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Myanmar's Police Forces: Coercion, Continuity and Change[1]

ANDREW SELTH

Myanmar's police forces have received little attention over the years, but they have always played a critical role in the country's administration and national security. Since the 1962 military coup, the national police force has been overshadowed by the armed forces, but it has continued to evolve and grow. It is now larger and more powerful than at any time in the country's history, and is considered a key instrument of reform and control by the hybrid civilian-military government which was inaugurated in Naypyidaw in March 2011. This article aims to provide an introduction to this neglected subject. It sketches the historical development of the police as an institution from the beginning of the colonial period to the present day. It then outlines the current structure and organization of the Myanmar Police Force (MPF). This is followed by a discussion of eight broad themes that have characterized policing in Myanmar over the past 185 years. Finally, the article looks at some of the challenges facing the MPF and its likely future under the new government.

Keywords: Myanmar, Burma, police, crime, prisons, security.

> The Police department has always been and will always be one of the most important branches of administration of Burma.
>
> Daw Mya Sein
> *The Administration of Burma (1938)*

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For more than half a century, whenever reference has been made to Myanmar's coercive state apparatus, it has been the armed forces (or *Tatmadaw*) which have immediately sprung to mind.[2] This is hardly surprising. After all, the country boasts the world's most durable military dictatorship. There is another institution, however, that was once even more important and, arguably, is starting to recover its former role in Myanmar's internal affairs. This is the country's national police, currently organized as the Myanmar Police Force (MPF).

Since the coup d'etat in 1962 that brought General Ne Win to power, the armed forces have come to dominate almost every aspect of Myanmar society. In addition, over the past twenty years the *Tatmadaw* has been expanded and modernized. Estimates of its current size vary greatly, from less than 300,000 to more than 500,000.[3] Whatever figure is used, however, it is probably still the second largest armed force in Southeast Asia, after that of Vietnam. For fifty years, it has been the primary coercive arm of Myanmar's central government. Its troops have been deployed not only to combat armed insurgents and narcotics warlords in the countryside, but also to enforce the regime's edicts and crush civil unrest in urban centres. Continued military rule has also been made possible by a powerful intelligence system. Notwithstanding a new constitution in 2008 and the "election" of an apparently reform-minded government in 2010, the armed forces remain the ultimate arbiters of power in Myanmar.[4]

Throughout this period, the police have received little publicity. From time to time, there have been references in Myanmar's state-controlled news media to police campaigns against crime in the cities and police involvement in rural anti-narcotics operations. There have been occasional reports in the local press of police corruption and abuses. Rarely, however, has the force itself excited much attention, either in Myanmar or further afield. There have been a few passing mentions in the academic literature but descriptions in reference books have generally been out of date or inaccurate.[5] Similarly, estimates of the MPF's size have failed to keep pace with its growth.[6] International human rights groups have highlighted the activities of the force's paramilitary units and the role of Special Branch, which have played a part in the detention and interrogation of dissidents. Even then, however, little attention has been paid to the police force as a national institution.

That situation is now changing. Myanmar's police force is gradually being recognized as a large, increasingly powerful and

influential organization that is likely to become a key instrument of reform and control under the hybrid civilian-military government that was formally inaugurated in Naypyidaw in March 2011.

Development and Roles

Over the past 180 years, the size, structure and effectiveness of Myanmar's police forces have varied greatly. Whether they have been under British, Japanese or Myanmar control, however, they have always played an important role in the country's administration and national security.

During the colonial period, the police were essential for British rule. The conquest of Myanmar (then known as Burma) in three wars between 1826 and 1885 was carried out by regular soldiers of the East India Company, British India and the United Kingdom itself.[7] The army also assisted in the "pacification" of Myanmar after the fall of Mandalay, and was called upon to help crush the so-called Saya San rebellion in the 1930s. Yet, it was the province's police forces that were responsible for day-to-day enforcement of colonial rule, maintenance of law and order — as defined by various officials in Rangoon, Calcutta and London — for supporting the civil administration, and protecting the commercial ventures which soon established themselves in Britain's rich new possession. The police were also in the forefront of the colonial regime's attempts to stem the rising tide of nationalism in the early twentieth century.

Thus the Burma Police (BP) was the principal component of the colonial administration's coercive apparatus. Formally instituted in 1861 as a provincial civil or constabulary police force within British India, it was joined by the Burma Military Police (BMP) in 1887, the Railway Police in 1890 and the Rangoon Town Police in 1899. After a review of all British India's police forces in 1891, most executive positions in the BP were filled by members of a new colony-wide service which became known as the Indian Imperial Police.[8] In 1937, when Myanmar formally separated from India and became a colony in its own right, two thirds of the BMP were reconstituted as the Burma Frontier Force. After Myanmar was "pacified", relatively few regular army units had been retained in-country. In 1908, for example, there were 9,486 British and "native" troops stationed in Myanmar.[9] By 1939, the number had declined to 5,000, less than half the strength of the military police force.[10]

To help fulfill its multiple roles, the BP developed an extensive system to gather intelligence, not just on criminal organizations and

unlawful activity but also on local personalities and developments of broader social, political and security interest.[11] In Myanmar, as in India proper and other British colonial dependencies, it became the accepted practice for the civil police force to act as "the eyes and ears of their Government".[12] By 1890, and possibly even earlier, an Intelligence Branch (IB) had been formed within the BP to gather and collate information about the movements of "suspicious strangers", monitor domestic dissent and deal with "cases of a political nature".[13] When a Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) was created in 1906 the IB became part of that organization. Given wide responsibilities, the CIB became a "cornerstone of the surveillance and intelligence function of the government".[14] In 1948, the IB was taken out of the CIB and renamed Special Branch.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, and the British retreat to India in 1942, an indigenous Myanmar police force helped the *Kempeitai* military police enforce compliance with Japanese rule. When Britain reoccupied Myanmar in 1945 it re-established the old civil police force and created two paramilitary forces to help restore law and order. These were the Armed Police and Frontier Constabulary. After Myanmar regained its independence in 1948, the new Burma Police Organization and Union Military Police (UMP) were an integral part of Prime Minister U Nu's grand design to bring peace and prosperity to the country. Faced with serious internal security problems, however, the police struggled to exercise their basic functions. Even before the "Bogyoke" or "caretaker" military government was installed in 1958, they were overshadowed by Myanmar's growing armed forces.

