

## **Federalism and Local Self-Government In Germany Burmese German Dialogue**

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THE CHIN FORUM**

The Burmese German Dialogue was sponsored and organized by the Frederick Ebert Stiftung, and convened with the Burma Project Berlin and the Burma Buero in Koelon (Cologne).

### **My experiences during the meeting and comments**

The participants of the Seminar were (the list as given by the Frederick Ebert Stiftung):

1. U Thein Oo, Justice Minister, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
2. Dr. Vumson, Chinland State Representative
3. Phillip Edward George Smyth, Federal Constitution Drafting Committee
4. Maung Maung, Karenni State Representative
5. Saw Hla Henry, Karen State Representative
6. Maung Maung Lwin, Arakan League for Democracy
7. Mahaw Mung Shawng, Kachin State Representative
8. Khin Maung Win, Burman State Representative
9. Sunthorn Sripanngen, Mon State Representative
10. Nan Htay Htay Win, Women's League of Burma
11. Ratana Thongsaeng, Representative Shan State
12. Yu Zin Moe Than, Women's League of Burma
13. Su Kyaw Win, Women's League of Burma
14. Mi Thaug Lwin, Women's League of Burma
15. Dr. Chao T'zang Yawnghe, Advisor, Federal Constitution Drafting Committee
16. Dr. Lian Hmung Sakhong, Advisor, Federal Constitution Drafting Committee
17. U New Aung, Burma Bureau, Koln e.V.
18. U Ye Myint, Burma Project Berlin e.V

**The first two days November 25th and 26th were held in Berlin with speeches given by:**

1. Roland Feicht, Department for Asia and the Pacific, FES, Bonn
2. Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB)
3. Representative for UN Affairs Dr. Thaug Htun, NCGUB
4. Justice Minister U Thein Oo, NCGUB
5. Harn Yawnghe: Director, Euro-Burma Office, Brussels, Overview: The political situation in Burma in 2002
6. Dr. Lian Sakhong, Dr. Chao T'zang Yawnghe, Senior Advisors, Members of the programme Design Team, National Reconciliation Programme

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Vumson is a Convenor of Working Group (IV) as well as Co-Convenor of Working Group (I) of the Chin Forum. He is the author of *Zo History* and participated German Burmese Constitutional Dialogue. This article is his personal opinion and does not necessarily represent the views of the Chin Forum.

7. Professor Dr. Harald Hofman, Federalism and local autonomy. The German model
8. Dr. Christian Wagner, Experiences in Neighbouring Asian countries with local self-governments
9. Dr. Michael von Hauff: The relevance of social reforms for economic development in Burma
10. Facilitators were Roland Feicht, U Ye Myint, U New Aung, Sabine Guertner (FES)

**November 27:** The third day the participants were shown the German parliament or Bundestag in Berlin with a meeting with the committee for Foreign Affairs of the German Parliament, Federal Government Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, and Public Conference on Burma

**November 28:** Met with Dr. Bernd Scheelen, member of German Parliament, Chairman of the Working Group of Local Governments in SPD party, and Mayor of the city of Krefeld and travel to Bonn.

**November 29:** Visited Museum of Recent German History and Discussion with Frau Guertner on Local Autonomy and Governance and Dr. Beate Bartoldus on the work and goals of the FES

**December 1:** MEETING WITH THE Burmese Community in Koln organized by the Burma Buro: U New Aung, Director Lunch at a Burmese Restaurant: The main topic of discussion: When will be democracy in Burma? Some believe in two years some suggested ten years. Some doubts that with armed rebellion in Burma there could be no democracy in Burma in the near future.

**December 2:** Meeting in Dinat, in Belgium: French speaking community: Local Government.

**December 3:** Meeting in Koekelare: Flemish –Speaking Community Local government.

**December 4:** Return to Berlin and home Comments:

I attended in Manila a constitution seminar where the 1995 National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) Federal Constitution draft was discussed.

The NCUB draft divides the Union of Burma into eight ethnic federal states. It is the wish of the National Democratic Front (NDF). The NDF believes that by making the Burman, who has about two-thirds of the population of Burma, could be made to be equal to other ethnic states. The thought was to make the parliament of the Union of Burma into a bicameral parliament, in which the representatives of the Lower House will be elected from constituencies divided according to the population thickness. This means that as the Burman has about two-third of the population of the Union of Burma, the Burman will have the absolute majority in the lower house of Parliament. The Upper House will be made up of representatives elected from each state equal number of representatives. The NCUB draft suggested that each state is to send four representatives to the Union's parliament. The NDF believes that by doing so the non-Burman states together can block legislation that they do not like. Legislation has to be passed by both houses before it becomes law. This seems reasonable. Is it?

