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## KAREN NATIONAL UNION (K.N.U.) BULLETIN

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Prize winners of 1987/1988 Medical Training Course  
 L to R Kaing Soe Myint (A.L.A.) 1st. Prize.  
 Khun Ta Ni Thway (P.N.A.) 2nd Prize.  
 Naw Thoolei Paw (K.N.U.) 3rd. Prize.



Arms/Ammos/Flag of Enemy No.53 Inf. Bn captured at Mu Theh Battle.

## **PRESIDENT GENERAL BO MYA'S SPEECH ON THIRTY EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF MARTYRS' DAY**

Today, August 12, 1988 is the thirty eighth anniversary of Martyrs' Days. On every anniversary of this day, the whole Karen nation commemorates the death of the martyrs, who had sacrificed their lives for the country and national liberation, by holding a ceremony and reaffirming its resolution to fight on until victory. On this day, we, the whole Karen people, remember the martyrs with sorrow, but at the same time we take pride in the fact that, because of them, we are being recognised as a nation, enjoying the right to self-determination and having our own army and our own government.

Now, the Karen revolution has entered its 40th year of struggle. Our task is not complete yet. We must go on struggling to realize the aims and objectives of the martyrs, which are the liberation of the whole nation from oppression and the building of a prosperous society.

The enemy has threatened to annihilate us in a few years' time. If we are united, courageous and upright, the enemy shall never be able to overcome us. Whatever the threat of the enemy, it has always met defeat, suffering and sustained heavy casualties in battles against us.

Nowadays, the BSPP military dictatorship is in deep trouble. It is under attack by the entire people. There are uprisings in all parts of the country. Because of brutal massacres of unarmed students, the entire mass of students and people is opposing the military dictatorship with furious demonstrations. The wrong political system imposed by the BSPP regime has sown disunity, and the wrong economic policies have reduced the country to the status of the poorest nation. The people are not free to engage in livelihood. The state

monopoly of the economy has made all commodities to become scarce, and encouraged the growth of black-market economy.

Because of denial of the rights of non-Burmese indigenous nationalities to equality and self-determination, all are in armed resistance against the BSPP military dictatorship. Now, U Ne Win has to resign from his position of power as a result of the fight of the indigenous nationalities, the students and the people. At present, the international mass media has focussed its attention on Burma and been giving a wide coverage to the people's uprisings and the atrocities perpetrated by the BSPP military government. By this, we have to understand that the demise of our enemy is imminent. Accordingly, we, the revolutionaries, must endeavour with unity and new vigour, under the leadership of Karen National Union, to raise our activities a step higher in the military, organizational and administrative fields.

For the victory of Karen revolution, we must avoid unjust and anti-mass activities, and live among the people to gain their support. Stand firmly on the policies and programs of KNU and work with all your physical and intellectual power. Follow the leadership of KNU faithfully and carry out the instructions diligently. We will definitely gain victory if we work harmoniously in all matters of the nation, in affairs of government, in military affairs, and in organizational affairs. Therefore, let us march on to victory with new strength and unity.

\* The just Karen Revolution shall definitely be victorious !

\* Dictatorial chauvinist one-party BSPP government shall definitely fall!

## **RAISE THE STRUGGLE A STAGE HIGHER AND OVERTHROW THE DICTATORIAL ONE-PARTY BSPP GOVERNMENT**

People of All Nationalities,

Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), led by U Ne Win for 26 years, had to convene an emergency congress on July 23, 1988. The party emergency congress was held when the country was facing internal and external crisis as follows:-

The BSPP government becomes isolated, internally, because it has imposed the facist rule of one-party dictatorship for a very long period. At present, the political forces opposing it have grown in number and strength, and become more united. They are stepping up their respective struggles against BSPP. The struggles take the forms of armed resistance, as well as mass movements, and have pervaded the whole country. The economy of Burma, in BSPP era, has plunged to the bottom in all sectors and reached the lowest point in the whole of post-war period, and has suffered considerable damages.

The present internal crisis, BSPP is facing, is incomparably greater than the economic crisis of 1966-67 or the general crisis of 1974-75.

The crisis, the BSPP government, has to face externally is also serious. It has an external debt of US\$4,000 m. In order to get some measure of relief from the burden of this debt the BSPP government applied, at the UN, for the recognition of Burma as the Least Developed Country (LDC), in 1987. The LDC status was duly accorded. However, the BSPP government's intention to receive a write-off of the total, or more than half of the debt and to receive new massive aid, did not succeed. Only rescheduling of payment and readjustment of interests were made.

The BSPP government's disappointments and problems were, moreover, compounded by the fact that there was no consortium of industrialised countries, like in 1974-75, to give massive assistance, and the reduction of the amounts of aid, to a certain extent, by the principal donor countries of West Germany and

Japan, made the situation worse than ever. What was worst for the BSPP government is the focus of international attention on Burma, and the international pressure by governments experts and analysts urging it to terminate its facist rule and to make drastic changes.

Needless to say, the internal and external crisis, faced by the BSPP dictatorship, are shaking it from the very foundation.

The resignation of U Ne Win, who had led BSPP for 26 years, from chairmanship of the party, the rejection of U Ne Win's proposal for a referendum to decide the future political system and the elevation of U Sein Lwin, who has been responsible for the ruthless suppressions of popular uprisings of the students and the people and attendant bloodsheds, to the top posts of the party and the state, show that, inspite of the hopeless situation they have reached, the BSPP and its leaders are going to cling on to power obdurately, and remain on the opposite side of the oppressed nationalities, the oppressed people and the political forces representing them.

The development of more complex relations in internal politics, the intensification of various internal conflicts in different forms and the unprecedentedly ruinous state of the economy which is becoming worse, are the features the current situation of Burma.

Consequently, the oppressed nationalities, the oppressed people and all those who want to escape from the dark age of BSPP hell must stand on the basic points, as follows.-

- (1) It must be clearly seen that, far from coming over to the side of the oppressed people, BSPP and the government will continue to oppose them in more facist ways.
- (2) We must not let ourselves be lulled into rosy dreams by superficial changes and must be alert to the evil tricks the BSPP government may use to create race or religious riot which must be opposed.

(3) In our future struggles, however complex the political relations may be and however ruthless the military operations or suppression by force may be, we must be more united and raise our struggle a stage higher, under the general political goals of:-

- \* The overthrow of the fascist rule of dictatorial one-party BSPP government,
- \* The cessation of civil war and the establishment of internal peace,
- \* The establishment of a genuine federal union based on equality and self-determination of all the indigenous nationalities,
- \* The establishment of full democratic rights for the entire people,
- \* The formation of a new federal government which is genuinely representa-

tive of the interest and will of all the indigenous peoples.

The Karen National Union (KNU) is fighting for freedom, equality, democracy, social progress, and the formation of a peaceful and prosperous federal union. Now, the armed revolution, and mass movements of the students and the people, have reached a vital and decisive stage. Accordingly, we appeal to the students and the people, in towns and cities, to coordinate their struggle of mass movement with KNU's struggle of armed revolution, and continue the struggle against BSPP and the government, with greater momentum.

- \* Keep political alertness high!
- \* Keep the unity strong!
- \* Carry on the struggle progressively!
- \* Overthrow the BSPP totally!

