

DAWN



BURMA DESERVES MORE PRESSURE

The recent crackdown against the National League for Democracy (NLD) and its supporters demonstrate, once again, there are still no signs of progress towards democratic change and respect for human rights under the military regime of Slorc. The entire people of Burma continue to suffer under oppressive military rule.

The facts show there has been no progress towards democracy in Burma since Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release over one year ago. Slorc has repeatedly denied the NLD's call for a dialogue aimed at national reconciliation. Human rights abuses and harassment of peaceful pro-democracy activists have escalated significantly during the past months. The heavy sentence given to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's private secretary, U Win Htein, and the continued detention of her appointment secretary, U Aye Win, are blatant attempts to isolate the popular leader of Burma's democracy movement. These events have dashed any optimism that the Slorc intended, by releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from imprisonment, anything other than a cosmetic exercise to gain some international favor.

The timing of the recent crackdown on the NLD coincides with ASEAN's welcoming of Burma as a member of a regional group and planned welcome in the near future to the Asian Nations Free Trade Area (AFTA). Additionally, certain members of the US government are pushing for a weaker version of the Burma Freedom and Democracy Act. The original version, introduced by Senator Mitch McConnell, would have imposed economic sanctions immediately. The weaker version of the Bill allows President Clinton to impose stiff trade, travel and economic sanctions against Burma should it military rulers jail Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or launch large-scale repressive measures against the country's democracy movement.

It is morally wrong for the members of ASEAN to watch Slorc's crackdown on the NLD and Slorc's silencing of opposition voices in Burma and then welcome Burma as a member of its regional grouping. It is tactically unwise for the United States to water down Senator McConnell's original Bill. Both actions only assist Slorc to hang onto power for longer.

It is a time to enact swift economic sanctions against Slorc and to exert more pressure against a military regime which has continuously violated the human rights of its own citizens, and continuously ignored the demands of both the international community and its own people. Burma needs no more time to wait for freedom and democracy. The time for more pressure and more action is now.

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ABSDF Statement in Commemoration of 8888 Pro-democracy uprising

August 8, 1996 was the eight years since the 8-8-88 popular democratic uprising in which the people in Burma expressed their will for freedom and democracy in their motherland. The significant day continued the traditions of Burmese people who fought against the Imperialists and the Fascists for national freedom. On this occasion, eight years ago, the whole people in Burma broke down the system of one-party dictatorship and spearheaded the democratic movement.

“in these eight years,” the ABSDF statement said “under the rule of the military dictatorship, the people have not only been deprived of the democratic and human rights, the health, education, social and economic situation of the country are also heading for devastation.”

The ABSDF, which arose during the 8888 democratic uprising, for eight years, has been struggling for the well-being of the whole people, regardless of race, religion, political belief and class, with the spirit of 8888 which never bows down and dares confront the military dictatorship in Burma.

“Faced with difficulties and hardships” the ABSDF expressed its commitment “to continue to under-take the historical task of the people to struggle, sacrificing lives and

blood, against the military dictatorship which has not yet completed.” It also said “New generation forces, born of the 8888 democratic uprising, stand in solidarity with the ethnic resistance forces and the organizations which are struggling for their political belief, on the basis of anti-militarism, internal peace and national unity.”

The ABSDF appealed to the international community to continue monitoring the current situation in Burma and put pressure on SLoRC until it initiates a genuine democrati-zation process.

For its perspectives, the ABSDF said “to achieve democracy, human rights and ethnic rights are of paramount importance for internal peace and national unity in Burma. These will not be restored as long as the militarism exists in Burma, and, only when the militarism has been absolutely wiped out, can genuine internal peace and national unity be established. Only then, can the social and economic situation of the people be developed.”

In the statement, ABSDF vowed to continue struggle until the militarism in Burma has



Commemoration of 8888 at the ABSDF's Southern Region.

been overthrown, in loyalty to the monks, students and the people who sacrificed their lives in the democratic movement.

The commemoration of the eighth anniversary of August 8, 1988 were held in the ABSDF camps organized by the regional working committees respectively. At the ABSDF Headquarters (Dawn Gwin), the commemoration was held in the morning of

August 8, 1996. The opening speech was given by Kyaw Kyaw, vice-chairman of ABSDF and in his speech, he urged the fellow students to continue the unfinished struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma with the spirit of 8888 movement. Various topics such as the history of 8888, the role of ABSDF after the 8888 and the political development after 1988 were presented by the members of ABSDF headquarters.

Similar commemoration was also organized by the Regional Working Committee (Southern) at the Minthamee camp on the same day, which was attended by the camp members, responsible persons and special guests from the alliance forces. The event was chaired by Myo Win, member of CEC and ABSDF statement was read by Win Aung, member of Minthamee camp committee. The history of 8888 was jointly presented by Maung Than Hlaing and Ma Khin Nwe, both of them are students of Pyo Pan Wai primary school in the camp. The struggle and new generation topic was discussed by Ma Hla May from Burmese Women's Union and Than Aung of ABSDF presented the title, Current situation and the ABSDF. At the closing session,



*Some of the participants seen
at the 8888 commemoration in Bangkok.*

the revolution songs were sung by the participants and attendants were entertained with "the museum of heroes", a radio play by the Minthamee camp members.

Burmese students and international supporting groups also marked this historic day by staging protest demonstrations in front of the Burmese embassies across the world. The demonstrations were held in Bangkok, USA and Australia by the students and patriotic Burmese. In Bangkok, Thailand, photo exhibition and Burmese culture show was held at the Thai-German Culture Center. The commemoration was open by Dr. Suthin Nopakaet, a MP and member of Thai Human Rights Standing committee. Dr. Naing Aung, Chairman of ABSDF gave a opening speech and explained the history and sacrifice of Burmese students since 1988. The students, Thai and foreign guests and media attended and enjoyed the photo exhibition and Burmese cultural show.

NCUB's lobby trip to the Philippines

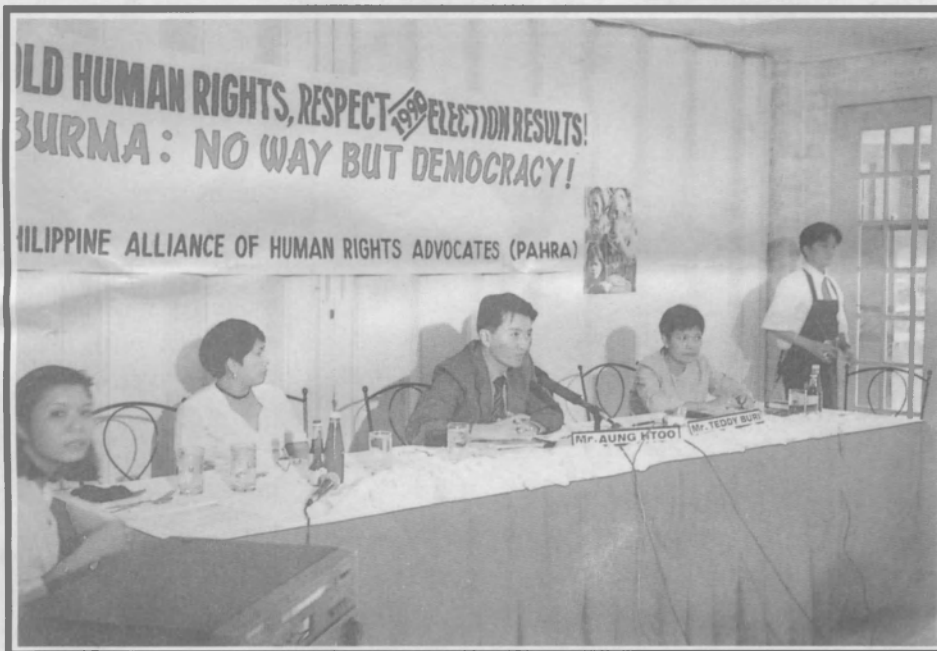
With the assistance of the leaders of Forum-Asia, a NGO based in Thailand, U Teddy Buri and U Aung Htoo, the chairman and coordinator of the Foreign Committee of the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) launched a lobby trip to the Philippines between June 9-14, 1996. The trips aimed to raise awareness among the general public of the Philippines on the political issues and current situation of Burma and to urge the political leaders of the Philippines in order to review the constructive engagement policy practiced by the ASEAN countries.

The mission was welcomed by the

representatives of the Philippines Alliance of Human Rights Advocate (PAHRA) and arranged the series of meeting and seminars on Burma issue. During the meetings with the human rights activists and politicians, the Burmese mission explained about the destructive result of the constructive engagement policy and urged the Philippine people should join hands with the oppressed Burmese and carry out the grass-roots based activities to put pressure on Slorc. In the press release "Appeal to the ASEAN Countries Regarding the Policy of Constructive Engagement" issued by the Burmese lobby delegation, it said the Philippines should initiate to review the policy of the constructive engagement among

the ASEAN countries.

The Burmese lobby mission met the several human right activists and politicians including Congressman Romeo Candazo, Vice-chairman, Foreign affairs committee, House of Representatives of the Philippines and explained the current situation in Burma.



NCUB's mission in the Philippines.

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Now, however, the tactic being employed bypasses the quota system entirely, with young men being forcibly recruited entirely at random. As a result, the price for a substitute has recently gone up to 75,000 kyats.

According to Naga youth who escaped

and reached the Indo-Burmese border, there were many physical and psychological torture methods employed during the military training period. Salaries were also cut off for some reason, it was reported. Many of those interviewed spoke of terrible suffering during their time in the army.

ABSDF participates human rights training in the Netherlands

Min Aung, in-charge of the ABSDF Foreign Affairs Committee participated human rights training (1996 Special Teaching Program on development, law and social justice) held at Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, Netherlands from April 18 to June 15, 1996.

The training aims to provide participants with a space to exchange their experience as human rights workers; to deepen their theoretical understanding and enhance their practical knowledge on human rights defence, and on the promotion of policies and strategies

aiming at social and cultural transformations within their own countries and in the world at large; and to foster a climate of mutual trust and respect for mutual sharing and learning so as to encourage cooperation between human rights workers in various fields. Participants at the training were from India, USA, Philippines, Costa Rica, Panama, Nigeria, Sudan, Malawi, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Cameroon, Yugoslavia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Zaire, South Africa, Indonesia, Chile, Sri Lanka and Ethiopia.

Min Aung presented "Case studies on

Burma" at the workshop held during the training and explained the current situation and future perspectives of the country. He organized meetings and talks with the Burma support groups and Burmese community in the Netherlands and Geneva.



ABSDF's representative at the training session.

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The Burmese military dictators regularly use slave labor to construct infrastructure projects to satisfy the needs of foreign investors. The elected democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has asked for an international boycott of all trade and investment until genuine democracy is restored. Currently all foreign investment involves payoffs to the military who use this

money to buy arms to kill and suppress the Burmese people. "Fosters is exporting to Burma, we must stop them" the leaflet distributed by BWU reads. "Trade sanctions worked for South Africa and with your support, we will make it works for Burma." it said.

BWU also appeals to Australians to boycott those Australian businesses such as Fosters who place business profits ahead of morality.



BWU ACTIVITIES IN THE REGIONS

Burmese Women's Union successfully held the closing ceremony of manual loom training on August 18, 1996 in the No. (4) Organizing Region. About 20 members of BWU attended the two-month long training.

