

BURMA ALERT No.6 (Vol.2, June 1991)

Burma News:

NCGUB GETS C\$100,000 FROM CANADA

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) headed by Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win received a C\$100,000 grant in June from the Montreal-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development to campaign for democracy in Burma. The ICHRDD was established in 1988 by an act of the Parliament of Canada to promote the rights and freedoms enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights. The Honourable Edward Broadbent, President of the ICHRDD, said in a recent statement, *"One year ago the Burmese people exercised its fundamental rights and elected a government. Today, this people is still governed by a military regime. The representatives it elected are in exile, in jail or otherwise prevented from taking office. This is not acceptable. The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development expresses its strongest opposition to this continuing tragedy and calls upon like-minded institutions around the world to express, publicly and loudly, their own opposition. The Centre calls upon the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to hear the voice of the Burmese people, to respect the people's choice and to transfer powers without delay to those who have been elected by the people."* The ICHRDD is the first international organization to publicly and materially support the NCGUB. This sharply contrasts with the official position of the Government of Canada which condemns SLORC's human rights record but has so far refrained from taking concrete steps to help change the situation in Burma. The ICHRDD's position is also diametrically opposite to that taken by Petro-Canada, the oil company which is wholly-owned by the Government of Canada and is exploring for oil in Burma. In November 1989, Petro-Canada paid SLORC a US\$5 million 'singing' bonus to get a US\$15 million oil exploration and production sharing contract covering Block 'E' near Meiktila. In January 1991, Petro-Canada further purchased from Unocal, a 30% share worth US\$21 million in its Block 'F' concession area near Magwe. Petro-Canada has to date invested US\$41 million.

25-YEARS JAIL TERM FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Twenty-three of the 48 Members of Parliament arrested by SLORC since the May 1990 elections have been sentenced to 25-year terms for 'attempting to form a government'. These included 4 women. Nine other opposition politicians were also given ten to twenty year prison sentences [B910514, F910523 & N910514] U Kyi Maung, 72, Acting Chairman, and U Chit Khaing, 69, Acting Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) which won the elections, have each been sentenced by a military tribunal to an additional 10 years in prison [A910614]. Both are already serving 10-year prison sentences pronounced by a military tribunal on 19 November 1990. Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein, General Secretary of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), was sentenced to 7 years in prison by a military tribunal on May 12. The AFPFL was de-registered by SLORC in January for *"establishing links with armed rebels with the intent to revolt against the state"* [A910607].

MORE BURMESE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DIE

On May 9, SLORC announced that Sai Kyaw Sein, Member of Parliament for Mong Ton, Shan State, died on April 19 but did not say how or where. Sai Kyaw Sein was a member of the Shan National League for Democracy which is aligned with the NLD [A910524]. SLORC also announced on May 16, that its troops found the skeleton of U Si Maung, NLD MP for Lay-myet-hnar (1), Irrawaddy Division near Padauk on the Thai-Burmese border. Villagers said he died of malaria on January 30. U Si Maung was named a fugitive from justice by SLORC on December 4 for taking part in talks in the jungle to form the NCGUB [B910517]. In November, NLD MP U Maung Ko died in prison after being tortured and in January two more NLD MPs U Tin Maung Win and U Maung Maung Gyi died in prison

(Alert No.3, Vol.2, March 1991, reported the death of Asahi Shimbun correspondent U Nay Min in Insein Jail in November 1990. The correct name is U Nay Win or Ne Win, and he died on January 17, 1991. Maj.Gen. Khin Nyunt, SLORC Secretary I accused U Nay Win of being a leftist and a close friend of NLD Secretary, U Win Tin, an alleged communist who is said to have given 'bad advice' to NLD Secretary General Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - Ed).

