

Mayday Celebration and Basic Trade Union training in Karen state, Burma.

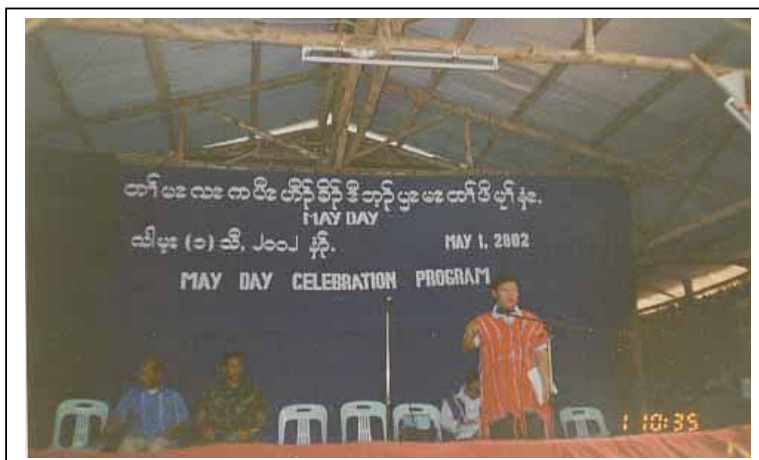
At the end of April, 2002 The Federation of Trade Union-Kawthoolei (FTUK) and the Federation of Trade Union-Burma (FTUB) conducted a short course training on trade union education and May Day celebration in two places of Karen State, Burma.

The first place was in Pa-an district and the second place was in Pa-pun district. In the first place, a joint organizing campaign team of FTUK and FTUB organized trade union short course training for farmers at Mae-plet-wah-kee village in Pa-an district. They educated the workers about trade union knowledge and organized them to participate in the union movement and struggle for their rights.

On May 1, 2002 they joined together with the workers staying around there and celebrated May Day celebration. The people were very happy and enjoyed the celebration, because this was the very first time for the villagers to celebrate May Day in the Karen area. They heard about messages in this celebration which they haven't heard before such as the history of how May Day originated, the International Trade Union movement for Burma, FTUK chairman message, FTUB statement, FTUK statement and they also had the opportunity to participate to express their opinion in a time opened for discussion.

The second place where trade union training and May Day organized was in Kho-kay area in North Pa-pun district(Wegyi on the map). In this training, FTUB representative could not attend for sharing trade union knowledge but only two members of FTUK organized the people and conducted trade union education for the workers and expressed about trade union principles and fundamental activities, FTUK, FTUB activities on union issue and International trade union movement on Burma

On May 1, 2002, they cooperated with the villagers and conducted May Day celebration. The people were very happy and enjoyed the celebration, because it was the first time for them and heard about the messages which they haven't heard before such as May Day original background, International trade union movement on Burma, FTUK Chairman message, FTUB statement, FTUK Statement and they also had an opportunity to participate to express their opinion during a time of discussion.



The General Secretary of the Federation of Trade Unions Kawthoolei FTUK explaining about the history of Mayday.

This high school that had over 300 students was burnt down by the junta's soldiers after the celebration and training.



Saw Dee Dee – TUR HR trainer conducting a session on basic trade union rights / workers rights issues.

Mayday was also celebrated after the training.



Naw Htwe Nge – FTUB conducting the session on Children's Rights and Women's Issues.



Eating together during a break.



The organizer of the Kawthoolei Education Workers Union KEWU speaking about Mayday at Kho Kay village.

This union building was also burnt down.

Attack by the military after the Mayday celebrations

Soon after May Day celebration held in Kho-Kay North PapPun(Wegyi on the map) , on 3.5.2002 troops from SPDC LIB 8, LIB 104 and LIB 434 staged military operation in Kho-Kay area.

The school that taught over 300 students was burnt down.

The Karen Education Workers Union KEWU's coordination office was burnt down

On 6.5.2002, SPDC troops entered into Eu-Tu-Klo village of Kho-Kay area and burnt down one hospital [20 beds], one workshop for the handicapped (set up by Handicapped International HI), one school and other houses. Materials from hospital, handicap workshop and school were moved to another place before SPDC troops entered into that place.

About (500) people from Paw Kar Der IDP (Internally Displaced People) village and Kho-Kay village crossed Salween river and fled into Thailand.

Between 7.5.2002 and 8.5.2002 the troops burnt down (3) civilian places with (27) houses (27 families with 169 people) and around (30) paddy barns (estimate over 1,000 baskets of paddy) in Kho-Kay area. The troops looted all properties of the IDP people and took all domestic animals for their food. Ninety five percent of the IDP population in this area are agricultural workers.

List of Loss from the FTUK

1. Small scale goat farm project (KAWU)
2. A hospital (20) beds.
3. Two primary schools (Kho-Kay and Eu-Tu-Klo).
Kho-Kay school was used by FTUK for training courses and meetings.
4. KEWU president Saw Lah Say's house and other union members' houses.

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