Closing training was chaired by joint secretary of BWU's central organizing committee and an opening speech was delivered. In the speech, she urged the fellow members of BWU to work for



Participants at the closing ceremony of manual loom training.



First prize awarded to the winner.

the movement of democracy with the co-operation and understanding of the male counterparts. The prizes were awarded to the outstanding trainees in the training.

Another second closing ceremony of embroider training was also held in Minthamee camp, No(1) Organizing Region. The ceremony was held on July 7, 1996 and attended by the trainers and trainees. San San

Nwe, BWU member took responsibility as the in-charge of the training and Ma Sein Aye, another BWU member worked as the trainer. First prize went to Ma Tin Yu Swe. It was known that ten trainees from Minthamee camp under the leadership of BWU Organizing Committee finished the training successfully.

BWU LAUNCHES 'BOYCOTT FOSTERS BEER' CAMPAIGN

Burmese Women's Union (Australia Branch) launches "Boycott Fosters Beer" and calls for the Australian people to support democracy for Burma. Letter campaign to Managing Director of Carlton & United Breweries Pty Ltd has been launched.

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Nordic Foreign Ministers Deplore Situation In Burma

The foreign ministers of the five Nordic countries called for Burma's military government to release imprisoned members of Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD.

Burma has been an increasingly sore point with the Nordic countries since the death in prison in June of James Leander Nichols, a former honorary consul for several of the countries.

Norwegian officials have said Nichols, an associate of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was repeatedly tortured through sleep deprivation. He was arrested for illegally possessing two fax machines and telephone switchboard, Burmese government newspapers said.

In a statement, the foreign ministers of Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland urged Burma to release detained members of the National League for Democracy and other political prisoners.

They also demanded an "impartial and

independent" investigation of Nichols' death. On other matters, the foreign ministers expressed concern about the renewed fighting in Chechnya said they will continue to push for the election of Sweden to the United Nations Security Council for 1997-98.

Malaysian NGOs denounced Gen. Than Shwe's visit

Twenty eight non government organizations have expressed their objection to the visit by General Than Shwe, head of SLORC to Malaysia. The delegations delivered a public statement to Wisma Putra objecting the state visit at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, August 14. The letter was received on the Minister's behalf by officials.

"It is internationally recognized that this regime is guilty of the massacre of thousands of unarmed civilians exactly eight years ago and it is the same regime which refuses to honor the result of the 1990 election and which continues to jail, torture, murder and enslave thousands of Burmese", the letter said.

The letter also reminded Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi that Gen. Than Shwe's regime had continued to harass and plague the elected representatives of the Burmese people, jailing with impunity the elected Members of Parliament and their supporters.

One of the



Malaysian activists with "Don't Support Slorc" banner.

members of NGO delegation, Fan Yew Teng, said it was extremely unfortunate and disappointing that Malaysia had put itself in a position to be seen as an accomplice of the Slorc.

The group composed of ABIM (Malaysian Youth Muslim Movement), ASA Media Center, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, Burma Solidarity Group, Malaysia Cenpeace, Center for Orang Asli (Indigenous Peoples), Concerns Democratic Action Party, Socialist Youth, Ideal Time, INSAN, JUST World Trust, Labor Resource Center, Parti Rakyat Malaysia (Peoples Party Malaysia), Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall Youth, SUARAM, Support Committee for Urban Pioneer Settlers, and United Chinese School Teachers Association called upon Malaysian government, to use this opportunity to express concern at the crisis in Burma and encourage the SLORC to cease these atrocities against its own people.

U.S Denounces Jailing of Dissidents in Burma

The United States on August 21, 1996 denounced the reported jailing of 11 Burmese dissidents and called on Burma's military rulers to start a dialogue with the opposition.

The opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) reported the seven-year sentences of its members. It said those jailed included Win Htein, personal assistant to the party's Nobel Peace prize-winning leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. State Department spokesman Glyn Davies said Washington was concerned by the reports.

"We view this as another in a series of oppressive actions by the regime to prevent Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters from exercising their rights," he told reporters. Davies described as ominous recent actions

by Burma's ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc). "The Slorc has violated with impunity the human rights of the Burmese people," he said. "What remains to happen in Burma ... is that (the authorities) enter into a genuine dialogue with the National League for Democracy ... That is the key to reconciliation in that country," he added.

Davies said the United States had not ruled out sanctions against Burma and continued to discuss firmer measures against the Rangoon government with regional powers including Japan, Thailand and Australia. Washington gained little support for such measures, however, at a meeting last month of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Lawsuit against UNOCAL

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma on behalf of the people of Burma and the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma on behalf of the workers of Burma, filed a lawsuit against UNOCAL in a US Federal Court in Los Angeles on September 3, 1996.

The lawsuit alleges that UNOCAL in forming a joint venture with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) in Burma to explore for, produce and build a natural gas pipeline from the Yadana field to Thailand is seriously harming the people of Burma. The NCGUB and FTUB are claiming that UNOCAL is negligent in carrying out its business activities because it knew or should have known that its joint venture partner Slorc engages in severe repression, human rights abuses, and money laundering obtained from the forced labor of villager. the lawsuit further alleges that Unocal and its partners conspired to cause injury to the people of Burma in building the pipeline. The NCGUB and the FTUB are therefore, seeking relief and damages for

the injured parties from UNOCAL.

The plaintiffs are represented by the law office of Cristobal Bonifaz of Amherst, Massachusetts, the International Labor Rights and Education Fund of Washington, DC and the Center for Human Rights and Constitution Law in Los Angeles.

The lawsuit is the latest in series of activities launched by supporters and advocates for democracy in Burma, that will deny resources to the illegitimate military dictatorship in Burma. The move closely follows the campaign launched in August in Denmark by the labor movement to boycott companies doing business in Burma, the adoption in July by the US Senate of the Cohen-Feinstein Amendment that will limit US bilateral and multilateral assistance to Burma, as well as restrict entry into the United States of Slorc officials and provides for the President to prohibit new investments in Burma if the generals commit large scale repression of or violence against the democracy movement; the legislation in June that barred the State of Massachusetts from purchasing goods and services from firms doing business in Burma; and numerous other initiatives worldwide.

Young Leaders call on freedom in Burma

Participants of the FDL-AP Young Leaders' workshop, voiced their protest against State Law and Order Restoration Council, military regime in Burma and expressed their solidarity with the Burmese democratic forces.

Altogether 50 participants from Burma, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the Philippines, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Japan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Nepal and Korea participated the a week-long workshop held in Seoul, Korea

between August 25-31. Thet Thet Lwin participated as a representative of Burmese Women's Union. The workshop was jointly organized by Forum of Democratic Leaders (Asia-Pacific Region) (FDL-AP) and Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS) to develop the democratization among the Asia-Pacific region.

FDL-AP is an organization founded since December 1994. It is chaired by Kim Dae-Jung and co-presidents are Corazon Aquino (former President of the Philippines), Oscar Arias (Former Costa Rican President) and Sonia Gandhi (widow of former Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi). Burmese democratic leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is one of the honorable patrons of this organization.

In the resolution issued after the workshop, the participants agree that while many countries have managed to stabilize the practice of democracy, there are still countries, most notable Burma and Indonesia, which are currently going through initial or unstable transitions towards democracy.

"We urged the leaders of ASEAN countries to reconsider their practice of 'constructive engagement' with the illegitimate Slorc regime," the resolution said. The participants of Young Leaders' Workshop expressed their support and determine to bring about government on business respect for the call of the National League for Democracy for economic sanction.

A protesting letter to Slorc was also sent by the participants. In the letter, the participants denounced the crack down on opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her NLD party by military regime in Burma recently. They also urged Slorc to release all detainees immediately and withdraw ridiculous charge which is something about preventing anarchy.

Burmese democratic leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi called economic sanctions against Slorc by ending all links between the European and Burma based on trade, tourism and investment in Burma by European companies. She called on the European Commission to suspend trade preferences granted to Burma in view of the used of forced labor and to introduce a total boycott of economic and trade relations, in her video smuggled out of Burma and shown to Member of European Parliament July 18, 1996.

*Transcript of video
by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
shown in the European Parliament
on July 18, 1996.*

Q *Do you advocate imposing economic sanctions upon Burma?*

A Yes, at the moment, I do. For some time I have already considered whether or not we should support economic sanctions, but because of the situation in Burma today we do support the sanctions.

Q *In what way should sanctions be imposed?*

A Well, in any way they can, depends on the country. I think what we want is the kind of sanctions that will make it quite clear that economic change in Burma is not possible without political change.

Q *What impact would those sanctions have on the people of Burma?*

A It will have very little impact on the ordinary people of Burma. I say the only people who the sanctions will effect are the privileged ones.

Q *Would economic sanctions involved regressively isolating Burma?*

A I do not think so, because I do not think everybody is going to join in these economic

sanctions, but still what the sanctions will show is that there has to be political reform, before we can think of achieving true economic development in this country.

Q *Does foreign investment strengthen the process of democratization?*

A Not so far, it has nothing to strengthen the process of democratization. In fact, what it has done is to convince the authorities, that they can go ahead without conceding a at all to the demands for democratization.

Q *How would sanctions to be implemented by the European Union be effective with the continued economic relations with ASEAN and China?*

A The economic development of a country, good business anywhere is foremost dependent on confidence, and I think what the sanctions will do is to decrease business confidence in Burma. the investments made in Burma by the ASEAN countries and by



China have nothing to do with the infrastructure, such investments have done nothing to improve the infrastructure of the country and unless there is an improvement in the infrastructure we will not be able to achieve sustained development. The kind of investments that will keep coming in, if the European Union imposes sanctions and if the United States imposes sanctions, would be the kind of investments that we have seen already the over the last few years. investments in the

tourist industry and department stores and consumer goods outlets and these of course are only related to the very privileged group.

Q *Would the local private sector perceive sanctions implemented by the European Union as a western imposition of its values?*

A I do not think they will think of it as a western imposition of its values. They do very well know that it is a political action. Especially if such sanctions are critically linked to the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on Burma. We in the NLD believe very strongly that any form of international action should be linked to the General Assembly resolution on Burma. It should be undertaken in order to bring about the implementation of the terms of the resolution.

Q *I would like to ask you about the recent withdrawal of Pepsico from Burma? Does that recent withdrawal meet objectives of your appeal for the withdrawal of foreign investments in Burma?*

A We do not consider that Pepsico has withdrawn from Burma at all. The name Pepsi Cola is still used, 7-Up, Miranda. The company trade names are still used and as I understand it the company is still sending the necessary ingredients for the soft drink to Burma, so we do not consider that this constitutes a withdrawal.

Q *In what ways, if any, is forced labor related to foreign investments?*

A Well, forced labor is related to, let's say, foreign connection in general rather than foreign investment, because forced labor, of course, is linked to such things as gas pipelines, but also forced labor is used to make the country attractive for tourists, so tourism of course is linked to international connections and in that sense it is linked to the tourist industry. Roads are built, bridges are built, tourist sights are prettied up. You have heard of this infamous

moat of the Mandalay Palace on which there is convict labor, so forced labor is used to make the country attractive as the authorities understand it.

