

# DAWN

NEWS BULLETIN

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# DAWN

## NEWS BULLETIN

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### SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

With the end of the cold war, the role of the United Nations in peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building in conflicted areas of the world has become more and more prevalent. Regarding the peacemaking process, there is much evidence for the success of these UN operations in some countries, while failure to bring peace into certain countries is also indisputable. Although the effectiveness of the overall peacemaking process remains questionable, we recognise and believe in the role of the UN regarding the restoration of democracy and conflict resolution in Burma.

In Burma, mediation alone by the UN for the achievement of genuine and sustainable peace can not succeed unless two existing major political problems -- non-existence of democracy and abuses of the rights of the ethnic minorities -- are solved. In order to achieve sustainable peace, which is essential for transition to a genuine Democratic Federal Union, these political problems must be solved by political means. Even if a countrywide ceasefire agreement is achieved, it is no more than a part of the peace process, and talks for genuine and sustainable peace are still needed. Neither UN mediation nor ceasefire agreements can achieve democracy and sustainable peace or solve the political problems.

If a nationwide UN-sponsored ceasefire is achieved, it must be followed by another step which is vital for the restoration of genuine and sustainable peace in Burma: peace talks among all the parties concerned. The UN should supervise the whole process of finding ways to solve root causes of the conflicts in Burma by means of tripartite meetings composed of the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the ethnic minorities and the military regime in Rangoon. At that time UN should also encourage SLORC and its military personnel to guarantee the safety of all persons involved in the process.

SLORC must ensure that all violations of human rights and suppression of democratic forces who voice dissent committed by its military personnel are stopped immediately. Freedom of expression and freedom of assembly must also be guaranteed by the regime.

If there is any deviation from the above-mentioned process, there will not only be no hope for the restoration of democracy and genuine and sustainable peace in Burma, but the UN's attempts at mediation will actually be counterproductive.

*Published By The All Burma Students' Democratic Front.*

**(DAWN)** GPO Box 1352, Bangkok 10501 Thailand

## CLOSING CEREMONY OF TEACHER'S TRAINING COURSE HELD



volunteer in teaching Educational Psychology, Child Development, Classroom Management, Teaching English and in preparing new syllabi in English. New syllabi will be translated into the Burmese by the Education Branch in order to use them in the future.

After the training, teachers have been teaching at Yaung Ni Oo primary school for 1994-95 academic year. General Science, Physical Education, Health Education and Educational games have been added as new subjects to former three subjects -- Burmese, English and Mathematics -- taught during 1993-94 academic year. "If teaching aids are sufficient enough, there will be more success and convenience," said the teachers based on their experiences. It was known that second batch of this training will be opened for the teachers from Pyoe Pan Wai school of ABSDF.

The closing ceremony of a 14-week long first batch of the Teacher's Training Course was held on 15 June 1994 at Yaung Ni Oo family camp of the ABSDF. About 120 people composed of members of the ABSDF led by Khin Maung Win, member to the Central Executive Committee, and trainees attended the closing ceremony. At the closing session, chairperson of the ceremony delivered a speech to the gathering and awarded prizes to 7 teachers who finished the courses successfully.

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 Institutional Media, Teaching Maths, Teaching Science, Physical Education and Fine Arts. A Singaporean teacher helped as a

## ABSDF OPPOSES CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

On 20 June 1994, the Central Committee of the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) opposed in principle the "constructive engagement" policy exported by ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and objected to the association's invitation to the unlawful SLORC regime which does not reflect the will of the people of Burma nor represent the country.

ABSDF believes that access to enjoy fundamental democratic rights and basic human rights by the people in respective countries is of vital importance than senses

of good but sugar-coated bilateral relations of the regimes in those countries. Aiming at good relations in the long run with the ASEAN member countries, we, members of ABSDF, have been emphasising this point which is in line with the will of the people, said in a statement released on 29 June.

In the aftermath of a military coup in Burma in 1988, ASEAN member countries have been supporting SLORC in maintaining a firm grip on Burma and to build its army by introducing so-called constructive engagement. Under this policy, ASEAN is encourag-

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The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) expressed its grave concern over the negative impact that investments by multinational companies are having on the people's livelihood and the environment in Burma.

NCGUB viewed with particular concern the Tenasserim region gas pipeline and the offshore oil exploration projects being undertaken by Total of France, Texaco and UNOCAL of the USA, British Premier of the UK, Nippon Oil of Japan and Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration & Production (PTTEP).

NCGUB reminded these companies that since they are dealing with an illegal regime, which has no mandate from the people to exploit or sell off the country's natural resources, that represents no one but a small group of military personnel in Burma, any agreement undertaken with an illegal regime will not be honored by the Burmese people.

ing SLORC politically, supporting it economically and turning a blind eye to SLORC's crimes against the people of Burma.

The constructive engagement policy is only the by-product of ASEAN member countries to lend legitimacy to SLORC, to help in deluding the international community about its abysmal human rights records in Burma, and to undermine the democratic movement of the people of Burma, added the statement.

ABSDF also pointed out that ASEAN, which fails to take into account Burma's long-standing political problem, let Thailand invite SLORC with observer status to join its 27th annual meeting to be held in Bangkok in July.

### NCGUB: FOREIGN INVESTMENTS RUN COUNTER TO THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE

Citing the realities on the planning gas pipe line project and the investment of the multinational oil companies, NCGUB voiced in a statement released on 17 May 1994, These companies are contributing to the problems that the Burmese people face today... In Burma today, foreign investments run counter to the interests of the people and hamper democratization.

Local people who have lived in 15 villages in Mon State and Tenasserim Division for generations are now forcefully evicted because their homes have suddenly become part of what SLORC considers a "strategic zone."

Touching the issues of forced relocation and forced labour sponsored by SLORC, NCGUB stated, The military regime has deployed 15 new regiments in the Ye-Tavoy region to move the local people out and secure the 'strategic zones.' Troops from these regiments have conscripted the local people to build military barracks and dig trenches for their security.

The gas pipelines project will also pass through the last of the dense rain forests that is home to rare species like elephant, rhinoceros, wild giant cattle, tapir and hornbill. The damage done to the ecology and the environment is unfathomable because the military is already felling trees and preparing wide clearings along the pipeline route to ensure security for the pipeline.

An estimated 120,000-150,000 local civilian families, who nor-

mally earn their living as fisherman, miners and farmers, are now forced to work as unpaid "volunteer" laborers in the infrastructural projects, such as clearing forests, building railway lines and roads. As a result, an estimated total of at least half a million people who are members of the victimized families have necessarily been suffering all the appalling consequences.

The local economy has also been disrupted for many villages along the coast as the military regime has now declared the exploration zones as off-limit areas to the local people.

The disruption of the economy in this region has led to an exodus of local people to the Thai border. Many of the girls and young women have become victims of the Thai 'sex slave' industry, pointed out the NCGUB.

As the gas pipeline project cuts through areas where the Karen and Mon ethnic resistance forces have been in control for decades, the Thai Government is blatantly pressuring these ethnic groups to enter into separate cease-fire agreement with the military regime.

Thai interest in the development of the gas pipeline project has also aggravated problems for the Burmese people. The Democracy Village and Aungthapyae Village, which were too close to the gas pipeline project area, where about 500 Tavoyan people had taken refuge at the Thai border, were burned down by the 9th Division of the Royal Thai Army. Source: NCGUB



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# JAPAN SEEKS RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI SI ADOPTS STRONG RESOLUTION

Tokyo, 10 May - Japanese Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata affirmed that his government will continue to seek the release of Burmese democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. He made the statement in response to a request by U Win Khet, Chairman of the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area, Burma), who attended the meeting of the Council of the Socialist International (SI) held from -11 May 1994.

The Hata-Win Khet meeting took place during an official reception for SI delegates hosted by the Prime Minister on a cruise ship in Tokyo Bay. Sheikh Hasina, president of the Awami League and daughter of Sheikh Mujiba Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, made the same request to Hata while U Win Khet pinned an Aung San Suu Kyi button on his lapel. U Win Khet also affixed a "Free Aung San Suu Kyi -- Free Burma" badge

on Cambodian 2nd Prime Minister Hun Sen when he too expressed his support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Hun Sen said that he would do his best to seek her release. Both Hata and Japanese offering Minister Koji Kakizawa were also requested not to renew Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the SLORC in Rangoon. The request to Kakizawa was made by Dr Tun Aye at another official reception hosted by the Foreign Minister. U Win Khet, Dr Tun Aye and Harn Yawngwe represented the NLD (LA), which had been invited by the SI Secretary-General Luis Ayala of Chile, to attend the SI Council as special guests.

At the SI Council meeting -- "Asia and the Pacific, Democracy and Economic and Social Development" -- U Win Khet called on the SI to support the democracy movement in Burma and said that no real change can occur

without the participation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Addressing the SI Council, Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh) expressed her admiration for and identification with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Other speakers that expressed concern for the situation in Burma and support for the Burmese democracy movement included General-Secretary Felix Anthony of the Fiji Sugar and General Workers Union, General-Secretary Pradip Bose of the Indian Centre for Democratic Socialism, Ahmed Nor, Democratic Action Party of Malaysia, Chair Helen Clark of the New Zealand Labour party, and Raimon Obiols, Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

The gathering noted with grave concern that "the SLORC in Burma still has not transferred power to the elected representatives of the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi, that won more than 92 per cent of the parliamentary seats in the 27 May 1990 general elections," and "the National Convention convened by SLORC in 1993 excludes many of the representatives elected in 1990 and other ethnic nationalist leaders, and its designed to reserve a leading role for the armed forces in the future political life of Burma, which clearly contradicts the expressed will of the Burmese people."

Participants to the Conference deplored that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate, will have been under house



U Tun Aye, U Win Khet and Harn Yawngwe at SI Conference

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arrest, without any charge, for five years on 20 July 1994.

In a strongly worded resolution unanimously adopted by the Council "strongly condemned the systematic use of torture, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labour in development projects, forced portering of the military, forced conscription into the armed forces, forced dislocation of the Population, mass rape of women, as a tool of repression, in particular against ethnic and religious minorities," and "the restrictions placed on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and the use of politically motivated arrests and detentions to suppress political dissent."

The Resolution called on SLORC "to respect the will of the Burmese people by immediately and unconditionally releasing Aung San Suu Kyi and other political

prisoners; entering into a dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, and other democratic and ethnic nationalist leaders, to find a peaceful solution to the political situation in Burma; restoring full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including ethnic and religious rights, and putting an immediate end to the use of torture, arbitrary arrests, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labour, portering, relocation and conscription, and the abuse of women." Regarding the evolution of democracy in Burma, the SI called on "the UN Secretary General to appoint a special envoy for Burma to facilitate the transition to democracy."

Relating to the support of the international community it called on "the international community to refrain from renewing ODA assistance until SLORC responds positively and with integrity to the efforts of the international community to facilitate the tran-

sition, and to impose a mandatory arms embargo, and trade and investment sanctions should SLORC continue to ignore the will of the Burmese people."

Foreign companies operating in Burma were also demanded to withdraw or suspend their operations in Burma until democracy and human rights are restored in Burma.

SI Secretary-General Ayala also affirmed that SI's Asia Pacific Committee has made Burma its priority. Other world leaders that endorsed the SI decisions included Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, Hun Sen of Cambodia and former French Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. The SI is the oldest and largest political association of socialist, social democrat and labour parties, currently comprising 111 parties and organisations. *Source: ADDB/Burma Alert/ Circulation of SI*

## OBLF CALLS ON USITY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SLORC

On 11 May 1994 Overseas Burma Liberation Front (OBLF) called on all the internal and external Burmese pro-democracy groups to unite themselves under the umbrella of the Democratic Alliance of Burma and the National Council of the Union of Burma and to fight for human rights and democracy until the SLORC military regime is ousted once and for all, and to restore a genuine democratic government under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

In a statement released in Australia, OBLF called on the inter-

national community and those who are genuinely concerned about the plight of the Burmese people, to immediately implement a "get tough" policy leading to rigid sanctions against the SLORC military regime as the junta has been ignoring all international attempts, including that of the UN, to peacefully seek the implementation of the 1990 election results, and the restoration of fundamental freedoms and human rights in Burma.

The people of Burma sink deeper into poverty, and cry out in desperation, whilst the SLORC mili-

tary regime steers the country further into bankruptcy, as massive amounts of foreign exchange from joint ventures with foreign companies are channelled towards its personal excesses and on its military spending. In its attempt to attract unscrupulous foreign investors, the regime has substituted an isolationist trade policy with that of its so-called open market economic policy, which has resulted in record inflation as SLORC floods the market with fresh currency from Warzi.

In this connection, OBLF urged all foreign companies, which wish to deal with the SLORC military regime, to think twice.

The people riding SLORC's wave of prosperity now falls into three categories — the military and their

supporters, the businessmen, and employees of foreign embassies and foreign companies who are paid in foreign currencies.

"The patriotic Burmese people who are excluded from the above categories, are now being forced to leave Burma in droves, as there is no longer a future for them in Burma. A large portion leaving Burma leave as refugees to escape arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, execution, slave labour and portage," reported the statement.

Moreover, OBLF added, "the ethnic nationalities are now being individually enticed by 'peace talks,' a ploy aimed at dividing and ruling the ethnic nationalities."

*Source: OBLF*

## **NMSP APPEALS FOR SANCTIONS**

On 11 May 1994, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) appealed to the international community to support Burma's democratic movement, call for global sanctions and expose the complicity of Western Corporations and neighbouring regimes.

The NMSP also appealed the international community to hold their business interest in Burma until a democratic government is in power.

Regarding the multinational oil and gas firms' involvement in the oil and gas ventures in Burma, NMSP said that these companies

are irrespective of destruction of tropical ecosystem.

"The projects reportedly rely on slave labour and forced relocation of the ethnic Mon, Karen and Tavoyan nationalities both by the Thai civil and SLORC military authorities... Ethnic nationalities and ecological diversity are the immediate victims of greed and racism, because the oil and gas corporations as well as multinational investors are assisting SLORC military junta with technical and propaganda to legitimise SLORC rule," said in a statement released by NMSP.

*Source: NMSP*

## **FTUB'S Outlook on Gas Pipeline Project**

The Federation of Trade Unions, Burma (FTUB) said it was very disappointed that the economic and social structures of the local population were never put into consideration when the Nat Ein Taung gas pipeline project was being planned.

More than 10,000 farmers, plantation workers, miners and fishermen of the Ye-Tavoy area have migrated illegally to Thailand due to the social breakdown resulting from the forced labor and forced relocation of the SLORC military.

"It is insulting when company decision makers deny knowledge

of the inhuman methods in the violations of Human Rights used by the SLORC military in the support projects for the gas pipeline," said FTUB in a statement released on 18 May 1994.

FTUB stressed, "The multinationals like TEXACO, UNOCAL and TOTAL which are based in democratic countries and fund the respective democratic parties through various ways and means to keep the democratic governments in power add salt to the wound when they quote themselves as 'apolitical' but recognise and work with a regime that took power through guns and has denied an election result to be put

into effect."

The FTUB condemned the companies involved and reaffirmed its stand that after there has been a change for a democratic government, all the investments done with the SLORC will be reviewed for their collaboration in the Human Rights and Trade Union Rights violations in Burma. Moreover, the FTUB demanded the companies involved to stop their work before the actual pumping of the gas takes place and the investors defend their money by all means.

*Source: FTUB*

Regular meeting of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), an umbrella organisation of the democratic forces, was held on 24 May 1994 at Manerplaw. Gen Saw Bo Mya, chairman of DAB and KNU delivered a speech at the meeting, and current situation of the 11 organisations which reached ceasefire agreement with SLORC, including Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), were analysed.

SLORC's offer for negotiations to KNU, New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) were explained to members of the CEC, and views and recommendations of member organisations were presented. Gen Aung Than Lay of KNPP who was invited as a special guest to the meeting also clarified in details of SLORC's political and military pressure, and insincerity during its talks with KNPP. Future working programmes of DAB were adopted after being discussed and recommended by each member organisation.

DAB urged both internal and external population of Burma for a united opposition against the wrong negotiation and ceasefire policy being pursued by SLORC, State Law and Order Restoration Council, and requested the international community including Burma's neighboring countries not to put pressure on the revolutionary forces.

Moreover, DAB stated that the present negotiation activities of SLORC cannot solve the nationalities problem nor the democracy and human rights problem, which are the basic problems facing Burma. DAB believes that negotiations will only be success-

### DAB POSITION ON SLORC'S "Ceasefire" Talks

ful when basic political issues are discussed freely and frankly

In a statement released on the same day, Central Executive Committee of DAB cited, "Although SLORC military junta is currently pursuing a policy of seeking negotiations and ceasefires with armed ethnic revolutionary groups, SLORC does not aim toward achieving a stable nationwide ceasefire, nor does it aim to solve the country's political problems by political means."

By seeking negotiations and ceasefire agreements exclusively with one group at a time, the SLORC is trying to break up the revolutionary forces piece by piece. They have been trying to sow suspicion between allies by spreading false reports, to bribe influential people within the opposition with promises of special

privileges, to create rifts between opposition political parties and to manufacture religious and ethnic conflicts among various peoples. SLORC has concluded that these activities brazenly and openly.

SLORC wouldn't discuss any political issues with the political organizations with whom they reached ceasefire agreements in 1989-90. Instead, they have since used various methods to divide and annihilate these organizations, which is why there are now splits between the leadership and members of the Shan and Ko Kang organizations. Similarly, the number two leader of the Pa-O National Organization was assassinated, and SLORC went on to create problems between the Pa-O in the North and those in the South. In Wa territory, SLORC secretly sent in commandos with arms and ammunition to under-





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mine the Wa revolution.

In this statement DAB clearly stated that although SLORC repeats daily about roads and bridges constructions in the areas where ceasefires have been reached, these constructions are for strategic military uses, setting up many new permanent military posts at all strategic points. Moreover, villagers in these areas are forced to work on road construction and to build military camps.

