construction of a natural gas pipeline, continues. With investors fearful that exploration activities might be threatened, the oil industry has been willing to continue their activities with the SLORC, despite evidence on the use of slave labour on their investment projects, forced relocation of local peoples in exploration areas, and evidence of human rights violations against

the ethnic nationalities.

The exploration, development and production of natural gas can create similar environmental problems as those caused by oil exploration. Burma has virtually no environmental laws, and there are no mechanisms in place for corporate or government accountability. Occupational safety codes are unknown, as are environmental impact studies. The people of Burma have no say in the use or sale of their natural resources, and in the exploration of their environment. The environmental impact of oil and gas exploration in the Andaman Sea under current conditions, will devastate certain marine life.

As the ruling class in the country and investors who are backing that class for their benefits are rigorously defending their self-seeking economic policy by pronouncing that political development is totally underlying on the economic development, the people of Burma today are not only being deprived of their political rights but also being plunged into the economic chaos.

What can be done? Only a political solution to the crisis in Burma will make for sound investment, development, and energy policies. Such a solution will require the participation of the citizens of Burma, currently impossible under SLORC dictatorship. Concerned citizens, companies, international bodies, and States can help by putting economic pressure on SLORC. Divestment, shareholder resolutions, and campaigns can and will make a difference. Continued investment with SLORC is support for slave labour, repression, unsound environmental policy, and the delay of the return to democratic rule so fervently sought by the people of Burma.

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ABSDF ON THE MOVE

CLOSING CEREMONY OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING HELD

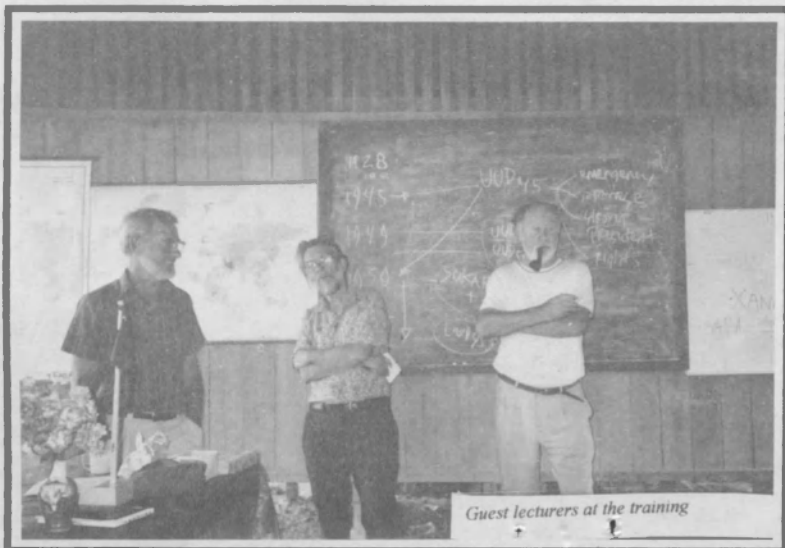
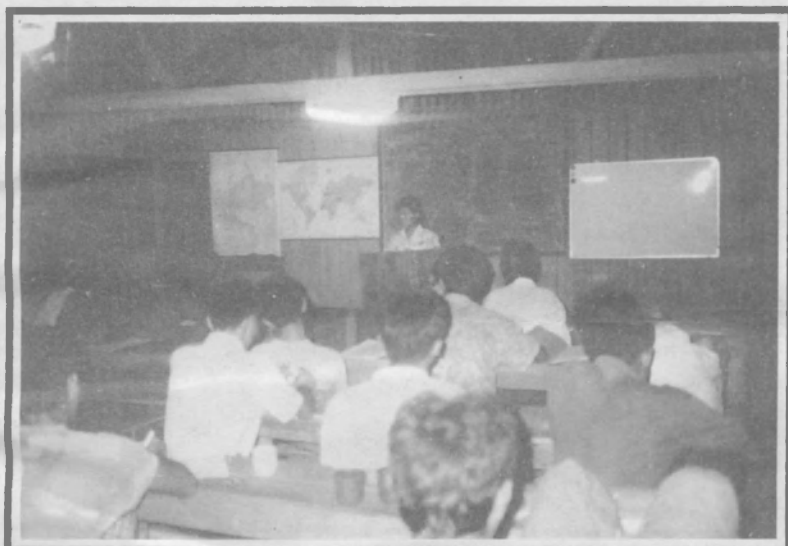
The closing ceremony of Democratic Leadership Training Course No. 1 was held on 10 April 1994 at the Training Centre of ABSDF Central Headquarters in Dawn Gwin. ABSDF Chairman Dr Naing Aung presided over the clos-

ing session of the training and delivered a speech to the gathering.

Present at the ceremony were Ministers from the NCGUB, leaders from alliance revolutionary organisations, international friends, members of the ABSDF Central Committee, leaders and members of the ABSDF camps and trainees and invited guests. The eleven-week long training was sponsored by the Central Executive Committee of ABSDF and was attended by 30 students from respective departments, central working groups and ABSDF (Northern Burma).

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 were lectured by 12 resource persons of ABSDF. Moreover, international friends of ABSDF also helped with part-time teaching in Democracy, Human Rights and Federalism.

It was known that ABSDF will continue to open such kinds of training courses with the aim to cultivate its leaders who will help organising within the Front, within the alliance organisation and grassroots people inside Burma.



COLLECTIVE ORDAINING CEREMONY HELD

The first collective ordaining ceremony was held from 13-17 April 1994 at the central headquarters of ABSDF. On that occasion 62 people, composed of ABSDF members at central and camp level, family members of ABSDF and villagers from nearby communities located in the liberated area, were ordained into monkhood. Of them, 38 were ordained into monkhood while 24 became novices. Because of the generous donations for the ceremony contributed by alliance organisations, local people, overseas Burmese, and international friends, the occasion resulted in an unprecedented success. With the participation of monks from Htoparkalao Monastery, Mae Wai Dai Monastery, Thaw Lae Hta Monastery, Than Lwin Oo Monastery, Thu Mwe Hta Monastery, Beindawgone Monastery, Young Monks from ABYMU, and Inn Shae Monastery, who joined and contributed their warm love, the ceremony was conducted on a marked scale.

On the New Years Day of the Burmese Era (April 17), a cer-

emony for alms offering was held, presented by the abbot of Thaw Lae Hta, as well as monks and novices from other

localities. On 23 April another ceremony was also performed at Thaw Lae Hta Village.

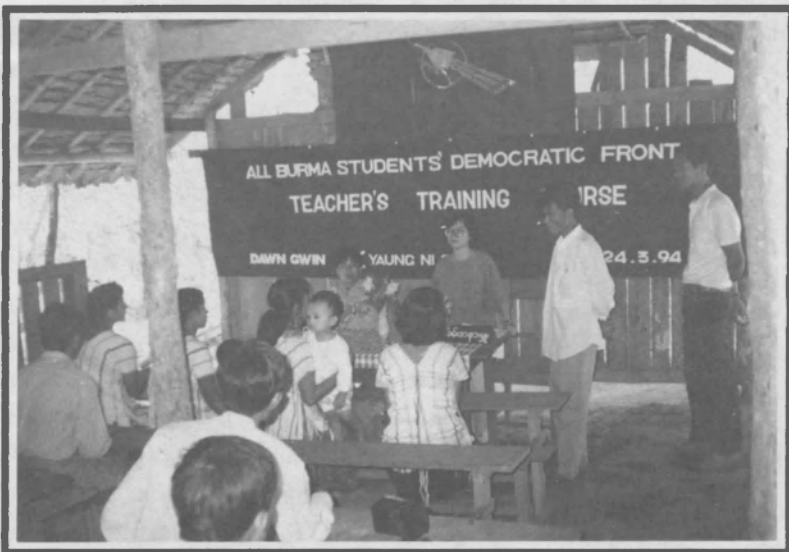
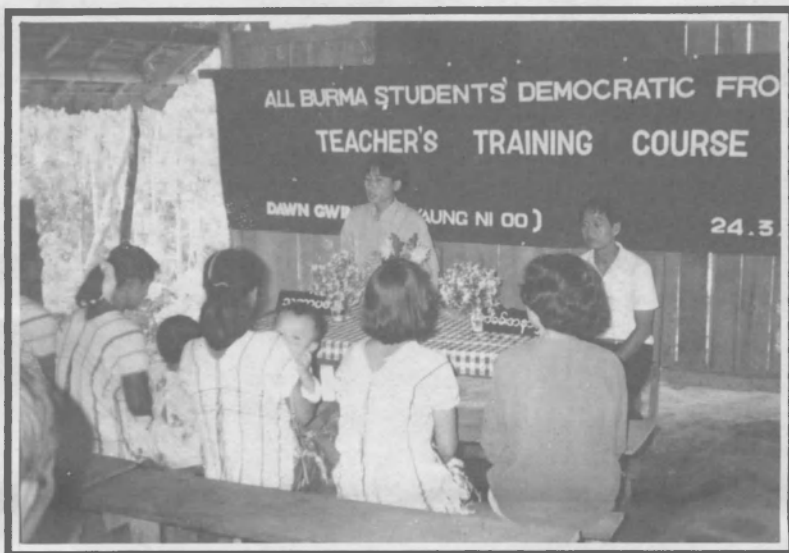
Simultaneously, the water festival and ceremony to welcome the New Year were took place at the central headquarters of ABSDF, and all people in attendance enjoyed Bur-



mese traditional food. The ceremony was attended by invited guests from alliance organisations, members of ABSDF, local people from nearby villages and refugee camps, including guests from Thailand. The audience delighted in various forms of entertainment, such as Burmese traditional songs as well as modern versions.

A 14-week teacher training course, sponsored by the Education Branch of ABSDF, was opened on 24 March 1994 in the primary school at Yaung Ni Oo, the family village of ABSDF. Trainees for the course were members of ABSDF who have contributed their time as teachers at the family village, in addition to members of ABSDF from respective camps who have taken the responsibility for education of children along their border areas. Lillian Wong, a Singaporean post-graduate in education with teaching experience at the primary school level, gave lectures during the training. The main aim of the training is to increase the teachers' knowledge about different teaching methodologies and improve the syllabi for the current curriculum as well as prepare new syllabi for Science, Physical Education and Fine Arts.

TEACHER TRAINING COURSE OPENS



MOVING TOWARD DEMOCRACY

NCGUB DELEGATION AT UNCHR, EXTENDS LOBBYING TOUR TO NORTHERN EUROPE

Dr Sein Win, Prime Minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and Dr Thaung Htun, Member of the Central Executive Committee of ABSDF (Foreign Affairs) departed for Geneva via Oslo on 12 February 1994 to attend the 50th Session of UNCHR. On the way, Dr Sein Win met with the Foreign Minister of Norway and exchanged viewpoints during an open discussion with Foreign Department Officials on the problem of Burma. Dr Sein Win and Dr Thaung Htun met with members of the Norwegian Burma Council, Democratic Voice of Burma, and also was interviewed by the Norwegian state radio station (NRK).

At UNCHR, the delegation held talks with diplomats from France, the US, UK, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and India, when the current situation of human rights in Burma were discussed and support was requested for the proposed reso-

lution presented by the NCGUB.

During their presence at UNCHR, the delegation received the opportunity to meet with Professor Yozo Yokota (UNCHR Special Rapporteur for Burma) and the staff of the Thematic Rapporteurs, where they expressed their concern on the serious human rights situation in Burma. Dr Sein Win made an intervention under item 12, and subsequently the French-sponsored UNCHR Resolution on Burma was adopted by consensus.

In Switzerland, the delegates were joined by colleagues from Germany, Canada, and Norway. During their stay the delegation met with the World Council of Churches (WCC), the President of the Swiss Parliament, other members of Parliament, officials of the Swiss Foreign Affairs Department and the Swiss news media. The delegation also met with the Swiss-Birmanie Association, SWISS AID, the International Fellowship of Rec-

onciliation, the international Peace Bureau, International Law Group, Asia Watch, International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD), Amnesty International, International Confederation of Free Trade Union (ICFTU), United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW) and World Students Christian Federation (WSCF).

In Switzerland, the delegation discussed the sale of Pilatus aircraft to SLORC and the continuing sale of its spare parts, establishment of an NCGUB office in Geneva and material aid to the democratic opposition.

Apart from a general political discussion, the delegates requested the parliamentarians to pass a strong resolution against the National Convention being held in Rangoon, the main purpose of which is to cancel the results of the 1990 elections and to perpetuate the military domination in Burma politics, and to orga-

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nize a signature campaign of parliamentarians for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 20 July 1994.

During their stay in Geneva, the Burmese delegation also met with Swiss and other international NGOs. Apart from general discussions on the political, economic and human rights situation, they discussed the issue of NGOs operating inside Burma. The delegation presented the NCGUB policy on that matter: namely, the NCGUB recognizes the humanitarian need of the people of Burma and it is not against the humanitarian NGOs going into Burma to provide for emergency needs of the people; furthermore, NGOs which enter the country must also be able to operate in the areas controlled by ethnic forces; the humanitarian aid given by the NGOs must go directly into the hands of most needy people and must be able to function independently of SLORC; key administrative personnel active in Burma must not be local, since this would make easier SLORC-intimidation, -infiltration, and -corruption; no importation duties or taxes should be paid to SLORC for equipment, food, medicines, etc., intended for use by the people, which should be allowed into the

country duty-free; human rights NGOs and independent news agencies stationed in Burma will have free access to jails, detention centers etc.

We are totally against all development projects either initiated by governments or NGOs.

Moreover, the delegation also held press conferences with Swiss Media, *Le Monde*, *Tages Anzeiger* and *Der Bund*. At this time, they informed the media on the immediate purpose of their visit, the Swiss government's assistance for the struggle to restore democracy, peace, and human rights and the deplorable human rights and political situation in Burma. They also revealed facts to the media about the sale of Pilatus spare airplane parts to SLORC, and the opposition's position on that matter.

After the UNCHR Assembly, Dr Sein Win and Dr Thaung Htun visited France at the invitation of the France-Birmanie Association, where they were joined by colleagues from Germany. Dr Sein Win and colleagues met with French Foreign Affairs official, parliamentarians, the France-Birmanie Association, French media (*Liberation*, *La*

Croix), the French Socialist Party and the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH).

During the meeting with Foreign Affairs official, the delegation had an opportunity to present the democratic opposition's views on how best to find a comprehensive political settlement in Burma, as well as offer an update on the current economic/political/human rights situation. The delegation also stated their position on the French oil company TOTAL and its investments in Burma which is creating intentionally or unintentionally human rights violations (such as forced relocation, forced labour), political complications (shifting of Thai policy towards SLORC) and humanitarian problems (such as the refugee problems).

From France the delegation continued with the tour of four Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. They met with respective ministers, Foreign Affairs officials, the Nordic Burma Council, parliamentarians, Trade Union (Labor Movement International Forum, Danish Food and Allied Workers Union), the Olof Palme International Center and members of the Peace Education Insti-

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tute. A press conference was held in Helsinki and this gave an opportunity to meet with the media.

Topics highlighted during the discussions were; US policy review on Burma, international support for democratic opposition especially US support, current political, humanitarian and social situation, the meeting between Congressman Bill Richardson and Daw

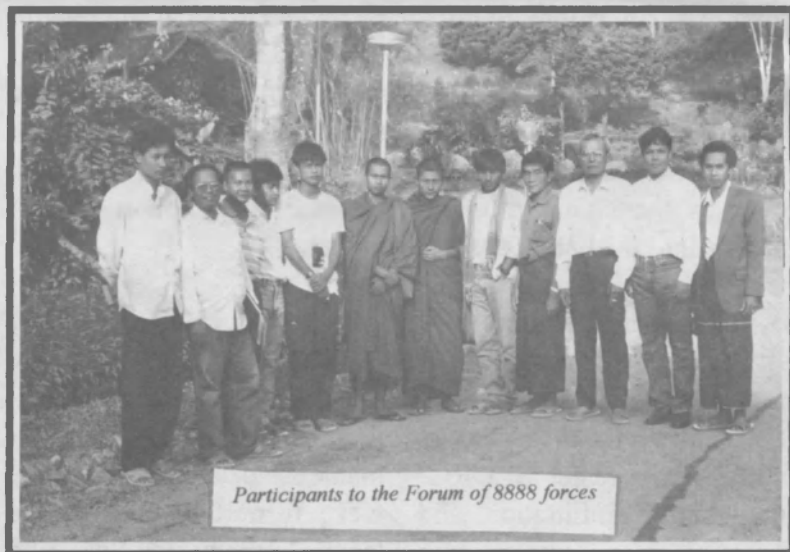
Aung San Suu Kyi, separate cease fire talks between SLORC and ethnic groups, shifting of Thai policy towards the military regime and ASEAN policy on Burma, opposition's view, strategies and plans - especially the sending of a UN special envoy to Burma.

Nordic interest in Burma's affairs regarding human rights violations, the suffering of the

people of Burma due to SLORC's refusal to honour the results of the 1990 elections and finding ways and means towards a comprehensive political settlement was very encouraging. The northern countries reiterated their support for the democratic movement and promised continuing political and humanitarian aid to the democratic opposition.