Q *Does the current policy of the European Union which is called a policy of critical dialogue, does it adequately encourage the regime to change into a direction of respecting fundamental human rights?*

A I have never been quite certain exactly what they meant by critical dialogue. I am all in favor of dialogue. I think that people should talk to each other and so I have got nothing to say against dialogue. It's just what accompanies this dialogue. Critical dialogue, if by critical dialogue it is meant by you carry on a dialogue with the authorities in order to let them understand that the terms of the General Assembly resolution have to be implemented, that is perfectly fine. But if you say one thing and do another, that is not fine, so just a critical dialogue by itself means nothing unless action is taken to reinforce principles of this critical dialogue which, as I understand it, the principles are to bring about early democratization of Burma, to have the terms of the General Assembly resolution implemented. We think this is the time for convergent international efforts with regard to the democratization process in Burma. We have reached a critical period when we must decide whether Burma is going to be allowed to go forward with the full participation of its people or whether we are condemned to stagnate on the margins of regional prosperity, so we would like to appeal to the whole international community, the United Nations and its agencies, to the ILO and to the all NGOs who are interested in promoting democracy and human rights the world over, to help the cause of Burma in any way they can.

Nothing has changed but more repression are being launched on the political opposition in Burma by the Slorc. Although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release raised hopes for an improvement in the Slorc's human rights practices and policy, the pace of political arrests has in fact accelerated dramatically since November 1995. Some 1,000 political prisoners remain behind bars throughout the country. Law No. 5/96, a Slorc's new law issued on June 7, 1996 allows for up to 20 years' imprisonment of anyone who expresses their political views publicly.

In March 1996, U Pa Pa Lay and U Lu Zaw, two members of a comedy troupe, were given seven year jail sentences after an independence day performance which included dances, songs and jokes satirizing the authorities. Their trial was conducted inside Mandalay prison and they were denied any legal representation. Both were sent to labor camps and forced to work long hours breaking rocks whilst shackled with iron bars across their legs.

In March 1996, Sein Hla Aung and Zaw Zaw Myaing were sentenced to three and two years in prison respectively for distributing videotapes of Aung San Suu Kyi's. At about the same time local officials reportedly began arresting people for watching the videos in private homes.

Later the same month, NLD member U Saw Hlaing was arrested on 15 March after the car he was driving hit a trishaw in Bago Division, hurting three of its occupants. Neither his family nor lawyers were allowed to provide him with legal assistance or accompany him to court, where he was subsequently sentenced to five years' imprisonment for "grievous bodily harm". According to the NLD, the police forced the three people in the trishaw to remain in hospital for 22 days, even though one of them had only dislocated a thumb and the other one had received two

stitches on the chin. Under Burmese law in order for an injury to be considered "grievous bodily harm" the individual concerned must have remained in the hospital for at least 21 days.

In May 1996, the authorities arrested more than 300 NLD members following an announcement by the party that it would hold a weekend meeting to commemorate the sixth anniversary of their election victory. Despite the release of most of the detainees, about 31 are still in prison. Among those arrested were Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's bodyguard — Maung San Hlaing.

On August 15, Win Htein, a close aide to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, arrested in last May was slapped with a seven-year term for his role in the making of a video tape of arid rice fields aimed at countering the government's rosy agricultural projections. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said Win Htein had only made an appointment with her to meet the two farmers involved in the making of the film. Along with him Po Aye, Htein Lin, Hla Tun Aung, Kan Shein and three other NLD members were sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment under the Emergency Act (5)J, on the 15th of August 1996. Slorc has doubled the prison sentence of Win Htein to 14 years, the NLD sources said on September 3, 1996.

Another 10-year sentence went on August 15, to Hlaing Myint (a) Billy McKenzie, Kyaw Khin (NLD- Taunggyi) and Maung Maung Wan for allegedly attempting to form illegal youth organizations by monetary fundings, distribution of anti-government papers and video tapes. Hlaing Myint, Kyaw Khin and Maung Maung Wan were put on trial and the Insein Township Court and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for breaching the 1985 Television and Video Law, Act (40 and also another 7 years of imprisonment under the Emergency Act (5) J, on the 15th of August 1996.

Another 19 NLD supporters including Khun Myint Tun, one of elected MPs were arrested and sentenced in the same week for allegedly involved in the plot and also distributed leaflets the newspaper said were intended to undermine government programs to develop the country. They were charged with violating the country's strict public laws and sentenced to seven year terms and an additional three years each for breaching the 1985 Television and Video Act. Burmese official media reported on August 22, that "Action had been taken" against the 19 NLD members for distributing anti-government material and conniving with outside forces to destabilize the country.

Now the number of political prisoners has gone up to at least 60, including 9 people who were arrested only for being regular attendees of the weekend talks in front of Aung San Suu Kyi's house. These nine were not arrested at the talks but back at their homes late at night. At least nine are now in Insein prison, and one has already been sentenced to seven years in prison. These nine were not NLD party members or party of the NLD youth

wing. They were merely regular at-tendees of the talks. One day in early June, a single monk, U Khetsara, stood on a main thoroughfare (in front of Sule Pagoda) with a sign calling for dialogue. He was arrested and sentenced last week to seven years in prison. Although some suggested him to apologize and plead for leniency, he refused to do so, saying that he had done nothing wrong. The Slorc has forced him to disrobe, but he is still following the 5 precepts and preaching Buddhism in the prison.

Five students who met with senior NLD members earlier in August were also arrested. Ye Htun, Taung Ni, Lwin Aung, and Myo Than were taken away on August 9, 1996 and Nyein Hlaing was taken on August 12th. Their whereabouts are unknown.

The arrest and more repression inside Burma express although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release raised hopes for an improvement in the government's human rights practice and policy, the pace of show that political arrests has in fact accelerated dramatically since November 1995.



In 1988, the Burmese military brutally crushed the mass uprising and calls for democracy by its people; took over the rein of government; and renamed itself as Slorc (State Law and Order Restoration Council). The ASEAN countries have since recognized Slorc. Soon after Thailand initiated the Constructive Engagement Policy towards Burma, which the ASEAN subsequently adopted. Under this policy, the ASEAN countries are to keep a warm relationship with Slorc, so that the grouping can encourage Slorc to make reforms for the country's development.

IS THE ASEAN REALLY CONSTRUCTIVE?

From the beginning, the concept of constructive engagement policy is in open clash with the democratic forces worldwide. Partly, the difference is based on ideology, and partly, it is based on the ASEAN's vested economic interest in Burma. Therefore, the argument in favor of the constructive engagement policy deserves a close look.

The ASEAN's economic engagement with Slorc does not lead to real economic development of Burma and its people, although it does lead the ruling junta towards the insatiable taste for power and money

(1) THAT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TAKES PRIORITY OVER THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT.

The ASEAN holds that the economic development of a country is the precondition for its political development, therefore, developing the economy takes first priority; and engaging Slorc to help Burma develop economically will eventually lead to the country's political development. Even if this line of thought holds true, the ASEAN so far has not done anything substantive towards the kind of economic reforms Burma needs. What it has done so far results more in its own benefits? The genuine economic progress for Burma will come about only when its political system makes fundamental changes required by a healthily progressing economy. Such measures as developing key infrastructures and human resources, sound public sector planning, and stopping the State/military from taking gross advantage in various sectors of businesses, are some of the policies that will propel Burma towards a true and sustainable market-oriented economy. Such measures call for the kind of government that puts the national interest above self-enrichment, and Slorc's vision of future Burma political system is not conducive for such governments to come into power. The ASEAN can argue that their countries have managed to bring about economic development despite restrictive political environment. However, the dimensions and magnitude of political conflicts in Burma is too great even to let any real economic development takes

root. As any ordinary Burmese can tell, the economic hardship despite a number of direct foreign investment during the last few years, has been the worst since 1962 military take-over. One reason for such economic disaster is because the lion's share of the benefit goes to financing the country's armed forces and to the private hands of its masters and their families, whereas it should have been to developing the country's human resources, for example. The ASEAN's economic engagement with Slorc does not lead to real economic development of Burma and its people, although it does lead the ruling junta towards the insatiable taste for power and money. Therefore, the ASEAN's economic engagement is not constructive for Burma and its people; it is only beneficial for the ASEAN countries to take advantage of its vast natural resources, cheap labor and largely untapped market.

Then, there is the question of citizen's right and dignity. Should they be sacrificed in the name of the economic development? Would the economic policies of a government represent the interest of the people if those people have no say in the government? True, meeting the basic necessities of life is all important. But for many people, earning these necessities of life in a dignified way is just as important. Giving incremental right and dignity to the citizens means not fully recognizing it in the first place; it means gauging the citizen's resignation to a government's domination.

(2) THAT SLORC IS THE RULING GOVERNMENT AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH IT IS INSTRUMENTAL TO THE INFLUENCE ON ITS BEHAVIOR.

Establishing relation with Slorc can be seen as a normal practice in international relation as it is presently the government in power, de facto though it may be. However, this close relationship has not been instrumental in securing the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi a year ago, nor has it been in securing the release

of NLD party MPs recently. In fact, there has been no incidence where the loose relationship with Slorc has affect its behavior for the better. On the other hands, here are many incidence of the ASEAN either saying nothing which is tantamount to approval in Slorc's eyes at least, or saying in defense of Slorc. The few instances in which individual ASEAN countries speak out against the unacceptable behavior of Slorc do come up from time to time though. Being close only to Slorc without any real recognition of the appeals made by the NLD, the party with overwhelming and legitimate public mandate, the ASEAN has become obvious to the genuine desire of Burma's people. Instead, the ASEAN is attentive only to the desire of Burma's junta. (Accepting Burma into the group and thereby giving it the much-wanted legitimacy is one such example.) The ASEAN's constructive engagement would be lacking the essence without engaging the NLD as well.

The ASEAN's constructive engagement would be lacking the essence without engaging the NLD as well.

(3) THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA IS ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE ASEAN SHOULD NOT INTERFERE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT.

The birth of a political system that represents the people, is based on the people and is for the people, is good for that country and it inevitably good for the world. This is the ideology that know boundary and limitation. It is really a blessing for someone, some nations to be in a position to offer a helping hand to a less fortunate ones' struggle towards a better future, rather than just standing by with indifference. Nonetheless, in this era of global village, it is hardly possible to stay completely aloof. Ties in various forms will interact. Economic ties will end to support political ties. Economic support to a government as lacking its people's support as Slorc's is

equivalent to its standing politically. Is it not interfering in Burma's internal politics? Given such interrelations, is it not safe to say that the birth of democracy in Burma is also in the good interest of the world community?

Behind the facade of maintaining that development of democracy in Burma is its internal affairs, one underlying reason for this stand is the ASEAN nation's acceptance and practice of soft authoritarian rule to varying degree despite their varying levels of democratization. Should Burma become a full democracy, the wave would be more or less felt by their own populace. Helping Burma gain full democracy will inevitably expose most ASEAN members' irony in handling democracy in their own countries.

(4) ON THE ISSUE OF REGIONAL SECURITY AND STABILITY.

One of the ASEAN's main concerns is the regional peace and stability. In the case of Burma, the ASEAN thinks that engaging Slorc will help attain it. The unspoken point of consideration under this thinking is the relationship between China and Slorc. China is a super power and it is giving Slorc its full backing. The ASEAN does not want to run the risk of turning Slorc into China's arms by leaving it alone. Also, the ASEAN does not want to strain its relationship with China on Burma issue. It seems these are the real causes of concern for the ASEAN's engagement with Slorc for regional peace and stability.

