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A HISTORY OF THE BURMA SOCIALIST PARTY (1930-1964)

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

From

University of Wollongong

By

Kyaw Zaw Win (BA (Q), BA (Hons), MA)

School of History and Politics, Faculty of Arts

July 2008

Certification

I, Kyaw Zaw Win, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of History and Politics, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Kyaw Zaw Win_____

Kyaw Zaw Win
1 July 2008

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Abbreviations and Glossary of Key Burmese Terms

ABPO	All-Burma Peasants' Organisation
ABTUC	All-Burma Trade Union Congress
ABWFL	All-Burma Women's Freedom League
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League
Ahpwechok[1]	Federation
Ayeidawpon[2]	Revolution
AITUC	All-India Trade Union Congress
ARO	Asian Relations Organisation
AS	Bogyoke Aung San
ASC	Asian Socialist Conference
ASM	Asia Socialist Movement
Athin	Association or Organisation
AUMP	Auxiliary Union of Military Police
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBTCL	Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Ltd.
BIA	Burma Independence Army
BRP[3]	Burma Revolutionary Party
BSP	Burma Socialist Party
BSPP	Burma Socialist Program Party
Bama Taw-hlan-hmu	Burma's Revolution
Ba La Ma Sa[4]	Burma Women's Freedom Asiayone
Ba Ta La Sa[5]	Burma Taungthulaithemar (Peasants') Asiayone
Bogyoke	General (usually used of Aung San)
BWPP	Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party
CPB	Communist Party (Burma)
Clean AFPFL	The faction led by U Nu, Thakin Tin and Thakin Kyaw Tun when the AFPFL was split into two
DP	Dictatorship of the Proletariat
DSO	Democratic Students' Organisation
Daw	"Mrs": respectful title for Burmese married women
FTOB	Federation of Trade Organisation (Burma)
GCBA	General Council of Burmese Association
HMG	His/Her Majesty's Government
Hsoshelit Wada	Socialism
ICS	Indian Civil Servant
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INA	India National Army
INC	Indian National Congress

1. Pa Sa Pa La Ahpwechok (AFPFL)= Ah Myo Thar Democracy Ahpwechok (NLD)
2. Saya San's Taungthulaithamar (Peasant's) Ayeidawpon = 1300 (1938-39) Ayeidawpon
3. Also known as the Peoples' Revolutionary Party.
4. Also known as the "All-Burma Women's Freedom League".
5. Also known as the "All-Burma Peasant's Organisation".

IOR	India Office Records
IUSY	International Union of Socialist Youth
Kayars	Ethnic group, also known as Karenni
Keibotai	Civil Defence
KMT	Koumintang
KNDO	Karen National Defence Organisation
Lokaneiban	Paradise = Perfect World, the ultimate aim of Burmese Socialist programs
LUC	Leftist Unity Council
Lanzin	Program (Directive)
Mah	title used in front of the name of Ethnic Karen (like Mr.)
MI	Military Intelligence
Marxist League (ML)	The organisation including those who emphatically believed in the ideology of Karl Marx, "Marxism"
MP	Member of Parliament
NLD	National League for Democracy
NUF	National United Front (in Burmese: ပ မ ည တ)
NW	Ne Win
Nga Pu	Short person (dwarf)
PFP	Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRP	Peoples' Revolutionary Party
PSP	Praja Socialist Party
PVO	Peoples' Volunteer Organisation
Politbureau	The group holding supreme power in CPB
Presidium	The group holding supreme power in BSP
Pha Ta[6] Pa La	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
Pha Sa[7] Pa La	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
Rakhine	Ethnic Arakenese
Red Flag Communist Party	The party led by Thakin Soe that split from the CPB in the 2nd CPB Congress on 20th July, 1945
SEAC	South East Asia Command
SEATO	South-East Asia Treaty Organization
SOE	Special Operation Executive
Sinyethar	Proletariat
SI	Socialist International (Second International)
SLORC	State Law & Order Restoration Council
Stable AFPFL	The BSP group led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein when the AFPFL was split into two
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
Tat (Tatmadaw)	Army
TUCB	Trade Union Congress (Burma)

6. "Ta" means "attack and destroy". It is softer in sense than "Sa".
7. "Sa" means "oppose or be against".

Thakins	"Lords" or "Masters"
Taline	Ethnic Mon
TA & DA	Travel Allowance and Daily Allowance
U	"Mr": respectful title for an older Burmese man
UF	United Front (Vanguard of the Revolution)
UN	United Nations
UHRC	University of Historical Research Commission
Wunthanu	Nationalist
White Flag Communist Party	The core of the CPB, led by Thakin Thein Pe and Thakin Than Tun, that remained after Thakin Soe and his followers split and formed their own Burma Communist Party.
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
YMBA	Young Men’s Buddhist Association
Yebaws	Comrades
Zayat	Rest-House

Acknowledgements

In making my grateful acknowledgments, I wish to start with the persons who encouraged me to finish my MA thesis after I was forced to retire from government service. These are the people who permitted not only me but also others kicked out from government service, to pursue our research; and who agreed to provide academic supervision for my MA thesis. The persons uppermost in my mind who were instrumental to the completion of my MA thesis were: Retired Rector Saya U Saw Hlaing (Taunggyi University); Retired Professor Saya U Tun Aung Chain (History Department, Rangoon University); and Retired Professor Daw Tin Sein (Distance University). If I had not finished my MA, I definitely would not have been able to continue my research and do this dissertation.

While studying for my MA in Rangoon/Yangon, I collected important data by means of interview. I would like to sincerely thank the interviewees for their patiently-given explanations, especially those who were players in the PRP/PFP/BSP: U Aung Than; U Kyaw Myint Lay; Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine; Bo Mya Han; U Ohn Thwin; U Hla Myint; Daw Nan; Former Brigadier Tin Pe and his wife, Daw Thein Saing; U Than (Kyimyindine); Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura); U Chan Thar (ICS); Thakin Soe Myint; Bo Nyo (PVO); and U Ye Gaung (Myawaddi). I also thank Former Brigadier Tin Oo who informed me of the BSP's ideological class which opened in Pegu/Pego for members of the Tatmadaw elite.

Among those to whom I most owe thanks is the family of Baba[1] Thakin Hla Kyway.[2] The personal library of Thakin Hla Kyway contains important primary sources. The family allowed me access to these sources which proved very useful not only for my MA thesis but also for this dissertation. If I could not have got the chance to use this personal library, I would have failed to find the conceptual track necessary for the writing

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1. Baba means "grandfather". Burmese peoples used to call any man whose age was the same as their grandfathers "Baba" or "Ahbha" or "Ahphoe".
2. In fact, my grandfather, U Ko Ko Gyi, and his generation of my family, owed a lot to the family of Thakin Hla Kyway. U Ko Ko Gyi had to give up his wife's dead body and run away when the Japanese military police came to his house to arrest him; allied planes were dropping bombs on the Kyimyindine Township at this time. The family of Thakin Hla Kyway whose house was opposite U Ko Ko Gyi's house, and other neighbours had to arrange the funeral.

of my history of the BSP. The story of how I got permission to use the old politician's library is interesting. As a person who was forced to retire from government service, I found it very difficult to use any reference library especially the National Library[3], Tatmadaw's Archives[4] and the Historical Research Department[5] (HRD) and the Universities Central Library (UCL). I spoke out about my difficult situation in front of the eldest daughter of the late Thakin Hla Kyway and so, she gave me permission to use her late father's library. Also, I would like to say many thanks to Saya Dr Andrew Wells, Saya Dr Adrian Vickers and Saya Dr Ben Maddison, (all of the School of History and Politics, University of Wollongong, Australia) for the opportunity to work at the IISG Archive, Amsterdam, a rich source of material about the Asian socialist movements, especially about the Burmese social democrats. Without this opportunity, I would have had no access to primary documents concerning the role of the BSP in the Asian socialist movements.

I also thank the History Department, University of Wollongong for accepting my thesis proposal in 1995 while I was in Singapore. Unfortunately, I could not commence work on the thesis at that time because of my financial situation. I had been punished by the Government of Singapore for visa-overstay, and then I went back to my country. I need to give many thanks to the people from the Australian Embassy, Thailand, who helped me obtain an Australian visa. There were also many persons—Daw Yee Yee Thant, Mr Zarman, U Thaung Htway, Tun Tun Oo, Ko Aung Than, U Thein Oo, Saw Ne Win, Myint Swe, Ko Than Aye, Ko Aung Moe Win, Ko Thar Nyunt Oo & Ma Ingyin, Ko Phoe Khwar, Ko Myo Thant—who helped me while I was waiting in Thailand for my visa.