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE RE-AFFIRMS VOW TO FIGHT SLORC

The Central Committee of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) at its meeting on May 8-9, reaffirmed the DAB's determination to continue to fight SLORC. The Committee met after two more of its 21 member groups defected to SLORC [B910515]. Five hundred men of the Pa-O National Organization (PNO) led by U Aung Hkam Hti surrendered to SLORC on 11 April [P910414 & F910523]. The Pa-O people are a minority group of about 200,000 living in Southern Shan State. Linguistically, they are related to the Karen. Six hundred men of the Palaung State Liberation Party (PSLP) led by Ai Mong also surrendered to SLORC on 23 April [P910504 & F910523]. The Palaung people are linguistically related to the Mon and number about 60,000. The Pa-O and Palaung are largely Buddhist. SLORC has promised to develop the Pa-O and Palaung areas and allow the PNO and the PSLP to participate in the future national convention to draw up a constitution. The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), another DAB member, led by Brang Seng reported to the DAB in April that it had met with SLORC three times between October 1990 and April 1991 to discuss a possible settlement. The talks failed when the KIO refused to negotiate a deal separately without the DAB [N910515]. The Kachin State covers 87,808 sq.km (13% of Burma) and has a population of about 1 million (2.5% of Burma). The DAB was founded in 1988, uniting 21 different ethnic and political groups fighting Rangoon for a democratic federal Burma. In 1990, the DAB recognized the NLD as the true representatives of the Burmese people and fully supported the NCGUB when it was formed on 18 December 1990. The DAB said it will continue to fight SLORC until it hands over power to a democratically elected government. The All Burma Muslim Union (ABMU), another DAB member, led by president Dr. Abdul Razzak and the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) led by chairman Nurul Islam, issued a joint statement in May pledging to work with the DAB to fight SLORC and establish a democratic state. They accused SLORC of trying to stamp out Islam in Burma and trying to engineer communal riots between Buddhists and Muslims. The ABMU and ARIF called on SLORC to immediately hand over power to the NLD [B910506 & N910507]. A Thai official in Mae Sod said 1,000 Burmese Muslims have fled to the Thai border after being harassed by SLORC troops. A muslim leader in Pa-an was forced by soldiers into a mosque at gunpoint and had his head shaven like a Buddhist monk. The soldiers were angry because the muslim leader had not allowed them to celebrate Thingyan (water festival) in the mosque [N910504]. Other troops of the 81st Battalion led by Lieut. Aung Naing Swe also humiliated and harassed two muslim leaders, Moradee Yusuf and Moradee Yamaruddin during Ramadan in the village of Nabu, southwest of Myawaddy. Five Nabu villagers were used as mine sweepers by the troops and one lost both legs when he stepped on a mine. In November, 30,000 were uprooted from coastal villages in the Arakan State and driven out to Bangladesh [N910507 & P910504]. The Arakan State covers 36,762 sq.km and has a population of about 2.4 million. Approximately 30% of the Arakanese are muslims. The Karen National Union, another DAB member, confirmed that they have successfully repulsed major assaults on their base area where the NCGUB, the NLD (Liberated Area) and the DAB have their headquarters. In an effort to capture their positions, the Burma Army backed by jets and helicopters launched a major offensive in March and April. General Than Shwe, Vice Chief of Staff (Army) had boasted that the Karens would be 'resolutely crushed' [N910407]. The Karen State covers 28,726 sq.km and has a population of 1 million but the Karens in Burma number about 3 million. Approximately 20% of Karens are Christians.

THAI MINISTER: AIDS SPREADING IN BURMA

Burmese prostitutes working in Thailand are spreading AIDS when they return home, Thai Minister for the Prime Minister's Office, Mechai Viravaidya said on May 6. Mechai, a well-known public health campaigner, called for talks with Burmese officials. Underlining the seriousness of the situation, he cited the case of the rescue of 19 Shan teen-age girls from a Chainç Rai brothel in April. None had any knowledge of AIDS but 17 were found to be infected with the HIV virus which produces AIDS. Mechai said, *"Our neighbours are coming over the border and taking the virus back. This is not just a health issue, it's a social issue. We are fighting a lot of ignorance and vested interests."* [B910507 & N910507]. Burmese girls sold as prostitutes to Thai brothels in Ranong get US\$8 per month. A customer pays the brothel US\$8 a night for girls who are sometimes as young as 10 to 11 years old. Most are about 16 years old. There are approximately 1,500 Burmese prostitutes in Ranong [BUR910531].

SLORC RE-OPENS ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Burmese colleges and universities closed by SLORC for three years following the 1988 nation-wide demonstrations for democracy, were re-opened May 15. The faculty, parents and students had to pledge that they would not engage in any political activity. Parents have to accept responsibility for their children and agree to accept any punishment SLORC may give if they misbehave. Secondary schools re-opened in 1989 and some universities and colleges re-opened in January 1991. SLORC issued a strong warning that the educational institutions will be closed again if *"someone goes astray"* [B910516].

