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Kyaw Zaw Win
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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 Taungthulaithamar (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: ဝ ဝ ည ဝ)
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 2 nd CPB Congress on 20 th 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 Baba¹ 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

1. Baba means "grandfather". Burmese peoples used to call any man whose age was the same as their grandfathers "Baba" or "Ahhba" 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 Library³, Tatmadaw's Archives⁴ and the Historical Research Department⁵ (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,

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 Phylene, 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 Gothenberg 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

"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 understand 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 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

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

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

13. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ “ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း (၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)”၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈-၁၁။ (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; နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ “ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း”၊ ၈-၈၊ 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

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

21. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ 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 ပြန်လည်စည်းရုံးရေးကော်မတီ၊ ပါတီဌာနချုပ်)၊ "(၁၃-၁၂-၄၉)နေ့စွဲအထိ ပြန်လည်ဖွဲ့စည်းပြီးသော ပါတီကလပ် စည်းမျဉ်းစာရင်း"၊ (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 (လူကိုခင်တော့မူကိုပြင်တယ်၊ လူကိုမုန်းတော့မူကိုသုံးတယ်။).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

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. Sirsakar & 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 Madiun 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

29. Dietmar Rothmund, “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; Sirsakar & 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

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. "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာရှင်" (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"၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အဖိုးရပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန 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

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၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေနှင့်ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေး"၊ ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၏လုပ်ဖော်ကိုင်ဖက်များ၊ ဗမာ့သမိုင်းဟင်းလေး၊ မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်(သမိုင်းဌာန)၊ ၁၉--၊ ၂၀၁၇-၁၈။ (Daw Aye Thida, "Nagani Literatures 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 elite⁴⁸, two historians from Southeast Asia⁴⁹, and some British historians⁵⁰ 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

46. Taylor, "Burma", pp.120-122.

47. မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များကိုဆန်းစစ်လေ့လာခြင်း (၁၉၂၀-၁၉၄၅)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့ယူကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂။ (Maung Ye Mya, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1982.); သခင်ချစ်မောင် (ဝိဇ္ဇာ)၊ "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.

52. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ဖာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၈-၃၁၊ ၃၃။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1956, p.31, p.33); ဗဆွေ(ခးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်သူ့တောင်လော့"၊ ၈-၁၆၊ 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; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဌာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၆၊ ၁၁၊ 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

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၊ "အာရှ-အာဖရိကထိပ်သီးညီလာခံ၊ အာရှ-အာဖရိကကွန်ဖရင့်အထိမ်းအမှတ် ရွှေရတုအခမ်းအနားနှင့်ရိုးသားပွင့်လင်းသောမြန်မာနိုင်ငံ ရှိသဘောထား"၊ ၂၅၅၀၀၅။ (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"၊ 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

62. ကျော်စောဝင်း၊ "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

66. စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ 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 Gyi⁷² 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

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 Bogoyoke Aung San and Bogoyoke 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

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.

Chapter One

The Emergence of the Burmese Nationalist Struggle (1900-1939)

Introduction

This chapter develops the basic argument of my thesis by showing that socialism in Burma was influenced by both patriotism and nationalism and was thus integral to the wider nationalist movement. The Burmese people sought an ideology to use against imperialism and they used socialism to fight for their freedom. Because of this connection the Socialist Party of Burma (BSP) strongly influenced the country's political development as Burma fought for independence. Because the emerging political leadership required an instrument to achieve independence, the formation of political parties involved a military element. Thus, a connection between socialism, politics and the military exists in the origins of the modern Burmese nation. I will examine the process of shaping the dominating party and in doing so show how Thakin Mya emerged as the senior figure in socialist nationalism, and how he influenced younger future leaders.

The nationalist movement of Burma produced a set of political parties. These parties were shaped by three main elements: the class structure of Burma that produced prominent leaders, the influence of socialist thought, and the continued role of quasi-military groups in society. The economic and social situation under colonial policy, the spread of socialist and communist literatures in Burma and then the role of Tats (Armies) were the background to the creation of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (PRP)¹. The history of this party began with the patriotic group, composed of Thakins and the student elite², whose primary concern was the welfare of peasants, workers and the poor. Even their privileged lives were socially disrupted by the colonial system.

Burmese Society under the Colonial System, 1870 – 1939

Under British rule in Burma, the connection between social disintegration and the economic backwardness of the indigenous peoples awakened the nationalist

1. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈-၁၂-၁၅။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, pp.12-15.)

2. Especially those who were involved in the Second University Students' Strike (1936).

sentiments of the Burmese. Members of the elite group, including Thakin Mya, began to study anti-colonial freedom movements and socialist propaganda. It, therefore, can be said that Burmese socialism originated in nationalism, which was a product of the economic and social effects of colonial rule. Indeed, the main objective of British policy was not only to "develop the material resources of Burma through trade and economic enterprise" but also "to establish and maintain political control".³

Let us first look at the social situation of the middle classes in Burma under the British-Indian Policy. In his classic work, J.S. Furnivall points out that Burma was a 'plural society', where diverse people such as Europeans, Chinese, Indians and natives, mixed within the same political unit but did not actually combine. They lived side by side separately and within their own religion, culture and language, based on their economic roles.⁴ In the plural society, Indians were wealthier than Burmese, had higher class status and were more accustomed to the modern banking system and industrial concerns. This was demonstrated by Indian ownership of the more expensive buildings. These tensions erupted in racial riots between Indians and Burmese in 1930 and again in 1939. Generally, the Burmese political elite who could play a part in the nationalist movement were supported by their rich parents, so that they did not need to be involved in the family businesses. They were educated under the colonial system but they could not get jobs when they finished their degrees. They observed the suffering of the farmers and workers who comprised the lowest social classes. They lost their sources of independent wealth and they were increasingly dependent on government and Indian financiers for their incomes.⁵ Initially, former officials of the early Burmese, pre-British government often received jobs in the British administration. They invested their earnings and savings in business or in land. Thus, they became wealthier and more powerful and were able to send their sons to government schools and universities in England and in India. But, by the 1930s, the Indians were replacing the middle-class Burmese in the areas of trading, landowning,

3. A.H Fenichel & W.G Huff, *The Impact of Colonialism on Burmese Economic Development*, Montreal: Centre for Developing Area Studies, Mc Gill University, 1971, p.20, p.28; J.S. Furnivall, I.C.S (Retd.), *An Introduction To The Political Economy Of Burma*, Rangoon: People's Literature Committee & House, 1957, p. i.

4. J.S Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, New York: New York University Press, 1956, pp.303-313; Robert H. 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, p.5: note- 1. See also in H.S. Morris, "Some Aspects of the Concept Plural Society": *Man, New Series*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (June 1967), pp.169-184; in Burton Benedict, "Stratification in Plural Societies": *American Anthropologist, New Series*, Vol.64, No.6 (December 1962), pp.1235-1246.

5. Robert H. Taylor, *The State In Burma*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1987, pp.124-125.

money-lending, mill-owning because of the expansion of the colonial economy. For these reasons, this urban middle class was situated in the social structure of Burma from about 1907 to 1930 or 1935 emerged as the force behind the development of modern Burmese political nationalism.⁶

The living standards and spatial location of colonial society reflected the class structure. The more prosperous trading classes used to live in the western quarter of Rangoon—Edward Street and Oliphant Street; the retired Burmese lived round about the Kokine Lakes (now Inya Lakes) and along the main highway to Prome; the pensioners lived in a crowded part of Rangoon; the small traders, the clerks and the school teachers lived in the village of Kemmendine.⁷

Robert H. Taylor described the general class structure of around 1930 as a three-tiered pyramid. At the peak of the pyramid was a very small group composed of British government officials, European managers and Eurasians. In the second tier of the pyramid was the middle class which divided into a hierarchy of three sectors: the landowning sector; secondly, the commercial and trade sector; and thirdly, the independent professionals and government employees, or, to use a western term, the white-collar middle class.⁸

Michael Adas sought to show that viewing plural society as a layered pyramid is “highly inaccurate and misleading” by pointing out the situation of Lower Burma.⁹ In other words, he means that it fails to capture the pluralist nature of Burmese society. In his study of the social origins of the Saya San's revolt (1930), Burma's colonial social structure is presented as a layered pyramid in which the upper layers were normally occupied by Europeans; the middle layers by non-European immigrants (Chinese, Indians, Syrians and Lebanese), mostly merchants or subordinate administrators; and the great majority of the indigenous population was at the base of the pyramid. There are significant differences between Adas's view of the social structure and Taylor's view.¹⁰ Taylor is not convinced by Adas's claim but the fact can not be denied that the Burmese middle class from Lower Burma prospered from

6. *Ibid.*

7. Mi Mi Khaing, *Burmese Family*, Calcutta: Titagur Paper Mills Co., Ltd, 1946, p.113. The Edward Street is now known as *Kon-Zay-Dan*. The Oliphant Street is now known as *Shwedaung Dan*.

8. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.3.

9. Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, p.109.

10. *Ibid.*

the colonial economy.¹¹ Adas states that the Burmese were not only involved in money-lending and internal marketing but also in the rice mills. Burmese had a 15 per cent interest in the delta rice industry, and a large majority of the paddy brokers and rice merchants in Lower Burma throughout the first phase of the development of the rice industry were Burmese.¹²

The position of Taylor and Adas are quite distinct. The former visualised the class structure of Burmese colonial society more from an essential political point of view. His viewpoint focussed on colonial education, creating the “middle class” which was the most important segment of the colonial state. The latter put more weight on specific cases in specific places. That is why, Adas argued from the developed economic and social part of the Delta and his outlook appeared to ignore other areas of Burma. His argument was based on an economic point of view and each cultural segment or group owned the “particular niches” in the plural social hierarchy due to economic development. He also supported the policies of colonial government. But, he also misunderstood the circumstances of indigenous people who struggled to free their country from the colonial master. Between Taylor and Adas, there are differences in their theoretical focus and the examples they use to support their theses.

Parts of the circumstances explaining the origins of socialism in Burma are the economic and social conditions under colonial rule. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1871 and the substitution of the money economy (from the barter system to using money in trade to get a profit) from 1890, the colonial government extended commercial rice cultivation in the Lower Burma. Consequently, the colonial government provided access to foreign markets and investment funds, and encouraged Indian and Chinese immigration. Thus, Rangoon was for a time the port receiving the highest numbers of immigrants in the world.¹³ By 1931, over half the population of Rangoon, the commercial and administrative centre of the country, was Indian.¹⁴ Similarly, in 1931, the Chinese population of Rangoon had reached the considerable number of 193,589.¹⁵ By 1941, Rangoon had become a cosmopolitan city of over

11. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.5, foot-note.

12. Adas, *op.cit.*, pp.110-111.

13. J.Russell Andrus, *Burmese Economic Life*, Stanford Calif: Stanford University Press, 1947, p.34.

14. Taylor, *The State In Burma*, p.127.

15. *Ibid.*, p.128. Table 2.1: Population Of Burma By Ethnicity, 1931; Andrus, *op.cit.*, pp.35-36.

500,000 inhabitants.¹⁶ A foreigner who came to Burma at that time did not need to understand a Burmese language, only an Indian language or English.¹⁷

Another source of racial tension can be found at the lower level of the colonial social structure. In the workplaces, the Indian and Chinese immigrants specialised in trade and unskilled labour while the Burmese were principally engaged in peasant agriculture. The natives regarded the immigrants as competitors in the labour markets and racial riots between Indians and Burmese occurred in 1930 and again in 1938. The Indian and Chinese immigrants were denounced by journalists, cartoonists and nationalists.¹⁸ A characteristic of Burmese economic life was the exploitation of the native peasants by moneylenders, who were mostly Chettyars (Indian caste from Southern India). Burma was primarily an agricultural country at the end of 1930s. Burmese peasants needed capital not only to extend their land and for cultivation but also for food and clothes for their families before harvest time. The role of Chettyars, who originally came from South India, was important in the development of Lower Burma, and they and other moneylenders loaned vast sums of money at high interest rates. When the Burmese peasants were faced with disastrous flood, drought or other natural hazards, they could not repay the loans. Also, they had to pay a capitation tax in cash to the colonial government, which was a direct head tax applied in Lower Burma. In Upper Burma, there was a tax on non-agricultural income known as *Thathameda*, which was calculated at a fixed rate per household.¹⁹ Under Burmese rule, tax was levied in kind, but under British rule it was levied in cash. With time, ownership of the land passed into the hands of non-agriculturalists and the Burmese peasants became tenants and workers. Between 1901 and 1939, the status of the peasant changed from owner to agricultural labourer.²⁰ Thus, began the formation of a landless agricultural labouring class in colonial Burma.

Another important industry, teak, the principal item of export, also came under foreign control. The teak tree had been declared the 'Royal Tree' in the reigns of the

16. Mi Mi Khaing, *op.cit.*, p.75.

17. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. Even Thakin Aung San, while he was serving as general secretary in the Dobama Asiayone, spoke the Indian language 'Baryar Gyaung' to the driver of the rickshaw he and Thakin Hla Kyway hired to go to ဆယ်သန်းဂျာနယ်တိုက် (10 Million Journal Publishing House).

18. Adas, *op.cit.*, pp.136-137. A pamphlet was issued in 1931 in which one of the nationalists, U Saw who later became a Premier, claimed that the Indians had come to Burma to exploit the labour force, industry and commerce.

19. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.17; Taylor, *The State in Burma*, pp.191-192.

20. Andrus, *op.cit.*, p.70

Burmese Kings and, in 1886, the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, laid down a decree that made teak trees state property. The teak industry was in the hands of a few large companies, mainly British and Indian. The Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation Limited (BBTCL) remained the largest firm. All the leading companies got concessions, “long-term lesses” from the government because the industry required a long-term investment for extraction, milling and marketing.²¹ The oil industry was also dominated by British interests; the Burma Oil Company, the country's chief producer and refiner of petroleum, the British Burma Petroleum Company and Burma Shell.²²

In these ways, the Burmese people suffered economic and social disintegration under colonial rule. The colonial government created a plural society in Burma to maintain its political control and reap the economic benefits. Under pre-colonial Burmese kings, Burmese society had a plural character based on race and occupation, but under the British rule, the society was transformed into a plural society on the basis of economic factors. J.S. Furnivall, in his book, *Netherlands India*, defined the colonial plural society as:

a society,...comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit...the rulers and the ruled are of different races.²³

He also pointed out the defects of the plural society in his book, *The Governance of Modern Burma*. He argued that the plural society of Burma comprised:

numerous groups living side by side, but separately, meeting only in the market place. Each racial group and sub-group depended on the others for the performance of its own special economic functions, but their economic interests were often antagonistic and they had no social life in common. The relations between the groups were governed solely by law, and it was only by law supported by adequate military force that they could be held together.²⁴

21. *Ibid.*, pp.98-99, pp.105-106. The five leading firms in the teak industry were (1) Messrs. MacGregor & Co.; (2) Messrs. Steel Brothers; (3) Messrs Foucar & Co.; (4) T.D. Findlay and Son; and (5) Indo-Burmese firm, U Bah Oh and Co.

22. Taylor, *The State In Burma*, p.133.

23. J.S Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1944, p. 446.

24. J.S. Furnivall, *The Governance Of Modern Burma*, New York: International Secretariat: Institute Of Pacific Relations, 1958, p.22.

There was an extreme form of pluralism in Burma and it resulted in the racial riots and the rebellion led by Saya San in 1930. In addition though the economy progressed rapidly up to the 1930 Depression, the indigenous peoples remained at the bottom of the social economic pyramid. Thus, there was social disorder because the plural society rested on unequal wealth and power. There, however, are a range of issues that need further analysis including: the redefinition of 'Plural Society'; the ownership of major economic resources; private money lenders; and the increase of landless peasants. And, also there was a complex ethnic mix. In this context, the indigenous political elite group came from the middle class, created by the very situation when they began to fight against the colonial policy and imperialism. They found a tonic in socialist literatures.

Patriotism, Nationalism and Socialism

The development of a nationalist struggle was given impetus by such international circumstances as the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), the 1911 Revolution in China, the First World War (1914-1918), the 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia and the Indian nationalist movements led by Mahatma Gandhi. The nationalist movement started as religious organisation, the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) based on the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), established in 1906. Important developments in the nationalist movements in 1920 included the transformation of the YMBA into the General Council of Burmese Association (GCBA) and the first Students' Strike organised in 1920. On the Burmese political scene, the GCBA was influential prior to 1930. What is noteworthy for example is the leadership role played by one of the GCBA, led by U Soe Thein, founder of the Galon Athins (Associations)) members - Saya San, in the 1930 Peasants' *Ayeidawpon*²⁵ (literally 'uprising').²⁶

Ultimately, the GCBA had withered away but it added fuel to the fire of Burmese nationalism. During Saya San's *Ayeidawpon* the colonial government put up a signboard in the delta city of Myaungmya, "Do not throw fruit from the jujube tree

25. According to the Myanmar-English Dictionary published in 1994 by the Ministry of Education, "Ayeidawpon" means "social or political uprising; revolution". See also Robert H. Taylor, "Burmese Concepts of Revolution" in Mark Hobart and Robert H. Taylor (Editors), *Context Meaning and Power in Southeast Asia*, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1986, pp.79-92.