FORUM OF 8888 FORCES HELD

Under the sponsorship of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), the first Forum of 8888 Forces (F88) comprising of the NCGUB, All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), National League for Democracy-Liberated Area (NLD.L.A), All Burma Young Monks Union (ABYMU) and Democratic Party for New Society (DPNS) was held at a base on the Thai-Burma border from 18-21 March 1994. The Forum was held with the purposes of discussing prevailing political situations in Burma, international involvement with regard to these ever-



Participants to the Forum of 8888 forces

changing developments as well as other current problems of major importance. F88's guiding aim was to seek a common, broad-based strategy

in the struggle for democracy inside Burma. Moreover, the Forum also endeavours to build confidence and understanding among these groups,

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through strengthening the unity and effectiveness of existing alliances.

In actual fact, the meeting professes not to be aiming for the formation of yet another alliance organisation. By having a Forum, whereby mutual understanding can be cultivated, proceeds the step forward for total unity within already existing alliance organisations. During this Forum, a common policy on the current situation was arrived at among the respective groups.

The Forum's view is, after careful analysis, that the present trend of SLORC is not heading towards any real, positive political change, rather the regime is consolidating its efforts to hold onto power permanently.

"The regime's much publicised market-oriented economy is nothing but an economic system solely monopolised by the military and its handful of allies, which does not benefit the people of Burma. The soaring rate of inflation, huge gap between the rich and the poor, multiple taxes imposed on the people and skyrocketing prices are perpetuating the country's economic decline," stated a press release after the Forum.

Moreover, the Forum pointed out that, as an attempt to boost its image both internally and internationally, SLORC has been trying to alleviate political, military and economic problems by making cosmetic changes. Major steps to cheat the people and the international community include ceasefire deals with ethnic na-

tionalities and offers of border area development programmes. These steps, the Forum stressed, will never solve the problems of Burma as they are being used only to perpetuate the rule of the military.

The press release concluded, "The Forces of 8888 believe that the problems of Burma will be settled only when they are able to find the solutions to two fundamental issues in Burma; the total lack of democratic rights and the rights of ethnic nationalities to self-determination. These must be dealt with in a convention in which the democratic forces including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ethnic nationalities and SLORC all participate."

Moreover, other common goals were reached concerning information exchange and dissemination, regular meetings, mutual assistance and the continuation of collective work, in addition to trying for unity within F88. They also agreed to discuss the existence of a solidified alliance in the forthcoming meeting, to protest the proposed Salween Dam and Gas Pipeline projects, to organise the overseas Burmese community in order to gain concrete unity with them, and to explain the position of F88 to the ASEAN NGOs which

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support the movement for democracy in Burma.

The second round of the Forum, attended by the same organisations as the first, was held from 28-30 April and reached agreement for the existence of a united and solidified alliance. The Forum also urged the NLD and NCGUB to hold a joint meeting in order to come to a decision on the formation of a federal government. Also, the NCGUB and NLD were suggested to jointly sponsor activities for the 4th Anniversary of the 1990 May Election. The NCGUB was asked to take responsibility for arranging effective meetings and successful implementation of the Forum.

Moreover they also agreed to issue statements and campaign letters regarding Thailand's invitation to SLORC to attend the ASEAN meeting, to hold a seminar with Green November 32 on the issues of the Gas Pipeline and Salween Dam projects, and to send a letter of recommendation of F88 to the ethnic groups which are attempting dialogue with the SLORC regime.

In a press release issued 30 April, F88 said that ASEAN nations should not ignore the plight of the Burmese people

while hoping to win financial gains from an illegitimate regime which has created situations that no civilised society would indulge, only in order to permanently hold onto power.

"The economic, social and political life of the people in Burma is going downhill, and that the human rights violations of the military are continuing on an unprecedented scale," said F88.

The Forum also emphasised that, "It will be a great setback

and loss for the Burmese people if ASEAN countries continue to cooperate with the regime in its efforts to further the destruction of our motherland. It will also have a profound and lasting impact on mutual understanding and relations of people in the region."

The participants of F88 strongly urged ASEAN nations not to recognise SLORC as a legitimate government and to cancel the invitation for SLORC to attend the Bangkok meeting in July.

NCGUB WELCOMES UNCHR RESOLUTION

The NCGUB welcomed the resolution on Burma adopted on 9 March in Geneva by the UNCHR. In a statement released on the same day, the government stated, "We are pleased that the resolution, which was adopted by consensus, is stronger than in previous years, reflecting the seriousness of the continuing human rights violations in Burma."

The NCGUB welcomes the resolution's reference to the violations directly affecting women, in particular those concerning ethnic minorities,

who suffer ill-treatment, especially at the hands of the military.

Particularly, the NCGUB welcomes the point which "urges SLORC immediately and unconditionally to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as other detained political leaders and all political prisoners, and to permit them to participate in the process of national reconciliation" which in the past the Commission has been rather shy about making recommendations that might be considered "political".

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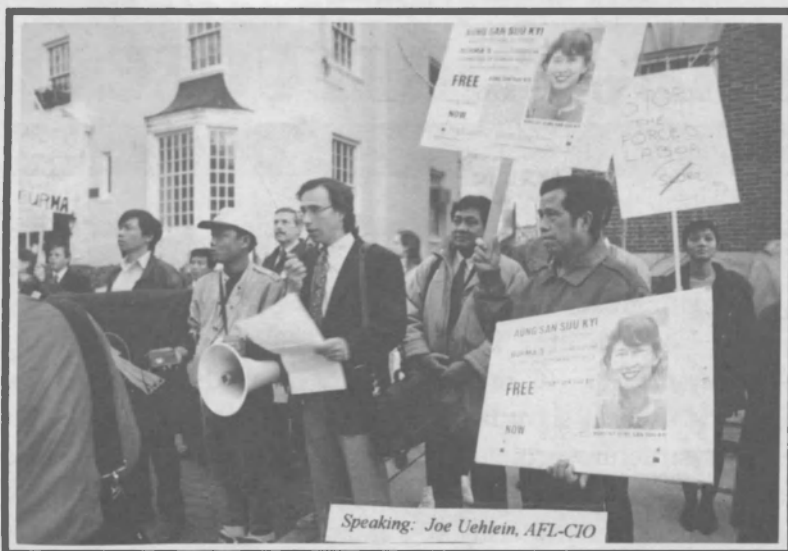
FTUB

INTENSIFIES LOBBYING

13 March - Maung Maung, Secretary of the Free Trade Union Burma (FTUB), met with Cheryl Greave, Executive Director of the American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO), and they discussed helping to cover the needs of Burmese youth, to educate and develop students already in the US, to find ways to hold workshops on federalism and democracy and to organise clothing and book drives for border areas.



On the same day Maung Maung also met with George Martins, trade union rights, ICFTU, Brussels, and Lydia Siselakis from Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI) and conferred on trade union rights violations. He also presented a video made by Faith Doherty of



Southeast Asian Information Network on investments and their disastrous effects on the Burmese people.

On 15 March representatives of the following organisations held a protest in front of the SLORC embassy against Chit Swe's visit, with some of the speakers mentioned; AAFLI (Mark Hankin, Lydia, Mark Sybly, Chat), AFL-CIO (Joe Uhelein and Kahryn, who entered the residence), FTUB (Maung Maung), ICFTU

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(George Martins), SIU (Ed Morris), and many other unnamed and unforgotten friends and comrades from DBSO, CRDB, NCGUB and NLD.

On 22 March Maung Maung met with Demelza Stubbings and Estrellita Jones from Amnesty International, when a close assessment on the present situation was made. The pressure of Thailand was also looked at, as well as the forced labour migration in the Nat Ei-Taung Area. Finally, Maung Maung rounded up his schedule on 28 March with an interview by David Morberg (In These Times) on Burma labour issues.

"When ceasefires are achieved, voluntary repatriation of refugees should be negotiated with due provision for their safety and assistance in accordance with international practice", NDF said in its statement released on 26 March 1994.

NDF also added, "There must be no forced repatriation and voluntary repatriation should not commence until it has been clearly demonstrated that the underlying problems which caused people to flee have been satisfactorily resolved."

"A ceasefire does not necessarily solve the problems," it

As these practices can continue after a ceasefire, NDF insisted that no refugees should be returned to Burma until it is clear that such abuses have stopped, and villages destroyed by the SLORC troops are being rebuilt.

Regarding the humanitarian assistance to the internally persons, NDF said that there has been almost no external assistance to them. In the post-ceasefire situations, NDF wants the internally displaced persons as well as returning refugees to be provided with development and humanitarian assistance until they survive and are able to become

NDF

CONCERNS ABOUT REFUGEES

The National Democratic Front (NDF), an umbrella organisation of the ethnic minorities of Burma, said that more than 70,000 people had entered Thailand to escape the years of civil war in Burma and several hundred thousand more had fled to the border.

said.

Many Burmese fled their homes because they feared abuse by the SLORC military — being used as slave labour on infrastructure projects or forced to carry ammunition and supplies for the army to frontline areas.

self-sufficient. In order to ensure that external assistance is not misused or manipulated by the SLORC military, and directly reached into the hands of the people intended, NDF requested that aid should be delivered from Thailand by means of cross-border assistance.

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REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

A regional Human Rights Conference sponsored by the Calcutta-based Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) was held at the City Hall in Siliguri, West Bengal of India from 12-13 March. At the invitation of APDR, Ko Soe Myint and Ko Nyo of the Burmese Students League (BSL) joined over 500 participants from respective human rights organisations in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Burma.

At the opening conference, ex-Chairman of People Union for Civil Liberty (UCL) and former Justice of India Mr Tarkunde presided over the session and delivered the opening speech to the gathering.

At the conference, regional human rights issues were focused on by Mr Adv Nazrulislam of the Human Rights Development Centre (Bangladesh), Mr Gopal Ghimrer from

Ahura (Bhutan) Damark, Mr Bi Shnu Pradhan from People Forum for Human Rights and Dr Arun Kumar Singh from Forum for Protection of Human Rights (Nepal).

Ko Soe Myint of BSL highlighted, "Burma today is listed in one of the countries where gross human rights violations are occurring and the international community are much aware how the basic human rights of the people of Burma are violated. Since the military regime came into power in 1962, people who voice their political dissent from the military regime have been brutally oppressed by the regime."

He stressed the realities of the human rights situation — violations in the prisons, sentences handed down by using unlawful acts, forced labour and forced portorage, forced relocation and various forms of violations against women (sexual harassment) in Burma — all with ample evidence.

During this, the 13th Regional Human Rights Conference, Burma was accepted as a member of the South Asia Human Rights Commission, which has become as wide as the South East Asia Human Rights Commission. APDR Chairman Mr Biren Roy said that, in the future, the Commission will highlight the violations of human rights through the United Nations and the international community.

Moreover, during the commemoration of Burmese Human Rights Day, 13 March, the BSL presented a video documentary on the human rights movement in Burma to the participants.

People from West Bengal showed a strong interest in the movement for the restoration of democracy in Burma and promised that they will contribute physical as well as mental support.

No More
Military Interference
In Civilian Rule

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They also disseminated leaflets and educational papers on how SLORC has spoiled the natural resources. The protesters held portraits of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and placards that show how the SLORC military regime oppresses the democratic groups with military hardware purchased from the foreign currency, which is received from the selling of natural resources at bottom prices. Moreover, the protesters also distributed leaflets that urged the boycott of joint-ventures with SLORC, such as Texaco, Unocal and Pepsico have done. It was reportedly known that the exhibition was supported by the people as it can draw the attention of the people to know the realities inside Burma.

CEREMONY FOR EARTH DAY HELD

The ceremony for Earth Day was held on 17 April 1994 in front of the World Trade Centre in New York, USA. On this occasion, various environmental preservation organisations presented their organisations' aims and held exhibitions which aimed at saving the world. New York-based Burmese students and people who are interested in Burma also held exhibitions in order to make the people in the US aware how Burma's natural resources and forests have been exploited and raped by the SLORC military regime.



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COMPUTER TRAINING COURSE OPENS



A basic computer training course sponsored by Green November 32 was conducted from 31 March to 30 April. At that training ABSDF arranged for a resource person to direct instruction. This deputy was Khaing Myo Min Aung from GN 32, joined by 16 trainees from respective organisations.

At that training, Win Naing Oo from PLF won first prize, Nai Banya Aung from DPNS won second prize while third prize went to Min Yan Naing of DAB.



INTERN'L PERSPECTIVES

The Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations met in its fiftieth session in March 1994. On the agenda was Burma, or more specifically, the "situation of human rights in Myanmar [Burma]" based on the reports of Special Rapporteur Yoko Yokota (on the question of torture, E/CN.4/1994/31), and on the question of religious intolerance, E/CN.4/1994/71) and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (E/CN.4/1994/27). France put forth a resolution on 4 March, which was also

tics, law and democratization in the future Burma.

The Special Rapporteur's original objectives set up in resolution 1992/58 of 3 March 1992 were "to establish direct contacts with the Government and people of Myanmar, including political leaders deprived of their liberty, their families and their lawyers, with a view to examining the situation of human rights in Myanmar and following any progress made towards the transfer of power to a civilian

of SLORC personnel. These freedoms, those of expression and assembly, were commented on in addition to other restrictions of freedom and despite the unavailing lifting of some "emergency measures" by SLORC.

The report pointed out several times the continuing lack of political freedom inside the country. Not only was the Special Rapporteur denied to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, now in her fifth year under house arrest, but the plight of a host

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNCHR FIFTIETH SESSION

sponsored by the NCUB. The proposal was discussed and passed with consensus on 9 March 1994.

While the Commission took note of positive measures the State Law and Order Restoration Council, or the SLORC junta, has taken since the mandate of Special Rapporteur was extended last year, the session's proceedings made it clearly evident much remains to be done and recommendations were forwarded on the topics of human rights, poli-

Government and the drafting of a new constitution, the lifting of restrictions on personal freedoms and the restoration of human rights in Myanmar..."

While the fiftieth session noted that the Special Rapporteur visited the country at the invitation of the SLORC authorities, the fact was stressed that his freedoms were restricted and, according to the report itself, the ability of the people to speak openly was hindered by the presence

of other political prisoners continually deprived of their liberty and fundamental rights were raised. Although Burma's most known "prisoner of conscience" was recently allowed a visit by foreigners other than her family for the first time, among them a representative of the UN and US Congress, as well as the exchange of letters with her family, the UNCHR did not seem be hoodwinked by allowing these "privileges" to obscure the fact that her detention is unlawful and should be

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immediately and unconditionally terminated.

The National Convention was visited by the Special Rapporteur, who commented that a lack of debate and vote on topics, including a restriction of those elected in May 1990, down-played any results as truly the will of the people and not just the military government. The UNCHR stressed "...that no evident progress has been made towards turning power over to a freely elected Government." In different places within the text, it was stated that the prior elections must fulfil their conclusion "...through the transfer of power to the democratically-elected representatives, lifting restraining orders placed on a number of political leaders, releasing those who are detained and ensuring that all political parties can function freely..."

Participants to the National Convention who offer opposing viewpoints or are critics of SLORC have been arrested and imprisoned, and political parties, namely the should-be ruling National League for Democracy (with over 80% of the 1990 election returns), have been prevented from distributing literature and even from freely meeting, with the

result "...that one the objectives of the Convention is to maintain the participation of the armed forces (*Tatmadaw*) in a leading role in the future political life of the State..." Elsewhere the UNHCR stressed that, "...the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government..." and the clear implications are that SLORC does not allow all citizens to freely participate in the political process, which is essential.

Throughout the proceeding of the UNCHR's fiftieth session, international laws and standards were directly referred to, some of which SLORC was asked to sign, others which the regime was a party to; all of which the military regime were urged to implement and respect for the sake of all the country's people. Obviously, if the L and O of SLORC truly do stand for "Law" and "Order", the government should find security in adopting and actualizing these rules and guidelines suggested by the UNCHR, which included: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenants on Human Rights; the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (concerning the protection of war victims and SLORC's release of a number of political prisoners), in par-

ticular their common article 3; the Forced Labor Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Rights to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), both of the International Labor Organization; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

This was in addition to a long list of human rights violations "...which remain particularly serious, in particular the practice of torture, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labor, including forced portering for the military, abuse of women, politically motivated arrests and detention, forced displacement of the population, the existence of important restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and association, and the imposition of oppressive measures directed, in particular, at minority groups..."

Furthermore, special attention was paid to the situation of women inside Burma, who are subjected to many personal indignities, "Noting further

INTERN'L PERSPECTIVES

that many violations directly affect women, in particular women belonging to minorities, who have suffered ill-treatment, especially at the hands of the military, as stated by the Special Rapporteur..." Minority groups have also been targeted by the UNCHR as needing special attention by the SLORC regime, notwithstanding that cease-fire talks are continuing.

The question of ethnic refugees was brought up more than once, highlighting this growing problem which involves not only the UNCHR but other UN resources and agencies, such as the UN High Commissioner on Refugees. Currently there are an estimated 70,000 refugees along the Thai-Burmese border, and more than 200,000 Moslem refugees along the Indian-Burmese border. These refugees are the result of people fleeing religious intolerance, political repression and human rights abuses advocated by SLORC policies and the Burmese army.

Although the Memorandum of Understanding, an agreement for the voluntary repatriation of the Moslem Rakhine refugees from Bangladesh, was reached on 5 November 1993 between the UNHCR and SLORC, the fiftieth session

called on the junta for its full implementation and requested that SLORC authorities "...create the necessary conditions to facilitate the early repatriation of Myanmar refugees in neighboring countries and their full reintegration, in conditions of safety and dignity..."

