

# DAWN

7/8 95



I would like to take this opportunity to warn everybody not to expect too much too quickly.  
I think there is still long way ahead.

## Slorc under pressure, Aung San Suu Kyi released

To the surprise of supporters both inside and outside Burma, the Slorc, on July 10, 1995, ended the house arrest of Burmese Democracy Leader Daw Aung Sang Suu Kyi. She emerged as she had entered her house arrest nearly six years before; unafraid, articulate, ready for genuine dialogue, utterly sincere, and "free from fear." On her first press conference, on July 11, she was insightful and witty, the exchange with the press was frank and open, and questions were answered honestly and with a vivid sense of Aung San Suu Kyi's dignity and humour. Seeing her and hearing her words was like breathing fresh air again after years in a prison cell.

Her release has been reported as "unconditional" and she is to have all the freedoms accorded any other Burmese citizen. But here is the problem with the word unconditional. She, and the people, who love her so much, will only be free when civilians rule is restored, when the rights of individuals and ethnic nationalities are respected, and when free and fair elections determine the political make up of a representative government.

The Slorc held Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for almost 6 years, without trial, and the violation of their own law, which limits detention without trial to five years. Their situation was extraordinarily difficult as this long detention has only increased her stature internationally, and deepened the love of the Burmese people for their leader. They can not have released her without the fear of popular uprising, and yet they do they did so. She is the single most important symbol and reminder of the illegitimacy of their regime. The people of Burma are ready to back her in the struggle for change. Now is the time for the people of the country, who have suffered so much already, to stand and be counted.

There are several possibilities ranging from a feeling of confidence of the Slorc that their control was now complete, to a need for more foreign aid that would not come to Burma while she was jailed, the threat of US sanctions (the Board on which was scheduled in Washington on the day of her release), and pressure from the Japanese, again over promised loans and aid. But the one vital reason for releasing her remains in question ! Bringing about a negotiated political situation to the crisis that is Burma under the Slorc. Aung San Suu Kyi, in her statement to the press, reported that Gen Than Shwe had asked her to help in the restoration of peace and stability in the country. She has agreed to this request. Are they ready to begin discussion of truly listening to ethnics demands and of giving power back to the people of Burma?

The Slorc is attempting to prove that national reconciliation is being achieved, and that all the ethnic groups of Burma now recognize their

authority. The experience of ethnic groups who have signed with the Slorc shows us clearly that such agreements have not brought development. The Slorc still finds itself unable to consolidate its power among the ethnic minorities. The recent freeing of the cease fire agreement with the Karenni (KNPP) reveals the very wide gulf between the many existing cease fires and true national reconciliation. Aung San Suu Kyi stated this clearly in her first press conference about the cease fires, she said, what was needed was real resolution, not cease fire.

The Slorc is now under considerable pressure; Aung San Suu Kyi's international standing continues to rise, and now that she is freed, will surely continue to do so; the ethnic group cease fires they have driven through are beginning to come apart, and the world is increasingly aware of the horrors of the generals. They know that their hold on power now requires total military control of the Burmese people. The question now is, will the business and international communities accept this state of affairs, or will they look to the long term?

Peaceful and prosperous Burma will benefit all parties in the region. But this can be only happened after a genuine political situation is reached, and for this the ethnic peoples, the elected leaders, and Aung San Suu Kyi must be allowed to play in active role.

## **Contents**

Interview with DawAung San Suu Kyi	4
Democracy is the goal	18
The release of Aung San Suu Kyi and the so-called "National" Convention	20
New Democratic Government of Burma	21
Why the DKBA is not a Buddhist Army	26
7th Anniversary of 8-8-88	27
What will be the concrete steps of Slorc to change into democratization process in Burma?	29
KNPP and Slorc's cease-fire	32
U Nga Reh reveals his experience in prison	33

### **News in brief**

UNOCAL is SLORC 22, Slorc launches military offensive in KNU 4th Brigade 22, Mr Richardson denounces increased U.S. cooperation with Slorc 23, Melbourne group raises awareness of refugees 23, Burma campaign in Canada 23, Burmese Benefit Dinner in Japan 23, More Porters Escape 28, AFL-CIO assure support sanctions 31

*The DAWN News Bulletin is published 6 times a year by the All Burma Students' Democratic Front DAWN GWIN. It is funded by the Asian- American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI) through the Free Trade Union (Burma) [FTUB].*



## **INTERVIEW WITH DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI**

---

*The following is un-edited interview with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi done by various news agencies during the first week of her released, including her comments in last week of July. All these interview were sent through ASIA TV satellite and monitored in Bangkok, Thailand by the ABSDF. For more information, please contact the ABSDF office in Bangkok, tel. 01-920-8286, e-mail - caroline@ksc.net.th.*

### **Regarding Slorc's so-called National Convention**

**Q:** What is the way forward regarding Constitution Convention ...

**A:** Well, the way forward is supposed to find out ?? and what is they stand for process of democracy and what they want to achieve. You would remember that I am not a dictator. I am a member of the group of people working for democracy so I have to consult the other people opinion before I decide.

**Q:** ??National Convention???

**A:** It is supposed to be national convention and national convention means all forces in the nations are involved. And we hope we would like to see as a true national convention

**Q:** You are not consider the National Convention as' part as you had said last year in February.

**A:** Has anything changed at the National Convention since then? **Q:** I have no idea. I am asking your opinion.

**A:** Unless you can tell me what changes they have taken place at the National Convention, it will be difficult for me to tell you that I have changed my mind,. I haven't had a chance to find out what's going on at the National Convention.

**Q:** Have you changed your mind?

**A:** I haven't had a chance to find out whether I should change my mind.

**Q:** Unofficially, some military people are saying that there are 104 guide-lines with the consti-

**tution. Are these guide-lines will going to be problem with your negotiation?**

**A:** Well! If there are 104 of them, I can hardly answer them...Actually, I won't really make any decision about what my next step is going to be until I have consultant with my colleagues very very fully. I am not in a hurry to rush into anything. I am not in hurry to prove anything. What ever I do, I wanted to be solid valid to the country.

**Q:** So, under the new constitution law at the National Convention last year will approve the army take part in the politics in the future and in the government also. How do you think about this?

**A:** It is not the sort of thing that we were working for when we started for movement for democracy. And this is something that most of my colleagues will agree about. This is not our aim when we started working movement for, democracy. But, actually, everything is open to negotiation and all problem can be solved through good will and compromise. As long as all of us wish only for the good of the nation, we should have no trouble. But all of us have to wait to do something that will benefit the nation as whole.

**Q:** What do you think about the National Convention?

**A:** I have to study further. That was in February when I met the United States Congressman Bill Richardson. That I don't like the way that convention is going. And I still have reservation about it. And I keep in open mind. I think it should be there are a lot of changes necessity.

**Q:** But what changes, would you be willing to participate in it?

**A:** If there is changes acceptable to the people, I don't see why I should resist the will of the people.

**Q:** What is acceptable to the people? What is the will of the people? **A:** Guarantee democracy!

**Q:** Last year I think you said National Convention was something like rubber stamp for the Slorc. So, what do you think of the national convention now?

**A:** I don't think that the national convention has changed substantially since I make this remark. So, until there are substantially changes I probably have no reason for making any substantially changes either in my opinion toward the national convention. But I think everything is open to compromise and negotiation. Between those who are reasonable and sensible.

**Q:** The present Government is writing a new constitution. How do you think about their draft constitution?

**A:** They draft constitution as a stamp. It is not my idea of the democratic constitution. **Q:** So, what your opinion on how to write democratic constitution?

**A:** I think any constitution for any country should be written by consultating the will of as wide coverage of the people as possible. Of course, every single person in the nation cannot sit down at the conference table and say this is the way they want our constitution to be. But as wider range of the opinion as possible should be taken into consideration.

### **Regarding ASEAN Constructive Engagement Policy**

**"The question is for whom has it been constructive? Was it constructive for the Burmese people in general? Was it constructive for a limited business community? Or was it constructive for Slorc?**



"I'm not certain about that. I do not know just how effective the persuasive part of the ASEAN nations are when it comes to internal change."

"consider the fact that you can not have economic progress without the peace and stability. And to achieve the peace and stability there must be a climate of trust within the nation. There must be a government the people can trust if that country is to be peaceful and stable. In the long run you can't maintain peace and stability without trust and confidence."

"If we care about our regional peace and stability we should care about the kind of governments that are in place in those countries."

"I do notice that while promoting the policy of constructive engagement some ASEAN nations are careful to say that they do not interfere in the internal affairs of another country. If they do not interfere in the internal affairs of another country then how far can they help us achieve change?"

"The world is getting smaller all the time. We have to accept that no country is really free from external influence. We are all subject to some degree of international opinions and external influence."

---

**Q: I want to know you immediate and future plan.**

A: The immediate plans are to conduct this press conference.....

**Q: Have you had contact to your husband?**

A: No! Not at all. I don't have telephone in the house.

**Q: Did you expect your released this time?**

A: Well! To tell the truth, I thought I will be released around first week of August. I thought that the authorities will wait for people to give up hope that I haven't been released and then suddenly released me. But obviously I was wrong and I very grateful to say that they have deserved the law strictly in this time.

**Q: Will the Slorc return power to the people?**

A: That's what we always said, you see.

**Q: Why they didn't do that?**

A: This is their intention and we intent to help them every way we can to return to power to the people. This is not just my intention and this is an intention of everybody who want democracy and it is obviously the intention of Slorc if you read it everyday in the Slorc newspaper.

**Q: Are you going to organize the public rally?**

A: I said as I told you I have to take these step by step.

**Q: ???**

A: Well, you know election took place in 1990. This is now 1995 and hope is most important about the election was that they clearly reflected the will of the people. That I think important and keep our mind of. We may have moved on 6 years, but we must continue to respect the will of the people. But in a way, which is acceptable to all those who can truly work this democracy and peace in the nation.



**Q: Could you work with Gen Khin Nyunt and Gen Than Shwe?**

A: Oh! I can work with any body, Why not!

**Q: What would you think about the two men?**

A: Well, I thought that Gen Than Shwe was very nature, very honest and straight forward. And Gen Khin Nyunt I found rather charming. But that was Burmese way of charming.

**Q: No plan of public rally your speech apart from what you might do here?**

A: No! no plan. I hold the plan like that until I find wider consideration

**Q: ??? .going to the temple?**

A: Even that one has to work very carefully. It could interpret as a rally. That's also something we have to discuss and work hard. We are also very discipline organization in spite the fact that we been linking a long for sometime due to circumstances beyond our control and etc. And we don't just go out and do what we want to do. We consult each other. We find out the consensus of opinion. Opinion of the people because what we don't want is to get out of touch. We always have to keep in touch with public, the public opinion, the public hope and the public fear. We don't want to give them false hope. With on the other hand, of course we don't want to, I keep saying that I don't want them to be frighten, I want them to get rid of their fear. But I don't want to do that by given them false hope. They should be able to look at the situation straight, accept that the difficulty to what they are. And still find the courage to do what is suppose to do.