SLORC also forces the people to accept its ceasefire terms by torture the villagers, burning down the villages and looting properties from those who are living close to armed engagement areas, for which villagers, including women, were subjected to work

as porters, to rape and to be used as human minesweepers.

In negotiations with the ethnic nationalities, SLORC, which does not have intention of trying to seek political solutions or reconciliation, does neither acknowledge any of the rights of these nationalities nor the principle of division of power. SLORC's main desire is to turn all the revolutionary forces into prisoners-of-war who will hold guns.

Moreover, DAB stated, SLORC is only inviting the ethnic armed forces to negotiate, and is not inviting the other armed forces or political opposition groups. It also does not want to hold talks with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who represents the Burmese people, to sincerely discuss political

issues the people are most strongly demanding. This makes it obvious that SLORC has no desire to respect the democratic rights or the human rights of the people as everyone is demanding.

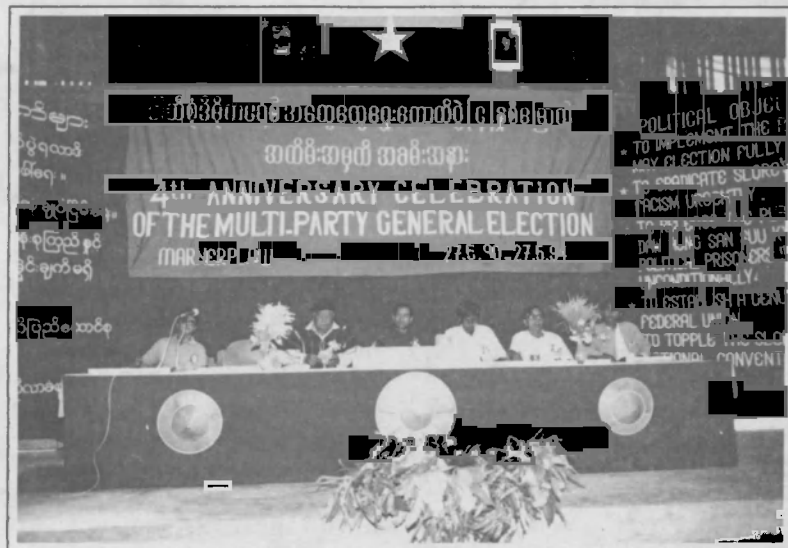
By pushing the groups which have already accepted ceasefire terms to attend its so-called National Convention, SLORC pretends that it is trying to solve problems by political means. But in reality, this is only a SLORC trick to make itself seem a legitimate government. At the same time, SLORC is conscripting members into its Union Solidarity Development Association and forcing those attending the National Convention to support the SLORC draft constitution for Burma.

## Commemoration of May 27 election Held

Commemoration of May 27, 1990 multi-party general election, the first of its kind to be held in thirty years and the result of the

democracy movement in Burma, was held at Manerplaw, headquarters of the National League for Democracy Liberated Area

(NLD LA). About 100 people including invited guests from overseas attended the ceremony.



U Maung Maung Aye, Information Minister of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and chairman of the Central Committee for the Commemoration of the 4th Anniversary of the May 27; Gen Saw Bo Mya, Chairman of Karen National Union (KNU); Nai Han Tha, General Secretary of Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB); Khai Soe Naing Aung, Secretary of National Democratic Front (NDF); U Tin Aung, Secretary of (NLD-LA); Ver U Khae Mar Sara, Chairman of All Burma Young Monks Union (ABYMU) and U Daniel Aung, Presidium

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Member Representing the Political Parties Bloc at the SLORC National Convention acted as members of presidium at the ceremony. Respective speeches were delivered to the gathering by members of presidium and message of felicitations from ABSDF, KNU, NCGUB and other organisations, both inside the country and overseas, were read out.

Four years ago, the majority of the people of Burma expressed their rejection to one-party dictatorship and military despotism by voting overwhelmingly for the NLD led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

But SLORC, the military clique, not only continues to shamelessly ignore the results of the election and peacefully hand over the power to the elected representatives of the people, but it also continues detaining NLD's chairman, U Tin Oo and General Secretary Aung San Suu Kyi, other elected representatives, democracy movement leaders, student leaders and monks.

In a statement released on the same day by the Central Committee for the Commemoration of the 4th Anniversary of the May 27, 1990 Multi-party General Elections, it was pointed out that, "Although SLORC has, under various practices, disregarded the outcome of the elections for four years, the election results remains valid, because chapter 2, article 3 of the election

law clearly states, 'the *Hluttaw* shall be made up of *Hluttaw* members elected from constituencies in accordance with this law'. Besides, chapter 1, article 2(a) states, '*Hluttaw* means *Pyithu Hluttaw* hence, all these powers, namely, legislative power, executive power and judicial power remain vested in the people's representatives and that the *Hluttaw* team begins only with the convention of the first *Hluttaw* meeting.'"

The Central Committee for the Commemoration of the 4th Anniversary of the May 27, 1990 Multi-party General Election solemnly declared in their statement that they will adhere to the political objectives of realisation to the fullest extent the results of the May 27, 1990 election, removal of the military dictatorship, immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, establishment of a genuine democratic Federal Union and abolishing the SLORC's sham National Convention, and will not stop fighting until these objectives are achieved.



## **DEMOCRATIC DEMONSTRATIONS AT SLORC, THAI EMBASSIES**

On 27 May 1994, the fourth anniversary of Burma's first multi-party democratic elections in over thirty years, Burmese expatriates, workers, students and their American supporters gathered in front of the SLORC Embassy in Washington, DC, to stage a protest against the illegitimate military regime and to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

Also present, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) called for the junta to finally honor the pre-election promise to transfer power to those politicians fairly chosen as representatives of the people

during the 1990 general elections.

On the same day, the devoted demonstrators staged another protest in front of the Royal Thai Embassy in America's capital, to highlight Thailand's forefront role urging for a constructive engagement with Burma, an economic policy that in essence favours SLORC buying power and does little to improve the daily life of Burmese people in economic, democratic or human rights spheres. This destructive policy has been revealed to be designed more for protecting Thailand's right to exploit Burma's raw natural resources than for contributing to a peaceful and equitable settlement of the current situation.

gime in Rangoon. He said that 1994 is a critical year for Burma as the junta could begin to make real political concessions if international pressure is maintained. However, if international measures in the call for democracy are relaxed, SLORC will succeed in consolidating and legalizing its hold on power through "superficial reforms."

The Burmese leader called for a continued embargo on aid as well as curbs on trade with the self-styled "Myanmar", cross-border humanitarian assistance for the some 800,000 internal refugees uprooted and displaced by SLORC's forced reallocations and slave labor campaigns, and more concrete political and financial assistance to the Burmese democracy movement.

Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win was in Canada from 5-11 June at the invitation of the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development

## **LAND OF THE MAPLE LEAF RECEIVES PM**

Ottawa, 10 June - Canadian Acting Prime Minister Sheila Copps met with Burmese Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) on 9 June and reaffirmed Canada's support for the Burmese democracy movement. Earlier the same day, the PM was introduced to the House of Commons by Speaker Gilbert Parent.

On 7 June, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Asia Pacific) Raymond Chan assured Dr Sein Win that Canada had no intention of encouraging trade with the military junta, SLORC.

The Asian PM also testified before the Joint Senate-House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Disabled. He stressed that the human rights situation in Burma has not improved and that the conditions have, in fact, witnessed a worsening escalation in ethnic areas in spite of the much-publicized cease-fire negotiations between the ethnic groups and the Burmese military.

Dr. Sein Win also called on Canada to maintain and toughen its human rights stand with regard to the unlawful SLORC re-

(ICHRDD) headed by Mr. Ed Broadbent. ICHRDD was the first international institution to recognize the NCGUB as the legally elected representatives of the Burmese people and has provided political and financial assistance since the government was formed, in 1991.

A similar trans-Canada tour was arranged by ICHRDD for Dr. Sein Win in 1992 when he met with the then leader of the Official Opposition, Jean Cloutier.

During the current trip the Burmese leader met with Lucien Bouchard, the present leader of

the Official Opposition (Bloc Quebecois); Preston Manning, leader of the Reform Party; Audrey McLaughlin, leader of the New Democratic Party; David Kilgour, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons; a number of members of Parliament from all parties; and the Ontario Minister-without-portfolio responsible for International Trade.

Included in this trip, was a visit with Bob White, President of the Canadian Labor Congress, and discussed the work of trade unions in Burma. In addition, he made a public speech at the Law Faculty of the University of Ottawa on 9 June. The dedicated Prime Minister discussed the situation in Burma with non-governmental organizations in the dominion's capital, hosted by the Canadian Council of International Cooperation and in Toronto hosted by the Canada-Asian Working Group.

Even with such a busy schedule, Dr Sein Win found time to meet with Burmese communities in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, and he was much sought after by the fourth estate, holding interviews with such diverse media as the Financial Post, the Toronto Star, International Press Service, the Ottawa Citizen, the Montreal Gazette, Reuters and La Presse. Finally, the Prime Minister addressed the Board of Directors of the International Center in Montreal on 11 June before returning to Washington, DC.

Dr. Sein Win was accompanied by Harn Yawngwe, Associates to Develop Democratic Burma, and Bushan Gulati, Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma (Canada) and the NCGUB Information Officer.

*Source: NCGUB (NY)*

## ACTIVISTS MARK AUNG SAN SUU KYI BIRTHDAY WITH BLOOD DRIVE, LETTERS

June 18 & 19 - Supporters of the Burmese pro-democracy movement gathered in Tokyo and Kobe over the weekend to mark Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 49th birthday, to memorialise fallen comrades, and to demand the immediate release of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and other political prisoners.

More than 40 people participated in a blood donation ceremony in honour of Aung San Suu Kyi in Tokyo's Ikebukuro Ward on June 19. The ceremony also honoured her father, slain national hero Gen Aung San, her mother Daw Khin Kyi, and all those who have "sacrificed their lives in the struggle for freedom, democracy and human rights" in Burma, according to organisers from the Burma Youth Volunteer Association (BYVA). Blood donation is a traditional form of charity to make merit in Burma.

In Kobe, on 18 June, more than 20 people from Japan, Burma, North America, Europe and New Zealand gathered near Sannomiya Station and handed out leaflets and collected signatures and messages from passers-by on a giant birthday card to be sent via special registered mail to the detained leader, passing her fifth birthday under house arrest. Following the reading of a joint statement from Burmese Relief Center-Japan (BRC-J), Burma Youth Volunteers Association (BYVA) and International Network for Burma Relief (INBR), participants walked to the Post Office, mailed their birthday greetings and forwarded to the SLORC Embassy in Tokyo the fifth batch of letters collected from 55 countries.

The BRC-J has received more than 1,170 letters calling for Daw





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Aung San Suu Kyi's release. "We hope that her next birthday will be celebrated in a new Burma: we hope, as Abraham Lincoln did when his own country was engaged in a bloody civil war, for 'a new birth of freedom' in Burma," commented the joint statement. Representatives of the BRC-J who organised the gathering stated that according to the conditions of her house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi ought to be released when her five years of detention end on July 20.

However, members of the ruling military junta have said that they will extend her detention for another year. The participants in the Japanese action demanded SLORC to immediately release

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her fellow prisoners of conscience, to abide by its own laws and free her on or before July 20, 1994, and to transfer power to the legitimate government of Burma, the one elected overwhelmingly by the Burmese people in 1990.

Participants also demanded an end of the ASEAN policy of "constructive engagement" which they characterised as destructive opportunism which actually supports the junta, thus interfering in Burmese internal affairs and prolonging Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's imprisonment.

Furthermore, they demanded cessation of Japanese firms like Nippon Oil to profit from the

blood of the Burmese people and demanded the Japanese government to abandon its plans to resume overseas development aid to Burma, which will only aid in Burma's destruction; its ethnic groups, its economy and environment.

"We give our support to those groups and individuals working for democracy and human rights in Burma. Our wish on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday is that all those who believe in the right of humanity to live in freedom from fear join us," concluded the statement.

*Source: BRC-Japan, BYVA and INBR*



## **ONSOB RAPS SLORC PRESENCE AT ASEAN**

The Bangkok-based Overseas National Students' Organisation of Burma (ONSOB) on 24 June said the Thai government should invite democratic representatives of the Burmese people to the ASEAN meeting rather than representatives of SLORC military

regime.

ONSOB said in a statement that it refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of its temporary refuge country, Thailand. "However, it is our sincere request and suggestion that the

elected people's representatives of the victorious party be invited in place of the ruthless military dictatorship, the SLORC, an endeavour more appropriate and in conformity with the desires of the people of Burma," said the statement.

It also added that the presence of the Burmese military regime at the annual regional meeting in July would only degrade the image of ASEAN.

## **INTERN'L PERSPECTIVES**

# **ASEAN**

## **must ensure concrete criteria for progress**

Winston Lord, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs on 3 May 1994 called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to work out a set of concrete criteria in its engagement with Burma to ensure progress towards a free and open country. He also reiterated that arms should not be sent to the Burmese regime, which is under threat of economic sanctions by Western countries.

"I would just hope that in engaging Burma, ASEAN will try to set forth some concrete criteria for progress as part of its engagement strategy... We do believe arms should not be sent to this regime," he told during an appearance on the US information agency's world net television programme.

Mr Lord said the United States

believes that ASEAN shares Washington's goals in Burma: namely to see a more chance to compete for power, and to release people from jail and generally ease human rights.

Mr Lord said Asean, due to its geographic proximity to Burma, has the right to devise its own approach. He admitted that the United States and Asean have differences on recent changes in Burma and how effective the policy of constructive engagement might be.

"Reasonable people and nations can agree to disagree on the best way to accept peaceful change," said Mr Lord.

The United States, he said, is reviewing its policy on Burma and would brief Asean when the two sides meet under the US-Asean Dialogue scheduled on

May 9-10 in Washington. The situation in Burma and Cambodia would be high on the agenda of their meeting on regional issues.

Mr Lord said Washington's review of Burma did not mean that the United States was changing its position. Calls would continue for the isolation of the Burmese regime and arms sanctions against the SLORC.

Regarding Asean's constructive engagement policy, Mr Lord said if Asean is going to engage Burma more fully diplomatically at the highest level and conduct more regular visits, the regional grouping should also encourage the Burmese leaders to respect human rights and to respect the results of past elections.

Whatever changes may or may not have taken place there," he warned, "we do not think they are very profound yet with respect to the openness of that system, the fact remains there is a humanitarian problem, a refugee problem and a drug problem. He also expressed support for the proposed dialogue between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and SLORC leaders, and called for her release.

# GLOBAL PARLIAMENTARY APPEAL

19 May 1994 -- The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD), an independent organisation founded by an act of the Canadian Parliament and was responsible for organising the Nobel Peace Laureate Mission to Thailand in 1993, has launched a call for international parliamentary support for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all others imprisoned in Burma for their political beliefs. The Global Parliamentary Appeal for Burma which is in petition format has been circulated to democratic nations around the world. As of May 40 countries have taken part in the exercise in an unprecedented show of support for Daw Aung San Suu

Kyi.

In Canada, over 80% of Members of Parliament signed the appeal and a motion was later passed in the House of Commons supporting the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The President of ICHRDD, Mr Ed Broadbent, planned to present the petitions to Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, General Secretary of the United Nations on 20 July 1994 to commemorate the fifth anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's arrest. ICHRDD is issuing a call to all Burma support organisations to actively involve themselves in gathering signatures on the petition.

right by their own historical standards.

Furthermore, Senator Bourne wanted clarification if Mr Hume was speaking on behalf of the Australian government when he made these statements and if these comments were made but not authorised in any way, and "has the government considered recalling the ambassador so that he might become more acquainted with the facts surrounding Burma's military regime?"

Gareth Evans responded that these remarks were "attributed to the ambassador by some groups in the Australian NGO community," with a dismissive tone. The minister went on to make excuses for Hume's original statements, claiming "my understanding is that during a conversation in Bangkok in April he offered the historical observation that corvee labour has been a longstanding practice in Burma since 1962."

Gareth Evans concluded by stressing the Australian government's concerns over human rights abuses, "including forced labour in the border regions," which Senator Bourne brought to the attention of the proceedings.

Although the minister stated there was "no suggestion" of Australian NGOs becoming involved in BAD projects in cooperation with SLORC, the veteran politician did say that Ambassador Hume "took the opportunity at his meeting with the [Burmese] minister to encourage the SLORC to work towards a genuine and comprehensive national reconciliation with both ethnic insurgents and the domestic political opposition."

## *Stuart Hume's Traditional Work Ethic*

Canberra, 24 June - Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Gareth Evans was questioned yesterday on the role of the Australian government in Burma, including statements made by the ambassador to Burma, Mr Stuart Hume.

Senator Bourne directed the question at the minister and requested he explain "How accurate are media reports which suggest that Australia's ambassador to Burma,

Mr Stuart Hume, recently stated that Burma's forced labour practices are acceptable and that Australia was ready to assist Burma with technical and financial assistance for border area development?"

The press reported that, back in April 1994 while in Bangkok, Ambassador Hume stated that forced labour in Burma is a matter of culture and is therefore all

A congressional hearing on *US Policy toward Burma* followed by a *Mark-up of a Resolution on US Policy Toward Burma*, chaired by the Asia Pacific Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Gary L. Ackerman (NY), was held on 29 June 1994 in the House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

The session was attended by all 11 members of the Subcommittee while testimonies were heard by the following distinguished guests: the Honorable Bill

The Subcommittee urged SLORC to: immediately and unconditionally release Burma's political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; permit the transfer of political power to an elected civilian government based upon the results of the 1990 election; fully respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are the birthright of all peoples; end the practice of forced labour, including portering for the military; allow free and confidential access to all prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, by international humanitarian

other United States Government officials and representatives should urge SLORC to release, immediately and unconditionally, Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. Moreover, the Representatives recommended them to: maintain the current United States ban on all forms of nonhumanitarian assistance to Burma; maintain current limitations on the provision of bilateral narcotics control assistance to SLORC until it demonstrates a genuine commitment to combating the scourge of illicit narcotics production and traf-

# US LEGISLATORS PASS RESOLUTION

Richardson, US Member of Congress from New Mexico; Thomas Hubbard, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs; Catharin Dalphino, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Affairs; Prime Minister Dr Sein Win, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB); Mr Mike Jendrzeczyk, Washington Director of Asia Watch; and Mrs Miriam Marshall Segal of MMA International Group.