On the other hand, the ASEAN has not given any thought on what the NLD-led democratic forces think about future Burma's relationship with China. The NLD has already declared that it would practice an independent and progressive policy of neutrality. The mass majority of the people of Burma as represented

by the NLD, does not want foreign invasion of any kind, not it wants to be hostile towards any foreign country, be it from the East or the West.

Engaging also with the NLD-led democratic forces can clear up any undue concerns for the ASEAN. Onesided engagement with Slorc for regional peace and stability does not seem to be a balanced proposition.

Another point to consider is how Burma can contribute to the region's peace without first achieving its internal peace. The mass exodus of Burma's refugees in all directions of the country's borders, is the living proof of how it cannot. This is the proof is how lack of internal peace in

Burma will affect the region's peace and stability. Vast disparity and repression economically and politically has driven all these people away. Slorc's handling of internal conflicts by force has failed to achieve peace in the country. Fundamental changes in current Burma's political system are essential for ensuring peace in the country. We have not yet seen how the ASEAN's constructive engagement policy will help achieve internal peace in Burma. We have seen only the worsening peace process in

Burma because of Slorc's misguided arrogance fueled by the regional support both economically and politically it believes it has gathered.

(5) PRESSURES OR PERSUASION TOWARDS SLORC

One argument for constructive engagement policy is that pressures in the form of sanctions cannot be effective or it will only worsen the ordinary citizen's life; thus, it is better to exercise gentle persuasion instead. We have to look into the history of modern Burma to see if this argument can be valid. During the 26 years from 1962 to 1988, Burma practiced closed-door policy. Started in 1988, the people of Burma experienced even more

The birth of a political system that represents the people, is based on the people and is for the people, is good for that country and it inevitably good for the world. This is the ideology that know boundary and limitation.

hardships and repression in the form of monopoly, market manipulation, corruption, favoritism, and nepotism to the extent not known before. So, will the sanctions hurt the ordinary people of Burma? it might to some segments of the population. However, it will not make a big dent on the whole population already used to increasingly worsening economic situation. the long experience of isolation and hardship since 1962 has prepared the people of Burma to subsist on what's available in the country without depending on foreign money. However, Slorc has comparatively few years of experience managing the country's wealth. It is not yet prepared to face strict economic isolation and tough sanctions in its existence. Economic pressures will definitely undermine its administration. For vast majority of the people in Burma, economic pressures will mean a worthwhile investment.

After all, economic hardship had gotten greater for the vast majority since the foreign investment come in 1988. It seems, lack of it might be better off.

One other question is whether it can be effective without China's participation. It seems China's participation will no matter much since China itself is still in the process of constructing its own economy and it is not in a position to put economic pressure on Burma. Besides, China does not have considerable investment in Burma. Border trade is about the main activity going on between China and Burma. China alone certainly cannot support Burma's economy. The ASEAN is in a position to explain to China, its dialogue partner, the need for economic pressure in Burma.

All application of economic pressure on Burma, refers only to the duration of bringing about a viable political settlement in Burma. It will not be forever. We appeal to the ASEAN and the world community to cooperate in this important endeavor that will help restore true peace and stability in Burma.

If the ASEAN chooses to do so, the time

for mutually beneficial economic cooperation from Burma will eventually come sooner. the ASEAN can do with a clear conscience that the economic pressures it helps out on Slorc will not hurt the people of Burma so much as it hurts Slorc. Doing so will help put real meaning to the ASEAN's constructive engagement policy.

CONSTRUCTIVE OR DESTROY?

Now is the crucial time for Slorc. It is trying its best to secure its hold on power long term. It is forcing its version of national constitution which would guarantee the military's dominant role in the nation's politics. On the economic front, it is keeping a wide range of businesses under its control. It is keeping Burma's national income and resources for the military and its clique.

The people of Burma, the NLD and other democratic forces, do not approve of such mishandling of Burma's income and resources by Slorc. And, Slorc thinks that silencing the people and the NLD-led democratic groups by force, at the same time legitimizing itself with a forced constitution, will ensure its hold on power and be able to continue its abuses unabated. It is unfortunate for the people of Burma that the current policy of ASEAN holds towards Burma is serving against their best interest. On behalf of a people of Burma, we earnestly appeal to the ASEAN to review the constructive engagement policy.

**Not power that corrupts
but fear. Fear of losing
power corrupts those who
wield it and fear of the
scourge of power
corrupts those who are
subject to it.**

**(Daw Aung San Suu
Kyi.)**

BURMA ESCALATES ITS MILITARY STRENGTH

Ronald Aung Naing

Since the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) brutally seized power in September 1988, the regime has built up its military strength beyond any reasonable level. Not only has the size of the army been dramatically increased, Slorc has spent billions of dollars on new jet fighters, ground-attack aircraft, transport and assault helicopters, armored vehicles, artillery, trucks, communication equipment, naval patrol boats, frigates, assault rifles and light machine guns. Slorc has also tried to increase its ability to produce arms and ammunition. After eight years, Slorc is on the verge of turning one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia into the region's largest military powers.

Expansion of Infantry forces

Over the past eight years, Slorc increased the size of its ground attack forces from 180,000 to 350,000. The arms and ammunition for these new soldiers were mainly acquired from China. Burma also imported arms, artillery and ammunition from several other countries. Slorc also increased production of semi-automatic carbines, assault rifles, light machine guns and ammunition in their own "Defense Products Factories", known as "Ka Pa Sa".

China played a major role in this drastic build-up of the Burma Army. A Slorc delegation visited China's "North Industries Corporation" in August 1990 and agreed to buy US \$ 1.4 billion worth military supplies. The deal included F-7 jet aircraft, "Shanghai" or "Hainan" class patrol boats, tanks (including T-63 and T-69), armoured personnel carriers, AK-47 (M-22) assault rifles, 37 mm twin-barrel and 57 mm single barrel anti-aircraft guns, rocket launchers, ground-based radar and communication equipment.

Eight Chinese trucks delivered the first batch of arms and ammunition in November 90 traveling across the border to Lashio. China has made several other deliveries of supplies to Burma from between 1991 to 1994 including: thirty 107 mm Type 63 multiple rocket launcher systems, US\$ 5 million worth of radio equipment, nine hundred 5-ton trucks, arms and ammunition of one thirty heavily laden army trucks, one fifty Type 85 tracked armoured personnel carriers, twenty Type 69 main battle tanks, twenty Type 63 light amphibious tanks and three hundred trucks of varying sizes.

Slorc purchased arms not only from China but also from several other countries. Two twenty five truck loads of unidentified arms, 84 mm Carl Gustaf rockets, mortars and ammunition arrived in Rangoon from Singapore via the Five Star Line in October 1988. Unidentified arms were shipped via the S'pore Senator and Five Star Line from Belgium in July 1989. Several unidentified military supplies were shipped via Five Star Line in July 1989 from Britain, Germany, Holland, Italy and Yugoslavia. Pakistan Ordnance Company transported machine guns, ammunition, five thousand 120 mm mortars and shells to Rangoon in March 1989. Further unidentified arms were sent via the Five Star Line from Singapore in August 1989.

In February 1990, US \$ 3.2 million worth of equipment for the arms factories were shipped from Fritz Werner Industries of Germany. Arms were also sent from Sweden and Switzerland via the Five Star Line in 1990. Slorc also purchased rocket launchers, mortars and rifles from Afghanistan through the Parkistan Government in June 1991 a deal worth US \$ 20 million.

Slorc plans to increase the Burmese infantry forces to 500,000 personnel. In the past eight years, Slorc has added two military Command and two light infantry Divisions each containing 10 battalions. Expansion of the Navy

The Burmese Navy has traditionally focused on two main tasks: patrol of coastal waters and rivers in support of counter insurgency operations and coastal surveillance and fisheries protection. The Navy has employed four old corvettes with an average age of about 43 years ranging from 400 to 650 tons.

Slorc has stepped up the modernization of its Navy with the purchase from China of twelve Hainan class coastal patrol vessels which are reportedly capable of being equipped with surface to surface missiles. The Burmese Navy also purchased three PB 90 Koncar class patrol craft in October 1990 from the former Yugoslavia which were later equipped with 40 mm and 57 mm Bofors from Sweden. These have strengthened coastal and inshore patrol capabilities already undertaken by six ex-US PGM class boats built in 1959-61 and four PGM type boats built in the early 1980s.

Slorc has also increased the number of navy personnel from about 7,000 to 15,000 in the past eight years.

Modernization of naval infrastructure meanwhile includes the construction of a new naval base on Hainggyi Island and the upgrading of facilities at Akyab (Sittwe) with Chinese support. China has also helped Slorc to upgrade its naval signals and radar stations on the Coco Islands between the Andamans and Orissa.

Expansion and modernization of the Air Force

Burma has never been able to produce air craft or aircraft components and has always been heavily dependent on foreign equipment, logistics and expertise to keep its aircraft operational.

Burma's Air Force was formerly provided with PC-6 'Porter' aircraft, sixteen PC-7 and six PC-9 from Switzerland, twenty Soko Galeb G-4 ground attack aircraft from the former Yugoslavia.

During the past eight years, Slorc

purchased new Rolls-Royce engines for its G-4 aircraft, repaired PT 6 engines and Pratt and Whitney engines from Australia and Canada for its Pilatus PC 7 and PC 9 aircraft.

The Air Force was also reinforced with the purchase of Chinese made jet aircraft, helicopter gun ships and transport helicopters from Poland. Burma took delivery of its first batch of twelve F-7 jet aircraft (China's version of the MiG-21) in May 1991. A second squadron arrived in May 1993 and twelve more in 1994. China has also supplied the Burmese Air Force with twenty four NAMC A-M 5 ground attack aircraft and two SACY-8 D medium-range transport aircraft. Slorc also purchased ten Hoplite Mi 2 helicopter gun ships and ten PZL Swidnik transport helicopters from Poland in June 1990 in a deal worth US \$ 41.3 million. Burma also sent its pilots to China and Malaysia for training. Malaysia trained ten Burmese captains on C 130s in 1989 and 1990.

The latest deal for reinforcing the Air Force was with Russia. The Slorc army commander Lt. Gen. Tin Oo made an unpublicized visit to Russia in October 1995 where he reached an agreement for a number of Mil Mi 17 " Hip-H " utility transport helicopters. Eight Mil Mi 17 have been reportedly delivered to Burma. The deal included a training package for Slorc pilots. The latest report said that Burma has also received MiG 17 supersonic jet fighters from Russia. It is also reported that Slorc is also interested in buying Mil Mi-24 assault helicopters and MiG 29 " Falcrum " fighters from Russia.

Increased arms production

While purchasing arms from foreign countries, Slorc has also developed its ability to build arms on its own. Burma began to develop its own arms industries in the early 1950s when a factory was built to produce small arms ammunition and BA 52 sub machine guns (Ne Win Sten, copy of Italian 9 mm TZ-45). Production began as soon as the factory was

completed and the BA 52 became the standard submachine gun for the Burma Army in 1953.

The arms production sector was boosted by the 1957 agreement with the German Fritz Werner company to build a factory in Rangoon to produce G-3 automatic rifles. A second arms factory was built near Prome to produce 7.62 mm ammunition for G-3 and G-4 rifles and 9 mm small arms ammunition for BA-52 and 9 mm pistols. In the 1970s Fritz Werner, with the help of engineers from the German Technical Co-operation Agency, built more arms manufacturing facilities. In 1984, the Fritz Werner company entered into a joint venture arrangement with Burma's State-owned Heavy Industrial Corporation.

