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THE CONSTITUTION OF SRUB AND THE ETHNIC PEOPLES OF BURMA

The following extracts from the constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (SRUB) and the accompanying explanations solidly illustrate the fact that the indigenous ethnic nationalities are suffering oppression more than ever under the constitution and due to the more drastic policy of Burmese Chauvinism practised by the ruling BSPP Military regime.

the SRUB constitution, Chapter (2)« the Basic Principles Article (8) states, "the State shall be completely free from the exploitation of man by man or the exploitation of one race by another."

The actual experiences of the indigenous ethnic races are in complete contradiction to it.

In the field of culture, Burmese songs and dances are given much encouragement. Large sums from the state budget are expended to develop Burmese culture exclusively. Burmese song and dance troupes are frequently sent to other countries in culture exchange programmes. On the other hand, cultural activities of the ethnic races are rarely seen except on the Union Day, once in a year.

This is the cultural exploitation of the ethnic races by the Burmese chauvinists.

Special preference is given to the Burmese students in the selection of state scholars. Only when there is no suitable Burmese candidates, the sons and daughters of the ethnic individuals loyal to the BSPP regime are given a chance.

This is an outright racial discrimination and the exploitation of man by man.

Article (11) states, "the State shall practice the one-party system. The



Teachers of Dooplaya District high school. Teachers of Kawmoorah High School.

BSPP is the only party of the state and shall lead the state."

Since it denies the right of leadership role of the other mass, class, religious and national organisations, it is the establishment of the system of one-party dictatorship and the total abolishment of the social and democratic rights of the people. Therefore, the SRUB is a state of one-party dictatorship without any democracy.

Article (18) Section (2) states, "The resources of the country shall be developed, operated on and utilised for the benefit of the working people of the country.

The facts given below, however, show that the resources of the country have been utilised not for the benefit of the working people of the country but for the sole benefit of the ruling BSPP military clique.

"Rice quota" and "farm subsidies" are forcibly collected from the farmers by the government at the appointed time. The farmers who fail to meet the "quota" due to poor harvest have to buy rice from the outside at prevailing prices which are three to four times higher than the government rate. In the process of trying to meet the "quota", many farmers have become utterly impoverished as they have to sell their draft animals and farm implements to get the required cash.

On the other hand, members of the military clique are getting richer and richer.

During the period of colonial rule, fuel oil had been the third largest item on the export list, but nowadays, under the rule of BSPP regime, there is not enough oil even for domestic consumption. The country's transport and communication are facing great difficulties as a result of the shortage. A large number of trucks and some factories have to stop running.

The largest hydro-electric power station in the country is situated in the Kayah State, but none of the people in the state has a chance to use the electricity produced as the Burmese towns and cities in the heart-land along Rangoon-Mandalay road are using up all of it.

This is a blatant exploitation of the Kayah people (Karenni) by the Burmese chauvinist rulers.

Article (21), Section (1) states, "The state shall be responsible to work for the constant development of unity, cooperation, friendship and respect for one another among the indigenous races."

Much lip-service, fanfare and show about unity and cooperation are generated

in the celebration of the Union Day, once a year. Apart from that time, the Burmese chauvinists ignore and despise all the indigenous ethnic races. Instead of working for unity, it is a well known fact to the world that the Burmese chauvinists are constantly engaged in making war, wantonly killing the indigenous ethnic races that can only be described as genocidal.

Article (21). Section (2) states, "If it is not against the law or against the interest of the majority of the people, all the indigenous races have the right to freely worship, develop, express and practise their own religions, languages, literatures, cultures and traditional customs.

Whatever it says, the BSPP regime, by various means, makes it very difficult for the followers of all the religions, except Buddhism, to practise. One specific example is the severe limitation placed upon the sale of paper and ink by government to Christian organisations wishing to publish the Bible and hymn books which are essential in Christian worship. One disturbing situation is the unconfirmed report that the State Sangha Federation has covertly planned to eradicate Christianity systematically.

Schools in the states of ethnic races are officially not allowed to teach the languages and literatures of the ethnic races. The languages and literature of the ethnic races still survive because of the endeavour of the patriotic youths who volunteer to teach the languages and literatures during the summer holidays and because of some religious training schools.

On the other hand, the stipulation in the constitution of Burmese as the only official language makes the ethnic races' languages unofficial and to be neglected. Consequently, the exhortation to cooperate and help one another loses all significance.

Chapter (3): The Institution of the State

Article (28) states, "In the institution of the state, the system of the



Students of Criminal Law Class(1986). Political Training Class at Tavoy/Mergui District.

central leadership and the execution by each region on its own is practised."

This, in essence, is the system of the regions strictly following the direction and control of the centre. The constituent states of the ethnic races have no liberty to do anything in accordance with their peculiar national conditions but to be under the complete central control. Therefore, there is not a whit of right for the states of ethnic races for national autonomy.

Article (29) Section (1), Sub-section (E) states, "The Union is constituted of the states and divisions," and Section (2), Sub-section (c) states, "The states or the divisions are constituted of the townships." Then in Article (31) it states, "The states and divisions of SRUB are as follows:" and goes on to give the names of the seven states and seven divisions.

This Union is nothing but a union only in form and unitary in content. The states of the ethnic races are reduced to the status of mere administrative divisions and placed under complete central control. This is a unitary system of states in which all are in complete subordination to the absolute power of the centre wielded by the Burmese chauvinists.