International News:

AUSTRALIA:

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, on 16 May called on the international community to act to discourage SLORC from repressing democratic leaders. He told parliament that, *"Indeed, it is now increasingly difficult to avoid the conclusion that, as much as we hoped and believed otherwise at the time, (the election) was a fraud to flush out democratic leaders and make it easier to move against the dissident groups using increasingly intimidatory methods."* Evans said Australia will seek action through the United Nations General Assembly. She will raise the issue of trade and economic sanctions with the United States and discuss the imposition of an arms embargo with China, Singapore and Thailand [TA910517 & FR910527].

The Committee for Democracy in Burma (CDB) at its Annual General Meeting on 27 January in Sydney, unanimously elected U Ba Hla Oung, President, Dr. Raymond Tint Way, Secretary and Mahn Orson Taik, Treasurer. The CDB's main objective is to endeavour to assist in the restoration of democracy in Burma and to participate in the rehabilitation of the country. The CDB states: *"In line with the mandate of the people of Burma so clearly determined at the general elections held on 27 May 1990, we support the NCGUB, all members of this government being duly elected representatives of the people"*. In January, the CDB sponsored Ko Aung Naing Oo, Joint Secretary - Foreign Affairs of the All Burma Students Democratic Front, to attend a 4-week Diplomacy Training Program conducted by the Law Faculty of the University of New South Wales. The Australian Council of Churches provided a bursary of A\$ 5,000 to cover travel, accommodation and enrolment fees. CDB address: 42 Marsden Road, West Ryde, NSW 2114, Australia. Tel:/Fax: 61 (2) 858-5739.

BRITAIN:

Burma Action Group (BAG-UK), Burma Affairs Monitor and the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma (UK) held demonstrations outside the Burmese Embassy in London on May 27 to commemorate the May 27, 1990 general elections.

CANADA:

Canadian Friends of Burma and Canadian members of parliament held a rally in Ottawa on May 27 calling for Canadian government action on Burma.

Friends of the Rainforest (FoR) has launched a campaign to save Burma's forests and protest Petro-Canada's support for SLORC. "To participate, please contact: P.O. Box 4612, Station E, Ottawa, Ont., K1S 5H8, Canada. Tel: 1 (613) 236-5751.

FRANCE:

On May 27, the 12 nations of the European Community reiterated their appeal to SLORC to respect the mandate of the people. Ken Coates, chairman of the European parliament's human rights subcommittee said, *"Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council has intensified repression and systematically violated the human rights of the people. The time has now come to consider more direct and punitive measures. Direct economic sanctions should be applied along with measures to impede trade with Burma via its other trading partners. Attention must be paid to the supply of weapons and other means of repression to the Burmese authorities as well as to exports from Burma which involve the continued destruction of Burma's forests and other natural resources."* [AE910527]

L'Association France-Birmanie (AFB) held a protest rally against SLORC in Paris on May 27.

GERMANY:

The Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma (Germany), German-Burmese Association, Committee for Democracy in Burma (Berlin) and the International Network for Democracy in Burma (Europe) held demonstrations in Bonn, Berlin and Hamburg on May 27 to bring Burma to the attention of the German people.

JAPAN:

The Amnesty International, Association for Burmese Issues in Kansai and the Buddhist Relief Center held a picnic-rally in Nakanoshima Park in Osaka on May 26. Participants wore Daw Aung San Suu Kyi face masks to protect their identities and released fifty pigeons to symbolize the release of political prisoners in Burma.