The NCUB constitution draft handed over the winner of the election to the Lower House to build the Union Government. The Burman has a two-third majority in population, which will be translated into the result of the parliamentary elections. Whatever the political party circumstances might be, the winner of a nationwide election will be a party dominated by the Burman. Thus the Union Government will be under a political party dominated by the Burman majority.

This is like giving a blank check to the Burman to run the country. The Burman will run the federal government. It is a repetition of Burman leadership roll for the last fifty years under democracy and military dictatorship.

I thought that the members of the NDF were crying and had taken arms to make their point for federalism for the last fifty years. Once again the 1995 NCUB draft constitution denied the members of the NDF access to power in the Union and have willingly hand over serve the political leadership of the Union.

Even if all the members of parliament of other national states united they could never challenge the Burman majority even if the Burman even split evenly into two parties.

The NCUB 1995 draft does not come close to a federal constitution. There were no clauses to allow the participation of the non-Burman in the Union Government. The draft does not mention about the self-determination so wanted by the non-Burman nationalities in the state and local level.

Adopting the draft constitution will create dissatisfaction among the non-Burman nationalities. Civil war will continue.

Experts on constitutions were hired to look into the draft constitution but there was no warning from these experts the likely outcome of the draft constitution. The experts simply bow to the wish of the drafting committee without really studying the condition and situation of the Union of Burma.

I found the paper presented by Professor Harald Hofman most informative and most useful and should be used in revising the Chin State draft constitution.. For example, the responsibilities of the State government in relation to the local governments is most defined and I appreciate Dr. Hofman's listing of the task of cities and municipalities. We need such an understanding in formulating local and municipalities laws and guidelines.

Dr. Wagner's presentation informed us other federal arrangement in the region. I am most impressed by his analysis of official languages of a federal union. For example in Sri Lanka the Tamil leader had demanded that there should be two official languages for the country. He warned and predicted that if the Sri Lanka's constitution recognized a single official language it would mean a two-country system. A country for the Tamil and a country for the Sinhalese. But the representatives of the Sinhalese majority population decided on a single official language, which lead to a bloody civil war. The ongoing peace accord between the Tamil Tiger and the Sinhalese geared towards a two official languages. I believe that in the Union of Burma this example should be used in finding a solution for the ethnic conflict. Dr. Wagner suggests (conversation outside of the seminar) a three official languages, local, Burmese and English would be an answer whereby the Burman would learn a language of the nationalities other than their own. The knowledge of a language of the nationalities other than their own should be a pre-condition for the appointment of civil service officers of the federal union.

During the question and answer period I raised the question of "How the Union of Burma can restore democracy while civil war is going on? I said that the armed resistance groups are basically working for the Burmese military. The Burmese military had been grooming these non-Burman nationalities' forces. The military controls the sizes of the

resistance groups. Burma's civil unrest (Communist underground movement, Karen, Mon, Pa O, etc rebellion) were used by General Ne Win to increase the Burmese Army. He promised the civilian authorities to solve Burma's problem by military means but he never wanted to wipe out the rebellion.

He kept the rebels alive by attacking them and by giving them a chance to regroup. Thus after ten years at the helm of the Burmese Army he felt strong enough and have enough soldiers to run the country and he took the power. Actually the rise of Ne Win was due to the civil wars where the non-Burman nationalities played a huge roll. As soon as a rebellion started Ne Win knew how to exploit these rebellion for his advantage sometimes by practicing very cruel and inhuman methods to the people although there usually was no reason for them to act that way. It was to make the people angry and with the understanding that some angry youth would join the armed resistance movement thus increasing the rebel armies. Because of the 1988 general uprising of the people and the 1990 election result awakened Ne Win and his henchmen to the realization that they were vulnerable. If the non-Burman rebels had used their strength to take over the power in 1988 when law and order broke down as the BSPP lost control of the mass uprising, the rebels could have easily taken the power had they launch an attack against the Rangoon government. Then the people rejected the military's political party in 1990. Thus we witness cease-fire arrangements to make the armed resistance movement weaker. And the military increased its strength to control the crowd.