Chapter (4) Peoples "Hluttaw" (Parliament)

Article (48), Section (1) states, "all the principal businesses shall be decided only by 75% of the votes of members of the parliament." This clause plainly negates an ethnic race state to decide essential business concerning its national situation, as it can never hope to get the required number of votes. Even if an ethnic race state gets all the votes from its MPs, it can never get half of the votes from the MPs of the other six states of ethnic races and seven divisions.

This is the way the Burmese chauvinists one-party dictatorship system is keeping a stranglehold on the states of ethnic races by constitutionally denying the states any chance to decide important businesses concerning their national situations.

Chapter (5): State Council

Article (65), Section (1) states that the State Council shall be composed of "a representative, elected from among themselves, by MPs of each ethnic race state or division," and Section (2) goes on to state, "together with representatives, elected from among themselves by the MPs, equal in number to those elected by the ethnic race state and the divisions in accordance with Section (1)," and Section (3) concludes, "and the prime minister."

Thus, in the composition of the highest body of the state, the State Council,

there are seven ethnic race state representatives who would, let us say, truly represent the ethnic races, but there are seven from the divisions and fourteen from the parliament both of which are primarily Burmese and, on top of that, the prime minister, who can never be other than a Burmese, is added.

Therefore, the State Council, with an overwhelming number of Burmese, shall never make the initiative that may lead to any measure of self-determination for the ethnic races.

Chapter (6): The Cabinet.

Article (65) states, "The Cabinet is the highest executive body of the state."

Article (69). Section (1) states, "the cabinet, on behalf of the parliament and by collective leadership, administers the management of the affairs of the people, the economic affairs, religious affairs, social affairs, cultural affairs, foreign affairs and defence affairs of the State." Section (2) States, "The socialist economic system is realised in accordance with the economic plan of all the indigenous races."

Those clauses give the cabinet of the central government, dominated by the Burmese, a monopoly over all the executive power and the ethnic race states are left with no executive power to separately do anything for the affairs of their own peoples.

Chapter (11): The basic Rights and Responsibilities of the Citizens:

Article (168), Section (1) states. "Every citizen has the right to freedom of thought, freedom of belief and freedom of worship of any religion."

All the news organs are properties of the state and are strictly controlled by the government. Even the dances, dramas and novels are subjected to the



Heavy weapons training.



Short-hand training Course.

Strict scrutiny of the government's Censor board. As It has been mentioned before, all the faiths, apart from Buddhism which enjoys a certain amount of freedom and the sponsorship of the government, have to face a welter of restrictions, making them vary difficult to practice or propagate.

In reality, the freedoms given exist only on paper.

Article (170) states, "Every citizen has the right to participate in the political, social and mass organisations allowed by the law, and the right to freedom of organisation, freedom of congregation and freedom of demonstration. The State shall give the necessary help for the sake of the enjoyment of these freedoms to the full."

As BSPP is the only party of the State and leads the State according to chapter (2), Article (11), only the social and mass organisations accepting the leadership and under the strict control of BSPP are enjoying the said freedoms. Organisations not accepting the leadership of BSPP are not even allowed to legally exist.

That means democracy is completely dead in Burma under the BSPP regime and one-party dictatorship is in absolute control.

Article (17d) states, "the law shall give protection to the legitimate incomes, savings, properties, house and buildings, instruments of production allowed within the frame-work of socialist economy and legally permitted assets of every citizen acquired through physical ability, intellectual ability and industry."

In the demonetisation of the popular currency notes of 100 kyat, 50 kyat and 20 kyat, the short allowance in time for exchange, the deduction in the form of heavy income taxes, the very limited amount given back in legal tenders for the exchange and the various rules and regulations imposed on the exchange all amounted to an undisguised robbery of the people by the government. Instead of getting legal protection of their properties, the people were being legally robbed. This makes the high sounding statement about legal protection of the people's properties not worth the paper on which it is written.

Chapter (12): the System of Election

Article (184). Section (3) begins with "The election of representatives who will truly represent the working people to the parliament and the various levels of the peoples councils..."

In the election of the representatives to the said bodies, the people have no choice but to vote just "yes" or "no" for the persons who have been nominated by the BSPP.

No choice, means no representation and thus the people are denied their most important democratic right and the right to self-determination.

Article (191), states, "the expenses for the election of the people's representatives to the parliament and the various stages of people's councils shall be born by the state budget."

This is merely a means used by the persons in power to control the so-called people's representatives and make sure that these "representatives" dance to their tune, by the expenditure of cash.

It means that the persons in power are misappropriating the State fund for their own interest.

Soon after it came to power, the Revolutionary Council declared that there were too many weak points in the old constitution, including, the secession right of the ethnic race states, which could disintegrate the union and that a new constitution was needed.

This shows that the new Burmese chauvinists were contemplating more drastic and complete measures to subjugate the ethnic races and all the people in the country.

In addition to having to suffer more economic, social and political oppressions in common with all the people in the country, the ethnic races have to suffer more racial oppression under the new constitution.

Historically, the ethnic races in Burma had lived in their independent lands with their own administrations before they were subjugated in wars of aggressions launched by the Burmese, then came the British colonial rulers who subjugated the whole country.

After independence, the ethnic races asked for more freedom for national



Central Kawthoolei Women Organisation Tavoy District KWO leaders with District leaders with Tavoy/Mergui KWO leaders. KNU Organisation leaders sitting in front.

development on the basis of self-determination, from the Burmese chauvinist rulers, through democratic process. The Burmese chauvinists' answer to the peaceful demand of the ethnic races was armed suppression. Thus, the ethnic races were forced to take up arms for the sake of national survival and independence.