Now, Burma has built its own arms factories known by Burmese initials "Ka Pa Sa". The main factory, Ka Pa Sa No.1, was built in Rangoon near Inya Lake together with three other major Ka Pa Sa weapons and ammunition factories in the Rangoon-Mingladon area. There are also ammunition factories at Htonebo near Mandalay and at Sinde, Padaung and Ngyung Chidauk near Pegu.

Fritz Werner resumed its exports of "Industrial Machinery" and other materials to Burma in 1989 for a short period after the crackdown of the democratic movement when the German Government shed its direct

support. In 1990, a US \$ 8 million joint venture called Myanmar Fritz Werner Industries Ltd. was established, further strengthening Slorc's arms link with Germany. Also a group of Singaporean companies- Shengli Holding, Allied Ordenance, Chartered Industries and Hurper Co.- has stepped in to help develop SLORC's arms industries.

China has also reportedly begun to play a role in strengthening Slorc's arms industries. In 1991, a group of Chinese engineers inspected a site near Margue to build a factory complex which could produce M-21 Semi-automatic rifles, M-22 automatic assault rifles and M-23 light machine guns as well as 7.62 mm ammunition for these weapons. The establishment of Slorc-China joint ventures for arsenal factories are not yet reported.

Slorc arms factories have reportedly produced prototypes of Type 56 and Galil assault rifles. SLORC has also produced the 9 mm BA 94 (Ne Win Uzi), a version of the Israeli 9 mm Uzi submachine gun. Burmese engineers are experimenting on 5.56 m assault rifles, currently known as EMERK-1. The prototype of these weapons have already been produced. Slorc also manufactures its own mobile 81 mm artillery rocket launchers known as BA 84.

Slorc has also improved its capacity to produce ammunition. For some time, Burma has had the ability to produce small calibre ammunition such as .303 British, 7.62 mm Nato and 9 mm Parabellum. Slorc also makes 51 mm (BA 78) and 81 mm mortar bombs. It has replaced US and UK made Type 36 and BA 77 anti-personnel hand grenades with locally produced BA 88 (offensive), BA 91 (defensive) and BA 109 (general-purpose) grenades. Slorc also has the ability to produce 120



mm and 60 mm mortar bombs, 41 mm (BA 92) and 51 mm (BA 80) rifle grenades.

In addition to developing its ability to produce infantry weapons and ammunition, Slorc has stepped in to manufacture its own reconnaissance vehicles and light armoured cars. These cars seem to be based on Mazada and Hino Technology and parts. Slorc has reportedly produced at least four kinds of light armoured vehicles: BAAC-83, BAAC-84, BAAC-85 and BAAC-86. Slorc also boosts an indigenous "Special Combat Vehicles" which is armed with 7.62 mm MG-3 and 0.5 calibre Browning machine guns, a 60 mm or 81 mm mortar mounted in the back and a 84 mm recoilless gun. These vehicles are also known as "Bran Carriers".

Slorc has also made attempts to boost its production of naval craft. Since 1988, the Naval Engineering Depot and Myanmar Shipyard in Rangoon have produced two coastal patrol boats and four river patrol craft. It has also completed two newly designed fast-attack gunboats, to be powered by German Mercedes diesel engines.

Although Slorc remains mainly dependent on foreign technology and logistics in naval and aircraft components, it is obvious that Slorc has made significant strides in developing its ability to produce its own arms.

Funding the arms build-up

There are twelve distinct "Defense Industries" that produce a variety of goods ranging from weapons to sport balls. These twelve industries are funded as part of the central government's budget and supervised by the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Defense Industries (DDI). The Defense Ministry owns several enterprises in Burma after the creation of a private sector after 1988. Apart from DDI, the Defense Ministry also has another economic department, Department of Defense Procurement (DDP), which provides for the import of small arms. In July 1990, Slorc formed the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (UMEH) which is run by DDP.

The Slorc Defense Ministry cashes on far more than just arms production: it controls a real estate enterprises, trading companies, timber, fisheries and mining concessions through Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. Slorc also takes a percentage of foreign investments and unofficial jewelry trading that help finance its arms build-up.

Slorc has also got hidden allocations from the public sector to the Defense Ministry. The Ministry of Defense uses 16-18 % of Burma's generated electricity without paying for it and buys fuel from the state petro-chemical monopoly at prices very far below market prices.



Conclusion

Slorc is dramatically enlarging and upgrading its army by increasing the size of its forces, purchasing arms and ammunition from abroad and trying to develop its capacity to make arms on its own. Now the Slorc Army is becoming the largest in Southeast Asia. Vietnam has the only current standing army that is marginally larger. Slorc's

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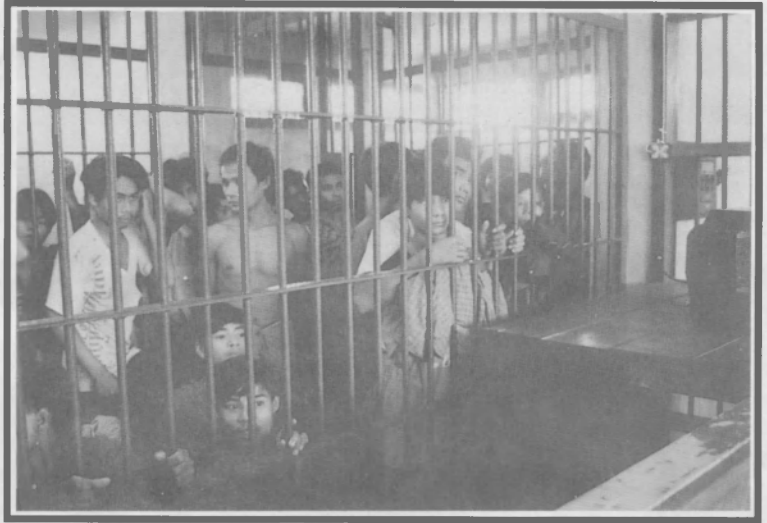
death rate of Burmese inmates in Thai detention high

Due to continued political repression and extreme economic hardship inside Burma, thousands of Burmese flee to neighboring countries with hope for survival and the dream of a better life. Although they have managed to escaped from the terror of their home country, they still have to face new problems as illegal immigrants in foreign lands.

As illegal immigrants, they are subjected to arrest, harassment and deportation under the immigration laws of foreign countries. They face many social and labor problems since they do not have legal status or work authorization. Various forms of labor discrimination including low pay, harsh and dangerous working conditions, threats and force, are frequent. Abuse and unlawful treatment after their detention or during the deportation period, especially against women and children are frequent.

In July, Ko Thaung (not his real name), formerly an inmate in Thom Pha Phom, Kanchanaburi Province in Thailand claimed four Burmese inmates (two men and two women) died in detention center during the 36 days he was detained during May and June 1996.

Ko Thaung is 31-year-old Karen originally from Kyar Ein Seik Kyi township, Karen State. He came to Thailand three years ago due to the economic hardship, the constant threat of forced labor, and the incessant demands for taxes by the local Slorc authorities in Burma drove him to escape to Thailand. "I have worked at so many odd jobs in Thailand. The money I earn here is not very attractive, but it's much better than staying in



*Burmese illegal immigrants seen
in a over-crowded Thai detention cell.*

Burma." he said.

In mid-May, while he was working at an illegal logging operation run by a local Thai business man, he was arrested near Thom Pha Phom for cutting wood unlawfully and also charged under the immigration act. He spent 36 days in jail.

According to his account of conditions in Thom Pha Phom Detention Center, there are two big halls with bars on one side while the other three sides are walls without windows. The ceiling is zinc. One hall is for male prisoners and other is for females. Each hall is 18' x 18' wide where the bathroom and toilet is annexed. There are always at least 40 men but sometimes male prisoners number over 200.

Beatings in the detention center were common. Inmates were sometimes beaten by the Thai prison officers over small matters, according to him. He said "once while I was in detention, two inmates fought over money matters and an officer came and asked the problem. The two were singled out and handcuffed; then they were taken outside the room

and forced to lay down on the floor with their faces down, while the officer and three policemen beat them with batons. After their injuries healed, they had scares on their backs from that beating," he said.

Health problems were rampant in the cells. Most of the inmates were Burmese and suffered from malaria and malnutrition even on their way to Thailand. When they got sick in jail, they suffered more severely than other prisoners. No proper treatment was ever given nor were regular medical examinations conducted. "I did not see any sick people sent to hospital even when they were critically ill," he said.

The prisoners informed the authorities about the ailing people and requested they be sent to the hospital, but no action was taken. The Thai policemen always said, "You aliens had better die; we will burn your body," Ko Thaung reported.

Due to the lack of proper medical care, Ko Thaung claimed that he himself witnessed four people died in prison. He saw three people's death within two day. The first one was 24-year-old man from Kaw Bein, Karen state. He died at 2:00 am on the 1st or 2nd of June. His body was taken to the hospital in the morning and the other dying man was also taken to hospital. "We did not hear anything about him, so all of his friends believe that he was also dead."

The next day, one women, about 24 years old died in the women prisoners' room. The three of them who died were from the same region. "

"The had been sick for at least one week and their friends had informed the police several times," he said. Prison officials also saw their condition, but they did not send them to the hospital while they were still alive, said Ko Thaung. When people died, hospital staff came and took photos and then the bodies were taken away. Nobody knew what happened after that. The officials later told the inmates that the bodies were cremated, but no one knew if it was true.

Another death was Ni Ni Win, 16-year-old single girl from Moulmein. She came to



*Burmese child working at the new detention center.
His current worksite might become his prison in future.*

Thailand with a group of sixty-one men and women who were all arrested on 18 June. They were apprehended in Sankhlaburi while waiting to go into Thailand. About five days after their arrest, many of them got sick including the girl, said Ko Thaung. In the evening, the girl began vomiting blood and then she suffered convulsions. An official came but did nothing. She died about 1:30 am of 24, June. The other women covered her body with a blanket until the medical staff came and took away her body.

Similar stories are heard about other local police cells, lock-ups, detention centers and

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FORCED RECRUITMENT FOR NEWLY EXTENDED MILITARY BASES

Since 1988, Slorc has been dramatically expanding its military might adding entire new battalions with the expected result that the armed forces will have grown from 186,000 in 1988 to an eventual half a million troops under arms.

Due to this policy of rapid military expansion, recruiting new soldiers has become a serious problem for Slorc authorities. In order to solve this problem, Slorc has stepped up forcible recruitment of new troops on the village and township level by a strict quota system.

While the Slorc claims the Burmese army, the Tatmadaw, is a volunteer army which does not accept recruits below the age of eighteen, there is plenty of strong evidence of forced recruitment, especially of under-aged boys.

In Tanessarim Division, the cost of recruits has soared to 80,000 kyats per person as the Slorc is desperately recruiting new soldiers for their recently-established coastal regional division military headquarters and for new battalions under the command of No.8 Strategic Command Headquarters. Previously, the price for a substitute recruit was 20,000 kyats for one person, but because of the demand for the rapid expansion of the armed forces the amount has gone up sharply.