I give my deepest thanks to Retired Professor Daw Ohn Kyi who arranged, through my wife (her MA student), to get a reference for me from Retired Professor the late Saya Dr Than Tun. I thank Saya Dr Than Tun who gave me a reference to study overseas,

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3. A staff member of the National Library told me to fill in the relevant application form and they would let me know when I could use the library but they didn't contact me.
4. While I was doing my MA thesis, I obtained use of the Tatmadaw's Archives with the help of my friend. I got very little from it that was of use and the responsible person said that there was no more material relevant to my research.
5. The Historical Research Department (HRD) is situated in Amara Hall, Rangoon University. While I was doing my MA thesis, I applied to use the library while my two friends were using it but I was not approved and my two friends also were stopped from using it.

although I was a person expelled from government service. He also guided me in writing this thesis by sharing with me his knowledge of the Indian situation.

Five persons I shall never forget are Ko Khin Maung Lwin and Dr. Alan Smith who helped me obtain sponsorship to Australia from my angel Esteemed Mrs. Amanda Zappia. Mrs Zappia opened the door to Australia for me, bringing me very close to the doors of the University of Wollongong. If I could not arrive in Sydney, I would not have had the chance to study at my University. I was warmly welcomed by Ko Soe Lwin and Hon. Janelle Saffin (now a Federal MP of ruling Australian Labour government) and her family who arranged for me to stay with them when I first arrived in Sydney. I received a warm reception from my sponsor, Mrs. Amanda Zappia, when she came back from New York. Therefore, I have concluded that the two esteemed ladies, Mrs. Amanda Zappia and Hon. Janelle Saffin, have been ordained by Buddha to be my two angelic sisters.

My first English teacher was Miss Maree from the Languages Department of the University of New South Wales, who taught me not only the English language but also Australian ways of life. I also got much advice from Dr Jean Taylor (UNSW) about how to approach learning in Australian universities. While I was trying to pass the IELTS exam and to get entrance to Australian universities, the person who gave me the most encouragement was Saya Dr Thann Naing; he gave me a lot of moral support. I am also grateful to Saya Dr Michael Aung Thwin who advised me about the conceptual direction of my studies. I also thank Dr Daw Hla Kyaw Zaw and Sayama Daw San Kyaw Zaw who gave moral support to me when I started my study.

While I was studying in the History Department, UoW, I was warmly welcomed by my esteemed professors, Saya Dr Andrew Wells, Saya Dr Adrian Vickers and Saya Dr Ben Maddison, who treated me and my work very sympathetically even though I was not a good student. I owe these three teachers a lot. They enabled me to receive a scholarship. They arranged for me to travel to India, Amsterdam and London to investigate primary sources, and organised a second trip for me to participate in the Burma/Myanmar Conference in Sweden in 2002. Another two persons I should say many thanks to, concerning my attendance of the conference in Sweden, are Dr. Daw Khin Ni Ni Thein and Dr. Gustaaf Houtman.

I would like to express my thanks to two former Ambassadors for Burma/Myanmar- Mr Treavor Wilson (Australian Ambassador) who gave me a chance to participate in ANU Conference, and Miss Vicky Bowman (British Ambassador).

I would like to thank especially those who helped me during the trip to India, Amsterdam and London. In relation to the trip to India, I will never forget the help of Retd. Col. Narinder K. Chaudhary who gave me a rest at his house for a night and one morning although we had only met on the plane; of Professor Dr N. Chandoke (Head of the Political Science Department, University of Delhi) who arranged for me to stay at the Guest House of the university; of Shri R.P Kashyap a senior staff member of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (New Delhi) who willingly gave me assistance. Regarding the trip to IISG (Amsterdam), I would like to mention with special thanks Saya Dr Andrew Wells and Saya Dr Adrian Vickers for their instructions for gaining access to primary sources from the IISG but also for the arrangements they made for my stay at a guesthouse. During my work at the IISG Library, I got a lot of help from Mr Eef Vermeij, Dr Emile Schwidder, Prof. Willem van Schendel, Miss Willeke Tijssen (Librarian) and Miss M. IJzermans (Librarian). I also want to express my thanks to U Thaung Htway and his Burmese friends who assisted me one Sunday to study the ways of life of rural Holland.

Regarding my trip to London, I must thank Saya U Kyaw Zan Thar (BBC, Burmese Section) and his wife; my brother Thurein Kyaw Zaw who shared his room with me without accepting money; and Saya Dr Aung Khin. All these people warmly welcomed me and made arrangements for me while I was in London. I was warmly received by Dr Michael W Charney and given advice by Patricia M Herbert (Vice-Chair, Prospect Burma). Daw San San May (Curator, Burmese Section) kindly helped me to search for Burmese primary sources in the British Library. I am grateful for the hospitable reception by Saya Dr Robert H. Taylor who had always replied to my many emailed questions and, while I was researching sources at the SOAS (London) Library, instantly replied to me when I asked him to expand on points he makes in his writings.

I must acknowledge all the persons who had social dealings with my family while I was writing my thesis. In particular, I thank two esteemed ladies, Jeanne Robson (Manager, Petersham Op Shop, Baptist Community Services) and Motra Hayward who

took care of my family as relatives. Other persons living in Sydney I need to mention with thanks are Myawaddi U Ye Gaung, Saya Dr Chit Swe (Former Rector from Rangoon University), Dr Myo Nyunt, Anty Phyone, U Ohn Khine, U Khin Oo, Saya U Ye Win, U Terrell Oung (SBS), Saya U Htway, Saya Sonny Ko Ko Gyi, Paw Lwin Oo, Ko Thein Htaik (Computer), Ko Tin Myint, Ko Win Maung, U Tint Zaw, U Thet Htay alias Alex Lo, Ko Than Htut, Kevin Moe (IT) and Rev Lin Yaung Khin. I also thank the staff of Coles Supermarket (Lindfield) especially Mr Bred KC (Grocery Manager) because he understood my nature while I was working part-time, before I received the scholarship from my University. I also thank the YWCA Hotel for employing me as a laundry attendant, enabling me to support my family while I was finalising my thesis. I must express my thanks to U Win Khet who served in the NLD as member of the CC and his family, especially Ko Nyi Nyi Lwin and Ma Myint Myint Moe, for permission to use his library.

I was granted a scholarship for my thesis writing from the University of Wollongong. I also received funding from the Open Society Institute's Burma Project and the Prospect Burma. Therefore, I owe many thanks to these two institutions. I also need to thank my three professors, Saya Dr Andrew Wells, Saya Dr Adrian Vickers, and Saya Dr Ben Maddison for the parts they played in the granting of my UoW scholarship. I also thank Mrs Robinson Foster who made all necessary arrangements when I went to the Gothernberg Conference. The help given to me by members of the Library (UoW) should not be forgotten; I thank them, especially Miss Susan Jones who guided me in the use of library resources.

Without the editing work undertaken by esteemed lady Mrs Julie Marlow, who might be ordained by Buddha as another angel, the English in which the original thesis was expressed would not have reached an adequate standard. So, I give many thanks to Mrs Julie Marlow who battled with my bloody English writings and word repetition.

After the first examination of my thesis, I was required to make major revisions under the supervision of my esteemed Professor Dr Andrew Wells and Sayamagyi Professor Dr Diana Kelly who put into my mind a lot of theories and showed me the way to write the history of the BSP in a comparison with the histories of the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI). I also thank for Saya Dr

Andrew Wells and Sayamagyi who arranged for a silent room to do for my revision-works. Besides, I would like to give my thanks to Mrs Nimet Kurtmen (Mission Australia) who understands the nature of study demands on a postgraduate student while I was receiving Newstart Allowance from Centrelink.

Finally, I have many thanks for my mother Daw Kyi Kyi Khin and for my father U Khin Maung Win who is now paralysed and bed-ridden. I am also thankful to my sisters and youngest brother: Thet Mar Win, Cho Mar Win, Mo Mo Win, Naing Mar Win and Kyaw Swar Win for not complaining when I could not financially support them although I am the eldest in my family. I would like to give many thanks to my wife, Daw Ni Ni Aung, and my daughters, Thu Thu and Aye Aye Win, for their patience with me, although I am the father of the family. While I was halfway through my thesis, my second daughter was stillborn in Sydney. I send a lot of thanks to my friends, Stanley Chit while we were class-mates at No (2) High School Kamayut (St. Augustine School), Rangoon, and Motra Hayward, for coming to the funeral ceremony of this daughter.

Abstract

This dissertation seeks to demonstrate the legacy and historical significance of the Burma Socialist Party (BSP), and so, to solve major puzzles for scholars of Burmese history, particularly with regard to how the links between civilian and military groups in politics in Burma came about. Thus, this thesis addresses a major gap in the current historical literature, which has tended to underplay or ignore the role of the BSP. In so doing this work draws a wide range of interviews, archives and hitherto unused research sources, as well as the historical analyses in English and Burmese contribute.

The thesis begins by examining the historical and cultural antecedents of the BSP. The party was formed as a major element of Burma's independence movement, which developed from a core group of nationalist leaders. Among these leaders were founders and key members of the future BSP. The Peoples' Revolutionary Party (PRP), the pre-war version of the BSP, emerged in the struggle for independence and played a key role in that struggle as a core group around which the future state was founded. After the War, the BSP came out as separate party to compete with the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). The Tatmadaw played a key role in this process, and thus the process itself was a crucial turning point in Burma's history.