NETHERLANDS:

The European Alliance of Burma Action Groups (TEABAG) held a protest rally for Burma in Amsterdam on May 27.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Amnesty International in co-operation with the Burma Forum held a candlelight gathering for Burma on May 27 in Hollywood

Greenpeace Action and Rainforest Action Network held a direct action at the annual meeting of the International Hardwood Products Association in Palm Springs, California in March and called for the IHPA to stop importing tropical timber from Burma and Sarawak. This was followed up in May by a Greenpeace Burma Action Alert to urge President George Bush to ban the import of Burmese timber as mandated by Congress in Trade Bill HR 1594. US citizens can call the White House: 1 (202) 456-7639. Karuna Center has issued an appeal on behalf of 300 Burmese monks living on the Thai-Burma border. The monks belong to the All Burma Young Monks Union led by Ven. Ashin Kemasara. They are facing numerous hardships including financial difficulties. Please send a tax-deductible cheque to the Karuna Center. Donations will then be sent to the International Network of Engaged Buddhists in Bangkok who will forward the funds to the ABYMU. Address: Karuna Center, (Dr. Paula Green), 49 Richardson Road, Leverett, MA.01054, USA. Tel: 1 (413) 367-9520. Fax: 1 (413) 773-7507.

Synapses in Chicago issued an appeal in May urging US citizens to write to the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs of both the Senate and House of Representatives to support a US\$1 million appropriation for Burmese student refugees living along the Burma-Thailand border. Congressman David R. Obey (WI) is the chairman of the House Subcommittee which held hearings in April. Senator Patrick Leahy (Vermont) is chairman of the Senate Subcommittee and will be holding hearings in June.

THAILAND:

Burma Underground Rights Movement for Action (BURMA) has a new address: P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504, Thailand.

The Overseas National Students Organization of Burma appealed to Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun in April to 40 Burmese students detained at the Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok.

SOURCES (this issue):

[A910524] Asiaweek

[B910517] Bangkok Post

[AE910604] Agence Europe

[N910515] The Nation, Bangkok

[F910523] Far Eastern Economic Review

[P910414] Working Peoples Daily

[FR910527] Financial Review

[BUR910531] BURMA Vol.1, No.4, May 91

The "Burma Alert" is published monthly by the ADDB. It monitors foreign investment and trade with Burma to provide the Burmese democracy movement with data for their campaigns against the military dictatorship in Rangoon. Subscription Fee is US\$ 25.00 for 1991 payable to ADDB, c/o Harn Yawngnaw, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 647-3088

Human Rights:

SLORC CIVIL SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE:

The following is the questionnaire all Burmese civil servants were required to answer in April to assess their loyalty to SLORC. It is clear from the questionnaire that SLORC does not expect truthful answers but intends to blackmail the civil servants into submission with their own answers. The questionnaire may also be later used to demonstrate public support for SLORC policies. The "Burma Alert" received copies of the questionnaire from several independent sources and we are satisfied that it is authentic.

1. Do you want Burma to be ruled by insurgent groups such as the KIA, KNU, ABSDF and New Mon State Party? (*KIA = Kachin Independence Army, KNU = Karen National Union, and ABSDF = All Burma Students Democratic Front.*)
2. Do you want Burma to be ruled by the BCP, Tha-Ka-Tha or its underground organizations? Do you support them? (*BCP = Burma Communist Party, an illegal organization. We are uncertain what Tha-Ka-Tha stands for.*)
3. Do you want Burma to be ruled by a foreign country?
4. Can you accept the CIA's interference in Burmese affairs?
5. Do you want Burma to be ruled by the exile Sein Win and his group? (*Dr. Sein Win heads the exile National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma which is made up of elected Members of Parliament.*)
6. Do you want Burma to be ruled by the so-called parallel government of U Nu? (*U Nu was the last democratically elected Prime Minister of Burma who was overthrown in 1962 by General Ne Win. In 1988, he proclaimed that he still headed the legal government of Burma.*)
7. Are you in favour of the programs broadcast by foreign radio stations such as the VOA, BBC and AIR? (*VOA = Voice of America, BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation and AIR = All India Radio.*)
8. Do you want Burma to lose its independence?
9. Do you support National League for Democracy leaders U Tin Oo, Daw (Aung San) Suu Kyi, U Kyi Maung and U Chit Khaing? (*All those named are under arrest or house arrest - see Page 1.*)
10. Do you support the exiles Sein Win, Peter Limbin, Maung Aung and U Sein Mya? (*Dr. Sein Win and Peter Limbin are members of the NCGUB. Maung Aung is U Nu's son and heads the Alliance for Democratic Solidarity. U Sein Mya is a former colonel who once commanded the North-West Command and served as Minister for Home & Religious Affairs from April-Sept.1972. He now leads a resistance force against SLORC.*)
11. Do you want the country to face a situation similar to that in 1988?
12. Do you want the Army to protect the nation while a permanent constitution is being drawn up?
13. Do you agree that all citizens are responsible for drawing up a strong constitution?
14. Do you agree that all government employees (including armed forces personnel) must not engage in party politics?
15. If you disagree, explain why.
16. Were you a member of the former Burmese Socialist Program Party (BSPP)?
17. If yes, give your party membership number.
18. What party position did you hold? (*In 1972, the BSPP had 73,369 full members. 42,359 were armed forces personnel, 308 were policemen, 22,595 were workers and working people employed by the state, 8,207 were classified as peasants. Total membership including candidate members was 334,226 of which 105,896 were armed forces personnel. Full strength of the armed forces was just under 150,000 men.*)
19. Since the government has already issued directives to government employees not to engage in party politics, do you know that action will be taken if you violate instructions?
20. Do you realize that the penalty for violating civil service rules and regulations includes dismissal from the service?
21. What is your main responsibility?
22. Was the Army biased in the last election (May 27, 1990)?