**Q: Did you hear anything from your long-supporters talk about fear and what the significance are?**

A: I haven't been aware of hear last two days. But I never talked about fear. That's why they didn't say anything about this. Perhaps, I should ask them "are you afraid."

**Q: Slorc said you've been released unconditionally but you've been released into a country where to be politically active is banned. I means it is very very difficult. I means, what is your view on that?**

A: Well, if you remember my statement in January, I said that I intended to taking active part in the movement for democracy. So, I think I should be active politically. Because I look upon myself as a politician. That's not a dirty work you know. Some people think that there are something wrong with politicians. Of course, something wrong with some politicians. It's the way they do.

**Q: Do you have any idea exactly how many of your friends have been detained still since 1988 and 1989?**

A: It is shifting population, you know - in jail. I cannot say how many, because some time they are more, some time they are less. For the moment, I think of the better know ones - better know ones - they are about 40. As I understand 40, Four - zero better know ones. But I have asked them list. I would not having quote this number for 40 any significant. Because this is just a rough guess by one or two people to whom my put it enquire..

**Q: Are they all NLD?**

A: Not necessarily. I don't think of the NLD has just one organization, apart to the rest of the movement for democracy. So when they talk to me about people who are in prison, they are



talking about those who are not in the NLD. For example, Min Ko Naing. Min Ko Naing, we think of as part of our democratic forces. We don't leave him out just because he is not a member of the NLD.

**Q: What your program for today and the another two, three days?**

A: Well, for today, I have a number of meetings line up. And tomorrow too, solid. And the day after too, solid. Well, Thursday and Friday is solidly book up with me to meet with various people

**Q: Do you want to meet public today?**

A: Oh! a lot of people outside?

A: Yes, Yes

A: Then, I think I will go out and talk to them. I am sorry I have been meeting people continuously since this morning. So I really don't know what's going on outside.

**Q: Have you had any thought of why you think they released you now?**

A: I think they though probably this is a right time.

**Q: Why is that?**

A: Because, well! I should had been released three years ago, you know. Then, they changed the law. I should had been released last year. But the interpretation of the law was again changed. And to hold me further, they will have had to change the law again perhaps.

**Q: But it is not just the legal thing, isn't it?**

A. Is not just the legal thing. But I think it probably for other reasons as well. It is legally it is the right time.

**Q: What reason do you think they have? Why they willing to have you out there?**

A: Well, I have been listening to journalists speculation about me on various radio programs. Something between it is because the authorities feel confidence enough. Something to think that it is because of the international pressure. Well, I must work heard, which I think is the right answer. I haven't been out to about yet. But in my opinion, international pressure is always count. And this world, you really cannot discount international opinion where ever you are.

**Q: How did you feel yesterday, you have been approached from the people in front of your house?**

A: I always feels very at home with the people. When I meet them, they were just like meeting friends and family. They were very informal. And what make me very happy is the fact that they are not afraid of me. They treat me very much as a friend, as family, as elder sister, their younger or aunt or their daughter. And I find it very pleasant at one point I said to-them, that "I think you should go away because you are blocking the car," and one of them said "Oh! there is another way that they can go home." I like that. I like the fact that they are not afraid to talk to me. And they are not afraid to disagree with me. But when I am reasoning to them, then, they accepted it. This I feels very proud of my people when I meet them like that. So, they are so nice, and they don't look at to me like somebody great and big but just as somebody who belongs to them. And that's the very nice feeling. And I like them talking back to me.



**Q: Have you had a chance to; talk with many of your supporters? What is your sense of the state of democracy movement in the country?**

A: I think is very very strong. I think the assist is strong and dedicated as it was before, although of course, the situation now is not the same as it was in 1989.

**Q: Are you having trouble with faction within the NLD and so forth and to see different view on politics.**

A: I have nothing aware of it at all. So far. I must find out. But so far, I am not aware of any different view.

**Q: Haven't Slorc sent any new people to report what happen within last 24 hours.**

A: Last 24 hours! Well! you know my old liaison officer was hear at the press meeting. I was very happy to welcome.

**Q: Why do you think why they are keeping your release as a secret.**

A: I really don't like to speculate about other people motive. I might be quite away out. So, it is better not to. I don't mind. It doesn't worry me.

**Q: That you convince the military has the same view when talking to the opposition forces.**

A: You means, do they have good will to us as nation as whole..

A: Yes.(reporter)

A: Well! I'm very much hopeful. They always said they do.

**Q: Are you getting any information on what happening on border areas in the Karen areas.**

A: No! I haven't read the paper today. Is there anything on paper about that?

A: I don't think so.

A: I am sorry. I don't know anything about it. I though there was something in the paper. I am not sure.

**Q: Is there a danger on over expectation from part of your supporters?**

A: Yes, of course, there is always a danger. I would like to take this opportunity to warn everybody not to expect too much too quickly. I think there is still long way ahead. The way is not going to be all that smooth. But as long as we have a will. As long as we go about intelligently, I think we will get there.

**Q: In how many years, do you think?**

A: That's sort of speculation I don't believe it. People are always saying how many years and how many years. Doesn't it matter. ? As long as we get there.

**Q: Did you received any message from organizations which are based in border areas?**

A: No! How would they send the messages, through you? You better give me.

**Q: What is important thing toward democracy, to progress democracy? What is the most important point?**



**A:** The most important point I think for us is to keep our eyes very very statute on our goal. And must not let ourselves get aggressive by un-important factors but to be reality. We may get very statutes. We got to keep our eye firmly on our goal and we got to be brave but not hardy. I have to say this very very difficult to some of our young supporters that courage and hardness are not the same. Courage means that if you have to suffer for something worth suffering for, then you must suffer. But there is no point of unnecessary suffering. The whole reasons why we want democracy is because we want to lessing the suffering of the people. We don't want to increase it.

**Q:** You know how much suffering the people at the border areas?

**A:** Have you been there?

**A:** Yes, I have been there?(reporter)

**A:** Are they suffering a lot?

**Q:** Do you think you have a chance to go and visit there to see by your eye?

**A:** I don't think I ever had a chance to visit to these areas. But I think such a visit will do any good. If such a visit will do any good for our nation, of course I would like to. But I don't want to go there, just to take a look around. I want to do something positive to come out of my action.

**Q:** What's your understanding of their situation of daily life of the ordinary people outside. What is your plan?

**A:** The first thing I have learnt in the last two ..three days..is how tremendously inflationness. That is most people I have been talking about. And I myself of course aware of it because I also have to buy my own food. This is what a lot of people talk about how prices are goes up.

**Q:** What sort of leadership role do you see for yourself in the NLD in long time future?

**A:** I think it is very dangerous to talk about your leadership for yourself I means it is always the people who decide what sort of role they want to give you. That's the essence of democracy. The people should decide who they want as their leader and what kind of leader they want and how they want the particular leader to be. That's the essence of democracy. I don't think it is for me to say I want to be like this or I want to be like that or even I want to be a leader. It is for the people to decide.

**Q:** Are you going to meet us again?

**A:** I hope so. Or I don't know about the next one or two days but if there is reason to meet you again, I would like to. I am very fond of the press.

**Q:** Would you ask for more dialogue. Would you wait here the other side...

**A:** I though I've been asking for dialogue all the time. Did I not make you clear? More dialogue! More dialogue! More dialogue!

**Q:** How would you feel the role of the UN in Myanmar?

**A:** I think the United Nations should be given an important role in every country they belong to. I think so the United Nations role in Burma also should have some significant.

**Q:** When a ...have you been most disappointed and also the most happiest in this 6 years?



A: I don't think I had ever been very very disappointed and very very harsh. I had adopt the Buddhist sense of equanimity. All the whole. Not all the time. But actually, sometime, I was depressed. But not so much that I can remember it. I had no time that I can find out I was very very depressive.

**Q: Do you have any plan to see Gen Khin Nyunt and high officials from Slorc?**

A: Well, I always said I plan to see them any time. So, my door is always open.

**Q: Why didn't you had such a meeting?**

A: I think this is something you got to ask the Slorc.

**Q: ??**

A: I don't know about soon, I do believe that democracy will come to Burma. Because it is something that people want. And I think in the long run, they really cannot resist the people.

**Q: You mentioned involvement of all political groups in Thailand. You means that government of Dr Sein Win should take part in the meeting.**

A: Dialogue should be extended to include as many people as possible which will represent various political cultural.

**Q: Do you have any plan to attend the Martyr's day ceremony?**

A: Do you know I haven't in fact time to think about it. I know it is next week but I think I need to sit down and discuss with this colleagues.

**Q: When do you think the Democracy will come?**

A: I am not a fortune teller, you know. I never encourage people to go to fortune tellers. And this not a sort of thing that I ever encourage.

**Q: Is there any depression on your part any side or any fear that you would not be released.**

A: Absolutely sometime.

**Q: Have you asked about help?**

A: ..Oh! Ya! help is of course, ...security arrangement. I felt that they have done with genuine will. I asked them when they talked about it. And, they suggested that there would be better to have a few guards at the gate.??

**Q: Can you describe the first few minutes of you and former colleagues of NLD, what you would like to see of all this year of many days in prison.**

A: Oh! feel hostages.

**Q: Here is a natural gas pipeline that being built between Burma and Thailand. I don't know its already been asked. What is your view on this. Do you think it is good idea to continue building this pipeline.**

A: I want to look further into what this natural gas pipeline is meant to achieve the people of Burma.

**Q: So, you don't have a d.....**

A: No, I don't know that much about the gas pipeline apart from what I heard from radio. I don't



think that sufficient. — I

**Q: What do you think about the cease-fire between the rebels and the Slorc? Have you support about this peace?**

A: Cease-fire is a cease-fire. What we want is a permanent peace settlement. I don't think this is just my opinion. I think this is the opinion of everybody in Burma.

**Q: about NLD ???**

A: Have I ever sent my resignation?

**Q: What do you think about Col Kyaw Win?**

A: Col Kyaw Win is just as charming as Gen Khin Nyunt.

**Q: How did you keep your spirit up during last 6 years?**

A: Thinking of my colleagues, my father and ? ?

**Q: Do you think you can restore the NLD as in 1989?**

A: Absolutely don't want! We don't want the NLD to be just exactly as it is in 1989. We want the NLD to be what it ought to be in 1995.

**Q: Japan has stopped ODA aid to Maynmar since 1988 because of military crack down in your group. Now, do you agree to reopening of the ODA of Japan to your country.**

A: I think aid donor country should depend more than the faith of one person. I am just one person. And I think my release is not as important as the a lot of Burmese people in general. And so the resumption of aid to be base on what changes are broad about to better the condition of the people. Rather than on my release alone.

**Q: ???**

A: I do not agree to hesitate step. I think, I would like the Japanese Government to look at the situation and to save for the in fact situation of the people has improved.

**Q: In your statement, you have Gen Than Shwe ask you to help toward achieving peace and stability in Myamnmar. But how will you do it?**

A: This is something that we will got to talk it over. I cannot do it alone. If the authorities wish me to help peace and stability, they also have to make possible for me to help. You cannot just say "help." You've got to make or create a situation which the help can be given effectively.