The BSP was the main political party after Burma's independence in 1948. This situation can be seen through looking at the way the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL) operated as the umbrella of the BSP. The BSP shaped domestic and foreign policies in the period 1948-58, and provided the basis of various forms of government, even at times of internal division. It was in these circumstances that the military aspect of Burmese politics became important. Careful examination of the sources dealing with the major political influences of the post-independence period shows that the Burmese military took their ideas from the BSP and launched their bid for power by taking over from the BSP.

Introduction

Why, in the period after the fall of the Soviet Empire, should I write a dissertation on the Burma Socialist Party (BSP)? The end of the USSR coincided with the dissolution of the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP), a party which had been formed on 4 July 1962 and whose rule had lasted from 1962 to 1988. In its initial form the BSPP was a Revolutionary Council (RC) led by progressive military minds who had staged a coup. That reflected earlier preparation for a socialist program after 1958 to transform the state from a parliamentary to a socialist system. The BSPP had links to the BSP, which evolved between 1945 and 1964, and which had existed in earlier forms since 1939. Such links have rarely been made public. This thesis will fill the gaps in the Burmese literature on the subject, but more than this, the historiography appears to have important omissions and distortions. The gaps in the literature highlight the importance of the central question of this thesis: "To what extent has the BSP been the central force in modern Burma/Myanmar history".

In order to answer this question, I will first describe how I researched this topic because it shows the links between personal experience and the uses of existing scholarship. Next, I will look at the early history of the BSP, identifying key personnel, and their influence and memories. This leads into an evaluation and discussion of the English language scholarly literature on the history of politics in Burma/Myanmar. I then discuss which methods were used in this thesis. Finally, I provide an outline of the thesis as a whole, briefly describing each chapter.

The importance of addressing these historical gaps and central argument the thesis makes is related to the advantages of writing this thesis in Australia. I have previously worked in the History Department of Rangoon University and of Taunggyi Degree College from 1986 to 1991 as a Tutor. This teaching job was abolished because of my participation in the 1988 democracy movement.[1] In 1993, I completed

1. The 1988 democracy movement was initiated by the students' movement. Amongst the causes of the movement was the peoples' suffering, a result of the BSPP government's de-monetisation of large currency notes in September 1987. The students' movement began in March 1988 at the Rangoon Institute of Technology, and then spread to other campuses in June, leading to the closing of all universities. In August, there was a general strike not only in Rangoon but also in other cities. Consequently, there were leadership changes in the ruling BSPP and eventually, General Saw Maung seized power in September 1988. As a result of military and police actions against students' and workers' demonstrations, many people were killed during this period. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi viewed the peoples' demonstrations at night as wrong. The event happened in 1988, therefore, was known as

my Master thesis on *The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, the party that preceded the BSP. I was fortunate, in that family connections allowed me to gain access to special sources for my research. The former BSP Chairman, U Ko Ko Gyi, was my grandfather, and U Hla Mon, a Senior Tutor from the History Department at Rangoon University, my grandfather's cousin, had worked as his personal bodyguard. The impetus to research the BSP came from U Hla Mon's many stories about his experiences as bodyguard.

When U Ko Ko Gyi died on 5 August 1992, his obituary notice in Burma's two newspapers, "Myanmarahlin" (မြန်မာ့အလင်း), and the *Working Peoples' Daily*, was censored. Why was he the subject of so much high-level attention? Was the attempt to omit him from history related to General Ne Win's legacy, or an attempt to suppress any mention of the BSP because of its former members' involvement in the National League for Democracy (NLD)? There were many ex-members of the BSP of 1948-1964 in the NLD, including U Aung Shwe (ex-army who became NLD chairman), Thakin Soe Myint, U Hla Pe, U Than Tun and the late U Chit Khine (ex-army). Or was this part of a post-Cold War attempt to remove any mention of socialism from the public face of Burma? It was clear to me from this sensitivity just how important the history of the BSP was to an understanding of the current situation in Burma. Both the opposition and the Tatmadaw government consider it necessary to advocate National Reconciliation (as it is called by the Opposition) or National Reconsolidation (the term preferred by the Government) in the current unfinished approach to exercising state power. A common ground in the approach of both sides can be found in the roles played by civilians and the military in the freedom movement of the first part of the twentieth century.

Literature on the Subject

There is a wide literature on the history of politics in Burma but as with other postcolonial literatures, it excludes important elements and does not draw important conclusions. The weakness of much of the current literature about the BSP is that it is based on secondary sources and the views of outsiders. Only if one understands the nucleus of Socialists' participation in the nationalist movement and subsequently the

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"Democracy movement" or "Democracy Ayeidawpon (revolution)". See for example, the Ex-President of Burma/Myanmar Dr Maung Maung in his last work, titled the event as "1988 Uprising in Burma". See also the 1988 democracy movement of Burma in Vince Boudreau, *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

parliamentary system of Burma, can one clearly understands the characteristics of Burmese politics in the later phase of the Socialist revolutionary struggle over three decades, and current competition over state power between the ruling military government and civilian groups. That is a central conclusion of this thesis. Some scholars may argue that the BSP was only incidental to Burmese history. On the other hand, there is also significant evidence suggesting an alternative view, and that is what I aim to investigate here.

A political party is defined generally as an organization, an association, a group, a type of social relationship. Maurice Duverger defined a party as "a community with a particular purpose" . Yet he elaborated that a political party is "…not a community but a collection of communities…".[2] In fact, the meaning of "a collection of communities" is not a comprehensive statement of the basis of a political party. In every society with a state, there is a variety of communities which are not directly associated with political power but only with the affairs of that community, such as a religious group. Therefore, a political party is a group of leading individuals and members who share common aims, principles and ideology, whose intention is to improve the welfare of all who are live in the state or of specific members, linked directly or indirectly to exercising state power. In other words, the aim of a political party is to attain political power directly or indirectly, in order that it can implement its objectives within society, according to the local environmental and international circumstances.

The general function of parties is to be the representatives or brokers, for the collective membership, a mixture of society; to unite the people, the cautious response, the convincing acts, the repressive moods, the selection of leaders, the policy-makers, a representation of the government.[3] Some parties persuade the masses to directly seize state power but some do not. There is a bi-party system in Britain or the United States and people living in Australia usually concentrate on two parties- the Labor Party and Liberal Party although there is potential for a multi-party system. Burma's two neighbouring countries exhibit different systems. In the east is China with a single party system controlled by the Chinese Communist Party since

2. Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, London, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1964, p. xv, p.17.
3. Roy C. Macridis, *Political Parties: Contemporary Trends and Ideas*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967, p.17.

1949, to the west, the Indian party system has been dominated by the Indian National Congress (INC) since 1885.

Burma was incorporated into the British-India Empire in 1886 after waging three Anglo-Burmese Wars. However, the INC in its early years was against the annexation of upper Burma. [4] There was native resistance to alien rule after the annexation of the whole of Burma. One source reveals that there were altogether ninety-six parties, organisations, groups and fronts in the development of the Burmese party system from 1906 to 1962.[5] This number includes both legal and illegal parties and organizations which emerged at that period. However, another source assessed the Burmese party movements for the period of 1950-1962 focussing on four parties, based on activities around the "government of nation-states".[6] The second study took the approach that a party can be defined by how it evolved to representations of government organised within the state. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the start of a 'national ray' began with the appearance of religious organisations such as the Young Men's Buddhist Association (1906) in Burma like the *Budi Utomo* (1908) in Indonesia.

Like the Indonesian *Sarekat Islam* (1912), the Burmese national political organisation took a western form; with a chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and EC members. The General Council of Burmese Associations (GCBA) emerged in 1919.[7] In the 1920s, the distinguished political groups accepting the British Constitutional reform of 1923 were the *Golden Valley Group* led by Sir Maung Gyi and the *Twenty-one Party* led by U Ba Pe. On the other hand, the groups against the reform were the Party led by U Pu who later became Premier in 1939, U Paw Tun's Party in which Dr Ba Maw (who later cooperated with Thakins group in 1930s) was involved, U Chit

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4. Basudeo Sharma & Miss Manju Jain, "The Rise and Growth of the Indian National Congress: Ram Pande, *Congress 100 Years*, Jaipur: Jaipur Publishing House, 1985, pp.26-30; M. V. Ramana Rao, *A Short History of The Indian National Congress*, Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1959, p.8. The first Indian National Congress was held from 28 to 30 December 1885 in Bombay in which one of its nine resolutions was that "protest against the annexation of upper Burma".
5. Robert H. Taylor, "Burma": Haruhiro Fukui (Editor-in-Chief), *Political Parties Of Asia and the Pacific*, Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985, pp.99-154. It was noted about ninety-nine parties, organisations and fronts varied from political, unity, ethnicity, religion and socio-politics. He presented not only legal but also illegal parties, but he did not count mass organizations. However, I excluded of three parties which were emerged only after formation of the BSPP (1962).
6. Kenneth Janda, *A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Political Parties*, California: Sage Publications, 1970, p.118: Appendix.
7. Pauker, "The Role of Political Organisations in Indonesia", pp.129-142.