The Subcommittee called for the immediate release of Burmas political prisoners, including Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The resolution, which now goes in front of the full committee before proceeding to the floor of the House later in July, also urged the transfer of political power to an elected civilian government based upon the results of the 1990 election.

agencies; implement fully the *Memorandum of Understanding with United Nations Commission on Human Rights* and create the necessary conditions to ensure an end to the flows of refugees to neighbouring countries and to facilitate the speedy repatriation and full reintegration, under conditions of safety and dignity, of those who have already fled Burma; respect fully the obligations set forth in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular the obligations in common article III, and make use of such relief services as may be offered by impartial humanitarian bodies; and take effective law enforcement actions against those individuals within the Burmese Government (including the Burmese military), as well as those outside the government, who are engaged in the production and trafficking of illicit narcotics.

The House of Representatives also recommended that the President, the Secretary of State, and

ficking; continue to oppose loans to Burma in accordance with chapter 8 of part I of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961; consider imposing further economic sanctions against Burma, and encourage other members of the international community to take similar steps, maintain United States support for the appointment by the United Nations Secretary General of a special envoy to focus on conflict resolution as the basis of national reconciliation and the restoration of democracy in Burma; maintain the unilateral United States arms embargo against Burma, and encourage the other members of the international community, most particularly the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the People's Republic of China, to prohibit arms sales and transfers to Burma; elevate the issues of democracy and human rights in Burma in the conduct of United States relations with other members of the international community, particu-



## INTERN'L PERSPECTIVES

larly in coordination with Japan, China, and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; ensure that, during the July 1994 Post-Ministerial Conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Secretary of State calls on the members of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations to support the international consensus on Burma by urging SLORC to unconditionally release Aung San Suu Kyi and to indicate its willingness to cooperate with a special envoy appointed by the United Nations Secretary General; disperse the funds previously appropriated to support assistance for Burmese refugees and students along the Thai/Burma border; encourage other members of the international community to halt all nonhumanitarian assistance to Burma or, at a minimum, to condition any new official assistance on significant progress by the Government of Burma toward respecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people; and continue to encourage the United Nations and its specialised agencies operating in Burma (A) to use particular care to ensure that their activities meet basic human needs, do not benefit the present military regime in Rangoon, and promote the enjoyment of internationally recognised human rights, and (B) to work through nongovernmental organisations to the greatest possible extent.

### AT THE SENATE

\* The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the same day called for the United States Government to enunciate a clear and strong policy to promote democracy in Burma. The resolution also strongly encourages ASEAN members at the meetings in Bang-

kok in July 1994 to join United States efforts to seek the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners in Burma and allow them to participate fully in the Burmese political process. The resolution submitted to the Committee by Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Mr Pell, Mr Simon, Mr D. Amato, Mr Kennedy, Mr Helms and Mr Pressler was passed on a voice vote.

The resolution also urged the ASEAN to join the US efforts to achieve the transfer of power to the winners of the 1990 democratic election, to join the arms embargo which the United States continues to maintain against Burma, and to end the gross human rights abuses perpetuated by the SLORC, including torture, arbitrary arrests, executions, forced labour, forced relocation and the rape and trafficking of women.

Moreover, it urged the US Government to clearly and publicly indicate the continued opposition of the United States to SLORC participation in ASEAN, work to implement UNGA resolution 48/150, unanimously adopted on 20 December 1993,

and pledge to seek international sanctions through the UN, including a multinational arms embargo, and the appointment of a special envoy to facilitate the transfer to democracy in Burma, oppose commercial arrangement that only provide financial support for the SLORC, oppose foreign aid and financial assistance from international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which only provide financial support for the SLORC, encourage the government of Thailand to allow Burmese political leaders and refugees, including the Karen, Mon and Karenni, and other ethnic groups, to continue their efforts to bring democratic change to Burma without fear of harassment or other pressure, continue the current United States policy of not sending an ambassador to Rangoon until such time as the SLORC has taken concrete steps to end human rights abuses and transfer power to the democratically elected leaders of Burma, and investigate claims of forced repatriation of Rohingya refugees and encourage adequate monitoring to prevent Burmese refugees from being repatriated against their will.

# AUS

## PARL SPEAKS UP

Canberra, 30 June - "Burma should immediately and unconditionally release political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi," Senator Gary Jones, the Government Whip in the Senate, stated today. "The continued house imprisonment of Suu Kyi is totally unacceptable".

Senator Jones gained unanimous

support in the Senate today for a motion calling for Suu Kyi's release from the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which has held the NLD leader without trial since July 20, 1990. "Her release is crucial for the movement towards democratic reform in Burma, the bringing about of peace in the country, and election of a demo-

cratic government," commented the Labour Party member from Queensland. He urged his government to continue the pressure on the Burma's rulers, "in the strongest possible manner, using all practicable steps, to achieve these goals."

"The SLORC should release Suu Kyi and begin genuine talks to end the years of ... turmoil in Burma and create an agenda for peace and election of a representative government. There is no way she can be isolated from the political future of Burma. She must be freed now," Senator Jones said.

He hoped when freedom comes to Suu Kyi and the people Burma in the form of a democratic government, that she and her supporters will finally know of Australians' support for their uphill struggle. "As Suu Kyi said earlier this year, 'Be courageous and democracy will win.'"

Resolution of the Australian Senate:

That the Senate:

(A) Notes that --

(1) 20 July marks the sixth year the Burmese State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has detained without trial the Nobel Prize Winner Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;

(2) The release of Aung San Suu Kyi is crucial for the movement towards democratic reform in Burma.

(B) Urges the government to continue to press the SLORC in the strongest manner possible for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and to take all practicable steps to maintain pressure on the SLORC to implement democratic reforms with the ultimate goal of bringing about democratic government in Burma.

parties revoiced the strong concerns of the Australian Parliament that have been raised over the politically motivated detainment of democracy advocates in Burma. Over the past five years, many resolutions have been passed without dissent in both Houses in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyis release.

Members of the Human Rights Subcommittee were particularly concerned for the world's most known prisoner of conscience. As late as March 1994 Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt commented he did not believe that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi should be included in talks and that no date has been set for her release.

The Subcommittee believes that it is important for immediate transfer of power to the democratically elected representatives of the Burmese people. The body endorsed the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United

## AUSSIE PROTEST LETTER TO SLORC

On 30 June 1994 Human Rights Subcommittee Chairman Senator Stephen Loosley and Deputy Chairman Senator Baden Teague of the Australia Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade sent a protest letter to SLORC Chairman General Than Shwe for the military regime's continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate who was placed under house arrest on 20 July 1989, and all other political

prisoners.

The Senators expressed that the international community and the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Australian Parliament reaffirm a commitment to fundamental democratic principles on this important political anniversary for Burma.

Drawing together in bipartisan union for the protest, Subcommittee members from all political

Nations passed in November 1993 as well as those passed by the Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights in 1992, 1993 and 1994, pointing out that not only do these resolutions relate to the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but also involves the more general questions of the prevention of human rights and the restoration of democracy in Burma.

Burma Support Group Norway has been working hard to realize our ideas. We hope that, by keeping the world informed what's going on up here or what ideas we're kicking around, other groups or individual Burmologists might have suggestions or could even coordinate activities around the globe!

Since the founding of our Oslo-based group on May 1st, 1994, we have been exploring several possible actions, while trying to increase our membership. As of the June 19th, BSGN has doubled in size as we take the word to the streets of Oslo -- namely, Karl Johan Gate, the main street running from the downtown to our King's palace. The downtown part of our university, housing the Faculty of Law, is located just across from the National Theatre and Ibsen's memory. We placed an information stand in this busy area from noon till 16.00, with 8 of our friendly and cheery members passing out literature about the situation in Burma and talking with interested passers-by. Our group hopes to continue the practice every two weeks, both to attract new members, inform people and keep active!

We usually hold meetings bi-weekly, open to the public. For example, when a group of journalism students from a Voss College on Norway's west coast were coming through Oslo on their way to the Thai-Burmese border, our two groups met at the Refugee Council's locality for an evening of discussions, exchange of ideas and, of course, relaxation! The journalism students have been collecting musical and other equipment for DVB Studios (Dawn Gwin) and planned to tour from Mon refugee camps all the way along the border up to Karenni country (remember, this is the rainy season!). BSGN sent along with our new friends a few office items for ABSDF with the thought, "Every little bit helps."

In addition to increasing contact with Burma-interest groups in Norway and abroad, BSGN is working on several projects, such as; helping to raise funds for a hydropower plant at Dawn Gwin, finding computer equipment for student groups in Thailand and India, selling Aung San Suu Kyi T-shirts to continue publicizing the plight of

# BSGN

## Update

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political prisoners in Burma, designing an audio-visual presentation for school children about Burma and what is happening there, finding an office for BSGN and the funds to pay for our activities, lend any assistance or support to DVB studios in Oslo that we are able to do, keeping the information flowing through Norwegian media by writing newspaper articles and contacting radio, further working with the Law Students Association Humanitarian Action to take place in September for raising funds for a documentation center, and planning a demonstration for July 20th with Amnesty International



and organizing some speakers. Other ideas we've come up with for awareness campaigns are to promote the national telephone company to issue telephone cards with Aung San Suu Kyi's picture and investigate how much it would cost to issue collectable stamps from the Liberated Areas?

Please, if you have any ideas or suggestions, our cold ears are always open under our *luer*, or woolen caps, so don't hesitate to write to BSGN c/o Tormod Lien, Grefsenkollvn. 12c, room 197, N-0490 Oslo, Norway. We look forward to hearing from you, even if it's only to say hello!





# PRESIDIUM MEMBER

## AT SLORC NATIONAL CONVENTION COMES OVER TO LIBERATED AREA

U Daniel Aung, Presidium Member Representing the Political Parties Bloc at the SLORC National Convention, made a statement on 26 May 1994 at Manerplaw, headquarters of the Liberated Areas. After attending the last session of the National Convention in April, He left Rangoon on 12 April 1994, and arrived at Manerplaw on 1 May 1994. His reasons for coming over to the Liberated Areas are as follows:

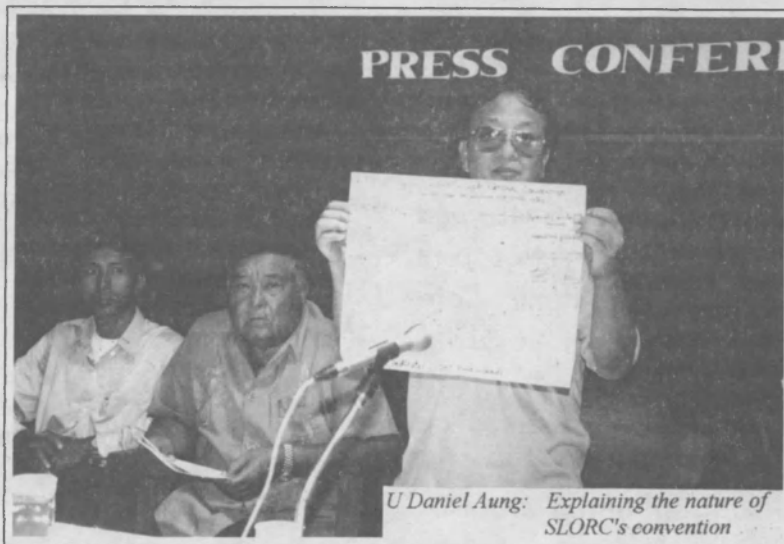
(1) I have lost all faith in the National Convention convened by SLORC because;

(a) SLORC had prepared and laid down in advance all the aims and objectives of the Convention instead of allowing the representatives to lay down the aims and objectives of their own choosing, (b) Similarly, the basic principles of the state constitution to be drafted were laid down by SLORC and the representatives were merely asked to discuss about their appropriateness. The suggestions given and positions formulated by the representatives

were never respected by SLORC. It simply went ahead and adopted the principles of its own choosing,

(c) The principles of selecting the president of the state, which it had adopted, would only allow for the military to permanently monopolize the executive power.

(2) The attempt of SLORC to downgrade the role of and even-



U Daniel Aung: Explaining the nature of SLORC's convention

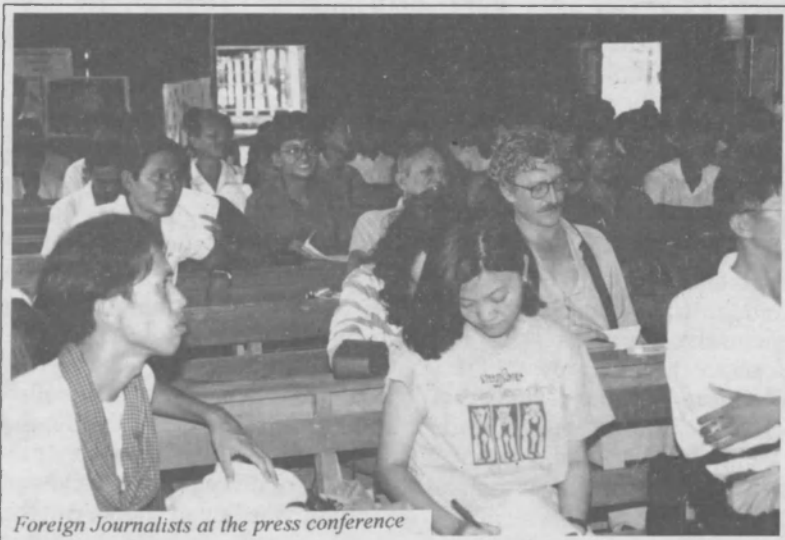
tually eliminate the political parties by imposing various restrictions on them, is diametrically opposed to the system of multi-party democracy. At present;

(a) A central executive committee member of a political party can travel only after reporting and receiving permission from the military intelligence unit concerned,

(b) Vacancy in the central executive committee due to any reason is not allowed to be filled, but reduction of the number of the members or resignation is allowed,

(c) Organizing committees of the political parties in various townships are not allowed to engage in any organizing activities,

(d) In some townships, if the number of township committee members decreased below 5, the committee is abolished without informing the parent party.



Foreign Journalists at the press conference

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# SUMMARY REPORT ON SLORC NATIONAL CONVENTION, GENERAL SITUATION AND NARCOTICS PROBLEM IN BURMA

(On 26 May 1994, Khun Marco Ban, MP-elect from Pe-kong Township Constituency of Karenni State and Daniel Aung, MP-elect from Mongping Township Constituency of Shan State issued a statement regarding SLORC-sponsored National Convention, general situation and Narcotics Problem in Burma. Following text is their original translation from the Burmese. The Editor)

## Introduction

In Burma, the fascist military regime led by Ne Win seized the state power from the legally elected parliamentary democracy government in a coup d'état on 2nd March 1962. Since then the military dictatorship has been gradually suppressing the whole population of Burma. Moreover, as you all know, they are violating human rights very badly. Every Burmese citizen is scared by the SLORC guns. And still they are trying to monopolise the whole future politics by writing a constitution.

## National Convention

It is true that the National Convention sponsored by the SLORC is only a pretense which will guarantee the military dictators to rule the nation continuously, or even permanently. We two are the first ones, who had been among the selected representatives, to have a good chance to disclose the true nature of the National Convention to the outside world. Altogether 702 delegates were categorised into eight groups. They were:

(1) MP-elects group	99
(2) Political parties group	48
(3) Nationalities group	212
(4) Peasants group	93
(5) Workers group	44
(6) Government employees group	90
(7) Intelligentsia group	35
(8) Specially invited persons group	81

Except categories number (1) and (2), from (3) to (7) were hand-picked by the SLORC or intelligence units concerned. In the category (8), there were 45 delegates from groups without cease-fire agreements, plus 36 SLORC hand-picked ex-military officers and senior government employees. There are only ten political parties still legally existing. On the last day of parties' registration period (28th February 1989) there were exactly 255 parties. The ten still existing now are:

(1) National League for Democracy	(NLD)
(2) Shan National League for Democracy	(SNLD)
(3) National Unity Party	(NUP)
(4) Union Karen League	(UKL)
(5) Union Pa-O National Organisation	(UPNO)
(6) Shan State Kokant Democratic Party	(SKDP)
(7) Kokant Democracy and Unity Party	(KDUP)
(8) Mro-Khami Unity Organisation	(MKUO)
(9) Lahu National Development Party	(LNDP)
(10) Wa National Development Party	(WNDP)

As you see, holding the National Convention was a mere pretense just to show the world that it wrote the constitution. Actually, it seems that a constitution was already written by SLORC itself. Why we should say this is because the SLORC has prepared and laid down six political aims and objectives before the Convention started. In reality the aims and objectives must be laid down by the Convention delegates themselves according to their own choice. One of the six points (exactly the sixth) says: "The military will partake in the leading role of future national politics." According to this point, one so-called principle for electing a state president, adopted recently by the National Convention, clearly shows that the military will permanently hold on to at least a vice-presidential post. All delegates were allowed to freely discuss and even allowed to put forward suggestions. But the

SLORC just simply ignored suggestions or proposals.

Ten political parties had to choose ten chairmen, one from each party. These ten were divided into two groups – one for the political parties group and the other for the MP-elects group. And five chairmen were chosen from each SLORC hand-picked group of six categories. Moreover, there were five chairmen from the SLORC-appointed National Convention Work Committee for supervising the whole group of chairmen, known as the Presidium. Chairmen's duties were mainly to preside over meetings of inter-groups and mass meetings as well. But practically, the chairmen had to receive papers from representatives and edit them before putting them forward to the Work Committee. The Work Committee then re-edited and approved them.