The 1962 military coup saw the effective eclipse of Myanmar's national police force as an independent entity. It continued to exist as a separate institution but answered to the armed forces, which assumed responsibility for all functions of government, including law and order. Some senior police positions were filled by army officers. After a major reorganization in 1964, the renamed People's Police Force (PPF) acquired greater power and formal status. Following a nation-wide pro-democracy uprising in 1988, and severe criticism of the police's performance from both within and outside Myanmar, the newly-installed State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) reorganized the force once again. It still occupied a subordinate role, *vis-à-vis* the army, but by the mid-1990s the revamped and renamed Myanmar Police Force had been elevated to a more important position in Myanmar's domestic affairs.[15]

If the armed forces continue to step back from direct rule, this trend is likely to continue as President Thein Sein's administration in Naypyidaw attempts to change the popular perception of the government and its instruments of power by presenting a more civilian face to the country, and the world.

Such a transition, however, will not be easy. Myanmar's police have never enjoyed a positive image. Before 1942, the force was "viewed with disdain as a lackey of the colonial power".[16] It was the same story under the Japanese who, despite initially being welcomed by Myanmar nationalists, soon came to be viewed as even more oppressive than the British. The widespread perception of the police as inefficient, corrupt and politically partisan was reinforced during the chaotic post-independence period, when U Nu's government was accused of using the force — including the UMP — against its political opponents. After the 1962 coup, the PPF became the willing, albeit junior, partner in an inept and repressive military regime. This position was confirmed in the popular mind by the brutality of the *Lon Htein* riot police before and during the 1988 uprising.[17]

Under the SLORC and, after 1997, its nominal successor the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the MPF still faced serious problems. After a series of administrative and personnel changes, however, it gave the impression of being better organized, better resourced and more professional in the execution of its duties. It is significant that, after a purge of the country's military intelligence apparatus in 2004, the MPF was given greater responsibility for monitoring Myanmar's internal security.[18] For a period, the force even seemed to be gaining a greater level of public respect.[19] Its popular standing suffered another blow in 2007, however, when it helped to crush the civil unrest which erupted that year. Some observers have suggested that a distinction was made by most people in Myanmar between the behaviour of the police and that of the army, with the latter receiving the greatest opprobrium. Even so, the MPF did not come out of that episode well, either domestically or internationally.[20]

Notwithstanding their fluctuating fortunes, Myanmar's police forces have always been much more than merely a symbol or an extension of the central government's judicial authority. In addition to their more traditional responsibilities for crime prevention and detection, and maintaining civil order, they have exercised important paramilitary functions and operated closely with the armed forces of the day. Except for three years or so during the Second World

War, when the Imperial Japanese Army exercised unbridled coercive power, and another period following the 1962 coup, there have always been dedicated armed police units in Myanmar. Since the formation of the BMP in 1887, their duties have ranged from crowd control in the cities and punitive expeditions against rural communities to military-style operations against insurgents.

After the *Tatmadaw* took back direct political power in 1988, the SLORC and SPDC saw the police force not only as a means of maintaining social order and enforcing military rule in Myanmar, but also as an extension of the country's broader national security apparatus, able to perform both internal and external roles. During the so-called "saffron revolution" in 2007, for example, the police — notably the paramilitary security battalions and Special Branch — worked closely with the army, not only to help suppress the demonstrations in the streets but also to identify, arrest and interrogate protesters.[21] The security battalions in particular are seen as an important strategic reserve, available to join with the *Tatmadaw* to defend the country in an emergency.[22]

There is one area, however, in which the police force has stood out from the armed forces, and that is in the level of its international profile and relationships. Unlike the normally secretive and introverted *Tatmadaw*, the MPF has been prepared — up to a point, at least — to share information and details of its organizational structure with outsiders, and to work with foreign countries and international agencies in tackling various aspects of transnational crime. There are only two openly declared police liaison offices in Myanmar — those based in the Australian and United States embassies in Yangon — but the MPF routinely meets and discusses a wide range of policing issues with its counterparts from neighbouring countries, notably China and Thailand. MPF officers have attended police training courses in China.

In addition, Myanmar is a member of INTERPOL, ASEANPOL and a number of United Nations and other international organizations which look at problems such as the narcotics trade, human trafficking and money laundering.[23] While these contacts appear to have resulted in few practical initiatives — most countries preferring bilateral agreements on specific issues — they have nevertheless exposed Myanmar police officers to different perspectives on such issues and permitted them to become familiar with a variety of police operating procedures.[24] The MPF has also attended training courses offered by the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation,

which was established with Australian help in 2004. Most of these courses have been for mixed classes drawn from Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) member states and other regional countries. At least one course, however, has been tailored to the specific needs of the MPF.[25]

Structure and Organization

During the colonial and early post-independence periods, Myanmar's policing roles and capabilities were divided between separate civil and military police forces, supplemented by a number of distinct functional units. During the 1950s, the Burma Police was assisted by "special police reserves" and a bewildering array of militia organizations.[26] After the 1962 coup, however, the Union Military Police (renamed the Union Constabulary by the "caretaker" government) was absorbed into the *Tatmadaw*. All civil police forces, including the separately organized Rangoon Town Police, were consolidated into one centralized police structure. This was to remain the situation until 1974, when widespread labour and student unrest prompted Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) government once again to create a force of paramilitary "riot police".[27] Even then, however, the *Lon Htein* remained within the national police command structure.

The MPF falls within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Home Affairs, currently headed by Myanmar Army Lieutenant General Ko Ko. His last position was as Chief of Bureau of Special Operations 3 in the Defence Ministry. The Minister reports directly to President Thein Sein, and is a member of the National Defence and Security Council which was established under the 2008 Constitution.[28]

Exact numbers are difficult to determine, but the current strength of the MPF is believed to be close to 80,000.[29] This represents an increase of some 8,000 men and women over the past decade.[30] INTERPOL's website states that the MPF's strength is "more than 93,000", and some unofficial estimates range as high as 100,000; these claims, however, are difficult to substantiate.[31] That said, a recruitment programme is underway to increase the MPF's numbers. A special effort is reportedly being made to boost the number of women in the force, which currently stands at less than 2 per cent of the total. The developed country norm is around 25 per cent.[32]

In organizational terms, the MPF has for at least a decade been made up of six separate, but inter-related component parts. These are the national headquarters, the State and Region (formerly Division)

police forces, four special departments, five training centres, up to nineteen police security battalions and several small auxiliary forces.[33] This is in addition to a number of other units and organizations that are either administered by, or in other ways closely connected to, the MPF.

National Headquarters

At national headquarters in Naypyidaw, the MPF is headed by the Chief of Police, who usually holds the rank of Police Major General. The present incumbent is the former Deputy Commander of the Tatmadaw's Yangon Command, (Myanmar Army) Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun.[34] Under him is the Deputy Chief of Police (DCP), who holds the rank of Police Brigadier General. As the MPF's second-in-command, the DCP has responsibility for "the proper command, control and monitor all the Departments of the Myanmar Police Force" (sic).[35] There are six other Police Brigadier Generals in the national headquarters. They manage the General Staff Department, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Special Branch, Adjutant General's Office, Quartermaster-General's Office and Police Battalion Command.