**Q: And also you said your aim is to return power from military to the people. And the same time you said the importance of dialogue. So how will you make military to return power to the people through dialogue.**

A: It was the military who said their aim was to return power to the people. This is the Slorc that you see in the Burmese newspaper it is the aim of the Slorc is to return power to the people. And since we want to return power to the people. We see this is very good basic for negotiation. Since this is the common aim.

**Q: But if they refuse to do it. How will you achieve your aim?**

A: We have to think other ways.



**Q: Other way! What do you means?**

A: Well! If they refuse to negotiate, do you means if they refuse to negotiate, then we got to find and think of the way to persuading them. The negotiation is the best way. Perhaps, we can provide enough reasons for them to see that the best thing for the people is all of us concerned to sit around the table and find the common way of solving the problem.

**Q: Are you confidence that you can persuade them?**

A: I am confidence that we will reach our goal in the end. I am not saying that it is going to be easy. I said it will be very long. It is not going to be easy. We are always saying in the movement for democracy is not just that the road is hard. It is that there is no road at all. We got to build the road as we go along.

**Q: And the Slorc always insist that the military must have a special role in Myamar. So, Could you tell us your opinion about the role of military in Myanmar?**

A: We all have the special role to play. I don't think just one single group has special role to play in the nation. Each group in the nation has special role to play just as every single person has it own value as a human being in the world. Even those there are billion of them.

**Q: The election in 1990, the main subject was the dialogue with the government.**

A: I'm sorry! Oh! the election of 1990! The most important thing of the election of 1990 is express the will of the people, very clearly. And that should would be one of the main subject of the dialogue with the government. The Will of the People. Because, true democracy means respecting the will of the people, identifying it and respecting it.

**Q: Could you describe as precisely as possible your daily life?**

A: Under house arrest! I was get up at 4:30 in the morning. I was meditate for an hour. Then I would listen to the BBC world service, then I would listen to the VOA news in the Burmese, and then the BBC news in Burmese. If I could hear it, I would listen to the Democratic Voice of Burma but that always not very clear, sometime I couldn't hear it. Then of course, take bath, breakfast, and then the rest of the day I divide into period for reading, for walk around the house, for sowing and for playing a bid of music. My younger son taught me to play a guitar last year. So, I tried to play, but not very good at.

**Q: How about piano?**

A: Piano went out of order long time ago. And I must try something done

**Q: ??**

A: I believed that most of this minorities groups who have reached the cease-fire, also want the democracy. So, I would not let to think of it as my movement. I would like to think of it as the movement of people in general.

**Q: But you are symbol of the democratic movement of Myanmar**

A: Perhaps, perhaps, I am symbol, but symbol is not enough. Symbol doesn't get any work. It really work that get suite. Where you want to get to. I think to achieve we need the support and cooperative of the people.

**Q: It seems to me that the you are very, you want the people refrain from over action in the**



**democracy movement. Do you fear some bloody reaction from the government?**

A: I would not primarily thinking about bloody reaction, as you put it. But in the sense that I don't want them to have too high expectation. This is not very healthy. We got to understand that there is too a lot to be done. I don't want them to think that this because I have been released, we certainly gone forward several steps. No! We've gone for one small step. I am just one person. My circumstances have changed. The fact that circumstances of one person in this country has changed. This not means that much. What we want to see is substantial changes of the circumstances of the people as a whole.

**Q: ???**

A: Well, if they are resuming ODA because of my release, I don't think that is sufficient reason. Because as I have explained my release means change in the condition of one person, It doesn't mean that change in the condition of people of Burma. So, should the resumption of ODA depend entire on the change in the condition of one single individual? That's not seem to me right.

**Q: ???**

A: I think the question should be put a little more differently. Why did they feel that because of my release. It is the good reason for increasing investment. It is the same things as about ODA. Why should the different in the condition of one single person make them feel that the country has now changed and enough for them to increase investment. It seems to rather narrow way of looking at it. It is not the condition of one person. We must consider. It is the condition of the whole country. After when any companies is making an investment, they would like to study the whole situation. They are just going to one house and ask them. How do you like our good? They are just going to find out from situation of one house whether or not their investment will be successful. In the same way, the change in my situation, this not seem to me as sufficient reason why they think they should be changed in their policy.

**Q: The government control the information. So, how do you inform your idea to your people?**

A: Through people like you!

**Q: Under this circumstances, how do you do for democracy?**

A: Well! I do, what ever I can and what I see to be my duty. And I feel that all the Burmese do that. If as many as possible do what ever they can toward achieving democracy, we will get there. It is not going to be easy. I have never said it will be easy. And perhaps, it better that it is not easy. Because we will then value it much more. If it is too easy, people intent to think that it is cheap. We don't want cheap democracy. We want the democracy that is solid and that will benefit the democracy for many many generation to come.

**Q: What kind of democracy do you want?**

A: I've just said you know for me, genuine democracy means genuine respect for the will of the people. The will of the people must be respected. Not just lip service. By word and by action, the people must be valued to respect.

**Q: ????**

A: Basically, most unhappy thing about Burma is lack of trust. Lack of trust between the various ethnic groups. Lack of trust between the government and the people. This is not going to get our



country to a situation where we can achieve peace and prosperity.

**Q: How can we get trust each other?**

**A:** We have got to make yourself trust worthy. You know, you got to be honest and sincere. And you got to keep your word. I am very very much afraid of making promises to the people because I don't want to break my promises. This is why I don't like to break make promises. I don't want to say I am going to do this for you and then find that I cannot do. So, I always say I do what I can, I do my best. More than that I cannot do. I cannot say I promise you democracy in so many years. I promise you this, I promise you that. I promise you security. I cannot promise any of this thing. All I can promise is that with their love and their support, I will go on and I will go on till we reach our goal.

**Q: ??**

**A:** If Japan want to help accelerate the economic process in Burma, it must study the very very carefully not just from an official point of view but from the point of view of the people. You know, is the people who are important. Government is not the important part of the country. It is the people. From the people, arise the strength of the nation. And unless you can watch what is happening among the people, and unless you can study the expectation and aspiration of the people, you will not be able to help the country. If you really want to help the country, if you ought to accelerate the democratic process which the people of Burma want, you must study the people more closely. You must go out among the Burmese people. You must able to do that. Are you able to do that? Are you people from Japan able to go out among the Burmese people, ordinary Burmese people and find out how they feel and what they want? You are not able to do that. Can you claim that they have been able to that? Unless you are able to that, unless there is situation in which you can do that, how can you know that you have found the answer to the problem that you have found the best way of Burma toward democracy. And so, you should listen to the voice of ordinary of people of Burma and find out what it is that they want.

**Q: ??**

**A:** Why is there conflict between the ethnic groups of Burma because we don't trust each other. We think that the other group doesn't care our warfare. Therefore we were always in conflict. We were each working for our own warfare. Instead of working for common warfare. But if there will be still trust, if we felt that we could work together as nation, as brother, there would be no need for conflict. This is one of the reason why dialogue is so important. Because, we want to get people into the habit of talking over the problem rather fighting them out. If you have problem, if you have something about which you disagree, the best thing to do is sit down and talk about. It is no use shooting each other. That's not the way to solve the problem. It would kill both of you but it is not the way to solve the problem. So, that is why democracy is important. Democracy is not just the will of the people. It firstly will of the people and it is about resolving problem through political means not through violent means. If we have all the chance to resolute problems through political means there would have been no conflict between the Karen and the Burmese, the Mon and the Kachin and anything like that. If the Karen didn't like what Mon were doing, they could sit down and talk about it. If we have established such a tradition, this is why we want democracy. We want the system where people sit and talk about their problem and meet the conclusion which is best for the nation and which is in keeping the will of the people.

**Q: Do you think that the Slorc government would change and dialogue with you?**



**A:** I hope that they will change to do what ever they see to be the will of the people. I hope that they will study the will of the people. I hope that they will listen to the voice of the people and act accordingly. ?? I am sure that they also desire what is good for the nation.

**Q:** Are you optimistic about the future of Burma?

**A:** Yes, I am cautiously optimistic about the future of the country. Because I believed in the people. I believed in the people. I think they have some way to go. I think we all have to change. I think we all need to improve ourselves. But I think basically there is a lot of good stuff in Burma.

**Q:** Would you mind telling me your body weight?

**A:** 106 pound.

**Q:** First of all there are more than 7 thousands Burmese expatriates in Japan and ten of thousands in Thailand. They have been waiting for your leadership and instruction, may be. So, would you give them some message.

**A:** First of all, I want to thanks them for keeping me in their heart for so long and for helping me for keep up my spirit during the year of detention. I think one of the thing which is helping most during this year is feeling that I have their support and their love. It have make a great deal to me. Now that I released. It means that we have got to start working harder than ever. It doesn't mean that we reach our goal. It just means that we have been allowed to take one small step forward. And we've got to make best of it so that we can go on forward, forward, forward all the time.

**Q:** Are they really looking forward to coming back to Burma? But do you think it could be near future?

**A:** I hope it could be as soon as possible. Because I know that they want to come back to their own-country. And one of the reason why we started engaging this movement for democracy is because we want Burma to be in country where all the citizens can live in peace and security, financial, political and social.

**Q:** Japan government, they have set the small loan to the Burmese government. And then, they will start big loan about may be airport construction and so on. What do you think about this idea?

**A:** I think it will be very good if the Japanese government study the situation very carefully. And take more time before they make such decision. Because what we want is aid that will be of direct help to the people of Burma. Which will be best for the common people, the one who needed most. And in order to decide what kind of help would most benefit people it need time. It need real intense of study and that is what I would like to very humbly advise the Japanese government to do. To study the situation first.

**Q:** Give me some more idea about your near future plan and your final aim?

**A:** My final aim of course very simple, democracy for Burma. Such a democracy is benefit all the people of Burma, not just one section or two. And the my immediate aim to work out the best way in which we could forward to this goal.

**Q:** There are still what they call, security law that the you can not have a meeting of a more than 5 people. But how can you progress democracy?

**A:** ?? how do you reprogress the democracy when there are so many laws that specifically forbid



the necessary actions to take us toward democracy and this one of thing that one should negotiate and work out.

**Q: Like this a few days, there are so many crowds waiting outside but don't you afraid that the government will say crush them?**

**A:** Certainly I always worry for the safety and security of the people but I hope the government will see that they are very peaceful and all they want is to say hello to me, to demonstrate their support to me. There are nothing dangerous in it and I do not see why anybody should hurt them because this small demonstration of support and affection.

**Q: Right now, the government want to foreigners to invest here. Do you think it is the right time to foreigners to invest in Burma?**

**A:** Well! I have been saying that please wait and see. What they have witnessed during the last week is the change the situation of one Burmese citizen. What we want is an indication that they are going to be substantial changes in the situation of 45 million Burmese. And when there are strong indication, where there is positive indication that the situation of 45 million Burmese, can be changed for the better to foreign investment, to international aid. I think then is the time for them to start.