Only then papers could be read at mass meetings. These were also a group of alternate chairmen to preside over each mass meeting, one from each of the eight groups plus one from the Work Committee. The SLORC Work Committee wrote a paper based on all papers read out at the mass meeting as a view of alternate chairmen. So the alternate chairmen had to read it out as their own paper. And finally, the Work Committee laid down and adopted principles for the constitution based on their so-called chairmen's view.

We, democratic representatives, protested against many points we disliked but the SLORC just ignored our protests.

During the 1990 general elections democratic parties and their candidates promised their voters to:

- (a) eliminate dictatorial system of administration,
- (b) establish a genuine democ-

racy, and

(c) constitute a Union of Burma which would guarantee liberty, equality and self-determination of all nationalities.

But it is obvious now that these goals will never be formulated through the SLORC National Convention. So we have decided to defect from the Convention and come over to the Liberated Area to join hands with democratic revolutionary forces. We hope and are sure if circumstances permit many delegates and MP-elects will boycott the Convention when it re-opens on 2nd September 1994, and team up with us. We are sure that even many delegates among the SLORC hand-picked representatives were dissatisfied with the SLORC's behaviour. But now no one dares to speak against it.

### General Situation

When we were in Rangoon, we were surprisingly sorry to hear some of our neighbouring countries saying that the SLORC is becoming more and more moderate, it was changing its policies and serving the peoples as a democratic government so that the people were feeling happy. Our neighbours are not to be blamed. Outwardly that is what it will seem like because the SLORC pretense is very clever. Nowadays so many big and tall buildings appear and roads and streets are extended in big cities. Everywhere we can see department stores and mini-markets decorated beautifully with foreign-made goods. But the prices on goods are so high that the man on the street cannot afford to buy. Many people who have no job to work because of high unemployment, can only go round and round, from place to place, from store to store gazing at goods which they cannot buy. We can hear many people everywhere complaining about the prices of goods. They put the blame on

their rulers, the SLORC government. But nobody dares to criticise the SLORC openly. The SLORC agents are everywhere. So, anyone who tends to say something has to look around first. Most ordinary citizens are scared by the SLORC guns. In the countryside we can see military brutality – human rights violations – everywhere.

### Narcotics Problem

It is true that some SLORC military officers were directly or indirectly involved in both producing and trafficking narcotics. We do not say SLORC members like Than Shwe, Khin Nyunt, Tin Oo, etc., are involved. But their deputies are. For instance, in the Shan State military personnel openly encouraged opium growth and enabled its marketing for their own benefit. We have heard many times that traffickers were helped by being provided with security measures to bring their goods out of Burma and in return their narcotics go out of Burma. The first way is from various producing areas by air, by trains and by cars to Rangoon and then by ships which are fully loaded with goods including firearms. The second way is from the producing areas through Mandalay by trains or by cars to the Indian border. And the third way is from the infamous Golden Triangle to the outside world.

We have many times read news reports on the seizing of such and such amount of drugs by military intelligence and policemen. Such cases are just tricks to cover up their big moves. Currently, we know that the Wa-controlled area is one of the heaviest opium producers of Southeast Asia. The official SLORC policy is to suppress opium growing. This, as Wa leaders see, is a "window dressing" policy only to impress the west. In recent years, the SLORC regime invited a number of foreigners to observe their

## Short Biography of U Daniel Aung

(3) Nowadays, SLORC is in the process of forming the so-called Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). I view this as an attempt by SLORC to trick or force the people to do what it wants, in some way like the previous Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP);

(a) People are forced to attend mass meetings or parades,

(b) After forcibly gathering the people in this manner, SLORC spread the false propaganda that its program or policies have been massively supported by the people,

(c) SLORC is spending large amounts of funds from the state treasury on the association to serve its own purpose.

After considering the facts given above, I reached the conclusion that far from serving any useful purpose in the interests of the people, a representative continuing to attend the SLORC National Convention would be soundly condemned by history. In consequence, I came over to

demonstrations of so-called opium-burning ceremonies in the Wa and Kokant areas. We have learnt that opium and opium-based products they destroyed in front of foreigners were partly bought but not all seized from traffickers as they said.

At present, to produce opium-based heroin is far easier than some year ago because necessary chemicals are easily available from China.

Now, Wa leaders have come to know that their people are in the bondage of opium. So they want to free their people from the opium bondage. Early in 1993 an organisation, known as the United Wa State Anti-narcotics and De-

the Liberated Areas to continue my struggle for freedom and democracy.

1942 (December 5) - born in Lashio, northern Shan State, to parents U Kya Heh and Daw Na G'a, the fourth child out of 12 brothers and sisters

1950 - started primary school education at Namkhio ABM School in Pangyan in the east of Lashio, where his parents had moved to as Christian missionaries soon after the Second World War ended

1953 to 1956 - continued schooling at Pagwai ABM School in Kengtung

1956 - received a chance through the help of a Karen missionary to attend Unique Karen High School in Rangoon

1961 - passed the matriculation examination and joined higher education classes at Rangoon University

1966 - graduated with a B.A. degree from Rangoon University  
1966 to 1989 (December 6) - worked as an editor at the News Agency Burma under the Minis-

try of Information  
1971 - married and has two sons  
1990 - joined the Lahu National Development Party (LNDP), was elected as Chairman of the party in February  
1990 (May 27) - elected as an MP from Mongping Township Constituency in eastern Shan State as an LNDP candidate  
1991 - elected as a patron of the LNDP at its first convention  
1991 - chosen as a permanent Presidium member of the Union Nationalities League for Democracy (UNLD), headquartered in Rangoon, representing Shan State, until the league was disbanded in early 1992  
1992 (June 23) - attended the SLORC-sponsored coordination meeting for the National Convention in Rangoon, representing the LNDP  
1993 (January 8) - attended the SLORC-sponsored National Convention from the start (January 8) until it adjourned (April 8), as a Presidium member of the National Convention, representing the LNDP

velopment Organisation (UWADO), was formed for eradication of opium growing in the Wa-controlled areas. Foreigners who might be interested in the field were also invited and some responded with visits. Therefore, the SLORC proclaimed this organisation illegal and its leader (Chairman U Sawlu) a rebel mastermind. In our view the SLORC should support and even give assistance to such a group if they really want to eradicate narcotics. But anyway the above-mentioned organisation is now trying to carry out its duties as much as possible. A head office for external relations has been opened at Manerplaw, headquarters of the Liberated Areas of Burma. Anyone who is interested in opium

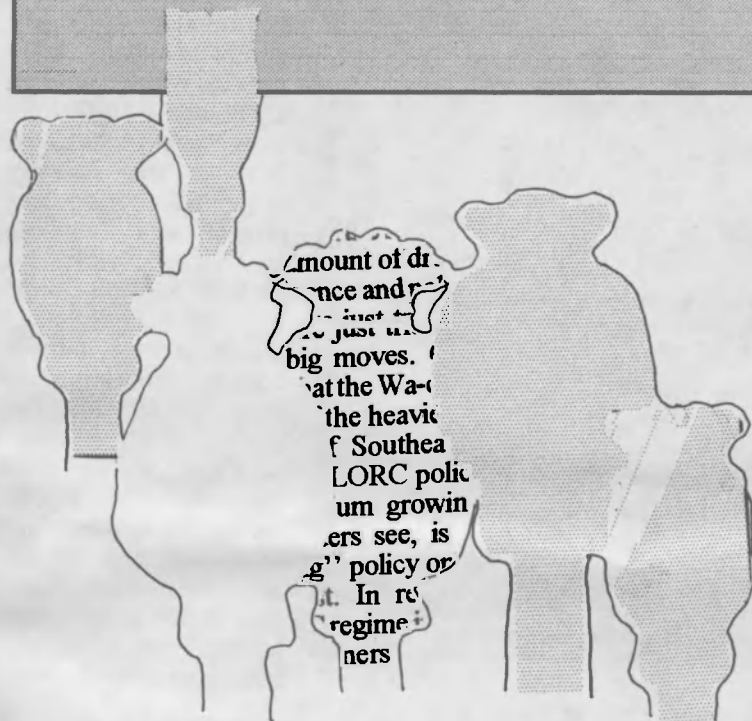
eradication work may make contacts with either its headquarters in Pangwai, Wa State, or its head office for external relations in Manerplaw. Wa leaders will warmly welcome any kind of assistance for opium eradication programme from abroad. Their top priorities are:

- (1) Eradication of opium in the Wa State.
- (2) Achievement of the Wa Autonomous Region.
- (3) Rehabilitation and development of Wa State.
- (4) Restoration of real democracy in Burma.

Finally, we want to urge the world whole-heartedly to please hear the Humble Murmur of forty-three million Burmese !



# BROKEN PROMISES



Pangsang, the former stronghold of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), and now the headquarters of the United Wa State Army (UWSA), is situated on the bank of the Ka River just opposite Meng Ar, a small town on the Sino-Burmese border. Due to the turbulent political situation in Burma, Pangsang has been off-limits to foreign visitors since World War II, and even today, travellers are not allowed to visit the area.

The settlement is more like a small town than a jungle guerrilla base. A dusty road leads from the border straight to the market. Chinese box-style brick houses surround the area, and there are three hotels to choose from. In fact, it could be any rural town in China except for the large presence of Wa soldiers carrying AK-47s, and the military training grounds. Around 15,000 people live there, mainly Wa and some Shan, Chinese, Jingpaw, Lisu, Lahu and Burmese.

The headquarters has a number of bars -- with karaoke featured high on the entertainment list -- gambling halls and a disco. There are three hospitals. The Wa operate a small hospital with a Wa

military doctor. The Chinese operate a clinic with Chinese doctors and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) operates a hospital, with staff provided recently, courtesy of Rangoon.

The Buddhists maintain a monastery, and the Baptists, a church run by a Kachin pastor.

Pangsang has three schools where the languages of instruction are Wa, Mandarin and a little Burmese. Some of the leaders' children are sent to study in China, a tactic that will surely help to maintain trade relations between the Wa and the Chinese.

Close to the market in the centre of town are many restaurants and shops stocked with Chinese goods. There are few Burmese goods. The Wa believe these goods are of inferior quality, and China's proximity makes Chinese merchandise easier to obtain. There are even video halls and photo studios where people can have their photo taken in front of a skyscraper scene resembling Bangkok. Electricity bought from China keeps the marketplace lively until the early hours of the morning.

The market is open every day, and every fifth day villagers from other areas around Pangsang make the long trip into town with goods to sell. Many start walking from their homes at around 2 a.m. to make sure they are in time for the market's early start. Aside from vegetables and meat, one of the most popular commodities available for barter is opium. Villagers bring opium from their fields to trade for Chinese yuan or silver Indian rupees, the local hard currencies. These people do not use Burmese kyat. Most have no intention of going into the despised Burmese areas, or of using a currency that after several demonetizations, is unreliable.

There are very few crops that will grow in the Wa hills. The only real cash crop is opium. In the early '70s

the communists tried to implement crop substitution by introducing wheat. Then a rat plague wiped out most of the wheat and the villagers went back to growing the more hardy opium poppy. In 1979 when China cut its aid to the CPB, the crop substitution projects ended, and opium trading became a way of survival for the army.

Local commanders became involved in their own drug scams, and corruption became rife. The CPB tried to curb the rampant trade in 1985; however, some local commanders had become warlords and were reluctant to follow party orders to cut down the trade and extricate themselves from it. It was local commanders who led a mutiny against the CPB in 1989, and who are now in charge of the UWSA. Even today, opium remains one of the only viable crops in the Wa hills.

It is mostly women in the market, under government licence, who sell the opium. About 20 of them sit at tables, shaded by umbrellas, with opium, yuan and rupees, scales and bullets for weights, on their tables. They drive a hard bargain.

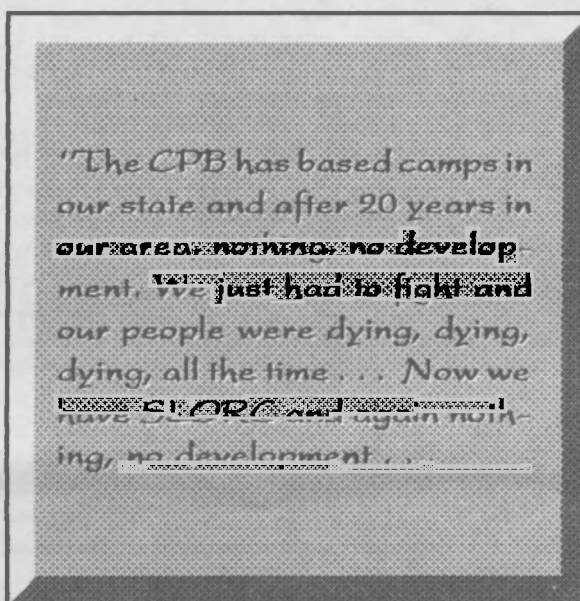
A Wa drug addict approaches the table with 10 yuan, looking hungrily at the opium. A woman weighs out one bullet's worth and the addict protests at the size. The vendor seems to have heard it all before, and puts the opium back in a lacquer box, ignoring the addict. The customer, eyes on the box of opium, resigns himself, agrees to the amount, and hands over the money.

Villagers also come with large bundles of opium wrapped in dried leaves to sell. The women cut the bundles open and check the colour, consistency and aroma — the best quality opium is rust coloured with a thick honey consistency and a fresh bitter smell. Then these women haggle like experts for a good price. One viss (1.6 kilogrammes) fetches between 750 and 850 yuan — around US\$100. Opium is expensive this year due to weather problems and a bad yield.

The Wa assert that following the CPB mutiny in 1989, their aim was to cut down the opium yield

annually, and to introduce crop replacement initiatives. Wa Army Chief Commander Pao Yo Chang says, "We do know that to grow opium and spread it is bad for [other] countries, and bad for our people, too. But we have to sell it for our own survival. If we cut out all the opium our people will not have food, won't be able to get any money, and will starve and die. We are trying to lessen it [the opium trade] annually, but without development of other industries, communication and agriculture, it is impossible to eradicate opium here."

The Wa, once known as the "wild headhunters", were among the first of the Burmese revolutionary groups to make a cease-fire deal with SLORC in 1989, months after the mutiny against the CPB. In return, the Wa were promised development projects with Burmese assistance. However, so far little has been forthcoming. Pangsang has received a doctor and five nurses, who arrived in early 1994, while the SLORC-built hospital stood idle for a few years. The hospital has little in the way of medicine and equipment, and the real need for medical assistance is out in the countryside. There are already two functioning hospitals



in Pangsang.

According to the Wa people, the Burmese also promised to send teachers — who have yet to arrive — when there are already three schools in the township. SLORC also sent one agricultural worker, a veterinarian, to Pangsang when again the need is in the rural districts. The Burmese have ignored Wa requests for technicians to survey their land for natural resources, or to look at other viable crops.

Wa sources claim SLORC had promised to arrange a meeting in September 1993, between Chao Nyi Lai, the UWSA General-Secretary, and representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in Rangoon, to co-ordinate strategies for narcotics control in the Wa State. The Wa leader rushed to Rangoon but SLORC did not allow the two parties to meet. Chao Nyi Lai was left waiting in the capital for one month, while the Burmese kept the UN delegations occupied. The

Wa leader left without meeting the UNDP or UNDCP representatives.

On March 7, after profuse apologies to the Wa leadership, SLORC escorted UNDP and the UNDCP officials along with US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and US embassy officials to Pangsang to witness the burning of heroin. The Wa people claim this was an attempt to improve SLORC's image internationally. It is widely suspected that the Burmese regime is heavily involved in Burma's notorious narcotics trade. If this is the case, SLORC's actions in destroying heroin will help it gain international credibility and, more importantly, foreign aid and funding for activities such as its so-called development projects in the Wa hills.

The Wa say the UNDP and UNDCP have come to assist with crop-replacement and opium eradication, but as Pao Yo Chang says: "The UN are going to help us . . . They said they would help us. Sometimes they come and go in their white pick-up trucks with SLORC, but we don't have anything yet . . . maybe a little, but it's not sufficient."

The Burmese regime has sent the Wa some rice and has promised to rebuild some roads. However, these gestures have been marred by a number of incidents. On Feb 2 this year, SLORC trucks carrying rice sacks arrived in Wa territory at a checkpoint on the road from Lashio to Pangwai. Wa soldiers found more than 100 G-3 and G-4 guns and other ammunition hidden under the rice. This checkpoint is dangerously close to the place where Chao Nyi Lai is based. At around the same time, the Burmese also sent 300 unarmed soldiers to build a road near the checkpoint, and the Wa suspect these soldiers were planning to use the guns to assassinate Wa leaders. The Wa subsequently drove the soldiers out of the Wa hills.

More guns were discovered a week later at another checkpoint. After the discovery of the guns, the Wa decided to send 300 of their own men to work with SLORC soldiers on the road. SLORC apparently refused to have its soldiers work with Wa soldiers and withdrew its men. The Wa have decided not to

go ahead with the Burmese road-building plans.

Unfortunately, the Wa made a gentlemen's agreement with SLORC, and so there is nothing on paper and no recourse to law for broken promises. Lt Gen Khin Nyunt flew in by helicopter to Pangsang on April 23 for a meeting, during which the Wa pressed for more development aid. However, according to those who met with him, Khin Nyunt was more interested in discussing boundary demarcations for the Wa autonomous region.

Pao Yao Chang sums up the situation succinctly:

"The CPB has based camps in our state and after 20 years in our area, nothing, no development. We just had to fight and our people were dying, dying, dying, all the time . . . Now we have SLORC and again nothing, no development . . . SLORC said it would try and help with opium eradication with the United Nations Development Programme, but so far with few results. If there is no development assistance or aid to accompany this from SLORC, we cannot guarantee we will stop the opium crops, as we won't be able to defend ourselves . . . Even the

*If SLORC cannot provide development for the Wa after five years, how can it hope to provide development for other ethnic groups about to make cease-fire deals?*

National Convention has done nothing for us."