State and Region Police Forces

Under national command, there are now fourteen Region and State Police Forces, matching Myanmar's fourteen regions and states. Under the 2008 constitution, these administrative entities have the same formal status, the difference in nomenclature simply reflecting the 1974 division of the country into seven ethnic Burman-dominated divisions and seven states named after major ethnic minorities.[36] Each is commanded by a Police Colonel, working from the respective State and Region capitals. Generally speaking, the jurisdictions of these forces follow established civil administrative boundaries, as laid down in the 2008 Constitution.[37] Below them are police at the district, township and (in some places) village level. There are currently over 1,200 police stations in the country.[38] These range in size from quite large facilities in densely populated areas to small rural outposts manned by only a few officers.

"Special" Departments and Agencies

There are four "special" departments in the MPF, namely the Criminal Investigation Department, Special Branch, Railways Police and City Development Police Force.

The CID maintains a central Directorate in Naypyidaw and has two regional branches, one in Yangon and another in Mandalay. Both branches are commanded by Police Colonels.[39] In addition, there are small CID detachments under the command of Police Lieutenants in the capitals of all states and regions. Special Branch too has its headquarters in Naypyidaw, with branches in Upper and Lower Myanmar. Officers are also outposted to State and Region capitals.

The Railways Police Force is commanded by a Police Colonel, and is responsible for law and order on trains and in railway-related premises. The City Development Police Force is commanded by a Police Colonel. It appears to have replaced the old Rangoon Town (later City) Police, and has units in Yangon and Mandalay, each commanded by a Police Major. Since Myanmar's seat of government was transferred to Naypyidaw in 2005, there has also been a MPF unit responsible for the national capital, which is technically a Union Territory directly administered by the president.

The MPF is also directly involved in the operation of two important government agencies, the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) and the Department Against Transnational Crime (DATC).

The CCDAC was established in 1976 "in order to eradicate the menace of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances".[40] It was reorganized in December 1997. Its Chairman is the Minister for Home Affairs, but its Secretary is the Chief of Police. The force's Director (Narcotics) acts as Joint Secretary. In addition, the DCP and MPF Chief of Staff attend CCDAC meetings as ordinary committee members. The committee has two Vice Chairmen and 24 Central Committee members. The CCDAC leads all drug enforcement efforts in Myanmar. It oversees 10 sub-committees and coordinates the MPF's 26 Anti-Narcotic Task Forces, which are stationed all over the country.

The DATC was created by the MPF in September 2004, just six months after Myanmar became a state party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.[41] Its activities are also governed by UN Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1276 and 1455, which relate primarily to international terrorism.[42] The Department has a very wide remit, and covers such issues as terrorism, narcotics offenses, arms smuggling, maritime piracy, cyber crime, money laundering and people trafficking.[43] It is often through this department that the MPF maintains contacts with foreign police forces. The DATC is managed by a Police Colonel.

Additional Bodies

Details are difficult to obtain, but the MPF has a specialist counter-terrorist unit, commanded by a Police Colonel. This unit appears to be trained and equipped along the lines of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units found in most Western police forces. It seems to include a number of female police officers.[44] Observers who have witnessed unit training programmes speak highly of its capabilities.[45]

MPF organization charts show three other "Additional Bodies". These are the Border Patrol Police, Sea Patrol Police and Central Institute of Public Training.

The first appears to refer to the "Border Control Force" (abbreviated in the Myanmar language to *Na Sa Kha*). This is a multi-jurisdictional organization which was established in 2001 and reportedly expanded to cover most of Myanmar's major border crossing points.[46] Not to be confused with the later Border Area Trade Directorate (*Na Ka Tha*), it now reportedly operates only along the border with Bangladesh. Little is known about the Sea Patrol Police, but ever since the creation of a River Police force in Lower Burma in 1854 there have been units assigned to patrol Myanmar's many rivers and ports.[47] The Central Institute of Public Training at Phaunggyi provides management courses and ideologically-oriented programmes designed to "keep patriotism alive".[48] It also educates civil servants and others about the MPF's roles and responsibilities.

Training Centres

There are five police training centres in Myanmar. The main facility is the MPF's Central Institute of Police Training, which was opened on a 150-acre site between Mandalay and Maymyo (Pyin Oo Lwin) in 1999. It replaced the old police college in Mandalay. It was anticipated that, after it was completed in 2002, the Institute would have the capacity simultaneously to train 1,800 students in a wide range of courses.[49] In addition, there are Police Training Schools at Taungleyon (in southern Shan State) and Yemathin (near Mandalay). There are also two smaller police training depots. The CID maintains a specialist training centre at Insein township, just outside Yangon.

Police Battalions Command

Since the first *Lon Htein* unit was created in 1974, the MPF has steadily expanded its paramilitary capabilities. While official

publications state that there are 16 security battalions, there are in fact 19. However, three are held in reserve and of the remainder only 15 are currently active.[50] They are commanded by a Police Brigadier General based in Naypyidaw. There are also three Deputy Battalion Commands under Police Colonels in Yangon, Mandalay and Sittwe. Battalion commanders are Police Lieutenant Colonels. The main function of these units is "suppression of uprising, sabotage and riot" (sic).[51] There are seven battalions based in or around Yangon, two in Mandalay Region, two in Arakan State, one in Sagaing Region, two in Pegu Region and one in Mon State.[52] The three reserve battalions are based in Naypyidaw. Each battalion has a formal establishment of 500 personnel, but to date they have only been about 350 strong.[53]

Auxiliary Forces

There are two Auxiliary Forces attached to the MPF's State and Regional police forces. These are the Traffic Unit (or Highway Patrol) under a Police Lieutenant Colonel and the Oil Field (or Oil Refinery) Security Unit. In practice, however, they seem to be little more than paper units made up of State and Region level police officers assigned to these particular duties. From all reports, their areas of jurisdiction are quite restricted, for example on the Yangon-Naypyidaw-Mandalay highway and around the oil refineries at Syriam (Thanlyin).

Colonial Continuities

For almost fifty years, successive military governments pursued a relentless campaign to denigrate the British administration and the various state agencies through which it once exercised control over the Myanmar people. The propaganda produced as part of this campaign covered many diverse issues, but one consistent target for criticism was the colonial police forces, which were characterized as oppressive, inefficient and corrupt.[54] After 1988, the MPF was repeatedly exhorted by senior officials to "stay away from the ideas and views and bureaucratic habits that were popular in the colonial period".[55]

Even so, the MPF still bears a number of similarities to the police forces which developed under the British. This is something that continues to cause concern both in Myanmar and abroad. Indeed, looking at policing in the country since 1826, it is possible to identify eight broad themes that link the past and the present. The first is

the very unsettled — at times even volatile — nature of Myanmar politics and society. The second is the high rate of recorded crime, particularly violent crime. The third is the central government's conflation of law and order with broader internal security issues, and the consequent pressure on the penal system. The fourth is the effective separation of the police from the wider Myanmar population. The fifth is the force's record of low professional standards, corruption and abuse of power. The sixth is the division of the police force into civil and paramilitary arms. The seventh is the inclination of rulers of modern Myanmar, be they British, Japanese or Myanmar, to view the police as a vital part of the country's national security apparatus. This leads in turn to an eighth theme, which is the close relationship that has always existed between the country's police forces and the regular armed forces, notably the army.