26. Parimal Ghosh, *Brave Men of the Hills: Resistance and Rebellion in Burma, 1825-1932*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000, p.148. In Legend, "Galon" is the only one able to defeat the "Naga". Galon was the mythical bird of Hindu mythology, *Garuda*, which lived on snakes, the *Nagas*. Saya San's message was that only Garuda could vanquish the Nagas, ie. the British.

at the Myintmow-taung (Meru Mountain)²⁷". It meant that 'You are too weak to compete against the might of the British'. The patriotic Burmese were very angry and came to regard the colonial government as both unlawful and lawless and Saya San as a patriotic revolutionary.²⁸

The foundation of the Dobama Asiayone or "We Burmese Association" on 30 May 1930 further demonstrated the rising Burmese national spirit and challenged colonial administrators and Indian economic exploiters to recognise that the Burmese were the rightful masters in their own lands.²⁹ The spirit of nationalism expressed in the Dobama Asiayone's motto (in Burmese) of 1930, "Burmese is Our Literature, Burmese is Our Language and Cherish Our Literature", was a reaction to this growing threat to local languages under British, Indian and Chinese dominations.³⁰

Within the Dobama Asiayone, there was greater engagement among the members, Thakins and the student elite group after the 1936 Students' Strike.³¹ This added momentum to the nationalist movement and resulted in the Thakins taking leading roles in the 1300 Ayeidawpon (1938-9).³² As a result of the Ayeidawpon, mass organisations—peasants' and workers' organisations—were set up for the first time in the colonial period, forming the basis for Burma's struggle for independence.

Despite this unrest and protest, the nationalists did not get the independence they wanted. The British only permitted a limited democratic involvement through the Joint Administration in 1923 and the 91 Departmental Administration of 1937-41³³,

27. "Myintmow-taung" means "Very big mountain", like "Mount Meru". In Burmese mythology, the mountain is an immense mountain forming the centre of the cosmos and is surrounded by four great islands occupying the cardinal points.

28. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု"၊ အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂ နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင်အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောဆောင်းပါး၊ (U Soe Myint, "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League For Democracy, *The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum*, Vol. II.)

29. Dobama Asiayone's founding members assumed the title of "Thakin" in-front of their names. The term, "Thakin" was used for white rulers in the colonial period. The adoption of "Thakins" by Burmans was intended to show that they claimed equality with Europeans and stood for complete independence.

30. Also in Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, p.233.

31. 1936 Rangoon University Strike, Mss/Eur D 1066/3 (British Library, London): The 2nd Students' Strike in 1936 was based on the expulsion of Ko Nu and Ko Aung San in February 1936. Ko Nu was the President of the Students' Union of Rangoon University in 1936 and Ko Aung San was the editor of the student magazine, "Oway".

32. During the British colonial period in 1938-39, in Burma, there were three linked strikes—a workers' strike, a peasants' strike and the 3rd students' strike. The era coincided with the Burmese Years 1300. So, Burmese named the event, "1300 Ayeidawpon".

33. The Secretary of State, *Burma: Statement of Policy by His Majesty's Government*, London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1945, p.5. In the Act of 1935, there was a House of Representatives of 132 seats in which 91 were general seats and the remaining 41 were reserved for minorities, Chambers of

1937-41, by separating Burma from India (despite an anti-separation majority in the 1932 election) in the Government of Burma Act, 1935. The young nationalists also viewed old Burmese politicians as corrupt.³⁴ The young Burmese nationalists learned from the Saya San Ayeidawpon and from the 1300 Ayeidawpon. They saw that the two Ayeidawpons had been unsuccessful in overthrowing the British, because they lacked modern weapons and a trained army. In response, the nationalists legally founded the Burma Freedom Bloc on 1 September 1939, collaborating with the former Premier Dr Ba Maw. They also set up an illegal secret party called the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (PRP), on 18 November 1939 to coordinate the military struggle. Its aim was to get military aid from outside Burma.³⁵

Thakin Mya as Nationalist Leader

In their attempts to regain independence, the nationalist leadership searched for a single leader. This view of leadership came from Party's revolutionary tradition. Contenders included from U Ba Pe, Dr Ba Maw, and U Saw.³⁶ Eventually, they selected Thakin Mya, because of "his history of service to the people".³⁷ Thakin Mya was born in 1897, in Htonbo, Prome (now Pyi) District.³⁸ His native town and his wife's native town of Okkpo influenced his career and his movements. In Burma, Prome and Tharrawaddy District were notable for producing revolutionaries during the British occupation. Significantly for Thakin Mya's future political life, the two districts were his main power base. The youth, the peasants and farmers from these

Commerce, Labour and the University. So, it was called the "91 Departmental Administration". It produced three Prime Ministers: Dr Ba Maw (the first Prime Minister of Burma) and U Pu and U Saw.
34. Preparatory Committee, Asian Socialist Conference (1952), *Report of the Preliminary for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25-29 March 1952*, Rangoon: 1952. (From IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

35. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀-၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.10-12)

36. U Ba Pe was a veteran of Burmese politics. He had taken part in politics since the periods of YMBA and GCBA. In Burmese politics, he was known as Bagyi Ba Pe. He was a member of the Legislative Council from 1923 onwards and, became Minister of Forests, 1930-32 and 1934-36. Then, he served as Minister for Home Affairs, 1939-40. Dr Ba Maw served as Education minister, 1934, a member of the House of Representatives 1936-40 and, Prime Minister, 1937. U Saw was known in Burmese politics as Galon (Garuda) U Saw because he founded the pocket-army, Galon Army, which was armed with bamboo-sticks, was a minister for Forests and Agriculture in 1939 and then became Prime Minister in 1940.

37. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.8)

38. Interview with U Saw Hlaing on 16.11.1990; မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ၏နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များကိုဆန်းစစ်လေ့လာခြင်း (၁၉၂၀-၁၉၄၇)။" မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့ယူကျမ်းရေးကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂။ (Maung Ye Mya, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1982.); သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိဇ္ဇာ)၊ "အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီး သခင်မြ"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉၊ စာ-၃၅။ (Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Press, 1979, p.35.)

districts became his followers.³⁹ The story of his leadership shows how the political parties of Burma were formed through a combination of a strong sense of local tradition and a revolutionary anti-colonialism.

Thakin Mya's political life began in 1916 in his university days when he founded the first "Kyimyindine Students' Union Club" with the assistances of Ko Zin, Ko Khin and Ko Tune Pe.⁴⁰ The aim of the union was to improve the welfare of students rather than to take part in politics.⁴¹ The union building, however, became a centre in which to discuss politics, especially dissatisfaction with the University of Rangoon Act (1920). He became one of the twenty-six leaders of the 1920 Students' Strike.

After the 1920 Students' Strike, the strikers left the government schools and the university and worked as teachers in what were supposedly national schools. A national college was opened at Bahan Township as was a National Education Council. Ko Mya entered the Bahan National College as a teacher and he was a member of the National Education Council⁴². In 1922, he served as a teacher in Kyinmyindine National School.⁴³ Burmese social structure place teachers, doctors and lawyers within the upper middle class, a position that gives them status and recognition but not necessarily high salaries. Those who work at these jobs are regarded as noble and respected persons. Thakin Mya's teaching jobs, therefore, made him much admired. Furthermore, after he finished his Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry in 1924, he graduated with a Bachelor of Law in 1927 and commenced working as a lawyer in Tharrawaddy.⁴⁴ He was not concerned so much with making money, as with advocating the cause of the peasants living in Tharrawaddy.⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that he was not a womaniser nor did he allow romantic attraction to interfere with his work.⁴⁶

39. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁၂။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.12.) He formed the "Boys Scouts" to maintain discipline among local youths.

40. Ko Zin, Ko Khin and Ko Tun Pe were members of the First Students' Union. After he gained his degree, U Tun Pe became the gazetted officer of sub-divisional rank in the border.

41. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁-၂။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, pp.1-2.)

42. A National Council was formed in March 1921 and the executive committee comprised M.A Maung Gyi (Chairman), U Maung Maung Ohn Khine (General Secretary), Ko Mya (later became Leader Thakin Mya in Burmese politics), Ko Ba Oo, Ko Po Lat, A Ya Zat and Ko Soe Win. The Council was intended to administer the national schools and to ensure that all the exams were held systematically.

43. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၇-၉။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, pp.7-9.)

44. *Ibid.*, p.11.

45. *Ibid.*, p.12.

46. ဝိဇ္ဇာ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၅၀။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.50.) In his student life, he fell in love with an Anglo-Burmese girl for 3 months but he ignored her because he was afraid of not passing the exam.

The year before he completed his law degree, his parents arranged his marriage to Ma Khin Nyunt. Interestingly, U Saw who was to become premier in the British administration (1940-1942) also proposed marriage, through his parents, to Ma Khin Nyunt, but, the former Premier did not come to hate him. To illustrate the respect Thakin Mya could command, U Saw's admiration overcame any ill will his defeat as suitor caused.⁴⁷ This fact also shows that the political movements were based on regional bias and personality cults.