**Q: Do you know how many political prisoners now in jail in Burma? Are going to address this issue in the government?**

**A:** In my very first statement, I urge the government to release all political prisoners. They run into the hundreds. I don't have the complete list yet. I have been collecting the names. And is not yet complete. And I have about more than X0 names. But these are the one I managed to collect. And these are the one known to people here in Rangoon I have been in touch with. I think I need to work more in subject.

**Q: Do you have any plan to go abroad?**

**A:** I would like to some day. The Norwegian Ambassador very kindly invited me to Norway. And of course very frankly Norway is special to us because it has took very firmly to cause and it would be one of the first countries I would choose to visit. If I could possibly arrange is a first foreign country I like to visit. Just to say Thank you for all that they have done to support us. But I have no immediate plan to travel abroad.

**Q: Do you have plan to travel around the country?**

**A:** I hope to travel around the country but again I have no immediate plan. I have so much to do here in Rangoon. The meeting in NLD leaderships and as well as some of the NLD members probably continue at least forth night.

**Q: ???**

**A:** Oh! Is not really bad as people think it is. There are no division between U Aung Shwe and U Lwin. And Uncle U Khin Maung, U Tin Oo and myself. We understand each other perfectly well. We know that the U Aung Shwe have to take some very difficult decision. He went through as much outside as we did inside that different way. We have perfect understanding between us. And in fact the bound between us is strengthen over the last 6 years. We understand each other better. We have proved to each other how strong our commitment are. And this has been the tremendous test. □

# DEMOCRACY IS THE GOAL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ARE THE METHOD

The sudden and unexpected release of Daw Suu from house arrest by the SLORC military dictatorship has brought a new sense of excitement and possibility to the members of the ABSDF. Now that Daw Suu has been free for some weeks, it is appropriate to begin analyzing some of the impacts this event will have on the work of the ABSDF and the Burmese democratic resistance.

In all the happiness that accompanies Daw Suu's release, we must never lose sight of the fact that the primary goal we are fighting for is the establishment of a functioning democratic government in Burma. We will never allow SLORC to distract us from that final goal, and we will analyze every action SLORC takes in light of whether that action brings us closer to achieving democracy in Burma or further away. When analyzing what motivated the SLORC military dictatorship to suddenly release Daw Suu, we have to face the unfortunate possibility that SLORC may have believed that releasing Daw Suu at this time will actually assist them to avoid democracy and allow them to consolidate their long term grip on power.

In this regard, it must not be forgotten that Daw Suu was released with no warning only two days before U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell was slated to introduce a bill in the U.S. Senate to impose economic sanctions on Burma. We at the ABSDF do not believe that the timing of Daw Suu's release two days before the introduction of McConnell's Bill was a coincidence. On the contrary, we believe her release was a direct cause and effect

It is highly probable that early in the month of July, SLORC was faced with a very tough decision. SLORC had to decide between two courses of action:

1. SLORC could continue to hold Daw Suu under house arrest and run the growing risk of having McConnell's economic sanctions bill even-

tually become law in the United States; or,

2. SLORC could release Daw Suu and hope to substantially decrease the probability that McConnell's economic sanctions bill would become law.

SLORC would have had to have been very concerned about the imposition of any formal economic sanctions; the dictatorship could not be unaware that economic sanctions were the primary weapon that eventually brought down the apartheid government of South Africa. SLORC had to be fearful that once economic sanctions were adopted by a nation as powerful as the United States then a successful campaign to impose economic sanctions on Burma could start to spread to other nations and perhaps even to the UN. The military officers who run SLORC therefore probably had to answer a very difficult question which of these two different scenarios was the greater threat to their grip on long term power?

1. The beginning of a formal U.S. campaign of economic embargo that might spread to other major nations; or,

2. The release of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Under the present circumstances, the SLORC military dictatorship may very well have believed that economic sanctions were a greater threat than a free Aung San Suu Kyi. In other words, a confident, cocky SLORC may believe that after nearly seven years in power its now strengthened apparatus of repression can contain any pressure for democracy that Aung San Suu Kyi can generate inside Burma. With their army larger and better armed than ever, and with all of Burmese society riddled with spies and informers, the SLORC generals may be more afraid of economic sanctions right now than they are of Aung San Suu Kyi, who they can, after all, rearrest anytime they want if she proves tougher to handle than they are expecting.

If this scenario is correct and SLORC is more afraid of economic sanctions than of a temporarily free Daw Suu, it is more important than ever that the international community impose economic sanctions on SLORC to force it to begin the next step on the road to democratization. That step is the opening of a genuine political dialogue with a democratic opposition headed by Aung San Suu Kyi. If because of the release of Daw Suu all threat of economic boycott is now lifted, it is very possible we will see no further steps whatsoever taken by SLORC on the road to democratization. By releasing Daw Suu two days before the McConnell economic sanctions bill was introduced, SLORC demonstrated the power of economic sanctions to modify its behavior. Therefore, the ABSDF:

- Calls on the international community to take note of the remarkable power of such sanctions to influence events in Burma.

- Calls upon the international community to remember that Nelson Mandela believed that economic sanctions were the greatest weapon he held while he was negotiating for democracy in South Africa. Nelson Mandela did not suggest that economic sanctions be lifted until two years after he was released from prison and only after he had successfully concluded negotiations to bring democracy to his country.

- Calls upon members of the international community to unilaterally impose economic sanctions on SLORC; and to thereby, give Aung San Suu Kyi the same weapon the international community so successfully gave to Nelson Mandela.

- Calls upon all people who support the final goal of bringing democracy to Burma, to vigorously support Senator Mitch McConnell's 1995 Free Burma Act (which contains economic sanctions).

All who are supporting the fight for democracy in Burma should understand this four part formula:

Genuine political dialogue between a democratic opposition lead by Daw Suu and the SLORC military leadership is the best route for achieving democracy in Burma;

Economic sanctions are the best weapon for forcing SLORC to engage in that dialogue and for giving Daw Suu the strongest bargaining position during the dialogue;

The United States is the key to any effective economic sanctions policy, because unless the United States the world's largest economy and only remaining superpower leads the way, other nations are not likely to adopt economic sanctions;

Senator Mitch McConnell's Free Burma Act is the key to getting those sanctions passed into law in the United States. All organizations in the Burmese democratic resistance should organize all available resources to support passage of this Act;

Neither the international community nor the Burmese resistance can afford to allow the release of Aung San Suu Kyi to distract us from the critical drive to have economic sanctions imposed on SLORC. If SLORC released Daw Suu in good faith as an indication that they are now ready to begin the long process of having a genuine political dialogue with the democratic resistance, then the imposition of economic sanctions are most important to give Daw Suu the strongest possible bargaining position when she enters that dialogue. In contrast, if SLORC released Daw Suu in bad faith, only as a decoy for the purpose of stopping economic sanctions, and has no intention whatsoever of entering a genuine political dialogue then we must not allow SLORC's cynical maneuver to succeed. Under all circumstances, the ABSDF calls on the international community to rapidly impose economic sanctions on the SLORC military dictatorship and the ABSDF calls on all those fighting for democracy in Burma to redouble their efforts on behalf of getting economic sanctions imposed.

The release of Aung San Suu Ky is a joyous event for us all. But her release is also an important lesson teaching us how frightened SLORC is of economic sanctions, and for this very reason the push toward economic sanctions should be accelerated. We have seen what the enemy truly fears. It is a lesson those supporting the fight for democracy in Burma must not ignore. □

# THE RELEASE OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND THE SO-CALLED "NATIONAL CONVENTION"

Daw Suu's release should now cause us to focus on the "so-called" National Convention more sharply than ever. Tricking the Burmese people and the international community into believing that the so-called "National" Convention is a legitimate body for writing a constitution for Burma is the core of SLORC's plan for staying in power for the long term. We must redouble our efforts to make sure this trick does not succeed.

There is currently one path and one path only for achieving democracy Burma. This is for the SLORC military dictatorship to participate in a genuine political dialogue with the democratic opposition headed by Aung San Suu Kyi. Genuine political dialogue will lead to democracy because the overwhelming majority of the Burmese people want democracy.

Because SLORC, however, does not wish democracy to come to Burma, it is attempting to substitute the path of genuine political dialogue with the so-called "National Convention" which can never lead to democracy. With the release of Daw Suu it now becomes clearer than ever that the future of Burma is in many ways a direct fight between two different paths:

## **PATH #1 - to democracy**

Genuine political dialogue between the SLORC military dictatorship and the democratic opposition headed by Daw Suu

- Versus -

## **PATH # 2 - to long term military dictatorship**

### **The "National Convention"**

With Daw Suu now released it is time for the Burmese resistance to mobilize its effort to send the message loud and clear to SLORC that path # 2 is a dead end and the democratic resistance will never allow itself to be seduced to enter that path.

Sending this message to SLORC starts first by working with the international community. We

must call on the international community to specifically express its non-recognition of the so-called "National" Convention on the grounds that it is an illegal convention.

When SLORC refused to cede power to the representatives of the people elected in a free election in May 1990, SLORC became an illegal government under customary international law, and it has continued to be an illegal and illegitimate government ever since the moment it refused to cede power, and the so-called "National" Convention is equally illegal because every delegate attending the convention is handpicked by an illegal government. This is a defect that can never be remedied. SLORC is illegal and every delegate it picks to attend its convention is therefore illegal, and any so-called constitution produced by these such delegates is obviously illegal and illegitimate also. Only representatives of the people selected by the people in free elections can write a legal constitution

- The ABSDF demands that SLORC dissolve its illegal "National" Convention and enter into a genuine political dialogue with the democratic opposition headed by Daw Suu.

- The ABSDF calls on the people inside Burma, who believe in democracy, to boycott the so-called "National" Convention and any activity connected with it.

- The ABSDF calls on the international community to demand that SLORC dissolve the so-called "National" Convention because it is an illegitimate body whose delegates have all been selected by an illegal military dictatorship, not elected by the people. A convention with this type of flaw can never bestow legitimacy on a government, and the international community needs to make this clear to SLORC.

- The ABSDF calls on the international media, particularly the BBC and VOA, to help break through the curtain of censorship in Burma to discuss and analyze the various aspects of the so-called "National" Convention so the Burmese people will hear objective discussion of this desperate ruse by the military dictatorship to try and cover up its own illegality. □

# NEW DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF BURMA FORMED



Following the release of Burmese democracy leader and 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 10 July 1995 the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) led by Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win convened the first ever Convention of Elected Representatives from the liberated areas of Burma in Boxnmetik Sweden from 18-23 July 1995. The representatives, elected in the 27 May 1990 General Elections met to discuss the drastically changed political situation in Burma and to re-organize the NCGUB into a more effective force to support Daw Aung San Suu Kyi political initiatives in Rangoon. The Convention supported Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's call for a genuine political dialogue, and called on the Secretary-general of the United Nations to implement the UN Geneva Assembly resolution to assist in the national reconciliation process in Burma. A tripartite dialogue between the Burmese military led by SLORC; the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and Burma's ethnic leaders, was endorsed by the elected representatives.