Briefly surveyed, these themes can provide a snapshot of policing in modern Myanmar, and how it has changed — or not changed — over the past 185 years.

The state of Myanmar — in its various historical manifestations — has always been deeply fractured, and beset with a wide range of political, ethnic, religious and social tensions. The British colonial regime succeeded in imposing a superficial unity and sense of order, but it added to these underlying problems by precipitating the breakdown of many traditional political, social and cultural structures. Partly as a consequence, British Burma gained the reputation of being the most criminal province in the empire, with the highest incidence of violent crime.[56] These problems were exacerbated by the racial tensions, economic devastation and social dislocation of the Second World War and subsequent civil wars, which almost caused the collapse of the newly independent Union.[57]

Since 1962, the armed forces have imposed a similar kind of unity on Myanmar but the country has been wracked by insurgencies and civil protests, and suffered the depredations of narcotics warlords. The BSPP's failed experiment in socialist autarky caused widespread economic distress. Most Myanmar citizens still live in rural towns and villages, but as the population increased the country began to experience all the usual social problems associated with urbanization. Despite all these developments, successive military governments have claimed a steady decline in civil offenses, in all major categories. At the same time official graphs showing the rate of arrests and convictions remorselessly point upwards.[58] Few statistics in Myanmar, however, can be taken at face value. Most are fabricated for public

consumption and the benefit of the country's rulers. They are also affected by endemic corruption and poor record keeping.

More to the point, it is difficult to know the true crime rate in Myanmar when the government routinely conflates law and order and threats to the peace, in the traditional sense, with the more ambiguous and politically sensitive concept of internal security. To both the British and more recent rulers, any actions which threatened social stability or national unity — as the government defined these terms — constituted serious offences. There are still laws on Myanmar's statute books that date back to the colonial period, when the British created a whole new category of crimes designed to protect the imposed structure of political management and control. During the 1950s, the U Nu government revived many of these internal security and public order laws "that allowed any and all critics of the government and army to be treated as enemies of the state".[59] Since 1962, they have been used by the *Tatmadaw* to punish dissent in Myanmar.

As new laws were introduced, and the police forces became more effective, so the number of people in Myanmar's penal system ballooned.[60] In 1925, a British Commissioner for Prisons noted that British Burma, with a population then of about 13 million, was sending over 20,000 people to prison each year, a ratio of 1:650. This was a rate higher than any other province of British India.[61] In 1940, an official report noted that the daily average number of prisoners held in Myanmar's prisons was 18,206.[62] By 1978, when Myanmar's population was around 35 million, there were over 40,000 convicts in the country, a ratio of 1:875. They were spread between more than 40 overcrowded, unsanitary and poorly maintained prisons and some 50 labour camps.[63] The current number of convicts is unknown, but appears to be at least as high. The state of the country's prisons and jails does not seem to have improved since then.[64]

Under colonial rule there were few political prisoners — at least not before the upsurge of nationalism in the 1920s. The number of such prisoners in Myanmar is currently unknown, with most claims ranging between 600 and 2,200.[65] While some are serving relatively short sentences, others are in jail for 80 years or more, having been charged with provisions under Myanmar's legal code which criminalize a wide range of activities.[66] This is currently demonstrated by the responsibilities exercised by the MPF's Special Branch, which is charged with the detection of "activities of people and political leagues which could ruin the security of the state". Before certain changes were made in 2011, targets included

political parties, religious groups, labour organizations and student associations. The Branch acted against those who "make destructive impediments in order to obstruct stability of the state, community peace and prevalence of law and order (sic)".[67]

Under the British, this system worked partly because those enforcing it, namely the civil police, the military police and, *in extremis*, the army, were essentially separate from the Myanmar population. In criminological terms, they were "strangers policing strangers".[68] Right up to 1948, the BP was commanded almost entirely by European officials. From 1893, there was even a separate institution, the Indian Imperial Police, which recruited personnel directly from Britain with the express purpose of filling the executive ranks of the provincial police forces — hence George Orwell's five years in Burma.[69] The BMP was made up almost entirely of Indians (including Gurkhas) and members of Burma's ethnic minorities, none of whom identified with the ethnic Burman (Bamar) majority. Despite occasional "Burmanization" campaigns, particularly after the turn of the twentieth century, the civil police force was also heavily weighted in favour of "foreigners".

Such racial distinctions disappeared after independence, although the preponderance of ethnic Burman policemen in the BP after that date prompted complaints from members of the Indian community and ethnic minorities, who felt discriminated against. After the 1962 coup, the force was still heavily Burman, but it also developed a sense of exclusiveness and privilege, as policemen were encouraged to see themselves as extensions of the ruling military regime. Many officers became members of the BSPP. Also, policemen were often housed in barracks and tended to socialize only with other police families. Over time, these distinctions began to fade, as the military government became more unpopular and postings were reduced, leaving more policemen to live among their home communities. This tested police loyalties, however, as demonstrated by the appearance of policemen marching with pro-democracy demonstrators in 1988.[70]

Throughout this entire period, the police force's professional standards were generally poor. Indeed, for many years the colonial police force had the reputation of being "the worst and most costly in the world".[71] Its officers tended to be those who failed to get into the more prestigious Indian Civil Service or regular armed forces. Among the lower ranks, education and training levels were low, as were pay scales. As the force's main focus gradually shifted from internal security to civil policing, there was a greater requirement

for more literate and numerate officers. However, recruitment and training programmes failed to match the force's changing needs. Similar problems existed under the BSPP government, which treated the PPF as the poor cousin of the armed forces, denying it both status and resources.

There were honourable exceptions of course, but as a general rule the BP enjoyed a poor reputation. Before 1988, the PPF were widely viewed as "particularly corrupt, officious, and exploitative".[72] Bullying, petty theft, extortion and fraud were considered commonplace. From time to time more serious infractions, such as rape and murder, were exposed. Some officers were even brought to court, but this tended to be more the exception than the rule.[73] These abuses caused widespread resentment, as illustrated by the attacks against police stations, and the murder of twenty or more policemen, by angry mobs during the 1988 uprising. After the SLORC's takeover, the MPF inherited this reputation. An effort has since been made to overcome many of these problems, but the force's culture and image will be difficult to change.