Leveling false accusations such as bandits, wreckers, breakers of the union and etc., at the revolutionary forces of the ethnic races, the BSPP Burmese chauvinists have drummed up support, internally and externally, and stepped up their effort for bigger and bigger wars against the ethnic races. Over the years, the Burmese chauvinist troops burnt down thousands of villages, tortured and killed many thousands of innocent civilians. The Burmese chauvinists atrocities have made many Karen villagers to abandon their villages and find refuge in deep jungle. In 1984-85, more than 17,000 Karen refugees spilled into Thailand

Thus, under the constitution of SRUB, the ethnic races are being oppressed more then ever and it may not be wrong to say that the constitution has been designed for the foundation of the 4th Burmese empire through ruthless wars of conquest and systematic plunder of the ethnic races.

SETTING BROTHERS AGAINST BROTHERS

In the days of the Burmese Kings, wars against the other indigenous races by the Burmese were pure barbarism and terror. According to tales left by our forebears, it was a normal behaviour of the Burmese troops to burn, loot, rape, torture and kill wantonly without any restraint. After a Burmese raid the land usually was one of complete desolation for even religious structures and edifices were not left from the destruction. Sometimes prisoners were taken back for enslavement to the heart-land of Burma where the Burmese kings had their capitals. There are many narrations, mostly in verse forms, telling of the miserable and wretched life the prisoners had to lead as slaves. The pagodas in central Burma which the tourists gape at nowadays, had been built mainly with the blood, sweat and tears of the Arakanese, Karens, Mons and Shans, generation after generation, who had had the misfortune of being taken as Burmese prisoners.

Nearly a century of the British rule failed to civilize the majority of the Burmese. In spite of the influence of western education and ideas, the hostile attitude of the Burmese towards the ethnic peoples hardly changed as evidenced by the massacres the Burmese troops committed against the Karens during the Second World War, without any provocation on the part of the Karens.

The Burmese leaders were very amicable and sounded very reasonable with rosy promises when they wheeled and dealt with the leaders of the ethnic peoples before independence after the war. At that time, they had to secure the consent of the ethnic peoples for a show of unity to the British. The Kachins who had scarcely suffered the oppression of the Burmese pledged to an everlasting unity. The Shans promised to give them the constitutional right to secede from the union after a ten-year trial period. Only the Karens remained wary and suspicious of the new attitude of the Burmese. Even then, the crafty Burmese politicians won over a few gullible Karen leaders to their side with bribery and promises which they never intended to keep.

Soon after independence, the Burmese leaders started acting most arrogantly and overbearingly without showing any spirit of tolerance, understanding or accomodation which they had shown abundantly before. When the Karens submitted their demand for a home-land, the Burmese bluntly told them to fight for it and accused them of being narrow-minded nationalists, stooges of imperialists and racist extremists. At the same time the party in power, the Anti-facist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), formed a pocket army of levies and started armed provocations against the Karens which eventually led to the Karen uprising.

The AFPFL Burmese chauvinists employed armed suppression to eliminate the Karens on the one hand, and sow dissension among them to keep them weak. Buddhist Karens were set against the Christian Karens, left against the right and one dialect group against another. For propaganda purpose, a Karen state was created out of the hilly eastern part of Karen land. The Karen state created by the Burmese chauvinists is limited so much in habitable and arable land that if all Karens in Burma chose to live in it, most of them would soon die of disease and hunger. In the process of dividing the Karens, the Burmese chauvinists even established a separate state for the Kayahs (Karennis) who are a dialect group of



Boys' Company troops. Some National Democratic Front(NDF) troops.

the Karen people.

In 1961, the Shans, Kachins and Chins started to agitate for more state autonomy, while the Arakanese and Mons for creation of their states. Under the pretext of saving the union from disintegration, armed forces chief, Gen. Ne Win, overthrew the elected government led by U Nu in a coup d'etat in March 1962.

Ne Win abolished the constitution and the democratic rights of the people soon after he came to power. Then he set up the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) and declared Burma to be a socialist state. In three years' time, the strength of Burma army was doubled and major suppression campaigns against the ethnic rebellions and communist insurgency were launched.

While the AFPFL Burmese chauvinists used some subtle methods in conjunction with coercion, the new BSPP Burmese chauvinists relied entirely on brute force and barbarous methods to eliminate and oppress the ethnic peoples in the country.

During the encirclement and annihilation campaigns in the latter part of the 60s, against the Karen revolutionary forces in the Irrawaddy Delta region where the majority of the population were Karens and Mons, villagers were forced by the BSPP troops to join what were known as People's Militia forces. They were made to guard routes, army out-posts and go into the front with the troops. Many were forced to serve as porters for the troops and clear jungles. The most inhuman use of civilians by the BSPP troops was the forcing of civilians to cover the gaps between the troops columns in encirclement operations. The Karen revolutionary forces did their utmost to avoid killing. Since the Karen revolutionary forces were made up of people who came from the same population set against them, hurting the civilians would be like hurting their own kins. However thousands died in cross-fires before the Karen revolutionary forces shifted to Pegu Yoma in 1970

When the BSPP troops started their campaigns in Pegu Yoma, thousands of Karen villagers living in the hills were forced, this time, to move down to the plain where many died due to diseases against which they had no resistance.