23. How long should it take change political systems in such a way that it benefits the country in the long term?
24. Which organization can ensure peace and stability for the country?
25. Which political system is the most suitable for Burma?
26. How should the head of state (President) be chosen? By a) Direct election by the people, b) Step by step via township, division and central elections, c) Election from among members of parliament or Parliament elects a suitable person who is not a member of parliament.
27. Should a person who is married to a foreigner be chosen as head of state?
28. If you answer yes, explain what will happen to our country.
29. What punishment should be given to someone who threatens others, beheads people, destroys state property and attempts to divide the Army?
30. What comes first, the interest of the state or that of a certain individual?
31. For whose benefit is the Army working today?
32. How should the Army which is working for the benefit of nation, respond to an organization that regards the Army as its enemy?
33. Is it right to oppose, confront and attack the Army?

Each government department down to the township level, is required to list the number of departmental personnel, the number of those who completed the questionnaire and the number of those who did not do so, together with why they did not complete the questionnaire.

Foreign Investments:

S. KOREA:

Korean Foreign Trade Association delegation led by Mr. Kim Uhn Sang, called on Brig.Gen. David Abel, Minister for Planning & Finance and for Trade, and Lt.Gen. Sein Aung, Minister for Industry 1 and for Industry 2 [P910405].

Seoul Air International Ltd. President Mr. S.Y. Roh and Manager Mr. I.C. Chang called on Lt.Gen. Tin Tun, Minister for Transport & Communication, Social Welfare, and for Labour, to discuss *"civil aviation, training of Korean civil helicopter cadets by the Civil Aviation Training Institute, lending of Myanmar helicopter pilots and technicians to petroleum companies"* [P910412].

PAKISTAN:

A Pakistan defence study delegation headed by Air Commodore Bashir Ahmed Chaudhry of the National Defence Academy called on Vice Chief of Staff (Army) General Than Shwe [P910423J].

THAILAND:

ADG Gem Dealer Co. a firm set up by the *Thai Gem and Jewellery Traders Association (*Alert No.5, Vol.1*) in Feb.1991, was granted permission in April to open a buying office in Rangoon to meet the demands of Thai jewellery makers. Three or four officials of the Association will be sent to run the office, said Vichian Veerasakari, Managing Director of ADG [N910411].

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Unocal Myanmar Oil Co. started its drilling program with test well No.1 at Kandaw, Magwe Division, on April 27 [P910428].

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:

Soviet Aviaexport Deputy Director General F.N. Myavinikov, met with Major General Tin Tun, Vice-Chief of Staff (Air Force), on May 2 in Rangoon to propose the sale of M-17 helicopters and airliners to SLORC on easy terms. The M-17 is an attack helicopter capable of carrying rockets and other arms. It has a speed of 126 mph and a combat radius of 56 miles. Diplomats say they have seen newly delivered Yugoslav G4s on training flights in Rangoon [N910504 & P910504]. They may also have been used in recent attacks on Karen bases [N910409]. The Soviets also proposed selling Antonov 32s or Turpelov 154s to replace Burma Airway's aging Fokker Friendship airliners [B910504 & N910504].