Viewing all manner of crime as a threat to social stability, and thus to the state itself, the British were quick to utilize armed force against offenders. The BMP in particular was used to enforce colonial rule and impose collective punishments on villages deemed to be sources of subversion and unrest. Measures taken were often severe, at times prompting outrage in Britain itself. There was even a special category of "punitive police". BP units were billeted in particular villages, often for lengthy periods and at the villagers' own expense, to prevent acts of overt rebellion and to pre-empt civil disorder. Since 1962, the military government has been prepared to deploy armed police units in the event of serious civil unrest. As seen during disturbances in 1974, 1988 and 2007, should the police prove unable to cope the army is called in, usually with lethal consequences.

Indeed, before 1962, there was often little to distinguish the police from the armed forces. It was often remarked by BMP officers that there were few real differences between them and members of the regular army — which was quick to absorb entire BMP units during the First and Second World Wars. In 1962, the UMP was made part of the *Tatmadaw*. Also, senior positions in the colonial police were often filled by military personnel. In 1958 and 1964 Ne Win transferred army officers into the police force and adjusted its structure to reflect more closely that of the armed forces. After the 1988 uprising these links were further strengthened. A number of

executive and senior positions in the MPF are held by serving or former military officers. Over the years, this practice contributed to close operational links between the police and armed forces, and to a police culture that in some ways mirrored that of the *Tatmadaw*.

This situation is now changing, as the police force itself is changing, but the link remains strong. The official MPF website still describes the force as the "younger brother" of the Myanmar Army, and an integral part of Myanmar's wider "Defence Services".[74]

The police force has always been seen as an armed reserve by the military government, able to support the regular armed forces. Under the concept of "people's war under modern conditions", it is currently envisaged that the armed forces would initially defend Myanmar against an aggressor but, in the event that was not successful, the government would revert to a "total people's defence".[75] This strategy envisages the mobilization of all sectors of Myanmar society, notably the MPF and other disciplined bodies such as the Auxiliary Fire Brigade, but also extending to the Myanmar Red Cross, village militia units, civil servants, non-governmental organizations and mass political parties. Given its national command structure, secure communications links and paramilitary security battalions, the MPF would clearly play a key role in the event of such an emergency.

Many of these themes can be identified, to a greater or lesser degree, in other post-colonial states in Asia and Africa. By accident or design, most retained aspects of their colonial police systems, which newly-independent governments found suited their own purposes, not just for the routine maintenance of law and order but also for the imposition of more rigorous controls over the civilian population. Myanmar's experience has been different, however, in that the armed forces played a dominant role in government from a very early stage and went on to establish the world's most durable military dictatorship. In these circumstances, the relationship between the *Tatmadaw* and the national police force developed its own characteristics. Even so, the MPF is not alone in facing the challenges of transition and modernization.

Classic Contradictions

As a result of these continuities, the MPF today bears a number of striking similarities with the police forces of the colonial, post-independence and Ne Win eras. They have many of the same strengths and weaknesses. They are also supported by many of the same laws. This has both reflected, and contributed to, a shared

dilemma. For, ever since the birth of Myanmar's modern police force in 1861, it has been required to fill two important but potentially quite contradictory roles.

The first has been the preservation of the political order, be it Britain's colonial rule, Japan's military administration, the post-independence democratic system or successive forms of the military dictatorship. During the colonial era, the police took a militaristic, authoritarian approach to law enforcement. Some contemporary scholars have even described Burma before 1948 as being under a kind of permanent martial law.[76] Broadly speaking, this style of policing was maintained under the 1958–60 military caretaker government, and was reinforced by the armed forces after the 1962 coup. As seen in the years since then, the police force — particularly Special Branch and the security battalions — have played a significant role in helping successive military governments detect political dissent, respond to civil unrest and remove from society anyone daring to challenge the existing political order.

The police have thus exercised a role in the country's internal affairs that has gone well beyond the traditional British model which emphasizes an approachable, impartial and accountable style of policing based on minimal force. With any serious challenge to law and order viewed also as a threat to the government, and thus the state, the police have been injected directly into highly charged and often violent disputes with traditionalists, nationalists, communists, ethnic separatists, drug lords and, most recently, pro-democracy activists. While paid lip service, the Western ideal of community policing by consent has repeatedly been set aside in favour of policing through control and coercion.

At the same time, however, Myanmar's police forces have been charged with protecting society from crime and other threats faced by the civil population. This role demands public respect and a high level of trust and cooperation. For, unlike the *Tatmadaw*, which has created a virtual state within the state of Myanmar, lives in special enclaves and usually conducts military operations far from the main areas of settlement, the police live and work among the general population. Even more than civil servants, they are the day-to-day interface between the government and its citizens. For most, the police force marks the entry point into a regime of law. It is thus imperative that the police force feels accountable to the public and conducts itself in a way that properly reflects this community role.

For the past ten years or so, the MPF has commanded more resources and its members have undergone more extensive training. A greater emphasis has been placed on community policing, and on professional and personal discipline. Even so, policemen were still expected to give their loyalty first to the central government. Also, due to persistent problems of low pay, lax discipline, poor leadership and an abiding sense of privilege, abuses were still common. It is widely believed, for example, that most shady businesses in the larger urban centres enjoy some degree of police protection, including at a senior level.[77] Officers reportedly seek positions where they have opportunities to supplement their meagre pay by soliciting bribes.[78] As policemen live and work among the community, their faults are on display for all to see.

Negative views of the MPF have been encouraged by the advent of community journalism and the ubiquity of the electronic media. The international news coverage of the regime's response to the 2007 demonstrations, for example, was picked up via satellite by tens of thousands of viewers in Myanmar itself, almost as events were unfolding.[79] In their distinctive blue uniforms, the police were easy to identify. Dissidents released from jail have also been able to spread stories of brutality and corruption, not just by prison guards but also by MPF officers. This has all reinforced a deep public cynicism, a suspicion of the police force and resentment at its corruption and heavy-handedness.[80] As Errol Mendes has noted, such a situation encourages a lack of respect for the societal institutions that promote the rule of law and the proper functioning of the criminal justice system.[81]

The Future

The MPF's official website states that the force is "always serving the interest of Myanmar People to carry out four objectives with four efficiencies on the basis of five criteria in order to accomplish main tasks and establish integrated institution (sic)".[82] The four stated objectives are "To ensure the rule of law", "Prevalence of peace and tranquillity", "Regional development" and "To serve the public interest". The four "efficiencies" are "Uplift of morality and esprit de corps", "Constant training programme", "Welfare of members" and "Correct administration system". The five criteria are morality, discipline, loyalty, unity and competency.