Although U Mya did not take part in the peasants' revolution, he continued to support the nationalist cause by advocating for Saya San and his followers.⁴⁸ He encouraged Saya San to write a statement in support of the peoples' struggle, but Saya San was afraid of being sentenced to death and he apologised to the Deputy Commissioner.⁴⁹ At Saya San's trial, U Mya helped the defence barristers, Dr Ba Maw and U Tun Aung Kyaw. He donated all the money he earned from the cases of Saya San and his followers, a demonstration of U Mya's commitment to nationalism.⁵⁰

U Mya first became a member of the Dobama Asiayone in March 1934 and thus known as Thakin Mya. By 1936, he was a Central Committee Member of the All-Burma Dobama Asiayone.⁵¹ The Dobama formed a party called "Komin Kochin" (Own King, Own State) to participate in the 1936 national election; if its candidates were elected, it could challenge the 91 Departmental Administration from within parliament. A rule was made that no elected member of Komin Kochin was to accept a parliamentary salary. Thakin Mya was elected by the constituency of Southern Tharrawaddy as a representative of the party.⁵² It is notable that, as a member of the House of Representatives, he observed the Dobama rule and refused a government salary.⁵³ He participated in the Parliament as a Dobama member, arguing that this was

47. *Ibid.*, pp.30-33, p.102.) The former Premier U Saw ordered the assassination of the Cabinet Members of the Governor Council in 1947. However, he asked his men to refrain from assassinating Thakin Mya, which strongly suggests that U Saw admired Thakin Mya.

48. *Ibid.*, p.121.) Other lawyers for the case of Saya San were Tharrawaddy U Pu and Dr Ba Maw.

49. Interview with U Saw Hlaing on 16.11.1990. U Saw Hlaing did not regard Saya San as a "National Hero" and only U Tun Sein and his son from Phyar Pon (the Delta area) who faced with the death penalty were given this status. When his son was faced with execution, he refused a mask and proclaimed that "in coming lives, I want to be a winner over the British."

50. ဝိဇ္ဇာ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁၁၉-၁၂၄။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, pp.119-124.)

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-137; မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁၂-၁၄။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, pp.12-14.)

52. *Ibid.*, 155; မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁၆။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.16.)

53. *Ibid.*, p.14, p.158; မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၁၅။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.15) In the preface to Thakin Mya's Biography written by Waidura, Thakin Khin Aung mentioned that Thakin Mya took the daily wages and transportation costs while he was attending the Parliament but that he did not take the salary of the

the only way to win independence for Burma. He demonstrated his national sentiment by requesting permission to speak in Burmese at the parliament. His activities, thus, encouraged nationalism and the Students' Union Group in particular praised him as an honourable person.

He was able to separate political and social matters when the Dobama split into two factions in 1938. Thakin Mya was involved in the Dobama faction led by Thakin Ko Taw Hmaing together with Thakin Aung San, Thakin Hla Pe, Thakin Nu, Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Thein Maung when the movement split into two groups—the other was led by Thakin Ba Sein and Thakin Tun Ok.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, he maintained contact socially with the other faction.⁵⁵ His broadmindedness was one of his notable qualities.

Mya showed his effectiveness as a leader by organising the masses by helping peasants. Though peasants attended the conferences of the Dobama, very few became members. They were afraid of their headmen and the police who threatened them and warned them against joining the Dobama. Knowing their circumstances, he began to organise them based on their economic circumstances, not on their political situation. Then, he gave guidance to them by forming a sub-committee for solving the peasants' problems such as landlessness, large debts and the lives of agricultural porters and he himself formed a peasants' organisation in Tharrawaddy. Gradually, peasant organisations could be seen in other areas, for example, Myaungmya, Maupin, Insein, Daydeye and Letpadan.⁵⁶ He was elected founding chairman of the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation on 4 January 1939.⁵⁷ It, thus, can be said that he was possibly the only one, or one of the very few, who could organise and unite the mass of the peasants.

Thakin Mya's attempts to create links to the working class were also important. In January 1938, the Workers' Ayeidawpon took place in the oil fields. To solve the workers' problems, the Dobama Asiayone established a committee in which Thakin

Parliament. His acceptance of some parliamentary allowances is defensible on the ground that he had to take care of comrades who were working at the Dobama Asiayone as full time members.

54. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်းနှင့်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးခရီး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၉၊ ၁၂၀။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win and Burmese Politics*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1969, p.120); မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၁၇-၃၁။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.31.)

55. Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung in 1986.

56. Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980, p.171, foot-note; မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၁၆-၁၇။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17.)

57. မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၂၆။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.26); ဒီဂူရ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၅၀၄။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.504.) Thakin Mya served as president for the organisation from 1939 to 1940.

Mya was a member.⁵⁸ He included U Ba Hlaing (a member of Parliament and workers' representative) who gave assistance and advice to the workers.⁵⁹ He also rejected moves in the Legislative Council that would increase pressure upon the strikers who were at the oil-field, and requested that the matter be moved to Parliamentary discussion.⁶⁰ He was also involved in the Enquiry Committee set up by the Dobama Asiayone concerned with workers' affairs.⁶¹ Within the parliament, Thakin Mya proposed amending the criminal law because district officers used the law to punish politicians.⁶² In this way, he did as much as he could to solving the workers' problems and in the process won the confidence of the mass of the workers.

How did Thakin Mya co-operate with others who were to become prominent communist and socialist leaders? While he was serving as a teacher in the National College, established after the students' strike in 1920, he worked along side Thakin Kodaw Hmaing who later became an influential leader in Dobama Asiayone, and Dedok U Ba Cho who became chairman of the Trade Union Congress (Burma) (TUCB), one of the wings of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (PFP), founded in November 1945.⁶³ Moreover, while he was studying in the Baptist High School in Rangoon from 1912 to 1915, U Ba Maw, a future Prime Minister in the British and Japanese administrations, was his English teacher.⁶⁴ Saya Mya was science teacher for Maung Ko Ko Gyi—later to become a theoretician for the PFP and its Chairman after Thakin Mya was assassinated in July 1947—when Ko Ko Gyi was studying in Ninth Grade at the Central Government High School in Rangoon.⁶⁵ Thakin Mya, therefore, had had teacher-pupil relations with these two key leaders.

As a result of these activities, by 1938, most of the leaders of the nationalist movement, including Thakin Aung San, proclaimed Thakin Mya as Saya (meaning Teacher) reflecting their esteem. After the Second Students' Strike of 1936, most of

58. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၂၀။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.20.) The other members were U Aung Pe, U Ba Hlaing, Thakins Kha, Ba Tin, Phoe Hla Gyi, Hlaing, Thin and Lay Maung.

59. သခင်လွင် "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း" ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈၊ စာ-၁၉၃-၁၉၄။ (Thakin Lwin, *A History of Workers' Movements In Burma*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1968, pp.193-194.)

60. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၂၁။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.21.)

61. တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်းပြုစုရေးအဖွဲ့ "တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း" (ပ)တွဲ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၆၊ စာ-၃၁၀-၃၁၁။ (A Committee of Dobama Asiayone, *A History of Dobama Asiayone*, Vol. I, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1976, p.310-311) Formed at the Prome Conference held on 22 March 1938. The committee members were Thakin Mya, U Ariya, Thakin Lay Maung and Thakin Tin Maung.

62. မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၂၃။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.23.)

63. *Ibid.*, p.7.

64. ဝိဇ္ဇာ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၅၁။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.51.)

65. The Central Government High School was situated in front of the Dental College which was placed within the compound of the Rangoon General Hospital. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

the prominent student leaders, such as Ko Nu, Ko Aung San, Ko Hla Pe, Ko Ba Hein, Ko Ba Swe and KoThein Pe, joined with the Dobama Asiayone under Thakin Mya. Furthermore, the future leaders of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun, participated in the Asiayone where they had a chance to study under Thakin Mya's leadership.

The increasingly high esteem in which Thakin Mya was held by the Students' Union group that organised the Second Student Strike of 1936 was affirmed by events in 1938. Striking oil field workers, led by Thakin Pho Hla Gyi, marched to Rangoon on 30 November 1938, despite being banned from going to the city by the Inspector of Police from Magwe.⁶⁶ The Students' Union sent student leaders Ko Ba Swe (who later became one of the leaders in BSP) and Ko Ba Hein (who later became one of the leaders in CPB) to help the strikers. Both were arrested because of their inflammatory speech making. Consequently, Rangoon experienced the Third Students' Strike. More than three hundred students were wounded and student leader Ko Aung Kyaw died on 22 December 1938. Thakin Mya sent a letter of protest to the Governor together with his resignation from the House of Representatives.⁶⁷ The elite students from the 1936 Students' Union Group were impressed with what he did inside and outside parliament and noted his close connection with the Dobama Asiayone. They saw him as their leader.