According to the order issued by the division Law and Order Restoration Council, village and ward Lorc members were required to find two new recruits from each village and ward within the ten townships of Tanessarim Division. "The Slorc has ordered every village and ward to provide two village youngsters," said U San Nyunt from Mintha village, Yebyu village. New recruits are usually chosen by drawing lots. His son, Maung Than Naing, a seventh grade student and another classmate were chosen in this way. Neither boy had any alternative but to join the army, according to

U San Nyunt. Later they both escaped from the Military New Recruit Training Center and they and their families decided to flee to the Thai border, where they arrived recently.

Other testimony was given by a 14-year-old secondary school student from Kan Bauk district, Tanessarim division. Due to the worsening demand for forced labor, he and his family fled to the Thai border last July. According to him, Slorc ordered every household with male members in Kan Bauk to provide one person (between 16-30 years of age) as a recruit for the army or to pay a 5,000 baht fine. "We cannot avoid this because they have a list of all households with male members" his 50-year-old father said.

The soldiers came to their neighborhood and made all the young men stand in front of them. They selected those who were tall and heavy enough regardless of age. "Some students showed their ID cards, but it did not make any difference," the student reported. According to him, his friends, Toe Toe, a student in sixth standard in the State Middle School and Soe Pyne, who was out of school, were selected and taken to LIB 104 in Tavoy. They later fled and escaped to Three Pagodas Pass. Their whole families also fled to Thailand because they were afraid of being arrested by troops after their sons deserted.

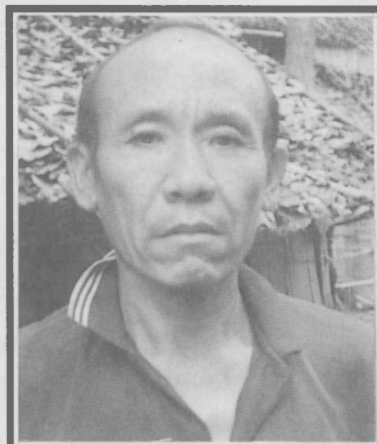
A similar situation is taking place in the Naga region of Chin State by local Slorc troops. Since last June 1996, the local military battalion has been recruiting Naga youth from village to village. Naga youth in the Naga Hills do not dare to stay at home or in their village for this reason and many have fled and taken refuge in Indo-Burmese border.

Forced recruitment by quota system had been practiced for a long time in the region. In the past, recruitment depended on village size and the price for substitute was 30,000 kyat.

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INTERVIEW WITH KARENNI REFUGEE

Name Ku U Reh
 age 47-year-old
 marital status married with 7 children
 occupation village headman of
 9-village group
 address Daw Kalaw Oak village,
 15-mile south of
 Shar Daw town,
 Karenni State
 Arrived to border June 4, 1996
 place of Interview camp 2, Le Char Karenni camp,



I was a village headman of a nine-village group in Daw Kalaw. I was chosen for that post because nobody else wanted to do it. It was unpaid, and there were many problems in dealing with the Slorc troops and township Lorc. They usually gave orders to me and I had to do what they demanded. Sometimes I understood the difficulties my people faced when they had to do as they were ordered, but I had no right to say no and go against the orders given by the military or township Lorc.

Human rights violations against the civilians are not new or strange things in our region. Whenever the soldiers or military column come to the village, many forms of lawlessness occur. Many villagers, especially young people, are subjected to arrest as suspected KNPP soldiers. They are accused of being KNPP soldiers or sympathizers. Soldiers frequently arrest and torture young people from our village. They would be released only when the village headman guarantees them and also give some amount of money for their release.

Looting and other mistreatments are very common. The Slorc soldiers do as they please because they are authorized to do whatever they want to do to civilians.

Forced portering is very common. Sometimes, the troops send an order to conscript an exact number of people and send

them to their barracks. Sometimes, the troops just come and arrest people at random. Porterage is also another tax we have to pay the troops. My village must pay 3,000-7,000 kyats per month. If the village fails to pay the porter fees, the soldiers arrest the village headman. I myself was arrested for failing to pay the exact amount of porter taxes in 1991. My village was required to pay 4,500 kyat to the troops and I could afford only 2,500 kyats. The soldiers came to my village and arrested me. They brought me to Shar Daw and detained me three days. After paying the remaining money, I was released. Asking porter fees from the villages is another way of making money for the troops. The troops never use money to hire porters. All porters are used as unpaid porters.

There are many kinds of forced labor taking place. About 20-30 people are ordered to go to Shar Daw and forced to work many kinds of tasks such as logging, construction work on the Shar Daw-Tartamaw motor-road, and carrying food to the outposts. Each time, it takes at least three days and no money or food is ever given.

Another kind of money-making business is conscription of rice. Every village household is ordered to give 6 Burmese-unit baskets (240 kilograms). No money is paid for the rice by the authorities. We must either

send the rice to Shar Daw by our own arrangement or buy it there and give it to them. It costs 1,500 kyats.

On June 6, 1996 I received an order issued by Regional Command Military Strategy Headquarters based in Loikaw, Karenni state dated May 31, 1996. The letter ordered that villagers in my village group to move to the new site in Shar Daw within a week of date issued. Anyone found after the deadline would be shot without question regardless of sex and age. The letter was signed by Shar Daw township Lorc and LIB 330 based in Shar Daw. I learnt that similar letters were given to other village groups in the region between Pun Creek and the Salween River.

When I explained the order to the villagers, they all were shocked. This is the land we had been living on for a long time. We have our farms and we know how to survive in this place. Nobody wanted to move to another place. They asked me to go and appeal to the authorities. I, myself did not want to move from my village.

After the meeting with the villagers from my village groups, I decided to write an appeal letter to the authorities in Shar Daw on June 3, 1996.

I gave six reasons to the authorities: First the climate changes in the rainy season. It was in June when heavy rain started. The climate in Shar Daw was hotter than my village and many people, especially children and the elderly, would certainly become ill because of the weather change. I asked them to allow us to stay until the raining season was over.

The second reason was the children's education. Their education would be interrupted if we moved to Shar Daw right now. Our village had one primary school and it was right in the middle of the academic year.

Third was our farm. We had just started our cultivation because the rains had

began. If we had to move right now, all of our farming would be lost. How could we survive without any crops or rice for next year. I asked them to allow us to stay until after the harvest time.

Fourth was the elderly in the village. The journey between my village and Shar Daw is a distance of 15 miles. They needed time to move to Shar Daw since they could not walk in the rainy season. Winter was a more convenient time for them to move, I said.

Fifth was our animals. It was essential to take all our animals, our buffaloes, cattle, pigs and chickens. We could not leave them behind because we could not farm or live without them in the future.

Six was the food supply at the new site. We could not bring our rice and other food stuffs within the short period mentioned in the order. As it was far, we also could not reasonably go back and forth again and again to bring food rations. I was sure that the food would not be provided by the authorities when we moved to new site. We would starve without enough food. If we have more time, we can prepare to handle this problem, I explained.

All my reasons were turned down. The secretary of the Shar Daw township came to our village on the next day with some soldiers. He said this was an absolute order and everybody must obey. Anyone failing to obey would be shot, he threatened. I did not dare say anymore.

The next day, I went to Shar Daw to see the situation there. I saw some newly-arrived villagers from other villages. The living situation was terrible in Shar Daw. No proper program for relocation was arranged. People were just put in churches and monasteries in town. The health and sanitation conditions were not good. These buildings were not big enough for the villagers even at that early stage. Some people stayed with their relatives or friends in town. The authorities said all the

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INTERVIEW WITH THE FORMER FORCED LABOUR

Name	Ma San San
age	42 -year- old
marital status	married with two children, 12-year-old twin
address	Kan Bauk, Kan Bauk township,
date of arrival to Thailand	June 15, 1996
Date of Interview	July 5, 1996
place of interview	Thom Pha Pum, Kanchanaburi province, Thailand

I was a vendor when I was in Burma. While I was selling at the market, the Ward Lorc ordered me to go and work without pay on the Ye-Tavoy project. That was in November 1995.

The military informed the village headman the exact number of people wanted for forced labor. Then the village headman decided how to conscript the people from the every household in the village. A wealthy family could afford to give 3,000- 3,500 kyats to get a substitute.

My husband had died in 1992 and I had to support my 10-year-old twins, my elderly mother and my brother who was mentally ill. I was the only breadwinner for my whole family. For those of us who had hardly enough for our daily life, it was impossible to pay money for a substitute. The only thing we could do was just go and work. When we went, we needed to take some money too. That was why my mentally-ill brother also had to go and work as a substitute. He was paid 3,000 kyats and that money was used for the remaining family in the village and also used for our own expense in the forced labor camp. First I said I could not go and explained that I had to look for the rest of my family. About 200 villagers, 12 people from my Maggin ward, including elderly and children took a bus to Nwe Lain camp. Some children went as substitutes

hired by others. Some were only 12-13-year-old.

The work was terribly hard and the weather was extremely hot. Despite the heat, we were not allowed to take a rest even if we were exhausted. The only rest permitted was during the break time at midday. We worked two weeks there. We had to get up at 3:00 am and prepare to go to work site at 4:00 am. It took an hour to walk to the worksite from the place we were staying. Work was from 7:00 am until 11:00 am. Break time was from 11:00 to 1:00 pm. Then the work restarted at 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Just before work was over, the authorities came and checked the work we had done. They demanded it be exactly what they had ordered. If they were not satisfied, they ordered us to do it again and would not allow us to go back to the living place. When it was getting dark, we used oil lamps until the work was done. After ten days, the two of us had no food or money left, so we asked the authorities to allow us to go back and bring food supplies for the remaining days. They did not allow that. We had to borrow from others, who also faced a shortage of rations. Even worse, my brother became sick. He went to see the medic, but they just gave him aspirin which was not effective at all. The authorities (civilians monitoring the work-site) told all the laborers to say that all

were paid when the military officers came. I was very angry about that. I did not come and work voluntarily. They forced me to work without pay and threatened me. I had to leave my family back home and neglect all my business. I also had to spend my own money while I was working here. The rest of family was starving while I was working without pay. I said I would tell the truth when I was asked if we were paid or not.

Nobody was allowed to go anywhere except the place we were staying and the work site. Police and soldiers were blocking every-where. When I did not have any food left, I decided to go back secretly to the village. So all the villagers, altogether 192 people, went back to the village at night. The next morning, the soldiers followed after us and took us back to the worksite by buses. They threatened to arrest us if we did that again. They scolded us and threatened us all the way back to work-site.

If there were some children in your group, you had to work harder because they could not work very hard. All groups were assigned the same jobs so if we could not finish within the designated time, we had to work until the work was done. The work was to cut the ground from the hills, dig trenches, carry soil from place to place and build the embankment of the railway. When the rains started, the embankment just washed away. We had to carry the dirt to make embankment again. When the embankment got high, we had to climb up it carrying heavy loads of dirt in baskets and dump the dirt onto the top of embankment. I fell down sometimes while carrying dirt like that. I have never done such hard work before in my life.

When you got sick, you could go to the clinic but the medicine given by the medic was the same for all sicknesses and diseases. Whether you had sore eyes or malaria, the same medicine was given. The nurse working at the clinic also said there was no other medicine in the clinic and she did not want

to work there either. She was just working against her will because she was assigned there, she said. Some patients were referred to Kan Bauk hospital but the Lorc in the worksite did not allow them to leave. I heard that two children, aged 12-13-year-old, died while they were working in Nwe Lein camp in November 1995. Some people were beaten up by the guards who accused them of pretending to be ill during working time.