The present armed resistance movements are no more than the pets of the military. The resistance armies have no significance or value in the fight for democracy in Burma. Rather they become the pillar of support for the military to hold on to power. The military uses them to justify whatever they are doing against the people. Armed resistance movement by the non-Burman nationalities alone cannot work especially after they split themselves into cease-fire groups and active armed resisters. The non-Burman nationalities are just over thirty percent of the Union's total population. A movement without the participation of the Burman is deemed to fail because of geographical and ethnic factors. These non-Burman national Armies were formed during Parliamentary democracy and they are still fighting not because they have a chance to beat the Burmese military but because it has become a way of life at least for the leaders. This is very dangerous. The whole country is suffering because a few like to continue their way of life.

I am convinced that democracy will come to Burma only when there is peace in Burma. As long as there is armed resistance movement the military will use them to stay in power. Talks such as tri-partite dialogues, are not to be seriously considered. The military has no sincerity for loosing their power. We are wasting our time. The Burmese military has so far no real challenge for them to give up the power. A real political dialogue with the NLD (ASSK) or the armed groups would mean the military would loose its power. Even in democratic countries the power holder fight with all their strength to hold on to power, and the opposition tries harder to grape the power. Why should the military want to loose its power unless seriously challenge? The military have never shown that they were sincere, will they show their sincerity now because the UN wants them to be sincere. They have treated the UN as a Paper Tiger and the military regards the condemnation of their actions such as not honoring the result of the 1990 election, and the human rights abuses by the UN General Assembly every year as a routine matter. They will not realistically change their stand now.

The rebuttals from the delegates were quite negative. "Dr. Vum Son had been saying this for a long time. It must be his private opinion. This is belittling the spirit of the armed resistance movement. "This is the reply made by Dr. Yawng Hwe. (I could not remember the

exact words I hope it is close enough) I was not only belittling the spirit I was saying that the spirit to hold arms against the Burmese military is helping the military and it is counter productive for the democracy movement. I believe that Dr. Wagner had agreed with me when he said "there are some criminal elements".

Professor von Hauff's presentation was most interesting when he compared the GNP of South Korea and Burma. In 1950 South Korea and the Union of Burma had the same per Capita income. While Burma's capita income is about the same as in 1950 South Korea is the fourth largest economy in the world. Burma's lack of progress may be blamed on the military dictatorship, but the blame should also go to those responsible for unrest in the country. The peoples of the Union had listen to their emotion without properly calculating the outcome of their movements.

The Museum of German Modern History in Bonn was very impressive. Most impressive is how Germany lost its territory due to the Second World War. The land of German militarism –Prussia was given to Poland, where Russia took part of Poland. Prussia was so big as a Federal State that they could do anything they wanted without conferring with the other states. The same thing might happen to Federal Burma, if the future constitution allows the Burman to dominate the other states.

According to the draft constitution (1995) there will be eight ethnic states in the Union. As Dr. Yawng Hwe emphasized these are not really ethnic states but territories because there are so many other people in one ethnic state. I believe the worst thing about the constitution draft was making the plains of Burma the Burman State. This was the wish of the NDF. They thought that by making the plains of Burma (Burma proper) the Burman State, the NDF believed that they could vote "no" in the upper house (House of the nationalities) where each state would send an equal number of senators regardless of its size. Most of the lawyers who drafted the constitution were young Burmans. Thus they say it is good, you (the non Burman) can have your eight states but we will rule the country. They wrote in the constitution that the political party-winner of the general election of the lower house, form the government, knowing that the party that win the lower house would be a Burman-political party.

After the 1988 mass uprising, Burmese students realized that the NDF especially KNU were not haters of the Burman as they were told by the military's propoganda. The Karens shared their food and lodging with the student refugees. Then came the elected members of the 1990 election. They were able to form the National Coalition Government. Then many Burmese political parties and organizations sprung up outside of Burma. Anti-Burmese military activists came to Marnaplaw, the capital of the KNU, which eventually became the capital of the Burma's resistance movement. Marnaplaw was in the early 1990s as important as Rangoon. The owner of Marnaplaw, the KNU and the KNU's friends the members of the NDF were treated like big babies by the Burmese pro democracy political activists. The leaders of the NDF especially the KNU were spoiled. By the Burman political activists. They listened to the Karen leaders with respect. That was why no Burman spoke out against the eight ethnic states proposed by the NDF. When it comes to drafting the future constitution of the Union of Burma, no body care to ask what the Burman might want. Do they want federalism? Do they like to divide Burma proper into many states? Nobody asked them. They simply adopted what the NDF wanted.

