



A NEWS ORGAN OF THE KAREN NATIONAL MOVEMENT (BURMA).



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

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*Teachers and staff of 1981 Me Tarit Vol. Trg. Course after being garlanded.*



*1987 Me Tarit Vol. Trg. Trainees at the Closing ceremony.*



*Tavoy/Mergui District KWO Leaders.*



*Mary Ohn, Kawthoolei Organiser visiting and meeting Refugees fleeing enemy atrocities in No.(1) Bde. Thaton area.*



## THE GOVERNMENT OF KAWTHOOLEI

Our Ref: GK-KK/87-177

19 May 1987

H.E. Javier Perez de Cuellar  
Secretary General  
United Nations Organization  
New York, U.S.A.

Your Excellency,

It is understood that the Burmese government has applied to the United Nations Organization for the "poorest nation" status in order to obtain further international aid and loan. Before the War, Burma was one of the most prosperous countries in Asia, and could be so again were it not for its government's incorrect handling of the nationality question, wrong economic policies, dictatorial rule and the fact that more than 40% of the budget are being spent on the oppressive war against the indigenous peoples of the country. Burma is a country collectively owned and inhabited by the indigenous peoples such as Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Pa-Oh, Palaung, Shan, Wa, etc. From the very beginning, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) government has held fast to the Burmese totalitarianism and refuses to grant liberty, equality and to practise peaceful co-existence with the indigenous peoples of the country. We, the Karens, under the banner of the Karen National Union (KNU), have been fighting against the Burmese chauvinism and totalitarianism since January 1949 without any foreign aid while the Burmese government has received and used foreign aid from several countries in various forms in their

oppressive war against us and the other indigenous peoples. We have our own elected government, legislature, judiciary, democratic administrative system, army, educational system, etc.

The total population of the Karens in Burma is more than seven million. We are not the only people that are fighting against the Burmese chauvinism and totalitarianism. All the nationalities have now joined under the umbrella organization of the National Democratic Front (Burma) and have been fighting for a genuine federal union.

We believe that the problems of Burma could not be settled with the granting of the "poorest nation" status in Burma. There is no doubt that granting this status to the current Burmese government would only mean more suppressive measures to the people of the country and, hence, creating more injustice and human sufferings on a nation-wide scale. The one and only effective solution to the existing problems in Burma today would be for the Burmese government to end its oppressive war, handle the nationality question correctly, and seek a peaceful political settlement.

We therefore request your Excellency to kindly relay the case herein submitted to the UN agencies concerned before the BSPP government application for the "poorest nation" status is considered. At the same time, we would like to urge Your Excellency to explore means and ways for the persuasion of the Burmese government to settle the political problems in the country peacefully.

We would also like to suggest that a UN fact-finding commission be sent for an in-depth study of the real situation in Burma. If necessary, we are prepared to send a delegation to the United Nations to present the true situation of Burma if Your Excellency should arrange travelling document for it.

Sincerely yours,



General Bo Mya  
President  
The Government of Kawthoolei

### **25 years in the life of the BSPP regime**

In March 1962, Ne Win staged a successful coup d'etat and took over power from U Nu. Along with power, he also inherited an ailing economic system.

When Ne Win came to power, he proclaimed that he would carry out a revolution and establish a socialist economic system in the country. For 25 years now, he has been trying desperately to achieve that goal. It is necessary for us to study how much the peasants, the workers and the general public have benefited from this so-called revolution.

As soon as he came to power Ne Win put on the mask of socialism. He conducted several peasant seminars and permitted peasants union and workers union to be established, but under the auspices and control of military officers. In order to acquire capital for his socialist economy, private enterprises of the nationals were nationalised. Foreign firms and corporations were also nationalised after being given compensation. Burmese bank notes of 50 kyat and 100 kyat denominations were announced to be invalid and were recalled within a very short notice there by robbing the people of 4,000 million kyats.

In the course of this so called revolution, short term and long term plans that could never be accomplished were laid down. The country's finance has been grossly used up by the government in its struggle to suppress the various resistance movements of the ethnic nationals. After a period of 25 years, let us stop now and consider what is happening in Burma today.

Industrial enterprises in the country are not independent of capitals from countries like Japan, West Germany, the United States and other developed countries. Foreign investment flows in through joint ventures, through loans and through the purchase of industrial equipments. Far from the capability of exporting its industrial products, Burma is still unable to produce the much needed materials, instrumental and essential for its alleged transition from manual to mechanised farming.

During the colonial days, farmers in Burma were mercilessly exploited by chettyar money-lenders, by their feudal masters and by corporations which controlled the price of rice. During the reign

of U Nu, farmers were still exploited by land lords. Ne Win proclaimed the abolition of land lord and serf, but his socialist government has now taken the place of those chettyar money-lenders and feudal land lords. Formerly, corporations like Steel Brothers controlled the price of rice. Now, each year at harvest time, the government opens rice purchasing centres and farmers are required to go and sell their rice at these centres at an awfully low price. That is the reason why, until today, the farmers have to toil labouriously in the fields with their animals but live in dire hardship and poverty.

Burma could virtually produce no refined product and so every item of manufactured goods have to be bought from outside with foreign currency earned from the sale of rice bought from the farmers at a greatly reduced price, and with foreign currency earned from the sale of hard wood and minerals. A lot of other industrial produce are imported in the form of foreign capital investments. During the 25 years, Burma's foreign trade always show a deficit balance which is increasing in amount gradually.

25 years after Ne Win proclaimed his socialist economic system, Burma has receded to a state similar to what China had been after the Opium War. Commodities from Thailand such as detergents, plastic utensils, seasoning powder, rubber footwear, textile goods, various kinds of syrups, medicines and various kinds of other consumer goods flow into Burma through the blackmarket trade routes from the east. Radio cassettes, bicycles, motorcycles and electrical appliances from Penang, Singapore and Malaysia flow into Burma through blackmarket trade routes from the south. From India and Bangladesh come medicine, industrial equipments, stationeries, other consumer goods and even some used clothes through the blackmarket trade routes in the west. Cigarettes, matches, ceramics, flash lights, clothings, medicines, watches and a lot of other consumer goods from China flow in through the blackmarket trade routes from the north. Apart from all these, Burma also has to import motor vehicles, television sets, video cassettes and films etc. from Japan and other developed countries in the west.

Burma which gained independence since 1948 is, after 39 years of independence, still is a semi-colonial state with Ne Win, San Yu

and the military top brass as current colonial masters. The general living condition of the people has been reduced to one of utter deprivation and poverty.