The Karen revolutionary forces from the Delta had to move to the east of Sittang river in 1975 to join hands with the Karen revolutionary forces in the east. Here, the terrain is better suited to guerilla warfare. There is more room for manoeuvre. The nature of terrain makes the strategy of encirclement and annihilation impracticable. The BSPP Burmese chauvinists' attempt to crush the Karen revolution here failed again and again. After their miserable defeat in 1984 when they attempted to capture the base camps of the Karen revolution by the use of superior number and fire power, the BSPP Burmese chauvinists have turned

more and more against the civilians up to the present day.

Like in the Delta, the BSPP Burmese chauvinists are now forcing Karen civilians to join People's Militia forces, with the same evil intention of setting Karens against Karens, or brothers against brothers. To discredit the Karen revolution, the BSPP Burmese chauvinists organise some Karen society misfits into bands. Then they are made to pose as Karen revolutionary troops and collect high taxes, rob or destroy the properties of the villagers. Starting from this year's harvest, the farmers are required to sell all the rice to the BSPP Burmese chauvinist government at about one third the price of rice on the black-market, after keeping ten baskets per each adult for consumption until next harvest. Ten baskets of rice is an amount that would not last more than ten months for an adult farmer. It is no wonder that Burmese rice is selling 20% less than any other rice on the international market.

The Karens are not the only people who have to suffer the brutal oppression of the BSPP Burmese chauvinist government and its attempt by all the evil means to eliminate them. All the other ethnic peoples have to suffer the same measure of oppression and face the same danger of genocide. For these reasons, the Karen revolution and its allies are determined more than ever to fight until the overthrow of the BSPP Burmese chauvinist regime and its evil ideology of Burmese way to socialism which is a direct product of Burmese chauvinism.

TRUE SITUATION OF THE FARMERS

The news media of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) government regularly churns out a large amount of propaganda portraying the farmers in the country as the most favoured class. In reality, the farmers are the most exploited and deprived class of people in the society. Like the draft animals they use for tilling the land, the farmers have to toil, year in and year out, to produce the best quality rice all of which they have to sell to the government at the much depressed rate. For their own consumption,, the farmers have to buy the lowest quality rice, fit only for live-stock feeding, from the cooperative shops set up by the BSPP. The reason given by the BSPP is that the farmers have to eat rice that can stand digestion better as they have to do hard manual labour.

Every year, after buying up all the rice from the farmers by force, the BSPP holds ceremonies to honour the few farmers who manage to meet the requirement of selling the "quota amount" of rice. The prizes given to these "dutiful" farmers are radios worth about 100 kyats a piece. Those who refuse, out of bitterness, to take the prizes are accused of being trouble-makers and thrown into lock-ups.

The farmers are not allowed to store any surplus rice or paddy. They and all their family members have to register with the authorities. The cooperatives sell rice to them enough only for a week in advance, according to age and according to scales stipulated by the government. Thus, it has become a great burden or entirely impossible for the farmers to feed boarding guests or offer the traditional alms to the monks.

To ensure the sale of rice to it, the BSPP government advances loans, euphemistically known as farm subsidies, and sells chemical fertilizers, water pumps and other implements. More rice is produced, but due to the low prices paid by the government, the farmers are hardly left with anything to improve their lives. In fact, as a result of the ever increasing demands by the government, inflation and the rising cost of living, the farmers have become poorer then ever. On the other hand, the BSPP government and its hirelings are benefitting more and more from the increased production of rice.

Every year at harvest time, the BSPP government send out its hirelings to various districts and townships who set up themselves up as paddy purchasing agents. From all indications, it appears that these hirelings have been selected on the basis of their ability to fleece the farmers down to their skins. Their ruthless attitude and exploitation of the farmers are surpassed only by those of their BSPP masters.

These paddy buying agents arbitrarily inspect the well-winnowed and dried paddy brought in by the farmers, and then they weigh the paddy on special scales they have brought with them. The doctored scales usually show only about 70% of the actual weight of the paddy. Then claiming that the paddy contain high amount of moisture and impurities, the amount of paddy brought in by the farmers is further reduced in accounting and paid accordingly by the agents at the much depressed rate of nine kyats per basket of paddy. In this way, the farmers are mercilessly robbed of the fruit of their toil and labour every year.

According to the latest rule, the farmers are allowed to retain only 15 basket of paddy for consumption per adult and lesser amount per child in the family. Fifteen baskets of paddy yield not more then 224 kg. of rice and this amount is consumed by an adult in no more then ten months'. To cover the shortage, the farmers have to buy rice, usually on the black market, at 2 1/2 to 3 time the price they are forced to sell.

In the year 1981-82, the BSPP government exported rice at the price of 3028.90 kyats per ton, or approximately at 4.8 times its buying price, making a gross profit of 2398.9 kyats per ton. In 1984-85, the export price of rice had fallen

to 2471.00 kyats per ton, but the BSPP government still made a gross profit of 1841.00 kyats on a ton of rice, or it was exporting at approximately 3.9 times of the buying price. In 1985-86, the BSPP government got more than 2.812 million tons of rice by forced buying, part of which was exported, realizing a profit of 5170.66 million kyats.

Even for a super capitalist, such a margin of profit would be hard to think of in selling any commodity, but the BSPP government has been doing it by the blantant exploitation and oppression of the farmers of the country. Then, in a shameless scramble for hard currency, the rice is sold on the international market at 20% less than any other seller. This can only be viewed as the BSPP government prostituting itself internationally without any consideration for the well being of the poor farmers.