The Convention welcomed the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and thanked all who worked for her release, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's return to politics and her determination to continue working for democracy in Burma was applauded and welcomed. The leading role played by SLORC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi release was also recognized. To give the leadership of the democracy movement more flexibility to deal with the rapidly changing situations the government formed by elected representatives in Manerplaw on 18 December 1990 was officially dissolved by the Convention of Elected Representatives on 21 July 1995 in Bormnersvik. The Convention unanimously re-elected Dr. Sein Win by secret ballot to head the new government.

The new government re-affirmed its commitment to the establishment of a multi-party parliamentary democracy within the framework of a genuine federal union. The broad based support of the new coalition government is reflected in the make up of the cabinet.

Prime Minister:	Dr. Sein Win	PND
Foreign Affairs:		
Finance:	Bo Hla Tmt	NLD
Office	Teddy Buri	NLD
Information	Maung Maung Aye	NLD
Federal Affairs:	Marko Ban	DOKNU
Justice:	Thein Oo	NLD
Heghth Education;	Sann Aung	Ind
Prime Minister's Office	Tint Swe	NLD
Social Welfare & Development:	Zahlethang	CNLD
Labour Minister:	Tha Noe	ALD

The elected representatives were joined in their deliberations by representatives from the NCUB, leaders of the NLD (LA), UNLD, ABSDF, FTUB, and NCGUB representatives.

The Convention was hosted by the Stockholm-based Olof Palme International Centre the Norwegian Burma Council in Bommersvik, the training centre of the Social Democratic Youth of Sweden. □

Note: Teddy Buri is an elected representative from Karenni State, Marko Ban is an elected representative from Shan State, Zahlethang is an elected representative from Chin State, Tha Noe is an elected representative from Arakan State, ALD - Arakan League for Democracy, CNLE - Chin National League for Democracy, DOKNU Democratic Organization for Kayan National Unity, NLD = National League for Democracy, PND = Party for National Democracy, Ind = Independent, NCUB=National Council of the Union of Burma, FTUB=Federation of Labour Unions (Burma), UNLD=United Nationalities League for Democracy

## **UNOCAL is SLORC**

### **TOTAL's dilemma about doing business with SLORC**

"UNOCAL is SLORC" demonstrations were concurrently organized in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland and Oregon on July 20, 1995. The protests were attended by shareholders, consumers and other US citizens. These were the follow-up to last May's protest in Houston at the UNOCAL Annual Shareholders meeting. In the meeting, UNOCAL was asked why it was in partnership with Slorc which enslaves its people for their labour in pipeline and other construction nationwide.

In Santa Monica, the City Council is working on legislation to ban the city's purchase of products from companies which are doing business in Burma, including other US cities are considering the same.

French TOTAL engineers were reportedly slain by Karen guerrillas early this year. This showed that the Slorc is ??? to ensure the security in gas pipeline areas could not be guaranteed. There are about 7,000 Mons and about 20,000 Karen guerrillas are active in these pipeline areas in Southern Burma. TOTAL is facing delays in early stage of pipeline construction despite UNOCAL's move to provide finance and the SLORC's promise to provide protection. TOTAL is also having doubts, because Slorc's holding vulnerability especially since the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her statement that no one should rush to invest in Burma. □

### **Slorc launches military offensive in KNU 4th Brigade**

In the third week of June, Slorc started a military offensive against the KNU in 4th brigade areas. A total of 1,500 combined troops from LIB 401, 403, 404, 405 and 409 were active in the area and engaging with the KNU troops. Since the fighting broke out, hundreds of civilians from Tennaserim Division were reported to be fleeing to the Thai-Burma border to avoid arrest and forced portage. Slorc had once again broken its unilateral cease fire, as it had in December of last year, and again attacked KNU strongholds. Manerplaw, the headquarters of the KNU and democratic forces, and the Kawmoora stronghold, were captured by the Slorc early this year. The Slorc backed Democratic Buddhist Karen Army (DKBA) has also committed a number of attacks on refugee camps in Thailand since its split from mainstream KNU. (Source; ABSDF News Agency). □

## Mr Richardson denounces increased U.S. cooperation with Slorc

Lee Brown, director of the president's office of Drug Control Policy, United States said on June 21 that the United States will increase cooperation with Burma in an effort to stem heroin smuggling. The decision was made after a six-month tug of war in which federal drug officials pushed for much more cooperation while human rights officials opposed it.

"Since approximately 60 percent of the heroin sold in the U.S. comes from Southeast Asia, and particularly Burma, our primary heroin control priority will be to reduce this flow," Brown told a hearing of the House (of Representatives) International Relations subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific. "We will continue to employ a range of activities to address U.S. counter narcotics concerns without undermining other vital U.S. objectives, including efforts to promote political reform and reconciliation and curb human rights violations," Brown said.

His statement was denounced by Representative Bill Richardson, a New Mexico Democrat and

## Melbourne group raises awareness of refugees on Thai-Burma border

Teresa O'Shannassy and Marc Purcell from Burma Support Group, Melbourne, prepared a report about Burma to submit to church groups in June, to draw more attention from Australians regarding refugee issues on the Thai-Burma border. The report said, "Burma has had a low media profile and only now is the Australian public aware of the Burmese refugee crisis. The participation of church groups is needed to bring about awareness of the human rights violations, to pressure the Australian government to address the situation in Burma, and to be involved in the resettlement of refugees admitted to Australia under the Special Assistance Category (SAC)." It appealed to the communities in Australia to assist by direct sponsorship or by contributing funds to a loan scheme established by the National Council of Churches. Further information is available from the RMS representative in Australia. □

a leading critic of Burma's military government. "This is a terrible signal to send," he told the hearing. "they are human rights violators of the first order. We are going to bed with the heavyweight champions of repression."

With human rights groups criticizing the new policy, White House officials sought to emphasize that President Clinton was ordering only a modest change in policy and that none of the money for increased cooperation would go to Slorc. □

*(Source, Reuter & N.Y. Times News Service)*

## Burma campaign in Canada

Well-wishers can join the letter campaign for economic withdrawal from Burma at the Councilor's Office, City Hall, 2nd floor, 100 Queen St. W., Toronto, M5H 2N2 or fax them at 392-1050. Canadian Friends of Burma has a sticker customers can put on their Consumer's Gas payments to protest buying from Unocal-100 stickers for \$4 mailed to Canadian friends of Burma, 145 Spruce St., Suite 206, Ottawa, K1R 6P1. Call 613-2378056 for information. □

## Burmese Benefit Dinner in Japan

To commemorate the fifth anniversary of the elections in Burma, May 27, 1990, Burmese Relief Center Japan held a gala Burmese Benefit Dinner in Kyoto on Sunday, May 28. More than 60 guests attended. The scrumptious meal, prepared by a skilled Burmese cook living in Japan included Pebo, Mohingar, and Baya Gyaw. Entertainment was provided by a dancer from Nagoya, who performed several traditional dances. U Win Khet, representative of NLD Liberated Area, was a special guest and gave a short speech explaining the current position of the NLD. The dinner was preceded by a bazaar of handicraft, much of it produced by the students and refugees. The afternoon ended with a spirited auction of various items, including coupons for meals for two, donated by restaurants in the area. Proceeds from the event totaled half a million yen, which translates into more than five thousand dollars. All of this money has been or will be donated to ABSDF and other groups on the Thai-Burma border. □

# Why the DKBA is not a Buddhist Army

**Ken and Visakha Kawasaki**

Many must be wondering about the incongruity of an aggressive and violent "Buddhist" faction terrorizing Karen refugees along the Thai Burma border. They are right to be perplexed. The militant Democratic Kayin Buddhist Organization (DKBO) also calls itself the Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army (DKBA), which gives it the deplorable distinction of being the first army in history that has dared call itself Buddhist. Buddhism, which preaches non-harming of living beings, has never spread by means of the sword. For Buddhism there is no righteous anger, let alone a righteous war, so a Buddhist army is a blatant contradiction.

The DKBO's SLORC masters are also ostentatious in their claims to be Buddhist. It must not be forgotten, however, that hundreds of Buddhist monks were killed along with thousands of civilians in the suppression of the 1988 democracy movement in which the Sangha played a leading part. The courageous decision of respected senior monks in 1990 to declare a boycott of the SLORC should also be recalled. In that formal act of the Sangha, they agreed to "overturn the bowl," by refusing to accept alms from SLORC members or to solemnize their funerals. SLORC retaliated swiftly and brutally, by raiding monasteries and arresting, imprisoning, disrobing, and torturing hundreds of good monks.

After playing a key role in the fall of KNU headquarters last January, the so-called DKBA began a terrorist campaign against Karen refugees. They have abducted both Buddhist and Christian Karens from camps on Thai soil, burned thousands of Karen refugee houses, and harassed and threatened the 74,000 Karen refugees. Thai border police, ordinary Thai citizens, and Karen refugees Christian, Buddhist and animist alike have died at the hands of the DKBA.

Several monks are said to be "spiritual" leaders of this group. U Thuzana has played a major role

in attracting people to the DKBA and actually gives orders to DKBA commanders. One of his deputies, a monk named U Yanika, has been quoted as saying "Tons of the weapons belonging to the KNU are hidden inside the refugee camps inside Thailand. We want those weapons, and if the Thai army cannot give them to us, we will go and get them ourselves." In an interview with the Nation newspaper, U Yanika admitted that the raids were intended to force the refugees to return to Burma, and he threatened more violence unless all the Karen refugees return to SLORC controlled Burma before the onset of rainy season.

## **How can these monks advocate violence and still be monks?**

According to the Buddhist Monastic Code, they cannot. The Patimokkha is quite clear: "Should any bhikkhu purposely deprive a human being of life or provide him with a life-taking weapon or recommend advantages in death or encourage him to kill himself, then he is defeated and no more in communion also."

To deprive a human being of life means to cut off the continuity or to bring an end to its life in various ways. killing by direct contact, killing at a distance, arranging something to kill, killing using magical knowledge or supernatural power or by commanding. This last point would be the most relevant to the DKBA. Commanding means telling another person to do something that will result in death. This is the broadest of the categories and can include recommendations and the use of one's rhetorical powers to inspire the death of a person without giving any express commands. The commentaries explain that, if a bhikkhu were to tell people, "In such and such a place a bandit is staying. Whoever cuts off his head will receive great honor from the King," and if any of the bhikkhu's listeners were to kill as a result of his instigation, the bhikkhu would incur a parajika, or defeat. Parajika means that the monk has defeated the

very purpose of his having become a bhikkhu in the first place. The irrevocable nature of this defeat is illustrated by a number of similes. A monk who is defeated is like a man with his head cut off, a withered leaf freed from its stem, a flat stone broken in half that cannot be put together again, a palm tree cut off at the crown and thus incapable of further growth.