August 2, 1988

Central Standing Committee  
Karen National Union



President Gen. Bo Mya addressing 1988 Central Political Training Class at closing function.

## **NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT (NDF) STATEMENT ON BSPP EMERGENCY CONGRESS AND CHANGES MADE.**

### **Fighting Students and People of All Nationalities.**

The BSPP led by U Ne Win has ruled the country for 26 years, and 1988 is the year BSPP government has to face the worst economic and political crisis. This is the extraordinary condition in Burma of BSPP era.

Due to the extraordinary condition, the BSPP had to convene an emergency congress on July 23, 1988. Observers both inside and outside of the country regarded this congress to be especially interesting in the history of fascist rule of the one party BSPP regime. In delivering some important speeches at the congress, U Ne Win admitted that he was indirectly responsible for the bloody incidents that broke out in March and June of 1988, and that the incidents showed the lack of confidence in the BSPP and the government. U Ne Win had to make the admission because of BSPP's unjust and repressive rule, and excessive brutality had the uprising of the students and the people.

U Ne Win went on to say that it was necessary to hold a referendum to decide whether the people wanted one-party or multi-party system, and to make changes in the guiding philosophy of BSPP the "Principle of Correlation of Man and His Environment" economic policy and some sections of the party constitution. He continued to say that though six top party leaders, including himself, had submitted their resignation, it was necessary to keep the situation under control. Then, in a threatening tone, he warned that any uprising by the students and the people would be ruthlessly suppressed by the army.

Though the congress allowed U Ne Win and U San Yu to resign from the posts of chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, their party membership was retained. The congress rejected the proposal for holding a referendum and the central committee was entrusted to decide the remaining issues.

An analysis of the acts of the congress convened by U Ne Win, and the election of U Sein Lwin by the central committee to the chairmanship of state council and the presidency of Burma, shows that the devil-may-care fascist rule of one-party dictatorship will be continued.

The utterances, made in all seriousness, by new leaders, U Sein Lwin and U Aye Ko, that "principles need not be changed, only persons need be changed", showed that they will continue to follow their path of folly to the end. This situation will develop into a very complex problem of political relation, and it is certain that the conflicts in the country will become vehement. All national groups engaged in armed struggle and students in unarmed struggle must have a clear view of the facts as follows.-

- (1) The Military man U Sein Lwin, who had unhesitatingly massacred students and the people ruthlessly when he was in No. 4 position in the power structure of Burma, has been elevated to No. 1 position. He will become 10 times more ruthless and reckless in oppressing the students and the people.
- (2) BSPP top leaders who are responsible for all the problems continue to retain their positions of power securely.
- (3) Superficial changes made by the BSPP and government are tricks intended to deflate the anti-BSPP movements.
- (4) Reports of disturbances in Taunggyi and Prome towns during July as Buddhist-Muslim religious riots and Burmese-Indian race riots are lies fabricated by the BSPP. They, in actuality, were anti-BSPP riots.
- (5) The successive governments including the BSPP, when faced with an internal crisis, resorted to the dirty trick of setting one section of the people against another. The Karen-Burmese race riots of 1949-50 and the Burmese-Chinese race riots of 1967 are the relevant examples.

If we analyze the errors of the BSPP government, which has ruled the country since 1962, we find that the following factors are the most basic. They are .-

- (a) The system of state monopoly of the economy.
- (b) The unlimited escalation of the civil war, instead of solving the national question of the indigenous peoples of Burma correctly.
- (c) The use of 65 percent of financial assistances, received as foreign aid, for the luxurious living of the BSPP leaders and for the escalation of the civil war, instead of using them for development.
- (d) The establishment of a unitary state disguised as a federal union, instead of setting up a genuine federal union based on national equality and self-determination,
- (e) The establishment of one-party dictatorial facist rule, instead of establishing democratic freedom and social justices

for all the indigenous peoples in the country.

These are the basic errors committed by U Ne Win and the BSPP.

To correct these errors and bring about effective changes, it is necessary for the students and the whole people to carry on the struggle in concert with the NDF for the total over-throw of the BSPP and the government representing it. Only after the over-throw of the BSPP, we will be able to establish unity, peace and a prosperous federal union.

Accordingly, the students and the people who are fighting, in various forms, against the BSPP regime, must work in coordination and intensify the struggle, with courage and determination. The NDF is engaged in the struggle for the establishment of a genuine federal union based on democratic freedom, national equality and self-determination. Therefore we urge all concerned to coordinate mass struggle with armed struggle for early victory.

August 1st, 1988

Central Presidium  
National Democratic Front  
(Headquarters).



Women W/T operators.at K.T.L. Army Signal Station.



## THE RISE AND FALL OF NE WIN DICTATORSHIP

### The Rise

The one-time postal clerk, General Ne Win, came to power in 1962 by a military coup against a more or less popularly elected U Nu government. The coup was staged under the pretext of protecting the integrity of the union when U Nu had to negotiate with the non-Burmese indigenous nationalities who had failed to insist upon the formation of a genuine federal union.

The first step political charlatan, power-mad Ne Win, and his clique did to monopolize power was the abolition of the constitution and all political parties. The one and only party, the so-called Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was set up. The ideology of the party, as most observers have noted, was a mixture of Buddhist philosophy, Burmese chauvinism, xenophobia and some socialist dogmas. Dictator Ne Win had hoped it to be a basis for rallying the Burmese people by appealing to their weaker instincts.

The next step in the monopolization of power was rigid control of the economy. All banks, businesses, factories, mills and cultivated lands were placed under state control. Then military budget was greatly increased for the escalation of civil war against the national movements of the non-Burmese indigenous nationalities, with the intention of wiping them out in a few years' time, as the national movements posed as the only viable opposition to the dictatorship.

### People's Resistance

The ultra-chauvinistic policy of intense Burmanization, racial discrimination, the relegation of the non-Burmese nationalities to third-class citizen status, the occupation of their lands and decimation of their population by brute force, and the transformation of Burma into a unitary state, failed to attract the general population of the Burmese who have better political sense. Instead of popular support, Ne Win dictatorship was being increasingly resisted by the Burmese people from all

walks of life, with occasional outbursts of violence in towns and cities.

Rampant corruption and inefficiency among Ne Win's military men who managed the economy and the administration, plunged the country into economic, social and political disorders within a decade. Ne Win's answer to the deteriorating situation was the issue of more and more paper money, more and more exploitation of the farmers who had been the backbone of Burma's agrarian economy, the use of more and more brutality to crush the people's opposition and frequent demonetizations.

### Foreign Assistance

One area Ne Win dictatorship had done fairly well, however, was in the area of acquiring financial assistance from foreign governments. Portraying the problems he and his party had created as the consequences of British colonialism and alleging all the revolutionary movements as smugglers, terrorists, leftists and narcotic drug runners in his propaganda, Ne Win managed to get from the West, and even from the UN, considerable amount of financial assistance, year after year. These assistances were used mainly for the maintenance of spy network against the people and his regime's effort to crush the national movements of the non-Burmese indigenous peoples who have been in armed struggle for the establishment of a genuine federal union based on equality, democracy and self-determination.