One many fairly ask where all the money is going and where all this is leading to. Because of the self-importance they hold themselves in, the BSPP stalwarts and their henchmen live in luxury far above the standard of their own countrymen. They live in expensive houses, travel in expensive cars and pursue expensive hobbies. Any minor ailment is enough to make them to hurry off to foreign countries for treatment, with the family or a large entourage in tow. The thing draining the coffer of the BSPP government most, however, is its prosecution of war against the indigenous ethnic nationalities who are fighting for their national rights and democratic freedom. The ever increasing expenditure on the war effort by the BSPP government since 1965 has inevitably induced a raging inflation that has been plaguing the economy for more than a decade. Since there is no likeliness of the war to end and since men in the BSPP leadership and their cohorts are held together by the privileges maintained by the exploitation of the farmers, the BSPP government has no other way but to go on exploiting the farmers more ruthlessly than ever. Naturally, this situation cannot go on for



A Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) outpost.



Officer Training School (OTS) training class.

ever. There will Soon be a day when the endurance of the farmers will come to a breaking point which can result in a general uprising of the people. Reports reaching here recently indicate that farmers in some areas have started acts of resistance by burning the crops and killing some of the BSPP party men who had come down to urge them to turn in their paddy.

Using the past record as a guide for judgement, we can predict with certainty that the BSPP government will create a blood bath that may not fail to rival some of the worst atrocities man has ever known.

ATTEMPTS OF THE ENEMY TO BREED ENMITY AND SOW DISCORD AMONG THE KARENS

Like its predecessors, the military government of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party is trying hard to breed enmity and sow discord among the Karens in order to undermine their solidarity in the struggle for national survival and independence.

Looking back through the long years in the struggle of the Karens for freedom, it can be seen that the Burmese realised too well that arm suppressions alone would not bring them victory over a united people. They therefore resorted to lies and distortions to create rifts between the Karens and through these rifts they worked their way towards total disintegration of the Karens, and caused them to quarrel among themselves.

The Karens had been united under the banner of the Karen National Union (KNU) in their struggle for independence and a state of their own. But the Burmese craftily managed to lure some Karen youths over to their side so that the Karen Youth Organization (KYO) broke away from the mother union and turned against the Karens and their national cause. At the Union Day celebration in Mandalay in 1964, Ne Win himself declared that it was because of their endeavour that KYO broke away from the Karen National Union.

KYO later split into two factions: one faction led by Win Maung and Aung Pa became Union Karen League (UKL) and the other faction led by Hla Tun and Chit Than became Union Karen Organization (UKO). In the split within the then ruling AFPFL in 1958, UKL sided with U Nu whereas UKO sided with Ba Swe. Friction between these two groups had done great damage to the Karens in terms of human lives and national security.

The Union Karen Peace Force, a para military unit was formed by the Burmese

in the early sixties. Unscrupulous Karen youths were given arms and were employed especially to spy on their own people and arrest those who are supportive of the Karen national movement. UKPF militiamen robbed their own people, burned the houses and villages of their own people and even raped their own womenfolk. Aung Myaing, Kyaw Zan and Ni Kon were notorious UKPF officers in the Irrawaddy Delta region who acted most ruthlessly against their own people.

In their effort to divide the Karens, the Burmese branded the Karen resistance fighters as insurgents but artfully called the Karens under their rule "Loyal Karens" or "Faithful Karens" and at every opportunity openly orchestrated for the Karens to fight against each other.

They also tried to create misunderstanding between Pwo Karens and Sgaw Karens. At the beginning of the Karen revolution, most of the leaders were Sgaw Karens and the Burmese took advantage of this fact and did their best to create a rift between the two tribes. Consequently, in some places there were tensions

and misunderstandings between

to divide Karens from the Irrawaddy Delta region and Karens from the eastern Yoma. Likewise, in Toungoo area the Burmese did their best to divide Pakus, Bwes and Koh Ker Koh Bah, and in Karenni they tried hard to divide the Karennis and the Padaung.

Nowadays, the Burmese step up their plans to undermine the unity of the Karens and are now employing religion as another weapon to divide the Karens. Karens can generally be divided into two major religious groups, namely, Buddhists and Christians. 70% of the Karens are Buddhists but in the Karen leadership circle, Christians are the majority and so the Burmese accuse the Karen national movement of being the work of only a handful of Christians and

thereby they dissuade the Buddhist Karens from joining forces in a movement which



General Head Quarters (GHQ) troops who captured enemy stores at Say Day mine. captured Say Day mine.

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they allege is led by Karen Christians. They also try to breed discord between different christian denominations.

Karens who have risen in arms resistance against the Burmese government for freedom and national survival, together with the Karen masses who earnestly support the Karen national movement are branded as insurgents but the Burmese call their henchmen, together with a great number of Karens who seek after their own good and the majority of the Karens who are forced into submission, loyal Karens

The wrong policies they have laid down and corruption among the ranks have rendered the country and its people destitute and miserable but the government shamelessly put the blame on the so-called insurgents.

In yet another move to let the Karens fight against each other the BSPP government now forms up people militia in Karen villages. Weapons and military uniforms issued to those militia are mostly the same as those used by the Karen resistance fighters. It is most vital for the Karens to be cautious of this move so that they will not fall prey to the evil schemes devised by the Burmese against the Karens as a whole.

It is the ultimate responsibility of every Karen national to safeguard national solidarity and keep constant vigil so that the evil schemes of the Burmese would not penetrate into our ranks and files and wreak havoc.

It is also necessary for all the Karens to fully understand the wiles of the enemy. Let the past be a lesson to all of us. Restore national unity and uphold our solidarity under the banner of the Karen National Union.