These human rights violations must stop. This can be halted through just laws and due process of those laws, plus with a "humanitarian education" of SLORC forces, the UNCHR reminded the regime "...of its obligation to put an end to the impunity of perpetrators of violations of human rights, including members of the military, and its responsibility to investigate alleged cases of human rights violations committed by its agents on its territory, to bring them to justice, prosecute them and punish those found guilty, in all circumstances..."

The UNCHR welcomed "...the first measures taken by the Government of Myanmar to provide for the training of military personnel in international humanitarian law..." and requested SLORC authorities "...to intensify its efforts in that regard and to extend them to police and prison personnel..." The resolution included an important call for SLORC to

address special attention to the country's prison conditions in general, as well as "...to allow international humanitarian organizations to communicate freely and confidentially with prisoners..." Also, the junta should not hesitate to permit various aid offered by impartial humanitarian bodies to operate in Burma.

The recommendations of the UNCHR concluded with another one-year extension, its second, for the mandate of Special Rapporteur for Burma, "...to establish or continue direct contacts with the Government and people of Myanmar, including political leaders deprived of their liberty, their families and lawyers, and requests him to report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session..." The recommendations urged SLORC "...to cooperate fully and unreservedly with the Commission and the Special Rapporteur and, to that end, to ensure that the Special Rapporteur has effectively free access to any person in Myanmar whom he may deem it appropriate to meet in the performance of his mandate, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi."

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA

SWEDEN

"Also in Burma, atrocities continue to constantly be committed on a wide scale in the form of extra-judicial executions and torture, as well as forced labour, rape and forced reallocations. Further, as regards the National Convention, my Government holds the view that, given its composition and the restrictions placed on the delegates, and also given the general guide-lines to be followed, it does not constitute the necessary step towards the restoration of democracy in Burma, which has been called for by the international community."

JAPAN

"While my delegation appreciates the fact that the Government of Myanmar facilitated the visit of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights to Myanmar, and that it permitted a United States Congressman to meet

with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, it remains concerned about the human rights situation in that country. My delegation hopes that the Government of Myanmar will extend its full cooperation to international human rights organisations such as the Commission on Human Rights and the UNHCR, and responded to the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur as a matter of the highest priority. In this regard, my delegation hopes that the dialogue will take place between the Government of Myanmar and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and that there will be a step forward toward the early solution of the problems, including the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi."

HUNGARY

"The situation of human rights in Myanmar remains a serious concern for us. The Special Rapporteur Professor Y. Yokota deserves our appreciation for the report he has sub-

mitted to us. Grave violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms continue to be committed by the Burmese military, including arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

"We, once again, urge the immediate and unconditional release of political prisoners, including Noble Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

"By the same token, we would like to reiterate: as long as the military rulers refuse to transfer the power to the elected representatives of the Burmese people, the international community shall be vigilant to keep the situation under close review."

FINLAND

"Despite the positive developments Finland remains concerned about the human rights violations in Myanmar. Continued, serious restrictions are imposed upon people, particularly the leaders of political parties and the ethnic minorities, to enjoy their civil and political rights. We urge the Military Government of Myanmar to release the Noble Peace Prize Laureate, Mrs

INTERN'L PERSPECTIVES

Aung San Suu Kyi."

AUSTRALIA

"In Burma, an unrepresentative military regime continues to deny to Burmese citizens the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms. The SLORC's approach to the constitutional reform process has demonstrated little willingness to accommodate democratic aspirations.

"While the SLORC has made some positive gestures, including through the release of political prisoners, the signals from Rangoon are mixed. It is especially important at this time that the international community work more constructively to facilitate a lasting reconciliation in that country.

"In doing so, we need to be clear in our own thinking about what we are trying to achieve in Burma — Specifically, what "Benchmarks" the SLORC should meet in order to qualify for greater international acceptance and respectability. These should include greater transparency and participation in the current constitutional process and substantially improved human rights conditions.

"Australia welcomed unequivocally the relaxation of the conditions of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention, which allowed access to her by United States Congressman Richardson and a number of others on 14 February.

"This is a positive step, and we hope it will be followed quickly by the commencement of dialogue between the SLORC leadership and Burmese opposition figures, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the issues confronting Burma, including the process of national reconciliation and in improvement of human rights. We continue to hope that this development will also lead to the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi."

USA

"The situation is little better in Myanmar, where, despite an occasional visit, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi still remains under house arrest. Indeed, such is the repression imposed by the military government that much of the country operates as if it, too, were under such arrest. Given the State Law and Order Restoration Council's penchant

for harassing and detaining its political rivals, the United States feels there is a clear need for the Commission to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for Myanmar."

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

"The Fellowship was among the first to bring to the attention of the Commission the situation in Myanmar. The Reports to the General Assembly and to the Commission of Professor Yokota, Special Rapporteur on Myanmar deserve close attention. In order to overcome violence and to develop a new constitutional order based on the rule of law, cooperation between the Government of Myanmar, all members elected to the Parliament on 1990, and representatives of all sectors of the civil society is necessary. Our Commission can help create the atmosphere for such cooperation and can help provide through the Advisory Services of the Centre for Human Rights the expertise necessary for a speedy transition to a constitutional government.

"With these examples, we wish to stress three points:

INTERN'L SUPPORT

APPEALS TO UN SEC-GEN

20 April 1994

In order to press SLORC for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners, to respect the results of the May 1990 election and for the emergence of the people's government, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is implored to implement all appropriate measures stated in an appeal signed by 427 MPs of Japan sent to the UN Sec-Gen in 1993. This appeal was forwarded to the office of the UN in New York by Mr Satsuki Eda himself and present member in the Cabinet.

Similar attempts have been extended at the international

level in 1994 after being consulted with Canada-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD). Movements in Japan have been carried out by the democracy-loving people there by the help of Satsuki Eda.

In an appeal addressed to the UN Secretary-General, the signatures of 507 MPs were present — a number which represents 67% of the Japanese legislature. Among those who signed the appeal letter were present ministers and ex-prime ministers of Japan. It was known that one copy of this appeal letter is to be sent to the newly-elected Japanese Prime Minister.

"Firstly, we wish to indicate the need for realistic analysis of situations, devoid of much of the emotionalism which conflicting situations inevitably provoke.

"Secondly, we stress the crucial role of the system of Special Rapporteur — both thematic and country-specific; the need to reinforced this system and to avoid attacks on the integrity of the Special Rapporteurs.

"Thirdly, we stress the need for open and fruitful cooperation between governments, the UN Secretariat and non-governmental organisations.



Name	Number	Percentage
Liberal Democratic Party	143	45
Social Democratic party of Japan	132	95
Shinseito (Japan Renewal Party)	34	51
Komeito (Clean Government Party)	68	90
Japan New Party	37	90
Japanese Communist party	24	93
Democratic Socialist Party	18	78
New Party Sakigake	7	46
United Social Democratic Party	3	100
Democratic Reform Party	11	100
Others	30	65
Total	507	69
Upper House	171	68
Lower House	336	66

INTERN'L SUPPORT

AMOCO WITHDRAWS FROM BURMA

On 3 March 1994, AMOCO Production Co announced that after assessing the economic exploration potential of its contract areas in light of the current crude oil price forecasts, it decided that its Amoco Myanmar Petroleum Co subsidiary will pull out of Burma by the middle of 1994.

Some of its shareholders had pressured the company to pull

out of Burma because the country is ruled by a brutal military junta. They criticised Amoco for petitioning the US Securities and Exchange Commission to omit from Amoco's annual shareholders' meeting in April 1994 a shareholder resolution opposing Burma dealings.

Amoco paid US\$ 22 million for the concession and another US\$ 5 million signing bonus.

deaths, injuries, property damage or other harm arising out of their companies' operations in Burma.

Under standard U.S. tort law, whether a natural person or a corporation, each is responsible for the reasonably foreseeable consequences of their actions, even if those consequences involve the actions of a third party. If a corporation enters into a contractual relationship with disreputable parties, and it is reasonably foreseeable that those parties will hurt someone, the corporation may be held liable for the harm resulting from the business

TEXACO AND UNOCAL COULD BE HELD LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE

On 11 April 1993, Beth Stephens of the Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR), a nonprofit public interest law office, which has been contacted by several groups concerned about human rights violations in Burma, sent letters to Mr Alfred C. DeCrane, Jr Chairman and CEO of Texaco, and Mr Richard Stegemeier, Chairman of Unocal, urging them to cease their tortious business relationship with the Burmese military regime. CCR also called for

the executives' attention to several basic principles of U.S. law which apply to their activities.

In these letters she expressed that human rights groups have raised questions about the relationship between Texaco and Unocal's Burma and the gross human rights abuses perpetrated by the illegal Burmese military dictatorship. The Centre also said in its letters that Texaco and Unocal could be held legally responsible for

transaction.

"The recent history of Burma, along with human rights reports prepared by international human rights groups, the U.S. Department of State, and the United Nations, indicate that the military dictatorship with which Texaco and Unocal is in joint-venture partnership is committing large-scale violations of human rights," stressed the text.

The Centre's special concern

is the transport of natural gas by Texaco and Unocal from offshore Andaman Sea concessions, for sale to Thailand.

"Credible reports indicate that villages have been destroyed and local ethnic minority people have been kidnapped and forced to work as porters and manual laborers for these security forces. Many have been killed, while others have suffered torture, including rape and other sexual abuse, with lasting physical injury. Investigators familiar with conditions in the region in which the pipeline route has been proposed state that these human rights abuses are a direct and foreseeable result of commercial activities by you and your partners," cited the letters.

Texaco and Unocal have been the target of an international campaign designed to inform them of the dire consequences of their investment in Burma, are compelling evidence that they know or should know about the human rights abuses connected with the companies' activities in Burma, and that they should reasonably foresee abuses in the future.

(Source: Center for Constitutional Rights)

UNOCAL LINKED TO FOREST RUIN AND FORCED LABOR IN BURMA

PROTEST AT UNOCAL SHAREHOLDER'S MEETING

Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network (RAN) and the Burma Forum demonstrated on 25 April at Unocal's corporate headquarters in downtown Los Angeles during the annual shareholder's meeting and called Unocal Corporation to end its joint-venture (which holds a 47.5 per cent share in a natural gas concession in Burma) with the Burmese junta. The protest focused on Unocal's investment in a natural gas pipeline through rainforest in Burma.

Activists conducted a high profile airborne demonstration, using large weather balloons to lift a banner. Large photos depicting the forced labor chain-gangs used in Burma to build roads and clear forests were creatively displayed. Inside the meeting, shareholders discussed a resolution requesting Unocal to publicly disclose all of its ac-

tivities in Burma.

Greenpeace also released a report on the connection between the gas pipeline, human rights abuses (including slave labor, forced relocation and looting of villages by the military) and environmental degradation of the tropical rain forest. The report, based on a recent visit to Burma, is centered around interviews with indigenous people, such as the Karen and Mon who live throughout the pipeline area.

"This proposed pipeline encapsulates all that is wrong with Burma under the death grip of SLORC," said Pamela Wellner, Greenpeace forest campaigner.

"Unocal can't keep justifying its involvement with this junta by saying they are providing employment," Wellner said. "The truth is, they are support-

INTERN'L SUPPORT

Greenpeace, RAN and the Burma Forum are asking Unocal and other foreign companies such as Total of France, the other partner in the offshore gas concession, to pull their operations out of Burma. This is in solidarity with the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and other democratic forces which have been asking companies not to invest with SLORC and to put on hold their business interest in Burma until a democratic government is in power.

Since 1988 SLORC has been selling off its natural resources, such as timber, oil and gas, to gain hard currency to buy armaments to further suppress its people. Investment by oil companies is considered the largest single source of foreign currency to SLORC.

"If the Unocal shareholders were aware of the human rights atrocities perpetrated on their behalf, I am sure they would not condone Unocal doing business with the SLORC," said Naw Louisa Benson, co-founder of the Burma Forum and a member of the Karen ethnic group.

(Source: Green Peace)
Slorc, the military junta has

BRC-PHOTO CONTEST

controlled Burma since 1988, needs tourism dollars but fear travellers' curiosity. To prepare for the travellers, Slorc has been busy whitewashing: not only Rangoon's decaying landmarks, but more significantly its crimes against the Burmese people. Burmese Relief Center—Japan believes that travellers to Burma needn't be pawns in Slorc's power game. Indeed, an informed visitor who can expose what's behind the whitewash is a friend of Burma's people and a foe of the junta. That's why BRC—Japan is inviting all travellers to Burma to open their eyes, and shutters, to the realities of life under the dic-

tatorship. Black & White or Colour photos mentioning sender's name, address, phone number, location (s) and date (s) of photo (s), camera type, film type, and aperture and exposure information can be sent to 266-27 Ozuku-cho, Kashihara-Shi, Nara-ken 634, Japan, 1 December 1994 by the last. Photos will be judged on technical and artistic merit as well as content, and first, second, and third place winners will receive cash prizes; honourable mentions will receive Burmese gifts. It was known that winning photos will be used in BRC-J publications.

Announcement

Schemes of damming the Salween River and its tributaries initiated by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) and its impact will be focused on in a report by the Southeast Asian Information Network (SAIN) and All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), available very soon.

In rainy Oslo on 13 March 1994, a three-hour seminar was held to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the tragic incident which snowballed into the democratic movement in Burma — the brutal 1988 murder by police of student Phone Maw in a Rangoon teashop.

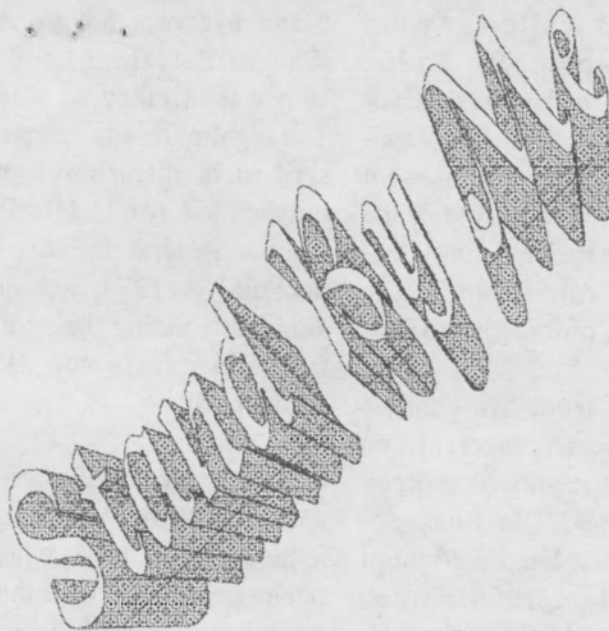
This seminar was organized by several groups, notably Youth Building the Future, a global issues/peace network, and the Democratic Voice of Burma-Oslo. Also helping with the arrangement was Khut Daung, a Burmese-interest group from the University of Oslo, members from ABSDF in Europe, and the Norwegian-Burma Council (NBC). Support and funding was provided by Oslo Municipality, the University of Oslo, and the Student Parliament.

In addition to five informative speeches, traditional Burmese food was prepared and an exhibition was on display to an audience of over seventy students, academia, journalists, amateur Burmologists, con-

cerned individuals and general public from Norway and abroad. There was even a visiting professor from Tibet in attendance, adding to this already widely international event!

The main aims were three-fold, explained the Master of Ceremonies, self-styled "Knut D. Haugen"¹ for the event; commemoration, education, and preparation for a weekend seminar to take place the following month. At that seminar a plan of action would be taken up, coordinating with other groups and individuals. The idea that day now was to promote awareness at the current seminar, in order to prepare themselves for the weekend seminar which would set up a grassroots group for planning future ways to help the people of Burma.

The first lecture on "Ethnic Diversity in Burma" was delivered by Mr Hallvard Kuloy, Chairman of the Norwegian-Burma Council, who previously worked with UNICEF inside Burma. Mr Kuloy's speech, aided by a large map of Burma and neighboring countries, traced the historical development of the ethnic groups in Burma, from imperial kings to British colonialism. His focus concentrated on the largest ethnic minorities, such as — Rakhine Muslim, Chin, Naga, Kachin, Wa, Shan, Karenni, Karen, Mon — out of the approximately 100 diverse groups, who all together make up an estimated 33% of the 43 million inhabitants but who live on over 60% of the land.



By Dr No

After general geography, customs and cultures were touched upon, Mr Kuloy moved on to the struggle for independence from the Japanese and British, and brought to a close his speech with the success of national unity under Gen. Aung San at the Panglong Conference in 1947.

Following from Mr Kuloy's cue, the next speaker picked up where the previous speech left off as U Hla Phay described a first-hand account of the turbulent 1950s, when Burma was briefly under parliamentary democracy for the first time in that land's history. By 1962 U Hla Phay was working as a junior lecturer in physics, well-liked by the students on account of his prominent participation as a student leader earlier. And, true to his nature, the young teacher became involved in the protests against Ne Win's military coup after witnessing the brutality and bloodshed of the *Tatmadaw* against peaceful demonstrators.

For his alleged "disruption of the students' activities," U Hla Phay was arrested and held without trial for almost nine years, as the new dictator sought to silence all opposition to and criticism of his regime. U Hla Phay's only "crime" was to deny, after repeated pressures such as physical and mental torture and even im-

prisonment on dreaded Coco Island, to accept the "Burmese Way to Socialism" and Ne Win's legitimacy to power. The nightmare, sometimes described in disturbing detail, only ended for U Hla Phay when a general amnesty was declared in 1973, a scheme aimed at winning the people's sympathies for a new BSPP constitution.