To sum up, Thakin Mya's role in Burmese politics was crucial; he was one of the outstanding young patriots. He gradually attained respect, based on his capabilities, from the students, peasants and workers, old politicians, thakins and ethnic peoples. This shows very clearly why the young patriots chose him and not others such as Dr Ba Maw or U Saw as their leader. While the senior politicians concentrated only on parliamentary politics, Thakin Mya was practically engaged, solving the problems of peasants and workers. In the parliament too, he worked tirelessly against imperialism and advocated for the peasants and workers. Hence, it is not strange that the young patriots admired him and ignored the older politicians. Thakin Mya became a member of the Dobama in 1934 and then, two years later, he was an active member of its Central Committee. His position as a member of parliament gave him social respectability, an advantage other leading members of the

66. "တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း" (၃)တွဲ၊ ၈-၃၅၈။ (*A History of Dobama Asiayone*, Vol. II, p.358.)

67. *Ibid.*

Asiayone did not have.⁶⁸ It is significant that his relationships with Burma's future leaders were also very smooth. He took part in the Freedom Bloc, in the PRP, during the administration of the Japanese occupation as an influential leader. Among the young patriotic men, he became a widely-recognised decision-maker. By looking at Thakin Mya and his fellow revolutionaries, it is evident that the Socialists had strong nationalist sentiment based on an anti-imperialist commitment.

The Class Background of Burma's Socialist Leadership

The creation of the PRP in 1939 is a suitable point in the history of Burmese socialism to look at the class origins of the socialist leaders and at the structure of colonial society. The educated elite group came from the middle class, and became steadily the spokesmen of the radicalised middle class.⁶⁹

The parents of most of the socialist leaders came from the second sector of the middle class, that is, the second layer of the second tier of the pyramid. Among the parents of the PRP members, there were: merchants, traders, a landowner, a forest ranger, lawyers, an agriculturalist, a deputy superintendent of police, a retired head clerk, a cultivator and trader, an ex-mayor of Rangoon, owners of rice-mills, a 'higher great pleader' (a lawyer who can practise at any court except the High Court), a revenue surveyor, and Myothugyi (Headman in city).⁷⁰ Predominantly, then, their parents' occupations were merchants, traders, a landowner, lawyers, government officials, owners of rice-mills and administrators. Of these, merchants were the largest group. An additional feature is that there were also parents with occupations such as cultivator and trader, and an agriculturalist. In other words, landownership was an important feature of the family backgrounds of some future leaders. This profile is surprising when a comparison is made between the Burmese revolutionaries and their

68. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. He mentioned that Thakin Mya and Thakin Aunt Gyi used to go to the headquarters of the Dobama Asiayone after parliamentary sessions.

69. Taylor, *op.cit.*, p.2.

70. People's Literature Committee and House, *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, Rangoon: Sarpaybeikman Press, 1962; Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp.96-97; Autobiography of former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990. The parents of Thakin Mya, Thakin Nu, U Ba Swe, U Ko Ko Gyi, U Win, U Tun Win, Thakin Pan Myaing, Bo Min Gaung, U Hla Aung, Thakin Maung Maung Galay and Daw Khin Chit, are merchants; of Thakin Lwin, Thakin Hla Kyway and Bo Khin Maung were traders; of Daw Khin Hla a landowner; of Maithila U Hla Maung a forest ranger; of U Kyaw Nyein, U Ba Win, U Aung Than, Thakin Aung San were lawyers; of Thakin Lun Baw an agriculturalist; of Thakin Tin a deputy superintendent of police; of Thakin Tun Ant and Bo Khin Maung Gale retired head clerk; of Thakin Lu Aye cultivator and trader; of U Kyaw Myint Lay an ex-mayor of Rangoon; of U Pe Than and Thakin San Myint owners of rice-mills; of U Chin Sein a higher great pleader; of Thakin Shu Maung (Bo Ne Win) a revenue surveyor; and of U Ko Ko Gyi a Myothugyi.

Indonesian counterparts; Indonesian revolutionaries were more likely to be the children of government officials.⁷¹ It is also noteworthy that, in Burma, not one socialist leader came from a family of workers or peasants. Most came from families of merchants or officials in government service. The author Saul Rose examined the occupations of the socialists themselves and noted that some came to politics through journalism, others through law, teaching and business but none worked their way up from the ranks of manual labour.⁷² The Socialists therefore were a section of the ruling elite and professional classes.

Most of the young revolutionary men were not actually employed when they founded the Underground Party in 1939, nor when they were involved in the students' movements and the Dobama Asiayone.⁷³ In other words, they had had no work experience. But some acquired jobs before the foundation of the Underground Party, such as in teaching, law, journalism, as members of parliament, as employees of British firm and as government servants.⁷⁴ Ko Kyaw Nyein, a member of the students' elite group, analysed the class composition of Burma's political parties before the Second World War as predominantly middle-class lawyers and upper-class and middle-class landlords. And he pointed out that most of the leaders had gained their law degrees from England or Burma. He categorised these leaders into two groups: (1) educated middle-class people living in towns and cities, and (2) landlords. The policies of these activists at that time were: to win freedom; to gain more posts for Burmese in the civil service; and to increase opportunities for the Burmese.⁷⁵

71. Information from Dr Adrian Vickers. See also about the "class structure" of Indonesian society in the Dutch and Japanese colonial periods and then in the postcolonial period in Justus M. van der Kroef, "The Changing Class Structure of Indonesia": *American Sociological Review*, 1956, pp.138-148.

72. Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, Fourth Edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.63-64; Saul Rose, *op.cit.*, p.135.

73. 1936 Rangoon University Strike, Mss/Eur 1066/3 (British Library, London); Interview with Ko Tun Ohn (Retired Municipal Commissioner of Rangoon) on 14.6.1976 (British Library, London); Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 9.6.1976 (British Library, London); နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၊ ၁၄၇။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.4, p.47.)

74. Dedok U Ba Cho, Thakin Mya, U Win and Bo Khin Maung Gale worked as teachers; Thakin Mya, Thakin Tin, U Kyaw Myint Lay and U Win as lawyers; Dedok U Ba Cho and Thakin Nu involved in journalism; Thakin Mya and Thakin Lun Baw as member of the Parliament; Ko Tin Pe (later he became Brigadier in Tatmadaw), Ko Ba Than who took part in 1936 University strike (later he became a Colonel in Tatmadaw), Ko Ko Gyi (later BSP Chairman) and Ko Khin Maung Latt (later lecturer in English Department of Rangoon University and editor of *the Guardian Newspaper*). The last four worked altogether in a British firm, Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation Ltd. (BBTCL) in c1935; U Aung Than (joined into BSP only in 1945) and Thakin Shu Maung (later one of the Thirty Comrades) worked in Post Office as a clerk.

75. *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25 to 29 March, 1952*, p.9. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

Although it is difficult to trace the exact statistics, perhaps more than one third of prominent party members came from the rice-growing delta region, for example, Ko Maung Maung (former brigadier and ex-ambassador for Burma in Australia), Yangon Ba Swe, Thakin Hla Pe, Thakin Aung Pe, Thakin Soe Myint, Bo Mya Han, Bo Mya Thway and Myaungmya Ba Swe.

In conclusion, most of the leaders involved in the PRP were middle class. Their parents could afford to have them educated under the colonial system, but this did not blind them to the fate of most Burmese - the workers and peasants who occupied the bottom-most layer of the societal pyramid. In other words, these educated men from the middle class saw the reality of the lower classes despite their colonial education. They intended to uplift the lives of the poor but they themselves were also socially displaced and disempowered by the colonial class structure. Most of the leading socialists were from mercantile families. It is clear that the party was led by members of the deracinated intellectual middle class. There was no one in the leading group, who had to work manually, sweating in either field or factory.

Origins of Socialism in Burma

Socialist ideology came to Burma from Europe. While its most popular forms were clearly not native Burmese, we can however look back at the old Kingdoms, and can find similar ideologies. Socialist characteristics are detectable in the ancient traditions of Burmese village life. There is also evidence of an ideology of state ownership in the reign of King Mindon (1853-1878), including the Konbaung Dynasty's '*Good Social Relations for a King Who Rules According to the Law*' (ရုဇေဓမ္မသင်္ဂဟကျမ်း) presented by U Hlaing who served as a minister for King Mindon.⁷⁶ Examples from this text are the Ten Principles of the King (မင်းကျင့်တရားဆယ်ပါး) and the ideology based on 'equal terms' (social equality) or 'conquest of the whole earth' (ဇယဘူမိဝါဒ). The authority of the Burmese kings was very great and they ruled harshly. To control the greedy and harsh kings, there were also directives written by Sarnarkyan, a Brahmin, called *Sarnarkyan's Niti*⁷⁷ (စာနာကျနီတိ) and directives written

76. မောင်ထင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးဝါဒများ"၊ ခုနစ်ဆယ့်နှစ်အတွင်း (၁)အမှတ်(၈)၊ ၁၉၅၆-၅၇၊ ၉-၁၂။ (Maung Htin, "Burmese Political Ideologies": *Owe Wai Magazines*, Vol. I, No. 8, Rangoon: Students' Union (Rangoon), 1956-57, pp.9-12.)