Industrial enterprises of the state experience losses rather than profits. Burma also experiences losses in foreign trade. But the government has to increase its military spendings greatly. The Burmese government prints and circulates more and more new bank notes and now, the Burmese Kyat is likened unto war time currencies issued by the Japanese during their temporary occupation of Burma. Inflation has driven the price of consumer goods and everything else to a frightening proportion.

It is sad to note that the income of the general populations and the civil servants does not increase. A decent house and a garden in Rangoon's Windemere crescent is supposedly, to cost 6 million Kyat. If a civil servant with a salary of 300 Kyat a month goes through utter starvation to save 50 Kyat a month, he would have saved 600 Kyat by the end of one year. It would take this civil servant ten thousand years to raise enough money to buy this decent house and garden.

This economic crisis has driven many people to commit crimes of various degrees. Many people, at their wit's end, wistfully resorted to gambling and lottery as their possible way out. Countless women had in desperation turned to prostitution in order to escape from hardship and poverty.

In light of all this, it is truly surprising to note that the lot of the BSPP senior officers is another story. They are surrounded by untold wealth hoarded unlawfully through the years, and the fact that senior officers are involved in gambling with big-money could not be kept secret. The BSPP government has to promulgate law that forbids large scale gambling.

The BSPP government had organized three youth organizations, namely, Tay Za youths, Vanguard youths and Lan Zin youths. The government is shouting loudly that it is against the production, trafficking and marketing of drugs, but heroin, valium, marijuana and all sorts of drugs are nowadays widely used both by those in the BSPP ruling circles and also by the young people in the country.

There is no other remedy that will cure the country of the malady that has plagued it for 25 years now. The situation can only get worse. Only armed resistance of the oppressed ethnic nationals unto victory would cure the country of this abominable malady.



*WNA (WA) officers taking weapons Trg. at KNLA HQ.*

## The poverty measurement

Burma sets out to convince the UN it is entitled to LDC status

By Paisal Sricharatchanya In Bangkok

In what is seen as a reflection of the country's deteriorating economic condition, Burma has applied for the UN status of a least-developed country (LDC). Deliberations by the UN on LDC applications are a time-consuming process that can take up to two years or more. If approved, the socialist regime in Rangoon will be entitled to international aid and, perhaps more importantly, relief measures for its small but burgeoning external debt.

Coinciding with the 25th anniversary of a tight-fisted rule by Ne Win - the country's strongman and chairman of the ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party - the move has taken the diplomatic communities in Rangoon and Bangkok by surprise. Despite shrinking export earnings in recent years in the face of depressed commodity prices, Rangoon had resisted overtures by selected donor countries to reschedule its debt.

Apart from maintaining a strictly neutral foreign policy, Rangoon had long taken pride in the fact that the country never defaults on any foreign loans. But as one Western ambassador asserted, seeking the LDC status carries far more serious ramifications than a straight debt rescheduling. Although the theory says otherwise, the move is seen in some diplomatic circles as a Burmese intention to remit its debt-servicing commitment.

Rangoon has made no public disclosure on the subject, but it is clear the country's worsening external imbalance is a main factor behind the UN application. According to *International Financial Statistics* (an IMF publication) foreign-exchange reserves - {minus gold} plummeted from a recent high of US\$ 260.6 million in 1980 to a record low US\$ 33.1 million at end-1986.

Burma's foreign debt, the bulk of which is made up of bilateral and multilateral official development assistance (ODA), galloped from just above US\$ 1 billion in 1979 to about US\$ 3.7 billion as of end-1985, according to the OECD. But shrinking export earnings - falling by 19.6% in 1985 and an annualised 23% in the first quarter of 1986, according to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - have com-

pounded to produce a high debt-service ratio, now estimated at 70-80%.

Revenue from rice, traditionally the premier export item, has fallen behind forestry products. It is understood the adverse impact from the US Farm Act (on world rice prices) have hit Burma harder than Thailand, currently the world's largest exporter.

Burmese official statistics claimed an impressive 6.2% gross domestic product growth in fiscal 1985-86 (ending March), which translated into an average 5.5% growth annually during the fourth four-year plan (ending the same period). The government has projected lower growth in 1986-87 - at 3.6% - primarily because of an expected weakness in the agricultural sector as a result of unfavourable weather conditions and depressed crop prices.

These statistics, however, do not project the real picture as they do not take into account a flourishing underground economy that thrives throughout the country. A large array of consumer goods are smuggled into Burma from Thailand, and China and India to a lesser extent, while Burmese jade, minerals, narcotics and timber are smuggled out. Recent visitors to Rangoon agree there is a distinct economic deterioration, particularly in terms of rising black-market prices on essential commodities

Diplomatic and international-agencies observers told the REVIEW that Rangoon will face an uphill task trying to convince the UN that it is entitled to LDC status. There are three main criteria for a poor nation to qualify as an LDC: a per-capita income broadly understood to be below US\$ 200, manufacturing as a ratio to GDP not exceeding 10%, and a literacy rate of below 20%.

Burma appears to have no difficulty meeting the first two conditions. According to informed sources, the Burmese application put per-capita income at US\$ 180, less than the US\$ 190 reported by the World Bank two years ago but still credible in light of the fallen rice prices. Meanwhile, straight manufacturing and processing of raw materials account for a combined 9.9% of the country's total output.

The problem area is the literacy rate. Extensive literacy campaigns since 1965 have produced a high literacy rate - estimated at 75% (in Burmese) by one Western embassy. Rangoon reportedly claims in the application that the majority of the people have had "monastic" literacy (or are taught by monks) while real literacy is below 20%

Aside from the basic economic and social factors, the Burmese will also have to lobby for political support, particularly among members of the UN's Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) which is likely to conduct a first review on the application at a scheduled Geneva meeting in mid-1987. The final decision will rest with the UN General Assembly, based on Ecosoc's recommendations.

Sources differ in their opinion on whether the necessary international backing will be forthcoming. "It is going to be tough. Burma is a case of economic mismanagement. The country remains extremely rich in various natural resources," commented one international-agency expert.

A Bangkok-based Japanese source said

Tokyo is likely to "favourably consider" any Burmese request for support in view of the two countries deeprooted economic ties. Japan is by far the largest donor/lender, accounting for roughly one-third of Burma's total debt.

If the application is finally approved, Burma will join the ranks of 37 nations worldwide (mostly in Africa) that are formally recognised as the poorest. There are eight countries in the Asia-Pacific region currently accorded LDC status - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Laos, Maldives, Nepal, Samoa, and Vanuatu - with two other applications now under UN deliberations from Kiribati and Tuvalu, both in South Pacific.