The NDF was satisfied when the Burman did not opposed the eight state proposal. The NDF did not looked beyond the eight state status. They did not think that the Burman could once again dominate the federal government if the magic word Federalism is entered into the constitution. But surely Burman domination will come if the 1995 draft constitution is

to be adopted for running the affairs of the Union of Burma. U Khin Maung Win, (I might have forgotten his name) one of the authors of the 1995 Federal Constitution of the U of Burma, told me that the Burman want the division of the Burman territory into seven states. At that time I thought, then why the Burman were never ask what they want. To divide Burma Proper into seven sates should benefit the non-Burman nationalities. Instead of having altogether the Burman into one state, the seven states will make the people more receptive to the decisions of the Govt. The Mandalayans, the Peguans etc. will look after their affairs and they would also compete with one another in development and so on.

The big babies were cheated once again as in 1947. This time it happens in their own headquarter and their own constitutional experts fully participating in the drafting of the constitution. The young Burman lawyers drafting the constitution recognized the eight state federal system. The young lawyers tricked the NDF leaders by writing down in the constitution that the Chief Executive Officer or Prime Mister and his government is to be formed by the winning party of the Lower house. Non-Burman nationalities have been saying again and again that Federalism is the answer to the problems in the Union of Burma. Most of them believe that federalism would work like magic and as soon as federalism is introduced they will have all they wanted such as 1. Equality: Equal treatment of ethnically different people, their language, culture, and the recognition of them as equals in political matters. 2, self-determination: every ethnic group want to develop their own economy, language, culture for example they would rule their own people without the interference of the others especially the Burman, who during the last fifty years were the key players in all walks of life and politics. Federalism means the power would rest in the people. There will be local governments where the people are directly participating in running their affairs and state governments. They should be able to write legislation to use and preserve their language, culture and develop their economy. 3. Participation: the non-Burman felt they had not participated in the policy of the country even under parliamentary democracy. They expect that under federalism they would be able to participate in the running of the Union of Burma.

But federalism is no magic. It has to be trimmed to suite the needs of the people. Unless the federal constitution considers all the facts of the diversity the people want, there will be no magic.

For example the 1995 draft constitution did not include any clause that suggested the non- Burman would participate in the Union Government. When I suggested that there should be reserved seats in the government for the non-Burman nationalities, at the constitutional seminar in Delhi in 1998, the secretary of the drafting committee said that seats in the government could not be reserved for non-Burman nationalities because Burma needed to compete in the world.

I am of the opinion that MPs from the eight states should share the ministries. If there are eight ministries, then one minister from each state and if there are sixteen ministries then each state should have two ministers. My suggestions that ministries or departments of the federal government should be run by committees received no attention from the non-Burman as well as the Burman. (I do not mean to say that what I suggested should be written in the constitution, however it might be important to consider as participation could solve problems existing among the different ethnic groups in the Union.)

I also produced a formula how the numbers of the members of parliament in the lower house and the upper house was to follow. This formula would have the end result that the non-Burman nationalities and the Burman split evenly or close to it in the combined parliament and this combined parliament would elect the chief executive of the union. The mathematical formula was published in the Federal Union Journal (No.1) 1997.

Frau Guertner of FES gave us the modern history and function of the German federal system. I always thought the German election system is a very good system. A small party can still be represented in parliament if the small party have no candidate directly elected to parliament. If a party wins more than 5% of the total votes cast, then their members were nominated by the party to be in parliament. However, according to Frau Guertner, this is not always good because the members nominated by the party may not feel that they are representing a certain constituency. I believe this is a very important point to think about.

Meeting with the Burmese community of the area in a Burmese Restaurant in Koeln was an experience. The talk of ethnic difference made many participants exited. When a delegation from the border areas came to Germany usually the delegation comprises non-Burman nationalities. One question asked was: "How would the non-Burman national armies act when democracy is restored in Burma? Another question is "How longer will the military rule?" This was also my question. What kind of women's right would be written into law?

The trip to Belgium: Belgium is a Union of two different people – the French speaking Wallones and the Dutch speaking Flenders. Although there are two different language groups the way how these two language groups are united into one country is exemplary for the Union of Burma.

I believe the organizers of the German-Burmese Dialogue have done a great job for choosing Belgium and the local communities of Dinant (French speaking) and Koekelare (Dutch Speaking), for the study group from the Union of Burma.