U Hla Phay concluded his speech with his participation in the events of 1988, when he once again challenged the repressive system ruling the country and joined the students' movement. Finally, the elderly lecturer decided that, in order to continue the struggle for freedom, the time had come to unite with the democratic forces converging at the Thai-Burmese border. The day following his departure, his house was visited by intelligence agents. U Hla Phay currently works in Bangkok with B.U.R.M.A., currently known as Burma Issues.

After the stirring and disturbing narrative, a pause was called for the audience to take a breather after the overwhelmingness of the regime. People collected themselves, talked in low tones and wandered around the exhibition.

On display were seven large panels designed by BURMA.

and flown in from Bangkok. NBC generously lent them for the occasion, and members of the students' group Khut Daung painted and pasted the panels into final form. Among the various themes of each display was the 1988 Uprising, foreign investments in Burma, ethnic diversity, and Aung San Suu Kyi. In addition to that, a haunting collection of black-and-white photographs by a Dutch photographer, detailing life along the border in villages and student camps. Rounding out the visual arts was a wall-sized portrait of the people's choice, Aung San Suu Kyi, painted on canvas in a delicate purple hue by noted artist.

Next to this amazing work stood a tiny table filled with books available for participants to purchase or order. These included such political works as Mark Smith's colossal *Burma and the Politics of Ethnic Insurgency* and journalist Bertil Lintner's chronicle of the 1988 Uprising in *Outrage*, to subjects on Burmese culture from pagodas to puppets, as well as Norwegian versions of Aung San Suu Kyi's *Freedom from Fear* and the NBC-sponsored translation of *Burma: the Next Killing Fields?* authored by former Buddhist monk Alan Clements.

Covering another table by the entrance was a host of colorful postcards reproductions of

Sit Nyein Aye's paintings, sent from India by BSL, ABSDF calendars and Aung San Suu Kyi T-shirts were for sale to help publicize the struggle, and a hot item snatched up by participants was the catchy red-and-yellow key chains proudly bearing *Khut Daung*, or the Fighting Peacock.

Throughout the pause a light Burmese snack of fried rice and shrimp in Burmese-style was being served which was, oddly enough, a Franco-Burmese collaboration and — not so surprising — a stunning success. As the number of participants overwhelmed the make-shift kitchen, forks being the first casualty, plastic teaspoons were used by many a hungry and happy friend that night and no one went without at least a *smak*, or taste, of this fine dish.

Spirits lightened, the audience took their seats and returned to the matter at hand as it became the students' turn to take over the lectern and relate their personal experiences. [The following names have been changed.] The lights were dimmed and the slide projector hummed, showed scenes of what many, especially to people in peaceful Norway, can only imagine and wonder about.

Ko Phyu began by talking about looking forward to the

end his studies in March 1988, the only pressing concerns a job in his chosen profession. But events decided otherwise for him, his peers, and so many thousands of others like them. The slides — pictures taken from various newspapers, books, and by the students themselves — along with his narrative of the uprising from the "inside", created a powerful picture of inhumanity run rampant. Ko Phyu told of how the desperation of the people found their ignition through the students, and nearly three decades of suppression was released in unyielding waves of peaceful protests, hopes, and dreams.

Then the mood changed drastically, as Ko Phyu escaped from one jungle another jungle, from SLORC to the border with its buzzing malaria misquitos, the cold sweat of comrades inflicted and dying. His pictures on the screen told the horrors better than any words; the poverty of the people, the substandard conditions in the camps, and the daily struggles merely to survive, much less pursuing their dream of freedom and democracy in Burma. Through the assistance of the ethnic peoples, students all along the border of India, China, and Thailand learned valuable lessons, that these were not rebels seeking to overthrow the "Union of Burma", but had

been fighting for the past forty years for what the students now wanted; a fair and just government. Reality had been revealed, and the students vowed to continue their struggle for all people of Burma, forming the All Burma Students Democratic Front in late 1988 for just that purpose.

But Ko Phyu also pointed out another side of Burma, the one of peaceful pagodas and a rich landscape filled with an abundance of natural resources that were mismanaged during the "Burmese Way to Socialism" and now raped and sold off to greedy companies for the profit of SLORC leaders, giving the people nothing. "And please, just don't forget the children of Burma," his voice pleaded in the dark as a picture of two healthy children burned into the screen.

Ms Gunilla Brundtland focused on the environment, especially the hydroelectric projects currently being planned by SLORC and Thailand. Her student organization, FTVAS (*Föreningen för Internationella Vatten- och Regnskogsstudier*, or Association for International Water and Rainforest Studies), visited the border and sailed up the Salween River. Ms Brundtland showed many incredibly beautiful slides of the environment surrounding the river, including the Burmese virgin forests now all but dis-

appeared across the thin border with Thailand. Pictures included the people living in the areas in their daily routines, including elephants loading freshly cut teak logs onto river barges to be shipped downstream. She also discussed the locations and situations of the ethnic, refugee and democratic forces camps along the river and the pointed out the seriousness any dam projects would have on them, in addition to the environment, lest we forget that these roads would make it easier for SLORC to move troops and supplies into the Liberated Areas.

The final speech as the clock neared the concluding hour of 9 p.m. proved to be especially moving although the talk was an impromptu after the Dutch speaker had to bow out due to illness. This paved the way for a rousing and penetrating talk by a budding young Norwegian photo-journalist who has visited the border as well as inside Burma proper as a tourist, Mr Magnus Anda shared his experiences in a frame most Norwegian youth could relate to — not an easy thing for a country as distant and different as Norway is from Burma, or for any Western country, for that matter.

His very personal account of the tension and fear existing inside Burma belied what

SLORC attempts to portray to the outside world. Mr. Anda commented. If he didn't know about the situation and history, he said you wouldn't know what was really going on, so suppressed and fearful the people were. He noticed that when he talked to anyone it seemed like ten people would instantly be standing around listening in, not doing anything in particular, but it was obvious they were intentionally overhearing the conversation, no matter how harmless. An elderly and somewhat senile man was taken away by police in the train station after ranting to Mr Anda about Ne Win and showing an old photograph the man said was of the former strongman and himself together in the past.

Burmese people were kind and polite and everything seemed so peaceful — on the surface. That was the kind of impression unknowing tourists get, he stressed. It was really "something to see", and one day, the day all the people are waiting for, the tension would break.

That said, the seminar then finished with the MC unable to add anything else to the awe-struck audience. He again reminded everyone present about the upcoming weekend seminar, urging everyone to "tell someone about Burma, what is going on there, what

you heard here today", before thanking the speakers and participants for coming.

Afterwards, a full-page article about Burma written by Mr Anda, with his own photographs, was published in the popular cultural Norwegian newspaper *Morgenbladet*.

The following day the DVB broadcast excerpts from the 3-hour affair, and a few days later Radio Nova in Oslo held a half hour interview with one of the organizers, who explained about the purpose behind the March 13's event as well as the situation in Burma today. When asked what he would like to hear, the interviewee promptly chose *Stand By Me* as a featured song to highlight the plight of the Burmese people, best stated in the opening stanza:

*When the night has come/And
the land is dark
And the moon is the only/ Light
we'll see
No, I won't be afraid/No, I won't
shed a tear
Just as long as you stand/Stand
by me...*

Source: Burma Support Group (Norway)

¹ A play off *Khut Daung* meaning "Fighting Peacock" in Burmese, the symbol which has come to represent the democratic movement.

SAVE THE SALWEEN

Board of the Editors

DAMMING EVIDENCE

The sources of the Salween River run down from Tibet's high mountains, through Yunnan in China, join across Shan and Karenni States to eventually form the border between Thailand and Burma for 118 km before turning west and flowing into the Andaman Sea off the coast of the Burmese port city Moulmein, 2,413 km from its lofty origins. Southeast Asia's longest and largest (in sheer volume) river has watershed regions which various ecological studies have suggested "...host rain forests which are critical in terms of balancing the world's ecology..."¹ not to mention the innumerable and diverse ethnic peoples that live within the mighty river's reach, dozens of tributaries spreading across the landscape like a spider web's grip. Local indigenous communities depend on the Salween River Basin for everything from the fish they eat to the tea they drink to the rice paddies they grow, from bathing their bodies to washing their sarongs to...electrifying their light bulbs.

The idea of damming the Salween has been studied for many years by dam proponents, especially by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), founded in 1969 and

¹ "The Salween: River of Life or Death?"
Sunday Post, 24 April 1994.

"...entrusted with electricity generation and transmission for the whole Kingdom."² "EGAT is Thailand's sole power supplier and has been looking to neighboring countries for new sites of hydro-power projects, as it currently faces strong opposition against the construction of new large multipurpose dams in Thailand. Along with the country's National Energy Administration (NEA), EGAT in past decades has conducted preliminary reports of possible dam sites in both Laos and Burma."³

Since EGAT's first 14 water diversion projects in 1979, plans had been forming to tap the mighty Salween for hydroelectric power through her tributaries, but it wasn't until after the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) seized power in Burma in 1988 that a comprehensive electricity-generating scheme was fully developed on a large-scale by Thai authorities. In 1989 a coordinating committee on water development projects was set up in Rangoon between the Thai National Committee on Energy (NCE) and the SLORC-controlled Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE), which went on to meet in November of that year and to begin pre-feasibility studies on 2 of the 7 proposed hydro-power projects. These were on Thai tributaries Mae Lamao-Mae Tdeun, Huay Kaneng, Upper Nam Pai-Mae Taeng, Lower Nam Pai-Mae Chaem, Nam Ngao-Mae Tdeun, and Nam Meoi-Mae Tdeun and Upper Salween-Mae Taeng (see map).

These extensive and elaborate plans were formed to supplement the water supply at the

Bhumibol Dam Reservoir "...to solve the problem of water shortages in the Chao Phraya River Basin..."⁴ by diverting "...about 12,000 million cubic meters [12 billion m³] of water a year from the river for electricity generation, agriculture and consumption..."⁵ Water is planned to be removed directly from the Salween River in the case of the Upper Salween Dam in Shan State, Burma. Five projects take away water from tributaries, like the Moei River, before flowing into the Salween while one is a tributary which flows into the Bhumibol Dam from the Salween. At the third meeting of the joint Thai-Burmese committee in 1991, it was decided a Japanese constancy firm known as the Electric Power Development Company (EPDC) would be requested to undertake preliminary studies, which were completed in March 1992.

On 28 July 1992, and after several months under consideration by the National Assembly of People's Representatives, the Thai "...[c]abinet instructed a committee to study the project and recommended that: EGAT be responsible for the project investigation. Cabinet studies should conduct technical and economic feasibility studies of the projects to ensure that the projects are a worthwhile investment, and to determine whether or not these projects would create any difficulties for neighboring countries."⁶ In August 1992, "[t]he Thai [c]abinet gives approval to the plan to solve the water crisis in the Chao Phraya River Basin which encompass the Salween Diversion Scheme."⁷

² "Message from the General Manager," by Somboon Manenava, Silver Anniversary Advertising Supplement to *Bangkok Post*, 1 May 1994.

³ "Damn the Dam Projects! Save the Salween River," *Dawn*, July-August 1993, p. 24.

⁴ "Project to Supplement Water Supply at Bhumibol Dam Reservoir," Civil Engineer-

ing Department of EGAT, January 1994, p. 1.

⁵ "Salween Scheme Won't Breach Treaty with Burma — Savit," *Bangkok Post*, 3 May 1994.

⁶ "Project to Supplement Water Supply...", op. cit., p. 1.

⁷ "Chronology of Events," *Sunday Post*, 24 April 1994.

On 17 October 1992 the cabinet also made EGAT "...responsible for investigating in detail long term measures to solve the problems of water supply at Bhumibol..."⁸ and seven days later the cabinet officially asked EGAT to study these projects. Topics of the evaluation reports included such information as history and description, location and feasibility, dimensions of rivers and equipment, needs and eventual production, environmental impact to both people and the land, engineering and economic studies, costs and investors, and restraints and special notes. Much of the information in the Civil Engineering Department's reports were incomplete or out-dated, and required further study, prompting PM's Office Minister Savit Bhothivihok to assign "...the Department of Energy Affairs and the Electricity Generating Authority to conduct a project feasibility study and report the findings to him within three months."⁹

One of the NGOs working with the Salween Dam Project is the Terra-Burma Bulletin which has published a report on the damming the Salween River, along with tips on what information is needed to continue a thorough survey of the disastrous impact which could result. By building upon knowledge in a systematic method, this report explored the impacts of large dams in general before focusing on the environmental conundrums associated with existing large dams in the Asia region and finally rounding out the information with direct application of potential impacts by damming the Salween River itself. This is done without regard to the exact location of the dam site, and does not take into account other projects on Salween tributaries. However, one point is made scathingly clear; "...[r]egardless of where exactly the Salween would be dammed, any dam on the Salween is cause for concern for people throughout the Salween river basin who depend upon the forests, land and rivers for their livelihoods and local economies."¹⁰

No feasibility study has been made on that social impact, or the delicate balance between a loss of bio-diversity and indigenous people in the effected areas who depend on their traditional customs and patterns of life. A certain harmony exists between the environment and those inhabitants living on the land for centuries, which Thailand has recently discovered how that delicate balance is easily disrupted by the clear-cutting of forests, leading to agricultural woes and even contributing to crippling drought. In truth, carelessly destroying the eco-balance between nature and man leads to a snowball effect which encompasses all people, whether living in the city dependent on agriculture produce and other renewable resources, or villagers living in the forests themselves. The Thai side is already protected with the Salween Wildlife Sanctuary, in addition to the Thung Yai Naresuan and Huay Kha Kaeng Wildlife Sanctuaries, listed as World Heritages and laying inside the Salween watershed area. This does not even take into consideration "...the possible damage to the forest. Reservoirs, canals and tunnels created during construction will destroy the immediate forest area, a plan of action that runs counter to the government's policy on forest conservation."¹¹

International attention has become focused on the planned project, not only for the environmental damage and harm to indigenous communities, but also because of the foreign currency which would be paid directly to the military junta in Burma and the SLORC army, which uses the money to purchase weapons

⁸ "Project to Supplement Water Supply..." op. cit., p. 2.

⁹ "Salween Diversion Not Illegal, Says Savit," *The Nation*, 3 May 1994.

¹⁰ "Dam Impacts," Terra-Burma Bulletin, March 1994, p. 1.

¹¹ "Damn the Lifeline," *The Nation*, 13 May 1994.

abroad to suppress their own people — especially the ethnic minorities. Cease-fire talks are paramount to SLORC's money-making schemes, since the area along the border has many "liberated areas" controlled by ethnic groups and other democratic forces. The central headquarters for many organizations are in Manerplaw, at the confluence of the Salween and Moei Rivers.

"If the dam projects become a reality, there are three ways for us to go. The first is to go to refugee camps in Thai territory. The second is to go to a SLORC concentration camp. And the third is to stay on the top of the mountain like animals..."¹² commented Karen National Union Central Committee member Padoe Kawsoe, well aware of the 70,000-plus refugees already along the Thai border with several major camps in the proposed site of the Upper Salween Project. They would need to move, along with villagers already living on the land, resulting in satisfying two of SLORC's main aims; destruction of the resistance and of ethnic minorities in a "lose your land, lose your culture, lose your cause" scenario. Therefore, the temporary peace in the region flows into a torrent of more instability and repression for the people, while drying up their natural resources for future livelihood.

Thai authorities have shown little sympathy for the eviction of ethnic people from native lands across the border in what is termed an "internal Burmese affair". While the Thais receive electricity, water and economic benefits — they will also almost undoubtedly receive refugees and continued strife in neighboring Burma, this in ironic juxtaposition to EGAT's claim it is

"[f]ully aware of its great commitment to the society, EGAT always strives to provide higher quality power service to support the fast growing national development and the people's better living standard."¹³ Unless, of course, the emphasis is on the insatiable electricity needs of a quickly industrializing nation more interested in "here and now" personal economic benefits than prolonging natural resources for future generations.

As far as the economic side is concerned, funding the dams is expected to come from the "private sector," but most likely bank loans. "Wildlife Fund Thailand documents have indicated that the World Bank, the Manhattan Bank of America and the Chinese Government will support the funding for these Salween projects."¹⁴ The World Bank has already funded some feasibility studies, and the estimated total US\$5.12 billion in cash is not likely to come from the private sector as the governor of the Provincial Electricity Authority, Chulapongs Chullakesa, indirectly claimed for the Mae Sai Project that "...the Thai government does not need funding from the Asia Development Bank as private investment should be enough to fund the project..."¹⁵ — a project which alone will cost 2 billion baht, or US\$80 million.

"The dams to date proposed represent only a theoretical estimate of the hydroelectric power that could be generated by harnessing flows of the Moei and the Salween. What actually ever gets built will depend not upon the engineers proposals but more upon political decision makers and international financiers who will weigh the political and economic stakes of each dam project separately."¹⁶ The Terra-Burma

¹² "The Salween: River of Life or Death?" op. cit.

¹³ "Message from the General Manager," op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁴ "The Salween: River of Life or Death?" op. cit.

¹⁵ "Power Plants for Thai-Burma Border," *The Nation*, 2 May 1994.

¹⁶ "Dam Impacts," op. cit., p. 1.