Hlaing's Party and the Party led by U Soe Thein.[8] All these parties or groups had sprung up in the political era of GCBA and were shadowed by the nationalist movements of the INC. The 1920s political generation were not willing to request full independence for Burma and were satisfied with participation in the legislative administration. They all continued to be active in response to the question of whether to separate from India or not, and in the election of 1936 following the Government Act of 1935. At last, Burma was separated from India.

Unlike the gradualist political environment of the 1920s, the next decade saw dynamic political development beginning with the emergences of the *Dobama Asiayone* and the *All Burma Youth League* in which Ko Nu participated, (who was later involved in the 1939 pre-war BSP inner circle).[9] In the 1930s, the Burmese political environment was influenced by the *Asiayone* in the place of GCBA, although the groups from 1920s were still involved in the Constitutional reform. The University Students' union clique which came into the limelight after the Second Students' Strike of 1935-36; it coincided with the *Asiayone* in 1936 and evolved to some extent into the structure of a *mass party* with branches in every district or town.[10] The result of the 1936 election was the formation of the parliamentary wing of *Dobama*, the *Komin Kochin Party* in which Thakin Mya was involved (who was later became a central leader of the pre-war BSP) and the *Fabian Party* led by Dedoke U Ba Cho (who after the War became a chairman for a wing of the BSP, the Workers' Asiayone).[11] There also existed significant political groups- the *Myochit Party* led by U Saw in 1937 and a *Marxist Study* group in 1938.[12] The split within the *Dobama* led to the creation of the "student's union clique and Dobama *thakins*" who became Socialists and Communists in the later national struggles. This nucleus joined hands with Dr Ba Maw's *Sinyetha Party* (*Proletariat Party*), Dr Thein Maung and U Tun Aung from the *Ngabwintsaing Party* (*Five-flower posy Party*) and, U Ba Oo from the *Naypyidaw Party* (*Royal City Party*) and then founded the *Freedom Bloc* as the

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8. B.K. Drake, *Burma: Nationalist Movements and Independence*, Singapore: Longman Malaysia, 1979, pp.60-61: Appendix (2).
9. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity: Nationalist Movements of Burma, 1920-1940*, New Delhi, Australian National University: Monographs on South Asia No-4, Swarn Printing Press, 1980, pp.78-79.
10. *Ibid.*, p.143.
11. *Ibid.*, p.139. The Dobama's party, the *Komin Kochin Party* got three seats and the *Fabian Party* one.
12. *Ibid.*, p.144, p.239.

national united front in September 1939.[13] The intention of the group was to follow the Constitutional reform and recognise Dr Ba Maw as their head. On the other hand, in November 1939 they formed a central group, employing the English political term "*caucus*", known as the "*Underground Party*", with Thakin Mya as its head, in preparing for armed struggle to achieve Independence.[14] The nationalist movements of 1930s were more active than in the 1920s. The later generation saw the former as "corrupt politicians" around the Legislative Council but at last they had chosen Dr Ba Maw as their leader to gain recognition outside Burma. However, their real leader from the inner circle was Thakin Mya.[15] The momentum of the movements sharply increased pressure for Independence from home rule with the welding of the intellectual class with the *students' union* group to the *thakins* group in 1936.

Only after they had constructed a coalition from three groups—the Burma Army (Tatmadaw), the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (PRP)—could they challenge colonialism and Japanese fascism through the national front, the Anti Fascist Organisation (AFO), later known as Anti Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL). There was a split of Communists' leadership into two; the CPB led by Thakin Than Tun, and the BCP led by Thakin Soe after the emergence of separate parties - the Communist Party of Burma in May 1945 and the Socialist Party of Burma in early August 1945. Another para-military force, the *Peoples' Volunteer Organisation* (PVO) emerged in December 1945. In post-war politics, the political elite of pre-war period such as Dr Ba Maw, U Chit Hlaing, Myat Thar Tun, Sir Paw Tun, and U Saw attempted to revive their parties including the *Dobama Asiayone* with public support in 1920s and the 1930s.[16]

However, U Aung San who entered politics from military service and his AFPFL against the Fascists emerged into the public limelight, so that the old politicians and their parties were not able to get much public recognition. The AFPFL

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13. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉–၁၉၄၆)"မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်းရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊စာ–၁၁။(Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, p.11.)
14. *Ibid.*, pp.12-13; Maurice Duverger, *op.cit.*, pp.17-23.
15. Preparatory Committee, Asian Socialist Conference (1952), *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25 to 29 March, 1952*, Rangoon: 1952, p.10; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊စာ–၈၊၁၁။(Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.8, p.11; Taylor, "Burma", p.130. The collaboration of Dobama group led by Thakin Aung San, Thakin Mya and Thakin Nu with Dr Ba Maw and other politicians in the formation of *Burma Freedom Bloc*. Dr Robert Taylor mentioned as *Freedom Bloc*.
16. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, pp.186-187.

itself was persuaded to include all kinds of people and parties, and thus, the old veterans - U Ba Pe and Henzada U Mya from U Saw's *Myochit Party*, becoming influential members of the League.[17] The British Governors saw an opportunity and used Thakin Ba Sein and U Saw as a counter-balance to the League.[18]

After regaining independence in 1948, there were splits among the nationalist groups and the result was Burma's civil war. The main force in the AFPFL, which was to become the BSP, linked civilian and military groups with the so-called "Yellow" Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO) force and other nationalists, to overcome the CPB and ethnic revolts. The rest of the PVO, "the whites", had gone underground in 1948 after a split. The BSP thus appeared crucial to the maintenance of the sovereignty of the Union of Burma. As a result of 'Cold War Politics', the Burmese Socialists had a major split in 1950 provoked by the *Korean War* (1950-52). Thus, it was moving to form a new opposition group in parliament under the AFPFL government backed up by the BSP. In 1957-58, there was a split in the civilian group and, the Tatmadaw penetrated into politics to fill the organisational vacuum. They argued that they did this to defend the interests of the state. Those who emerged as leaders of the Tatmadaw at this time were a small elite closely connected with the BSP.

In the development of parties after Second World War, there were fifth stages in which the BSP was associated with the last stage which included the emergences of parties in Asia, South East Asia and Africa, except in India and China. At this stage, the parties in the Western world including Soviet Union and Japan, did not focus much on ideology but leaned to compromise; whereas the BSP was different based on ideology derived from Burma/Myanmar.[19] However, the BSP learned its historical experiences at the third and fourth stage of party development, through socialist literature. Dr Robert H. Taylor remarked about the Burmese party system "Seldom has any party had a notable impact on government or society for more than a few years".[20] One exception is the BSP. The BSP that existed between 1945 and 1964 and was preceded from 1939 by the 'Peoples' Revolutionary Party', the 'Burma Revolutionary Party', the 'Unit Party' and the 'Underground Movement'. Despite

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17. *Ibid.*, p.204; In the conversation with Myawaddi U Ye Gaung.
18. *Ibid.*, p.211, p.223, p.249, pp.271-272: note, 135; Interview with Bo Mya Han on 9.2.1992.
19. Macridis, *op.cit.*, pp.9-16. The first stage is at the beginning of nineteenth century, second after the middle of the nineteenth century, third before and after the end of the nineteenth century, fourth after the World War I and the last after World War II.
20. Taylor, "Burma", p.99.

lasting twenty-five years on the Burmese political scene, its ideas, policies, and national sentiment remained fresh and green over the four decades of involvement in the state and its society and continue till the current time. Such claims became evident from an examining of the BSP's strengths and weaknesses in comparison with the INC and the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) twenty-five years before the BSP. The common feature of the three parties is that their emergence was based on the result of the social and economic conditions under colonial rule. The BSP stood for the "proletariat class –the peasants and workers, while the PKI represented the peasantry.[21] In contrast, the INC did not include the class of peasants and workers and only when Mahatma Gandhi led the Congress in 1920 as a "mass movement" were the interests of the peasants and workers included. The first priority of the Congress in its early stage was to unite all within the nation and then asking for reforms to the bureaucracy run by foreigners. The BSP in a colonial state, became a dual organisation, both a *Mass* and *Cadre* party although it focussed on a *cadre* party because leading players of the BSP were heavily involved in the mass organisations. Being the total membership of party cadres was 219 in 47 branches according to the Headquarters list following the 1949 reorganisation.[22] There was a slight increase of four party branches from 43 in 1946 to 47 in 1949.[23] The Party was not able to show exact membership until 1953 because of the nature of the *cadre* party. However, the exact membership number of its mass organisations has been established (See Chapter Five). The membership dramatically fell when the party was split into two in 1950. In 1956, it was reasonably estimated as near 6,000.[24] Its resources came from the affiliated (mass) organizations such as Workers' Asiayone, Peasants' Asiayone, Women's Asiayone, Federation of Trade Unions and Youth. From the beginning, the Party was a 'cadre' party at the centre and as 'mass' party in its outer circle. However, after 1950, it was nearly became an *elite* or *cadre* party led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein although it retained the Labour Union (TUCB) links. The Party's attachment to

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21. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီ၏စည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ရန်ကုန်၊ဗမာ့သစ်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၄၆၊စာ–၁။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, Rangoon: Bamathick Press, 1946, p.1. in the Introduction.); Justus M. Van Der Kroef, "Lenin, Mao and Aidit": *The China Quarterly*, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1962, p.43.

