

Students called to boycott

Excerpted from *Artest*
by Shannon Gowans & Mary Jane Hamilton.

On November 6, 1992, student associations across Canada will be participating in a boycott against Petro-Canada for its continued transactions with the military government in Myanmar (formerly Burma).

In the past three years, Petro-Canada has spent over \$40 million (U.S.) on oil exploration in Burma.

Petro-Canada justifies this action because other oil companies are doing the same.

Friends of the Rainforest and Canadian Youth Network for Asia-Pacific Solidarity (CYNAPS) are organizing this boycott because of the Burmese military's treatment of its citizens, especially students. Student demonstrations in 1988 resulted in a military coup and a massacre of thousands of protesters. Universities were closed. They have now re-opened

with: newly built walls which allow police to corner students; reduced student numbers for easier control; and teachers who act as spies for "undesirable elements" who may be tortured, enslaved, or executed.

The military regime has never respected the results of the 1990 election in which the National League for Democracy won an overwhelming majority. The Democratic leader, Aung San Suu Kyi (winner of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize), has been



placed under house arrest ever since her electoral victory.

Among other atrocities, thousands of Burmese have been enslaved as porters for the army, and others have been forced to flee to Bangladesh. The military dictatorship receives most of its finances through the world's largest heroin trade. However, they also put heroin addicts in concentration camps.

The Burmese military government has been condemned by the International Council of Jurists as an illegal regime, a criminal enterprise which controls all major business in the country. Other points to ponder:

- Burma has the third fastest rate of deforestation in the world.
- 60% of Burma's budget is spent on defence.
- Burma has purchased \$1.4 billion (U.S.) in arms from China.

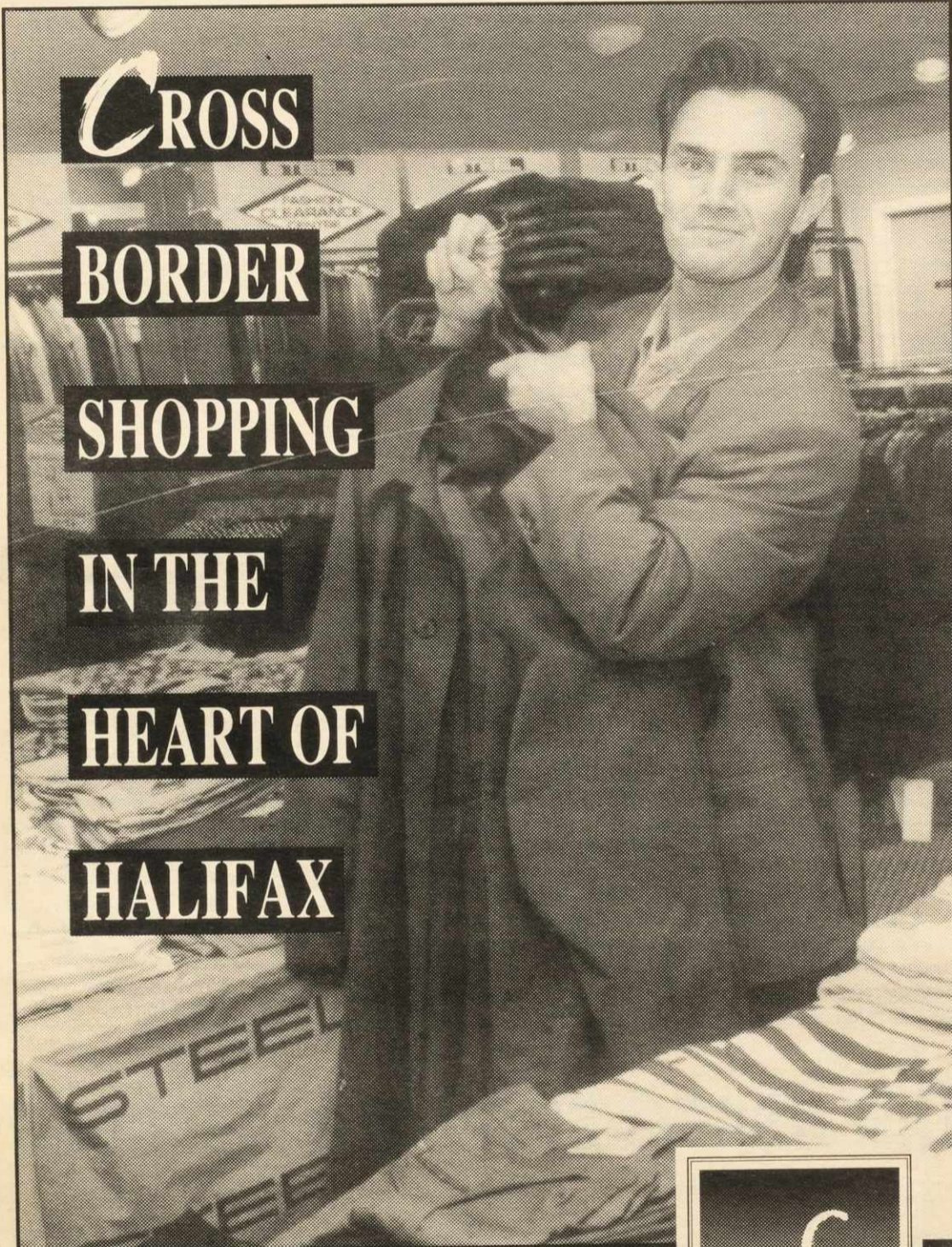
• Kidnapped citizens are forced to walk on land mines or into enemy fire.

• Burma receives 65% of its foreign investment from oil companies.

Petro-Canada is currently renegotiating a three-year exploration contract with Burma. Canadian taxpayers own 80.5% of Petro-Canada but the Canadian government will not interfere because Burma is profitable for oil exploration.

The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) will be debating whether it should join in the boycott at the Council meeting on Sunday, November 1.

You can voice your opinion to Petro-Canada's public affairs director David Hocking at (403) 296-8484 (he accepts collect calls - if not the cost is about 48c/min.).



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