The time has come for all the Karens to let nationalism flourish again. Let every Karen rise up courageously and fight unitedly to bring the vile and vicious rule of the greeter nationalists BSPP government to a hasty end.

AFTER NE WIN, WHO'S NEXT

Since 1981, officials in the diplomatic circle in Rangoon are interested in who the successor of Ne Win would be. Though Ne Win stepped down from the presidency in 1981, yet he still remains as chairman of the powerful Burma Socialist Program Party and retains full control over the Military government that is ruling the country. Every issue of importance has to be brought to his table for final decision and even some issues which seem but trivial have to be brought to his table. In fact, Ne Win could be classified as

the country's most powerful and ruthless dictator.

Ne Win is now 75 years old and according to reliable sources he is suffering from partial paralysis, hypertension and urinary disorder. That is why, in the diplomatic circle everybody is constantly watching to see who his successor would be. But all of the, unanimously conclude that there is no individual leader strong enough to succeed him.

Tin Oo had been tipped to be the most likely candidate but in 1983 he was sacked from office for misappropriation of government property and put into prison for life. He is now suffering in oblivion in the Insein jail. Some observers commented that no such leader could again be found in the ruling circle of the present military regime. Even San Yu who has worked in close cooperation with Ne Win through thick and thin and who took over the presidency from Ne Win does not fully enjoy the respect and support of his subordinates. This as alleged is because of the fact that his wife has been involved in cases of bribery and corruption.

Kyaw Htin, deputy prime minister and minister of defense is from Prome which also is the native place of Ne Win. He always accompanies Ne Win on his trips abroad. Kyaw Htin enjoys the respect of those in the military circle but he is not considered strong enough to lead the country. He is though a potential candidate of the premiership which at present belongs to U Maung Maung Kha.

Sein Lwin, joint secretary of the Burma Socialist Program Party is noted for his slyness and ruthlessness. It was in 1950 that, as a captain he led the attack on Saw Ba U Gyi, founder of the Karen National Union, and his group and killed them. He is better known for his cold blooded murder in 1962 of unarmed university students who were protesting in the university campus. He had been minister of Home and Religious affairs and also minister of Transport. Sein Lwin also is not considered a likely candidate to succeed Me Win.

Another, rising star in the leadership circle is Aye Ko, general secretary of the Burma Socialist Program Party. For many long years he was commanding officer of the Northern command. A soft spoken leader, Aye Ko also is not considered by observers as a likely successor.

Foreign observers are much interested in Saw Maung, commanding officer of the armed forces. During the two months' trip of Ne Win

to the European countries he took along commanding officers of the Navy and the Air force but left control of all the armed forces in the hand of Saw Maung who is his trusted colleague. Saw Naung could also not be considered as an efficient and strong leader to succeed Ne Win.

Lay Naung is tipped by observers to be a likely candidate. He had been able to systematically root out Tin Oo and his influential colleagues in the ruling circle and in the armed forces and is himself now in charge of the country's intelligent net work. Lay Naung can be expected to be a most likely candidate, considering the fact that he equals or excels Tin Oo in efficiency. But he has much to worry about. Would celebrity bring to him, like to his predecessor, his own downfall is something that is remained to be seen.

Those mentioned above are leaders in the ruling circle but none of them is as resolute, as ruthless and as sleek and wily as their boss. Under a system which does not tolerate even the slightest sign of repulse, none of them would dare oppose Ne Win. The fall of Tin Oo is a clear reminder to all of them. It can then be concluded that no individual would emerge who like Ne Win could effectively consolidate power all to himself. There could never be another Ne Win.

Without a strong leader, the Burma Socialist Program Party would quickly disintegrate. It cannot be denied that the struggle for position and power exists all along between the Burma Socialist Program Party leaders.

After Ne Win had passed away, members in the ruling circle will struggle among themselves for power and consequently the armed forces will break into factions. The country will then be in a state of chaos and lawlessness. The people who have been oppressed for many long years will rise in rebellion against the government.

This will be the moment when the various resistance movements of the ethnic minorities join forces and strike decisively to overthrow the military government of the Burma Socialist Program Party and restore law and order, freedom and human rights will once more prevail and peace and prosperity will be the order of the day. Those golden days will not be far off.

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CONSOLIDATED (KHA) MILITARY ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1966

KNU		BULLETIN.		No.		8		DECEMBER		1986		19	

SOME MAJOR MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF THE KNLA TROOPS

No. 4 Military Zone. Thaton District

On 4-6-86, at 0300 hrs., our troops, the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), attacked enemy out-post at Maw Ley-Kwi Lay. All enemy troops fled after suffering (4) dead. Our troops captured (1) carbine with (13) round, (1) G2 rifle with (330) rounds, (1) G3 rifle with (13) rounds, personal equipment sets, (3) back packs, and a large quantity of ration supply. The rations which could not be carried were burnt.

On 10-6-86 our troops attacked the enemy out-post at We Byan village. Enemy suffered (6) dead. (2) G3 rifles, (2) Brit. rifles and some military equipments were captured.

On 22-8-86 our troops attacked enemy at Kan Gyaw village. All enemy troops fled after suffering (8) dead including (1) Sgt. and (1) Corporal. (1) G4 rifle with (18) magazines and (776) rounds, (240) carbine rounds, (2) hand grenades, (3) personal equipment sets, (11) back packs, and a quantity of ration stores and documents were captured. All the stores which could not be carried were destroyed.