In Dinant, a community of just over 8000 people, we found that they run their community with much self-determination as possible. We visited a school, which was transformed, from a Catholic Church. Most remarkable is the school is opened to two and half years old children. Financing and curriculum of the school is from the regional authorities. The local community supports its project through tourism and permits for restaurants and bars were issued by the local authorities. Because many jobs are available to only bilingual people, the people have to learn the Dutch language.

In Koekelare, we learned that the Chief Executive of Belgium has to be fluent in the two languages (condition for becoming the prime minister). Also the cabinet minister has to be fluent in the two languages. Also very noteworthy is out of the sixteen ministries, eight of the ministers come from each region. (When I suggest similar arrangement in the Union of Burma I was laughed at or strongly opposed including learned non-Burman nationalities.) The local government looks after the social welfare, and the welfare of the people. They determine which roads need to be improved. They maintain the environmental protection of their locality and they handle the trash of the locality to their satisfaction. They showed us how they transformed an old brewery to a tourist attraction and made it also to be the office of the mayor of the locality.

A high light of the trip was also the lunch at the Koekelare-Thai Friendship house, where Thai food was served. It seems that the Flemm learn easily French whereas the Wallons have difficulty learning Dutch. The Flemm complained that they do not like to see cabinet ministers of the National Government speaking only in French. Intermarrying between the Flemm and Wallon end up with the family speaking in French.

One of the memorable experiences when Frau Guertner took us to a Fish Restaurant in the Fish Market in Brussels. The food was most most delicious. When I asked Frau Guertnet how much the dinner had cost, she did not tell me. As in all old cities there was no parking place and the driver could not easily find the place. All the frustrations of findinfg the place was compensated by the food. We thank you Frau: Guertner.

Like all conference or seminars the most valuable time are after the meetings and speeches. The discussions usually deal with what we think about the future of Burma. My conversation with Herr Hofman in Berlin: He wanted to know what I think about the situation in Burma. I told him that so long as there is armed rebellion, the Burmese military will use this as an excuse for their cruelty and brutality. Any thing they do against the people they blame the people who oppose them especially those with arms. So I told him when there is peace in Burma there will be democracy. Then Herr Hofman wanted to know what would happen to the Burmese Army. I replied that Burma needs no large army. About fifty thousand soldiers are plenty. We would retire officers above the rank of a major. And then we will send home those who have little training. The rest we will let the UN Peace Keeping force employ them. He seemed to agree.

One evening I was sitting with Dr. Sakhong, Dr. CT Yawng Hwe, Nan Htay Htay, Ye Htut (Phillip Smyth), Mrs Guertner, and Naw Lwin. When it comes to the tri-partite dialogue, I said "How can you believe that the Burmese military would actually discuss future Union politics with the non-Burman armed groups and the NLD? . The military has no challenge and unless there is a real threat to them they will never come to the table with seriousness". Dr. Sakhong told me that I am always so difficult and it is not necessary to participate with them if I do not agree with them. I had argued with Dr. Sakhong in Manila about the 1995 NCUB draft constitution. After the argument I asked him why he should support a constitution that will result in Burmese domination in the future Union Government, he replied that he did not read the draft constitution. I am sure that there must be some misunderstanding also this time.

Dr. Yawng Hwe also said to me if I disagree with them " You can stay home." (Pro-democracy activists could not tolerate freedom of speech and expression?) They asked me if I do not believe in dialogue what method is there for fighting the Burmese military. I replied that we have to use non-violence methods and people's power. The military had been beaten once and that was by means of non-violence. The second time it will be the same. We should practice civil disobedience and total boycott of the Burmese military. For this Dr. Yawng Hwe told me that if ASSK would tell the people to stay away from their work it will have no success and she would be out. We could not expect the civilian state employees to leave their jobs. I told them that we all trust in ASSK and we have promoted her as our leader. However, whereas she said that she was going to fight for democracy by non-violence means we are not listening to her. We should give up our armed struggle and instead we should fight by non-violence means. The media such as Radio Free Asia, DVB, BBC, VOA are available to us and we should be utilizing these possibilities.