Although the Wa are no longer losing thousands of men and women in the human-wave attacks of the CPB, and travel to cities like Lashio, Mandalay and Rangoon is now possible for the former guerrillas, the Wa are still not happy with the cease-fire arrangement they have with Rangoon. They say the broken promises of the Burmese junta should be a lesson for ethnic groups intending to negotiate peace agreements, to at least put deadlines on these commitments.

SLORC does not seem to have an infrastructure nor a plan for development in Burma. If SLORC cannot provide development for the Wa after five years, how can it hope to provide development for other ethnic groups about to make cease-fire deals?

*By Nin Hlaing Oo  
and  
Sam Kalayane*

# *It's time to begin a true dialogue in Burma.*



With its Finance Minister appealing to the World Bank to allow it to draw on its gold reserves because Burma is broke and cannot obtain financial or economic help from the nations of the world so long as it continues its inhumane and cruel violations of its people's human rights, SLORC must take steps to show that real change on these issues is in progress.

by Josef Silverstein

With the excitement caused by the meeting of Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and US Congressman W. Richardson having passed and the focus of the media having shifted elsewhere, it is time to consider more closely the words and ideas she expressed and realise that the dialogue she called for was nothing less than about dismantling the military dictatorship and replacing it with the democracy the people thought they were creating when they elected representatives in the 1990 election.

It may not have been SLORC's intention to give her a means by which, at last, to talk to the world; but that is what happened. With letters from the President of the United States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the new UN High Commissioner for Human Rights hand-carried to her by the congressman and the UNDP representative, who also was present at the meeting, it was clear that world leaders were standing with her and leaving no doubt if there is to be a peaceful solution to Burma's problems, she must be involved and her views must be taken seriously.

SLORC learned, if it did not already know, how formidable an opponent Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is and will continue to be.

Whether or not it was their intention, the fact that SLORC has held her prisoner without charges and trial has made her one with the people and through their common suffering and mistreatment at the hands of ruthless and arbitrary rulers, who have no regard for law and the will of the people, has made her the only leader who can speak for them. If anyone doubts this, let him stand in a free and fair election against her.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi made clear in the reported remarks that she stands politically where she stood in 1989, on the eve of her arrest, for a truly democratic Burma. By that time she



meant and still means civilian rule by the leaders who have been elected freely and fairly under laws made by a parliament in public sessions and a court system free of intimidation or coercion.

She made clear that while she still honours and respects the military her father created, she believes political rule belongs to the people, the army must be under government control and unable to disrupt the constitutional process once in place.

If the world sees her as the leader of Burma, she sees herself as one of the many leaders chosen in Burma. Before her house arrest, she was their spokesperson and a source of many of the ideas they collectively shared, but she firmly believed then and believes now in open and frank dialogue with them and the people.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called for a true dialogue with the men in power as the first step to change in Burma. It must take place in an environment of equality between discussants and talks must be free of coercion. And, if that dialogue is to produce positive results, there can be no expectations that she alone "gives" and they "take".

To create such an environment SLORC must curb itself and free the people as well as the leaders. There can be no meaningful dialogue between SLORC and Aung San Suu Kyi, if she cannot communicate freely with her fellow leaders in the NDF and the people to reflect their ideas as well as her own. That implies that she and her fellow leaders in the NLD must be free of jail or house arrest, living at home, moving about the community, talking and communicating with one another and constituents without threat of further arrest, imprisonment or torture.

Representative Democracy is the vehicle by

which she believes people govern themselves best. Under such a system, only those who are elected by the people have a right to represent them. Only they have the right to write a constitution and make the rules by which the people will be governed.

SLORC may have forgotten but it endorsed the above proposition in Declaration 1/90 (July 27, 1990) — its self-granted charter to rule by martial law until a new constitution is in place. Article 20 says, "...under present conditions, the representatives elected by the people are those who have the responsibility to draw up the constitution of the future democratic State."

The charade of a national convention going on in Rangoon does not fit that criterion. It is not a convention of the people's elected representatives; instead, it is a shadow play with the SLORC acting as *dalang* moving handpicked puppets before the flickering light and speaking the words they appear to say.

Any dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi and SLORC on the political future of Burma must begin by dismantling the national convention and the convening of the *Pyithu Hluttaw* (national assembly) as provided for in Declaration 1/90.

Some may argue that it is impossible for SLORC to retreat from its present course; after all it seeks to present itself to the outside world as a legitimate government. But SLORC retreated before. Didn't it hold a national election for all the world to see and then acted as though it had not occurred? Didn't it say that it held no political prisoners and then in April 1992 admitted their existence by releasing some from jail?

As it said in another part of Declaration 1/90, (Article 6), "The SLORC is not an organisation that observes any constitution; it is an

organisation that is governing the nation by Martial Law."

Thus, it sees itself as free to do as it chooses. It answers to no authority and has no responsibility to explain its behaviour. If SLORC wants to create an environment for dialogue it can shut down the national convention and return to its position of July 27, 1990.

SLORC knows that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi cannot be intimidated; she made the point clearly in the meeting when she told about the advice she once received from a 90-year-old monk, "to achieve happiness you must be willing to suffer," and "anyone willing to indulge in honest politics must be prepared to be reviled."

Having taken all the punishment SLORC imposed, she is unlikely to accept an invitation to dialogue unless the conditions under which it is held are acceptable to her.

SLORC has not admitted it, but it needs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. With its latest decision to print new money in ever larger denominations because the kyat is nearly worthless and inflation growing, with its Finance Minister appeal-

ing to the World Bank to allow it to draw on its gold reserves because Burma is broke and cannot obtain financial or economic help from the nations of the world so long as it continues its inhumane and cruel violations of its people's human rights, it must take steps to show that real change on these issues is in progress.

SLORC knows that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is pragmatic and realistic. She said, and SLORC should ponder it carefully, "that once a 'pre-dialogue' has begun and each side has acquired confidence in the reliability of the other side, then the talks could hone in on the real substance of the ways and means of moving forward politically."

It is time to begin the dialogue. Each day lost means that the nation has that much greater climb to extricate itself from the pit the military has dug since it seized power in 1962. If the military really loves the people, as its leaders profess they do, then let SLORC begin the long way out now by holding talks now with the people's leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The author is Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University and an acknowledged scholar on Burma affairs.



**Like our human rights record?  
You'll love our hotels!**

Lying in the pink floral Chinese bedspread in 106-degrees heat watching the ceiling bulb flicker while the walls rumble from the *karaoke* show upstairs is wonderfully conducive to reflecting upon the future of *Myanmar*, this "New Burma" of quasi-marketdom. The brand-new Hitachi refrigerator still sitting in its packing crate base, motor off, is somehow symbolic. There's a lovely view of a dozen different construction sites outside, only the windows are painted shut and the air conditioner isn't working either. Even the shower installed in an unventilated closet with exposed pipes is not the afterthought it seems. These lodgings that cry out for refurbishment are scarcely two months old, a new private venture of the Myanmar Mineral Prospecting Enterprise just unveiled this February in Mandalay.

# Let's Not Visit Myanmar Year 94

A floormaid comes to verify that the air-con circuit is indeed dead. By way of consolation, she switches on the Singapore-import Panasonic television and the hotel's own satellite dish pulls in the ghost of Star TV, an inaudible hiss beneath the *karaoke* din. She apologises, but cannot say whether the generator output for the entire building is being syphoned off to the rooftop stage spectacle. Apparently "up-country" entrepreneurs and military officers' kids with thousands of *kyats* to spend on coloured lights, Tiger Beer and mini-skirted Shan girls perch higher on the scale than Western tourists paying in Foreign Exchange Certificates. But then, looking down on the streets below, half the city of Mandalay is blacked out, each neighbourhood sharing a rotating minimum ration of electricity maybe three nights a week.

For this illumination on power surges by class in post-socialist Burma, the room charge is not quite laughable \$18 for foreigners, but an impossible 600 *kyats* for locals. Just under \$5 by black market rates, or an absurd \$100 if anyone actually took the official K6-to-\$1 rate seriously, in *kyats*, however, one overnight costs almost three weeks' wages for the typical public servant. Outrageous even with a second job, unless a son or daughter overseas is sending home real money. And this is the cheapest new hotel around.

Don't even ask who is supposed to stay at the New Popa Hotel. The question is why twenty other high-rise hotels just like it have suddenly sprung up in the old capital over the last four years? If "market forces" are engineering this building boom, the pastel Shenzhen-deco styling of these hotels leave little doubt that this is fast becoming a wholly "up-country" market. To Mandalay citizens, all the strange new signs in shiny gold characters say the same thing.



## **We Aim To Please – Our Friends The Chinese**

"Opium money," whisper local residents. Or more likely in the case of the New Poppa's Mineral Prospecting Enterprise, jade and rubies. For the Kokang, Wa, and Han profiteers pouring across the border from Yunnan Province 300 km away, Mandalay is prime commercial real estate. For Party cadres in Kunming, who want to upgrade the old World War II Burma Road over the rugged Shan Hills of Burma's northeast "Golden Triangle" with loans from the Asian Development Bank, the Irrawaddy River will be an oil pipeline to China's industrialising inner southwest. And of course the Burmese authorities find these developments personally rewarding. The rest of the Mandalay populace only figures in the deal as captive consumers of Double Happiness polyester jogging suits. Ah, the romance of free trade and infrastructure!

Although for now, four-wheel drive is still the thing to play on the unimproved road to Mandalay. The "new Chinese" are the ones riding around in Mitsubishi Pajeros, often toting Burmese National identity cards and handguns. Anyone can point them out. Just ask the old Fujian merchants who shipped in via Rangoon in the '20s. Despite differences of dialect and recent simplified characters, they communicate well enough on common ethnicity and kindred business practices to use and distrust each other. Clan rivalries have yet to explode, but over the last few years mysterious fires have claimed some nice property in Mandalay. This March a blaze swept through a minor residential section in the north of the city; last April's huge conflagration immediately south of the old Royal Palace has since been re-zoned with tax surcharged fire lanes and rebuilt in charming pink and green bunker condominiums.

Wander out at night toward the blacked-out west side of town. Stroll to the darkened *Zegyo* market, recently rebuilt into a massive high-rise block with funds that no one cares to trace, head up the only beckoning street past glowing mercantile mirages of a Valentino Boutique and Rainbow Ice Cream Parlour and Restaurant Hua Hin, step into a music store where three teenagers don't even blink an eye when a strange white face asks in Mandarin would they have the latest album by Beijing rockstar Cui Jian? No, but how about Sandy Lam from Hong Kong or Singapore's Dick Lee or Taiwanese Teresa Teng -- anything but Burmese tapes.

No one says the word "colonisation" here, least of all the Burmese military. Not when so much rheto-

ric was spent on "combatting imperialism" during the socialist decades. Not when "safeguarding national sovereignty" remains one of the Three National Causes printed in every book and magazine. If anyone does know how far the Burma Road extends up beyond Kunming, no one is telling. It may be only hearsay that Beijing received requests from Rangoon for \$1.4 billion worth of arms and technical assistance for naval bases on the Bay of Bengal, mere coincidence that not one week after Chinese Premier Li Peng announced a quadruple-digit licensing fee for satellite dishes last October, Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council's Sec-1 Khin Nyunt followed suit. Let's just say they're very good friends.

More immediately apparent is how China taught Burma to shake down tourists for hard currency. The Foreign Exchange Certificates issued in 1993 by the Central Bank of Myanmar are virtual duplicates of the funny money that the sightseer-friendly People's Republic insisted on for years. But while Beijing is just phasing out its dual tender, at Rangoon's Mngaladon Airport they don't even smile when the Foreign Independent Traveller now swaps a non-refundable US\$300 for denominations of "equivalent to US\$1," "equivalent to US\$5" and "equivalent to US\$10." It could almost be bad conceptual art, except when \$70 for an approved room in one of Rangoon's recent flush of private homes-turned-motels "equivalates" to dirty sheets and no hot water, or a \$15 breakfast to stale bread, cold fried egg and a limp pulpy banana in Pagan. Army hospitality you can afford -- or else.

## **Compliments Of The Ministry Of Tautology**

"Look on the bright side," my Burmese roommate says dryly, "at least the MI stays busy making money." A year ago, double occupancy with a Westerner would never have been allowed. But with the SLORC regime's inflating confidence in privatisation, their Military Intelligence no longer actively discourages "fraternising with the natives." Four years ago, an aside to a "foreign agent" would have led strait to prison, torture or worse. Now entertaining overseas clients and exchanging tips is legitimate business. Not such a radical shift for a country that boasts a combined Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare.

"The number of stars on a SLORC general's shoulders corresponds to the class of hotel he stays at in Singapore and Thailand," my companion quips. Power may be its own reward, but privilege continues to reflect Empire days. So by some reverse logic, having seen what deluxe "Western"



accommodations costs, these guardians of Burma's new "open door" have deemed it won't do for foreigners to come stay in Burma for anything less. Perfectly arbitrary enough.

"They're crazy. They've gotten so used to not seeing the world themselves, they think no one can see them." Did I realise that SLORC Minister of Hotels and Tourism, Maj-Gen Kyaw Ba decreed his VISIT MYANMAR '96 will draw 500,000 tourists — almost fourteen times the 35,000 this past year? Or what his signatory take was for the two Singaporean intercontinental hotels and one Macao-owned business plaza currently going up in Rangoon?

The millions quoted are no doubt mere rumour, but like anything else in Burma, who's to contradict? What reliable news sources are there? No printed alternatives exist to *The New Light of Myanmar* and *The Mirror*, state dailies inked thick with stain-repellent military jargon (and endlessly itemised laundry lists of general's names). In-depth accounts of SLORC Sec-1 Khin Nyunt and Commander-in-Chief Than Shwe's travels throughout the country to instruct and inspire (meanwhile soaring out what the other generals have got going on the side). Fascinating productivity reports and most ecstatic tidings of another oil strike! TV and Radio Myanmar schedules with programmes like "Slogans" and "Military Marches." There's even a "Democracy" column somewhere toward the back pages where readers can finally query why their applications for a telephone take two years to process or suggest perhaps a new bus line to the New Town where they've been (forcibly?) relocated. Gripping stuff.

Still more curious is the new face of "democratic" media that buzzes Rangoon at *Thingyan*, the mid-April New Year's water festival. Traditionally celebrated by sprinkling scented water on family and neighbours in ritual purification at peak hot season. *Thingyan* was a time of music, singing and dancing spiced with comic *thanjat* jingles satirising current trends and social conditions. Now under SLORC, whose "Law and Order" translates in Burmese as "suppress and silence," *Thingyan* is a sanctioned and heavily policed pressure-valve, the only time of the year to make noise. Predictably, however, *thanjat* chanting has been banned by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as "irreverent." Apparently the spirit of the occasion is better served by diverting so much water to hoses and cannons in central Rangoon that surrounding towns get no water for a week. Let the streets be jammed with Toyota flatbed trucks, even if petrol prices soar to K280 per gallon, and for those with K2000 to spare for

permits, let them construct *mandats*, streetside stages that this year sport Lucky Strike and Pepsi backdrops.

At the Heineken *mandat* out in front of the Pegasus Club, a ritzy new Singaporean venture hostess-bar on Kaba Aye Road, the scene is carnival. Dripping wet rich kids in identical MTV-shirt black jeans, logo T-shirts and bandannas have been partying since 8:00 in the morning to the latest sounds in house and rap — the new *thanjat*. Good authorised American fun. Yes, I've seen Myanmar future and it's a Rangoon homeboy in shades and max-waxed hair who yells out over a Technotronic DC — "Hey, man, wanna burger?" Maybe next life.

## Thank You For Your Inconvenience

All very well for Law and Orderly dissonance down in Rangoon. Here in Mandalay, *Thingyan* is a more subdued affair. Lt Gen Tun Gyi, the unofficial "King of Upper Burma," apparently has different ideas about how to keep the rabble occupied. Even now that he presides from Rangoon, where as SLORC Minister of Trade he inaugurated the Myanmar Trade Fair '94 auspiciously on April Fool's Day, his subordinate Gen Aung Than continues to exact the princely due of everything from tourism to city planning. This year's *Thingyan* counts as both.

As if not to be outdone by Rangoon's goings on, orders were apparently issued in late February to widen the main avenues on all four sides of the 1-1/2 mile square Royal Palace moat. Any buildings extending beyond the line — all of them, in fact — were summarily sliced down the middle, leaving corps of "volunteers" to labour around the clock to finish the roadwork by 13 April, the first day of festivities. Amidst tremendous clouds of dust and rubble, dazed residents stare from the far footpath of what were their houses. Stranded sewing machines sit painfully exposed on upper storeys where facades have been ripped away. The tiered roof of one eviscerated Buddhist temple along the westside teeters precariously. Even the most casual first-time visitor, as are the majority of tourists drawn to this last exotic Asian destination, can tell something's amiss here. No city in the world, not Hausmann's Paris or Ceausescu's Bucharest has attempted an urban "facelift" on this scale in only seven weeks.

According to a recent issue of Mandalay magazine, a private though carefully "scrutinised" Burmese-language publication, this is a beautification project. "Tourists and foreign investors who now come to our city in increasing numbers will appreciate

broader vistas of the Palace. The avenues along the south and east sides will now enjoy improved traffic circulation, while the north and west are changed beyond recognition." The deconstructed look. "Residents," the article continues, "have been provided with building materials for reparations, as well as new plots of land in nearby villages to compensate for their losses." A few sacks of cement to resell on the blackmarket for food and a sun-parched homestead with no utilities in the middle of nowhere. They're sticking it out on the pavement until they too get "beautified" away.