No. 2 Military Zone, Toungoo District

On 30-8-86 enemy No. 59 Infantry Battalion, with No. 39 Bn, and 73 Bn. arrived Si Kodo area. Our troops ambushed them on the way killing (2). Our troops ambushed them again between Si Kodo and Saw Wah Der. The enemies suffered (3) dead including (1) Sgt. and (1) L. Cpl. and (4) wounded including Battalion Commander of 59 Inf. Bn. who is also Column Commander of the attacking enemy, (1) Pln. Commander and (1) Cpl. On the same day (1) enemy soldier had his leg severed because of our land mine. The enemy retreated to Yithegyi and then to Bawgali with their wounded No.. 59 Bn. Comdr. on 3-9-86.

No. 5 Military Zone. Doooplaya District

On 4-9-86 our combined forces attacked 2 columns of the enemy from No. 31 and No. 32 Inf. Bns. near Ywathertah village. All enemy troops fled in disorder after suffering casualties of not less than (30) dead and wounded. (3) dead bodies were left behind. Among the wounded were (2) Coy. Comdrs. Our troops captured (1) G3 rifle with (273) rounds, (250) rounds of carbine and (3) M 79 rounds and a large amount of military equipments and rations.

No. 6 Military Zone. Pa-an District

On 7-8-86 our combined forces attacked the enemy at Tah Doh Thee. After one hour of battle, all enemy troops fled, suffering (9) wounded. Our troops

captured (1) G4, (1) G3, (1) G2 rifles and (1) Ne Win Sten, (3) rifle-launch-grenades, (50) 2 inch, mortar rounds, (110) 60mm mortar rounds, (1000) rounds of carbine ammo, (5475) rounds G3 ammo., (20) hand-grenades, (12) field maps, (1) radio, (29) sets of uniform and a large amount of ration stores, medicines and military documents.

On 16-11-86 our troops attacked the enemy at Wa Klu Tah, from 1705 hrs. to 0980 hrs. the next day. The enemies suffered (5) dead including Capt. Kyaw Sein and Capt. Win Oo. Our troops captured (1) 60mm mortar with (20) rounds, (1) MG42 light assault gun, (1) G3 rifle with 800 rounds ammo., (1) carbine, (1) Browning pistol, (4) land mine and some military uniform and equipment.

Fighting broke out again at the same place at 18-11-86. The enemy suffered (1) killed and (15) wounded. Our troops captured (1) G3 rifle with 75 rounds, (1) carbine with (15) rounds ammo. During the 3 day's battle, the enemy suffered a total casualty of (6) dead and (50) wounded.

GHQ - Tah Doh Wah Column

Our GHQ Tah Doh Wah column, attacked the enemy No. 30 and No. 73 Inf. Bns. at Ku Por Keh - Mu Kyo from 19-11-86 to 21-11-86. During the (3) day's battle, the enemy suffered a total casualty of (23) dead including (1) capt. (1) 2nd Lt. and (52) wounded including (1) capt. Our troops captured (2) 2 inch mortar with (10) rounds, (4) BZK rocket rounds, (1) G3 rifle with (14) magazines (256) round ammos., (1) battery and a quantity of military equipment.

On 4-9-86, our Tah Doh Wah column ambushed the enemy at (3) places. At Wah Pla Keh, the enemy suffered (1) dead and (1) wounded. At Ta Keh Ko, where our troops also had laid land-mines, the enemies suffered (7) dead and (5) wounded. At Bo La Kla, the enemy suffered (1) killed and (3) wounded. In the 4 ambushes on this one day the enemy suffered a total of (9) dead and (9) wounded with no casualty on our side.

Say Day Battle

On 1-11-86, the combined forces of GHQ special forces and Tah Doh Wah column attacked and captured Say Day Mine. Enemy suffered (6) dead and (5) wounded. We captured (99) 81mm mortar round, (89) 60mm shells, (12) BZK rocket rounds, (1) 2 inch. mortar round, (5) G3. (1) G2, (1) G4 rifles, (1) carbine, (21) G3 magazines with (1840) round ammos., (1) binocular, (1) Bn. flag, (1) Coy. flag, (1) signal unit flag, (1) battery charging set, (249) bags of rice, (27) 4 gallons tins of cooking oil, medicine and other ration stores and all documents. The enemy made a counter-attack on 3-14-86, but retreated after suffering (5) dead and (20) wounded.

US DIRTIES ITS HAND IN BURMA'S AFFAIRS

PROF. J SILVERSTEIN

The long and complex civil wars in Burma took a deadly turn in February when the government, using a U.S. supplied herbicide containing dioxins, sprayed 151 villages in Kengtung province in the eastern part of the Shan State.

Without publicity and probably without warning to the victims, the Burmese government implemented recommendations made in 1984 by a visiting delegation of U.S. Congressmen who were concerned with the problems of narcotics. The recommendations were made despite being told by the Burmese that "It was difficult to separate the issues of insurgency and narcotics."

Under Fire

Because the spraying apparently was done on the run, often with the planes coming under insurgent fire, precautions for the protection of farmers, their livestock and crops weren't taken. Politically, the move could force minority groups to think that the only kind of "help" the U.S. gives is destructive. Moreover, the spraying program could make a solution to Burma's insurgencies even more difficult to achieve.

Given the hue and cry raised in the U.S. when the Vietnamese and their Russian backers allegedly dropped "yellow rain" on hill people in Laos, the U.S. silence over the use in Burma of 2,4-D, a major component in Agent Orange, raises serious questions:

- Why did the U.S. provide a herbicide that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency fears may have detrimental effects on humans and animals? In 1980 the EPA demanded further testing of 2,4-D, to determine the impact of contaminated water and spray drifts.