Given Myanmar's long history of official abuses, broken promises and failed initiatives, it is not surprising that many observers both

within the country and outside it are sceptical that the MPF will be able to live up to these high ideals. Even so, there are some encouraging signs of progress, at both the macro and micro levels.

Since taking office in March 2011, President Thein Sein has made a number of public statements, and promised various changes, that seem to reflect a more open-minded and conciliatory approach to tackling Myanmar's many challenges. For example, he has met with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has expressed herself "happy and satisfied" with his intention to introduce "real positive change".[83] Hundreds of political prisoners have been released and laws changed to permit freer public debate, moves which address, to a certain extent at least, major sticking points with dissidents and foreign governments. Thanks to the 2008 Constitution, the armed forces will formally remain in control of Myanmar, but there now appears to be the possibility of greater personal freedoms, rational economic policies and a more relaxed attitude towards the development of civil society.[84]

These developments have prompted widely varying reactions from among the Myanmar-watching community. A number of respected academics and commentators have taken a strategic view and, with the usual caveats, sought to highlight what they believe is the beginning of a gradual process of political reconciliation and incremental reform. The International Crisis Group has gone even further and issued a report which boldly announces that "major reform is under way" in Myanmar.[85] A hard core of activists and their supporters, however, have dismissed recent developments as part of a massive confidence trick by an entrenched military regime.[86] Citing continued human rights violations, particularly against members of the ethnic communities, some have even called for harsher sanctions against Naypyidaw.

Given the dearth of reliable information about internal developments in Myanmar, and the highly politicized nature of the Myanmar-watching community, this divergence of views is not surprising. As more positive steps have been taken by Naypyidaw, however, an increasing number of observers — and governments — have concluded that something very important is happening in Myanmar.[87] If all these developments indeed herald a new approach to government, there will be significant implications for the role and future management of the country's police force. Even if the latest changes do not meet everyone's high hopes, it still seems to be envisaged that, under the new "multi-party disciplined democracy", the armed forces will spend more time in their barracks, leaving

the police force to take a more prominent role in tackling law and order issues.

Possibly in anticipation of such a development, an effort is being made to expand the MPF's size and capabilities, improve its performance and reform its culture. It appears that a serious attempt is being made to try and grapple with some of its longstanding problems, with a view to creating a more professional and civilianized force. As noted above, the MPF's organizational structure has already become more like those of Western police forces, with greater differentiation between management and operations, and between specialist functions and general duties. There is also a greater emphasis in training courses on a professional approach to community policing. Increasingly, modern technology is being embraced and more specialized instruction is being provided, at all levels. Cadets at the junior commissioned rank must now hold university degrees. In addition, some steps have been taken to deal with corruption and other abuses, and more reforms are promised.[88]

Some skeptics will be hard to convince. For example, there have already been accusations that the increase in the number of security battalions in recent years is an attempt to strengthen the government's coercive apparatus. However, the MPF's greater paramilitary capabilities can also be portrayed as part of a wider programme to civilianize functions that have long been performed — inappropriately — by the armed forces, such as the protection of diplomatic premises.[89] The move is also reportedly to provide a suitably trained and equipped alternative to the army in the event of civil protests — although the latter will always be an option if the disturbances are beyond the MPF's ability to control. As it has expanded, the proportion of the force in the battalions has in fact declined. At present, their personnel only constitute about 6 per cent of the total number.

In considering these issues, it is perhaps worth bearing in mind the difficulties that accompanied the formal separation of Indonesia's national police force (POLRI) from the armed forces (ABRI) in 2000.[90] Disputes arose relating to the police force's formal role, jurisdiction, individual identity and funding.[91] There were even armed clashes as members of the two forces competed for sources of off-budget finance, in particular the spoils of corruption.[92] Myanmar presents a different case, not least because the armed forces remain in control of the country and are thus in a position to dictate terms to the police. However, if the MPF is to develop a new and distinctive civilian character, then its relationship with the Tatmadaw will

have to change. This will not be easy, as power and authority in Myanmar are conceived as finite and limited, but under Thein Sein the process seems to have begun.[93]

It remains to be seen how successful the police reform programme will be. Such a profound cultural shift from a paramilitary mindset to the embrace of community policing will take time. Inevitably, there will be setbacks and some problems will not be easy to resolve. Much will depend on factors that are out of the Police Chief's control. These have a lot to do with developments in Naypyidaw, in particular the continued willingness of the Tatmadaw to relinquish its tight control over Myanmar society and allow the new administration space to introduce a range of new policies. A serious breakdown in public order would strengthen the hand of hard line elements known to oppose change. Even so, the process will bear watching, as it holds out the promise of a more capable and professional police force. This is not only something that has long been desired by the general population, but it will be essential if Myanmar is ever to make an orderly transition to genuine democratic rule.

NOTES

1 An earlier version of this article was published as Andrew Selth, *Burma's Police Forces: Continuities and Contradictions*, Regional Outlook no. 32 (Brisbane: Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, 2011). The author would like to thank all those who offered comments on this working paper.

2 In 1989, the country's name was changed from Burma to Myanmar. In this article, the official name has been used except where it refers to historical names and titles, such as British Burma, or the Burma Police. Quotations and publications have been cited as they originally appeared.

3 Andrew Selth, "Known Knowns and Known Unknowns: Measuring Myanmar's Military Capabilities", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 31, no. 2 (August 2009): 272–95.

4 The new national parliament first met in Naypyidaw on 31 January 2011, but the government was not inaugurated until 30 March, when power was formally transferred from the State Peace and Development Council.

5 See, for example, "Myanmar", *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Southeast Asia*, Issue 28 (Coulsdon: IHS Global Ltd., 2011), pp. 459–60.

6 See, for example, *The Military Balance, 2010* (Routledge, London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010), p. 420.

7 Military operations in Burma were initially conducted by units of the East India Company's own army and, after India became a crown colony in 1858, by units of the British Indian Army. Throughout this entire period, these local forces fought alongside units drawn from the UK-based regular British armed forces.

[8] The name "Indian Imperial Police" was never officially promulgated, but became common after the Beames Committee in 1891 recommended the creation of a colony-wide service able to fill executive ranks in the provincial police forces. By 1907, the IIP was being cited by name in official correspondence. See Percival Griffiths, *To Guard My People: The History of the Indian Police* (London: Ernest Benn, 1971), pp. 96–97, and J.C. Curry, *The Indian Police* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), pp. 53–58.

[9] C.C. Lowis, *Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series: Burma*, vol. 1 (Calcutta: Superintendant of Government Printing, 1908), p. 126.

[10] Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 316.

[11] Alleyne Ireland, *The Province of Burma: A Report Prepared on Behalf of the University of Chicago*, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1907), p. 199.

[12] Dogari, "Security in Colonial Policing", *The Police Journal* 22, no. 3 (July–September 1949): 231.

