

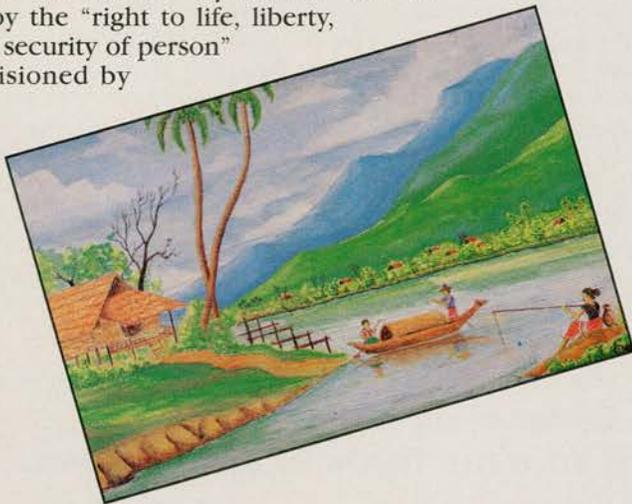
POSTCARDS FROM A REFUGEE CAMP

The drawings on these pages were made by students in the Mae La refugee camp, near the Thai-Burma border, and they were winners in a contest held at the camp in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Some of the drawings make very clear what the children, who are members of the ethnic Karen minority, have suffered at the hands of the Burmese military junta. Others communicate the children's hopes and aspirations and imagine a world in which they will be able to enjoy the "right to life, liberty, and security of person" envisioned by

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Right now, the peaceful world these children dream of seems far away. Since 1962, Burma has been ruled by a military dictatorship, which routinely violates trade union and human rights. In 1990, when Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy overwhelmingly won democratic elections in Burma, they were prevented by the military from assuming leadership of the government. And Aung San Suu Kyi, who subsequently won the Nobel Peace Prize, has been held under virtual house arrest.

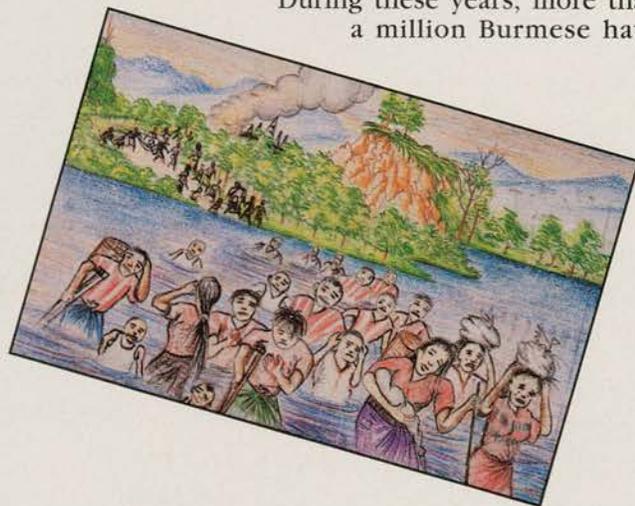
During these years, more than a million Burmese have



Drawn by: **Saw Andy**, Mae La Primary School No. 1

Poem:
Beautiful blue mountain surrounding
The clear, chilly water of Salween
Which set my mind at ease, these are all the inheritance,
Given to me by my ancestors.

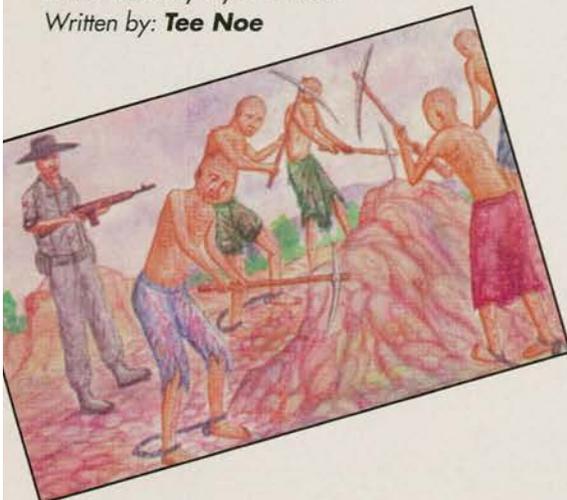
Written by: **Tee Noe**



Drawn by: **Taw Nay Htoo**, Wankha High School

Poem:
The military junta of Burma says,
"Soldiers are saving and protecting people's lives;
They are serving the people."
There is a big mistake.
Are speech and practice going in opposite directions?
Or, perhaps what I see and know are wrong because my vision is different
from yours, junta.
Anyway, one should be wrong, you or me.
With love for the people,
The wrong doer should change what he does.

Written by: **Kyauk Yaing**



Drawn by: **Saw Tin Aung Win**, Mae La FSP (Further Studies Program) School

Poem:
To hold eternal power, the SPDC employs forced labor.
The people are in great trouble because of the brutality of the SPDC military junta.

Written by: **Kyauk Yaing**

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fled across the border into Thailand to escape atrocities committed by the Burmese military and their allies. Some 200,000, mainly members of the Karen and Karenni ethnic minorities, now live in self-governing refugee camps located in Thailand, just over the Burmese border. The refugees face constant dangers and hardship. The children continue to go to school and teachers continue to teach them; but there are frequent military attacks on rice fields, schools, and villages. Last year, one of the camps was destroyed, and a child was killed. On February 19, 1999, several people were injured when Burmese troops shelled the area.

The AFT has a special relationship with the young teachers' union in these camps, the Education Workers' Union, Paan District. In May 1998, AFT Vice President Tom Hobart and Staffer Steve Fleischman visited the refugee camps, bringing computers and money to Karen and Karenni education workers. The teachers proposed using the money for animal husbandry and garden projects; and we have since gotten a letter describing how they and their students have planted vegetable gardens, dug and stocked fish ponds, and started raising ducks, pigs, and chickens.

But we have a chance to do more. The prize-winning drawings reproduced on the previous pages have already been turned into postcards, with the help of the Federation of Trade Unions—Burma and AFT. Each postcard carried information about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in three languages, Burmese, Karen and Karenni; and cards were mailed into Burma and to communities of Burmese exiles around the world.

Now, *American Educator* plans to reissue the postcards for our readers and their friends. The full-color cards will be available in shrink-wrapped packets of eight cards (including the seven shown in this article, plus one additional card). The back of each card will give information about the student who created the picture and the article from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that is depicted. The money from the sale of the cards will go directly to help schools and teachers in the camps.

When you buy one or more packets of cards, you'll be supporting projects that provide food and a future livelihood for Karen and Karenni teachers and students and an education for the children whose lives and futures are uncertain in so many other ways. □

Order a Set of Postcards and Help Burmese Students and Teachers

Please print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work Phone (____) _____

Quantity _____ x \$4/set = _____ Total Cost includes S&H

Send check or money order payable to the AFT.

Clip and mail to:

AFT/Burma Postcards

555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.

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In addition to the postcards, I would also like a free* copy of *Burma, The Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: A Resource Guide for Teachers*.

I decline the postcard offer, but I would like to receive a free* copy of *Burma, The Struggle for Democracy and Freedom: A Resource Guide for Teachers*.

*Free to AFT members; \$5 to non-members.