- What precautions were taken to warn the hill farmers before their fields were sprayed and what first aid was available for those affected?

It can be argued that Burma's immediate goal, supported by the U.S., was the destruction of opium poppy fields. However, the U.S. was well aware that Burma's longer range goal is to weaken its tenacious political opponents, in whose areas the fields are located, by destroying their financial base.

Before the 1970s Burma treated its civil wars and opium trade as an internal matter and sought no outside assistance to bring either under control.

The insurgencies are varied in origin, location and objectives. Each has a somewhat different economic base: The Burmese Communists drew their initial support from China, but since 1980 most assistance has come from the opium trade that passes through their areas; the Karens earn their income from taxes collected on black market consumer goods that move through their territory; while several of the Shan groups gain their income either directly or indirectly from the opium trade. It is mainly in the difficult-to-reach upland areas of the Shan State that most of Burma's opium is grown. Since the end of World War II, no government has exercised continuous and effective control in these border areas.

While the U.S. has had no desire to involve itself in Burma's local wars, it has been interested in stopping the flow of opium and heroin at the source.

Until 1974, Burma was unwilling to allow the stationing of a narcotics officer at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon or to participate in American-sponsored narcotics programs. But as the use of narcotics spread from the hills of Burma to the heartland, the government changed its policy.

In that year, insurgent Shan leaders offered to sell all opium that was produced in their state to the U.S. A House of Representatives delegation met with the Shans and discussed the proposal, but Washington rejected it. The U.S. felt

that there was no assurance that

to trade with insurgents battling a friendly nation.

In 1975, the U.S. supplied helicopters and pilot training to Burma to help the country suppress the narcotics-trade. The intent was to interdict the caravans and disrupt the movement of opium to world markets. At hearings in Washington, questions were raised over whether the equipment also would be used in Burma's wars against its political opponents. In the end, no restrictions were placed on the equipment, and the aircraft were used in both wars. But in neither have they proven decisive: the civil war continues and today Burma produces an estimated 600 tons of opium a year.

In this war against opium and political insurgents, what has been overlooked are the people who grow the crop. The farmers are members of various ethnic minority groups - Shans, Was, Lahus, Lisus, Kachins and others. They are poor and politically and economically underdeveloped.

For them, growing opium is a tradition that goes back for more than a century. It is a cash crop raised alongside food crops and livestock. Opium is used in the hill areas and has been a part of the local culture and economy.

Given the government's inability to exercise legal authority, no programs aimed at encouraging socio-economic change, like road building or crop substitution, have been introduced on a sustained basis. The hill farmers go on as before.

No-Man's Land

But if the production of opium is primitive, the trade - which is organized and controlled by outsiders - is highly organized and sophisticated. In this no-man's land, caravans of burros, guarded by private armies equipped with modern weapons and communications, carry it mainly to the Thai border, where, in most cases, it moves onto the world market.

During the journey inside Burma, battles are fought by rival gangs of Shans, Chinese and others for control of the trade. Thus, the wars in Shan State are highly complex: At times they're between the government and the insurgents, the government and the illegal traders, the insurgents and the illegal traders, and most of all, between the traders themselves. Mean-while, the farmers have no say and no control.

Knowing all this, the visiting U.S. Congressmen said in their 1984 report that "effective phasing out of opium production is not seen as achievable until such time as the problem of insurgency can be ended. » The delegation- felt, however, that because of Burma's obligations under the U.N. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1968, it might be interested in more international assistance and, if that were the case, war against the growers might be the way. But such assistance also might produce the side effect of weakening the insurgency. And if that's the case, the committee said, "so be it,"

Thus, the U.S. was well aware of the complexity of Burmese politics, and in the name of narcotic suppression was willing to become involved in domestic politics.

It is ironic that the U.S. chose this time and means because for years, the minorities in Burma unsuccessfully sought American assistance and recognition of their struggles for democracy and self-determination.

What we see in the end is the U.S. involved in the war against opium - and the U.S. taking the side of the Burmese government in its fight against its own citizens. Clearly, the U.S. owes its citizens and the world some answers. If the herbicide 2,4-D is still considered a danger in America, how can we justify giving it to Burma, knowing for what use it was intended? The U.S. knew it would be used in a war zone and that farmers couldn't be properly warned.

Hollow Words

Does the war against narcotics, however important, justify intrusion into the internal politics of Burma by joining sides with the government against its opponents?

President Reagan told Congress in March that among the four goals fundamental in our postwar foreign policy was our resolve to defend and advance the cause of democracy, freedom and human rights throughout the world. How hollow these words ring when American herbicides fall on Burma's hill farmers and political insurgents.

The civil wars and the insurgent problem must be resolved before continuous and effective government can come to the hills of Burma.

The delegation of congressmen was unaware that the minorities political organizations want to settle their differences peacefully through negotiations. They want an end to Burman dominance and one-party authoritarian rule. They fight for a political system that will guarantee local autonomy and rule by their own leaders. The political insurgents generally are opposed to opium and believe that it can be eliminated through crop substitution once the political wars end and the nation unites to help the hill farmers by bringing economic and social change to them.

The U.S. ought to halt the distribution of herbicide 2,4-D, stop its use against defenceless farmers and instead offer help to the people of Burma so they can resolve their political differences peacefully.



Paan District KNU leaders on tour. Standing 2nd from right is Dist. Chairman Pdoh Mahn Tin Sein

President Gen. Bo Mya decorating Kawthoolei Star medal to Pu San Say, age 85.