These LDCs are entitled to various forms of assistance from developed countries under the UN system, notably the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s which was adopted in 1981. A separate Unctad resolution calls on the OECD countries to "try as far as possible to write off the LDCs' ODA debts. Some - including the Netherlands, Britain, West Germany and the Scandinavian countries - have already done so.

D-20 Sunday, March 8, 1987 • The Modesto Bee

Burma: The Troubled Hermit of Asia

## A Shangri-la frozen in time

Beneath the exotic surfaces lie harsh political, economic facts

RANGOON, Burma -- Burma's quarter century of self-isolation and one-man rule has produced a string of contradictions -- a shattered economy in a bountiful land; Marxist slogans mingled with Buddhist religious chants; a people who move to the pace of the bullock cart while their neighbors harness computers.

Casual visitors are invariably enthralled. They return home with descriptions of a Shangri-la frozen in time, a throwback to an older, traditional Asia fast vanishing just about everywhere else in the shadows of skyscrapers and the impact of traffic snarls and Western ideas.

Indeed a case can be made for Burma's ways.

Crime and pollution are minimal, stress diseases are uncommon and the extended family is still vital. Its strict neutrality has kept it out of international turmoil.

Rangoon, its low-rise, tree-lined capital, evokes nostalgia for Imperial Britain that left behind colonnaded edifices, riverside promenades and charming suburban bungalows.

Buddhist pagodas dot the plains and hills; spirits roam the rural imagination, and even the poorest farmers insist "on inviting strangers in for a meal or tea.

But beneath these exotic surfaces are increasingly harsh political and economic realities.

Traditionally called the Golden Land because of its great natural wealth and set upon a democratic course at independence from Britain in 1948, Burma today ranks among the 10 poorest countries in the world and is ruled by an authoritarian who has snuffed out all opponents and stifled initiative.

U Ne Win, who heads Burma's sole political entity, the Burma Socialist Program Party, has proved one of the world's most durable leaders. The secretive, 75-year-old strongman seized power in a 1962 military coup and imposed an amalgam of Marxist economics, Buddhism and military rule. It is called "The Burmese Way to Socialism."

Thousands were jailed during Ne Win's early years in power and potential challengers since have been purged.

Ne Win, who has never attended an international conference or been interviewed, slammed shut Burma's door and has reopened it only slightly in more recent times. Foreign tourists now are allowed into the country but they can stay only a week and parts of the country are off limits because of Burma's hidden wars -- a string of insurgencies by minority ethnic groups.

The government has refused to allow joint private ventures with foreign companies and at the end of last year closed the offices of all Japanese businesses in Burma, even though Japan provides about two-thirds of the country's aid and loans.

Ne Win's credo is state control of the economy and military control of the state. About three quarters of executive government positions are held by active or retired military officers.

"When a king goes into business, the country goes to ruin" is an old saying Burmese use to explain why Burma is in such a dismal shape despite its fertility, wealth of mineral and energy resources and a population of only 38 million.

Although Ne Win's Burma never experienced the lift-offs witnessed elsewhere on the continent, there were promising signs in the early 1980s. However, over the past year the economy and quality of life have plunged to perhaps their lowest levels. -

The country's foreign debt is up to nearly \$3 billion while hard currency reserves have plunged to \$35 million to \$55 million roughly one month's worth of imports. The annual per capita income is below \$200 and prices have soared since early 1986.

With production slowdowns, Western analysts and Burmese sources say there is greater reliance than ever on the vast black market - or shadow economy - stocked with smuggled goods from nearby Thailand, India, China and Malaysia as well as those siphoned off from government factories and stores.

The average civil servant, who has not had a wage increase for 11 years, must rely heavily on the black market where many prices are pegged to an illegal dollar exchange rate. A government worker can spend his monthly pay of 500 kyat - \$ 75 at the official rate of exchange, \$ 12 on the black market - for one pair of jeans and a can of coffee.

The price of rice, a Burmese staple, has doubled over the past year to the equivalent of 3.5 cents a pound at the free-market rate. Chicken is up 50 percent to 53 cents a pound, and fish also has increased by 50 percent to 62 cents a pound. Those increases are small by Western standards, but they are sizable for Burmese families with low incomes.

Western diplomats and Burmese sources say corruption has mushroomed and sporadic violence has flared in recent months. Urban unrest may grow in coming months if rice comes in short supply for the people of what was once the world's largest rice exporter.

"Things are worse than I've seen at any time." said Dr. Josef Silverstein, a leading American Burma scholar, after a recent visit. "But I still think Ne Win is strong enough to hold. There is no opposition leadership so the grumbling goes nowhere."

Despite a decade of rumors about Ne Win's poor health, there are few signs that the golf-playing, six-times-married leader is giving up making decisions he used to, ranging from the sweeping to the trivial.

Perhaps Rangoon's favorite guessing game is "After Ne Win, Who?"

While a smooth transition of power to President San Yu, the No. 2 man in the hierarchy, is possible, some are betting on post-Ne Win turmoil within the military. Those hoping for a more liberal Burma point to reported dissatisfaction among

younger, possibly pro-Western, officers in the field.

"I'm convinced the army is more fractured than we can see," said Silverstein, the author of several books on Burma. "When Ne Win goes it will break open. Conflicting loyalties which were papered over will emerge."

With all media under total government control and all opposition parties banned, it is difficult to plumb the depth of dissent. However, open rebellion in the shape of a dozen insurgencies is in full play.

The central government controls roughly two-thirds of the country. The rugged border areas are in the hands of the Burmese Communist Party, plus an array of ethnic minority groups seeking autonomy and warlords who traffic in some of the biggest opium and heroin bulk in the world.

None of these appears to pose an immediate threat to Rangoon but about 30 percent of the current budget has been assigned to Burma's 2000,000 member military, which often battles better armed rebels. Hundreds are killed each year in the shadowy wars and the few attempts at negotiations in recent years have all broken down.

Another analytical exercise about Ne Win's Burma is why it has opted for isolation, its official obsession with outside interference and internal security.

One answer is in the insurgencies. Another is Burma's colonial past and earlier economic exploitation by Chinese and Indian residents.

Some believe Ne Win and his followers truly want to preserve Burmese culture. Less charitable critics say keeping foreign influences out has kept Ne Win firmly in the seat of power.