### Robbery of the People

After a quarter century of mismanagement and war under Ne Win dictatorship, Burma became so impoverished that the Burmese government was forced to apply for the Least Developed Country (LDC) status at the UN in early 1987. The economy of the country was in shambles. The majority of the people were living a hand-to-mouth existence. The government's coffer was empty. Ne Win dictatorship was in great difficulty to support the army and maintain the war effort.



As usual, the government resorted to demonetization in September 1987, touching off violent demonstrations led by the students. The demonetization deprive the people of 80 % of their hard-earned money. Though the people were much embittered, most remained silent for fear of truncheons, machine-guns and torture camps which Ne Win dictatorship employed without hesitation to keep the people in complete subjugation.

### **International Attention and Pressure**

The protest made by the National Democratic Front (NDF) at the UN in connection with Burma's application for LDC status, reports made by investigative reporters like Andrew Drummond of the Observer, Martin Smith of the BBC and Ron Martz of the Atlanta Constitution, the Amnesty International reports of extra-judicial executions of the non-Burmese indigenous peoples by Burmese soldiers, and the BBC and Australian TV stories of the Karens of Burma who have been fighting for freedom, and democracy for nearly 40 years, have brought international focus on Burma and pressure on Ne Win dictatorship for changes in recent months.

Encouraged by international attention, the students, with a long tradition of protest and militancy, turned a tea-shop brawl in Rangoon into anti-Ne Win dictatorship demonstrations in March this year. Joined by the public, the demonstrations turned into a general uprising of the people and spread to other parts of the country. Like before, Ne Win and his henchmen brought out the security police and the army, and brutally crushed the uprising.

According to reliable sources, not less than 200 demonstrators were killed and many hundreds were wounded, detained and tortured. A number of girls among the detainees were reportedly raped by the security police, resulting in the pregnancy of nine girls and the suicide of three.

Again in June, student demonstrations in Rangoon demanding punishment of the officials responsible for the brutal massacre of

their comrades in March, turned into a general uprising. Apart from the major cities like Mandalay, Moulmein and Bassein, the disturbances spread to Pegu, Taunggyi and Prome, towns which had rarely been involved in demonstrations, in the past. This time, Ne Win's military and security forces had to kill more than 400 demonstrators before the situation could be brought under control in the third week of July.

### **The Fall**

Shaken by the scale of the people's uprising, dictator Ne Win convened a special congress of the BSPP on July 23. Ne Win began his opening speech by deploring the bloody incidents. He then surprised his listeners by asking to resign from his post as chairman of the BSPP, giving as reasons that he assumed himself to be directly or indirectly responsible for the bloodshed and had advanced in age.

"Every time I asked to resign in the past, my close comrades and advisors prevented me to do so," he said. "Now I appeal to you to allow me to resign from the post of chairman, as well as from membership of the party, and retire from politics altogether," he added.

Five other top leaders of the BSPP submitted their resignations in sympathy. Among the five were vice chairman of the BSPP-cum-president of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (SRUB) San Yu, general secretary of BSPP-cum-vice-president of SRUB Aye Ko and Joint general secretary of BSPP Sein Lwin.

In the same speech, Ne Win went on to propose for the holding of a referendum to decide whether the people wanted a multi-party system. A change to a more liberal economic system was also proposed. The congress accepted the resignations of Ne Win and San Yu, but rejected those of the others and the proposal for referendum. The proposal for a change in the economic system was accepted.

Observers were of the opinion that, true to character, Ne Win was attempting to make a graceful exit and save his name in history by taking a minor blame, and leaving all the major blames and the crisis to his comrades in

crime. A puzzling note, however, was introduced by Ne Win warning, in a threatening tone, the future demonstrators that they would greatly suffer, adding, "when the military shoot, they shoot to hit. They won't shoot into the air to frighten." This made some to suspect that the whole thing was just a piece of theatre intended to calm the rebellious populace and Ne Win would go on pulling the reins of power from behind the curtain. This certainly is inconsistent with his earlier utterances of the desire to turn his back on politics forever.

Harsher critics were of the opinion that Ne Win would be pardoned by the people only if he abolished the BSPP and returned the sovereign power to the people by introducing a multi-party system and full democratic freedom. In addition, he and his comrades would have to return all the wealth they had stolen from the country to the people, and submit themselves to the people's judgement unconditionally.

### **Succession by the Henchman**

The disappointment and shock the people experienced when the proposal for referendum was rejected were much milder in comparison to the disappointment and shock they experienced when they heard the news of the election of Sein Lwin, by the central committee of the BSPP on July 26, to the post of BSPP chairmanship. The next day, the parliament elected him to the post of chairman of the State Council and, thus, to the post of the presidency of SURB.

Sein Lwin's first official act as chairman of the State Council was the dismissal of prime minister U Maung Maung Kha, the most educated person of the lot, with a reputation

for balanced judgement and foresight. His had been always a voice of reason and caution at the BSPP meetings where good sense, sound judgement and logic were rarely the order.

A man who has never had any formal education, Sein Lwin is known to have a minimum of culture and no knowledge of civilized politics. Power-crazed and ruthless to the extreme, he broaches no opposition in any form. The dismissal of U Maung Maung Kha by him was seen by the people as the beginning of his attempt to remove all rivals in the BSPP.

The principal henchman of Ne Win, Sein Lwin has been known as the "butcher" among the students and the people. Right from the beginning up to the waning days of Ne Win dictatorship in March and June of this year, he was entrusted with all the dirty jobs of suppressing the disturbances. He performed all these jobs with alacrity and the thoroughness of a mafia don in the liquidation of opposition.

Needless to say, the elevation of Sein Lwin triggered violent demonstrations all over the country. Ruthless suppression, according to reliable information reaching here, killed nearly 1,000 demonstrators in the 17 days that Sein Lwin was in power. Finally, he resigned from presidency of SRUB, party chairmanship and the parliament on August 12, 1988. Demonstrations petered out following the resignation and the announcement that an emergency congress of BSPP would be held on August 19, 1988.

Whatever the congress decides, if the restitution of democratic rights and freedom is not complete and if the national question of the non-Burmese indigenous peoples is not addressed to the satisfaction of all concerned, there will never be peace and no possibility for unity and reconstruction of the economy of the country.

## ANGUISH OF BRITAIN'S FORGOTTEN ALLIES

**When Burma allied itself with Japan during World War II in the hope of gaining independence from the British, one sector of the population remained loyal to the Crown — the Karen hill people. They have suffered for it ever since. Andrew Drummond reports from the Burma-Thai border, where the Karen are now fighting for their survival.**

SQUATING ON THE BAMBOO PORCH OF HER NEW BAMBOO HOME in a refugee camp in Thailand, Naw Mu, 28 relates almost impassively what happened when the Burmese army called on her home.

'They took my father, cut off his ears and stabbed him all over his body. They took him away and paraded him around two other villages as an example of what will happen to people helping the rebels. Then they tied him to a tree and lit a fire underneath him. His torture lasted a whole day before he turned to my mother and said, "I can't bear it any more." Then he collapsed into the flames. There was nothing we could do. My father knew no rebels.'