Bulletin report went on to speculate that, "In any case, it is improbable that all of these large dams would ever be built because there are some serious problems and risks associated with damming the Salween or Moei rivers which dam builders would not be able to solve and which will make the dam projects far less economically attractive than originally projected."

EGAT made several conclusions about the benefits and constraints of these diversion projects:

Benefits

1. Once a river basin is developed by dams and reservoirs there will be a reservoir to store water in the rainy season for multi purpose use. When the amount of water available naturally is small, water can be diverted for many uses or saved for use by the local population. It will also be beneficial for reducing the amount of water in years when water would naturally flood houses and destroy agricultural crops.
2. The project will increase the level and volume of water at Bhumibol reservoir.
3. The project will increase electricity generation at Bhumibol and reduce the investment in electricity generation because of the increased head in the reservoir.

Constraints

1. Cost of pumping
2. Can divert only the surplus water in the rainy season. Project may cause conflict with local water users unless there is development in the local area.
3. Forestry — reservoirs, canals and tunnels will destroy some areas of forest which conflicts with the government policy on forest conservation.
4. Economy — Projects need to be evaluated in terms of investment. Water from the project

provided for agriculture is not an economic investment. Water should be provided to industry and municipal consumption.

5. Society — Population increase; project will have to be adapted to meet the needs of the growing population in the area.

6. Administration services — Government must have a clear policy and allow the appropriate agencies to be responsible from the outset of the project — to promote the project, arrange financing for the project and arrange services for the project.

7. Political — This is an international water resource development project. The government must take the lead in promoting the project and ensuring an agreement to jointly develop the project is made from the beginning of study and development of the project right down to the benefits of the project.

Due to space constraints, the following is a slightly edited version of the Terra-Burma Bulletin text, pages 1-9:

(1) DAMNING THE SALWEEN RIVER

1.1 Reservoir Sedimentation Shortens Dam Lifespan

All rivers carry sediment and other organic matter which accumulates in the reservoirs created by dams. Eventually all reservoirs fill with sediment but long before this happens, the buildup of sediment in the reservoir can interfere with the operation of the dam and shorten the dam's operating lifespan.

The Salween is a Himalayan river with a naturally high sediment load but logging and road building in the upper reaches of the Salween river basin has made the Salween extremely

muddy most of the year. Therefore a reservoir on the Salween could be expected to slit up rapidly.

Dam reservoirs on other Himalayan rivers in China and India, for example, have filled with sediment only a few years after completion even though the dam builders predicted a 50 year operating life.

To date there are no successful measures to keep reservoirs sediment free and therefore the economic benefits of the dam are often far less than the dam builders originally estimated.

1.2 Aging and Decommissioning of Dams

Dams are usually designed to have an economic lifespan of anywhere from 50 to 100 years but their useful lifespans are inevitably shortened as the reservoirs become clogged with sediment and as the concrete and other dam materials age. As with nuclear power plants, careful monitoring and costly maintenance of older dams must eventually be followed by a difficult decommissioning process, for which the dam building industry is unprepared.

Dams designed to hold back the force of the standing water can require expensive new construction in order to withstand the greater force of a wall of dense sediment.

Over the course of several decades, the structural integrity of dams not designed to function as artificial waterfalls can be undermined, threatening to collapse in a catastrophic flood of mud and debris.

In the fifty years of building large dams, no large dam has yet been decommissioned although it is now being discussed in the USA where some of the first megadams were built.

1.3 Dams and Earthquakes

The pressure applied to often fragile geological structures by the vast mass of water impounded by a large dam can — and often does — give rise to earthquakes.

Although it is difficult to establish the geological conditions under which induced earthquakes can occur, scientists now conclude that all large reservoirs can be considered potential sources if induced seismic activity.

The first hint that dams could cause earthquakes came in the late 1930s, when increased seismic activity was recorded after the Lake Mead reservoir was impounded by the Boulder Dam in Colorado, USA.

Since then major earthquakes have occurred at large reservoirs in China, Africa, Greece and India. The Aswan dam and Akosombo dams have experienced earthquakes even though the dams are located in what were classified as low risk areas.

Originally it was thought that earthquakes can only occur when a reservoir was being filled — or immediately after it reached its maximum height. But earthquakes can also occur when a reservoir is emptied and then refilled, as has occurred at dams in France and Greece.

Despite the risks associated with large dams and reservoirs many dams are still being built — or planned — in areas of seismic activity.

In the last two decades, the science of seismology has advanced rapidly, with new research and recognition of reservoir-induced earthquakes. But many large dams have been designed using earlier optimistic estimates of fault displacement and ground accelerations.

Dam safety experts now fear there are tens of

thousands of existing dams in the USA, India and former Soviet Union that are unsafe. Independent researchers in China estimate there might be as many as 85,000 small and medium-sized dams built since the 1950s that are unsafe.

In August 1993, the Gouhou dam in Qinghai province, northwest China, collapsed killing hundreds of people and unleashing torrents of water on town and villages downstream. Dam experts suspect that the 1990 earthquake weakened the dam leading to its collapse under this year's floodwaters.

If the Salween dams are built, millions of people living downstream of the dams would be forced to bear the burden of risk that someday an earthquake could cause the dam to crack or burst unleashing a terrible flood downstream.

1.4 Forced Eviction

The people who are now living near the dam sites and reservoir areas would be forced to leave their homes and land.

It is unlikely that the dam proponents would make any provision for these people given that the SLORC [Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council] is waging war against the people living in the Salween river basin, and that Thai authorities would claim no responsibility for people affected beyond their border.

Exact location of the dam sites and details of the areas that would be flooded (towns, army bases, villages, natural/historical points of interest etc.) by the dams are as yet unrecorded and will depend upon exact dam location, height and local topography.

1.5 Effects of Dam Construction

Tonnes of explosives would be used to blast through the river gorges and rocky rapids to prepare the foundation for construction and the channel downstream of the dam and power station.

There would be a large-scale extraction of building materials — such as stones, gravel, sand and clay for dam construction.

Forests would be cleared for access roads to the site on either side of the Thai-Burma border.

Temporary housing for a large labour force of thousands of workers would have to be constructed for the years that it will take to build the dam. Wastewater and sewage will be dumped directly into the river.

This labour force would rely heavily on the forests in the vicinity of the construction site for their daily fuelwood.

The people evicted to make way for the construction site and worker camps would then be forced to clear new farm plots in the forest.

Construction and blasting of the river to transform it into straight intake and outflow channels will scare away animals and aquatic life as well as destroy their habitat.

1.6 From River to Reservoir

The physical form of a natural river and the ecosystem that depends on it have evolved together over thousands of years, created by the natural flows and sediment moved from the river's watershed.

The construction of a large dam destroys this balance and within several decades the changes in the river system would be far more costly

than the economic benefits of the dam.

When a river is dammed a body of water is impounded behind the dam and is known as a reservoir. This impoundment has an immediate impact on the physical and biological systems within the reservoir.

Physical Changes

Transformation of a free-flowing river into a regulated reservoir systems would initiate the following changes in the river systems:

The free flowing river would be transformed into a deep, slow moving or still water system (depending on actual operation), up to several hundred kilometres or more in length (depending on dam height and topography).

Migration of fish either upstream or downstream would be blocked by the dam.

Forests and fertile, low-lying land along the river and in the tributary valleys would be permanently submerged by the reservoir. These areas are now used for seasonal cultivation of crops which serve the needs of local families and communities.

The flooding of the river will disrupt aquatic and land-based animal habitat along the river banks. In the case of the Lower Salween dam, the western edge of the Salawin Wildlife Sanctuary in Thailand would be drowned.

As water velocity is reduced, fine particles of sand and clay, known as sediment, would settle to the bottom of the reservoir.

Initially, as the water level in the reservoir rose, land would be inundated and nutrients (and pollutants) would be drawn out from the flooded soils and decomposing vegetation.

The flooded vegetation would provide new habitat for young fish and there might be a population boom over the short term for some fish species.

Evaporation of water would increase.

Temperatures in the upstream end, and in the upper reaches of the reservoir would increase.

Due to the combined influence of temperature, sediment and other chemical constituents, the water in the reservoir would become stratified or not evenly mixed. As a result of this parts of the reservoir would become deoxygenated and fish would not be able to survive.

As water seeped into the dry land, as the reservoir level fluctuated, the reservoir shoreline would begin to erode.

Stratification in the reservoir could cause chemicals attached to bottom sediments to be released into the reservoir, leading to water quality problems and potential impacts on the aquatic food base.

Biological Changes

As the reservoir fills, the flooding of land and vegetation would release nutrients and organic matter into the water. The increase in nutrients combined with the increased light penetration in the reservoir would cause the plankton to multiply rapidly. As the plankton food base responded to the new conditions, zoo plankton and macro invertebrates would respond in much the same way, resulting in an overall short term increase in the productivity of the reservoir ecosystems. But once the nutrients from the flooded soils were depleted, the plankton population might either decrease or increase depending on the inflow of nutrients to the reservoir.

The fish presently found in the Salween have evolved in a riverine system. If the river were to be transformed into a reservoir, the native fish species would, in all likelihood, be unable to maintain themselves. They would attempt to move upstream to more favourable waters or seek other refuges.

In the long term whether or not fish populations — either native or introduced — could be sustained in their new environment would be determined primarily by the rate of flow through the reservoir and the amount of fluctuation in flows per year.

The decline of native fisheries in reservoirs is well documented for reservoirs in the United States, the former Soviet Union, and has been witnessed by fishing communities throughout Thailand.

For example, in the Colorado River (USA) and its tributaries which have been extensively dammed over the past several decades, native fish species are threatened with extinction.

Reservoirs Spread Water-Borne Disease

When a river is dammed and a deep lake is created, those forms of life which were adapted to the riverine ecosystems are likely to disappear. In their place, other species emerge. Some will thrive in the new, deep lake along the shoreline that fluctuates with daily operation of the dam to produce hydroelectricity.

As such, the permanent submergence of riverine ecosystems can lead to serious water quality problems and public health hazards. Dam reservoirs in tropical countries are responsible for the spread of serious diseases such as schistosomiasis and malaria.

Schistosomiasis is caused by parasitic flatworms known as schistosomes. The larvae of

the schistosomes develop within the bodies of freshwater snails. When people swim or wade in water contaminated by infected snails the larvae bore through their skin and enter their blood stream. From there they move to the liver where they mature in a few weeks and mate. The eggs then leave the human body via urine or faeces but also tend to spread to various organs while in the body. Reservoirs provide ideal habitat for fresh water snails and the schistosome parasite.

Swamps, marshes and stagnant pools of water are ideal breeding grounds for malarial mosquitoes. Large reservoirs have created permanent and extended habitat for mosquitoes.

Reservoir Water Quality and Disease

Decaying organic matter, can create eutrophic conditions in the reservoir leading to algal blooms, oxygen depletion and massive fish kills. Water from the reservoir and directly downstream of the reservoir is often unfit for human or animal consumption years after the project is completed.

(Poor quality water also corrodes the turbines and dissolve concrete, affecting dam safety and operation.)

(2) DOWNSTREAM ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The Salween river, like all rivers, is an ecological system: what happens upstream has an impact on what happens downstream; some impacts are immediate while others are more gradual. Many of the environmental problems associated with major rivers and estuaries of the world can be attributed largely to dam construction and the creation of large man-made reservoirs.

2.1 Fisheries Destroyed

The loss of fish and other aquatic life throughout the river basin once the river is dammed can be equal or even exceed the temporary benefits from fisheries in the dam's reservoir.

Dams tend to reduce the catch of fish from the river because fish cannot reach their spawning and feeding grounds. Even without the physical obstruction of the river, regulation of the river flow and the changed patterns of erosion and siltation in the river can destroy fish food and habitat.

Dams reduce the flow of rivers which means less habitat, nutrients and increased stress on aquatic life downstreams of the dam.

Dams trap silt which previously would flow downstream. That silt or sediment contains nutrients which are vital to the survival of fisheries in the lower reaches of the river, in the estuary and in the sea beyond.

2.2 Middle and Lower Reaches

The impact of damming the Salween river on downstream areas depends not only on the size and operation of the dam and reservoir but also on the hydroelectrical characteristics governing the river system such as the volume, timing, and duration of water flows. Second only to these factors is the transport, erosion and deposition of the river's sediment in determining the basic character of the aquatic environment immediately downstream of the dam to the estuary hundreds of kilometres away.

The extent to which the Salween river influences water levels downstream of the dam depends on a number of factors: flood flows from the upper reaches, timing of regional monsoon precipitation, and tributary flood patterns. Cer-

tainly, operation of the dam to serve peak power demand in Thailand would cause fluctuations of water levels in the middle and lower reaches of the Salween.

During the rainy season, the flow downstream would be reduced and in the dry season, water levels could fluctuate widely on an hourly and daily basis.

In short, the way in which the dam disrupts the river's flow of water and sediment influences the fate of downstream fisheries, farming, water quality and supplies, wildlife, estuarine and coastal marine life.

2.3 Downstream Channel Degradation

Once the river loses its sediment to the reservoir, it gains more power to erode its channel and banks downstream and may eventually shift its course and cause disastrous flooding as a result. Aggravating the situation is the mining of sand and gravel for dam construction and road building.

As the sediment-free water released from reservoir tends to erode river bed and bank material — river banks may cave in — the water surface elevation of the river can drop dramatically.

The degradation of the channel bed can extend hundreds of kilometres downstream, stranding irrigation and water supply intakes, undermining bridge piers and any structures on the riverbanks. Embankments designed to control flooding are undermined. Degradation of the main river can then in turn affect the tributary channels.

2.4 Salween Estuary, Wetlands and Coastal/Marine Areas

The Salween river is the principal source of

beach sands and estuary silt and mud flats which provide nutrients for estuary and coastal fisheries. Dams would block the flow of the vital materials, depriving fisheries of nutrients, causing shoreline erosion and loss of wetlands. Coastal areas would become more vulnerable to greater flooding during storms.

A significant percentage of the Salween's annual sediment load is deposited in the estuary or is carried out to the ocean. Depending on tidal influence and the seasonal flows of the Salween, the river and estuary waters can be fresh, brackish or salt water.

The Salween estuary provides a rich food source for birds, as well as feeding, spawning and nursing grounds for aquatic life, for example, herring, anchovies, eel, crab and shrimp.

Salween Estuary

A combination of drought, diversion of water from behind the dam into river basins in Thailand and conflicting demands on the reservoir (store vs. release of water), can severely reduce the flow of the river downstream. In some cases, reduced flow caused by dam operation has caused sea water to intrude inland, further than under natural conditions, thereby damaging crops, soils and water supplies (example: Srinagarind Dam, Thailand, 1980). In some river basins, for example in Bangladesh and Vietnam, sea water will intrude up to 100 kilometres every dry season when the rivers are at their lowest levels. Dams on the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers have worsened the situation every dry season.

If dams were constructed on the Salween, the demand for water from the reservoirs would likely exceed the available flow of the rivers — particularly in the dry season. The delta would be most vulnerable to the effects of development upstream as it is at the tail end of

the water supply.

Farming and fishing communities in the Salween delta would suffer the most because of the reduced flow in the river and a subsequent decline in the quality of water. Less flow means the river would have less capacity to flush out pollution and keep saltwater at bay.

Some details of the projects from the EGAT report:

MAE LAMAO-MAE TDEUN PROJECT

The Mae Lamao project is located within the Mae Lamao watershed which is part of the Mae Lamao National Forest Reserve. Project is located in Mae Sot, Ampang District, Tak Province, northern Thailand, about 120 km from the provincial capital. Feasibility study was completed in 1993 after two years, with financing from the World Bank.

height of dam	60 m
reservoir watershed	1395 km ²
reservoir area	6.7 km ²
volume of water entering reservoir	457 million m ³
reservoir elevation (above sea level)	250 m
reservoir storage capacity	94.3 million m ³

- to develop the Mae Lamao spillway on the Mae Lamao and Mae Jarao are needed
- downstream of the dam is about 18,000 rai of agricultural land belonging to people living in the watershed
- 100 million m³ of water per year is to be released from the Mae Lamao Dam to meet the needs of downstream year-round
- the surplus water - 356 million m³ - will be diverted from the reservoir into an underground

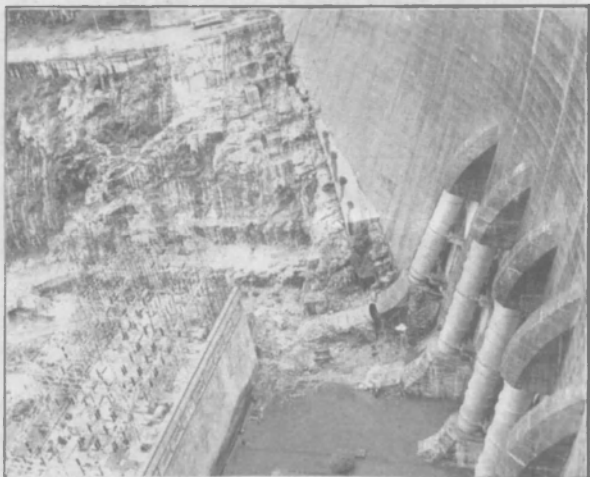
diversion tunnel 4.2 m diameter, 23.5-km length, down to Mae Tdeun river basin and then Bhumibol Reservoir

— a 23 mW capacity pump is required to pump water up 78 m; 96 million units per year will be used; 115 kW transmission line, 30 km long will send electricity from the power station at Mae Sot to the water pumping station

— the project will flood about 4,190 rai of land; 7 out of 117 households will be affected

Investment is economically feasible:

total project cost	5,342 million baht
dam construction & irrigation	3,270 million baht



construction time	6 years
benefit/cost ratio	1.60
volume of water diverted	350 million ³ /year
increased output at Bhumibol	80 million units/year

The diversion tunnel passes 15 km through Grade 1A watershed forest (a Royal Forest Department classification) and through national protected forest area for about 2.5 km.