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

Situation report presented to the Foreign Affairs Committee  
of the House of Commons by the Anti-Slavery Society  
5 March 1987

### THE BACKGROUND

Since independence in January 1948 Burma has been beset by near continuous political and ethnic conflict. The insurrection of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) began in March 1948, the Karen National Union in January 1949. Throughout the 1950s other ethnic groups took up arms to press their demands for greater political independence and autonomy - the Mon, the Karenni, the Shan, the Pao, the Arakanese and the Kachin.

The military coup of General Ne Win in 1962 failed to curtail the momentum of these movements. Indeed in some areas, especially in the Shan and Kachin States it gave the ethnic fronts a new impetus. Since the breakdown of peace talks with many of the insurgent groups in 1963, the Ne Win government has followed a dual policy of trying to introduce the one - party rule of the Burma Socialist Programme Party from the centre in Rangoon while at the same time in the area of insurgency carrying out a severe counter - insurgency pacification strategy - known as the "Four Cuts" Campaign ("Pya Ley Pya"). The aim is to cut off any links between the civilian population and the rebel groups, (financial, social or military) by a campaign of constant military harassment. At its most extreme it means the complete relocation of the civilian population in new camps on the plains and in the towns under military control. Here the chairman of the township and district councils are invariably military officers from the BSPP so the military and political counter - insurgency campaign can work in tandem - whether recruiting porters to work for the Burmese army or training "volunteers" to serve as local militia.

It is a strategy which had some success in clearing large areas of the Lower Delta and Pegu Yomas of central Burma of CPB and Karen rebel groups by the mid-seventies. But whether it can work it can work in the rugged minority states with long borders with neighbouring countries is open to question. And it is in these areas that today most of the rebel movements including the CPB are based. The

situation is rather one of stalemate. Over 20 political and ethnic fronts continue to confront the central government and from a quarter to a third of the country is still affected by insurgency. In many areas rebel groups have established large "liberated zones" and have been able to set up parallel administrations.

#### THE PRESENT SITUATION

At present armed opposition to the central government comes from two main blocks, one fronted by the Communist Party of Burma which has some 10,000 troops (mainly ethnic minority) in the Shan State, and the National Democratic Front - a 9 party alliance of ethnic minority fronts. The Ne Win regime has directed its military campaigns in see-saw fashion at one or other of these fronts over the last 10 years depending on their relative strengths and weaknesses. Since abortive peace talks with the CPB in 1980/81 it is the NDF which has been the main target of the Burmese army, though in the last few months there has been a dramatic escalation in fighting with the CPB - probably as a result of a joint military agreement concluded between the CPB and NDF during 1986.

It is from the Karen front that the most detailed accounts of the Burmese army activities continue to come. It would appear that as the leading member of the National Democratic Front, the Karen National Union is taking the main brunt of the Burmese army campaign. Again from frequent testimony it would appear that it is the civilian population who are the main focus of the army's strategy. Accounts of brutality and atrocities, leaving aside the political aspect of this campaign are commonplace.

#### THE KAREN FRONT

The main offensive was launched in January 1984 in the Northern Dawna Range where the Karen National Union's strongest military brigade - the 7th - is based. After 3 years constant military activity the scene along a 70 mile front today is one of devastation. Villages have been burnt down, all paddy and crops confiscated or destroyed, and villagers ordered to move to "Strategy Villages" (known in Burmese as Byuha Jayjwa) under military control on the plains to the west. Those who try to remain run the risk of being shot on sight and frequent testimony of this has been gathered amongst refugees who have fled to the Thai side of the border.

Today some 20,000 Karen refugees from this area are staying in camps in neighbouring Thailand. Most villages in the Paan and Hlaingbwe townships have now been placed under military control and refugees from these villages describe a life of constant hardship with villages under curfew and food rationed out on a daily basis. A common grievance is the "conscription" of villagers into porter service for the Burmese army - often into hazardous front-line areas.

Traders or those suspected of giving food or supplies to the K.N.U. have been singled out for particularly harsh treatment. In June/July 1985 the execution of over 40 traders was reported near one K.N.U. base at Phalu.

Perhaps, remarkably, given the intensity of the campaign, the K.N.U. is still holding many positions in the Northern Dawna Range. But with the area now largely devoid of civilians the Burmese army has recently changes its attention to new areas. While many of these areas have been the targets of campaigns in the past it would appear the "Four Cuts Campaign" has reached a new intensity over the past 12 months. Areas under operation at present include Shwegyin, Thaton, Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts. During a 6 week journey the Society's researchers heard frequent testimony from refugees from these districts.

#### RECENT TESTIMONY

On 14 January 1987 at Katihtita Village the researchers met with a large party of refugees from Shwegyin District who had reached the Salween River on 3 January. In total there were 220 people from 43 families from the villages of Htee Bla, Ma Wa Ki, Maw Daw Kaw, Aw Mu Ki and So Oh Ki - a small cluster of settlements in the hills near Shwegyin. The tactics of the "Four Cuts" campaign had allegedly been introduced in their area in 1975 when they had first been ordered to move to Shwegyin Town. But it was only in the last 12 months the campaign had reached such an intensity they felt they could no longer stay.

During the last rice growing season troops from the Burmese Army's 57th Regiment had twice come to their villages to destroy the paddy in the fields - once when 6 inches high and again near harvest. Then during September/October troops appeared to be carry-

ing out a systematic campaign of terror to force villagers to leave their homes.

Naw Meh Khin from Maw Da Kaw village described how her 20 year old son, Saw Ni Po, had been shot and killed by Burmese army troops in October while walking in the forest near his village. In the first week of November another young villager, 20 year old Saw Reh Htoo of Aw Nu Ki village was brutally murdered while sitting in the forest fishing. His body was riddled with over 100 bullets. In both cases villagers were adamant these young men were simple farmers unconnected with the K.N.U.

Another farmer, 50 year old Aung Thi from Ma Wa Ki village, told how in March 1986 two of his young daughters had been captured by Burmese troops and been taken to Shwegyin town. Since then he had had no official word of them though he had heard rumours they had been sent on to Toungoo town. Confirmation of the practice by the Burmese army of taking away young villagers came from 18 year old Naw Ka Pru Say who claimed her father had been killed by Burmese soldiers at the start of the Four Cuts Campaign in the area in 1975. She had been taken to Shwegyin town where she had grown up. She claimed facilities for the relocated villagers were non-existent. She had completed only 4th Standard in school since when she had worked on a citrus plantation and made a living by selling fruit in the town market. Finally in November 1985 she had run away to the forest.