Naw Mu fled Burma with her three children, walking through the jungle for a month. She is a Karen, a hill-tribe woman of Burma's largest ethnic minority, one of 20,000 people who recently have sought the safety of Thailand to escape pogroms initiated by Burma's military dictator, General Ne Win, against people — mainly Karen — suspected of rebel activity.

When *The Observer* first reported on atrocities carried out against Burma's minorities last year, the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) in Rangoon described the report 'capitalist propaganda' and 'lies' by the Karen who were fuelled by a 'yearning for their mother country' - Britain. Now, eight months later, a report by Amnesty International has confirmed *The Observer's* findings of the widespread execution and torture of Karen civilians

Tonight, 'Burma's Forgotten War', in the BBC1 'Everyman' slot, tells how Britain left the Karen, one of her staunchest wartime

allies, to the mercy of the Burmese. As many as 200,000 people may have died in parts of Burma where the Karen live, now closed to the West. Villages where tourists are forbidden 'for their own safety' have been burnt down and the population moved into stockaded villages or camps controlled by the Burma Socialist Program Party.

Prior to independence in 1948, the Karen were protected from the Burmese by British rule and had their own lands under British administration. When the Burmese turned against the British during World War II, the Karen remained loyal. (Viscount Slim, Commander of the British forces in Burma, described them as 'no fair-weather friends'.) During the war the Karen formed the backbone of Orde Wingate's Chindits and sent 10,000 men to the aid of Britain when Japan invaded Burma. During the occupation many parachuted back into the country with Force 136, an SOE (Special Operations Executive) unit, to cause disruption behind enemy lines. It is this relationship with the British which brought about postwar retribution and the civil war.

Now, at a place called Manerplaw, in a state called Kawthoolei that the Karen have set up on the Thai-Burma border, it is as though World War II has never ended.

Manerplaw is the headquarters of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), a 10,000-strong group who have been battling the Burmese since 1949. Their leader is General Bo Mya, a bulldog character and ex-Force 136 guerrilla. His wooden home faces a parade ground in a camp laid out in British Army fashion. From here he directs his troops, who face the Burmese along a 500-mile front. In places along the front line the opposing sides are only 150 yards apart, well dug in. During the rainy season, but for the heat and the mosquitoes carrying cerebral malaria, it could be the Somme.

Bo Mya cannot hide his bitterness. 'You British. Why did you forget us? Why did you hand us over to our traditional enemy,' he says,

referring to the independence negotiations in 1948 in which the Karen were given nothing. He screws up his face in disbelief at the memory of Princess Anne's visit to Burma last year, and at the thought of the friendship between General Ne Win and Princess Alexandra, a frequent visitor to Burma's capital, Rangoon. (General Ne Win, one of the 'Thirty Comrades' who received military training in Japan after the outbreak of World War II, returning to Burma to lead Burmese forces against the British, took control of Burma in a military coup in 1962. An operation instigated by him, 'The Four Cuts'- We cut off the rebels from the villages. We cut off the people from their country. We cut off their supplies and food. We cut off their heads'- is currently decimating the Karen and other ethnic minorities in Burma.) General Bo Mya says, 'Our people are being executed indiscriminately, our women raped and families put in camps, yet Britain has turned a blind eye. They pretend they never knew us. What a short memory you people have.'

Situated near the junction of the Salween and Moei Rivers, the scene of bitter fighting during World War II, Manerplaw is the administrative centre of this unrecognised state of Kawthoolei. The Ministry of Education runs the schools and the Health Service runs the hospitals. The Ministry of Finance looks after an economy based on timber, antimony and taxes levied on cross-border trade with Thailand. Karen living under the protection of the KNLA enjoy a better standard of living than many in Rangoon.

The border trade is the key to the Karen's survival. Burma, with its closed-door policy to outsiders, has a stagnant economy. Ninety per cent of its export earnings go to service foreign debts. The people are reluctant to sell their wares to the government stores. As a result, gems, cattle, artwork, cloth and jade are transported by foot to the Thai border. Coming the other way, from Thailand, are TV sets, radios and electrical goods, destined for the elite of Rangoon. As much as 80 per cent of trade is black market-based. Last year the BSPP under Ne Win abolished 90 per cent of

Burma's currency. The aim was to bankrupt the black marketeers. But it only served to impoverish the poor still further.

At the moment, the Karen are hard-pressed militarily. Burmese offensives have pushed their army right up against the Thai border at several fortified positions. At Kaw Moo Rah, 40 miles north of the That town of Mae Sot, we have to keep our heads down as Burmese automatic fire from positions 200 yards in front rakes the Karen 101 Battalion lines. At Wangkha, headquarters of the Karen 7th Brigade, we have to take to the bunkers as the Burmese lob 81mm mortars on to our positions. The situation is the same at Phalu, headquarters of the Karen 6th Brigade, but the enemy mortar fire falls at least 400 yards short from an enemy position nearly two miles away.

Back at Manerplaw, Karen women soldiers are being trained to face the next Burmese offensive, expected next month before the rainy season. The Karen are mainly Buddhist and animist, though the leadership is Christian, converted by American missionaries who penetrated the area 150 years ago. The sexes are kept apart. Karen soldiers are forbidden to marry before the age of 35. The penalty for pre-marital sex is 10 years in jail in Manerplaw. Most girls have joined up, unpaid except for 30 litres of rice a month and /2 at New Year, because their villages have already been burnt down by the Burmese.

Many of the families who have recently fled Burma are in Mae Po Tah camp across the River Moei in Thailand. Since Thailand will not give them refugee status, these people do not officially exist. As a result, none of the international agencies, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees or the Red Cross, can get involved.

Shwe Hie Kwin ('Beautiful Gold') tells what happened when the Burmese forces entered her village, Wa Tho Kla, in the Thaton district of Eastern Burma. 'They took a farmer, Saw Wi, and told him to bring them guns. He said he had no guns and knew no rebels. They did not believe him, so they started cutting open his body with their machetes. They poured salt into his wounds. When he did not die

after a couple of hours they clubbed him to death.'

The stories are similar in two other camps on the Thai border, Sho Klo and Huey Ka Loke.

The Karen, in turn, are accused by the Burmese of blowing up civilian trains and committing atrocities. They deny this, but there is a curious paucity of Burmese prisoners. We find only two. A staff officer says, 'When our troops see what the Burmese have done, it is difficult to curb their enthusiasm.'

In the war office at Manerplaw is Major Aaron Po Yin, DSM. He won his medal trying to save the lives of two British officers during a Japanese attack. He was severely wounded at the time and used to receive a war disability pension from Britain. 'If I go to Rangoon to collect my pension now I'll be

tried for treason,' says the Major, who parachuted into Burma with Force 136. Now 68, he has been fighting with the resistance for 39 years: 'We will never stop fighting until we win. That could be another 39 years. I don't hate the British for what they did. We know that it is the politicians, not the people that we knew, who are responsible.'

Last week's Amnesty report details injudicial executions, torture, rape and other atrocities committed against the Karen. The report names Burma army units and calls for an inquiry. The Burmese government response was: 'The authorities of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma categorically reject these groundless allegations. No execution could take place in Burma without proper judicial process.'