"Take pictures, tell somebody. We can't." In Mandalay this Happy Burmese New Year, the odd foreigner with a camera seems like some kind of small, sad miracle to these dispossessed families. Passing around a condensed milk tin of palm toddy, they can only shake their heads. The genuine fear of the late '80s is gone from their eyes. In its place, a deep ingrained cynicism has worn through. Who in Burma believes anymore?

No one believes the promises of economic betterment for all. No one believes the State Law and Order Restoration Council hand-picked by long-time dictator Ne Win succeeded the "Old Man" in anything like a coup. No one believes TV Myanmar's silence on Burmese army violence inside the country or the selected Eurosats feeds of

Bosnia and Somalia shown as evidence of an outside world falling to pieces. No one believes in "human rights" beyond vague notions of human welfare, which the Burmese never associated with the state anyway. Much as they may want to hope, no one believes Aung San Suu Kyi's time will come again, or that the West holds the key answer to the "Burma Question." The shadows are regrouping and no one believes the New China either. Might as well try to laugh a mad dog into a corner.

"They're crazy." *Them.* The words come up again, as they always do in Burma, whenever the talk turns to the impossible mess they've made of this city, this whole place. It's all crazy. After thirty years of numbing bureaucratic machinery and brutal military grind and intractably opaque policies, the regime chokes up everything like hot dust. They are the gasp of common exasperation by which all else is communicated. What else is there to not talk about, really?

"Tell somebody." Turn up the head, somebody. Dive back into the 106-degrees pink floral bedspread and wish the absurd patterns made even less sense. The snapshots still form a picture, still not arbitrary enough. How does anyone unvisit this country?

June 1994  
Spenser Ifsley

## REFUGEES AND PRESSURE FROM THAI GOVERNMENT

June 6, 1994

Although thousands of people in Burma continue to flee atrocities, the Thai Government does not allow any new refugees to cross the border anywhere, for any reason. In the north, where Shan villagers fled across the border to avoid being taken as slave porters for SLORC troops, Thai troops drove them back at gun point into the hands of SLORC. Thai authorities have ordered all the leaders of the refugee camps not to accept any new arrivals or face severe action. The Thai military has been ordered to force back anyone caught coming across the

border. A new "displaced persons" camp has had to be formed on the Burmese side of the border at Klay Muh Hta, 100 km. north of Mae Sot. There have been nearly 4,000 people fleeing slave labour, killings, torture and extortion in Hlaing Bwe area within the past two months and more are arriving daily. More camps will almost certainly have to be set up along the border soon, and their situation is extremely precarious - not only do they face the possibility of punitive offensives from SLORC troops, but they have trouble getting aid of any kind.

## SLORC SOLDIERS DEFECTED

On 7 June 1994, 11 SLORC soldiers from IB 341 shot their commander and 2 privates to death and defected to KNLA Brigade (3), bringing 1 BA 93 grenade launcher and 12 grenades, 1 BA 93 sub-machine gun (SLORC-model Israeli Uzi sub-machine gun) and 8 rounds, 12 propellant charges, 20- BA 100 (58mm) motor shells, 2 BA 64 automatic rifles, 10 BA 63 automatic rifles, 55 BA63/64 magazines with 12,000 rounds, and 13 hand grenades.

Fan Yew Teng was born in Malaysia in 1942. He is a former teacher, trade unionist, opposition MP and United Nations consultant. He received a Certificate in Education from the University of Birmingham, after attending a teacher-training course at the Malayan Teachers College at Brinsford Lodge, near Wolverhampton, England in 1961-62. He was a Parvin Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University for the 1976-77 academic year. In 1980 he received a Diploma in Education from the University of London, and the following year he obtained his MA from the University of Sussex.

In 1975 he was convicted for sedition and sentenced to a fine of M\$2,000 or six months' imprisonment. In 1987 he was convicted for publishing a banned article considered by the government to be prejudicial to the security of the country, and was sentenced to a M\$2,000 fine and a day in jail. For his first conviction he was disqualified from his parliamentary pension. On both convictions he was barred from standing for elections and holding office in any registered society for a period of five years.

He is a human rights activist, and now spends most of his time as a writer, critic and translator. He contributes frequently to the Hong Kong-based All Asia Review of Books and other publications. This poem was taken from his first collection of poetry entitled *The Song of the Merbok*, published by Egret Publications Enterprise, 56 Jalan Rahim Kajai, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, 60000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1990.

## A 20-CON SALUTE TO THE MUTUAL BACK-SCRATCHING ASSOCIATION

*(Or, reflections of the 20th anniversary of ASEAN)*

Say hello to our 20th anniversary bash,  
Applaud our lofty ideals and our high and mighty badge,  
Welcome to our mutual admiration club,  
Join us in raising our self-congratulatory cup;  
Now blow our trumpets and fly our flags!

We were never very much Vestal virgins<sup>1</sup> 20 years ago,  
We lost our innocence long before any birthday glow;  
For decades we were familiar with martial law, killings and coups,  
Massacres, arbitrary arrests, forced confessions and boos  
And the whole disgusting gamut<sup>2</sup> of facade shows.

But we have plenty of neo-colonial clout<sup>3</sup>,  
Japanese capitalists say we have cheap labour and resources to flout<sup>4</sup>;  
GDP, GNP, growth and military bases,  
We sell body, soul, blood and sweat in most cases  
Until we wallow<sup>5</sup> and luxuriate in an orgy of paroxysmal<sup>6</sup> gout<sup>7</sup>.

We know with boring diligence<sup>8</sup> all the tricks of the trade;  
In Malaysia Anglophilia gave us 'independence' on a golden plate,  
In tiny Singapore the Special Branch was and is our ilk<sup>9</sup>,  
In the Philippines and Indonesia we were on the CIA's slate<sup>10</sup>.

Welcome, welcome to our dream of ZOPFAN!<sup>11</sup>  
Enter this zone of peace of the autocrats and generals you can,  
Enjoy the freedom and generosity of our ASEAN gulags<sup>12</sup>,  
Sample our skills on specialised scratching of backs  
And savour the neutrality of client states built on sand.

Celebrate, celebrate our non-interference in each other's atrocities,  
Stay quiet on Indonesia's '65 massacres and Buru Island monstrosities  
And the documented genocide in East Timor;  
Pray, pray, if you do not want trouble, say no more,  
Consign those bloody facts to mere human propensities<sup>13</sup>.

Salute, salute our pretence in ignorance  
Over tortures and other forms of intolerance  
In the 'model parliamentary democracies' of Malaysia and Singapore,  
Of the molly-coddling<sup>14</sup> of Marcos, Imelda and more,  
And of the Thais' pacific<sup>15</sup> way of letting students' blood in torrents.

We pride not to interfere in each other's internal affairs,  
We said so loud and clear at our '77 Bali fair;  
It's not just a question of ersatz<sup>16</sup> sovereignty  
But more a case of not throwing stones at our glass-house integrity;  
To a tight lid on Pandora<sup>17</sup> boxes and horror chambers we'll swear.

Listen, listen, let's concentrate on co-operation



On how well our enormous wealth to partition;  
We may have our occasional hiccups and phoney storms  
But never should we let down our form;  
Privatisation is the magic formula to increase our portions.

Harry Lee and Herzog may amble,  
The former's praise of Johnny Enrile may be ample,  
But he is useful in reminding us of myriad<sup>18</sup> concocted conspiracies;  
So let's forgive him his idiocies  
Even though he is fond of racist and elitist rambles<sup>19</sup>.

We maintain strictly a good neighbours policy,  
Not caring how they beat up their children is our diplomacy;  
We are creatures of a peculiar genre,  
Our Repression Incorporated even permits dabbling in genes  
And huge doses of eunuchs<sup>20</sup> sycophancy<sup>21</sup>.

Yes, we are the whores of imitation,  
Tits over arse in tyrannous emasculation;  
Harry played host to murderous Thanom and Prapas  
But monitored Benigno's movements before he passed;  
On our intelligence sharing we need no elaboration.

Except for some duds in our family we are the best and the brightest;  
We like our conscience most when it is lightest.  
Pak Harto, what are the latest ASEAN percentages  
That we could use to best advantages  
At a pace that would be the fastest?

We are sworn against corruption,  
But then picking the people's pockets does give us an elation;  
In Malaysia we are now into Highway robberies.  
Didn't Mahathir have dinner with Lorraine, Kevin Tsu<sup>22</sup> and other snobberies?  
Oh yes, we have developed clichés and slogans into utter perfection.

Who says there is still poverty?  
Hasn't he seen our booming properties?  
Many of our Ministers, MPs, Senators and Assemblymen now count in millions,  
In Singapore recently one exemplary Minister even died with a bullion;  
All said, we build our piles with meticulous panache<sup>23</sup> and dignity.

Hear, hear, success breeds further success!  
In Brunei they do it by political incest;  
Their Sandhurst-trained sultan so loved freedom  
That he transferred millions to the Contras from his fiefdom<sup>24</sup>,  
Although it all ended up in a veritable<sup>25</sup> mess!

We are not in the business of perpetuating any dynasty,  
We are merely for meritocracy<sup>26</sup> and fantasy.  
If our syblings are natural successors,  
Why should we stop them from becoming possessors?  
We have no time for proper rules that are musty<sup>27</sup>.

You know we are for the open argument  
As a rule to all-around development;  
But some of our acts must as secrets forever remain,



For high politics is not the commoners' domain;  
Otherwise there'll be widespread discontentment.

Come, come, we assure you of impeccable security  
For our delightfully consanguineous<sup>28</sup> prosperity;  
We do it by imposing a culture of silence  
And an occasional display of necessary state violence  
To ensure there is peaceful conformity.

Look, look, this is your profit centre  
Which nothing we dare see can put asunder,  
You may join in the merry plunder and the radioactive rape!  
So, now, let's scatter the jubilation ticker-tape!  
For stability rules our waves beyond time yonder!

**Fan Yew Teng**

12 August 1987

Kuala Lumpur

- 1 Vestal virgin - virgin priestess of the Roman goddess of the hearth called Vesta.
- 2 gamut - the entire range or extent of something
- 3 clout - power, especially political power.
- 4 flout - to treat without respect.
- 5 wallow - to indulge in freely.
- 6 paroxysmal - sudden attack of a disease.
- 7 gout - a painful disease which makes joints swell.
- 8 diligence - hardworking; showing steady and careful effort.
- 9 ilk - kind, type, sort.
- 10 slate - a small board made of a grey-colored rock called slate, used especially formerly for writing on with chalk; an imaginary record of the past, especially of mistakes, faults, disagreements, etc.; a list of names, especially belonging to the same group or ideology.
- 11 ZOPFAN - acronym for 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality for Southeast Asia,' the declared aim of ASEAN.
- 12 gulag - Russian prisons with harsh conditions for political offenses.
- 13 propensities - a natural tendency towards a particular kind of behaviour, especially an undesirable behaviour.
- 14 mollycoddling - to take too much care of someone; show too much concern for the health and comfort of someone.
- 15 pacific - peaceful, calm.
- 16 ersatz - (derogatory) used instead of something else, either because of cost or because the real thing cannot be obtained; not real; artificial.
- 17 Pandora boxes - in Greek mythology, the first mortal woman who is given a box by the gods but told not to open it; finally her curiosity wins and she opens the box when voices from inside the box begs her to release the good things they hold, only to be in reality all the ills or problems of the world. Here it means to pretend they don't exist or ignore intentionally problems or abuses.
- 18 myriad - very many.
- 19 rambles - to talk or write aimlessly.
- 20 eunuch - a castrated man.
- 21 sycophancy - someone who tries to gain personal advantage by flattering or praising insincerely people of wealth or power.
- 22 Lorraine, Kevin Tsu - two of the dramatis personae in the M\$2.5 billion BMF scandal of Malaysia.
- 23 panache - dashing elegance or manner or style of doing something that causes admiration and seems to be without any difficulty.
- 24 fiefdom - anything under one's complete control, such as lands or a country.
- 25 veritable - true, actual.
- 26 meritocracy - a social system which gives the highest positions to those with the most ability.
- 27 musty - with an unpleasant smell as if old.
- 28 consanguineous - having the same ancestor.

It was the beginning of February 1994. I visited the ABSDF Training Center situated along the west bank of the Salween River, about 4 kilometers from Dawn Gwin, the headquarters of ABSDF. It was 6.00 a.m. when I arrived and saw about 30 students doing their routine morning physical exercises. I passed by that group and was led to the hill top where the office was situated. One of the members of the training administration board explained to me the training students were undergoing. It was the Democratic Leadership Training. He continued to explain that the exercises were meant to keep the students fit for the long daily schedule, which consisted of 6 hours of lectures and one hour of manual work in order to maintain the training center.

I was eager to learn what lectures were conducted in the training. At 7.00 a.m. the principal of the training center took me to the lecture hall. On the way, we sat on a bench under a tamarind tree and he started to explain the background and purpose of the training.

After five years of the struggle against the military regime, the Central Committee of ABSDF realized that it was necessary to

mobilize the grassroots people. So, it decided to start with the grassroots students of ABSDF itself.

One of the aims of ABSDF is to liberate the people from the oppression of military dictatorship. To reach that goal, it needs to educate the people towards greater political consciousness so that they will become a powerful force against the military. Although the different ethnic groups have been fighting against the central government for more than 40 years, their strategies have so far been inclined towards military activities. Year by year, the central government, with its greater military strength, were able to extend its control over territories formerly under the ethnic rule.

## *A Trip to ABSDF Training Center*



The 8.8.88 Uprising awoke in the people of Burma their right to concrete participation in politics but the military junta brutally suppressed and continues to suppress this political initiative. However, the opposition groups learned that tension between the people and the military is changing, as the spirit of the revolution to overthrow the military dictatorship once again arose. Unfortunately, the more than three decades of military rule and its shadowy military intelligence network have caused the people to become disorganized and unable to carry out

their necessary political roles. The opposition therefore planned to change the situation through educating the people.

To educate the people effectively, and to help the people form the picture of a new Burma without the military, ABSDF decided to disseminate all necessary background information and knowledge of the political life in Burma. Practically speaking, the grassroots will not be able to learn all these things on their own because of their individual backgrounds and experiences. So, a group of people needed to be trained to start effectively mobilizing people. The result was the Democratic Leadership Training.

To understand the key to solving the political problems by political means, the people in the revolution need to know the history of Burma's civil war. A subject on the "Brief History of the Civil War" was therefore included as part of the training. The economic situation of a country is very much related to its political changes. With this idea in mind, the trainees were also given a course on economics under the BSPP (Burma Socialist Program Party) and more recently, under SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council), mainly analyzing why a once prosperous Burma became a Least Developed Country.

The Burmese people, who had faced 30 years of isolation, failed to get a chance to understand how international politics has changed. Of course they had little chance to learn what are Human Rights and Democracy. So "Human Rights and Democracy" was included as part of the curriculum. To solve the political problems of Burma requires it to solve the problem of ethnic diversity, and this led to the learning of federalism and different federal systems all over the world.

After having acquired this knowledge, ABSDF

believes that it needs to equip students with the skill of mobilising people. So the Central Committee combined the above subjects into a curriculum which was used during the 3-month training.

When I reached the lecture hall, the trainees were receiving a lecture on federalism. Both the lecturer and trainees appeared very enthusiastically engaged in their learning task. I also overheard frequent discussions between the lecturer and individual trainees. Soon, it was time for a break. I walked towards a group of students who seemed to be still discussing about their lesson. I turned to the first student I was introduced to and asked him his opinion about the training. The trainee said, "Since we reached the Liberated Area, we felt that something is missing in the sense of communication between the grassroots people and the revolutionary groups. It seemed the grassroots people don't feel that they are a fundamental force in the process of democratic changes. It even seemed that the grassroots were not quite aware of why the revolutionary groups continue to struggle even after such a long time. We strongly wish to change this situation and I believe this Democratic Leadership Training will help us to achieve this aim."

I decided to find out what they were learning just before their break and posed the question to a young female student. She explained that they were learning about the differences and similarities between confederation and federation, including examples of countries with these two respective systems. In particular, they were learning about how decentralization and distribution of power between the central government and state governments differs under the two systems. Another trainee added to her explanation, "Some countries that call themselves 'federal unions' do not really practice the principle of federalism. Instead, all the power belongs to the central government, which may



not even be elected by the people. One such example is our country, Burma. This is the root of our civil war."

Soon the 10-minute break was over and the trainees filed orderly into the lecture hall to continue another lecture on "History of Civil War". I left with the lecturer and headed for the lecturers' room. I met the other lecturers and got a chance to talk to them. The lecturer on federalism helped me to form the picture of the training more clearly. He explained that they selected 33 trainees from different ABSDF camps. After the training, the trainees will be sent to the operational zones of ABSDF for mobilising people and to build concrete bases to support the struggle. ABSDF has three operational zones — South, North and Central.

I was curious to know about his experience in lecturing. He explained that it was his first

lecturing experience. In terms of compiling the curriculum, selecting teaching methodologies and making evaluations, he still felt inadequate. He also felt that the duration should be longer than three months to cover the aims of the training properly.

The lecturer on Human Rights entered the conversation. He said, "We lecturers face difficulties sharing our time between lecturing and the duties in the Central Committee. It is also difficult getting to the training center by boat because the Central Committee only has two boats and they are used for many other purposes. As a result, lecturers have to walk almost every day through the jungle, making our time even tighter."