If we were not able either to go or to pay fine to the village Lorc, we were subject to arrest by the police. I was also arrested once. The village Lore ordered me again to go and work for my second time while I was preparing to sell my stuffs at the market. I said no to them. In fact, I could not go without preparing for my family. Also I was in debt at that time. I needed to repay my debt. If I had to go for forced labor, it was impossible for me to pay it back. So I said "No". Later the police came to arrest me. They attempted to handcuff me but I did not let them. I said I was not a criminal. Then the police took me to the office of village Lorc. When I saw the chairman of Lore, I explained my situation. The chairman said he totally understood my situation and asked me to send my younger brother instead. I said he was mentally-ill. He knew that but kept asking to send him and said they would take care of him. So I asked my brother to go. After ten days of work, he ran away and came back home. The policemen and village Lorc came to my house and ordered me to go instead.

I have worked three times on the forced labor project. Each time took one month. The first two were in Nwe Lein and the third was in Yebon, Ye Byu township. Last April 1996, we were taken to Yebon and after seven days we were taken back to Nwe Lein again to continue to work. There were thousands of people from seven villages near our village.

The military presence is much greater

than before. They check everybody wherever you go. You could not leave from your home without your ID card. There were many check points everywhere. You would be checked just as soon as you stepped out of your home.

Unpaid labor is constantly practiced. The military orders the people to clear the land and cut bamboo for their barracks. Many more forced contributions and taxes are being levied than before. But the economy is getting worse. Sometimes, the authorities ordered us to give 500 kyats from each household for unknown reasons. They did not care whether we have money or not. We have to sell our belongings to pay for it.

Finally I decided to flee Thailand to escape from these hardships.

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relocated villagers must stay in one place later. They did not mention or explain where the place would be.

I came back and decided to flee to the border. Many villagers from other villages moved to my village because they thought my village did not have to move. I explained them we also had to move. So they also decided to escape to the border.

I left for border early in the morning of June 4 along with my ten family members. I could not bring much, just some food for the journey. About 100 villagers from my village followed with us. I did not know the way, but some knew. It us three days and two nights to reach to the border. I saw many villagers from other villages going to the same

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foreign trade and Investment policies, combined with ASEAN's constructive engagement policy, is enhancing its ability to develop the militarily strongest force in the region. Clearly, with the big army, Slorc's policy may endanger regional security and stability.

way. It was a mass exodus. The number of the groups had become hundreds, including infants, elderly, pregnant women and disabled men and women. The journey was hard and we had to cross many streams and creeks on the way. We also took great caution to avoid encountering the Slorc. We heard that Slorc troops were deployed on all the ways to the border to block our exodus. We rested in the day time and walked the whole night through. We used only the deep forest paths in order to avoid the Slorc troops stationed at the regular ways. After one or two days many people got sick due to the hard journey and heavy rain. Some were left on the way by their family because they could not walk along with the group. Nobody could help each other in this life or death situation.

I myself left my parents behind in my village with my nephew because they could not walk to the border. Both of them are 70 years old. I also left my younger brother and my nephew who is only 12 years old. I told them to move to Shar Daw because it was the only one way for them to survive. They would be killed if they were found in the deserted village. My younger brother followed us after staying five days in the relocation site. He said no assistance was given by the Slorc. They permitted the villagers to go back after three days and get their food. When the villagers arrived back, the soldiers confiscated some rice and food from the them. This made the villagers very upset and they fled to border. According to him, he saw all the barns in the villages and some houses burnt down by the Slorc troops.

Continued from page 24

jails. Because Burmese are aliens in Thailand, no proper action is taken nor are they accorded any protection whatsoever.

MASS EXODUS OF KARENNI REFUGEES



Refugees children with uncertain future and hope.

During the past 40 years, civilians, especially ethnic people, have borne the brunt of government attempts to crush the resistance against the central government. The inhabitants of the war-zones also suffer as a result of human rights abuses committed during the military operations, especially during the forcible relocation of villages, enforced portering and the seizure of land and property. The Slorc always claims these tactics are "Counter-insurgency" operations. Under the "Four Cuts" campaign, entire communities have been forcibly relocated from their homes and army operations have created large numbers of refugees and displaced peoples in the border area. The number of displaced or forced to resettle since 1988 is as high as four

million which amounts to a full ten per cent of the population. From every corner of Burma, there is irrefutable evidence that the forcible relocation of civilians by the Slorc military is taking place on a massive scale in both government-controlled areas and ethnic minority zones of conflict. Not only are such moves themselves a major cause of poverty and deprivation, but it is in the context of such relocations that many of the worse human rights abuses by the security forces have occurred.

The most recent massive forced relocations, begun in March 1996, are being carried out by Slorc in Shan State and Karenni State. To date, at least 70,000 villagers in Shan and Karenni States have been ordered to move to

new sites under the Slorc control. Those who fail to comply face death, according to orders issued by township Lorcs.

Karenni Nationalities Progressive Party (KNPP) signed a cease-fire agreement at a ceremony in Loikaw on March 21, making it the fourth and final armed group in the Karenni State to do so. But on June 28, the KNPP issued a statement claiming that the Slorc had broken the terms of the agreement by sending an additional 2,000 troops into its territory and continuing to take civilians for porters from the area. Two days later, fighting broke out after the Slorc launched an attack on the KNPP headquarters near the Thai border.

The fighting was fierce until the Slorc captured some of the strategic locations in the region. During the operation named "Pyi Nyein Aye", Slorc used between 2000-3000 of its armed forces from 27 battalions. Slorc also launched an air attack, sending its Swiss-made PC-7 planes against KNPP strongholds. Skirmish are still taking place, followed by orders demanding forced relocation of the civilians in the region. The purpose, of course, is mainly to eliminate the KNPP forces from the region by cutting off all food, information, communication and recruitment.

In Karenni state, ninety-six villages in Shar Daw township, between Pun Creek and the Salween River received relocation orders in the first week of June 1996. An original order, given to the ABSDF by newly arrived refugees on the Thai border, gave a deadline of June 7, 1996 for relocation in Shar Daw town.

The letter dated May 31, 1996 issued by Chairman of Shar Daw Township Lorc reads as follows:

Stamped	Township Lorc
	Shar Daw Township
Letter No.	101/0-1/Ya Ta-1 (thawa)
Date	May 31, 1996
Village	headman village
	Shar Daw South Village

Subject	group
	Building concentration
	village with the villages
	in Shar Daw township
ref:	Letter No. 337/01/Oo-1
dated	May 30, 1996 on the
	front line LIB 337.

Regarding the above-mentioned case, we order you to move the villagers from the villages between Salween River and Pun Creek as well as villages in southern and northern part of Shar Daw into Shar Daw town by June 7, 1996.

This is in order to restore peace, law and tranquillity in the region. Anyone who fails to comply the order will be considered an enemy and dealt with accordingly.

Thus, we inform you to move your whole village into Shar Daw not later than June 7, 1996. The relocating village will be resettled by the Township Lorc.

Signed by
Chairman
Shar Daw Township Lorc

cc.

- Chairman State Lorc, Kayah State
- Chairman District Lorc, Kayah State
- Front line office, LIB 337, Shar Daw town
- Chairman, Market Ward, south, middle and Aung Chan Tha- in order to assist the resettlement.

Over 20,000 people in Karenni State were affected by the orders. About 10,000 of them went to Shar Daw as ordered while 2,300 fled and reached the border. Villagers were not allowed to take their livestock or food supplies with them and had to move with just

the barest of essentials, such as cooking pots and what clothing they could bring. All their property including silver coins that are being still used for trade in that area were left behind.

In Daw Leh Ku village alone, 22 houses, 300,000 baskets of paddy and about 10 cattle and buffaloes were left behind.

About 10,000 villagers went to stay in Shar Daw town while the rest of them either moved to Shan State or fled to Thai-Burmese border. Those who went to Shar Daw according to the order were placed in the churches and schools and other built makeshift shelters. Slorc intended to make no provision for them, they found out later. These shelters were very crowded and no food or medicine was provided for the arrivals. Due to overcrowded conditions and lack of medical assistance, diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and cholera are rampant. At least 150 newly relocated Karenni refugees, mostly the elderly and the very young, died during the month of July at the new relocation site in Shar Daw town.

When the villagers asked permission to go back to their villages in order to fetch rice and other food supplies for themselves, they were allowed to go back for three days. Upon their return to the relocation site, all the food stuffs and rice they had carried back from the villages were seized by the troops, who later redistributed only six tins of rice per family back to them for their daily use.

Experiencing the overcrowding and large number of deaths in the new site, many fled to the border after staying some time in the camp. Many refugees reported that their villages had been razed, after soldiers had taken all the livestock and destroyed the remaining crops and barns. One hundred houses in Daw Tama and Daw Bo Leh villages as well as the local schools and churches were burned down on June 15 by the Slorc. Soldiers looted more than 10,000 silver coins from that village alone. One of the villager reported that he himself had left 6,000 silver coins behind. Many villagers reported that they saw soldiers using and selling silver coins in Shar Daw.

In some cases, people were shot in the deserted villages. A 70-year-old refugee woman reported that U Law Reh, a 53-year-old Karenni from Daw Tama village was burnt to death in the last week of July when his house was fired while he was still inside. The woman herself had been left behind in the village by her family because they thought she could not walk to the border. However, she managed to reach the border with two companions in the first week of August; she hadn't dared remain any longer in the abandoned village.



Slorc troops committed many other brutal killings against the Karenni villagers. Bu Me, 50-year-old Karenni woman from Daw Hti Kaw Le village was dragged out from her house by the Slorc troops in the last week of July. Shot twice in the stomach, she died instantly, according to Ngar-Reh, a witness from Daw Htaw Vee Me Le village.

Over 2,000 Karenni villagers reached the Thai-Burmese border sheltering in existing Karenni refugee camps near Mae Hong Son. Although the villages and the border is only two days walks far, many refugees took at least five days to reach to the border. The heavy rain on the way and Slorc's attempts to prevent their escape forced the refugees to hide by day and walk only at night. Troops from IB. 54 based in Loikaw, IB.94 based in Shwe Nyaung in Shan State and LIB.530 based in Lawpita have been sent to the region to prevent the people from escaping to Thailand. Some people were arrested on the way to border and sent back to the concentration camps in Shar Daw. In one case, a group of villagers from Htee Saw Ku were arrested while they stopped to help one woman in the group give birth en route to the border.

Despite the heavy monsoon rain and flooding in the region, the new arrivals reach the camps every day. These refugees are also facing terrible shortages of food and medicine. "At least ten of them, mainly children, have died of malaria and diarrhea since July and many

are very sick," according to a medic working with the Karenni refugees. "Many of these people are seriously ill due to their exhausting journey to the border and the heavy rains" said another aid worker. "There are many Karenni hiding in the jungle because they couldn't go to relocation site but they couldn't manage to walk to the border either. We do not know their fate, but we believe that their situation must be getting worse." added by other worker.

Slorc has also issued the order of forced relocation to the villages in Prusoe and Maw Chi townships in Karenni state. Similarly forced relocation is widely practiced in Shan State. The victims of human rights abuses by Slorc are taking refuge along the border. They are in desperate need of assistance as very few international aid agencies are operating.

The exodus of thousands of Karenni refugees to the border because of the forced relocation orders by the Slorc in the region clearly indicates the level of human rights violations going on in Burma.