Teaching staff of 1988 Central Political Training Course.

## READING THE STARS

Burma's new strongman, Sein Lwin, 64, has, among other attributes, a reputation for being an accomplished astrologer. According to a story widely told among Burmese, Sein Lwin's son recounted at a gathering in Japan some years ago how his star-gazing father had predicted. "One day I will become president, and after that I will be assassinated." Last week the story circulating in Rangoon claimed that Sein Lwin was victim of an assassination attempt by his private secretary on July 29, two days after he was named president of Burma by the People's Assembly. Supposedly, the secretary shot Sein Lwin in the arm, injuring him only slightly, then turned the gun on himself. Whether or not the story would ever be confirmed was less important to some Burmese than the fact that it was out. For in Burmese belief, fate can be appeased if an event similar to the one predicted occurs, or is staged, or is even rumoured.

Yet even if the heavens were mollified by *yedaya chaydeh*, there was no shortage of earthly predictions that Burma's ruthless new boss faced dangerous times ahead. Sein Lwin, whose name in Burmese means "Dazzling Diamond," is more commonly, if discreetly, called "the Beast" or "the Butcher" for his harsh treatment of demonstrators. Many describe him as "the most hated man in Burma." Last week, however, his hold on power seemed complete. His elevation to the presidency followed his selection as chairman of the Burma Socialist Program Party, the country's only legal party, to replace outgoing strongman Ne Win. It was the first time since 1981 that both positions had been held by one man. His accession also seemed to dash hopes that Ne Win's retirement after 26 years would usher in a kind of "Burmese Spring." A former army brigadier-general and a close ally of his predecessor, Sein Lwin was in charge of the dreaded lon-htain, or riot police, who killed scores of students during demonstrations in March and June. Student groups last week vowed to organise new protests, including a general strike

set for Aug. 8. Said a Western diplomat in Rangoon bluntly. "We have not seen the end of the current upheaval in Burma. It can come only with Sein Lwin's removal."

Like more than half of the new cabinet, including new Prime Minister Tun Tin, Sein Lwin is a part of the clique of army officers who served together in the 4th Burma Rifles regiment, recruited by Ne Win in 1945. They have been the nation's governing elite since Ne Win staged his coup in 1962, over throwing the civilian government of U Nu. Sein Lwin is typical of many of the veterans of that period who entered the army semi-literate and learned what they could while advancing through the ranks. Students and intellectuals delight in sneering at Sein Lwin's mere four years of education. According to one joke making the rounds last week, a schoolboy laments that he no longer has a chance of becoming president. Why not? "Because I'm already in the seventh grade."

Tensions in the capital were clear. As they do every year, thousands of people gathered at the Shwedagon Pagoda and other temples on July 28 to celebrate the beginning of Buddhist Lent. But this time, a day after Sein Lwin became president, the crowds of pilgrims were so huge that the trustees were obliged to limit the numbers making the ascent. Students were on hand delivering anti-Sein Lwin speeches and distributing leaflets. A commotion occurred when the authorities tried to arrest four students. The students yelled "pickpocket!" and the pilgrims beat up the police, freeing the students. There were other signs of unrest. One person was reported killed and five injured in a riot in Myede. The town is 70 km north of Prome, scene of racially sparked disturbances in late July.

A day after the pagoda scene, Sein Lwin cracked down on his most prominent opponents. Arrested was retired Brig.- Gen. Aung Gyi, 70, and at least nine of his associates. Unconfirmed report said as many as nineteen may have been picked up. Aung Gyi, another

veteran of the 4th Burma Rifle fell out with Ne Win in 1963 over the socialist direction of the revolution union. Of late, he has galvanised a series widely circulated open letters excoriating the government for economic mismanagement and brutality against protesters. His latest missive, dated July 19, criticises Sein Lwin for allowing all manner of persecution, shootings, rape and killings.

The other nine confirmed detainees included Aung Gyi's nephew, Zaw Win, and a group of retired army and navy officers, mostly in their 60s and 70s, who are known to share his liberal economic views. Also arrested was respected journalist Sein Win, Rangoon correspondent for the American news agency Associated Press. All were suspected of helping distribute Aung Gyi's letters. Three days later, diplomats said, pre-Independence era freedom fighters Tha Ya and Yan Nyang were added to the list, accused of involvement with pamphlets calling for Sein Lwin's overthrow.

Aung Gyi figured heavily in the genesis of events that led to Ne Win tendering his resignation at an extraordinary party congress July 23. On July 7, sources say, the chairman held a meeting with President San Yu, Tin Aung Hein, chairman of the Council of People's Justices, Myint Maung, chairman of the Council of People's Attorneys, and Dr. Maung Maung, Ne Win's personal lawyer and now chief attorney. On the table were four of Aung Gyi's letters, one from 1977, the other three concerning the disturbances in March and June. Ne Win asked the group to tell him everything they knew about the riots. Tin Aung Hein, who lives in the West Gyogon district of Rangoon where the March troubles began, gave a detailed account. He noted that he had offered to testify before a special investigative commission, but was ignored. The chairman asked the group whether Tin Aung Hein's description jibed with what Aung Gyi's letters said. They agreed it did. Then Ne Win asked enigmatically. "Do you think I dare not do it?" Nobody was sure what he meant by the question, according to one participant.

At the same meeting, Ne Win ordered the release of all detainees, the lifting of a curfew imposed after widespread rioting June 21 and the convening of the extraordinary party congress. That afternoon, an angry Ne Win delivered a severe tongue-lashing to Home Minister Min Gaung for detaining students without charge beyond the constitutional limit. At one point Ne Win became so agitated that he slapped the home minister right and left. Later he called on the carpet Ba Maw, head of the special investigative commission.

Up to then, Ne Win seems to have been in full control of events. But there is evidence that the extraordinary session did not go entirely according to script. The congress was originally scheduled to last for two days. Instead, it was extended to a third. Some of the delegates were already on their way home when they got word that there would be an extra day's work. Ne Win was not there, although he had been expected to stay for the full session. A small house was even built for his comfort at the congress venue, Kyaikkasan Grounds, formerly the race course. But after delivering his half hour opening speech in which the resignation section was read for him by party official Htwe Han - Ne Win unaccountably left the hall, climbed into a Fiat and was driven off.

Some speculate that he was incensed over the reluctance of delegates to accept his proposal to hold a special referendum later this year on instituting a multi-party system. Most analysts believe the rank-and-file did not want to give up prized perks. The referendum was rejected at the third day's session, which also accepted the resignations of Ne Win and San Yu while retaining four other officials, including Sein Lwin. Key speaker at the session, which lasted well into the night : Sein Lwin.

There was also a major diversion on the replacement for San Yu as president at the party central committee meeting July 26. Dr. Maung Maung, a close confidant of Ne Win's, had been slated for election, sources say. But when the People's Assembly met the next day to formalise the choice, Sein Lwin got the job.



Two theories were circulating in Rangoon last week. One held that everything was planned by Ne Win. To ensure safety for himself and his family, he had handed over full power to Sein Lwin, the only colleague he really trusted. By the other theory, Sein Lwin had subtly seized power in a supreme double-cross, sinking Ne Win's multi-party proposal in the process.