22. သခင်ချစ်မောင် (အတွင်းရေးမှူး–ဗဟို ပြန်လည် စည်းရုံးရေးကော်မတီ၊ပါတီဌာနချုပ်)၊"(၁၃–၁၂–၄၉)နေ့စွဲအထိ ပြန်လည်ဖွဲ့စည်းပြီးသော ပါတီကလာပ်စည်းများစာရင်း"။(The Report of the Party Cells List signed by Thakin Chit Maung, Secretary of the Central Reorganisation Committee, 13.12.1949.)

23. *Ibid.*; ဦးဗဆွေ၊"ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်"၊ရန်ကုန်၊ပြည်သူ့စာပေတိုက်၊၁၉၅၃၊စာ–၃၀။(U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, Rangoon: Peoples' Literature House, 1953, p.30.)

24. Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.139.

the masses was becoming weaker. The Congress in the postcolonial state was also a dual structure with the PKI a *cadre* party until 1951 and from 1951 onwards it was increasingly becoming a *mass* party. Thus, the growth of party membership increased sharply from 7,910 at the beginning of 1952 to more than 165,000 in 1954.[25]

Ideology in Burma/Myanmar can easily be over-ridden by personal loyalties. It can be said that in the realm of Burmese politics, as in Indonesian politics, personal relations are sometimes more important than ideology and when a person is loved, principles are revised (လူကိုခင်တော့မှုကိုပြင်တယ်၊လူကိုမုန်းတော့မှုကိုသုံးတယ်။).[26] This proverb demonstrates an important principle of Burmese politics. The evidence could be seen in the AFPFL politics after regaining independence. Examples include Bo Let Yar's joining (who took part in the study of Marxist and leftist literature in 1939) and Thakin Nu; the comparing U Ko Ko Gyi's case with the cases of Thakin Tin and U Kyaw Myint Lay; the linking of Thakin Tin and Thakin Kyaw Tun with Thakin Nu; and the recruitment of U Ba Swe (who devoted to Marxism) and U Kyaw Nyein who was against Marxism. Dr Robert H. Taylor also points to the nature of politics in Burma/Myanmar by referring to the 1960 election which he asserts was based on a charismatic political elite rather than party policies.[27]

The Congress had been a Centre party in comparison with the two cadre parties, and although it welcomed the masses in linking with state power, it took the role of 'compromiser' between the rulers and masses of the country. In the freedom movement, the Congress approached the colonial state through Constitutional reforms by the British. In the 1937 election then they won eight of eleven Provinces.[28] On the other hand, the BSP chose the revolutionary path and its strategy included founding the *Burma National Army*. In the transfer from the colonial state to the postcolonial state, the Congress was shaped by the colonial state, while the BSP turned the Government Act of 1935 upside-down working to transform the colonial state and rejecting membership of the British Commonwealth. The success of the Congress was due to a balance "…between agitational unity and the unity and stability of the

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25. Rex Mortimer, *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974, pp.48-49, p.64.
26. Guy J. Pauker, "The Role of Political Organisations in Indonesia": *Far Eastern Survey: American Institute of Pacific Relations*, Vol. XXVII, No.9, September 1958, p.129.
27. Robert H. Taylor, "Burma": Haruhiro Fukui (Editor-in-Chief), *Political Parties Of Asia And the Pacific*, Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985, p.99.
28. V.M. Sirsikar & L. Fernandes, *Indian Political Parties*, Meerut: India, Academic Press, 1984, pp.62-65.

state…".[29] For the PKI, it diverted from the freedom struggle because of the circumstances of the international communist movement and thus, it was recorded in Indonesian history as having "stabbed the Republic in the back".[30] In the practical sense of foreign relations, Indonesia followed the "Neutralist Policy" like India and Burma, by refraining from the two power blocs led by Russia and the U.S.A, and creating united internal forces and defending the International Communists' movements. Thus, the Indonesian postcolonial state was transformed from the old colonial Dutch state to a new state favouring the "Non-Alignment Policy". In this domestic ground, the PKI led by Aidit in the 1950s, like the BSP led by Thakin Mya in the 1940s who assumed leadership of the AFPFL, used the tactic of the strategy of the "United National Front" to form an alliance with the nationalist figure of Sukarno and other progressive forces. For the party's finances, the Congress collected its funds not only from its members within the wealthy class and masses, but also as a ruling party from business, industrial houses and private contributions.[31] Both the PKI and the BSP had experience with securing funds illegally. In the postcolonial state, the BSP had recruited wealthy merchants as a major financial source, while the PKI got assistance from the Chinese Embassy (PRC).[32] The similarity of the PKI and the BSP in their ideological evolution included the influences of Marxism, Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism, and the ideas of Marshal Tito. While accepting ideas from outside world, both of the two parties developed according to their own soil and water.[33] The Congress chose the middle path of ideology, while the other two parties were explicitly 'leftists'.

In comparing the role of the army for the PKI and the BSP, the most outstanding feature is that the latter was support by the state army while the tense relationship between the army and the Communists intensified since the Madium rebellion in September 1948. The difficult situation between the Communist organizers and the military could not be found in the top elite group but at the base level of local areas - towns and villages. The PKI's strategy was blocked by the Indonesian army headed

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29. Dietmar Rothermund, "Constitutional Reforms versus National Agitation in India, 1900-1950": *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 1962, p.518.
30. Peter Edman, *Communism A La Aidit: The Indonesian Communist Party Under D.N. Aidit, 1950-1965*, Queensland, Australia, James Cook University Press, 1987, pp.21-22.
31. Ramana Rao, *op.cit.*, pp.97-98; Sirsikar & Fernandes, *op.cit.*, pp.225-229.
32. Mochtar Lubis, "The Indonesian Communist Movement Today": *Far Eastern Survey: American Institute of Pacific Relations*, Vol. XXIII, No.11, November 1954, pp.163-164.
33. Mortimer, *op.cit.*; Kroef, "Lenin, Mao and Aidit".

by the Army Chief of Staff A. H. Nasution. The army did not want to let Communists control the state, especially in a power-vacuum.[34] Conversely, the military elite was involved in the formal foundation of the BSP. They supported whatever the party had planned and its programs in the struggle for freedom, and even proposed to stage a coup for the party in 1948. In the power vacuum of 1957-58 based on civilian politics, the party itself did not object to the army re-entering politics.

Some authors have noted aspects of the history of the BSP and the parties that preceded it. Even in the writing of the BSP history itself in the era of Asian Socialists' development in the 1950s, the party refrained from publicising its influential role in the Burmese politics, especially in the attempts to attain leftist unity but recorded it under personal names and some associations.[35] My work will provide more details of how to understand socialists' attempts to maintain national unity in the era of the Cold War. The party put AFPFL first in its own history—this is a source of many misconceptions. Moreover, the CPB, a rival to the BSP in the civil war, reviews the past not to consider principles but to vent personal dissatisfaction, a usual characteristic of Burmese politics.[36]

Norman Nyun-Han, a son of Dr Ba Han, the brother of former World War Two Prime Minister Dr Ba Maw, submitted his PhD thesis—*Burma's Experiment in Socialism*—to the University of Colorado in 1970. He examined socialism in Burma up to 1970. He presented the now conventional view of the relationship between socialism and politics when he stated in his thesis that "Socialism in Burma can therefore be said to be more or less an extension of Burmese Nationalism".[37] I agree with his statement but it is far too simplistic. I would argue that Burmese socialism deserves stronger recognition as a cornerstone of nationalism. If it can be said that Burmese nationalism is two steps forward from patriotism, then Burmese socialism is one step forward from nationalism. Later Chapters will explore this judgment. In his account of the origins of socialism in Burma, Norman Nyun-Han argued that socialism was already rooted in ancient Burmese tradition. In this thesis I will follow

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34. Guy J. Pauker, "The Role of Political Organisations in Indonesia": *Far Eastern Survey: American Institute of Pacific Relations*, Vol. XXVII, No.9, September 1958, pp. 140-141.
35. U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, Rangoon: Supdt., Govt. Printing and Staty., Union of Burma, 1956, pp.51-52.
36. "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာဂျာနယ်"၊အမှတ်(၂၁)၊မတ်၊၂၀၀၂၊စာ-၁၂။(*People's Power Journal*, No.21, March 2002, p.12.)
37. Norman Nyun-Han, *Burma's Experiment In Socialism*, PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 1970, p.19.

up this claim by examining ancient Burmese society and also present the case of how socialism was seen as a form of Pali (Sanskrit).