HUAY KANENG PROJECT

Huay Kaneng is a tributary of the Moei River originating in Mae Sot District, Tak Province. Project is located in Mae Lamat District, Tak Province.

During the rainy season, water will be pumped from Moei River in the vicinity of Huay Kaneng into a diversion tunnel 16-km long, 5.4 m diameter; down to Mae Tdeun river basin and then Bhumibol.

- a 74 mW capacity pump is required to lift water 169 m
- 600 - 800 million m³ is to be diverted annually
- Project costs 5,068 million baht

Feasibility study, funded by the World Bank, is being conducted and is expected to be completed November 1994. Environmental impact study is included in the EIS for Mae Lamao project; expected completion beginning of 1995.

Note: Project Huay Kaneng has been studied as a substitute for the Mae Jarao project. The Mae Jarao watershed flows into Mae Moei then the Salween river. Mae Jarao project will pump water in the rainy season when water backs up from the Moei into the Jarao river. Apart from Mae Jarao watershed there are many other tributaries in Mae Jarao watershed flowing into Moei with the same characteristics.

UPPER NAM PAI-MAE TAENG PROJECT

The Pai River originates in Mae Hon Son Province, flows through the provincial capital and then into the Salween River. The project is located in Pai District, Mae Hong Son, 110 km from the capital.

- 2 40-m high dams to dam the Pai and Saka rivers; includes a connecting canal between the

two reservoirs

- a 23 mW capacity pump is required to pump water up to 545 m above sea level
- gravity-fed diversion tunnel 4.4. diameter, 27.3-km length
- to Mae Taeng watershed in Chiang Mai and then to Bhumibol
- 500 million m³ to be diverted annually
- project cost 5,834 million baht

About 10 square km of reservoir is located in a protected forest area. No details of agricultural land or forest that would be flooded as of yet, although a pre-feasibility study was conducted. World Bank financed a feasibility study of the project and also a comparative analysis of this project with the Mae Jarao-Mae Tdeun project.

LOWER NAM PAI PROJECT

Project divert about 500 million m³ of water into the Chao Phraya river basin to alleviate water shortages.

- a dam is to be constructed across the Pai river (no height given)
- water to be pumped up to a head tank at 900 m above sea level then released into diversion tunnel 3.5 m diameter, 15.5 m length into the Mae Chaem watershed and then into Bhumibol
- 512 mW capacity pumping station is required to lift water up 500 m — 500 million m³ of water annually is to be diverted
- about 20 percent of the total energy required to pump the water to Bhumibol will be recovered at Bhumibol
- project is part of a long term plan and is to be developed after the Upper Nam Pai project

In 1980 estimated cost 6,390 million baht, when Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted a master plan which included this a preliminary study of this project. The project feasibility study is expected to be com-

pleted in 1993.

Project information is from the Master Plan for the Mae Pai and Mae Chaem Rivers Hydroelectric Power Development Project which was conducted by JICA in cooperation with the NEA in 1980.

NAM NGAO - MAE TDEUN PROJECT

Mae Nam Ngao originates in Tasongyang District, Tak Province and flows into Mae Nam Yuam at Sob Ngao. The dam will be situated between Sob Moei District, Mae Hong Sorn and Ta Songyang District, Tak Province.

- 80-m dam to dam the Ngao River
- pump water up to 505 m above sea level and then release into a diversion tunnel to Bhumibol
- a 51 mW capacity pumping station is required to lift 235 m
- 500 million m³ is to be diverted annually
- about 65 percent of the total energy required to pump the water to Bhumibol will be recovered at Bhumibol.

Construction cost 7,158 million baht (1992 prices).

NAM MOEI - MAE TDEUN PROJECT

Moei River flows from Tak Province into Salween River at Sob Moei District, Mae Hong Son Province. Project is located in Mae Ramat District, Tak Province in the upper Moei about 30 km from the town of Mae Ramat.

- 50-m high dam across the Moei River
- water is to be pumped up to 200 m above sea level then pumped to a head tank at 310 m above sea level
- then into a diversion tunnel 16.1-km long into Mae Tdeun watershed and then into Bhumibol

- 25 mW pumping capacity required to lift water 130 m
- divert 500 million m³ of water into Mae Tdeun and then into Bhumibol
- 65 percent of the total energy required to pump the water to Bhumibol will be recovered at Bhumibol

The area will flood both land and forest. 1993 estimate: 3,994 million baht. A pre-feasibility study was conducted by NEWJEC (a Japanese consulting firm) in 1992, and was reportedly being updated.

UPPER SALWEEN-MAE TAENG PROJECT

The dam site is located in northern Burma about 70 km from Chian Dao District, Chaing Mai Province. Project is designed to generate electricity and divert about 10 percent of the total volume of water entering the reservoir. Portion of the water will be diverted into Mae Taeng.

- dam (no height given) constructed across the Salween to store water at 400 m above sea level
- 4000 mW power station to produce 20,000 million units of electricity

Two alternatives:

- 1) 1350 mW capacity pumping station to lift 10,000 million m³ of water 370 m then into a diversion tunnel 32-km long (high pumping requirements rendered this alternative not feasible)
- 2) Gravity-fed tunnel 88-km long to divert 10,000 million m³/year

This project is now being studied to be completed early 1994 along with the studies of the Moei River projects — includes field surveys, constructions site investigations and coordination with governments of Thailand and SLORC.

Project was proposed by the company "World Impact" and a preliminary study was conducted by EGAT. At the present time EGAT has no plan to further study of the project.

Note: EGAT received notice from the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Burma has not yet investigated this because it is a large-scale project and there are many problems associated with it. In order to proceed, there would need to be a formal agreement between SLORC and Thailand.

(Board of the Editors)

GAS PIPELINE REPORT

The planning of the gas pipeline to be constructed by multi-national oil companies in order to divert natural gas to Thailand from the Gulf of Martaban in Burma, and the marine biological, environmental, social and political impacts of this pipeline will be focused on in a report named "**Burma: Human Lives for Natural Resources (Oil & Gas)**", published and distributed by the Southeast Asian Information Network (SAIN) and All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). This will be available by the end of June 1994.

POLITICAL SITUATION

A. NLD & NATIONAL CONVENTION.

As the current National Convention — a propaganda exercise aimed at rubber-stamping a constitution tailor-made for the military regime — held by SLORC not only runs counter to the will of the people, but also can not bring about any prosperous benefit to the people of the country. The grassroots level of the NLD persuaded NLD delegates that the NLD should no longer be present at this National Convention, and should actively boycott the pseudo-proceedings. In this connection, it was reportedly known that there was a high amount of tension between the grassroots level of NLD and the party's delegates to the Convention.

SLORC, which cracked down on the 8888 democratic uprising of the people and came to power by staging a coup d'état, allowed the registration of political parties and held multi-

party general elections in May 1990. Since the election campaign period, political parties were denied access to the freedom of assembly, and arrests, imprisonment and torture have been widespread under restrictions imposed by SLORC. First-line leaders of NLD, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo, were arrested on 18 July 1989. When the leaders from the political parties vigorously demanded SLORC to mention about the transfer of power in the election law, SLORC turned down their demands and held the election by echoing its slogan-like promise that SLORC will hand over to the winning party in the election.

In the election, where the NLD won over 80% of the seats in the parliament, SLORC barefacedly ignored to transfer power to the winning party and denied to allow MPs to draft a constitution. Instead,

with the reason to lay down guide lines for the constitution, SLORC shamelessly sponsored its brainchild — a national Convention — which was much influenced by SLORC.

When the sessions of the National Convention opened on 9 January 1993, of 702 delegates to the Convention, only were 93 delegates from the NLD out of the 156 MPs elected in the 1990 election. The remaining 546 delegates — so-called “representatives” of the workers, peasants, civil servants, ethnic minorities, intellectuals and technocrats as well as invited guests — were ex-members of the BSPP (Burma Socialist Program Party), retired and veteran military personnel, members of SLORC and the NUP (National Unity Party; formerly known as BSPP) at different levels who were hand-picked by SLORC after screening their status. This point makes very clear that SLORC have created an atmosphere to monopolise the Convention.

The NLD attended the National Convention in this crisis situation. On 26 May 1993 the NLD submitted its 47-page long proposal on which fundamental principles of the state should be based in drafting the constitution. In general this proposal included suggestions to exercise multi-party democ-

racy with a parliamentary system based to promulgate the basic human rights in the constitution, to adopt the existence of autonomous regions for the ethnic minorities in forming the state structure, to exercise a free market economy and to exercise an active and well-developed foreign policy based on five principles of peaceful coexistence.

Since the beginning of the Convention, the grassroots level of NLD objected to the proceedings as they were dissatisfied with the conditions which include:

- SLORC's broken commitment to Paragraph 12 of Order 1/90 which clearly stated that, "After the election, the duty to draw up the constitution is up to the desire of the elected representatives";
- Denial of *all* elected representatives access to the Convention;
- Continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners and imposition of martial law;
- Lack of effective measures to bring genuine peace by discouraging the participation of armed ethnic groups to the Convention.

Despite that these disagreements occurred, the NLD as a whole continued their struggle in line with the existing trend of the National Convention as the NLD Central Committee decided to attend the proceedings. SLORC turned a blind eye on the views successively presented by the NLD representatives and on 16 September 1993, SLORC forcibly adopted 104 basic principles and 6 objectives on which the fundamental principles of the state should be based in drafting the constitution (Principles of Constitution-Drafting). Among these principles were:

- The armed forces (*Tatmadaw*) shall have the right to participate in national politics;
- Military personnel nominated by the com-

mander-in-chief of the defence services shall be included in the legislature and administration;

- The commander-in-chief of the defence services shall also be the supreme commander of all armed forces of the country;
- The head of state shall be the president and he shall have qualifications and capabilities in politics, economics and military affairs;
- The armed forces shall have the right to use state power in a state of emergency;
- There shall be semi-autonomous territories.

Such a constitution is merely the backbone for the continued existence of military rule and the political system as a whole boils down to no more than a militarily dominated process.

According to information received from inside the country, the NLD opposed "the leading role of the military in the national politics of future Burma" during the proceedings of the National Convention. Although recommendations and suggestions were asked for prior to the meeting, decisions on what principles should be included was decided only by the SLORC-dominated "alternative chair of the session" and no vote has ever been called. Even if there was any vote taken, SLORC would win on its proposal as the majority of the delegates are its puppets. The grassroots level and MPs of NLD were absolutely dissatisfied with this situation and asked the NLD Central Committee to hold a consultation meeting at the division level.

Regarding the results of the National Convention, on 16 September grassroots leaders and remaining MPs of NLD pointed out that the party should no longer recognise the Convention as it not only runs counter to NLD's position (which was expressed in the Gandhi Hall Declaration on 28 July 1990) but also slides from the NLD's position of national reconciliation. They also sharply criticised the NLD

Central Committee's indecisive stand.

On 21 December 1993 U Aung Shwe issued a statement which revealed that, while upholding the principles of NLD, its Central Committee would continue to attend the National Convention. In this context, there has been high tension between NLD delegates to the National Convention who believe in direct participation and other MPs and township/division level organising in-charges of NLD who object to the mock proceedings.

Although the latter group still accepted the leadership of the NLD Central Committee, it proposed a 4-point recommendation to the NLD Central Committee. Those recommendations were:

- NLD shall uphold its will and recommendations stated in the 47-page NLD proposal submitted to the National Convention;
- NLD shall stand in line with its principles;
- NLD shall stand in accordance with the Gandhi Hall Declaration;
- NLD shall continue to implement the policy laid down by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The latter group has said that if the former group is not courageous enough to stand by the above-mentioned recommendations, committee members at township/division levels and other MPs will resign. They believe that the existence of the NLD is not more important than the national objectives. NLD will vigorously struggle in implementing its national politics, even though it could be faced with threatened abolishment of the party, arrests of its MPs, announcements of unlawful association and arrests of all members regardless of position or attitude. The NLD will never go against its own principles, it said.

A majority of NLD MPs have stated that if the National Convention is against the NLD's

stand, the winning party in the election will be left with no other choice than to object to the National Convention by signed approval and will distribute this to the international community. If the NLD Central Committee is then indecisive at these crossroads, NLD MPs will join with the grassroots support and issue a jointly signed statement and separate from the so-called Central Committee.

As of February 1994, of the 392 elected MPs, 156 were denied access to their status. Of the remaining 236 MPs, only 93 delegates attended the National Convention including Dr Aung Khin Sint who was the last one recently arrested. Those NLD MPs who were denied access to the Convention could be faced with a series of crises that SLORC will conclude the National Convention in May 1994 and will force them to accept all principles, or results, of the National Convention. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi could be released only after that agreement. A delegate to the National Convention exposed at a division-level meeting that the NLD Central Committee is already aware of SLORC's scheme.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that the National Convention 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 is nothing. It's not a convention. I cannot accept it as something that seriously represents the will of the people at all."

SLORC in January 1994 announced that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will not be released when her five-year term of detention expires on 20 July 1994, and that her detention would be extended by one more year. In this context, the NLD Central Committee is at the stage to make a clear-cut position on SLORC's attitude, with regard to the National Convention. The resolution adopted at the 48th Session of the UN General Assembly expressed its deep concern

that, "No evident progress has been made towards turning over power to a freely elected civilian Government..." and that "...most of the representatives duly elected in 1990 have been excluded from participating in the meetings of the National Convention." Delegates to the National Convention from the ethnic parties also demanded the formation of fully autonomous states.

One NLD delegate to the Convention said, "We have to work for the benefits of the people and we should no longer be culprits in history. If we cannot do anything we are going to issue statements signed by two-thirds of the MPs that express objection to the National Convention. We believe that it is the only political platform that can win effective pressure from the international community. But there have been difficulties to mention or discuss about this stage because the MIs [military intelligence] are everywhere."

B. SLORC & USDA

On 9 October 1993 SLORC Chairman Gen Than Shwe presided over the founding ceremony of the SLORC-sponsored Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), and the erection of its signboard. Although SLORC announced that USDA is only a social organisation and there is no political platform in its movement, people inside the country believe that in the name of USDA, SLORC is strengthening its position by grassroots mobilising to gain support for the military and military-backed political parties. SLORC forces the people to attend USDA mass rallies and to support its objectives. Moreover, NLD MPs informed that people inside the country are very much aware that the purpose of USDA mass rallies is to force the people into supporting the 104 principles of constitutional drafting adopted at the National Convention.

Each family was forced to send one family member to that mass rally, and if he/she was absent, there was a fine ranging from 200 to 1,500 Kyats. Civil servants and students were also forced to attend and support SLORC's objectives by threatening dismissals from jobs and schools, or failure of examinations in cases of absence. One NLD MP said, "If we want to know [the] genuine will of the people, we should hold the referendum under the supervision of the United Nations."

C. SLORC AND THE SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE

(1) SLORC's open-door policy and market-oriented economy mainly focuses on the selling of natural resources inside Burma at bottom prices, and it monopolises the whole life of the economy. In this connection, there is evidence that SLORC authorities at different levels have monopolised the economic sector. For example, logging concessions in the Chindwin Area are under the control of the Northwestern Command of SLORC, and this command has the right to directly make contracts with businessmen.

Similar to this, concessions of fishing, logging, gold mines and mineral resources are under the control of respective military commands and they have the right to make contracts with businessmen. Money received from these contracts flowed into bank accounts of the commanders, to be later used for military purposes.

At the national level, SLORC has been strengthening its existence and military machinery with money obtained from the selling of concessions as well as joint-ventures with foreign companies. SLORC has also given permission for doing business to armed groups which have reached ceasefire agreements with it. As an example, Lao Hsit Harn and his fol-

lowers are being allowed to control key Kalay logging concessions.

(2) In the name of development, SLORC has named businessmen and the rich as "well-wishers" and force them to contribute money for the construction and upgrading of railway lines, highways, bridges, satellite towns and other infrastructure projects. Moreover, SLORC misuses the term "voluntary labourers" while forcing local people to contribute money or corvee labour in implementing so-called development projects.

Of them, concrete evidence has been found in the construction of Pakokku-Kalay, Ye-Tavoy, Loikaw-Aung Ban and Yawnghwe-Nam Sam railway lines. The labourers were not only forced to contribute corvee labour, bringing their own food in addition to covering their own expenses, but were also forced to pay certain amounts of money fixed by SLORC. They were also forced to provide food supplies for SLORC troops. Villages near construction sites were forced to move out without any compensation while farms, vegetable plantations and other buildings along the way were reduced to ashes. Labourers were also subject to torture, and female labourers were gang-raped by SLORC troops. A number of labourers died due to torture and inhuman treatment. These atrocities are very common in SLORC-sponsored development programs. As SLORC troops did not take any responsibilities for the health care of the labourers, curable diseases became contagious.