As for the referendum, why should such a long-standing autocrat propose such a liberal measure in the first place in history, but Japan may also have played a key role. A Bangkok-based executive of a key Japanese trading firm operating in Burma told Asia-week that Tokyo had put pressure on Ne Win to ease political tensions or face aid cuts. The Japanese are said to be deeply disturbed by the recent vio-

lence and the deteriorating economy. Japan is Burma's biggest aid donor, and the move seems to signal a new willingness in Tokyo to use aid to achieve political goals.

It remains to be seen just how strong a strongman Sein Lwin will be. Rangoon analysts believe Ne Win could still retake power should the situation deteriorate. His following in the military is seen as far outweighing Sein Lwin's. There are also hints of tension within the armed forces. Several colonels are said to have resigned over the recent excesses. Moreover, younger officers who have spent their careers in the 40-year battle against ethnic insurgents are thought to be chafing at the continuing dominance of the 4th Burma Rifles. Sein Lwin may want to keep close track of his stars.



Skaw Ler Taw, addressing the gathering of K.T.L. Army Day Celebration.

## BURMA: A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE ?

When the new Burmese leader, Sein Lwin, was appointed to power, we noticed his name was almost identical to that of the Associated Press correspondent in Rangoon, Sein Win. The usual newsroom jokes made the rounds that the two men were one and the same. If there were any doubts, Burma's leaders have drawn a neat line marking the distinction between the two: one is in Jail and the other put him there.

Darkness is falling on Burma once again after a brief, flickering moment of hope. The socialist leadership has signalled the world that prospects for serious reform are few, and that a change in command does not necessarily mean a change in direction.

To make his point, Sein Lwin has arrested a leading opposition figure, Aung Gyi, along with respected newsman Sein Win and other critics of the government. Rangoon saw no need to announce the detentions, but the US State Department, quoting diplomats in Burma, said as many as two dozen dissidents were rounded up. The AP office here in Bangkok received the following telex from Sein Win's family. "Daddy has been taken away. He won't be available to answer your queries."

Sein Win's crime? Burmese authorities haven't bothered to say. Perhaps they didn't like the tone of his despatches, though there was nothing biased or seditious about them. Maybe they felt that the prize-winning former publisher of *The Guardian* English-language newspaper was a potential troublemaker. He was jailed for three years in the 1960s in connection with his journalistic activities.

A more foreboding sign is the jailing of Aung Gyi, whose letters have given voice to the Burmese. The one-time ally of former

leader Ne Win has accused Sein Lwin of "turning a blind eye" to "all kinds of human rights violations". It was Aung Gyi who said more than 200 people have died in the unrest that has plagued Burma since March.

No one likes to hear criticism. In a democracy, as many a Thai politician can attest, one must either bear it or return fire. In Burma, as in other totalitarian societies, critics are routinely suppressed or, like newsman Sein Win, taken from home at midnight without writ or warning.

On the official level, Burma's leaders are brimming with enthusiasm after the party congress at which Ne Win ostensibly called it quits, Sein Lwin took control and an agenda of economic reform was unveiled. One state-owned newspaper said "people's needs will be fulfilled once the reforms are implemented. Among the proposals are relaxing the government's monopoly on industry and encouraging foreign trade and investment. If this really comes to pass, Burma's neighbours may be in a better position to press for greater democracy and genuine change.

Events of the past week, however, make it difficult to feel that Burma is in store for any degree of restructuring. Sein Lwin has made it plain that, unlike some other socialist leaders, he is not a man one can do business with. It is too early to throw in the towel on Sein Lwin, but his debut as head of state has been less than auspicious.

If the Burmese are serious about opening their doors—and their economy — to the rest of the world, they must allay concerns that the political climate will grow ever more volatile. Releasing political dissidents would be a correct start.

## A NEW ERA IN BURMA

Gen Ne Win has retired as chairman of the Burma Socialist Programme Party, bringing an end to an era in his country which led to near economic collapse and social unrest. Ne Win may continue to exercise political influence. However, the party congress, which accepted his resignation, has decided upon an open economy in response to the errors of the past.

Burma suffered all the disadvantages of a closed-type, controlled economy. Burmese socialism had failed. One reason why Burmese socialism became rigid was the exclusion of capable people to advise Ne Win. Capable people now should be brought into the government to lead the new generation.

Of course, the choice is up to the Burmese people. However, we believe it is necessary to establish a free market economy and democracy for the stability and development of Burma. Ne Win proposed holding a referendum to decide whether the people wanted a multiparty or single-party system. Unfortunately the party congress rejected his proposal.

Japan, which extends large amounts of aid to Burma, should hold close dialogue with Burma .

*Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)*



Gen. Hla Htoo.(AG) inspecting guard of Honour (Women Unit) on Martyrs' Day Celebration (12.8.88)

## STORM CLOUDS GATHER AS WIND OF CHANGE FADES OVER TROUBLED BURMA

by Denis D.Gray of AP

*A BRIEF, shining moment for those who favoured change in a Burma beset by a quarter century of authoritarian rule and economic decline appears to have been shattered by the emergence of a leader even more hard-line than his predecessor, analysts say.*

*Western diplomats, academics and Burmese emigres fear this already troubled South-east Asian nation could face civil disorder in reaction to retired army Gen. Sein Lwin taking the reins of power from Ne Win.*

*Virtually the only optimistic note sounded by some analysts is that the new leaders will attempt some economic reforms while trying to keep a lid on the dissent that already has boiled over into bloody street riots three times since last October.*

*John Badgely, a Burma expert at Cornell University in the United States, described the 68-year-old Sein Lwin as an authoritarian figure with little education who was responsible for brutal suppression of antigovernment protests.*

### MAIMING

"Where civil disobedience has augured, Sein Lwin was on the spot and the result was killing, maiming and prisoners," said Ye Kyaw Thu, general secretary of the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma. "We are very concerned that the students will not be able to hold back their frustration, agony and anguish."

The short-lived expectations of change were sparked last Saturday when Ne Win, who had wielded power for 28 years, resigned as chairman of the Burma Socialist Programme Party.

He also called for a referendum that could have replaced one-party rule with a multiparty system. And a special party congress followed with proposals for major economic reforms.

Some diplomats already were outlining prospects of a resource-rich Burma — a "natural treasure trove" one called it — shedding its selfimposed isolation and contributing substantially to the ongoing economic boom in Southeast Asia.

But Just three days later, and for reasons still unclear, the 77 year-old chairman was replaced by Sein Lwin, who also was elected president. The referendum was turned down. Only the economic reform package remained, but some analysts express scepticism about how far and how effectively these can be implemented.

"I don't see any prospect for progress, but rather for resistance, violence," said Robert Nathan, a Washington-based economist who follows Burmese developments. "In a place where there hadn't been any hope for change, expectations were suddenly raised. Now, that's been dashed, down the drain."

Leaflets have circulated in Rangoon urging struggle against the new leadership and calling for demonstrations after universities reopen next month. Almost all the country's institutes of higher learning were closed in the wake of student-led rioting last march in which more than 100 persons were reliable said to have been killed.