77. The word *Niti* comes from Pali [the Prakrit language of the Buddhist Scriptures, which is importance to Burmese because most of them are devoted to Buddhism] and means maxim, advice or directive.

by Satuyan Bala, called *Lokaniti* (လောကနိတိ)⁷⁸ which in part resemble socialist ideologies. On the basis of this evidence, it can be said that there existed a core of proto-socialist ideas in traditional Burmese political thinking. Indeed, all the traditional Burmese legal systems in the villages under the old Burmese Kingdoms were based on Buddhist principles of justice, and criticised exploitation. Moreover, a review of Burma's distant past shows that it did not experience a stage of fully-fledged feudalism like Indonesia had. It is better described as semi-feudalistic because there was no caste system and the landlord class was not big, especially in comparison with India. In the traditional rural village, ideology was based on *Communalism* especially in maintaining safety for the village; novice ceremony; compulsory services: the constructions of war-boats and village-paths; irrigation works; and utilising water, play-ground, and rest-houses. Owning a monastery and a pagoda for every village marked how the ideas of the villagers related to Buddhism. The monastic education gave villagers Buddhist principles and elementary education and thus a higher literacy rate, which effected Socialist consciousness in 1930s.⁷⁹

Socialist and communist literatures came relatively late to Burma. The international communist movement reached much of Asia in the 1920s, while Burma was not overtly touched by European socialist ideas until the 1930s. According to the history of the Tatmadaw (National Army), socialism spread to Burma because the locally published newspaper, *The Burma Observer*, reported Russia's October Socialist Revolution of 1917. In 1918-19, the two volumes of *Das Kapital* reached Burma. In 1923-4, U Khin Maung Gyi (Kyaukmyaung) translated both volumes and then published the book "ဝိသနုရက္ခိတကျမ်း".⁸⁰ But socialism did not influence the nationalist movement of the 1920s run by the GCBA. In the 1920s, the Indian Congress Party and its anti-colonial activities influenced Burma, as is evident in the Burmese nationalist movement at that time in the form of the *Wunthanu* (meaning Nationalist) Movements. The colonial government's education system excluded contemporary events from the school curricula and thus, colonial education was regarded as 'slave education'.

78. Lokaniti comes from Pali and means "Buddhist instructions in ethics".

79. Shway Yoe, *The Burman: His Life and Notions*, Third Edition, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1910, pp.75-85; F.S.V. Donnison, *Burma*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970, p.46; Andrus, *op.cit.*, pp.11-13; J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, pp.12-15, p.33, p.55.

80. စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၅-၁၉၄၈" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်း လုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၅၊ ၁၈-၉၃။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, 1945-1948, First Edition, Rangoon: Information Department, 1995, p.93).

It is more likely that Marxism came in the late 1920s or early 1930s on the heels of the worldwide economic depression which reached Burma in the 1930s. However, there is no evidence to indicate the *Saya San Ayeidawpon* (1930) was influenced by socialism, despite the fact that the consequence of the *Ayeidawpon* was to set up the *Saya San's Library*, which led to the spread of socialist literature in Burma.⁸¹ In 1930-1, Dr Thein Maung purchased all twelve works of Lenin published in London in 1918.⁸² One author claimed that interest in Marxist books among Burmese nationalists began in 1932 after Dr Thein Maung returned from the "London Round Table Conference".⁸³ In the same year a journalist, U Tun Pe, purchased and distributed the books recommended in Pandit Nehru's *Impressions of Soviet Russia*.⁸⁴ Thakin Soe, together with Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Bo, studied the leftist literature brought by Ahshin Kyaw from England.⁸⁵ In the early 1930s, within the *All-Burma Youth League* founded early in 1930 by national schoolmasters and college students, a cadre group exchanged political literature and books.⁸⁶ If this is so, it is clear that some people living in Burma had been aware of socialism since 1917 through newspaper reports, even though it had not generally infiltrated the minds of the people.

In the spread of socialism in Burma, significant roles were played by the two brothers, Dr Ba Han and Dr Ba Maw.⁸⁷ It is clear that there was a spread of Marxist socialism among the students' elite group although they denied a strong commitment to Marxist ideology. Connections with foreign communist parties included close

81. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်, "ပိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ စာ-မြေ (Dr Maung Maung (former president), *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, pp.61-69.) The author calls the *Saya San's Ayeidawpon* "Saya San's Tawhlanye" but U Ne Win used the term, "Saya San's Ayeidawpon" when he gave a speech during the revolutionary council period.

82. *Ibid*; E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Background Of The Burmese Revolution*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, p.167. Marxist literature was introduced into Burma in 1931.

83. Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism And Resistance In Burma, 1942-1945: Thein Pe Myint's Wartime Traveller*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984, p.3. Note. The "Round Table Conference" was the practice of having round table conferences with leaders from India and Burma to plan for future administrative or constitutional matters, hosted by British Colonial Government at London.

84. *Ibid*.

85. သိန်းဖေမြင့်, "ဘုံဝါဒနှင့်တို့ဗမာ"၊ (တ)ကြိမ်ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗေဒစတောစာပေ၊ ၁၉၇၆၊ စာ-၁၉၂။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Communalism and Dobama*, 3rd Edition, Rangoon: Bawsataught Press, 1967, p.192). In the biography of Thakin Soe.

86. 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, p.79.

The leaders of the League were Saya Tint (president, Myoma National High School Teacher), Ko Nu (secretary for a while), Ko Ohn (a confidant of U Nu), Saya Hein (teacher at Myoma National High School), Ko Thant, Ko Ba Thauung, Ko Ba Sein, Ko Lay Maung and Ko Thi Han (ex-foreign minister).

87. Norman Nyun-Han, *Burma's Experiment In Socialism*, PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 1971, pp.24-25. They became aware of the world's great egalitarian movements and the individualist philosophies that were practised in Europe while they were studying in England, France and Germany. They also learned British law.

contact with the Indian Communist Party developed while Thakin Thein Pe and Thakin Hla Pe were studying in Calcutta. There were also separate, albeit tenuous pre-Second World War communications with the British Communist Party made by Thakin Kyaw Sein.⁸⁸

Most of the people who contributed to the founding of the PRP in 1939 came from educated backgrounds. They attended the universities and studied for degrees though some did not finish them. The levels of education that some reached were the undergraduate university level, as well as matriculation and high school levels. On the other hand, the levels of education the founders of the CPB reached were: BA and overseas postgraduate degree in law, graduate level, undergraduate level, matriculation, and education unknown.⁸⁹ The educational and intellectual backgrounds of leaders provide some indication of the origins of socialist thought in Burma.

The reading list of Thakin Mya is a good starting point for showing what socialist leaders read, and how socialist theory was adopted and spread. While Maung Mya was in middle school, he used to recite, in English, the poem, "Robert the Bruce" by Eleanor and Herbert Farjeon, about the Scottish king of that name.⁹⁰ The poem revealed the perseverance of the Scottish king, which he found inspiring. During his university life, he read the biographies of Indian leaders—Mahatma Gandhi, and the

88. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma*, p.6. During the Japanese occupation, Thakin Kyaw Sein founded a separate communist party in Burma.

89. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.114, p.156; Saul Rose, *op.cit.*, pp.96-97; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990; မောင်ရဲမြို့ "သခင်မြ" (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.12.) Of those socialists who were active at least before 1948: BL is a postgraduate diploma (2 years course) after BSc, BA. A person, who holds this diploma, could advocate at High Court. The LLB is a law degree (4 years course). BA for Thakhin Aung San, Thakin Nu; undergraduate level for U Sein Win (TUCB), and Thakin San Wai; matriculation for Bo Khin Maung; high school level for Daw Sein Pu; the rest of all Socialist's education can be found in chapter three; Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall Of The Communist Party Of Burma (CPB)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1990.p.57,p.58, p.66, p.68; Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, First Edition, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, pp.256-257; John F. Cady, *Contacts with Burma, 1935-1949: A Personal Account*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, Centre for International Studies, Southeast Asia Program, 1983, p.81. Thakin Thein Pe, alias Thein Pe Myint, got a BA degree from Rangoon University. Thein Pe also got a postgraduate degree in law from Calcutta University. Thakin Than Tun graduated with distinction from the King Edward Memorial High School at Pynmana in 1931 and graduated from the Teachers Training College at Rangoon in 1935. Goshal Ba Tin graduated from Rangoon University. Thakin Ba Hein was a Central Revolutionary leader in Underground Party, who probably reached undergraduate level, and Ko Hla Maung, alias Bo Zeya, one of the Thirty Comrades, was educated at Rangoon University. Thakin Ba Thein Tin reached matriculation level. Thakin Soe was described by J.S Furnivall as "the prophet of the new Marxist school, a man of little education but fanatic zeal."

90. မိရရ "သခင်မြ" (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.50); Norah Montgomerie, *To Read & To Tell*, London: The Bodley Head Ltd., 1962, pp.217-218.