Despite the value of his work, it is notable that Norman Nyun-Han mentioned the history of the BSP in only ten pages of one chapter. By contrast, my research questions his view of the party's origins and offers evidence to counteract his statement that "The Burma Socialist Party (BSP) is the post-war reincarnation of the pre-war Burma Revolutionary Party (BRP) founded in 1939...Its founders had not intended to organize such a party, and it was, in fact, a creature of circumstance whose birth was necessitated by an unexpected emergency".[38] However, as I will show, the emergence of the PRP came out of the efforts of patriots, including the student elite and the thakins, responding to the social and economic situation under colonialism. In the PRP's analysis, the two previous anti-colonial struggles, known as the Saya San Ayeidawpon (the Saya San uprising of 1930) and the 1300 Ayeidawpon (the peasants', workers' and students' strikes of 1938-1939) had failed because of their lack of arms and an army, so they saw military aid from outside as a precondition for independence. These two events entered official national historiography in the late 1940s and are still commemorated as part of national history.[39]

Further, Nyun-Han was unclear about how to represent relationships within the government. He argued that in 1949 the Socialists were forced to resign en bloc from the government because of adverse public opinion.[40] There is no doubt adverse public opinion had been aroused because of the "40 Lakhs" case, but the resignation of the BSP (and the remnant PVO) was to pave the way for a settlement of the Civil War, especially by welcoming the CPB back into the legal fold. As I will show, there were many discussions among the BSP, the PVO and General Ne Win behind the scenes regarding the strategy of resigning and holding debates. This can be seen in the formation of two groups. One, led by Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy), who agreed with the resignation, the other, led by Bo Khin Maung Gale, who did not. U Kyaw Nyein was against resigning, and argued that the case had to be rethought, and at first

38. *Ibid*., p.302.
39. "မြန်မာ့သမိုင်းဖတ်စာ စတုတ္ထတန်း"၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန အခြေခံပညာသင်ရိုးညွှန်းတမ်း၊ သင်ရိုးမာတိကာနှင့်ကျောင်းသုံးစာအုပ်ကော်မတီ။ (*History Book For Year Four*, Education Ministry, Union of Myanmar, Basic Education Curriculum and School Book Committee.)
40. *Ibid*., p.307.

Prime Minister U Nu himself did not agree with the resignations from the BSP and the PVO.[41]

In the analysis of the BSP's class structure, my work follows in the steps of Dr Robert H. Taylor in his PhD thesis, *The Relationship Between Burmese Social Classes And British-Indian Policy On The Behaviour Of The Burmese Political Elite, 1937-1942*, submitted in 1974. In that treatise, he argued that all the Socialists in Burma come from the middle class.[42] Robert H. Taylor supported Nyun-Han's view of the Burmese roots of socialism. Taylor's concentration in his writings is on the CPB, Thakin Soe and Thein Pe Myint. By contrast, I give more attention to Thakin Mya and other Socialist leaders.[43] I argue, after I examined the reading lists of the nationalist leaders who later became the post-war leaders of the BSP, that they read rather more widely than has been usually asserted. The revolutionary Marxists and Leninists of the Dobama Asiayone learned their ideologies from British writers like John Strachey, the publications of Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club and the theoretician of the British Communist Party, R. Palme Dutt.[44] There is also indication of the reading lists of 1920s and 1930s in colonial Burma by uncovering the *Nagani Book Club*.[45]

More credibility can be ascribed to views of frequent changing horses and the name of the BSP. I explain how the Party changed its name step-by-step: the BSP and then the PFP in 1945; then the BSP in 1948; then the *Union of Socialist Party* in 1949 and then the BSP until 1964. I explore the BSP's changing in leadership as four times including the Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein period before the arrival of Leader Mya at Rangoon; Mya's period of 1945-1947; Ko Ko Gyi's period of July 1947- July 1948; and then Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein's period until the termination of the Party in 1964. These name changed reflect the changing ideology and leadership in the BSP. However, in his article, *Burma*: *Political Parties Of Asia And The Pacific*, Dr Robert

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41. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. In the conversation, which I double checked in an interview with one of the participants at the meetings, Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy).
42. Robert Henry Taylor, *The Relationship Between Burmese Social Classes And British-Indian Policy On the Behaviour Of The Burmese Political Elite, 1937-1942*, PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1974.
43. Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism And Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945*: *Thein Pe Myint's Wartime Traveler*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984; Taylor, Robert H., *The State In Burma*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987.
44. Taylor, *Marxism And Resistance in Burma*, p.215.
45. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေနှင့်ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး"၊ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၏လုပ်ဖော်ကိုင်ဖက်များ၊ဗမာ့သမိုင်းဟင်းလေး၊ မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်(သမိုင်းဌာန)၊၁၉--၊စာ-၁၇၄-၁၈၈၊(Daw Aye Thida, "Nagani Literathres and Burmese Politics in Colonial Period": The Colleagues of Dr Than Tun, *Studies In Burmese History*, Mandalay: Mandalay University, 19--?, pp.174-188.) *Nagani* means *Red Dragon*. This book club distributed leftist literatures translated from English into Burmese in 1930s.

H. Taylor tends to overlook how changes to the BSP's name worked step-by-step with changing Burmese politics. He also jumped one step ahead to the role of Chairman Ko Ko Gyi in the period between Thakin Mya and U Ba Swe. He wrote that the founders of the BSP were non-communist nationalists. I will show that the two founder members - U Ko Ko Gyi and Thakin Lwin came from the Communist environment.[46]

I reveal how Thakin Mya came into the limelight among the young patriotic group in line with two Burmese works—Maung Ye Mya's MA thesis, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya* submitted in 1982, and Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), one of the CEC members in the foundation of the BSP in September 1945, *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya* published in 1979.[47]

In the analysis of the Socialists' idea in late 1930s to form an army to fight for independence, I point out that the national sentiment of the Burmese was in line with the writings of two members of the Burmese elite[48], two historians from Southeast Asia[49], and some British historians[50] in which they under-estimated the native spirit for military service. In the published work (2000) by Parimal Ghosh, *Brave Men of the Hills*: *Resistance and Rebellion in Burma, 1825-1932*, there is no indication of linking military history to main historiography of political parties.[51]

In addressing the works done by the PRP, in an examination of the collaboration with the fascist Japanese, to critics of the CPB and the western outlook, there is a focus on the BSP's insider's point of view and I develop the view that the people were suffering from persecution by the Japanese military police, and they supported their

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46. Taylor, "Burma", pp.120-122.
47. မောင်ရဲမြ၊"သခင်မြ၏နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များကိုဆန်းစစ်လေ့လာခြင်း(၁၉၂၀–၁၉၄၇)"၊မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့ယူကျမ်း၊ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂။(Maung,Ye Mya, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1982.); သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိဇူရ)၊"အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ"(ပ)ကြိမ်၊ရန်ကုန်၊မိသားစုစာပေ ဖြန့်ချိရေး၊၁၉၇၉၊စာ–၃၅။(Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Press, 1979, p.35.)
48. Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967; U Ba Than (Dhammika, Retired Colonel), *The Roots of The Revolution*, Rangoon: the Government Printing Press, 1962.
49. Sunait Chutintaranond & Than Tun, *On Both Sides Of The Tenasserim Range: History of Siamese-Burmese Relations*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Phyathai: Asian Studies Monographs No. 050, 1995.
50. G.E Harvey, *British Rule In Burma, 1824-1942*, London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1946; F.S.V Donnison, *Burma*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970.
51. Parimal Ghosh, *Brave Men of the Hills*: *Resistance and Rebellion in Burma, 1825-1932*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

own army, the Burma Independent Army (BIA).[52] Trager recorded the PRP as BRP. As well he pointed out that the Burmese never considered their collaboration with the Japanese as a moral failure but looked forward to it as a means of gaining independence.[53]

After the emergence of the PFP in September 1945, in the periodisation of historiography, the Socialists suggested three periods of organising people to follow the party's program. However, Josef Silverstein wrote in his book, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity* that there was no time limit placed on the second period.[54] I will show the time limit Socialists referred to, in the party's organ, *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*.

In the analysis of the BSP's role in the freedom movements of Burma, I argue in Chapter Six that the BSP had already developed friendly relationships with the ethnic peoples through their elite leaders, although I recognise the role of Thakin Nu in the Union as a leading national figure. But, Maung Maung Gyi in his PhD thesis appeared to ignore the real force of the relationship between the BSP and ethnic peoples.[55] On the other hand, I support Maung Maung Gyi's writings in his PhD thesis that there was amongst Socialists' a humble spirit in their works for the state rather than the party and perseverance to preserve the Union.[56] Thompson and Adloff also over emphasise on the intention of the "Leftist Unity" by the BSP as party's interest.[57] I will show their reliance on good intention to get unity among the left wingers. Mary P. Callahan also wrote in her book: *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, the success of the BSP and resulted from the party joining hands with its two mass organisations: Workers' Asiayone and Peasants' Asiayone, to keep loyalty to the AFPFL government.[58] I will support her argument.