At a meeting with refugees from Htee Bla village the Society's researchers were spontaneously given in 10 minutes the names of 31 villagers allegedly murdered by Burmese soldiers since 1975. According to 43 year old Pah La Hai, "Each year 3, 4 or 5 villagers have to die. The Burmese soldiers shoot them without reason. They will kill all the villagers. No one must stay there anymore".

At a field hospital to the south we saw physical evidence of recent atrocities. In one bed was Saw Parr Shwe, a 27 year old farmer from Melaki village in Papun District. He denied any involvement with the K.N.U. He described how on 17 December he and his father-in-law were travelling to Me Wi village when they were stopped by troops from the Burmese army's 59th Regiment. Accused

of being Karen soldiers they were arrested and told they were going to be taken to their Commanding Officer and shot. They decided to run away at the first opportunity. Though they had no weapons the Burmese troops opened fire. Saw Parr Shwe was hit twice, once in the back of his shoulder and once through the back of his jaw. This bullet followed through and tore away much of his right cheek. The Burmese soldiers did not give chase. After 5 days agony he had finally reached the Salween river.

In the next bed was 57 year old U Maung Maung from Jethaungzey village in Thaton District. On 26 November he claimed troops from the Burmese army's 70th Light Infantry Regiment had come to his village and asked for guides to lead them into a nearby area where K.N.U. units were known to be hiding. U Maung Maung spoke up repeating warnings from the K.N.U, that the paths had been mined. He was immediately arrested and told he would have to lead the way. He was tied to a rope and forced to walk in front of the Burmese troops. The inevitable happened when he stood on a mine. The mine detonated shattering his leg and wounding one Burmese soldier. U Maung Maung was left behind for dead. Later his friends found him and took 6 days to carry him to the border.

Nearby the Society's researchers met with more villagers from Thaton District who had just fled from the Burmese army. On 12 January 18 villagers from Pwo village had reached the Salween river as an advance party of over 80 villagers whom they reported were now on their way. Unlike many of the other refugees we met these were Plains Karen living on the Donthami River in an area supposedly long under Burmese army control. However even in these areas they claim over the last two years the Burmese army has been forcing villagers to relocate in new villages under military control nearer the towns. Their spokesman, 30 year old Pa Lu Thu, described how last year many neighbouring villages in Bilin Township were ordered to move to the "Strategy Village" at Leke. Then during 1986 villagers in his area were ordered to move to a camp at Paw Gaw. Then at the end of November troops under the command of Captain Tun Tin of the 81st Regiment of the Burmese Army's 66th Division came to their village. Most of the villagers ran away. 2 villagers who stayed, 50 year old Maung Ohn Nyunt, and a 41 year old

woman, Naw Kyi Kyi Po, were arrested and tortured and accused of being in contact with the K.N.U. They were then killed before several eye witnesses.

Since this time many villagers had been too afraid to return. As many as seven columns of Burmese troops have been continuously criss-crossing the area apparently looking for K.N.U. units. The remaining families are all believed to have been taken to Paw Gaw. The rest are now in the hills or are on their way to the border. Only one K.N.U. soldier has been captured during this campaign, 30 year old Saw Da Baw, whom they claimed had been shot.

#### KAYAH STATE

In April the Burmese army launched a major operation in the Kayah (Karenni) State where the Karenni National Progressive Party (an N.D.F. member) is active. Over 200 local porters were "conscripted" to carry supplies during the operation. According to testimony gathered their treatment was harsh, they were poorly fed, denied adequate medical treatment and on occasion beaten. It would appear Burmese officers treated them with great suspicion and regarded them as rebel sympathisers. At the end of the 2 week operation in which 10 villages were burnt down - as well as the K.N.P.P. HQ on the Pai River - over 40 porters were found left behind wandering in the jungle. One, Paw Dio, an ethnic Kayan (Padaung) from Moby, had been badly beaten by Burmese troops. When in mid-August he tried to return to his home village he was arrested by soldiers from the Burmese Army's 72nd Regiment who accused him of working for the K.N.P.P. According to unconfirmed reports he was then shot and killed.

Civilians have also been singled out for severe treatment in more recent incidents in the area. After a joint KNPP/KNU guerrilla unit attacked a Burmese outpost at Mesana on 25 December 1986, troops from the Burmese Army's 102nd Regiment, 2nd Company, raided 3 small villages in the Thaya District nearby in apparent retaliation on 11 and 12 January. All rice and paddy were looted and 2 villagers, Yin Maung of Thaya and Nay Win (30) of Wan Aw were allegedly tortured and killed. At the beginning of February 52 villagers reached the Thai border with photographic evidence of these murders.

From other ethnic minority areas similar reports have been made - notably in the Kachin State, the Loikhe area of the Northern Shan State and in the largely Pao areas of the S.W. Shan State. In the first week of February a similar report came from the Mon State where 120 Mon village schools in Ye Township have been ordered closed by the Burmese army. The teachers were accused of siding with the rebel New Mon State Party. Some 200 teachers are reported to have fled and some have already reached the Thai border.

#### POPPY SPRAYING

The researchers received eye witness accounts of a disturbing new development in the Burmese army's operations in the ethnic minority states. Under a U.S.A. financed anti-narcotics campaign during 1986 over 250 villagers in the Shan State have been sprayed with 2, 4, D, a component in the production of Agent Orange. The wisdom of such spraying is a subject of great debate. Many observers are convinced the twin problems of narcotics and insurgency are inseparable. Only when the Shan State's deep political problems are resolved can effective crop substitution programmes be introduced. Certainly the impoverished hill farmers of the State see none of the profits associated with the opium trade in the outside world. And certainly the manner in which the spraying operations have been carried out, again in areas of only slight government control, should be a matter of international concern.

Paw Kham (48) a Palaung headman from Padumawng village described how in December 1986 troops from the Monghsat battalion visited the villages in his area warning the farmers to leave their fields. He alleges 3 Akha women from the neighbouring village of Hwe Hung who refused to leave were shot dead. After the aerial spraying was carried out all the plants in the fields, poppies, cabbages, cauliflowers and potatoes began to shrivel and die. One villager, 25 year old Po Aye Chaum, who ate some of the affected plants died shortly afterwards. Other villagers complained of dizziness and vomiting. Obviously scientific tests would be needed to verify these effects but certainly all the villagers' agricultural produce has been destroyed. Paw Kham claims his villagers have been given no food supplies and are now without any income.