Although several officials, including ex-prime minister Maung Maung Kha, were sacked for mishandling the protests, the man who Western diplomats and Burmese hold responsible for commanding the dreaded riot police, Sein Lwin, emerged officially vindicated.

In the very speech calling for a referendum, Ne Win hurled a warning at future demonstrators, saying if the army was called out they would not be spared. "If the army shoots, it shoots to hit," he said.

Even official reports indicate an underlying tension in the country: anti-government

riots are started over personal slights at snack shops. Muslim-Buddhist quarrels escalate into general mob violence.

But besides such dissatisfaction, seemingly fuelled in part by a plunging economy, some analysts also see recent changes having heightened the potential for serious power struggles. Various scenarios are offered.

Badgley, who spent several months in Burma last year and early 1988, said events of the past week have duplicated a past pattern. Ne Win allowing a potential rival to rise only so high before cutting him off, and this time with popular support for the rival's ouster.

The American professor said Ne Win has opted for support from more reform-minded military officers and those who have benefitted from the limited economic reforms he instituted last year while Sein Lwin represented the conservative old guard.

Others, however, note the close bonds between the two that go back to the early 1940s when Sein Lwin joined Ne Win's outfit, the Fourth Burma Rifles, as a private.

Sein Lwin served Ne Win as a personal aide and later as a commander, when an iron fist was required. In 1962, the year Ne Win seized power via a military coup, Sein Lwin commanded troops that put down a campus protest with a hail of bullets.

These analysts view recent events as a well-orchestrated plot by the two in which the secretive Ne Win now will play a behind-the-scenes role.

### LOST CONTROL

Still others believe an ailing and old Ne Win simply lost control of the situation and gave in to his ambitious, one-time comrade-in-arms. Max McGrath, a spokesman for the London based Chapter of the Democracy Committee, said Ne Win sought medical treatment in Europe and after spending a week in London last June "practically returned in a stretcher".

None of these scenarios appear to augur well for Burma.

Whatever the changes at the top, the country is still run day-to-day by several hundred active duty or retired military officers, a group that over the past quarter century has turned perhaps Southeast Asia's potentially richest nation into one with a per capita income of less than \$200 — among the world's lowest.

With little economic expertise at senior echelons, there is scepticism whether the wide-ranging and complex economic reforms proposed can be pushed through even if there exists a genuine political will. The economic package includes allowing private foreign investment for the first time since 1962 and sweeping privatisation of sectors previously controlled by the state.

Nations that prop up Burma's debt-ridden economy with a yearly infusion of \$500 million recently have shown impatience. The Japanese are reportedly upset with Burma's shabby economic results and West Germany, the No. 2 aid donor, is turning some attention to Burma's human rights violations. — AP

SUMMARY OF KULA MILITARY ACTIVITIES FROM 1-4-88 TO 15-7-88.

Military Zone	KULA Attacks	KULA Land Mines	Eno. casualties			Eno. losses in Arms & Ammos						Eno. Surrendered	Remarks
			Killed	Wounded	Leg Covered	Heavy weapons	Small Arms	Magazines	Ammos	Bombs	Hand Grenade		
No.1	10	5	44	63	1	-	3	5	117	-	-	1	Eno. burnt down (17) civilian houses (2) officers kid, (1) officer wdd. (1) bridge destroyed. (2) villagers kid.
No.2	5	2	12	15	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Coy. comd. Thein Win wdd. Eno. looted 300,000 kyats, Radio cassettes etc. from traders.
No.3	5	2	28	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Eno. looted 15,000 kyats and kid. (5) traders.
No.4	7	2	10	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2) power plants exploded (1) officer kid.
No.5	19	-	50	50	-	-	14	13	410	-	-	1	Bn. comd. Mya Nyein & capt. Mya Cyl wdd.
No.6	16	2	44	51	4	-	1	5	-	-	-	1	Capt. Mya Aung & (1) other officer wounded.
GHQ	4	-	26	18	-	2	5	13	2813	-	-	-	Owa occupied Mee Thae camp (5) civilian kid. & (3) wdd. by eno. heavy weapons.
Ta doh wath	7	3	25	17	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
101 Bn.	1	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
20 Bn.	11	2	35	30	3	-	11	-	400	-	-	-	captured (5) eno. militia.
Total	85	18	279	285	12	2	36	36	3740	-	-	3	

## A LETTER FROM BURMA

Dear Uncle Lermoo,

Daddy showed me your letter this morning. He told me to write to you on the informations you requested upon. He told me the story how you saved his life on 7 July 1962, when you carried him to safety after he was hit by the soldiers' bullet at the students demonstration. Thank you for that.

I am attaching some newspaper cutting for your kind perusal. What is mentioned is not all true but what the students have done is correct. Much more the killings have been effected.

It started on the 20th & 21st at the main university, referring to the riot of March 1988. The students have requested peacefully to release the 141 students, including girls. Some of the girls were sent home after they have raped them in the jail. These gave speeches to the people outside the main university and thousands of students stating that they were kept in jail and were raped and molested, and now they are pregnant. But they will not destroy their wombs and bringing their children to the public and show to this bloody government. These students have demonstrated for two days and requesting for release, to have freedom of study, and call for democracy to be formed. Next the students published in English: as Follows, -

- (i) U Aung San is the Martyr of Burma,
- (ii) Ne Win is the devil or ghost
- (iii) San Yu is the cunning fox,
- (iv) Ne Win is the killer of students,
- (v) Capt. Ohn Kyaw is the HERO of Burma (who was hanged due to plot against them).

On the 21st, the students marched to the R.I.T, and all High Schools in Kamayut and Insein out came speeches to bring down the government. Then, they (students) came over to Prome Road, and reached in front of St. Philomena & Fatima Church where they demonstrated quietly. Then at that moment, the force with Police Special Squard, drove over them and killed some students by running over

some students with the truck. It was a blood shed. One boy student, aged about 19, 2nd year in college, his stomach opened and guts came out. This boy's body, they carried up high and showed it to the people around the place and also to Simalaik, Insein and Myenigon and saying what they have done to them (students). Then the working people from Insein, Simalaik and Myenigon and families came out with knives and sticks. Both workers and students combined and destroyed the police station and killed the 'Lonetai' (Special Police,) about six or seven of them. These are the 'Lonetai' that killed a lot of students in March 1988. On the same day (21 June 88) the girls students from St. Philomena, about six girls ran into their classroom, when the demonstration was in front of their convent - then, at that moment the 'Lonetai' entered the room, and tried to harm the girls, but the girls got over him and squeezed his neck to kill, but immediately another 'Lontain' came over and shot them to death. (This they never publish in the papers). So, you comrades can just imagine what is going on.

The people are having difficulties with rice problem. The poorest rice, Nga Sein, is Kyats 12 - per 'pyi' (before it was only Ks 1.5) and the market prices for oil is 75 kyats. Ducks, chicken, meat and fishes are having unreasonable prices. So, please pray for the people.

Many mothers are looking for their lost daughters-praying that they may not be raped, like others.

Moulmein - College closed

Mandalay - College closed, phongyis are joining the students

Akyab - College closed and "unable to control the students and workers

Bassein - College closed

Pegu - College closed, the students and workers burned down the party Unit Office, its office stationaries, destroyed



the bank, burned most of the government restaurants and offices. Some students gave their lives for the country.