Ali Brothers, and also studied books about the Indian Congress Party and the speeches of Congress leaders, R.C Dutt, S.N Banerjea and G.K Gokhale.⁹¹ Moreover, the books he read indicate that he focused on Indian history, especially material to do with the Indian National Congress, and on Chinese history but also on independence movements. He learned about the movements of India, the Home Rule sought by the Irish nationalists, the Freedom and New Era of Turkey and the revolution led by Dr Sun Yet-Sen in China.⁹² He became more politically conscious when he attended the speech of L.F Taylor, the principal of the Government High School (Rangoon), at the Buddhist Association of Rangoon College on 23 January 1916.⁹³ The Bengali bookshops in Rangoon—the Royal Stationary Bookshop and Calcutta Publishing House—provided political material for him during his university life. A notable fact is that he did not read books about class-based movements and thus, his understanding of socialism was informed predominantly by the freedom movements of India and China. And the most interesting thing for the future foreign policy of Union of Burma is that he concentrated more on the regions that had common boundaries with Burma than on other continents.

At the same time, Ko (Thakin, Bogoyoke or U)⁹⁴ Aung San, who later became the leading National Hero in Burma, and one of the main leaders in the PRP, during his university life, read a mixture of English literature and biographies of fascist leaders and of Indian nationalist leaders—such as the works of Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw, Goldsmith, Sarwalar Scotch, Hitler, Mussolini, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru.⁹⁵ Ko Ko Gyi, who later became a Marxist teacher in the reincarnation of the PRP (PF (Socialist) P), read the political writings of English authors such as G.D.H Cole, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and J. Ramsay MacDonald while he was studying for his Intermediate A (Inter A), then studied British socialist literature while he was at university but when he became involved with the Thakins, his reading list

91. B.N., Pandey, *The Indian Nationalist Movement, 1885-1947: Selected documents*, London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979, pp.264-266: Appendix B: Congress Presidents, Viceroys and Secretaries of State for India, 1885-1974. The congress leaders served as Congress Presidents for R.C Dutt in 1899, S.N Banerjea in 1902 and G.K. Gokhale in 1905.

92. မိုဝှေ့ရယ် "သခင်မြ" စာ-၅၈၆၈။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.58, p.68; မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၂။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.2.)

93. မိုဝှေ့ရယ် "သခင်မြ" စာ-၅၆။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.56.) The title of the speech by Mr L.F Taylor was the "For the uplift of Burma" in which "there are needs of unity for Burmese to promote administration and economy, to solve the problem of Indian mass migration into Burma and to let the rulers know the reality of national desire..."

94. I will use one title for each period, according to his political characteristic in Burmese politics.

95. မိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၊ "ကျောင်းသားဝတ္တရား"၊ အိုးဝေမဂ္ဂဇင်းအတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၈)၊ ၁၉၅၆-၅၇၊ စာ-၅-၈။ (Bogyoke Aung San, "The Responsible Duty of Student": *Owe Wai Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 8, 1956-57, Rangoon: Students' Union, 1956-1957, p.5-8.)

included the works of Marx and Lenin.⁹⁶ He aimed to be well-informed in Marxism and Leninism, so took his books to work and attempted to read them as soon as he finished his jobs.⁹⁷ He not only studied himself but also taught Marxism and Leninism occasionally to three or four young men, including Ko Tin Pe, and special lessons were held on "Dialectical Materialism", "The Materialistic Conception of History and The Law of Motion of Capitalism".⁹⁸ He studied Marx's *Capital*; Lenin's *The Teachings of Karl Marx* and *Imperialism*; *A Hand Book of Marxism* by Emile Burns; and *Theory and Practice of Socialism* by John Strachey.

To sum up this review of the writings that inspired Burmese socialists, the students' elite group kept in touch with the mass of British socialist literature while the thakins concentrated more on Marxism and Leninism, although Thakin Than Tun read the writings of Sidney and Beatrice Webb.⁹⁹ Thakin Soe was regarded as a left-wing polemicist who introduced Marxist-Leninist political concepts through the idiom of Burmese Buddhist thought to politically active students and others before the Second World War.¹⁰⁰ Thakin Soe was assisted by Thakin Ba Thaug, a pioneer founder of the *Dobama Asiayone* in 1930, to translate Marxist literature into Burmese.¹⁰¹

The reading lists of the students' elite group and of other Thakins were also revealing. Taylor states that 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, rather than from the writings that informed the Russian Revolution.¹⁰² Examination of the evidence shows that some of those revolutionaries read more broadly. One prominent student leader from the Christian Judson College at that time, Ko Maung Maung (who became one of the main leaders in Underground Party in 1939 and later a Brigadier), explained that many students just quietly read the mass of British socialist literature which had been contributed to the

96. Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi, retold by former brigadier, Tin Pe; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

97. *Ibid.* He was given notice by the British manager who said, "I can't stop you from reading what you want, but I can stop you from reading in working hours".

98. *Ibid.* He used several methods to learn: some paragraphs he learned by heart; some paragraphs he translated into his own English; and he précised some paragraphs.

99. Cady, *Contacts With Burma*, p.82.

100. Taylor, *The State In Burma*, p.238.

101. Interview with Myawaddy U Ye Gaung on 18.4.2001. But, in the conversation with Saya Dr Robert H. Taylor, he claimed that Thakin Soe in his interview could handle the English language well.

102. Taylor, *Marxism And Resistance In Burma*, p.3; Taylor, *The State In Burma*, p.215.

Students' Union Library. Among the subjects of interest to the students' elite group, he included the Sinn Fein, and the Irish revolutionary movement; Kemal Ataturk; and, for some, the socialist popularisers, G.D.H Cole, H. J Laski and John Strachey; and then, for a few others, the complete works of Lenin.¹⁰³ Other books read by the students' elite group included the writings of Karl Marx, Joseph Stalin, and Sidney and Beatrice Webb.¹⁰⁴ Historical figures who they admired included Pandit Jawaharial Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, Mussolini, Mahatma Gandhi, Hitler and Eamon de Valera.¹⁰⁵ One member of the students' elite group, Bo Khin Maung Gale, read the biography of Mussolini.¹⁰⁶

The spread of socialist theory was enhanced in the mid-1930s by the formation of several important collections of socialist literature. The Burma Book Club, established by English scholar and Fabian socialist J.S. Furnivall, provided material for the circle of Thakins.¹⁰⁷ The reading matter for Burmese intellectuals, including *Das Kapital*, came from the Saya San's Library which was established in 1931.¹⁰⁸ In 1936, the Nagani Book Club (Red Dragon Book Club) was formed by Thakin Nu, and in 1937 and the Burma Fabian Society by Deedok U Ba Cho; both played a significant role in disseminating leftist ideologies and socialism in Burma.¹⁰⁹ There were other publishing houses, such as the Dobama Asiayone Publishing House and the Aunglantaw Publishing House, which distributed socialist literature translated from

103. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p.23. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, p.145.

104. Mary P. Callahan, "Democracy In Burma: The Lessons of History": *Analysis: Political Legacies and Prospects for Democratic Development in Southeast Asia: Burma and Indonesia*, Vol. IX, No. 3, Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, Laing Communications Inc., 1998, p.10.

105. ဟိန်းလတ်၊ "အိန္ဒိယမျိုးချစ်သူရဲကောင်း(နေတာဂျီ)ဆုတံဆိပ်ချွန်ရာဘိမ်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပညာဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၉၊ ၈-၁၁-၁၃၉။ (Hein Latt, *Indian Patriotic Hero (Naytarji) Subha Chandra Bose*, Rangoon: Pyinnyar Baikman Publishing House, 1979, pp.118-139.) Subha Chandra Bose has been sent to Mandalay prison in Burma by the colonial British Government for two years (1925-7). He had a chance to meet Burmese politicians while he was in the prison. 1936 Rangoon University Strike, Mss/Eur D 1066/3 (British Library, London).

106. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ ၈-၁၀။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, p.101).

107. A Letter to Julius Braunthal, *Socialist International, from Michael Young on 12 May 1952*. (From IISG Archive, Amsterdam). U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, p.145.

108. John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, 4th Edition, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969, p.377; ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ ၈-၆၂-၆၃။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, pp.62-63).

Before Saya San was arrested, he donated the money, obtained from sales of a medical book he wrote. The books, selected from the book list provided by PanditJawaharial Nehru in his "My Impressions of Russia", were ordered from the Burma Book Club.

109. David I. Steinberg, *Burma: A Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia*, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982, p.41; U Oung Myint Tun, *Democratic Socialism in Burma (1948-1958)*. This document is from Patricia Herbert (London); ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေနှင့်ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး"၊ ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၏လုပ်ငန်းကိုင်ဖက်များ၊

ဗမာသမိုင်းဟင်းလေး၊ မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်(သမိုင်းဌာန)၁၉--?၊ ၈-၁၈၉-၁၉၀။ (Daw Aye Thida, "The Nagani Literatures and Burmese Politics in the Colonial Period": The Colleagues of Dr. Than Tun, *Studies In Burmese History*, Mandalay (History Department), nd, pp.189-190.)