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52. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ရန်ကုန်၊ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၅၆၊စာ-၃၁၊၃၃၊(Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyiton Press, 1956, p.31, p.33); ဗဆွေ(ဓါးဝယ်)၊"ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊စာ-၁၆၊၁၈၊(Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.16, p.18.); Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, *Mss/Eur D 1066/2* (British Library, London).
53. Trager, *op.cit.*, pp.57-61.
54. Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980, p.178; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)၊အမှတ်(၅)၊၁၆၊၁၊၁၉၄၆၊(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*,Vol. I, No.5, 16.1.1946.)
55. Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis Of the Social and Political Foundations Of The Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, p.188.
56. *Ibid*., p.191.
57. Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, First Edition, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, p.105.
58. Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, p.141.

In her PhD thesis, *The Origins of Military Rule in Burma* (Cornell University, 1996) Callahan discussed the role of the military in ruling Burma, but she was unable to uncover the deep relationship between military and civilian groups by connecting the BSP and the Tatmadaw (military) elite group.[59] By contrast, my work will analyse the relations between these two power groups. In Callahan's published book in 2004, *Making Enemies*, Callahan also wrote about the military history of Burma (1826-1962), placing considerable emphasis on military-war and postcolonial state-society in Burma as an "empirical" result rather than the result of military ideals in the building of the state. I argue in Chapter Eight that the socialist military elite group started their ideology, in coincidence with the emergence of the BSP in 1945 and passed through until 1949 and then, in 1957-58 they prepared to review the 1947 Constitution for the 1962 Socialist Revolution and trained leading cadres since 1958.

Moreover, Mary Callahan gave little weight to the success of civil society with the neutralism of Burma and the BSP role in Asian Socialist movements which started in 1952. By contrast, she covers the military history during the period from 1950 to 1962. I fill this gap in Chapter Seven with outlining the BSP's success. The current military articles included in the newspaper, *The New Light Of Myanmar* are also contradicted because the military government failed to mention the role of the civilian Prime Minister and the role of BSP at that time when they praised the Bandung spirit and attended the *Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African Conference 1955*. When they made a friendship relationship with the People's Republic of China (PRC), the five principles of peaceful coexistence were also revealed.[60] It is notable that the current military regime is copying the heritage of the BSP and its shell.

Some scholars might argue that the military involvement was just support from Tatmadaw that produced the reincarnation of the PRP, the PFP in 1945.[61] Yet such a

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59. Mary Patricia Callahan, *The Origins Of Military Rule In Burma*, PhD thesis, Cornell University, 1996.

60. Website: HYPERLINK "http://www.myanmar.com" http://www.myanmar.com: အောင်မိုးစံ၊"အာရ–အာဖရိကထိပ်သီးညီလာခံ၊အာရ–အာဖရိကကွန်ဖရင့်အထိမ်းအမှတ် ရွှေရတုအခမ်းအနားနှင့်ရိုးသားပွင်းလင်းသောမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ ရဲ့သဘောထား"၉၂၅၀၅။(Aung Moe San, *Asia-Africa Summit, the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Asian-African Conference 1955 and Myanmar's Policy on the Summit*); *The New Light Of Myanmar, 6.7.2005*: When SPDC Prime Minister General Soe Win went to People's Republic of China, he mentioned the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Myanmar relations in which included the *Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence* and the fact: "Myanmar is among the first nations that acknowledge People's Republic of China since its proclamation". Note. He failed to mention, Which period, Who's reigning and Which party gave this policy?

61. နေညွန့်၊"ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊စာ–၁၉၀။(Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.190.)

view acknowledges Tatmadaw's deep involvement in the foundation of the PFP and then the BSP, and does not compare the role of the PRP to the strategy of the CPB, as I do in Chapter Two. I also show in Chapter Six how the Tatmadaw men gave strong support to the party and how they created mutual understanding between the BSP and Tatmadaw men was achieved in the period 1945-57. Mary Callahan draws on Nay Nyunt's thesis but this is misleading because it conforms to official historiography which elides essential elements. I have already mentioned the shortcomings of my own thesis on the PFP, while another MA thesis from Rangoon University, by Pa Pa Oo, is limited in its scope and in its access to sources. Neither can answer the key questions posed in the present dissertation about the relationship of the BSP to the state.[62]

In the last book written by former President Dr Maung Maung, a biographer of U Ne Win, the author devotes only one sentence to the close relationship between the Socialists and the Prime Minister in the Nu period.[63] There was only one further sentence explaining the Army's deep involvement in the politics and administration of the country from the very early years after independence.[64] It may be assumed that he knew what had happened, but was perhaps constrained by the situation of writing and could only provide hints for other researchers.

In contrast claims were made on the basis of the forty-one pages written by former BSP Joint Secretary, Bo Aung Gyi, who said that Bo Tin Pe, Bo Than Sein and Bo Kyaw Soe had little knowledge of socialist ideology and that they studied only the notes used by U Ko Ko Gyi for his seven-day socialist ideology course held in 1945 when the BSP (Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party) was first founded.[65]

In writing the history of Tatmadaw in 1995, there are two reasons for the coup in 1962 by the military revolutionary group: the Shan Federalism and the Socialist

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62. ကျော်ဇော်ဝင်း၊"ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄–၁၉၄၈)"၊မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့ယူကျမ်း၊ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊၁၉၉၃။(Kyaw Zaw Win, A History of the People's Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948), MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1993.); ပပဦး၊"မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသမိုင်းတွင်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီ၏အခန်းကဏ္ဍ(၁၉၄၀–၁၉၅၀)"၊မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့ယူကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊၁၉၉၆။(Pa Pa Oo, The Role of the Socialist Party in Burma's History (1940-1950), MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1996.)

63. Dr Maung Maung, ex-President of Burma, mentioned in *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph 49, 1999, p.12.

64. *Ibid*., p.16.

65. The Former Brigadier Aung Gyi wrote a series of letters to U Ne Win, in 1988 which were especially critical of some BSPP's executive members; content of the letters was made public.; Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2nd Impression, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993, pp.449-450, foot-note: 11.

Construction.[66] My argument in Chapter Eight is leaning towards an ideological point of view rather than ethnic Shan problem. It provides new information about how Burmese authoritarianism gradually developed in Burma after the Second World War.

An article in the 'New Light of Myanmar' during the SLORC period in 1992, exemplifies the failure to recognise the combined role of the BSP and the Tatmadaw in fighting colonialism. In this article, Tat's role is described as the main force behind Burma's aid to Vietnam. In fact, the BSP saw itself as fulfilling the desires of the assassinated national heroes. In the period of the BSPP (1962-1988), when cadres from the BSPP visited these countries on official visits, the host countries proclaimed thanks for this assistance. At that time, the cadres didn't know how to respond, because the relations the BSP had established with Vietnam were not acknowledged in the history of the BSP and the Tatmadaw. When the former General Secretary of the BSP, U Ba Swe, heard that news, he remarked, "They don't know who is their real father".

The reason that these relations had not been made public, was that within the BSP in 1947-48, the social democrat group considered assistance to Vietnam and Indonesia as leaning to the communist groups and therefore kept it secret, although U Kyaw Nyein had mentioned the help given to the Viet Minh at the Asia Socialist Conference.[67] Nevertheless, the aid given to Indonesia became the basis for an historical friendship, which is explained in Chapter Seven.[68] Within the BSP, the Cold War was already beginning to have a strong effect, and this effect was to cloud the internal ideological formulations of the party, as revealed in its own historical records.

Methodology

In writing this dissertation, I have used the method of the Greek historian Herodotus, to cross-question and cross-examine eye-witnesses.[69] Both my Burmese

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66. စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ၊၁၉၄၈–၁၉၆၂"၊ရန်ကုန်၊သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၆၊စာ–၂၆၆။(The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, *1948-1962*, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996, p.266.)
67. *Report of the Second Meeting of the Bureau of the Asian Socialist Conference held at Hyderabad (India), 10 to 12 August 1953*. Burmese delegate, U Kyaw Nyein, admitted that "The Socialist Party and Government of Burma had maintained close relations with the Viet Minh Movement in the past. Although the Viet Minh consisted of some communist elements, the Movement was predominantly a nationalist one".
68. Interview with Daw Khin Pyone on 26.10.2001.
69. Norman Austin, *The Greek Historians*, New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold Company, 1969,

and Australian teachers urged me to re-examine the information and opinions from the interviews for bias.[70] For those reasons I began with the autobiographical account of former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi, the unpublished documents by Thakin Hla Kyway, the Diary of Thakin Hla Kyway, and the primary sources from Thakin Hla Kyway's library. The interviews with my grandfather, a leading figures such as former Brigadier Tin Pe, and others who played important roles in the BSP and related groups, were then supplemented with a variety of primary sources, in particular archives in London and the sources collected by International Institute for Social History (IISG), Amsterdam.