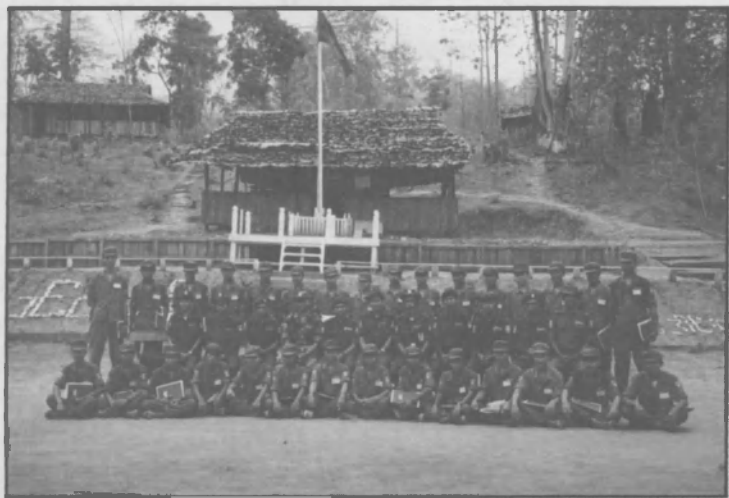
I continued my tour to the clinic accompanied by the two lecturers. On the way, I got to learn about the positive aspects of the training. Trainees

were eager to learn, organized in their time and disciplined although they had to fight frequently with malaria. I passed by a mini-library and the female dormitory. Soon we arrived at the clinic. A medic on duty was nursing a trainee who was suffering from malaria. I was very surprised to learn that even though the student was terribly sick, he was still longing to go back to the lecture hall. After a few minutes, I left the clinic so as not to disturb his rest.

I retraced my steps back to the library. The books I found there amazed me. It seemed impossible to have a collection of such good books on politics, economics, history, human rights and democracy and so forth in both English and Burmese in the middle of the jungle. It gave me the impression that the curriculum of training must be very well-prepared.

Before I departed, I went back to meet the principal to say my good-byes. He asked if I had enjoyed my trip, and added that they will be organising two more such trainings this year. He invited me to come back again when the new training starts. I was happy to see the progress and the strength of the students who are the future of Burma.

by Ma Thet





The military junta which took power in Burma in 1988 following nationwide demonstrations against General Ne Win's regime pledged to replace the collapsed socialist economy with a market-based one.

Since then, continued accusations of human rights violations have isolated the country economically and resulted in the suspension of international aid.

Relations between Burma and the British government have cooled, as well.

It was somewhat of a surprise, then, when the British ambassador designated the last week in March as "British Week," inviting UK firms to visit Burma and conducting seminars in Rangoon.

Does "British Week" signal the adoption of an ASEAN-style "constructive engagement" towards Burma? If so, is this the right time for British firms to be looking to this country?

Despite certain reforms, the Burmese economy is still rife with corruption and improper dealings. While trading has been liberalized, allowing a few local firms to prosper in importing and exporting, the number of exportable goods in this country is small.

Unconfirmed letters of credit, dodgy methods of payment, and the fact that bank inquiries are not allowed may make business transactions unappealing to many foreign traders, not to men-

tion a lack of infrastructure that can delay transactions, make shipping schedules hard to organize and cause a host of other problems.

These problems notwithstanding, trade links do exist between the two countries, mostly involving private UK firms and Burmese government departments.

Bennie and Partners, for example, has been supplying the Yangon City Development Committee with water pipes. The YCDC has been making payments in rice.

In order to expediate such a transaction the UK firm needs a third party buyer to take the rice. Burmese authorities require that the buyer purchase the rice at Burmese government rates, which are usually \$50 per ton higher than the world market price. The UK firm generally has no choice but to offer to refund the \$50 per ton to its buyer, which usually results in inflated prices on the original product, not just to cover the refund costs but the payoff of Burmese officials which is often necessary as well.

On top of all this, firms such as the London-based Export Credit Guarantee Department have reported outstanding payments due to failure on the part of Burmese government de-

partments to deliver the goods promised as payment.

Identifying a potential market is a main objective of any investor and many foreign companies have sent economic feelers into Burma despite failures by the military junta to respect the results of the 1990 elections.

It is vitally important therefore that the Burmese Foreign Investment Law (FIL) reflects the rights and obligations of potential investors. Understanding the legal environment is one of the major concerns of foreign investors in any country.

As it stands, the Burmese FIL seems to be in comparison with the Vietnamese FIL, especially in the areas of technology transfer and the right to profit repatriation in foreign currency. This is in part why major foreign investments have flowed into Vietnam in recent years.

According to official statistics, total authorized foreign investment in Burma during 1992/93 was \$850 million, but paid-up capital was only \$625 million. These figures resulted in a lack of credibility on the part of the military junta's claims that it had made significant economic strides, and the withdrawal of many joint ventures in 1992.

The highly artificial official exchange rate of about 6 kyats per US dollar, (the free market rate is about 120 to 1) further complicates negotiations between investors and authorities and makes proper appraisal of the values of imported machineries and capital goods difficult.

Local currency problems are particularly pressing in light of the fact that foreign investors do not yet have the right to repatriation in foreign currency. Profits, generated locally in kyats, can only be converted into foreign currency by purchasing local goods and exporting them to a third country. The only way to keep these problems from discouraging foreign investment is to adopt an FIL that embodies a legal framework concerning re-investment so that enterprises with foreign-invested capitals are entitled to re-invest profits earned in Burmese currency in other investment projects.

In the case of joint venture garment factories set up between the government and foreign companies, the government could provide land, labor, construction and electricity while machinery, raw materials and know-how were invested by the companies. Only 10 per cent of the textile products are sold locally; the other 90 per cent goes on the US market, as Burma is eli-

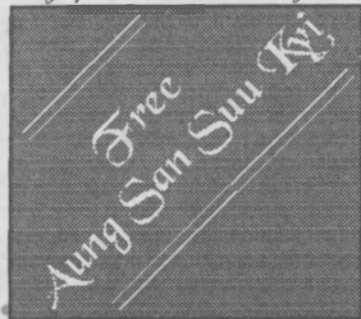
gible for duty-free export.

Hopes of a US market for textiles produced in Burma became much dimmer, however, when the US Administration decided not to renew a bilateral textile agreement in 1990 over a perceived lack of worker's rights there.

Furthermore, many of the foreign companies that established joint ventures in the early stages of economic reform are reluctant to bring in their portion of paid up capital as there has been no indication of improvement on the side of government' in promoting business development.

Some ASEAN members such as Thailand are gaining profits from Burma in terms of trading but the size of direct foreign investment in Burma by ASEAN is inappreciable.

*Uin Kyaw Hlaing was formerly the Commercial Officer of the British Embassy in Rangoon. Prior to that he was a businessman dealing with local and foreign firms since the beginning of the market economy.*





# ON-GOING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

*Much criticised and pressured by the international community due to its grave human rights record since it came to power by 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, people inside the country are still ruled at gun point. Forced labour, forced relocation, arbitrary detention, arbitrary execution, harassment, attacks on civilian targets, rape and torture of the people of Burma are still widespread under SLORC's reign. All of this 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 reveal SLORC's brutal and atrocious deeds which have been committed against the people living in Mon and Karen States and Pegu, Tenasserim, Sagaing and Magway Divisions. (The Editor)*

## ARBITRARY EXECUTION

On 10 May 1994, Kyaw Soe, 32, and Saw Ka Nu, 35, from Kaw Kya village in Tha Ton district were arrested and shot to death by pvt Maung Lay from IB 76 of SLORC.

On 20 June 1994, SLORC combined troops from IB 32 led by Maj Tun Yee, under the command of 33 LID, and IB 36 led by column commander Thein Zaw penetrated into Pa-Paun area, razed Phoe Tha Nge's house to the ground and shot Than Aung, Phoe Htaw and Saw Win to death.

## TORTURE

On 8 June 1994, SLORC troops, led by Lt Aung Tun from Coy 4 of IB 34, entered Naung Ke Take village in Tha Ton district and beat Htee Pha Leh and his son without any reason, and killed one of their cows to be used as army rations.

## ROBBERY LOOTING

On 18 June 1994, SLORC troops from IB 3, under the command of Southern Command, demanded 45,000 Kyats in cash from the villagers in Zayat Gyi and Moe Koung parish in Htantabin township, Pegu Division.

In Kyauk Kyi area, during this year's harvest, (December 1993-January 1994) four SLORC Battalions — 26, 35, 73 and 351 — ordered every peasant to give them three sacks of rice per acre (probably 100-kg. sacks). The troops said they would sell the rice elsewhere and pay the farmers a reasonable price. Although it has been four months already, the farmers are still waiting for the money. In Mu Per Hta vil-

lage, the troops burned the villagers' entire crop and stole all the animals in the village during the harvest time.

### HARASSMENT TAXATION

SLORC regional commanders summoned all the headmen of the villages in Thaton District to attend a meeting, and told them that "In the future, if one of our soldiers is killed, we will execute 5 of your villagers."

SLORC's demands for "compensation" from villagers are ever increasing. Every time they lose a truck because of a landmine, they demand that the villagers in each of 10-12 surrounding villages give 50,000 Kyats while the nearest village is forced to pay 100,000 Kyats for compensation. A written order from IB 42 states, "If a truck is exploded in the future, the troops will demand 1 million Kyats from the villagers, and it must be paid within 7 days. If the villagers cannot afford to pay, all surrounding villages will be burned down, and villagers will be forced to accompany SLORC troops in the army trucks."

In addition to the existing burdens of heavy "porter fees" and looting, villagers are now forcibly levied "taxes" on every farm or field and on many of their working tools such as saws. In many villages, whenever the villagers produce jaggery, SLORC troops confiscate the product or "buy" it at an absurdly low price from the villagers. Then the troops force the villagers at gun point to "buy" the product back at a higher price. SLORC soldiers also force the villagers to buy army rations at inflated prices, and loot them back from the villagers.

Southwestern Command has issued orders to villagers in the area that they are not allowed to cut, carry, saw, buy, sell or own wood or timber any more. At the same time, the same office sent new orders to the same villages demanding 75 tons of hardwood from each village. The villagers were also forced to cut and transport the hardwoods to a specified site, located on the river bank.

Moreover, SLORC troops have also demanded 5 tons of cut and bundled firewood from every village. Any village which fails to meet such orders would receive a package in which dreaded bullet, charcoal, and chilli are included. Then the troops transport the firewood to cities and sell it at a profit.

### ARBITRARY ARREST AND RANSOM

On 26 June 1994, SLORC military column 2 of IB 263, led by Maj Htay Aung, under the command of Tactical Operations Command 1 of Western Command, arrested traders from Tu Mae Daw and Leh Kalar De villages in Taungoo district, took away 200,000 Kyats in cash and press-ganged the victims into portage.

### SEXUAL ABUSES

SLORC troops from IB 351 in Kyaun Zut village of Kyauk Kyi township, Pegu Division, keep a pot of drinking water for travelers in front of their checkpoint, and they hide some bullets at the base of it. In February 1994, when a pretty girl stopped there, SLORC soldiers went out, "found" the bullets, and detained and raped her for 3 days.

### ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN TARGETS

On 28 January 1994, SLORC planes passed over the headquarters area of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and sprayed a yellow powder which spread on the whole area. The NMSP said this has happened before. But the effects are not clear as no proper analysis has ever been done, and no one knows what SLORC is spraying. In the past 8 months, a few days after SLORC planes flew over Karen territory and dropped mysterious "radio-sonde", a disease like cholera suddenly broke out in 2 different areas causing the deaths of hundreds of people. One of the affected areas is Thaton District where SLORC's notorious 99 LID unsuccessfully used terror 2 years ago to herd the entire population into camps or drive them out of the area. The disease is now helping that to happen.

### FORCED RECRUITMENT

April 29, 1994  
SLORC has given orders to all villages in Tavoy District, Tenasserim Division, that each village must send 2 recruits for SLORC troops. Villages which cannot provide the required recruits are forced to hire itinerant workers or others to go in their place at a price of 15,000 Kyat each. Any family which sends their son to be a SLORC soldier must be provided with 30 tins of rice and 300 Kyat per year by other people in the village. These families will also be free from all forms of slave labour and forced portage required by SLORC troops of others.

### FORCED RELOCATION

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At Mat La Daw village in Kyauk Kyi township of Pegu Division, there was a market for trading goods between the plains and hill regions, where the traders came to sell rice and take back betel nut and other products. In the latter half of January 1994, SLORC troops forced all 34 shops in this market to close down and drove the shopkeepers to the plains.

### FORCED LABOUR SLAVERY

(1) SLAVERY has become the main source of despair and destitution for Karen, Karenni, Mon, Tavoyan, Burman and others. Local people say, "How can we survive any more in our village? We have to do so much work for them, we don't even have time to work to support our own families any more." SLORC's systematic slavery can be found at army camps, on roads, railways and other development projects, on SLORC's farms, and so on. People in Karenni State reported that SLORC battalions confiscated all the fertile farmland in their area, then forced the displaced farmers and others to work for them. All the profits go to the local military. SLORC propaganda then claimed to the international community that all the resulting infrastructure and land are "community income generation" or "regional development projects".

(2) Since November 1993, SLORC has forced over 20,000 local people in Ye, Ye Phyu, Tavoy and Laung Lon Townships to contribute corvee labour for the construction of the more than 110-mile long Ye-Tavoy rail line, scheduled to be finished in 1996. Most labourers were from Ye and Ye Phyu townships.

SLORC troops in February 1994 forced local people living in Thanbyuzayat township, 58 miles north of Ye township. Every 5 households were assigned to send one labourer, and those who were spared from contributing labour were forced to pay money. In April 1994, SLORC also forced the local people in Mudon and Moulmein townships to contribute labour.

SLORC set up 4 concentration camps in Paukpinkwin, Nat Gyi Sin, Three Pagoda Pass and Kleinaung. As of February 1994, in Paukpinkwin concentration camp, there were 7000 labourers from Ye Chaung Taung, Han Gan, Kalaw, Taungbon, Ayu Taung, An Din, Thingangyun, AhBaw, 9 Miles, Hnikayin, Kaw Dot, Lamaing, Maokanin and Taung Pyin villages. In Nat Gyi Zin concentration camp, there were 6500 labourers from 16 villages in Ye Phyu township. In Three Pagoda Pass camp, there were 6800 labourers from Laung Lon and Tavoy township, and there were 6500 labourers in Kleinaung camp. SLORC LIBs 343, 402, 403, 407, 410 are in control of the project.

When there was a shortage of rice at the concentration camps because of so many people there, family members of SLORC troops sold rice to the labourers at the price of 50 Kyat for 8 tins (tin = condensed milk tin). Nobody except relatives of the military was allowed to sell anything. Moreover, the labourers were forced to carry the sacks of rice which they were required to buy at the higher price. SLORC troops also forced the people in Khaw Zar, Kapyar, Yin Dein, Yin Yeh villages to give household breeding animals — cattle, chickens, ducks and pigs — which were later resold at exorbitant

prices to the labourers.

Labourers on the railway were between the ages of 13 and 68 years, and each household was forced to send one family member, regardless of gender, or pay 3000 Kyats in case of their absence. Labourers had to clear 300 feet in width for the track and build 15 foot wide, 16 foot high earth embankments. Uncountable farms and gardens along the railway were destroyed without compensation. Working hours were from early in the morning to 6:00 p.m and the labourers were forced to work without any break. Because of lack of rest, malnutrition and back-breaking hard work, sickness was common among the labourers. When they became sick, they had to buy medicines from military-run drug stores with their own money. Although the labourers were forced to build clinics in the concentration camps, they were not allowed treatment there. There was almost no medicine in these clinics anyway, and when the labourers gave money to the soldiers to buy medicines for them, most of the time the labourers got neither medicines nor refunds. Severely sick labourers were allowed to go back home only when they could find somebody else to take their place. In Paukpinkwin camp alone, one labourer died every day.

When the labourers could no longer work, they had to rent a bulldozer from SLORC at a price ranging upwards from 15,000 Kyats per hour. The military and engineers got a good income from these rental charges. This was even worse than the infamous World War II Death Railway construction, in that even children and women were not spared from contributing labour. Some pregnant women had to deliver their babies at the camp. Some



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women were gang-raped and some were used as comfort women. There were brothels opened by SLORC.

As of April this year, 30 people from Konedaw Damin Seik village, 160 people from Paya Zardi village, 400 people from Onpinkwin village, 117 people from Mee Dai village, and 313 people from Nabuleh village have escaped from these labour camps to Kyauk Daw Damin Seik.

### RETOLD STORY BY ONE LABOURER

Name	U Tun Nyunt
Gender	Male
Age	55
Marital status	Married, with 5 children,
Address	Taung Tone Lone village, Tavoy township, Tenasserim division.

*(Following story is told by U Tun Nyunt who was forced to work as a labourer for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy rail line and is now detained at Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) in Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand. This story was written in Burmese by the victim himself in a letter forwarded to us. The Editor)*

"I am now detained at IDC in Kanchanaburi Province and when I was in Burma, I earned my living as a tin miner. Last summer (March-May 1994), when SLORC troops forced local people to contribute labour for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy rail line, each household was forced to send one labourer. It was compulsory; therefore, I had to go.

Along with about 100 villagers

from Myit Te, Myitta, Wah Gone, Nyaung Tone and Har Myin Gyi, I had to contribute labour, arranging by myself for the expenses - travelling charges, medicines and construction tools including baskets, pickaxes, mattocks, chopping hoes, grab hoes, and axes. All SLORC gave us was just ORDERS!

We were forced to work at gun point near Nat Kyi Zin and Paukpinkwin villages, bordering Mon State and Tenasserim Division. The construction site was about 100 miles from my village. We had to sell our possessions or borrow money from somebody else in order to cover our own expenses because most of the labourers are as poor as I am.

Under the guise of collecting food for the labourers, SLORC troops forced the fishermen in that area to give fish paste, dried fish and money. But nothing was given to us. Because of malnutrition and back-breaking hard work, we suffered from malaria attacks which resulted in the deaths of over 30 labourers. LIBs 406, 407, 408, 409 and 410 are in control of that part of the rail line. Despite their tight security, two of my friends and I fled to the Thai-Burmese border because we could no longer bear these hardships.

I earned my living as a day-labourer at a Thai corn farm in Kanchanaburi after I fled into Thailand at Nat Ei Taung. In May 1994, I managed the escape of my wife and children who I had left in Burma. At the border, Thai Border Patrol police arrested us and sent us to IDC in Kanchanaburi where over 50 other Burmese were detained. Since then, my family and I have not been able to meet each other. We are detained in separate cells.