A bhikkhu who commits any of the four parajika offenses (sexual intercourse, stealing, murder, and claiming to be enlightened) severs himself irrevocably from the life of the community and is no longer considered a bhikkhu. The monk who has intentionally deprived a human being of life is not a true recluse, not a true son of the Sakyans, and is, therefore, defeated.

The rules of conduct for Buddhist monks are detailed, careful, and strict. The Buddha laid down the rules for good and compassionate reasons. The training rules were formulated with ten aims in mind: the excellence of the Community, the peace of the Community, the curbing of the shameless, the comfort of well-behaved monks, the restraint of defilements related to the present life, the prevention of defilements related to the next life, the arousing of faith in the faithless, the increase of the faithful, the establishment of the true Dhamma,

and the fostering of discipline. A raging pseudo-Buddhist army led by monks is an outrage and violates every one of these principles.

There is a straightforward code of morality for Buddhist laypeople, the minimum being the five precepts: not taking life, not taking what is not given, not committing adultery, not telling lies, and not taking intoxicating substances. Lay people are prohibited from engaging in five kinds of wrong livelihood; viz., trading in weapons, dealing in human beings, trading in animals to be killed for food, dealing in liquor, and trading in poison. The conduct of monks surely cannot be less ethical! It is unthinkable for Buddhist monks to be involved in stealing weapons, kidnapping, and murder!

No matter what the DKBA call themselves, they are not a "Buddhist" army. Though the leaders wear robes, they cannot be regarded as Buddhist monks; they have forfeited that privilege. The basic principles common to the teaching of all the Buddhas are the avoidance of all evil, the performance of what is wholesome, and the purification of one's mind. The DKBO and their SLORC masters are "Adhamma", the antithesis of Dhamma, and, they are, in truth, the enemies of the Buddha Sasana.

□

---

## Out of Control; The Burmese HIV Epidemic under Slorc

It is becoming all too clear that Burma is currently undergoing an explosive epidemic of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. While reliable information is scarce and estimates of the problem are almost certainly biased by political influences, there is enough data now available to show that HIV is essentially everywhere, and the responses that could stop this public health disaster are everywhere inadequate. The best estimate is that a minimum of 400,000 people are already infected (more than 1% of all adults) and HIV has been found in every region where screening has been done. It is also clear that this is not an ethnic minority issue

and not a border issue; HIV rates are skyrocketing in Rangoon and Mandalay, among ethnic Burman as well as other groups, and among Burmese who have never traveled beyond the Irrawaddy subdivision.

How, and why, has this happened?

HIV is spread through three principle routes; unprotected sex, sharing of needles and other injecting equipment, and transfusion of blood and blood products (and unsafe medical practices in general). Any one of these routes is sufficient for an epidemic among people at risk. Burma under

the Slorc has serious problems with all three routes. Condom are used by less than 1% of adults, are expensive, difficult to purchase, and active promotion of condoms use is poor absent. This mean that virtually all sex in the country is unprotected sex, and here we must note that prostitution is now extensive in Burma, with at least 1% of all adults women are selling sex to survive. There is a tremendous amount of injecting heroin use among Burmese young. Slorc had admitted that at least 1% of all adult men and 0.5% of all adult women are injecting drug users. Needles are illegal, scarce, and costly, and so re-used again and again. This activity has been the root cause of the HIV explosion in the country, and rates of HIV infection in drug users are over 90% in several cities. Drug treatment is extremely limited, and addicts are punished for carrying their own injecting equipment, insuring that needle sharing will occur. Lastly, the blood supply is not safe. Injecting equipment in both private and public medical care facilitates is re-used repeatedly, and universal precautions are not being used for most procedures. Taken together, these sad truth suggest that the Burmese HIV epidemic is out of control on all three fronts; If a nation-wide campaign which addresses condom use, needle sharing by drug users, and improving medical safety is not mounted immediately. Burma will follow the footstep of Uganda, Rwanda, Haiti and Zaire; countries where HIV control has failed, and where AIDS has decimated the young adult population.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) an organization which is capable of Slorc refusal to allow humanitarian and medical visit to jailed political prisoners, including the visits to the democracy leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Another NGO has had a team in Burma for nearly a year, ready to assist with the HIV control program, they have not been given permission to start their projects. While the virtue of International organizations cooperating with the Slorc on HIV programs is questionable, the reality is that the Slorc is not cooperating anyway. Instead ethnic minorities are blamed, Thailand is accused of "spreading" HIV to Burma, and the Shans are demonized as AIDS carriers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Burma has become, in fact, an HIV exporter as well as an opium exporter; the worst

epidemic zone in China is the China-Burma border, and the worst in India is the Indian-Burma border in Manipur. Both of these flash points are on the drug routes out of Burma, these epidemics points to a new danger of the drug trade; local use in border areas with Burma now leads to rapid HIV spread. The ASEAN nations would do well to remember that heroin use and the subsequent spread of HIV brings are not just problems of users in the WEST, any country is now vulnerable.

#### What can be done?

Given that international organizations have been unable to establish working relationship with the Slorc, and that NGOs do not function freely under the Slorc, only the Slorc can respond to the HIV crisis in Burma. They could begin by simply being open about the current situation, which they have thus far refused to do (the information this article is based upon is, because of Slorc's refusal to publish, from "leaked" documents and from sources who must remain anonymous). A second step would be to allow those relief agencies who want to assist with the problem a chance to do this. Thirdly, the medical community in the country must be empowered to do its work (empowerment of anyone but the military is not, of course, the Slorc agenda). Lastly, the people of Burma need education and empowerment to fight the HIV epidemic. It has been shown repeatedly that local NGOs do the best job of education, organization, and prevention if they are able to operate. It does not take long to realize that all of the above solutions will be deeply threatening to the current closed and illegitimate regime. This is, no doubt, partly why the Burmese HIV epidemic has already gotten so out of hand. However, if such steps are not taken, HIV will continue to spread at the current rate, and Burmese will begin to die in numbers that may worry even the generals in Rangoon.

It is often said that only a political solution will bring peace to Burma. We probably have to accept that only a political solution will bring HIV under control as well. Both propositions, given the current position of the Slorc, mean that solutions are far away for the people of Burma, and suffering only too close to home. □

*A Doctor*

## 7th Anniversary of 8-8-88

The one party political system in Burma was brought down by the popular pro-democracy uprisings in 1988. The Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) had ruled the country for nearly three decades. Once prosperous Burma's economy in ruins and Burma had become one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC). Since before 1988, tension between BSPP and the people was gradually growing. U Ne Win knew this very well and he was prepared to resign from the chairmanship of the BSPP. However, the bitter feelings of the people could not be easily erased because the BSPP could not satisfy the demands of the people in terms of social welfare, politics, and economics. People had suffered too much from the 1987 demonetization, from declining social welfare, and from the rotten political system. Moreover, restricted laws added to the anger of the people who were barred from participation in the country's affairs throughout the BSPP era.

In fact, most Burmese people were not happy with the BSPP from the beginning. General Ne Win led a military coup in March 2, 1962. He took over power from democratically elected Prime Minister U Nu. From then on General Ne Win suppressed every single movement of the people against the military dictatorship. Students were the top target because they always spearheaded the demonstrations. There were strikes of students, labours and other walks of life from 1962 to 1988, but they failed to spread to become nationwide. However, in 1987 the people could no longer tolerate the military rule which had emptied their savings by demonetization without any compensation. It was even worse in 1988, hundreds of students were killed on university campuses, particularly in Rangoon Institute of Technology (RIT) in March, 1988. Many female students were gang-raped, and killed. The news of the ruthless killings by the military spread all over the country although the BSPP was trying to misinform the people. Ruthless killings in front of Rangoon General Hospital and in Sigaing Police Station intensified the anger of the people. Parents, brothers and sisters, relations of the students and other civilians who

were killed, raped, and tortured could not stay away from politics anymore. The whole country was waiting for the time to express their true will for political change and the elimination of the military interference in politics.

August 8, 1988 was the day which brought all the people in Burma to united front to call for the end of the one party system. It was the most important events in Burma's history after the Independence in 1947. People from all walks of life took to the streets. They showed their will in a peaceful and disciplined way. The people discovered that they have the fundamental strength to make change. They participated in running day to day administration, including finance and security by cooperating with strike committees' leadership all over the country. People removed the BSPP, and they did not accept the changes which presidents, Sein Lwin (Butcher) and Maung Maung. People unitedly called for the formation of an interim government without the military personnel and veterans of the BSPP. "Democracy" and "Multi-party political system" were the voice of the people. People enjoyed the "people power" for 51 days from 8-8-88 despite their uneasiness about the movements of the generals. Certainly, there were some elders who told the younger generation to be aware of the possible plans of the military to initiate unrest and fear among the people under the name of Counter-Strike-Committee (CSC). CSC caused fear among the people by poisoning drinking water, releasing criminals who then committed killings, stealing things from government factories, and destroying government buildings. The CSC under the control of U Ne Win and his Military Intellegents systematically caused unrest, especially in Rangoon, while the army was secretly preparing for a coup. The Army stole millions of kyats from the Union Bank, stole rice from several different stockpiles to bring to the barracks, and shuffled battalions from front-lines to the cities. Finally, U Ne Win commanded the soldiers, who were freshly removed from the front-lines and who never knew Rangoon and other cities, to shoot the people in peaceful demonstration.

The soldiers were told that the people were not ordinary civilians but "Insurgents" or "communists"! U Ne Win stated that "the Tatmadaw never shoot into the sky but to the target" in his last speech to the public before his resignation in October 1987. Everybody knew that the target he meant was "the people".

The Tatmadaw killed its own parents, brothers and sisters, and relations, and crushed the people power on September 18, 1988. Tens of thousands of civilians were killed during the peaceful demonstration and after the coup. These bloody events will never be erased from Burma's history. Innocent people sacrificed their lives for democracy in Burma and 8-8-88 has brought changes to Burma which can never be undone. People now do know clearly that it is only the military generals who rule the country which can never be ??? against the will of the people. There is no longer any BSPP, just the Army. So, the aim of the revolution is to eliminate military dictatorship from Burma. The goal is to achieve democracy and human rights in Burma. And the struggle continues.

8-8-88 brought significant changes to Burma.

-The democratic opposition has already chosen Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as their leader. As the co-founder and the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD), she must play a prominent role in Burma's politics

-Students formed their own organization and army, the ABSDF in the liberated area, ABSDF which plays a mediating role between the people inside Burma and the armed ethnic minorities.

-The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) was formed by the people's representatives who were elected in 1990 General Elections, and as an exile government works to achieve support from the international community, including the United Nations.

-The National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) was formed by the NLD(LA), Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), National Democratic Front (NDF) and NCGUB, which

plays the role to coordinate the armed opposition groups and other opposition groups in exile.

