

## Some forgotten history of Burma

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Monks marching, people joining in, soldiers setting up blockades, and protesters getting shot. Recent events in Burma have stirred the international news. Most of the media coverage, if not all, has been about the human right violations by the government, the detention of Aung San Su Kyi, and the lack of democracy in the nation. While all of these are true, no one ever mentions how the military came to power, in which lies the solution to all the problems.

When we had a presentation on campus about the situation in Burma, it attracted a lot of attention. We should be proud that we have a lot of people who care about something happening half the world away. However, the audience seemed to have the preconception of guilty, greedy generals and innocent, selfless monks colliding in the country. But in reality the monks are neither selfless nor innocent.

The essence of Buddhism is quite respectable; however the Buddhism in Burma is just another religion with its own agenda. As long as the needs of the monasteries are satisfied, monks care little about the advancement of the people, which explains why the military rule has lasted so long when both the government and the monasteries preside as the supreme authorities over the country.

The Buddhism in the country is not an institution of thought; it is an institution that demands more goods and services whenever anything bad happens. Donating to the monks better karma and deters unfortunate events. Why is it that people

still fear the government and yet are unable to do much, when Buddhist monasteries are the largest institution next to the military and they educate most of the people? (There exist some monasteries that promote true Buddhism, but by definition they are little heard of.)

While we all should be receptive to reports by popular media, we must assimilate what is reported with care and analysis, especially when it comes to sensitive and always one-sided reports regarding Burma. It seems that anyone who is anti-government about Burma is automatically credible. If one were to look beyond what newspapers have to say and dig a little into the history, the facts will reveal that Buddhism destabilized Burma right after the country gained its independence from Britain in 1948.

In 1950s, Burmese monks wanted to ban non-Buddhist teachings from public schools, make Buddhist lessons a requirement, and declare Buddhism the state religion. When the Prime Minister, U Nu, refused to do so, they harassed the mosques, the churches, and the Hindu temples, destroying buildings and terrorizing people. U Nu, encouraged by other religious leaders, had no choice but to declare Buddhism the state religion. This upset non-Buddhist ethnic groups from the highlands who seceded from the union, setting off all the chaos

which led to the military take over.

There were other circumstances that led to the military coup; however, the Buddhism in the country holds a major responsibility. So before we praise the monks who are taking to the streets, we must understand what their involvement represents, the inability of Burmese people to separate the religion and the state, and how religion is more important than the human rights.

Freedom means the flourishing of Buddhism, not the equality of people. While the monks' protests are the result of the actions by the economically incompetent government advisors, as long as they are involved there will be no real progress. If democracy is forced upon the country, it might very well become a Buddhist regime that oppresses all other religions.

Most importantly, it is the people of Burma whom must be held most accountable, who failed to unite, compromise, and find a resolution for both majority Burmans and the highland people during the final years as a democratic nation.

After all, they form a larger institution, the people, than both military and the monasteries combined. Only Burma's people can bring a change, but everybody else can make a difference by helping them open their eyes, investing in their education, promoting thoughts, not beliefs.

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## Footing the bill for new neighbors

By Reid Cranfill  
STAFF WRITER

It's raining carpetbaggers - it seems everybody and their cousin has decided to move to the Old North State. So far the state and local governments have opened their arms to the influx without regard to the real cost the development has for its citizens.

The population of the Triangle (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill) has grown by over 300,000 since levees on the Containment Area for Relocated Yankees (CARY) were topped seven years ago, and is expected to double in 13 years. That's an entirely new metro area grown up overnight in the Triangle alone.

We've suburbanized the tobacco fields faster than the crop could cure, spent billions in new highways, and continue to fight a constant battle to put up enough schools to handle the surge of new students. As a result of this unchecked growth, the state is continually updating its infrastructure, forcing original taxpaying Carolinians to front an investment for new residents who have yet to pay taxes.

New low-income residents have helped us immeasurably. Our agriculture industry has survived thanks to illegal immigrants and NC's guest worker program, but legal immigrants with well paying jobs have proved a drain on local citizens. They can actually demand the best police protection,

highways, and schools before they even move in, and local and state governments have rushed to provide.

North Carolinians have spent decades pouring vast amounts of money and effort into making our colleges, hospitals, and highways the best. But despite the heavy cost we've put into the state, it seems this investment wasn't meant for us to enjoy.