I am in one cell, my wife and three children are in another cell, while my 16-year old eldest daughter is in another. We were sent to the court for trial and charged with illegal entry and sentenced to pay fines. When we were not able to pay, we were sentenced to imprisonment. It is known that, when the prison term is finished, we will be handed over to the SLORC troops in Three Pagodas Pass. We have no money to pay and nowhere to escape to. There has been a rumour that my eldest daughter was released when somebody paid for her fines. I am very much concerned about her. I am writing this letter to appeal to you to immediately save both my family and other refugees from IDC in Thailand as well as to save the people of Burma who are suffering under the rule of the military regime."

### ABUSES IN HLAING BWE AREA

March 16, 1994

*(The following account, SLORC's severe mistreatment on villagers in the Hlaing Bwe Township in Karen State, was given by an ethnic Burman trader who traveled the area. His name has been changed and his full address not given in order to protect him from possible retaliation by SLORC.)*

Name:	Maung Win
Gender:	Male
Age:	42
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with 2 children
Occupation:	Trader
Address:	Hlaing Bwe Township

"I'm Burmese myself, but I want

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to tell you about all the forms of abuses -- forced labour, slave labour, torture, collecting porters, and murder -- conducted by SLORC against all the villagers around Hlaing Bwe. They did such horrible things. Since November and December 1993, as SLORC troops have built strategic roads up to the frontline area, 20-40 villagers from each village -- Tha Mo, Pah Gyi, Pah Ka, Leh Ghay, Leh Gyi, Nya Mayaw, Pa Nah Gyi, and Eh Thay Gone -- in Pain Kyone Township, located east of Hlaing Bwe, were forced at gun point to contribute labour and bring their own food.

SLORC troops forced the villagers to clear the bushes on both sides of the road with the intention that if there are landmines, the villagers would step on them and clear them for the troops with their bodies. SLORC troops also used the villagers as human minesweepers by forcing them to drive their carts along the road ahead of the army trucks. This suffering is very common for all villagers who live near the road.

At the moment, SLORC is building a road from Hlaing Bwe to 928 Strategic Command at Ler Bu. I've heard many stories of villagers being beaten while working on the road. All village headmen are required to provide labourers. I think they could use their own soldiers to do the work, but they just oppress the villagers instead. The villagers have no time to work for their families as they have to spend most of the time working for SLORC. They have nothing to eat because they have already surrendered all their livestock to SLORC soldiers.

Other forms of slave labour include cleaning the military compound, collecting firewood, cutting bamboo and fetching water

for the soldiers. Because it is such hard work, no villager wants to go. When the villagers don't go, the soldiers send an order to the village headman saying "You're responsible for the village, so collect the villagers and bring them to work or else we will come and arrest all of you and take severe action." Once when the villagers in Tha Mo village refused to work, the soldiers sent a package to the village headman with a message that said "You figure out what this means." When the headman opened it, he saw one red chilli, one bullet, and one piece of charcoal. At first no one understood it. Then people guessed: the chilli is very hot, so it means we will get into trouble; the bullet means they will shoot us to death; and the charcoal means they will burn down our village. After being threatened, the villagers were very afraid to refuse again.

SLORC troops even use aged persons to serve as porters, and if they can no longer carry the loads or get sick, the soldiers kill them or leave them behind. We see their dead bodies in the jungle. In November 1993, they killed a friend of mine named U Soe Thein from Ka Ma Ko village. They beat him to death with a very big stick. No one knows why they killed him. SLORC troops order the headman of every village located near the military camps to prohibit villagers from using lights in the village, and going out before 6 a.m. The order says anyone who breaks the rule will be shot on sight.

On one night in March 1993, at about 9:00 p.m., many villagers in Ter Pa Ket village gathered in one house for a funeral service. SLORC troops from IB 28 came into the village and went straight to that house. When the villagers

saw the troops, they were very afraid. One of them, Bo Dot, tried to run away, and they shot him dead. There was absolutely no reason. Another villager, named Saw Heh, tried to run. He was captured and shot. When they found he was still alive, they beat him to death with a very big pestle. The three children of Saw Heh become orphans. It's a horrible crime.

The soldiers are trying to drive Pain Kyone village out, but the village has not moved yet. The people there say they won't leave their village and their farms. SLORC soldiers without any warning bulldozed Gaw Ler, a Karen village, where there were about 10 houses. The villagers had to leave all their belongings and run away. SLORC troops forced villagers from Ta Maw, Pa Gyi, Wah Kyi, Pah Ka, Da Maw Kah Kee, Nat Kyi, Tha Yet Taw and Leh Ker Day villages to build a camp for IBs 338 and 39 there. Most of the people there are Pwo Karen.

Of the three battalions under the Ler Bu-based tactical command 928 (IBs 28, 39 and 338) IB 28 is the worst. But others are also bad. Whenever they enter the villages, they steal as much of the villagers' livestock as they can, and loot the villagers' properties. Sometimes, people in the cities were raided while they were in cinema halls and press-ganged into portage.

"Porter fees" that the villagers have to pay are indescribable. They have to pay several times a month. One old woman complained that "We are very poor already. Paying porter fees many times make us worse off. Sometimes we have no money. I had to sell my daughter's new sarong to get money for porter fees." The

rate depends on the situation - sometimes they have to pay twice a month, sometimes 3 times. Each time they have to pay 200-400 Kyats. The minimum is 200. Most people are now living from hand to mouth. Some are traders, like me. We have to cross many high mountains to earn our living. No one wants to earn their living in this way which is really very hard. As they have no alternative, they have to work for their survival.

In some villages, when the villagers collect money among themselves in order to build a school for their children, SLORC troops do not allow them to do so. They come to the village and threaten the villagers. The villagers, therefore, have to teach their children secretly. They say that any villagers who want their children to go to school must send them to the SLORC-run school and no other. The school is a 7-hour walk away, and parents cannot afford to pay boarding fees in town for their children, because of looting and porter fees demanded by SLORC troops. Parents also need the daily help of their children for the family's survival. SLORC summoned all the headmen of villages and demanded donations for education by saying that people living throughout the country, even those in Rangoon, have to contribute this donation. Each village was forced to pay 1,000 Kyats."

LID = Light Infantry Division  
LIB = Light Infantry  
Battalion  
IB = Infantry Battalion  
Coy = Company

Source: KNU  
NMSP  
ABSDF

# GENERAL SITUATION INSIDE BURMA

## 1. SLORC-sponsored USDA AND Suppression on NLD

Due to various forms of pressure from SLORC, National League for Democracy (NLD) Chairman U Aung Shwe issued an announcement to NLD members saying that the NLD can neither recruit new members nor take part in religious associations. But the Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA), composed of members of SLORC and former Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) members, the military and civil servants, is the only organisation that can organise mass rallies without any rival or encumbrance, and which, as announced by SLORC, hundreds of thousands of people have attended.

In this connection, the opposition parties are not satisfied with SLORC any more. Since the SLORC-sponsored USDA can organise freely while the NLD, on the other side of the coin, is denied access to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression, it is very clear that SLORC's position is inequitable.

At the beginning of 1994, SLORC invented a motto -- "There is no country in the world, except Burma, where understanding flourishes. In every part of Burma, understanding can be found" -- as a propaganda exer-

cise. By abusing the word "understanding", SLORC will continue to deceive the people with the idea that the people who gain the fruits of understanding must bear more hardships.

The military intelligence and its informers are everywhere, and since SLORC has been conducting arbitrary arrest of any person who voices objections to the reign of the military, people in general dare not mention anything which is related to the military. No one dares to speak openly about politics. People have to be very careful about their environment when they are talking. At night, when they hear any noise or sound in the dark, they stop talking or change the subject immediately. They are in fear when they see something in the darkness. SLORC troops, in order to create fear as a weapon, make the people face atrocities, oppression and suppression, punishment and confiscation of property. In Burma there is no one who is not afraid of the SLORC military regime after witnessing the regime's brutal, ruthless, deceitful, unjust activities.

## 2. SLORC machinery

Although SLORC announced that it has already handed over administrative power to the hands of civilians, whenever township level LORC meetings are held



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representatives of SLORC troops or battalions in the area have to be informed. Moreover, it has been reported that Secretaries of township level LORC will be soon replaced by 2-star (Lieutenant) rank officials from the military. It is evident that the military is gradually taking over administrative posts.

### 3. EDUCATION UNDER THE MILITARY BOOT-HEEL

There has been much concrete evidence that numerous students in Burma, without learning their lessons properly, pass their examinations with distinction. Able to buy their high grades, the students come to believe that money can do anything. Because of the changes in the educational system, they neither do their homework very well nor are interested in learning. Arts and Science subjects, which were separate in the Ninth standard in the past 6 years, are now combined and in the examinations those who get 12 marks in each combined subject (Biology, Physics and Chemistry or History, Geography and Economics) can pass the exam. In Tenth standard, the curriculum for English has now become Selected Myanmar Texts.

In February 1994, in Kalay township in Sagaing Division, female students from primary to high school level were trained to for a SLORC-sponsored "Miss Model" contest under the name of SAUNGEKARI (Winter Princess). As the final examinations for the students in Burma were drawing very near, parents and teachers were very much concerned about their children failing the examinations. Some parents clearly showed their disapproval.

In Depeyin township in Sagaing Division, a SLORC-authorized festival was held from 19-24 February in order to divert the attention of students who were going to enter examinations on 21 February or 7 March. Moreover, with the intention of degrading the morale of the students, various kinds of gambling were opened with licenses from the township LORC and official police protection.

SLORC, which is directly responsible for degrading the morale of these students by celebrating these festivals, exploited the situation and directed propaganda exercises at the international community claiming that Burma is becoming very peaceful and stable as the people join hand in hand with SLORC.

### 4. LIFE of Peasants

Under the dictatorial military regime, peasants are subjected to various forms of atrocity and oppression. In Kalay township, peasants living near the Myit Thar River were forced to send 1000 bullock carts for summer paddy planting of SLORC's rice fields. Local people were very upset when they found that their labour was absolutely spoiled by the summer weather, and SLORC's plan for summer rice became fruitless.

In Min Kin township, every peasant was required to sell 10 baskets of paddy per acre to SLORC at a price of 70-75 Kyats while the going price at the time was 250 Kyats per basket. Since the weather was not good enough, peasants got only a little crop production during the last harvest. As they had to return the money which they had borrowed from the rich in order to facilitate their household living, most of

the peasants were not able to sell the amount of paddy required by SLORC. With no paddy and no money to buy it from other sources, many of these peasants were arrested for not obeying SLORC's directives.

In Kalay township, peasants were forced to contribute corvée labour, bringing their own food and covering their own expenses. In Min Kin township, at least 10 people from every village were ordered to relocate and contribute labour for a minimum of one month. Although SLORC promised that it would provide travelling charges, peasants had to arrange their way home by themselves. Many people returned from Tamu to Kalay without eating a meal.

In Depeyin township, SLORC troops issued an order requiring each peasant to sell 12 baskets of paddy per acre at a price of 70 Kyats per basket. In 1993, peasants were had to give three baskets of paddy per acre to local SLORC authorities without any pay. In order to meet the demands for 700,000 baskets as claimed in the order, SLORC troops prohibited peasants by force from selling rice and arrested those who tried to do so. SLORC troops confiscated 50 acres of rice farms along Monywa--Ye U motorway to be used as a military base. In February 1993, all the people in Depeyin, aged 16-60, regardless of gender, were forced to contribute labour for Payan Patar stream. Each labourer was assigned to complete digging of 5 ten-foot square earth pitches. U Kyaw Win from Le Ti village was beaten by SLORC soldiers when he dug the wrong pitch.

In 1993, peasants in Ye U township were required to give one

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basket of paddy per acre to local SLORC authorities without any pay. In addition to that they were forced to sell 6 baskets per acre to SLORC at the price of 35 Kyats per basket. In 1994, peasants were forced to sell 12 baskets per acre at the price of 70 Kyats per basket.

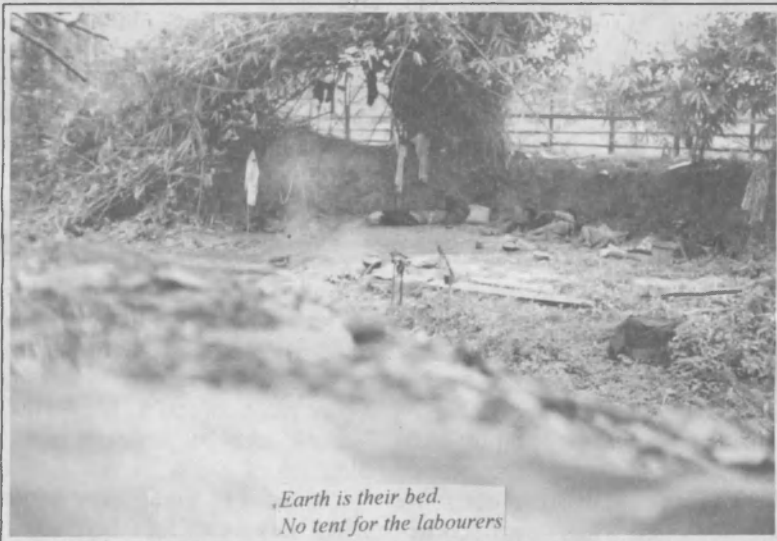
In Yinmar Pin township, peasants were forced to sell 4-12 baskets of paddy per acre at the price of 70 Kyats per basket. They were also forced to sell 3 baskets of wheat per acre at the price of 250 Kyats per basket. Peasants who failed to sign product sales contracts with SLORC were detained for one month without due process of law.

### 5. POKUKKU--GAGAW--KALAY RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION AND FORCED LABOUR

Peasants in these areas shed many tears as many acres of their farms were confiscated without any compensation by SLORC for the construction of the Pokukku--Gagaw--Kalay rail line. Local people in Kalay were upset with the rail line construction because each household was forced to send one family member, exclud-



*Newly-set up Sayar San village or Concentration Camp*



*Earth is their bed.  
No tent for the labourers*



*Illegal logging in Sagaing Division*

ing the blind and paralysed, to contribute one week's labour. Each household which failed to send someone had to pay a fine of 1500 Kyats to local SLORC authorities or hire somebody else. The cost of hiring ranged from 800 to 1500 Kyats. The worst event was when local people living in Khan Myo quarter and quarter A to E of Thar Han were forced to go to Zin Kalee area to contribute labour. Every quarter or area was divided and required to send a group of 25-30 people. They had to bring 24 tins of rice, 100-150 Kyats of money in cash,

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baskets, knives, pickaxes, mat-ticks, chopping hoes, grab goes, axes. The poor had to collect these tools by selling their pans, clothing and other property. Each group was assigned to complete an earth embankment 30 ft wide (the base), 11-15 ft high, 15 ft wide (the top surface) and 100 ft long.

Many people died when logs fell on them, and some were drowned in the Myit Thar River as they did not know how to swim. SLORC troops did not provide any medicine or medical treatment for those who got sick. The assignment could be completed within one week only if the labourers worked very hard. When the local people finished their work, USDA and SLORC forced high school students to put up ready-made signboards, took documentary video footage and used it as propaganda directed at the international community and people throughout Burma. Then, one SLORC official ordered the people to continue their work for 4-5 days. The people were very upset with the activities of SLORC. When one of the labourers said, "We are poor and odd job employees. We therefore want you to reconsider on further work. It is not possible for us to work any longer." SLORC responded, "You are not the only person to work; all the people here must work."

Labourers estimate that in January 1994, about 1500 local people living in 5 quarters and over 150 villages in Kalay township were forced to work. Local people in Kalay were very disappointed with the SLORC regime because they cannot celebrate their religious ceremonies, and instead are facing high prices of basic commodities, frequent demands for labour and various

kinds of assessments.

### 6. DRUG TRAFFICKING

Under the SLORC military regime, SLORC military intelligence personnel are involved in drug trafficking. In Kalay township, Thar Han quarter and Pyi Taw Thar, Pyin Khon Gyi and Let Pan Chaung villages are centres for buying and selling drugs. In Pyi Taw Thar village, which is about 6 miles from Kalay, one bottle of Pensyldine costs 400-600 Kyats, while the price in Kalay ranges from 900 to 1000 Kyats. Effectiveness of SLORC's drug eradication programme is questionable. Those who are involved in trafficking of illicit drugs become very rich overnight. Many youth have died of shock while attempting to inject heroin into their veins. Instead of using law enforcement agencies in order to eradicate drugs, SLORC's involvement in drug trafficking downgrades the morale of the young people. In order to pass drugs through the check points within their areas,

SLORC military officers themselves help by carrying the drugs in their vehicles.

Lao Hsit Han, in collaboration with high ranking SLORC officials, is involved in drug trafficking from Tamu to Moeh to India and Kalay to Tar Pan to Tee Tain to Mizoram in India. Vehicles carrying his drugs get free tickets to cross any checkpoints without any interruption.

SLORC military officials in Northwestern Command gave 90,000 Kyats to businessmen for a logging concession. These businessmen were responsible for selling sleepers and timbers to SLORC according to the numbers fixed by the military officers. If they cannot provide them, they have to return double the amount of money given to them. This is one way SLORC military officials become very rich while the people are suffering hardships resulting from high inflation rates and skyrocketing prices of basic commodities.

## BURMESE WORKER BEATEN TO DEATH

On 30 May 1994, Thai police in Thom Papum, Kanchanaburi province, stopped a bus coming from Kanchanaburi at Kyan Daw, near Thom Papum, arrested all Tavoyans and detained them at the station there. Police seized all the valuable things from the detainees, who were on their way back to Burma after working in

Thailand. On 1 June 1994, at 8:00 a.m, one of the detainees, namely Soe Win, 24, gave a 100-Baht note to one policeman in the station and asked him to buy cheroots for him. While the victim was smoking, another policeman came in and beat Soe Win to death with a baton.



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