The opposition movement has yet to achieve the necessary political changes in Burma despite some progress such as the recent release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The 8-8-88 Spirit must always be alive in our soul, it must be the conscience of those of us are most responsible to complete the task, the Struggle for Democracy in Burma. □

## More Porters Escape

Since Slorc's military offensives against the KNU and ABSDF early this year, thousands of civilians from several different cities and towns were arrested and detained by the Burma Army for portage. Many of them tried to escape. In June and July, a number of porters escaped to border areas. The followings is a list of porters who reached the KNU territories. (Source; ABSDF)

1. Maung Thant Zaw, aged 23, farmer from Pegu
2. Maung Win Zaw, aged 22, worker in wrought iron factory from Pegu
3. Maung Htain Lin, aged 18, ex-soldier from Burma Army, Northern Okkalapa, Rangoon
4. Maung Than Soe, aged 22, farmer from Deik Oo, Pegu Division
5. Ko Tin Oo, aged 49, worker from cooking-oil factory from Waoh, Pegu Division
6. Maung Soe Thein, aged 18, unemployed, from Pao, Mon State
7. Maung Khin Maung Soe, aged 25, farmer from Pauk Taw village, Paung Dae Township

All had been forced to serve as porters under the control of Infantry Battalion (73). They were forced to carry food supplies and ammunition from military base camps to frontline posts several times. Maung Khin Maung Soe and Maung Soe Thein witnessed the execution of two porters by a soldier because due to exhaustion they refused to follow the troops. □

# What will be the concrete steps of Slorc to change into democratization process in Burma?

After Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, said he had prepared legislation that would impose tighter economic sanctions on Burma. The bill will be introduced unless Burma takes concrete steps... to initiate a process of national reconciliation, to formalize the transfer of power to a civilian government and correct the appalling record of human rights abuses.

## *Constructive result for Burmese, Thai people and regional security*

The action of the honourable Senator McConnell, Congressman Bill Richardson and other democratic forces who are advocating for democracy and human rights, have played a significant role in the history of Burma. As long as the military dictatorship is economically strong, in order to bring ever lasting peace in Burma, the objective for achieving democracy by using constructive engagement will never work. It is doubtful that the Thai foreign policy outlined by the new Foreign Minister Mr. Kasem Samosorn Kaswersri - "keeping the national interest above all else" actually bring positive results even for the Thai people. Thailand is choosing to support the military regime in Burma as they believe that this will be in the national interest of the country. We believe that encouraging the common people in Burma and those active in the democratic movement will serve Thailand interest for long term. The action of the Slorc over last few months should be a warning for Thailand, the threat of Thailand sovereignty along the border area and the boycott of Thai goods recently introduced by the Slorc should be indicative of the regimes attitude towards Thailand. By supporting the military regime, the Thai government will find that the benefits in the long term for national interest of Thailand will suffer

In the 1990 May elections the democratic

movement in Burma won by a clear majority. In order to implement the wish of the people to form a government so that our political problems will be solved through a democratic process is in the national interest of Thailand. The Thai government should be encouraging the Slorc to implement the democratic process. This will be a genuine constructive engagement policy that will unquestionably bring a constructive result to the oppressed people of Burma as well as for the Thai people. This is the path, now, Senator McConnell and other democratic leaders in the U.S. are advocating. Until concrete changes take place in Burma the initiation of the sanctions bill by the US is a way to pressure Slorc. To resume aid to the regime at this point in time is not a strong enough signal to the Slorc to begin the first steps towards democratization in Burma.

## *Slorc's play under a slogan of peace and solidarity*

On July 19, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said, "I have been released. That is all. Nothing else has changed." Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now out of house arrest but lives under the same restrictions and oppression as the rest of the country. On the other hand, the Slorc continues to promote its policy of achieving "peace and solidarity" by releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and entering into a cease fire with the New Mon State Party. However, on the other hand, it is attempting to achieve legitimacy through its so-called National Convention. It is also determined to crush the Karen National Union and the Karen National Progressive Party, the ethnic armed revolutionary force currently under fire by Slorc troops. It is crucial that these points are taken into account in order to establish a proper analysis of this important time in Burma.

Discussion between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Slorc under this current climate is not enough

of an indication that Slorc is on the path of democracy. Past experience has shown us that. There have been two meetings between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Slorc prior to her release and neither meeting resulted in any positive changes for the people of Burma. For the proponent of constructive engagement, however, the fact that the Slorc met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was heralded as a major success for constructive engagement, especially members of ASEAN. This is simply not so. Should the Slorc decide to resume their meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi then it is important for them to actually start implementing steps to democracy rather than just talking about it.

### *Slorc's so-called National Convention*

The National Convention is of great importance to the Slorc. It is their way to ensure that they will achieve permanent military rule in Burma under the disguise of a civilian authority. This is a well-designed ploy to prolong the military rule in Burma for the long run. It has been convened since 1993 and it is the longest convention in the world. It has now been adjourned to October 1995. Genuine National Reconciliation will never be established without ceasing Slorc's so-called "National Convention." Although Slorc military dictatorship remained in power by brute force, it still face the problem that it was an illegal government. Any legal pretense of seizing power to take care of some temporary emergency had completely disappeared with the May 1990 elections which were acknowledged by the United Nations and international observers as reflecting the will of the people. Anxious to try and find a way to change its illegal status, as apparently believing that the outside world is quite gullible, Slorc called a fraudulent "National Convention" to write a so-called constitution. It has been meeting off and on ever since. In reality it is not a National Convention; it is a Military Convention. It was called by the military; its day to day deliberations are supervised by the military and the military commanded the convention, in writing, the so-called constitution must guarantee the military the leading role in national politics in the future. A military Convention can never bestowed legality on a military dictatorship. We are witnessing a desperate ruse by a regime rightly

obsessed by its own legality.

### *National Solidarity*

For decades, under successive military dictatorships, genuine national solidarity has absolutely collapsed in Burma. Also, Slorc has employed a "divide and conquer" strategy, trying to split up the nationalities and the organizations that are resisting the dictatorship. The brutal behaviour of Slorc in their assault against the KNU under the pretext of religion was done with the objective of completely destroying the KNU. While international attention is focused on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Slorc is conducting a military campaign against the KNU in order to absolutely destroy it. Slorc troops has recently violated a cease fire agreement with the KNPP, created problems amongst the ethnic people and causing doubts among different ethnic nationalities. These act of aggression have done nothing to establish trust amongst the different ethnic towards Slorc.

Furthermore, Slorc is also chasing the students who are struggling for democracy and human rights hand-in-hand with the ethnic groups in liberated areas. It will take time to establish a genuine peace through the path of national reconciliation. The Slorc should announce immediately a nationwide cease fire in order for any future steps of national reconciliation to be taken seriously. It is essential for this step to be taken and implemented otherwise the Slorc will have no credibility in its policy of "peace and reconciliation."

### *Recommendations*

To pave the way for genuine national reconciliation, the following steps must be taken by the Slorc;

1. All political prisoners must be released.
2. Unjust laws and orders which deprive the basic freedom of the people must be revoked.
3. Nationwide cease-fire must be declared
4. Slorc's so-called National Convention must be ceased.
5. The on-going process of national reconciliation must be announced.



# AFL-CIO assure support sanctions

On July 24th 1995 Phil Fishman, International Affairs assistant director of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO), testified concerning Burma to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee's Sub-committee on Foreign Operations.

Speaking on behalf of thirteen and a half million members, Fishman spoke on three areas of concern: forced labour in Burma, actions by the ILO in regard to Burma and finally, sanctions against Burma.

Fishman noted that the Slorc's use of forced labour for infrastructure projects remains widespread and forced portering for the military continues unabated. Fishman based his testimony on interviews by AFL-CIO and other observers in ethnic controlled areas of Burma and in Thailand. He concluded that abuse of forced labour and porters by the Slorc's administrative and military units was systematic and brutal.

The AFL-CIO official told the Senate sub-committee that the diversity of situations in which the Slorc resorted to the use of forced labour was stunning. It was used for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy railroad in the south, the reconstruction of the palace moat in Mandalay, the HaiGyi island naval base in the delta, the sports complex in Loi Kaw. Fishman went on two particular examples, the alleged displacement of villagers and use of forced labour for the construction of the UNOCAL/TOTAL gas pipeline and the use of forced labour in works being undertaken in preparation for the "1996-Visit Myanmar Year".

Fishman referred to a documentary scheduled to be shown in Britain on July 25 which showed graphically the impact of the pipeline on the lives of local villagers, while another programme seen in the United States had revealed forced labours at work on a tourist site. He referred also to the coverage of forced portering for the Burma Army by the National Geographic magazine in its July issue.

The AFL-CIO official went on to describe to the Senate sub-committee the ILO's view that the Burmese government was systematically in violation of ILO Convention #29 (concerning forced labour) and #87 (freedom of association). He drew attention to action taken against Burma by the ILO's Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations ten times since 1981, what Fishman referred to as "a record virtually unmatched during the same time period." Unless there is a satisfactory response to the ILO's 1993 censure of the Burmese government, the ILO is likely to recommend in the near future "a comprehensive mission of inquiry" into a record of "unparalleled abuse."

The AFL-CIO representative conducted by congratulating the Senate on the legislation introducing sanctions against Burma which, he said, the AFL-CIO strongly supported, "in solidarity with our trade union brothers and sisters in the exiled Free Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB)." Mr. Fishman referred to a recent letter from AFL-CIO President, Lane Kirkland, to Aung San Suu Kyi, stating his belief, shared with Aung San Suu Kyi, that "it is democracy and civil society—not economic opportunism—which will ensure a better future for the citizens of Burma," assuring her that the AFL-CIO "will continue to support full international trade and investment sanctions" □

---

*"it is democracy  
and civil society—  
not economic  
opportunism—  
which will ensure a  
better future for  
the citizens of  
Burma,"*

---

# KNPP and Slorc's cease-fire

Slorc has followed a different "cease-fire" strategy to deal with the armed ethnic groups compared with the time before 1988. Cease-fires in the BSPP era were somehow intended to bring about peace talk or to solve the political problems even though they did not achieve the solutions. The Slorc claims it has no mandate to solve political problems and that cease-fire groups should participate in the so-called National Convention in order to discuss politics. Some armed groups which entered into cease-fire agreement with the Slorc in early 1991 were allowed to participate in the National Convention. Later, however other groups were not allowed to do so without a declaration of completed surrender to Slorc. Moreover, Slorc repeatedly violates the agreements made during cease-fire talks. There have also been assassinations of the leaders of armed ethnic groups which entered into cease-fire talk with the Slorc and it is believed that Slorc may have been behind these assassinations. "Border Area Development Program" is another approach used by the Slorc to send its Military Intelligents (MIs) as teachers or medical workers into cease-fire areas. Border development has not been effectively implemented in cease-fire areas.

The Slorc's military offensives against the KNPP, which had entered into a cease-fire agreement with the Slorc only three months before really exposed the Slorc's insincerity. KNPP and the Slorc held discussion three times on January 12, 1994, on November 10, 1994, and on March 6, 1995. On March 21, the cease-fire agreement ceremony was held in Loi Kaw, capital of Kayah State. Up to that time, KNPP had put forward 16 points an agreement and the Slorc rejected only one point. The point Slorc rejected was, to remove the landmines which were planted by Slorc troops for the security of Law Pta Hydro Power Plantation. The other 15 were, in brief: not to expand the Slorc's military strength in Kayah State, release political prisoners and KNPP soldiers, arrested by Slorc in Kayah State, allow the civilians to move

freely without fear of being detained for portage, forced labour, forced relocation, allow the KNPP to move freely in Kayah State, and full scale cease-fire in Kayah State.