22nd - 23rd June 1988. Most of the students were all gathered in Shwedagon Pagoda. The leader of the students, Collegian Maung Maung Kyaw was arrested. The students asked the government to return their leader. Up to this date, they (students) are still on the pagoda. The army has surrounded the pagoda with guns and tanks in order to avoid the commotions. So that is the present state in Burma.

24.6.88 The monks from Mandalay came down with two carriages load, on reaching Toungoo, the party authorities discreetly removed their carriages and left them at Toungoo. After some time the monks came to know

about the disconnection of their carriages and small confusion took place. But the monks will find other means to reach Rangoon. What is going to happen, remains to be seen, please wait to hear - it is going to be the worst. At present, small commotions are taking place here and there.

We are now in hell. Please come back and save us. I am now a second year student in the same medical school that you and daddy had graduated. I am not sure whether I will ever graduate if Ne Win, the devil and murderer, and his 'yes sir' people, are in power. I'll write to you again on further developments. Excuse me for my poor English. English was not taught well during our high school years.

Mee Mee.



Troops masses and leaders attending K.T.L. Army Day gathering of Manerplaw.

## THE DIFFICULTY IN BURMA

We were young university graduates when Ne Win seized power 26 years ago from U Nu's democratically elected government. In our political naivete, we thought the change was for the good. The military had traditionally been respected as the saviours of Burma.

How wrong we were. Within a few months, Rangoon University Student Union's historic building was demolished and political activity was banned. Businesses, banks and factories were nationalised. People were detained, sometimes for years, without due process of law. Newspapers came under state control. The currency was demonetised. Military personnel were placed in all department — the civil service, corporations, law courts, shops, banks, ministries even the diplomatic service. There would be a *bohmu* \$major£ or a *bogyi* (captain) in every office — and of course *Bohmu* was always right. The military, from the *bogyokes* (generals) all the way down the rank, received special privileges and facilities.

As we worked in various parts of the country, we experienced first hand the workings of the regime. Our parents' property was confiscated. We were bypassed in promotions and transfers. Day-to-day routine was full of shortages, rations and queues.

As years went by, the children of the military were favoured in schools and universities and eventually in the competition for jobs. A daughter of Ne Win and a son of the education minister (Col. Hla Han) scored distinctions in all subjects in their university entrance examinations. How bright they all were! The black market became the main source of consumer items. Burma's natural resources were plundered and smuggled out to neighbouring countries.

Saddest of all, the morals of the people declined. Bribery and pilferage became common. Young women prostituted themselves for a better social life. When old *bohmu*s retired with houses and cars, new *bohmu*s came in to take their places. Members of the milita-

ry considered themselves a breed apart. Their attitude to their countrymen was totally uncaring.

We wondered what the future held. Traditionally, Burmese had never migrated; there had been no need to. But now we felt there were no prospects or security in our homeland for us and, especially, our children. So we joined the thousands of Burmese scattered across the globe.

The third demonetisation last year and more shortages of commodities, including rice, have brought further gloom to Burma. There have been numerous abuses of humanrights. Documentation has been difficult because of the closed society. The most prominent of these abuses has been the violent quelling of funeral arrangements for the late U Thant in December 1974 in Rangoon. The demonstrations last March were led by students who were not even born when the regime came to power. We salute these young people. The March Affair and its martyrs will go down in history as a significant step in the struggle against the dictatorship.

We hoped that the recent extraordinary party congress would pave the way for reform and even eventually a government of reconciliation and national unity. However, there has been no compromise. Sein Lwin has been elected party chairman. This man could be called the Butcher of Burma.

There has not been any superpower interference in Burma's internal affairs. It remains a one-party state. The regime claims to follow a socialist policy, but it was and is a military dictatorship. We fear there will be further violent confrontations, and no one can predict the outcome. Ne Win's regime will go down as the blackest segment of Burma's 20th century history — much, much worse than the periods of British colonial rule and the Japanese occupation.

NAME WITHHELD

## EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A BURMESE NOW IN ANOTHER SOUTH EAST ASEAN COUNTRY

*"This year is 'The Year of the Beast' for us Burmese," he writes. "We are trying to fight back with nothing for the future of Burma. There is no human right, no hope, no job, and not enough basic necessities for the majority as opposed to the government society of bohmas, bogies and gobyokes (majors, captains and generals). Let's start with students' life. Most ordinary students like us can not go to school in Mazda jeeps and Mazda 323s like the children of those military government people. We go to school on the top of overloaded buses. After graduation, the children of the military get jobs but we don't. So most of us go into the black market business and a few lucky graduates become sailors abroad, which is the only promising job. A few super-lucky graduates get jobs in the government's lowest positions with minimum pay which is not enough to survive, thus leading to corruption."*

He says: "Now, look over the structure of this military government. Top positions are filled by big bohmas, bogies and bogies. Then come little bohmas and bogies. After

these come a few professionals who are members of the ruling party. The lower levels are filled by underpaid and hungry officers who have no opportunity to buy goods in the special stores, unlike the top military officers. So they have to face the high prices of the black market. These are the sons, brothers and friends of the people. They are supposed to protect the people — not shoot, kill and rape them. When the army and the people unite together, then the sun will shine for us."

Another Burmese writes: "We fear there will be summary military trials and executions. We appeal to the leaders of the world, and especially Burma's neighbours, to use their good offices so that there will at least be fair and open trials." Echoing, perhaps, the theme of an editorial in our Aug. 5 issue, he concludes: "Why is the world community so oblivious to the plight of the people of Burma, the homeland of U Thant of the United Nations? Are you waiting for Ne Win and his thugs to decimate the population before labelling them the Idi Amins and the Pol Pots of Burma? Are you waiting for more people to flee, as refugees and boat people. . . .?"



Political Training Students honouring their teachers with garlands and gifts.

### STOP PRESS

Dr Maung Maung, a non-party lawyer, was elected Party Chairman by the central committee of the BSPP on August 19th morning and then elected as President of SRUB by the Peoples' Assembly in the afternoon.

The students and monks rejected all the decisions of the BSPP regime and demanded the ouster of the ruling party despite the election of a civilian, as President and Party leader, calling an end to one-party rule.

The anti-government demonstrations continue on and is now gaining strength and momentum day by day. Peoples from all walks of life and profession, students, workers

peasants, business-men, intellectual, service personnels (Army included) have now joined the demonstrations against BSPP regime. In the latest demonstrations tens and hundred thousands took part demanding the ouster of one party-rule. The BSPP flags were hoisted at half mast, upside down. The days of BSPP regime are numbered.

### AN APOLOGY.

We very much regret the long silence, and delay in the publishing of this issue of the KNU Bulletin, due to un-avoidable circumstances. Efforts will be made for the regular publication of the same in future.



Laying of wreaths on Martyrs Day Celebration at Manerplaw.



Guard of Honour on Martyrs Day at Manerplaw Women's Unit (far right)



Sgt Dah Doh Moo (now 2nd Lt and Commander of K.T.L. Women's Army Unit).



A recruit of K.T.L. Women's Army Unit.



President Gen. Bo Mya giving address on Martyrs Day Celebration.