Also relocations in this area are designed to pressure the KNPP into signing a new binding cease-fire agreement which would enable the government to open up the area to tourism after October 1996, the start of "Visit Myanmar Year."

Besides, Slorc is desperately attempting to regain cease-fire with KNPP in order to cover its renewed repression against opposition forces inside Burma.

"Cease-fire agreements" which lack the genuine desire and means for internal peace can not last long. Pressuring a group with threats and harassment to its people clearly shows that Slorc has neither the desire nor the way to establish internal peace in the country.



*ailing Karenni woman
suffering malaria
in her new land.*

FORCED LABOR IN KAWKAYEIK TOWNSHIP



*Forced labor is being widely used
in Burma though Slorc's faceless denial.*

Slorc has been using civilians in Kawkayeik Township, Karen State, as forced laborers on the motor-road construction projects, for about nine months. Currently, motor-roads are being built from Kyondoe to Nabu, from Kawkayeik to Nabu and also from Dawnan to Nabu.

Each road is about fifteen miles long and all construction is being monitored by Slorc LIBs 545, 546, 547, 548, and 549. Each village group is assigned to dig the ground and build up the roadway. Each group is responsible for a section of roadway 8 ft high, 60 ft wide and 1200 ft long. All family members, with the sole exception of the person allowed to stay and take care of the house, must report for work daily from the beginning of construction. Failure to do so, results in a 1,200 kyat fine.

Every morning soldiers from the LIB come and order the villagers to go to the worksite. "The soldiers always use very bad

language and tell us we should leave the country if we do not want to work," said one villager, recently arrived at the Thai-

Burma border.

There is no break in construction work even during the raining season. Often, sections of newly constructed roadway collapse due to the heavy rains while the work is still underway.

In addition to having to supply unpaid labor in motor-road construction, residents also face having their land confiscated by the five newly arrived battalions. By order of Col. Ye Htut, strategic commander, many plots of land belonging of local people have already been confiscated without any compensation whatsoever. Moreover, people are ordered to construct military barracks, to make bricks for the military, as well as work on the battalions' farms without any pay.

NMSP GAINS BUSINESS RIGHTS FROM SLORC

Slorc has given business privilege to the ethnic groups who have reached cease-fire agreements with them.

The New Mon State Party (NMSP) which signed a cease-fire agreement on June 29, 1995 has been given Slorc's permission to run seventeen businesses.

HUMAN RIGHTS
WITNESSES

including contracts in offshore fishing in the name of NMSP.

To start the offshore fishing concession, ten high-tech fishing vessels have arrived in Moulmein. This is the first group of a total of 25 vessels purchased from

FORCED LABOR IN THE TOTAL'S GAS PIPE PROJECT

Local people are conscripted and forced to work in virtual concentration camps related to the ongoing construction

of natural gas pipe between Yadana offshore natural gas field and Thailand, according to refugees who recently fled to the Thai-Burmese border.

K o
N g w e



Thailand. The new vessels are named Ramanya-1, Ramanya-2, etc. and painted blue, according to merchants from Moulmein, Mon State, Burma.

Among the seventeen business contracts permitted the NMSP are logging, offshore fishing, trade rights with Singapore and Malaysia, inland transportation, gold mining, soft drink manufacturing, and trading natural gas concessions. Local business people are greatly concerned by these special privileges granted to the NMSP, according to local merchants.

NMSP said that these business contracts with Slorc permission did not mean their surrender to the military dictatorship and that they are only a tactic to promote the well-being of Mon people. The actual policy of NMSP would be clarified after their third conference to be held in this year, a source from NMSP said.

Win, a villager from Mintha villager in Yebyu township, Tennesarim division, said one family member from each household in the village is ordered to work every fifteen days at the Heize Boke island, 20 kilometer southwest of Phaungdaw village. "Our village has 40 houses and that means 40 people have to work on the island every fifteen days without pay," he said. If someone fails to go and work, the family is required to pay 2000 kyat to the local military in fines.

Similar taxation is also levied on the local villagers for the construction of new army barracks in the region. "Our village, which has forty houses, has been levied a tax of 25,000 kyat at one time for this purpose," Ko Ngwe Win said. Not a single village in the region is spared the taxation and forced labor conscription. Although local people are subjected to unpaid forced

labor in the natural gas pipeline project, military troops responsible for security on the gas pipeline are paid 200 kyat per day by the French company TOTAL.

"People cannot endure the many forms of taxation and unpaid work such as gas pipeline project, Ye-Tavoy railway project, porter fees, forced labor fees and other unknown fees. "That's why my whole family decided to flee to the refugee camp on the border," said Ko Ngwe Win surrounded by his six-member family.

OPEN MARKET MERELY FOR SLORC

Slorc is claiming that it has introduced an "Open Market" economic system in Burma, and on the surface it is true, bringing apparent new prosperity into the cities. But the army remains firmly in control of the economy so that the open market system is merely for Slorc's senior members and their immediate families. It certainly does not benefit ordinary Burmese people, since all businesses and trades are being monopolized by the Slorc and army officers. Ordinary people are suffering an even more miserable life than ever before.

The army's holding company, Union of Myanmar Economic Holding is Burma's largest firm. It was established on February 19, 1990, with the objective of carrying out business internally and abroad and making investments "in

the interest of the state" which is none other than the Burmese army itself. Its registered capital stands at ten billion kyats, or \$1.4 billion at the official exchange rate. Forty percent of the capital shares are to be subscribed by the Ministry of Defence and 60% by the members of the armed forces, either active or retired, and by regimental institutions and organizations.

Many private companies are suffering various difficulties because of the economic monopoly of the military-run Myanmar Economic Holding. It's also the dominant player in the area of foreign investment, controlling 14 joint ventures ranging from garment manufacturing to real estate. It also notably manages the army's pension funds and



A store run by son of Slorc Sec.1 Khin Nyunt and his privileged business partners.

owns Myawaddy Bank, giving it ready sources of financing. In addition, Myawaddy Tour, one of the businesses run by Umeh, is granted special privileges to run its tours in highly restricted areas. For example, it won the exclusive contract for tours to Mogok, which is off-limits to others due to security

concerns but is famous as the land of jade and sapphires. Individual army officers are also enjoying special business privileges and running lucrative businesses.



Business is good only for Storc and its families while the people are starving.

The two-storey building which is an office of the Press and Publishing Corporation, situated at the corner of Merchant Street and Pansodan street in Rangoon was rented to Gen. Tun Kyi, the Minister for Trade for 70,000 kyats per month. Gen. Tun Kyi then converted the building's space into a number of small shops which he now rents to other well-connected businessmen. From this one building alone, he earns at least 500,000 kyats per month in rental fees. People in Rangoon have now nicknamed the building "Tun Kyi's Department Store."

NEW ARTILLERY BATTALION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

While the construction of bar-racks and facilities for No (20) new artillery division near Kyauk Sit Pon village, Monywa township, Sagaing division is underway, the land owned by local people is confiscated and people are being used as forced laborers in the construction work.

Villagers from nearby villages are ordered to work every Saturday at the

construction site for the new battalion. Locally owned motorcycles are commandeered for use by the army in rotation without any money paid. Army officers are making good money in this way by selling the battalion's quota of gasoline on the black market.

A lot of land belonging to local villagers has been confiscated for the construction without any compensation. In order to cultivate the land during the cultivating season and postpone construction, landowners must pay 700 kyats per acre to Maj. Zaw Min, commander of the battalion. Similarly, large tracts of land of Thapyidaw, Kyi Padon, Palingone, Minte, Kan-U, Yinpani, Magyigone, Songone and Thegyigone villages that are affected by the construction of 15-mile long motor-road between the Northwest military command and new artillery battalion are also being taken without compensation by the army.

RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN NAGA HILLS REGION

Not only Buddhism but also other religions in Burma have been persecuted

Rights

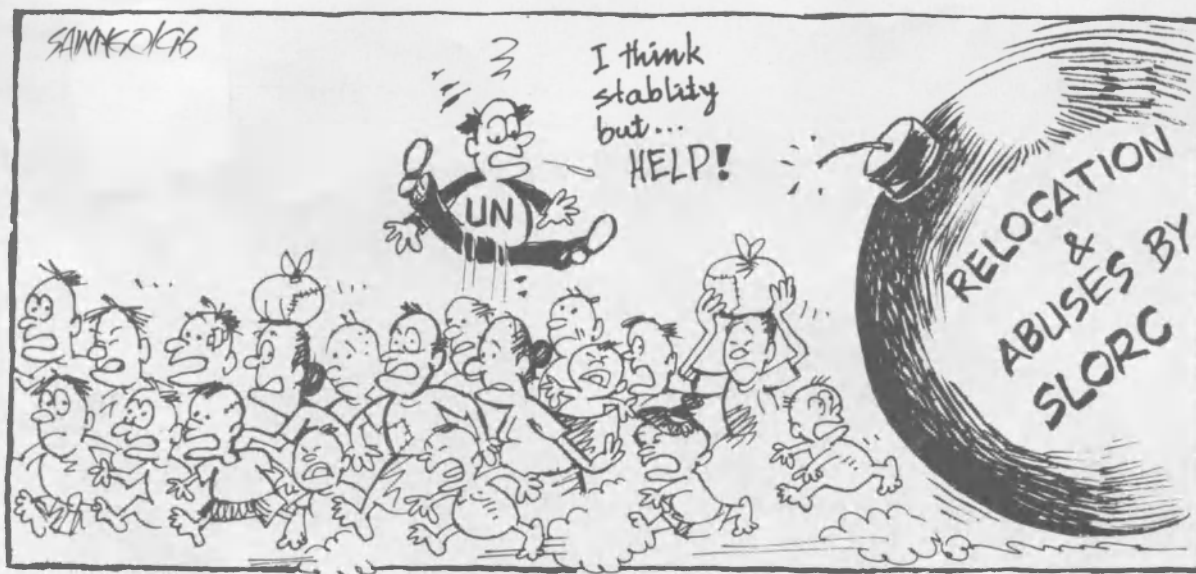
Declaration of Human Rights with religious choice. Naga people in Layshe township, Sagaing division are suffering racial and religious discrimination from SLORC troops in the region. Local villagers in Layshe township have frequently been threatened and coerced to convert to Buddhism when-ever columns of LIB 222 and IB 369 come to their village.

Layyon, Pansut, Konkailon, Sonmaya, Pontayet, Kuki and Mayeyon villages primarily inhabited by Christian Nagas have repeatedly been the victims of SLORC's religious persecution. In November of last year, a military column led by division commander Capt. Myint Kyaw from LIB 369 came to the villages and ordered the villagers to sign affidavits of conversion to Buddhism. Many Christian villagers, fearing torture or execution, signed the affidavit.

After that, the same military column went to Songmya village and broke down the door of the village church. After the

soldiers made two Buddhist monks sit on the preaching stage, they forced the Christian Naga villagers to worship them. On December 20, a military platoon from IB 222 arrived in Konkailon village and ordered the Christian minister, U Maung Hlaing, to make the Christian Naga convert to Buddhism. They also threatened to destroy the Christian churches in the region and replace them with Buddhist temples. The troop warned the villagers that there would be a big trouble if the villagers did not convert into Buddhism when they came next time.

Similar actions are also taking place in some places of Karenni and Shan States where majority of local residents are Christian. Regional Control Military Strategic Headquarters in Loikaw, Karenni state ordered the villagers to build one Buddhist monastery in every Christian village.





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