(3) Moreover, aside from "porter fees", food supplies and labour, villagers were also forced to pay various forms of illegal taxes in the name of religious ceremony, sports, founding of villages and upgrading of roads as fixed by SLORC troops.

(4) Traders were forced to pay tax at every

checkpoint of the military and police. To facilitate their businesses and to have excuses for various forms of illegal acts, the traders were required to pay certain amounts of bribe money to local SLORC authorities. Skyrocketing prices of basic commodities make the civil servants faced with crises of daily subsistence and pushes them to be corrupt, their morals degraded.

(5) Although people in general abhor SLORC because of its suppression, they dare not speak openly about anything as they are always fearful, feeling under constant SLORC pressure and harassed with the power of gun and barrel; that whatever they say or do would risk interrogation, arbitrary arrest, torture and arbitrary execution by SLORC. It is also due to economic reasons, they have to make up their minds and tolerate in relation to SLORC. But they could no longer bear day-to-day suppression anymore, and are hopefully waiting for the effective pressure from the international community.

D. RESTRICTIONS ON POLITICAL PARTIES

(1) By introducing Order 1/90, SLORC barred the NLD from forming a government or convening the People's Assembly.

(2) Freedom of expression is totally denied by SLORC and all publications are restricted under the 1962 Printers' and Publishers' Registration Law. All publications are allowed to print only after being tightly screened by SLORC's Board of Censorship.

(3) Since 26 April 1991 SLORC has imposed restrictions on political parties that any township-level which has less than 7 organisers is not allowed to reform or replace someone else, and comes to automatically cease existence.

(4) SLORC has imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement for MPs and chairmen

of the party organising committee at national and local levels. In case of travel inside or outside of their allowed places to travel, persons must be accompanied to townships by SLORC authorities. They can travel only when their proposals are approved by SLORC.

(5) If they want to hold meetings or discussions, they have to inform to their respective SLORC township authorities, Election Commission (township branch), police station and intelligence unit, in advance. Police and personnel from intelligence units usually come and note down the process of meetings and discussions.

E. DEMANDS OF SOME NLD MPS

Some NLD MPs inside the country wrote letters to the UN Secretary-General, UN Security Council and US President Bill Clinton.

In their letter they described the situation as mentioned below:

- Although the people do not accept SLORC's rule, they have to be silent because they are always fearful that whatever they say or do would risk interrogation, arbitrary arrest, tor-

ture and arbitrary execution by SLORC.

- The people believe that the current National Convention sanctioned by SLORC is only a "sham".

- Various forms of restrictions are imposed, and freedom of expression and the freedom of participation in the political process are totally denied in Burma.

- For the sake of the people of Burma, they appeal to the Security Council, based on the resolution recently adopted in the 48th Session of the UN General Assembly, to impose effective measures on SLORC to be able to implement the results of the May 1990 elections.

Recommendations in their letters were:

- To impose an arms embargo, and trade and investment sanctions on SLORC;

- To pressure SLORC for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners immediately and unconditionally;

- To terminate SLORC representing Burma in the United Nations until genuine representatives elected by the people are handed over power;

- To provide effective assistance to the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, led by Dr Sein Win, if the above-mentioned pressures seem unproductive.



ON-GOING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

To save its tarnished image as much criticised and pressure by the international community due to its grave human rights records since it came to power by a military coup in 1988, SLORC announced a one-sided suspension of fighting against the democratic forces. Although no major clashes with the democratic forces have broken out, the people inside the country are still ruled at gun point. Forced labour, forced relocation, arbitrary detention, arbitrary execution, harassment, attacks on the civilian targets and torture against the people of Burma are still widespread under SLORC's reign, all of which runs counter to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which clearly states, "No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." The following reports clearly reveals SLORC's brutal and atrocities deeds which have been committed against the people living in Mon and Karen States and Pegu, Tenasserim, Sagaing and Magway Division. (The Editor)

ARBITRARY DETENTION

(1) On 7 January 1994, Battalion Commander Myat Soe of IB 60 arrested village headman Tee Phar Nyo of Nyaung Tan village in Kyauk Kyi township in Pegu Division. On 14 January 1994, another village headman Saw Poe Poe was captured with his bullock cart and sent to Kyauk Kyi. In

fear of SLORC troops' further arrests and torture, on 15 January 1994, the villagers moved to Tha Ye Silaw, Kha Keh Kho, Poe Loe No Phoe and Natha Kwin villages.

(2) On 10 February 1994, Maj Thaung Sein, commander of military column 2 of SLORC IB 55, arrested local people in Klaw Mee Deh village, Taunggoo district. The villagers

were tied up and detained in a small room of a house before being press-ganged into portage.

(3) On 7 March 1994, military column 2 of SLORC IB 99 arrested 24 traders and captured 48 cows at Htee Khee in Taunggoo district.

ARBITRARY EXECUTION

(1) On 5 January 1994, SLORC troops from IB 57 executed 2 villagers from Phar Paung village at Ohn Pin Chanung of Nyaunglebin District.

(2) On 13 February 1994, battalion commander Yin Soe Min and company commander Soe Naing from IB 84, under the command of 99 LID executed Saw Thar Kyi, 41, and Saw Tun Phwa, 27, son of Phwa Gaw Yar from Talai Kayin Village in Thaton District and took 30,000 Kyats in cash belonging to the victims.

(3) On 2 March 1994, Private Soe Moe Naing from SLORC military column 1 led by Warrant Officer Ngwe Maung of LIB 341 shot Ma Mi Nge, 16, daughter of U Ba Pe and Daw Nu from Kyun Pin Village in Papun Township, Karen State, with his BA63 rifle, hitting her

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on the left side of the chest which caused death.

Case: The perpetrator tried to rape the victim at gun point and when the victim refused and attempted to defend herself, the perpetrator killed her. When company commander Capt Tu Lun and his troops reached the village, they made up a story that this was a case of an accidental shooting that resulted while Soe Moe Naing was hunting wild poultry. The captain threatened the villagers that those who attempted to degrade the dignity of the armed forces will be shot to death. In fear of their safety, the parents of the victim and other villagers dared not raise the case.

(4) On 3 March 1994, a military column from SLORC IB 35 arrested 18 villagers (2 men, 7 women and 9 children) from Toe Tay Khao and Pwe Nee Khao area. Of the victims, Saw Gay, 34, was inhumanely tortured by SLORC troops. SLORC soldiers pulled him up side down, cut his stomach alive and pulled out intestines and liver. His genital organ was also cut off. Then SLORC soldiers took his 2-year old child along with them. An aged woman, 75, was undressed and tied up while the remaining villagers were

brought for 3 days.

(5) On 17 March 1994, column commander Ah Tin and company commander Myat Soe of SLORC IB 37 opened fire on the villagers from Ko Kyaw Kaw Soo Village in Nyaunglebin district while they were collecting firewood. Five villagers were gunned down with the result that 1 person died.

(6) On 30 March 1994, SLORC troops from IB 73 abducted 2 village headmen from Lay Ti and Nat Ywa villages of Taungoo district, and the victims were beaten to death.

FORCED LABOUR

(1) On 21 January 1994, local SLORC authorities and IB 26 stationed in Mone township, Pegu division, demanded the

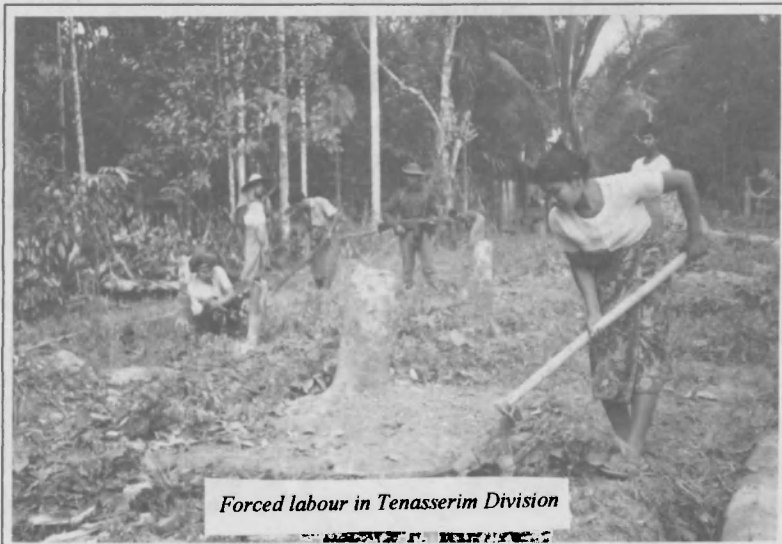
local people in Tha Htay Gone, Nga Lauk Tet villages to send 20 villagers from village in order to harvest crops in Tha Htay Gone area.

(2) On 22 January 1994, 2 SLORC military column led by Maj Thu Soe and Maj Soe Win from LIB 120, under the command of 33 LID forced the villagers from Htaw Kalaw Khee village in Thaton District to cook for the porters at gun point.

(3) **Victims:** Local people in Kywe Din Gone Village, Tha Kyet Parish, Tenasserim Township, Tenasserim Division.

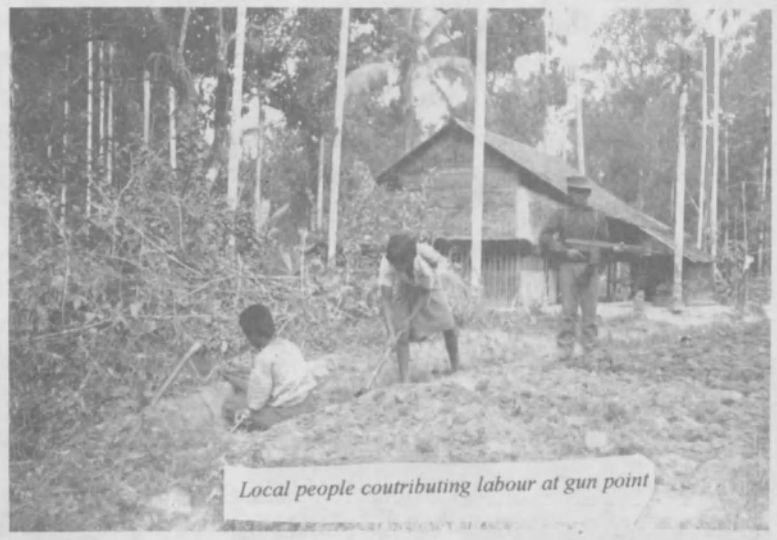
Perpetrators: SLORC IB 101 led by Maj Kyaw Kyaw
Date: 3 February 1994

Case: As SLORC has been



Forced labour in Tenasserim Division

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Local people contributing labour at gun point

RAZING OF VILLAGE ATTACK ON CIVILIAN TARGETS

(1) From 7 to 10 January 1994, a villager from Sa Daw Kho village in Taungoo district was shot which caused him wounded. 8 cows, 3 pigs, 10 hens belong to the villagers in Si Daw Khao, Bu Sar Khee, Tha Kwee Soe, Saw Mu Dae, Thway Baw Dae villages were killed and 72 tins of rice was looted. Loss estimated at current price is 464, 000 Kyat in cash at current prices. 15 huts located at different places were also reduced to ashes.

(2) On 24 January 1994, about 40 SLORC troops commanded by Company commander Myint Swe of IB 39 raided Kyi Taung village in Kyauktagah township, Pegu Division, and opened fire on the villagers which caused Phoe Win Nyo, a trader, wounded. SLORC troops captured the villagers and 26 cows.

(3) On 2 February 1994, military column 1 of SLORC IB 30, led by Maj Yee Aye burned down 10 farms of the villagers in Blar Poe Htar village in Shwe Kyin township, Pegu Division.

(4) On 19 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 84 led

constructing the highway from Tenasserim to Moe Taung, all the gardens, vegetable plantations, buildings and houses along the way were destroyed by SLORC troops. A company led by Maj San Myint and Khaing Soe were responsible for the security and Maj Kyaw Kyaw was in control of the project while all local people in Kywe Din Gone village were forced to carry out their assignments within the period fixed by SLORC troops. Those who did not finish their assignment faced fines fixed at a rate by the troops, subject to arrest, and forced to serve long-term portorage. Aside from these atrocities, their houses were destroyed and reduced to ashes as a punishment.

(4) On 10 February 1994, Col Win Maung, tactical commander of SLORC Central

Command, ordered the local people in Klaw Mee Deh village to make ID cards in Palet Wa village. On their way to home, the villagers were forced at gun point to carry rice for No. 2 military column of SLORC IB 55.

(5) On 2 March 1994, Col Sein Tun of military column 2 of SLORC IB 55 forced the local people in Klaw Mhee Deh, Leh Khalr Deh and Hu Mu Deh villages in Taungoo district to carry their rations and equipment from Palet Wa to Klaw Mhee Deh at gun point.

(6) On the same day, Col Win Maung, tactical commander of SLORC Central Command, forced the villagers in Bawgali Village in Than Daung township at gun point to carry rice for troops.

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by Company commander Nyo Soe Moe, under the command of 99 LID shot a buffalo belong to Saw Than Nyunt of Talai Kayin village in Thaton district. SLORC troops also razed the victim's sugar cane mill and another house belong to San Myint Par.

(5) On 28 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 79 led by Lieut Sein Win forced local people in Thayaw Mae village in Thaton district to move, and burned down their houses with the accusation that local people were sympathisers to the revolutionary forces. On 3 March 1994, local people in Kyet Chae Khat village was also forced to move out by the same troops.

(6) On 24 March 1994, a military column led by Capt Tin Maung Nyunt from SLORC IB 101 reached Kyauk Leik Village in Palaw Township of Tenasserim Division. There were about 40 households in this Karen village.

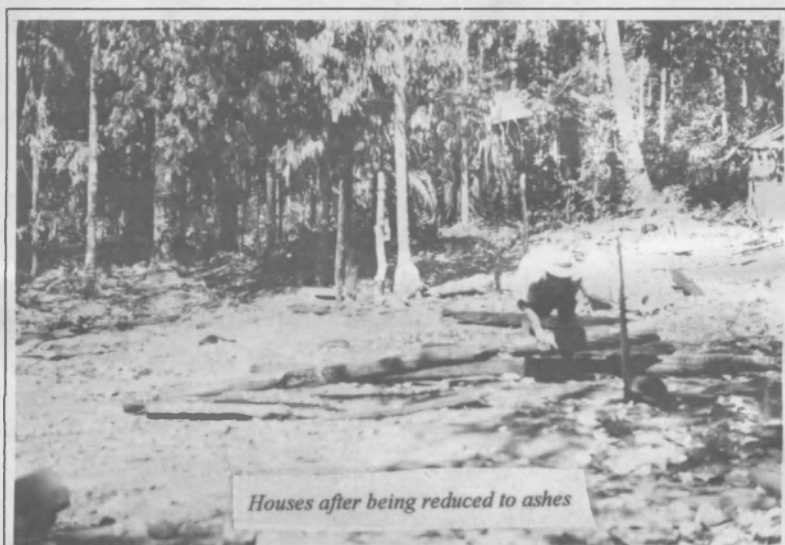
Then 10 minutes of fighting broke out between SLORC troops and KNU forces. When the fighting subsided, 2 houses belong to U Aung Myat and U Kyar Aye, both Karens, located nearby the battlefield, were razed to the ground by SLORC troops. U Aung Myat and his

wife were in the field when their house was on fire. All property inside their house, including 31 baskets of rice in the storeroom, were destroyed.

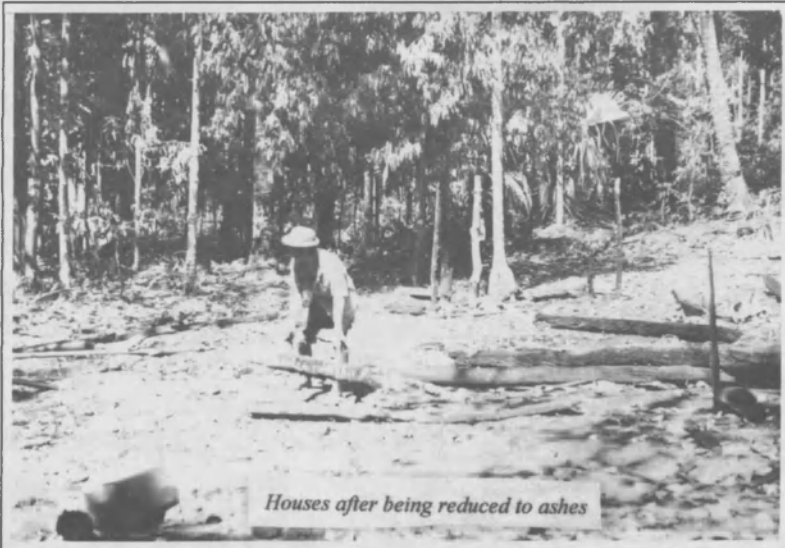
U Kyar Aye, a widower, who lives with his 4 sons and 1 daughter, lost all their property inside the house and an amount of paper money. While the house was on fire, his

youngest daughter, 23, was found and arrested by troops. She was released 2 days later only when the village headman gave a certain amount of bribe and a guarantee for her.

As the victims were very poor, they cannot afford to reconstruct their houses. The victims had to stay with their relatives in other villagers as



Houses after being reduced to ashes



Houses after being reduced to ashes

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SLORC troops threatened and prohibited them from reconstructing their houses.