Since the very beginning of the cease-fire agreement, Slorc did not keep the agreement. Slorc troops ambushed the KNPP, led by Second Commander in Chief Col. Aung Myat, on its way to their headquarters on the Thai-Burma border. The delegation went to discuss the border area development with the chairman of Kayah State Law and Order Restoration Council, Col. Maung Kyi, in Loi Kaw, on June 16. The delegation was told that Rangoon Central Command had sent an order that Slorc troops must move to strategic locations in Kayah State in order to prevent any trouble after the general elections in Thailand. The delegation responded that they did not accept this because it was in violation of the cease-fire agreement.

On June 26, Slorc started to move to launch military offensives against the KNPP. They detained civilians from several different towns in Karah State, seized horses, and demanded 200 kyats as porter fees from every household. According to escaped porters, there were about 1,500 porters, including elderly people, children and women. Slorc invaded the KNPP controlled areas under the operation code name "Tai Lon Hein (echo all over the state)" with 18 battalions. The battalions were: LIB 250, 336, 261, 423, 421, 426, 425 and IB???, altogether 8 battalions in northern part of KNPP territory and LIB 337, 428, 429, 530, 427, 424, 531, 520, 430 and LIB 102, altogether 10 battalions in southern part. The troops in the northern area were under the command of Lt. Col. Ko Ko Kyaw and the southern troops was under the command of Lt. Col. Min Din.

As a consequences of the Slorc offensives, thousands of Karenni civilians fled to border areas. The influx of refugees into Thailand made

Continued on page 35



*[The following is the story of U Nga Reh, general secretary of the Kayah State All Nationalities League for Democracy (KNLD), who was arrested by the Slorc before 1990 General Elections.*

*On July 18, 1995, he told to the DAWN that he wants the world to know about the suffering of political prisoners in Burma prisons under the Slorc. Editor]*

## U Nga Reh reveals his experience in prison

I would like to divide my story into two parts: the first concerns the movement of our party in Kayah State and the second is about my experiences in Myin Gyan and Mandalay prisons.

We formed our party, Kayah State All Nationalities League for Democracy (KNLD) on October 28, 1988. The party's aims and objectives were to promote unity among ethnic minorities in Burma, democracy, human rights and ethnic rights. We launched election campaigns in Kayah States in six different cities, Loi Kaw, De Maw So, Fruso, Baw Lakhea, Pha Saung and Sha Daw. Our chairman was U Sao Nwe Thauang who was arrested on August 18, 1989 just two months before I was arrested. We were told that we were arrested because we made anti-Tatmadaw speeches during our election campaigns, and we talked about forced portage and forced labour. We believe that there was one more reason, the Slorc wanted to remove all parties from the legal fold which could rival the Slorc-backed National Unity Party (NUP).

Although the Slorc arrested the top leaders of our party, we still managed to win two seats in the 1990 General Elections. U Khin Maung Cho from constituency 1 and U Victor Leh from constituency 2 of De Maw So township were successful. U Khin Maung Cho, an executive member of the KNLD also became a representative in National Convention. He was later expelled from the convention because of his harsh criticism of the military government. Finally, without any explanation Slorc abolished our party on March 3, 1992.

I would now like to talk about our arrest in 1989. As I said, U Sao Ngwe Thauang, our chairman, was arrested on August 18, 1989. Later on September 15, our secretary I U Zaw Myint was arrested and my self on October 26. The three of us were locked together in Loi Kaw Prison before being sent to Myin Gyan Prison. U Zaw Myint and I were sentenced to 5 years imprisonment and U Sao Ngwe Thauang was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. We were then moved to Myin Gyan Prison on December 13, 1989. A year and a half

later, some 40 political prisoners were split into others prisons in Mandalay and Meik Htila due to their secret political activities in prison. U Zaw Myint's prison term was increased by one more year for this reason. U Sao Ngwe Thauang and I were sent to Mandalay Prison in June 1991 and U Zaw Myint to Meik Htila.

#### In Myin Gyan Prison:

As I said we three were locked together in Loi Kaw for about three months. U Sao Ngwe Thauang was called to Taunggyi, Eastern Command Headquarters, and interrogated for two months. We were treated the same as other criminals in Loi Kaw. These criminals and ourselves were moved to Myin Gyan on December 13, 1989. We had to sleep in Meik Htila over night before we reached Myin Gyan. The prison officers did not allow us to sleep without chains on that night.

On the 14th, we were at the gate of Myin Gyan Prison, where we were checked for three hours. Our belongings were seized and we were given one thin blanket and three white prison uniforms. We three were kept locked in chains even in this small prison cell which was about 8 ft. by 12 ft. We had to use this one thin blanket as a bed on the concrete floor. We had to eat and sleep in this concrete room which was also our toilet. Actually, we did not have a toilet, just a small pot which we used as a chamber pot. Our request to have drinking water inside the cell was ruthlessly rejected. There was only a 1 foot square window on the iron door to allow us fresh air

At the beginning, we were allowed to be freed for a morning and afternoon for walk. However, everything had to do with money. We had to bribe the wardens with 20 kyats and above for each and every request to do this and that. From 6.00 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. was the time we could walk outside. We occasionally made discussion with other political prisoners. Unfortunately, everything was changed, after the NLD and BCP members held discussions. All freedom was lifted. We were told by the wardens that it was because the discussion (the wardens called it "fighting") was very noisy. After that there was no permission to communicate with other prisoners during our walk. At night, we were not al-

lowed to use a light, and no talking or whispering was allowed. We never succeeded to persuade the wardens to let us read even a piece of paper in the cell. It was a crime if you were found with a smuggled piece of paper or prohibited materials. Even worse, we were not allowed to use mosquito repellent. As you know, Myin Gyan has very hot weather and a lot of mosquito.

One thing I saw for the first time in my life. Monks were punished by laymen. Do you know, we witnessed prison officers forced 5 monks to disrobe and wear white prison uniforms like other prisoners. Of course, those monks had been arrested and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment like us because of the allegation that they had participated in politics. All prisoners, including the monks were controlled by other prisoners, the in charge persons who were appointed by the wardens. They were all criminals. They were like gangsters and asked us for money for many reasons. Sometime, they were much worse than the wardens. They would beat us for no reason. Everytime they came to check us (I do not know what they were checking for) we had to sit in "standard squat" until they completed their checking. If they were not satisfied with the way we sat, we were subjected to beatings. We were not allowed to see their faces while we were sitting (squatting). If we did not follow, there would be beatings again. All from appointed in charge persons to the top prison officers, used to come frequently to "checking" and demand money.

#### Mandalay Prison

When I heard that we were going to be moved to Mandalay Prison, I thought Mandalay would be a little better than the present prison. Actually, Mandalay was worse. We found ourselves at the gate of Mandalay Prison on April 30, 1994, sitting (squatting) in front of prison officers and wardens. They forced us to cover our heads with black cloth, they then searched our bodies. We were also beaten but never understood why. U Sao Ngwe Thauang was beaten the worst because he shouted at the wardens not to beat the prisoners. We were herded into small cells. It was a shock to find myself alone in a very small cell after all. One month later, I got to know that everybody had been put in solitary confinement like me. We all were

locked in chains even during our solitary confinement. We only got one bamboo mat for sleeping and a dirty chamber pot. Nobody got drinking water only very thin boiled rice which was like "salty glue." Many times I had to pretend to eat this glue because I did not want to be beaten.

After one month solitary confinement, we were put 3 persons in a small cell again. It was us different from the last month except that we could talk each other. We were not allowed to receive any visitors for six months. Ten of us who were moved from Myin Gyan were not allowed to see any relatives for one year. After that, we were moved to the cells where all the political prisoners were locked. The cells were the same size as the last one but had more people this time. I was squeezed into this small cell with 4 other persons until we ended our jail term. I saw other prisoners whose jail term were already over but they had to bribe kyat 3,000 to 5,000 to the wardens and officers for their release. Many prisoners who sentences of less than 10 years imprisonment were forced to go to "labour camps" which were the recruiting center for forced labourers and porters or mine-sweepers. If you could bribe thousands of kyats you could be spared from this. Can you imagine, how a prisoner can earn that much money?

In terms of the food we got in prison, our daily

food was only boiled rice and vegetables which were not edible. Almost everybody got diarrhoea. We got meat once a week. But, after the deduction by the wardens, so, we got just one third of the total, 33 gram per person.

I was released on December 27, 1993 but nobody appeared to pay the bail so, I had to wait for two more weeks in Mandalay No. 5 Police Station. I saw about 300 prisoners there. It was a hell. Five or more people died everyday from malnutrition and diseases. Throughout my days in prisons, we never saw any attempt by the prisons to take responsibility to provide medical care for ailing prisoners. January 1, 1994 was my last day in that hell. I wished all the best for U Sao Ngwe Thaung and U Zaw Myint, including all other political prisoners in the whole Burma. I was sure there were far worse experiences of other political prisoners in prisons such as Insein, Ye Kyi-I. U Sao Ngwe Thaung was released at the end of April, 1995 and U Zaw Myint was on January 10, 1995.

I want the world to know about the suffering of the political prisoners in Burma's prisons under Slorc. There were no human rights at all. We were treated like animals. I was released but there are thousands of political prisoners still suffering each day in Burma's prisons.

□

Continued from page 32

clear the violation of the cease-fire agreement. Slorc Secretary I Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt realized this situation and sent a letter to the Chairman of the KNPP, Gen. Aung Than Lay, to attempt to soothe the international condemnation, on July 3. In the letter, he claimed that the fighting was just the result of misunderstanding between the KNPP and Slorc's troops and that the Slorc had no intention to destroy the peace which had been achieved through the cease-fire agreement. Khin Nyunt asked the KNPP to solve the problems with the Slorc officers at the front-line. It was obvious that Lt. Gen Khin Nyunt was trying to cover the direct responsibility of the Rangoon junta. Why

did the Rangoon Central Command not simply deactivate its troops in KNPP area?

What is the real meaning of cease-fire talks under Slorc's term? The international community and the armed ethnic groups and the civilians in Burma had been frequently cheated by the Slorc. So the question is, what extent is the Slorc sincere in its approach to the process of national reconciliation, peace and solidarity? All the armed ethnic groups who have entered into cease-fire talk with the Slorc have suffered. Slorc need to change its approach to peace and solidarity otherwise the civil war in Burma will never end. □

GREATER  
AUTONOMY  
FOR  
CHINESE

CHINESE  
BURMA

SAVING/95

Address correction requested



PRINTED MATTER  
BY AIRMAIL

If undelivered, please return to  
P.O.Box 1352, GPO, Bangkok, 10501, THAILAND