A Shan villager from Mungkok (also in Monghsat township), 30 year old Inn Pong, described a very similar incident on 10 December 1986 when 5 villages on Doi Cham mountain were sprayed by 2 fixed wing planes. Again villagers had been forewarned by Burmese ground troops but again many Lahu and Akha villagers did not heed these warnings. He alleges 7 Lahu villagers (3 girls and 4 men) died as a result of the sparying. Other villagers complained of the same symptoms, dizziness and nausea. Livestock, too, had been affected and cattle, pigs and chickens had died. Again it is impossible to verify these claims but Inn Pong was adamant the fields are now useless, "We are trying to replant but it is no good. The soil is dead".

Another Shan villager, Ong Maung (24) from Tangyang in Lashio District described an earlier spraying incident in January 1986 - again by white fixed-wing aircraft. One old lady who ran to her fields during the operation died shortly afterwards. One year on he claims many of the villagers have left the affected areas - some, have moved to the towns and most are destitute. Others have joined the rebel Communist Party of Burma or the Shan State Progressive Party while others like Ong Maung have made the long journey down to the Thai border. He has joined the rebel Thailand Revolutionary Council.

Such incidents, spread over such a wide area of Burma, deepen the impression of a government trying to solve what are obviously deep political and ethnic problems by purely arbitrary and military means. In some areas the army would appear to be acting beyond any legal constraint. And yet not one person we met, whether civilian or militaty believed any solution would come by outright military victory. After 40 years it is clear no one party can win.

SUMMARY OF KNLA MILITARY ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTHS OF MARCH/APRIL/MAY, 1987

Military Zone	KNTA Attacks		ENE CASUALTIES					ENE A/A LOSSES						REMARKS	
	ENE	WIA	Killed	Wounded	Leg Severed	Surrendered	Total	Small arms	Magazine	Ammos	Heavy Weapons	Shells Rds.	Bombs		
No. 1	19	22	26	62	19	-	109	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1) Coy Comdr. KID. (1) officer leg severed. Destroyed and burned (2) enemy camp	
No. 2	16	1	22	30	-	-	52	1	11	200	-	-	5	Destroyed (2) ene supply go-downs, (1) PWD officers, (1) tractor, (1) pumping station. Cleared (3) ene active agents	
No. 3	11	7	40	30	-	-	70	7	-	-	-	-	5	(4) NCO KID. (1) Colm Comdr leg sev. (2) NCO wdd. Destroyed and burnt (1) pol station. (2) paddy go-downs with 35000 bks paddy, (5) cars (1) rice mill with 2000 bks rice	
No. 4	5	2	13	16	-	1	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	Destroyed (1) ene motor-launch. (1) ene cpl Thein Shwe of 101 Inf Bn surrendered with (1) G-4 rifle & (180) rds ammo.	
No. 5	29	4	83	163	1	-	257	4	-	1372	-	-	60	(4) officers wdd. including (1) leg severed. Destroyed (1) ene truck & (1) motor boat	
No. 6	7	46	19	62	18	-	99	1	-	1300	-	-	8	(6) officers wdd. including (1) leg severed. Attacked & burnt down (2) ene camps destroyed (10) ene trucks (1) electric power st. (2) fire ext. cars.	
101 Bn.	5	7	8	21	2	-	31	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1) capt. and (2) sgts killed	
20 Bn.	12	-	47	99	-	-	146	3	10	240	-	-	27	(1) Colm Comdr, (1) Coy Comdr, (1) sgt KID, (2) Coy Comdr wdd.	
GHQ	6	-	10	15	-	-	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	109	89	290	498	40	1	819	16	21	3112	-	-	35	10	(4) officers & (4) NCO KID. (7) officers, (3) NCO wdd. Attacked & destroyed (4) ene camps, (1) pol st. (2) ene paddy go-downs with 35000 bks paddy, (1) rice mill with 2000 bks rice (7) cars, (2) steam boats (1) motor launch, (1) tractor.

### Some important Military Achievements of KNLA in March, April and May, 1987.

#### No. 1. Military Zone. (Thaton District)

On 14-5-87 our troops attacked the enemy advancing troops at Tee Klu with Cortex Joint bombs, The enemy suffered (7) killed including (1) Coy. Commander and (4) wounded.

On 18-5-87 our troops attacked enemy strategic command post at Pyimabiseik camp. The enemy suffered (5) killed and many wounded. Many buildings in the camp were burnt down.

On that same day our troops attacked Bilin Kyun. All enemies fled after putting up little resistance. Our troops burnt down the whole camp taking away whatever they could carry.

#### No. 2. Military Zone. (Toungoo District)

On 20-3-87 our Demolition squad entered New Thandaung Town (13 m/s Mawchi Road) and destroyed (1) enemy supply go-down, and (1) P.W.D office building.

On 28-3-87 enemy No 48 Infantry Bn, returned from mawchi to Tantabin Area via Nattaung. Our troops carefully ambushed them at (7) places inflicting a total of (10) enemies killed and (13) wounded.

On 20-4-86. Our Demolition squad entered enemy Cocoa plantation at Thategon and blew up (1) tractor, (1) water pump engine (1) supply godown and cleared (3) very active enemy agents.

On 3-5-87, our troops attacked enemy near Ker Wai inflicting (4) enemies killed and (5) wounded. Our troops captured (5) military equipment sets, (1) G-3 Rifle with (200) rounds Ammos.

#### No. 3. Military Zone. Nyaunglebin District

On 17-3-87 our troops attacked enemy police-station Nattha Kwin on the Sittang river and occupied it after 30 minutes fighting. (7) policemen were Killed and about 60 of their families with some villagers were wounded our troops captured (7) Rifles (5) Handrenades, (7) racks, (5) sets military equipments some medicines and documents. Our troops destroyed and burnt down all buildings of council members (2) paddy go downs with

35000 baskets paddy, (1) rice mill with 2000 baskets rice, (5) cars. Our troops attacked enemy reinforcement on the way inflicting (10) more enemies killed Our troops suffered no casualty.

On 20-4-87 our troops attacked enemy Yan Myo Aung camp, inflicting (4) enemies and (10) enemy porters killed.

On 23-3-87 our troops ambushed enemy advancing along Bilin Chaung inflicting (2) enemies killed and (10) wounded.

On 2-5-87 our troops attacked the enemy between Myet Ye and Lebat inflicting (2) enemies killed and (5) wounded. Our troops destroyed and burnt down (1) enemy truck with 2000 basket paddy.

#### No. 4 Military Zone (Tavoy-Mergui District)

On 7-3-87 our troops attacked enemies collecting paddy from villagers at Kawe in Tenasorin Township, and captured 15 carts with 30 bullocks.