[13] *Criminal Investigation Department Manual*, Part I (Rangoon: Central Press, 1964), p. 7; and *Report of the Indian Police Commission and Resolution of the Government of India* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1905). See also Griffiths, *To Guard My People*, op. cit., pp. 342–52.

[14] D.A. Campion, "Authority, accountability and representation: The United Provinces police and the dilemmas of the colonial policeman in British India, 1902–39", *Historical Research* 76, no. 192 (May 2003): 225.

[15] After the country was renamed in 1989, the police force's formal title was changed to "The Union of Myanmar People's Police Force". In September 1995, it was changed again, to the "Myanmar Police Force". See "Police Force Renamed", *New Light of Myanmar*, 30 September 1995, <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs3/BPS95-10.pdf>.

[16] Tin Maung Maung Than, "Myanmar: Military in Charge", in *Government and Politics in Southeast Asia*, edited by John Funston (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2001), p. 224.

[17] *Lon Htein* was short for *Lon-chon-hmu Htein-thein Tat-yin*, or "security preservation battalion".

[18] M.B. Pedersen, *Promoting Human Rights in Burma: A Critique of Western Sanctions Policy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), p. 152.

[19] This judgement is based on interviews and personal observations made during periodic visits to Myanmar.

[20] Andrew Selth, "Burma's 'Saffron Revolution' and the Limits of International Influence", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 62, no. 3 (September 2008): 281–97.

[21] See, for example, "Crackdown: Repression of the 2007 Popular Protests in Burma" (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2007), <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/burma1207/>.

[22] *Myanmar Police Force*, <http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/ministry/home/MPFmain.htm>.

[23] See, for example, The Government of the Union of Myanmar, *The Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Law, 2004* (Yangon: Ministry of Home Affairs,

2004). INTERPOL is the International Criminal Police Organisation and ASEANPOL is the National Chiefs of Police Organisation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

[24] Author interview with a senior Thai police official, Canberra, July 2011.

[25] "Myanmar Police Officers Attend Intelligence Program", Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, 17 November 2006, <http://www.jclec.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=127&Itemid=2>.

[26] M.P. Callahan, "The Sinking Schooner: Murder and the State in Independent Burma, 1948–1958", in *Gangsters, Democracy, and the State in Southeast Asia*, edited by C.A. Trocki (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1998), pp. 17–38.

[27] On 2 August 1988, the *Lon Htein* units were renamed "Riot Suppression Battalions", but on 25 August 1988 their name was changed again, this time to the broader and more neutral "People's Police Battalions". In 1989, they became MPF security battalions. See *Myanmar Police History* (Yangon: Ministry of Home Affairs, 1995) (in Burmese).

[28] *Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar* (Naypyidaw: Printing and Publishing Enterprise, 2008), pp. 76 and 166.

[29] Author interview, Canberra, April 2011, and personal communication from Rangoon, July 2011. See also Nwe Nwe Aye and Thet Khaing, "MPF launches anti-crime campaign in Yangon", *Myanmar Times*, 31 October 2005.

[30] Andrew Selth, *Burma's Armed Forces: Power Without Glory* (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2002), p. 309.

[31] See, for example, "Myanmar", *Interpol*, <http://www.interpol.int/Member-countries/Asia-South-Pacific/Myanmar>.

[32] Personal communication from Rangoon, November 2011.

[33] The following section is based on several sources, notably *Myanmar Police Force* (Yangon: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of the Union of Myanmar, 2000, updated 2001 and 2005).

[34] Kyaw Kyaw Tun replaced the long-serving Brigadier Khin Yi in April 2011. See "Brigadier General Kyaw Kyaw Tun appointed Naypyitaw police chief", *Mizzima News*, 1 April 2011, <http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/5105-brigadier-general-kyaw-kyaw-tun-appointed-naypyitaw-police-chief.html>.

[35] *Myanmar Police Force*, 2005, op. cit., p. 2.

[36] The 2008 Constitution lists Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwady), Pegu (Bago), Magwe (Magway), Mandalay, Sagaing, Tenasserim (Tanintharyi) and Rangoon (Yangon) Regions, and Chin, Kachin, Karen (Kayin), Kayah, Mon, Arakan (Rhakine) and Shan States.

[37] Sagaing Region includes one small self-administered zone, while Shan State includes four self-administered zones and one self-administered division.

[38] Personal communication from Rangoon, January 2011.

[39] *Criminal Investigation Department: Organizational Set Up and Responsibilities* (Yangon: Myanmar Police Force, 2000), pp. 4–5.

[40] "Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control", *Myanmar Police Force*, <http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/ministry/home/ccdac.htm>.

41 This convention was adopted by UN General Assembly Resolution 55/25 on 15 November 2000. Myanmar became a state party to the convention on 30 March 2004. See "The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CTOC/index.html#Fulltext>.

42 UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001), "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts", <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/557/43/PDF/N0155743.pdf?OpenElement>; UNSC Resolution 1276 (1999), "On the situation in the Middle East", <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/360/95/PDF/N9936095.pdf?OpenElement>; and UNSC Resolution 1455 (2003), "Threats to international peace and security", <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/214/07/PDF/N0321407.pdf?OpenElement>.

43 *Myanmar Police Force*, 2005, op. cit., p. 9.

44 "Burmese Police Force", *You Tube*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rq4rQ3jlbgw>.

45 Personal communication from Rangoon, January 2011.

46 See, for example, James McAndrew, "From Combat to Karaoke: Burmese Military Intelligence, 1948–2006", thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science of Strategic Intelligence, National Defence Intelligence College, Washington D.C., 2007.

47 Off-shore patrolling has always been conducted by the Myanmar Navy.

48 "Training Activities", Central Institute of Civil Service (Phaunggyi), <http://www.csstb.gov.mm/About%20CSSTB/Central%20Institute%20of%20Civil%20Service%20(Phaung%20Gyi)/details.asp?submenuid=33&id=502>.

49 Personal communication from Rangoon, August 2000.

50 At present, the No. 13 Battalion designation does not appear to be used.

51 *Myanmar Police Force*, 2005, op. cit., pp. 8–9.

52 Personal communication from Rangoon, January 2010. These details are at variance with the information published in *Crackdown*, p. 103. For example, Human Rights Watch claims that there are three battalions in Arakan State and one in Karen State.

53 Activist groups have claimed that battalion manpower levels are boosted to the full complement of 500 whenever there is heightened political tension. See, for example, "Volatile Situation", *Burma Situation Update*, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, March–April 2008, <http://www.ncgub.net/NCGUB/www.ncgub.net/mediagallery/download2707.pdf?mid=20080424191005466>.

54 See, for example, "Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt Accuses Police", *New Light of Myanmar*, 14 March 1994, <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs3/BPS94-03.pdf>.