- ROBBERY -
- LOOTING -
- TAXATION -

(1) On 4 January 1994, SLORC troops from LIB 116 took away 4 baskets of rice, 3000 viss (1 viss = 1.6 kg) of fish paste, 400 coconuts, 3000 viss of jaggery (boiled and crystallised cane sugar) from the villagers in Paw Si Village in Thaton Township, Mon State.

(2) On 6 January 1994, military column 1 & 2 from LIB 120 forced the people in Htaw Kalaw Khee village in Thaton district to give 24 tins of rice (condensed milk tin) per household.

(3) On 11 January 1994 SLORC troops from IBs 739 & 234 looted various belongings from the local people in Pa Lay Sar village of Taungoo District. Loss of the villagers estimated at 47,670 Kyats in cash at current prices.

(4) On 15 January 1994, SLORC troops from IB 24 killed one goat, 4 pigs and looted rice from every house in Talai Kayin village in Thaton District.

(5) On 23 January 1994, a military column from SLORC IB 39 robbed all the properties and gold belong to a trader named Mhan Son from Shar Lo Village in Taungoo district and burned down his house. The loss is estimated at 700,000 Kyats in cash at current prices.

(6) On 24 January 1994, SLORC troops from IB 84 led by Battalion Commander Aung Kyaw Moe took away 15 baskets of rice, 5 nos of duck, 1 goat and 10 chickens from the local people in No Law Palaw village in Taungoo district.

(7) On 24 January 1994, military column Commander Win Myint of SLORC IB 26 forced local people in Nga Nwa Seik, Thay Gay Lu, Kayin Yeleh, Htwa Ni Gone, Ohn Ship Gone and Thmar Kaw villages to send 15 porters and "porter fees" from each village. When the village headmen sent porters, SLORC commander denied them and forced them to pay 35,000 Kyats in cash per village. Moreover, the villagers were also forced to pay rice as taxation to SLORC troops. Each village which failed to levy tax were forced to pay 100,000 Kyats. Local people in Yeleh and Ohn Ship Gone villages were forced to pay

200,000 Kyats.

(8) On 27 January 1994, SLORC troops from LIB 119 led by Battalion Commander Aye Myint took 6 baskets of paddy from the villagers in Tar U Ni village in Thaton township.

(9) On 28 January 1994, SLORC troops from IB 84 took a cow and 29 baskets of sesame from the villagers in Tar Paw village in Thaton township.

(10) On 7 February 1994, SLORC troops from company 3 of IB 84 led by Company commander Myat Than Lay and Maj Than Htay took 100 nos of chicken, 20 nos of duck, one pig, 7 baskets of rice, 100 viss of jaggery, 5 nos of blanket, 6 nos of Burmese sarong, clothing and 800 kyats of Burmese currency in cash from local people in No La Aw village of Thaton township. Moreover, they demanded 50,000 Kyats in cash as a compensation for their ruined car.

(11) On 10 February 1994, SLORC IB 84 of 99 LID commanded by Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Min forced the villagers in Hadareh parish in Pa-an township, Karen State, to gather in a certain place. SLORC troops forced the villagers from Talai

Kayin, Kyon Sein, Nolo Pla, No Aw Htar Hpwa Gaw, Deh Thu Khee, Mae Kana Khee, Mae Thae, Htee Kyoe Khee villages to pay 50,000 Kyats per village.

(12) On 10 February 1994, Khin Maung Win, commander of military column 2 of SLORC IB 55, confiscated 40 sacks of rice in Kaw Thay Deh village, Taungoo District, in order to use for military purpose.

(13) On 12 February 1994, a military column of SLORC IB 39 captured 100 bullock carts between Bone Ma Gyi and Htee Lon village of Taungoo district and forced to pay taxes in cash.

(14) On 19 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 42, under the command of 99 LID, led by Battalion Commander Maj Kyaw Win and Maung Maung Kyaw killed 2 cows belong to local people in Myit Kyoe village in Thaton district.

(15) On 20 February 1994, Company Commander Thein Zan of SLORC IB 24 forced the villagers from Thaw Kaw Kya village, Thaton District, to pay 450 Kyat per person who were on their way to sell roofing thatch.

(16) On 21 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 73 forced the villagers in Shar See Bo village, Taungoo district, to pay monthly "porter fees" ranging 3,000 Kyats to 6,000 Kyats.

(17) On 23 February 1994, SLORC IB 346, under the command of Western Command, robbed the properties of local people in Shan Le Pyin village, Taungoo district.

(18) On 24 February 1994, SLORC IB 39 penetrated Htee Lon, Kasel Do, Chaung Ma Gyi, Tha Phan Chaung, Bo Mo Khee and Htee Khee area in Taungoo district and extorted money from saw mill labourers. SLORC troops also took 5 viss of betel nuts and 3,500 Kyats in cash at gun point from Naw Khae May of Lay Tee village.

(19) On 26 February 1994, military column 1 & 2 from SLORC IB 61 burned down one house in Ma U Yar Village in Ye township, Mon State and robbed properties estimated at 1,000,000 Kyats at current prices, including 400,000 Kyats in cash and 7 tickles of gold.

(20) On 28 February 1994, SLORC police from Balaw Kyoe, Kawkareik township,

Karen State, penetrated Noe Bo Chaung and killed 2 buffaloes belong to the villagers.

(21) SLORC troops from IBs 26, 39, 48 and 73, under the Southern Command, forcibly confiscated land and farms of local peasants and branded them as an area belonging to the military. In 1992, an estimated 200 acres of farming land of the peasants in Chan Si, Lan Khwe, Zee Phyu Gone, Pyin Kan of Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division, were confiscated. In 1994, SLORC intends to extend the area to 700 acres. Peasants were forced to plough in that this confiscated land and then were demanded to pay taxes for working the land. Moreover, peasants were also forced to collect timber and bamboo for the troops. Each household in Shar Si Bo Parish was levied 2 sacks of rice by SLORC troops.

(22) On 2 March 1994, military column 1 of SLORC IB 39 forced local people in Shar Si Bo Village in Taungoo district at gun point to give 4500 Kyats for "porter fees" and 2 baskets for the troops.

(23) On 3 March 1994, SLORC troops from IBs 35 & 59 rounded up 14 houses in Phoe Moo Deh village and took all the properties belong

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to the villagers. Loss estimated 390,122 Kyats in cash at current prices.

(24) On 3 March 1994, a military column of IB 97 led by Thein Dan killed 2 cows belong to Naw Ka Leh in No Boe Chaung, Kawkaik township, Karen State. On 6 March 1994, Cpl Tun Aung of the same troops killed another cow from that village.

(25) On 5 March 1994, SLORC troops from LIB 119 led by Aye Myint, under the command of 33 LID robbed 5 baskets of rice, 11 pans, 2 flasks, 9 longgyi (Burmese sarong), 50 viss of fish paste, 47 chickens, 6 plates, 7 steel

spoons and 5 blankets from the villagers in Loh Khee Village in Thaton district.

TORTURE

(1) On 3 February 1994, Maung Myint Soe of Win Ta Pan village in Thaton township was beaten without any reason by Lt Man Son from SLORC IB 84. The victim's fate was unknown.

(2) On 9 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 39 forced local people in Zee Phyu Taung village of Taungoo district to levy taxes by means of rice. Those who failed to pay were severely beaten by the troops.

(3) On 23 February 1994, a military column of SLORC IB 39 tortured villagers from Daw Moo Deh village in Taungoo district.

(4) On 25 February 1994, SLORC troops from IB 26 penetrated into Koe Nee village in Taungoo District and severely beat Maung Kan Soe.

(5) On 17 March 1994, SLORC company commander Aung Myat Kyaw from IB 73 tortured 18 villagers from Ko Nee Village in Nyaunglebin district.

Source: Field Reporters of the
ABSDF
KNU

SITUATION IN MONYWA

On 23 January 1994, a SLORC-sponsored USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association) mass rally was held in Monywa, Sagaing Division. For that mass rally, at least 2,000 people from each township in Monywa District were forced to show up at gun point. Those who could not attend had to pay a fine of 50 kyats per person, and households which failed to send someone from

outside the household were also threatened with the shutting off of water and electricity. Other restrictions imposed on that day included prohibition of wearing *Piss Ni* (cloth woven from fawn-coloured cotton), or a traditional Burmese coat, and the Kachin sarong (*longgyi*) and of shopping at nearby shops. Some households were also forced to send two family members, and those who attempted to stay at

home on that day were forced out at gun point to the rally.

The rally was held in the football field of Monywa, with all the entrances locked during the entire rally. Those who tried to go out were beaten with belts, while those children were subjected to beatings with bamboo sticks by SLORC troops.

SLORC repaired roads in

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Monywa and each local household was assigned to complete the phase in front of their house. For the complement of the assignment, each household had to spend 500-1000 kyats. 20% of the population in Monywa are SLORC soldiers. As there are many SLORC informers in various forms — as tricycle drivers, pony cart drivers, sellers of betel nuts, porters, carpenters, brick-layers — at the crowded places, people in general are always fearful that whatever they say or do would risk interrogation and arrest by the police or military intelligence. They therefore dare not speak openly about anything even though they do not support SLORC and are not satisfied with SLORC's rule. Local SLORC cells become rich and own luxurious facilities. For their living, common people have to conduct their daily livelihood in accordance with SLORC rules and regulations. If residents fail to abide by SLORC's self-imposed laws which amount to little more than "decrees", as a punishment, SLORC authorities very often check their household list at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. and force them to clean the road or to contribute corvee labour.

Although SLORC gave electricity for houses in the satel-

lite town, only the family which received a letter of approval from SLORC could get electricity and a plot of land. To receive that letter, each person had to bribe thousands of kyats to SLORC authorities. One aged person said that there is no law that protects the people nor is there anyone who takes responsibility for their social welfare. Everybody has to strive for their own living, education, social welfare programmes social welfare programmes and sanitation.

Police demanded money from pubs, saw mill, rafts of timber and logging carts. Official pubs there were forced to pay over 200,000 kyats. There were about 20 official pubs. Each illegal pub was forced to pay 5,000 kyats. Moreover, owners of pubs were also forced to pay SLORC for the Regatta Festival, horse racing ceremony, golf courses and other festivals. They had to pay 5 kyats per person for Shwebo College.

In Ayardaw township, as Lt-Col Thura Phone Sein of No. 10 Training Corps authorised all the gambling, and police in the area did not know how to solve this problem of cracking down on gambling. There were reports of quarrels between Lt-Col Thura Phone

Sein and the in-charge of the police station there due to the gambling. Most of the youth were diverting their attention to gambling and their morale was degraded so that many cases of looting and robbery occurred.

In 1994 there was a festival in Ma Sein Village in Mawleik and the SLORC troops there authorised gambling. During the festival, it was reported that innocent villagers were arbitrarily beaten by SLORC troops. Over 20 people were confined and fettered in stocks. Each detainee was forced to pay a fine of 250 kyats before detention and another 250 kyats for their release. A porter fee in Mawleik ranges around 80 kyats per household.

On 10 February 1994 SLORC troops confiscated many boats and used them for transportation of petroleum to Khamti Tactical Command, with no compensation paid. Local people were also forced to carry barrels of petrol from Kalaywa to Monywa without any pay.

CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAY LINE IN MYAING

Since September 1993 local people from over 300 villages in 84 parishes in Myaing have been forced to contribute corvee labour for the construction of the Pakokku-Myaing-Gagaw-Kalay Railway Line.

For the construction, each family was forced to send one family member aged between 14 and 60. If there is no one who is within the criteria of SLORC, all family members are forced to contribute labour. In this context, even the elderly and children are not spared from working.

Moreover, the labourers had to bring their own baskets, mat-tocks, grubbing hoes, chopping hoes, pick axes, as well as 8-pound-weight hammers. As the labourers do not have such kind of hammers, they are forced to purchase the equipment from outside the village. The labourers must also arrange transportation to the worksite, covering their own expenses. This involves going by bus up to the distance where the bus route reaches, then they have to walk further to reach the worksite. Daily bus fare per person costs 50 kyat.

Those who cannot afford to contribute labour have to give a ransom ranging about 3000 kyats. Any person who fails to meet either of these, faces with various forms of harassment from the army, police and local SLORC authorities. Up to now, the phase of the construction in Myaing has not yet been finished. Since the construction of the railway line has been under construction, all the people, regardless of their age, are under undue hardships.

Since the railway line has been under construction, owners of cars, motorcycles, and bicycles have also been forced to give their vehicles, while even owners of video cassettes were forced to give their private video cassettes at gun point. There is no time limit for the contributing of labour. SLORC provides no shelter for labourers. SLORC takes no responsibility for the medical treatment of labourers who become sick or are suffering from disease, nor those who receive injuries at the construction site.

Moreover, SLORC does not provide enough drinking wa-

ter for the labourers at the worksite. The labourers are denied access to respond to anything that SLORC orders. SLORC wants them to follow orders and don't ask questions. SLORC does not expect to be disobeyed or defied. When somebody responds, he/she is slapped and force to dig trenches and do other hard works. Murmurings of the labourers — "We have been totally enslaved under the rule of SLORC" — have been heard around the construction site area.

Most of the female labourers were gang-raped by the troops. As they are ashamed of revealing their cases, many cases remained unexposed.

Civil servants were also levied a number of taxes. Taxes for each servant includes 500 kyats for breaking stones, 150 kyats for carrying stones to the truck and another 800 kyats for digging the earth pitch for the construction of the line. No servant is spared from this taxation.

From September 1993 to February 1994, during the half-way phase of the construction, 21 people died and many others were injured. Their hands and/or legs were broken due to a severe landslide.

HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTARY

In the first week of February 1994, SLORC Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt inspected the process of the railway line construction. At that time, the labourers were forced to say, "We are satisfied with contributing this kind of labour and enjoy to do so."

Peasants in Myaing Township are now getting into trouble as they do not have no land to escape to with their very lives and livelihood, and no money to pay SLORC "dues". Moreover, those who failed to attend the USDA mass rally

were faced with various forms of harassment — a fine of 500 kyats per person, confiscation of household list (known as Form No. 10) and ID cards, arrest and imprisonment, over-time forced labour at the construction site plus a 30 kyat fine as a punishment, in addition to a multitude of indignities and violations of their person or private property.

Villagers were not only compelled to contribute corvee labour at the railway construction site, they were also subjected to other forms of en-

forced labour, all against their will. For example, SLORC demanded from the labourers to pay 20 pieces of firewood per household, 5 branches of toddy-palm leaf, jute, groundnut and cooking oil and fees for the trip of Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt. The villagers were not in any position to deny the demands SLORC's troops. As the villagers are afraid of authoritarian rule from the gun, they have to find ways to fulfill these strenuous and illicit demands.

KABAW VALLEY

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The base of the Kabaw Valley Development Programme is Mintha Village, where a number of SLORC troops are stationed. Aung Zay Ya Village was founded near former Thanan Village in 1991. Aung Zay Ya Village is located 40 miles north of Tamu and there are at least 200 households present in the area. These houses were built by the local people in Kalay District, by covering their own expenses.

For the construction of Sayar San and Aung Zay Ya Village, each person in Kalay District

was forced to pay 5 kyats. Many people in Kalay District were forced to relocate to Aung Zay Ya Village. Although SLORC announced that each household would be provided with a house, 5-acre wide plot of land, cattle and farming tools without charges, no one wants to live there because there is no electricity nor running water. Local people living in 6 townships of Kalay District were not only forced to pay tax in the name of the Kabaw Valley Development Programme, but also driven to provide cattle according to

numbers fixed by SLORC. Businessmen were also forced to pay 200 kyats per person. Convict labourers were forced to dig earthen pitches and up-root trees. In ploughing farms, SLORC replaced cattle with convict labourers and forced them to work as cattle.

Another village, Sayar San, was founded in 1993. It is 20 miles from Tamu and the programmes will be similar to Aung Zay Ya Village. A police station was built by villagers at a place 13 miles from Tamu. Furthermore, another village will also be founded in Kabaw Valley. Local people there have been forced to provide for the new settlers.

LOGGING CONCESSIONS

Lao Hsit Han was granted logging concessions by SLORC in Sagaing Division in upper Chindwin. Through the paying of substantial bribes, Lao Hsit Han has managed to process much timber. Corruption is reportedly a common feature there.

In Sagaing Division, SLORC fixed the areas for logging concessions and issued licenses or logging permits. Northwest Command of SLORC, which was in control of the logging concessions and issued logging permits to their relatives, allowed for illegal logging and falling the trees. In coalition with departmental servants,

SLORC troops received bribes, and corruption is very common. Officials from the Northwest Command become very rich as they received hundreds of thousands of kyats worth of bribes. People who were granted logging permits stole timber from other concessions and illegally sold those which are not in their permits. Such kind of acts have become widespread.

In this connection, SLORC troops there traced the cases and found that their commanders were also involved in bribery cases. When the BSI (Bureau of Special Intelligence) investigated this case, many

civilians were found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and private property at their homes was confiscated. Cargo and Hino trucks and luxury cars of corrupt people were also confiscated. The main person; Lt-Col San Maung, Deputy Commander of Northwest Command, who was not faced with any legal action, only retirement from his post. The younger brother of San Maung was sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment for this case. San Maung's riches are estimated at 50,000,000 kyats from corruption.

Note: LID = Light Infantry Division

LIB = Light Infantry Battalion

IB = Infantry Battalion





DAWN NEWS BULLETIN

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