I have kept my promises that I would only reveal information from some interviewees after they died, and to only use some of the material revealed to me as unsourced background material, just as a number of the interviewees requested.[71] As I mentioned previously, some of my material was obtained on the assumption by others that my grandfather had already told me about these matters. I got the unpublished notes of Thakin Hla Kyway very early in my research, and I would like to have asked my grandfather many more questions that arose from them, but sadly his death prevented this. Some of the ex-politicians whom I interviewed requested that what they told me should only be revealed after their deaths, so I could not use their material in my MA thesis, although I am able to do so now. One of them, former Brigadier Tin Pe, who had helped General Ne Win organise the 1962 coup that brought the government preceding the BSPP to power, insisted on dictating his account. Former Brigadier Aung Gyi[72] said that he did not want the history of the BSP to be uncovered while U Ne Win was still alive, but he arranged an interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay, one of the founders in the BSP.[73] I was also able to

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pp.27-41; Carolyn Dewald, "Practical knowledge and the Historian's Role in Herodotus and Thucydides" in Antony E. Raubitschek, *The Greek Historians: Literature and History*, California: Department of Classics, Stanford University, Anma Libri & Co., 1985, pp.47-48. Herodotus was born early in the fifth century B.C. He was regarded as the *Father of History*. His method was to narrate what actually happened in the recent human past based on still accessible memory. He always reminds his readers to be sceptical on his work, a method learnt in MA classes of Prof. Saya U Tun Aung Chain.

70. In particular I would like to thank Saya Dr Toe Hla and Saya Dean Prof. Dr Andrew Wells.

71. Since some interviewees would not allow me to take notes, where I am unsure of the details they related to me I have indicated this in the thesis with "?"

72. Not a main supporter for the 1962 Coup although he was listed in the revolutionary council as a secondary figure. U Aung Gyi was confined, along with Former Colonel Ba Than, at the War Office, Rangoon at the time of the Coup, according to Former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi (as retold by Former Colonel Ba Than).

73. U Kyaw Myint Lay founded the party led by U Aung Gyi in 1988 along and contested the 1990 election.

interview other ex-politicians, cross-questioning each in relation to other accounts, and against contemporary newspapers and books. I am in the fortunate position of being able to draw on both Burmese and English sources. I also read unedited interviews plus help additional conversations from Burmese politicians. Therefore, the method used in this thesis is the fruitful result of examining the triangular relationship between interviews, primary documents from private and Library collections and historical evidence from newspapers and journals. However, I remind all readers that they should be sceptical about my work, as I remain faithful to Herodotus's method.

Summary of Chapters

My thesis concentrates on the decades between the 1930s and 1964. Chapter One aims at providing an understanding of why the Burmese revolutionaries created an underground party, one of the pre-conditions for understanding what led to the creation of the Socialist Party of Burma or BSP. Once a party had been created, the next question is, who should lead it? Thus I look at the emergence of the pre-war political leaders, who were also to lead the country in the post-war period. But this analysis does not tell us "why socialism", so I have analysed why the Burmese nationalist movement took a socialist form. In doing this I have drawn on previous literature that exists in a relatively scattered form on the subject. My study shows that the Nationalist movement adopted Socialist forms because of the class composition of Burma, in particular because of the class backgrounds of the leadership, an issue that has been partly examined by Robert H. Taylor in his study of Burmese political elites in the colonial era.[74] One element that needs to be added to the picture of the social background that produced the BSP is the importance of Tats or military groups under colonialism.

Chapter Two is concerned with the emergence of the underground party, the PRP, and its reincarnation as the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party after World War Two. I look at impact of the war on the former student leaders and those known as the Thakins. There are significant differences that emerged at that time between the Communists and other revolutionary groups. Such differences were produced both by ideology and by strategic views on whether it was more important to fight colonialism or fascism at that time. One of the key differences lay in the CPB's emphasis on

74. Taylor, *op.cit.*.

ideology, as opposed to the PRP/PFP group who argued that support from the masses, peasants and workers, had not been enough to defeat British imperialism, without the essential element of arms. The young patriotic men known later as PRP, founded the Burma Freedom Bloc legally and, simultaneously they formed the underground Burma Revolutionary Party or Peoples' Revolutionary Party in order to obtain foreign military assistance. They found it from the Japanese, and so from the latter group became the Thirty Heroes, who included Bogyoke Aung San and Bogyoke Ne Win.

The key players and followers of the PFP/BSP are discussed in Chapter Three. In this account, the builders of the party, military and civilian personnel are categorised to get a clear image of the Party's composition, although some of them were involved in both roles. The party's connection with the ethnic peoples and involvement of women are also analysed because of their significance in the freedom movements and the State's construction.

Chapter Four examines the writing of the constitution of the PFP/BSP, and the structure, organisation and funding of the PRP/PFP/BSP. In so doing, I compare it with the characteristics of the Socialist Party (India). I will ask: what elements gave rise to conflict within Burmese socialism and, what are the legacies of the BSP in the past? The 1947 Constitution was important to the BSP because of its advocacy of social revolution. Therefore, Chapter Five will examine the BSP's implementation of socialism in the economic and social fields. This chapter will look at factors in the formation of the BSP that led to continuing ideological differences within the party, especially in relation to the splits of 1948 and then 1950. These splits have to be seen in the light of different attitudes towards Burma's Civil War and then the maintenance of democratic government in the 1950s.

The reflections of the BSP's policies are still evident in Burmese/Myanmar politics and thus, the strategies and tactics for both internal and external relationships of Burma, are revealed in Chapter Five, which will be connect to chains in Chapter Seven. In this account, there is a need to glean from diverse sources such as the primary speeches by key players, the BSP's documentary books, and valuable interviews.

Chapter Six then evaluates the role of the PFP and its successor, the BSP, in Burmese politics between 1945 and 1962. This chapter looks at the party's role in the national front, the AFPFL, during the struggle for independence, and then in the subsequent struggle for national unity. The AFPFL was not a party proper, but a

national front, as the name implies. From the need to provide national unity derived the BSP strategies to organise and mobilise over 135 ethnic groups of Burma. I will also examine the party's attitude to the ethnic question. The AFPFL could not contain the differences between the CPB and the BSP. It was the split of the CPB into two communist parties (the Red Flags and the White Flags) and their expulsion from the AFPFL, that gave the opportunity for the BSP to emerge on the centre stage of Burmese politics.

However, there were still other significant differences among the members of the AFPFL in the struggle for independence, particularly over the role of armed struggle during World War Two. The CPB at the time followed the strategy of Browderism, which meant that they urged the Socialists, who were still hiding arms for a revolution against the British, to hand over all the arms to the Allied army. Later, under the leadership of Thakin Mya, not only the AFPFL but also the BSP shifted to the path of negotiation by entering into the Governor Council, attending the London talks for independence, and holding the April Election and Constituent Assembly. But, at the same time, they had prepared a contingency plan if negotiations failed, one that involved armed struggle.[75] Sources disagree as to whether these internal struggles were connected to the assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and the other leaders in July 1947.

Chapter Seven reveals that a significant element of the BSP's role in government was its international role. This has not previously been carefully examined in the secondary literature. Independent Burma played a key role in the Cold War, not because of the strength of its communist parties, but because of its leadership in the Asia Socialist group, leading to the attempt to break away from the two power blocs that dominated international politics, in the form of the Asia-Africa or Third World movement. The Cold War, however, had internal effects on the BSP, and these led to a division in the Party. This grew out of U Nu's rejection of Marxism within the AFPFL, which came to factionalise the BSP.

This factionalism led to the Coups of 1958 and 1962, as I will show in my examination of the role of the Tatmadaw (Military) in the BSP, in Chapter Eight. The future military leadership of Burma had been involved in the formation of the BSP since the days of the PRP. During the resistance to the Japanese, a clique of the

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75. Myawaddi U Ye Gaung, who was involved in the hiding of arms, has circulated documents publicly amongst the Burmese community in Australia concerning this matter.

Tatmadaw within the PRP evolved. Members of this same group were main players in the foundation of the PFP and then the BSP, although they were still in the army and so were not publicly members of the Party. This Tatmadaw group argued that it had to serve the state in the Civil War by joining together with the BSP. The Tatmadaw regarded the split of the AFPFL in 1958 as a power vacuum and thus staged a coup apparently sanctioned by the Prime Minister, U Nu. Some members of the 1958 Coup group in the Tatmadaw remained linked to the BSP, and they split from the other military faction in 1961 over ideological matters. This split may have made the 1962 Coup possible.

There were obviously many things going on behind the scenes that have not been previously identified as important. Also, there is a significant gap in the current literature about the BSP. By revealing these aspects of the history of the BSP, important lessons could be learned about the heritage and formation of present-day Burmese politics. Key questions that emerge from these events about the party, relevant to understanding the present-day political situation are: what precisely was their role in the independence movement? How did they develop their relationship with Burma's ruling Tatmadaw? Why has information about that relationship been suppressed? In order to answer these questions, I examine how the party was formed as the BSP after independence, and in what ways they continued pre-independence organisation and ideas. The "40 Lakhs case" shows that funding was obviously important, but just as important was the effect of the Cold War upon the BSP, considering that it initiated the Asia Socialist Movement. These questions and issues appear not to have been addressed in a satisfactory way in any of the existing literature, either in Burmese or English. By addressing them, I justifying this thesis as it seeks to thoroughly investigate just how central the BSP and its historical antecedents, have been in shaping modern Myanmar's history.