Prices in areas of high development have gone high enough to even price people out of their own towns. Chapel Hill has become so expensive. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has found that most of the people who work for the University can't even afford to live in Orange County anymore, let alone Chapel Hill proper. It now has to use charter busses to bring in its workforce from other counties.

Meanwhile, Charlotte and Greensboro have become the suburbs of a suburb of a suburb with Atlanta-like traffic. We've grown out, not up, and we've had to build cobwebs of bypasses and beltways like I-540 around Charlotte and Raleigh.

A powerful draw to the state has been the opportunity for families to take advantage of our public universities and the system has had to develop quickly to combat overcrowding. Currently both UNC and NCSU are developing external campuses to handle the growth, at a projected cost of over a billion for N.C. State's Centennial campus alone.

The state university system creates the talent that fuels our continued economic development and represents a source of economic opportunity and advancement for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians who could not afford it otherwise.

Every increase in tuition, every larger class, every class taught by an overworked master's student instead of an overworked professor is a direct threat to the economic future of North Carolina. Worse, it's a betrayal of the investment of billions in public funding millions of Carolinians and local industries have paid for generations to develop their children's futures.

North Carolina's current pattern of development heavily favors the people who will move here five or ten years from now at the expense of its citizens. North Carolina grows in power and influence, but Carolinians are learning a harsh lesson in the difference between economic growth and economic success as our government and developers sell us out.

How can we stop other Americans from seizing economic opportunity at our expense? Secession? A large fence? Could we send a bill to our new neighbor's home states after they move in?

Or do we clean house in Raleigh and start raising taxes in our favor to control development, making it sustainable and fair for local residents who've already paid their dues, and their new neighbor's dues too.

## Conservative group tries to establish campus presence

By Joanna Bernstein  
STAFF WRITER

Forget Gender Equality NOW. Forget Students Against Rape Culture. As a matter of fact, forget The Guilfordian. What this campus needs is groups that focus on strengthening national security, promoting traditional marriage, preventing illegal immigration, and banning abortion.

At least that's what the Leadership Institute thinks.

Based in Washington, D.C., the Leadership Institute is a non-profit, "non-partisan" educational organization that seeks to identify, recruit, train, and place conservatives to fight, of their own volition, on college campuses across the nation.

The Leadership Institute places field representatives in different regions of the country to help students establish their own conservative organizations and conservative student newspapers on campus.

I understand how newspapers may have liberal or conservative slants in their coverage. But if a paper is going to solely cover issues pertinent to their political agenda (whether it be liberal or conservative), then this paper will inherently neglect to cover issues that are not ideologically relevant to their cause.

Now, to be fair, I am not against students organizing to address conservative issues on campus.

But, to have an outside group that aims to promote an exclusive, oppressive political ideology throughout the nation be the root from which these groups stem, perpetuates a system that works to further divide our already divided nation (and campus).

It's no secret. Not here or anywhere else. For the most part, people with similar interests and political views tend to bond together. Thus, we're all sick of hearing about the student/athlete and conservative/liberal student divide at Guilford.

If we want to strengthen this divide, and get so sick of hearing about the divide that people begin to wish they were deaf, then let's greet the fine, "non-partisan" folks from the Leadership Institute with open arms.

If we don't want to see another 100 articles written in this forum section about the divide, then let us conservative and liberal students all come together and tell the Leadership Institute to take a hike.

The path leading up to Founders Hall that literally splits the campus in half and boasts of our core values, also figuratively splits it in half. To the left and slightly up the hill is the Greenleaf Coffee Co-operative. To the far right across the road is the Armfield Athletic Center. Any questions?

Please, let's not form an official conservative student organization and turn this walkway into a wall.

To be fair, if the Leadership Institute wanted to emphasize liberalism on Guilford's campus and have a super leftist campus newspaper, I would be equally opposed to it.

While I would be more likely to join designated liberal organizations, the divide on this campus would still be perpetuated, and those who are sick and tired of Guilford's inherent divide would become even more frustrated.

The Leadership Institute's principles and practices that aim to recruit students to help them fight towards the next conservative revolution sound too similar to those of the United States Army.

And the day that the Leadership Institute and the United States Army set up adjacent tables outside the cafeteria is the day the Founder's walkway turns into a wall.