On 14-4-87 our troops attacked enemies at Laung Thaik inflicting (7) enemies killed and (2) wounded.

On 3-5-87 our troops combined with some Muslim troop attacked enemies at KAW AN island inflicting (4) enemies killed (3) wounded and badly damaged one enemy motor launch by shelling.

On 25-4-87 enemy sgt. Thein Shwe tay of No. 101 Kinfatry Battalion surrendered to our troops with (1) G-3 Rifle and (180) rounds of ammos.

#### No. 5. Military Zone. (Dooplaya District).

On 27-3-87 our troops ambushed enemy near Kyaik Thalet inflicting (2) enemies killed and (5) wounded, our troop captured (1) carbine with (30) rounds, (1) G-3 Rifle with (20) rounds.

On 4-4-87 our troops attacked enemies at Pa Kyat inflicting (5) enemies killed and (3) wounded.

On 29-4-87 our troops combined with KNDO, attacked enemies No. 5. Inf. Bn. Colum, and No 97 Inf. Bn. near AwPa. The enemies fled leaving (4) dead bodies. A total of about 30 enemies were killed and wounded

Our troops captured (1) carbine with (50) rounds, (25) rounds 60mm shells. (25) rounds 40 MM. (1272) rounds of G-3 Ammos, medicines and some military equipments and documents.

On 29-4-87 our troops attacked and damaged (1) enemy motor launch at Shwe Lin, on Damichaung. Our troops ambushed enemy reinforcements near Hti Ban Klo inflicting about 30 enemies, killed and wounded.

On 9-5-87 our troops attacked enemy No 3 Light Infantry Br. near LawPa Hta inflicting (10) enemies killed and (21) wounded.

On 12-5-87 our troops attacked No 3 L.I.B. again at Takya, inflicting (10) enemies killed and (14) wounded. Our troop captured (10) bombs 2 inch mortar, (6) bomb 60 MM. Mortor,

#### **No. 6. Military Zone. (Paan District)**

On 13-4-87 our troops of No. 19 Bn. attacked the enemies at TAMO village inflicting (2) enemies killed and (17) wounded. Our troop captured (8) 2 inch mortar bombs. (8) Hand-Grenades and (20) sets Military equipments.

On 25-4-87 our troops attacked enemies at Ta Thoo Klo inflicting (10) enemies killed (19) wounded.

On 14-5-87 our troops attached enemy No. 4 LI. Bn. No 2 column camp at MAW KRET hill. The enemies fled after little resistance. Our troops captured (1000) rounds G-3 Rifle,

(200) rounds carbine and some other military equipments.

On 20-5-87 our troops attacked enemy at TAUKHI camp inflicting (3) enemies killed and (6) wounded. Our troops captured (1) G-3 Rifle.

#### **No. 20. Br area (Papun Districts)**

On 1-3-87 our troop attacked enemy at Nya Mu Hta. All enemies fled after (3) hours fighting. Our troop captured. (19) 81MM bombs, (8) 2 inch Mortar bomb, (1) basket medicinel, and some military equipments. (5) enemies were killed including (1) column Commander, and (5) wounded.

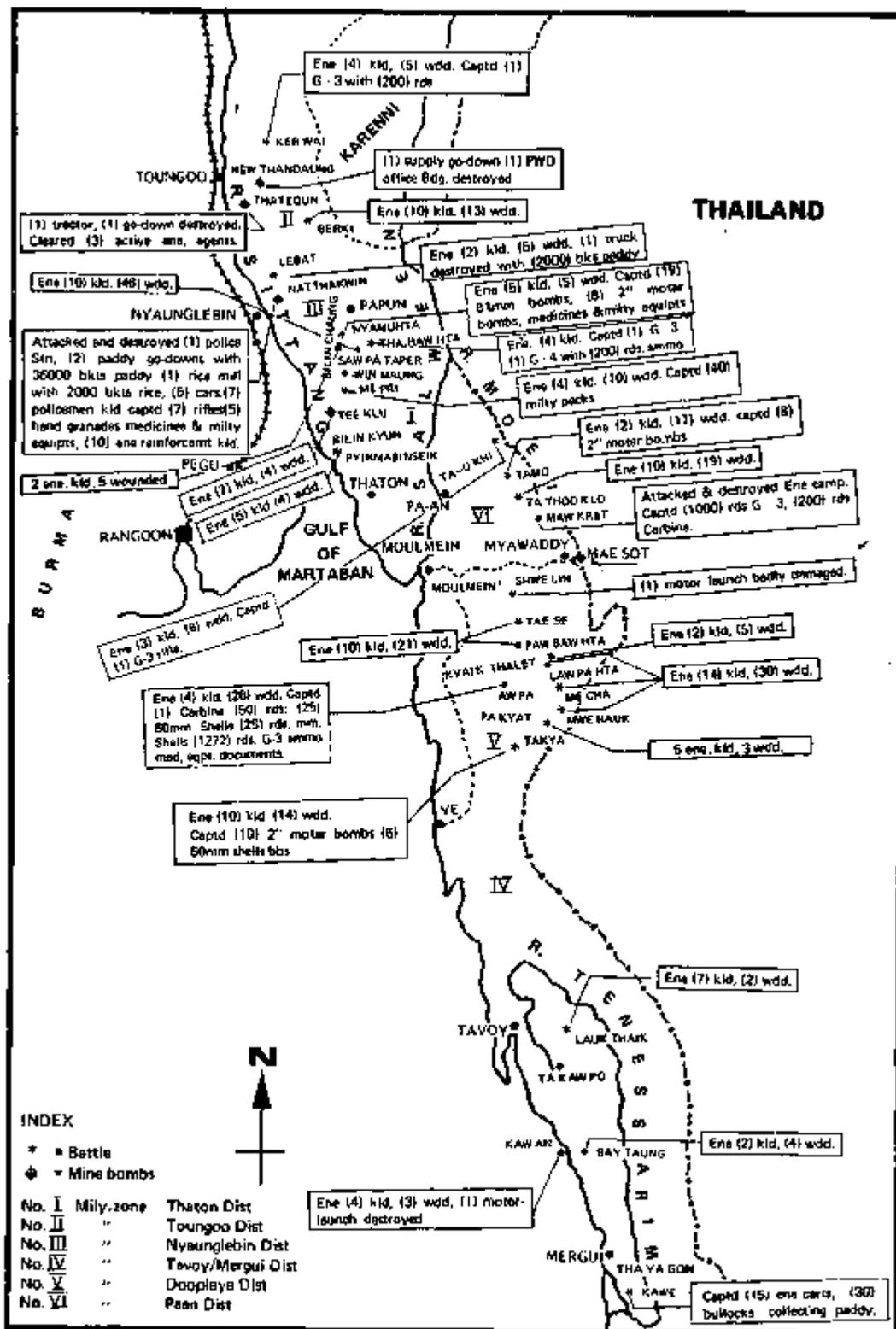
On 14-3-87 at 2 A.M. our 20 Bn. troop combined with some 3 Bde. troop attacked enemy at Win Maung and occupied the camp after (1) hour fighting, (1) enemy was killed (6) wounded and the rest fled. Our troops captured (1) G-3 Rifle.