55 Myanmar Information Committee, Yangon, Information Sheet No. D-3379(1), 15 July 2005, <http://www.myanmar-information.net/infosheet/2005/050715.htm>.

56 J.L. Christian, *Burma and the Japanese Invader* (Bombay: Thacker, 1945), pp. 158–59.

57 In 1948, foreign observers began referring to Burma's central government as the "Rangoon government", to reflect the very limited area over which it was

able to exercise any real authority. See, for example, M.P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 116.

58 See, for example, *Myanmar Police Force*, 2005, op. cit.

59 Callahan, *Making Enemies*, op. cit., p. 222.

60 The words "prison" and "jail" tend to be used interchangeably. Technically speaking, however, jails are smaller establishments run by local administrations for short term prisoners, while prisons are managed by the state for longer term inmates.

61 Ian Brown, "A Commissioner calls: Alexander Paterson and colonial Burma's prisons", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 38, no. 2 (June 2007): 296.

62 Ian Brown, "South East Asia: Reform and the Colonial Prison", in C*ultures of Confinement: A History of the Prison in Africa, Asia and Latin America*, edited by Frank Dikotter and Ian Brown (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p. 232.

63 Tekkatho Than Oo, "A New Work Force Along Pegu Yoma", *Forward* 16, no. 10 (1 July 1978): 6.

64 See, for example, *Cries From Insein: A Report on Conditions for Political Prisoners in Burma's Infamous Insein Prison* (Bangkok: All Burma Students Democratic Front, 1996); and Nan Zing La, *Life in Burma Military Prisons: Memoir of a Pro-Democracy Advocate* (Pittsburgh: Rosedog Books, 2005).

65 Derek Tonkin, "Political Prisoners and Political Correctness", *Myanmar Briefing Note No. 7*, Network Myanmar, 14 October 2011, <http://www.networkmyanmar.org/images/stories/PDF10/mbf-no.7.pdf>. See also "Only 600 Political Prisoners in Burma: President's Adviser", *The Irrawaddy*, 18 October 2011, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22283>.

66 See, for example, "Myanmar", *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/myanmar/report-2011>; and Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (Burma), "Criteria for AAPP's Definition of a Political Prisoner", *Information Release*, 30 September 2011, <http://www.aappb.org/Criteria_for_AAPP-B_definition_of_a_political_prisoner.pdf>.

67 *Myanmar Police Force*, 2005, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

68 R.T. Sigler and D.J. King, "Colonial policing and control of movements for independence", *Policing and Society* 3, no. 1 (1992): 13–22. See also David Killingray, "Guardians of Empire", in *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c.1700–1964*, edited by David Killingray and David Omissi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 11–16.

69 See, for example, Curry, *The Indian Police*, op. cit., pp. 53–58.

70 There is a photograph of members of the People's Railway Police marching in September 1988, in Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (London: White Lotus, 1990), ff.p. 120.

71 Charles Crosthwaite, *The Pacification of Burma* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 25.

72 R.H. Taylor, *The State in Myanmar* (London: Hurst and Company, 2009), p. 452.

[73] Nicholas Cheesman, "Policing Burma", unpublished Background Research Paper no. 2, Canberra, 24 February 2009. See also Asian Legal Resource Centre, "Burma's Cheap Muscle", *Article 2*, vol. 8, no. 1 (13 March 2009), <http://www.article2.org/mainfile.php/0801/343/>.

[74] *Myanmar Police Force*, <http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/ministry/home/MPFmain.htm>.

[75] Maung Aung Myoe, *Building the Tatmadaw: Myanmar Armed Forces Since 1948* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), pp. 33–42.

[76] C.A. Trocki, "Political Structures in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 2, edited by Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 120.

[77] "Burma said to dismiss Rangoon police chief", *BBC Monitoring Service*, East Asia and the Pacific, 7 October 2009.

[78] In 2010, the minimum wage for a policeman was 35,000 kyat (about $35) a month. A commanding officer at a police station received about 180,000 kyat ($180). See "Policeman's Life Isn't Easy, Say Officers", *The Irrawaddy*, 12 July 2010, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=18949>.

[79] See, for example, the 2008 docu-drama "Burma VJ", which graphically depicts community coverage of the "saffron revolution" in 2007, <http://burmavjmovie.com/>.

[80] Callahan, *Making Enemies*, op. cit., p. 223.

[81] E.P. Mendes, "Raising the social capital of policing and nations: how can professional policing and civilian oversight weaken the circle of violence?", in *Democratic Policing and Accountability: Global Perspectives*, by E.P. Mendes et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 17.

[82] *Myanmar Police Force*, <http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/ministry/home/MPFmain.htm>.

[83] "Suu Kyi sees 'positive' change in Burma", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 September 2011, <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/suu-kyi-sees-positive-change-in-burma-20110918-1kfom.html>.

[84] Andrew Selth, "Thein Sein as Myanmar's Gorbachev", *Asia Times Online*, 19 October 2011, <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/MJ19Ae01.html>.

[85] International Crisis Group, "Myanmar: Major Reform Underway", ICG Asia Briefing no. 127, 22 September 2011, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/south-east-asia/burma-myanmar/B127%20Myanmar%20-%20Major%20Reform%20Underway.pdf>.

[86] See, for example, Robert Warshaw, "Keeping Perspective on Developments in Burma", *The Foundry*, 17 October 2011, <http://blog.heritage.org/2011/10/17/keeping-perspective-on-developments-in-burma/>; and Bertil Lintner, "Burmese change aplenty but it's only skin deep", *The Australian*, 17 October 2011, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/burmese-change-aplenty-but-its-only-skin-deep/story-e6frg6ux-1226167961805>.

[87] "Briefing on Burma by Senior Administration Officials", Office of the Press Secretary, The White House, Bali, 18 November 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/18/briefing-burma-senior-administration-officials>.

[88] For example, in January 2011 a number of corrupt senior police officers were arrested at the instigation of the Chief of Police and Bureau of Special Investigation. See "Burma dismisses five division, state police commissioners on graft charges", *BBC Monitoring Service*, East Asia and the Pacific, 27 January 2011.

[89] Personal communication from Rangoon, 7 August 2011.

[90] POLRI stands for *Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia*. ABRI stands for *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*.

[91] See, for example, Adrianus Meliala, "Police as military: Indonesia's experience", *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* 24, no. 3 (2001): 420–31; and David Jensen, "Relations among Security and Law Enforcement Institutions in Indonesia", *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no. 3 (December 2008): 429–54.

[92] See, for example, L.E. Madjiah, "Myriad Problems Mar TNI Relations with the Police", *Jakarta Post*, 5 October 2002, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2002/10/05/myriad-problems-mar-tni-relations-with-police.html>.

[93] David Steinberg, *Turmoil in Burma: Contested Legitimacies in Myanmar* (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2006), p. 37.