



## **The Chin People Resist SLORC 's Ethnic Cleansing**

*Edith T. Mirante (Project Maje)*

Even from as far away as America, it is obvious that what has been going on in Chin land can be described with the term “ethnic cleansing.” This weighty phrase has come from a war torn region we every night on American television news: the former Yugoslavia. The Serbian regime invented the term to describe its campaigns against first Croats, and now Bosnian Moslems. The Serbs have wished to “clean out” whole areas of their non-Serb ethnic populations, as if those people were a kind of dirt to be erased. They have gone about massacres. Just as occurs in ethnic areas of Burma when the SLORC troops are in occupation.

It appears that the SLORC wishes to “cleanse” mountain areas such as in the Chin State of indigenous villages, and then use the inhabitants as slaves on a variety of projects, including railway lines. Dislocation, separation from food crops, and the effects of slave labour can gradually wear down the people’s will to survive. They become a captive people, then they head towards extinction. The remark of a SLORC general that in the future, if you want to see a Karen, you’ll have to go to a museum, could as easily apply to Burma’s captive Chins. As long as the SLORC’s army continues to take Chin people for slave labour, and otherwise rape, murder and abuse them, the Chin’s very existence is endangered.

The African-American civil rights leader, Malcolm X, stated many times that oppressed people of any race must resist such threat of extinction “by any means necessary.” In case where guerilla warfare is possible that can help protect a threatened people from being slaughtered in entirety. The very existence of a guerrilla force can give hope of safe havens and eventual liberation, event to people whose daily experience of injustice gives them very little hope. Political means, such as non-violent resistance, and especially important, underground organizing and intelligence gathering, are also of vital importance. What is crucial is that all methods should be explored.

While the Chin National Front valiantly wages the struggle against SLORC “Ethnic Cleansing” in the dark nights of the Blue Mountains, another element, the economic war, is ongoing in the United States and other countries. Here, organizations and individuals have come together in a concerted effort to force corporations to withdraw their investments from SLORC. Awareness that the SLORC gets money to buy weapons for ethnic cleansing attacks on indigenous people, from overseas companies, has convinced many activists to call for an end to such ventures. The oil companies have been especially lucrative for SLORC, paying millions of dollars directly to the regime. Texaco and Unocal, from the US, total of France, and premier from England, plus Nippon of

Japan, all are in joint ventures with the SLORC. Demonstrations are held constantly in California, New York, Paris, and other places, to protest the plan by Unocal and total force a gas pipeline through the Mon and Karen homeland in the Taninsarim. Also, some cities and states in America now ban doing government business with those companies involved with the SLORC.

Supporters of the CNF anywhere can participate in this economic campaign the SLORC, by joining the international boycott of Pepsi-Cola. A Burmese businessman with heavy military connections, U. Thein Tun, and his family, runs a joint venture with Pepsi-Cola's America parent company. Pepsi Myanmar does a lot to promote the image of the SLORC through advertising and trade promotion. They deal in barter trade of farm products and it is well know that in Burma the farmers are not free to refuse SLORC's low prices or event confiscation of their crops. Concerned people can write letters to the Pepsi executives in the Burma, India, or elsewhere, because Pepsi dose business with SLORC (the rival company, Coca-Cola, is not in a Burma venture now). The address is: Mr. Wayne Calloway, CEO, PepsiCo, 700 Anderson Hill Rd..., Purchase NY, 10577, USA.

It is through a combination of efforts, large and small, unrelenting, inside and outside of Chinland, that the SLORC can be finally overthrown and the survival of the Chin people can be ensured into the coming millennium.

*(Edith T. Mirante is director of project maje, and independent Burma information project, and author of "Burmese Looking Glass: a human rights adventure".)*