Two or three years ago I suggested to Dr. Sein Win the NCGUB Prime Minister that we should make contacts with the people through the media and give instructions how we could proceed mass movements of people's power inside the country. He did not reply directly to me but let me know that the NCGUB was not going to tell the people what to do

Every body disagreed with me (There were those who did not say anything). Nan Htay Htay said that the armed groups are protecting their people and without these armed groups their people would be totally exposed to the Burmese military's brutality and cruelty. Naw Lwin spoke out in support of her. Ye Htut also said that without these armies we could not organize ourselves. It is not good to give up armed struggle. I was speechless to these statements. I know that the KNU controlled perhaps one percent of their population while the majority of their people are wide open for the military. There are over one hundred thousand soldiers of the military in the Karen and Mon areas. How can they suggest that the KNU is protecting their people when the majority of the Karen people are totally under the Burmese military control? The same goes with the Karenni, whom Htay Htay mentioned took arms

after their cease fire arrangements. I recall an interview given by the Karenni in which they said that they took arms again because they could not emotionally control their anger. This is exactly what the Burmese military wanted. They wanted to have continued armed rebellion so that they could extend their rule.

For that Dr. Yawng Hwe said several times dead serious that my basic concept that the Burmese military increases its forces because of the armed groups: was wrong. One of the participant of the group Maung Maung of Karenni State told me that the Burmese military is increasing its presence in the Karenni state . He said that in Bawlake, which is small village, there are three battalions of the Burmese military. And there are twenty-seven battalions of the Burmese army in the Karenni state. The Karenni State population is two hundred thousand. (old estimate) and there are about twenty thousand soldiers. I do not know what Dr. Yawng Hwe was talking about. If the Karenni did not take arms will there be twenty-seven battalions of the Burmese military in the Karenni state? He had said in the meeting that I had be little the spirit of the armed groups. I am not sure whether it is a good spirit because these armed groups really have no meaning in the struggle for democracy except that they rendered it impossible the practice of real non-violence movements inside the country and realistic dialogue. The military accused at one time ASSK to have contact with the armed groups but the military could not show evidence and they stopped pointing their fingers at her.

There were about one hundred Burmese soldiers before the formation of the CNF. Within a few years of the CNF activity the Burmese Army increased its presence in the Chin State to about ten thousand soldiers. If this increase is not due to the presence of armed resistance movement, I do not know. When the Chin Peace Foundation approached the cease-fire department under General Khin Nyunt to negotiate a cease-fire, General Khin Nyunt told them "We do not want to negotiate with the CNF." The CNF has such a little army of 200 men that Khin Nyunt told them that there was no necessity to negotiate. They could do whatever they were doing.

### **Concluding Remarks:**

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has spent a ton of money in support of the restoration of democracy in Burma. However there is nothing we can call a success in the Burmese democracy movement.

I believe there are several reasons for the little success achieved. As I have described above one of the hindrance is the civil war. In fifty years of fighting the non-Burman nationalities have not been able to penetrate into the power center of the Burmese government, both during parliamentary democracy and military dictatorship. This means that although over 30 000 soldiers had been killed, the rebels had nothing to show for their action. The only achievement was perhaps making the Burmese Army a strong army thereby making possible for the commander to take over the power from the civilian government. Without a civil war and peace in Burma, the restoration of democracy would be easier.

The leaders of the pro-democracy movement inside the country lead by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is doing all they can do under the circumstances. But much is to be wish from the activities outside of the country. For example how is it possible that the United State is importing textile and other products worth more than five hundred million dollars from Burma when US imposed trade sanction against Burma? The exile government which is supposed to be the leader of the pro democracy movement sits in the US capital. Is this not the weakness of the exile government?

The National Endowment for Democracy spent tons of money in support of the Burmese pro-democracy movement. Why is programs supported by the NED not being implemented?

What I want to say is: The players of the pro democracy movement are to be blamed for the little or no success of the democracy movement. The method that they have chosen is outdated. When Dr. Sein Win was asked what he would do if the pro democracy would be successful. He replied that he would retire. I feel that this say it all why the pro democracy forces could not topple the military dictatorship because they know only their way of life and do not seek new avenues or methods.

Have we, as Burman activities do enough for our country for the restoration of democracy in our land? It seemed that some participants of the seminar did not come prepared for the seminar. Is it necessary to waste donor's money in the name of democracy movement? We must ask ourselves have I done enough to deserve to be invited to such a seminar, staying in hotels that cost \$240 per night? The cost of food, and the travel are very expensive. We should not participate so that we become tourists but real players in the democracy movement for the U of Burma.

The FES had been so generous to care for the democracy movement. Without the FES and the German people such a seminar would have not been possible. I thank the FES and the German people for their contribution towards Burma's restoration to democracy.

Concerning state, local or federal constitution I believe that consultation with Burmese and non-Burman nationalities and constitutional experts with open mind might be able to produce a constitution that would work.

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