On 10-4-87 our troops attacked the enemy at Tha Haw Hta. inflicting (4) enemies killed. Our troop captured (1) G-3 and (1) G-4 Rifle (10) Magazines with 200 rounds Ammos.

On 26-4-87 our troop attacked enemy at Me pri, inflicting (4) enemies killed and (10) wounded. Our troops captured (40) military packs from the enemy.

On 22-5-87 our troop attacked enemy at Saw Pa Taper Rilling (10) enemies including (1) Coy. Commander and wounding (46) enemies including (2) Coy, Commanders.

Map Showing places of Important Military Actions



## PROJECT MAJE: Report on the Project's First Year, June 1986 to May 1987

Project Maje is an independent, non-profit information project, designed to encourage American awareness of the political situation in Burma, particularly the ongoing war in the frontier areas, and related issues of human rights and the narcotics trade.

Project Maje was founded by Edith T. Mirante (Project Director) in June, 1986. It is an ad hoc effort to use information to which the Project Director has special access, to fill the information gap that exists in the United States about Burma and the frontier war. Recognizing the need for fundamental change in Burma, Project Maje set out to distribute information about groups or individuals whose stated purpose is to effect changes that would improve living conditions and insure freedom for all people in Burma and the frontier areas. Project Maje's primary concern is the welfare and safety of civilians in the war zone, and the urgent need for a negotiated end to the long and bitter conflict. Project Maje believes that international awareness of the frontier war may bring about pressure for peace and development in Burma and the frontier areas. Project Maje does not endorse any group involved in Burma's political situation, nor does it endorse any ideology involved. The Project Director is not a member of any of the ethnic groups, organizations or factions involved in Burma's political situation. In founding Project Maje, the Project Director has sought to use the viewpoint of a concerned outsider to gain "the big picture" of causes, effects, and possible solutions to problems in Burma and the frontier areas.

**Funding:** Project Maje has mainly been funded by the Project Director and by loans from the Project Director's family. Some contributions (\$ 5.00 to \$ 50.00) have been accepted in return for copies of Project Maje reports. A contribution from an organization involved in Burma's political situation was returned as it was felt it would compromise Project Maje's independent status. Project Maje's first year budget was approximately \$ 3,000.00. About half of that amount covered expenses for the fact-finding mission; the other

half went for report publishing, postage, and travel to Washington for lobbying.

**Assistance:** The Project Director is entirely responsible for Project Maje and all information distributed. Valuable secretarial and financial assistance has been provided by members of the Project Director's family. A number of academic and other experts have been consulted, but Project Maje has no academic or other outside affiliation. The Project Director's network of sources involved in the Burma political situation has provided information and access to the frontier war zone.

**Projects:** Project Maje is actually a series of projects, such as reports, lobbying, and fact-finding. Projects during June 1986 to May 1987 included:

- Lecture, "On the Frontiers of Burma": lecture with slides, about the ongoing frontier war.
- Report, "Burma Frontier Insurgency": a situation report, intended to acquaint the general reader with issues and background information about the frontier war. Includes bibliography and appendix of news articles.
- Press release, "Chemical Warfare in Burma, U.S. Involvement": mailing intended to draw attention to the U.S. program giving 2,4-D herbicide to the Burmese government, and its inappropriate usage.
- Lobbying: meetings with government representatives, including Congressional staff and State Department officers, in Washington, D.C., and New Jersey; in order to familiarize them with the political situation in Burma and the need for a settlement to the frontier war. The plight of civilians in the war zone, narcotics trade issues, and the inappropriateness of the 2,4-D aid program were discussed.
- Report, "Effects of 2,4-D Herbicide: A Selection of Recent Literature on Toxicity, Safety, Usage and Regulation" (volume 1 plus supplementary volume 2): a compilation of scientific data on 2,4-D for use in assessing its appropriateness for Burma.

- Report, "Information on Health Programs" data on child health programs for use in the frontier war zone, which lacks international aid for civilian health.
- Art exhibit, "The Karen and Shan of the Burma Frontier': paintings depicting frontier peoples.
- Survey and report, "I Am Still Alive' - Report of a Survey on Human Rights Abuse in frontier Areas of Burma, 1983-1986": questionnaire survey sent to sources in the frontier areas, and to observers. Intended to provide international human rights organizations with recent and detailed information.
- \* Letter writing campaigns: an effort to encourage letters of concern about the U.S. program giving 2,4-D herbicide to the Burmese government.
- \* Fact-finding mission to Southeast Asia:

meetings with leaders of insurgent groups, interviews with civilians from the war zone, discussions with observers. Assessment of situation re narcotics trade, military situation, economy, refugees, human rights abuse.

#### PROJECT MAJE

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The word "maje" comes from the Apa Tani tribe of northern Assam. It is their term for Tibetan bells which they venerate. In Eastern thought, the bell symbolizes enlightenment, and its Western meaning is alarm-sounding. Also, in Burmese, "ma-je" means an older sister, who looks after her other siblings.



*Kadaingti enemy camp after being occupied by KNLA lately*



*Men Trainees of Mē Tūrit Vol. Tūg. course at Fatigue work.*



*Women trainees of Mē Tūrit Vol. Tūg. Course at Fatigue work.*



*Trainees of Mē Tūrit Vol. Tūg. class lining up to honour their teachers.*



*Instructors and Trainees of Mergut-Taro weaving school.*



*WNA (WA) Troops taking Heavy Weapons Trg. at KNLA GHQ.*



*WNA (WA) troops at Heavy Weapons Trg. at KNLA HQ.*



*Radio mechanic (centre) with (2) women operators who accompanied the organization team to Bu Tho Township*



*Central KWO leaders at Kawlawulu Peak viewing the beautiful Sabween Valleys*