English to Burmese.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, there were two Marxist study groups: one started in 1938 at the Students' Union of Rangoon University and, another on 15 August 1939. One of these groups had about ten members, including Thakin Soe, Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Thein Pe, and Ko Ba Hein, later the main leaders of the CPB, as well as Thakin Hla Pe and Thakin Aung San.¹¹¹

The objectives of the reading clubs were to provoke the spirit of freedom in the minds of the peoples, to awaken the workers and the peasants through translating Burmese literatures, understanding their strengths and to win human rights for the workers and peasants.¹¹² The founder of the Nagani Book Club was Thakin Nu, who played a part in the Fabian Party led by Deedok U Ba Cho in 1936 and became a prominent leader in the PRP.¹¹³ Ko Tin Pe, a former brigadier and later involved in the PRP and BSP, laboured as a volunteer for the Nagani Book Club while he was working in the (B.B.T.C.L).¹¹⁴ This suggests that the future Burma Tatmadaw was also connected with Burmese nationalism and socialism.

The Nagani Book Club had 217 members and modelled itself on Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club in London. They issued seventy books before the war.¹¹⁵ It published books concerning the freedom movements.¹¹⁶ In his "လူမွဲတို့ထွက်ရပ်လမ်း (Exit For the Poor)", Thakin Nu, gives an account of Russian revolutionary history and Russian communist ideology. Indeed, the purpose of the book was to understand the Russian revolutionaries and Marxism. Other books published by the Nagani Book club were "ဆိုဗီယက်ဒီမိုကရေစီနှင့်ကိုယ်တွေ့များ (Soviet Democracy and Its Experiences)" by U Tun Pe and "ကားလ်မာတ်စ်ဝါဒ (Marxism)" by Thakin Bo. In U Tun Pe's book, he talked about how Soviet democracy favoured workers and their education, reducing joblessness and improving the lives of Soviet women. Soviet government created free

110. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေ"၊ ၁၈-၁၈၄။ (Daw Aye Thida, "Nagani Literatures", p.184.)

111. Mary P. Callahan, "Democracy In Burma: The Lessons of History", p.10; Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.3.

112. မောင်နု၊ "ဘယ်လိုလွတ်လပ်ရေးမျိုးလဲ"၊ "သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ ဘုံဝါဒနှင့်တို့ဗမာ"၊ ၁၈-၈၄။ (Maung Nu, "What Kind of Independence?": Thein Pe Myint, *Communalism and Dobama*, p.74)

113. Dr Robert H. Taylor, "Burma": Haruhiro Fukui (Editor-in-Chief), *Political Parties Of Asia And The Pacific*, Westport Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985, pp.129-130; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.12.) Thakin Nu was one of the members of the Central Committee in the PRP movements.

114. Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi, retold by former brigadier, Tin Pe. U Ko Ko Gyi encouraged Ko Tin Pe to help in the Nagani Book Club.

115. David I. Steinberg, *Burma: A Socialist Nation*, p.42.

116. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေ"၊ ၁၈-၁၈၄။ (Daw Aye Thida, "Nagani Literatures", p.174.) These books were: "ဂျပန်သုလျှို" (Secret Agent of Japan) by one Editor, "ကျွန်ုပ်၏စွန့်စားခြင်း" ("My Fight For Irish Freedom") and "ကျွန်ုပ်နှင့်မိုက်ကယ်ကောလင်း" (With Michael Collins In the Fight For Irish Independence) by Myoma Saya Hein, "အိုင်ယာလန်သုပုန်ပုန်းအဖွဲ့" (Ireland's Secret Service In England) by Mya Daung Nyo and "သုလျှိုဗမာ" (Tactics of the Secret Agent) by Viewhar Khin.

compulsory primary education and gave equal rights to every citizen.¹¹⁷ During that time in Burma, the young intellectual class had no jobs although they held degrees. Workers had difficulties with the employers and were often jobless. Their interest in the books and in socialism is understandable given that a socialist system promised to relieve their employment difficulties. In "Marxism", the author revealed the essence of Marxism was the requirement that the government take responsibility for the social and economic relations.¹¹⁸

Another book published by the Nagani Book Club, "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာပဌမတွဲနှင့်ပြင်သစ် အရေးတော်ပုံ (Peoples' Power Vol. I and the French Revolution)", was about Chinese political ideology and the speeches of Chinese leader Dr Sun Yat-sen concerning peoples' power. The significant feature of this book was its elaboration of freedom and included a comparison of China and western countries, and that it provided a discussion of freedom and equality in the context of the French revolution. The book, "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာဒုတိယတွဲနှင့်အင်္ဂလိပ်အမေရိကန်အရေးတော်ပုံ (Peoples' Power Vol. II and Anglo-American Revolutions)", written by U Ohn Khin (Moe Gyo), also gave an explanation of the speeches by Dr Sun Yat-sen.¹¹⁹ These books demonstrate that the Burmese revolutionary group studied Chinese political thought, Marxism, the Socialist revolution in Russia and the American revolution.

In a book published in 1938, "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဝါဒ (Socialism)" by Thakin Soe, Lenin's view of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels is explained. Thakin Soe agitated to consolidate the masses—the peasants and workers - and to have Capitalism overthrown in a revolutionary way. He pointed out that there was need to set up a new suitable ideology for the new proletariat world of socialism. He also called the new ideology "ဘုံဝါဒ" (literally Communism or Communalism). There was a biography of Karl Marx in that book.¹²⁰ Ko Hla Shwe, a member of the Nagani Book Club, wrote a book, "ခန့်ရှင်ဝါဒ (Capitalism)", in which he criticised the poverty of the workers in comparison to the lives of capitalists. He also mentioned "ဘုံဝါဒ" (socialism as communalism). Thakin Tin, who later became a member of the PRP in 1939 and the PF (Socialist) P in 1945, in his book, "ခန့်ရှင်ဦးက" (Details of Capitalism) emphasised the weaknesses of capitalism; he wanted the people to know the 'bad habits' of

117. *Ibid.*, pp.175-185.

118. *Ibid.*, p.185.

119. *Ibid.*, pp.178-179. Thakin Thein Pe wrote a preface dated 25 July 1938 but the author's name was withheld. In reality, the book was written by Thakin Ba Thaug.

120. *Ibid.*, pp.179-180.

capitalism.¹²¹ In the book, "ဓနရှင်လောက (Capitalist World)" by Thakin Ba Hein, published in 1939, the author compared socialism and capitalism.¹²² The Nagani Book Club was the main distributor and publisher of socialist literature produced as translations in the Burmese script.

The Nagani Book Club also published the News of Nagani from April 1938. There were eight issues of the News written entirely in Burmese. Many articles were written by Thakin Nu. These articles, written in Burmese, were a serialisation of his books, "ကျွန်တော်ဘုံသမားနှင့်ဘယ်လိုလွတ်လပ်ရေးမျိုးလဲ (I am Communist and what kind of Independence?)". Maung Ba Swe, who also became one of the influential leaders in the PRP, wrote in Burmese about the Soviet leader, Stalin; the articles titled "လောကနိဗ္ဗာန်တည်ဆောက်နေသူစတာလင်" (Stalin — Builder of Lokka Nibban).¹²³ It is significant that this future socialist leader referred to socialism as "Lokka Nibban"; this term means 'perfect world' or 'paradise' and is the ultimate goal for Buddhists.

An examination of the socialist and communist publications discussed above shows that, those who later became communists were already more communist than socialist in their writings. The distinction between them was the emphasis on class struggle or not. There were three people who later became involved in the PRP and later in socialist party, and five people who became communists.¹²⁴ The fact is that those who later became involved in the socialist parties were not interested in studying Marxism and Leninism (see Chapters Two and Four). The evidence can be seen in the books: Exit for the Poor (i.e. Socialism) by Thakin Nu, Soviet Democracy and Its Experiences by Ko Tun Pe, Marxism by Thakin Bo and the article about Stalin's socialist theory by Ko Ba Swe. These works probably influenced the minds of peasants and workers, the main supporters of the social revolution in 1938-9. Evidence also can be seen in the anti-fascist revolutionary Marxism of the 1940s (1943-1945) although some socialists did not agree with the communist ideology or the foundation of the Marxist-inclined PF (Socialist) P. The increased popularity of communism was a consequence of the circulation of translated socialist and Marxist-Leninist literature among the masses in the 1930s. The view that Fabian socialism was stronger than Marxism in Burma can be regarded only as partially correct because the

121. *Ibid.*, pp.182-186.

122. *Ibid.*, p.182.

123. *Ibid.*, p.186.

124. Respectively, Ko Nu, Thakin Tin and Ko Ba Swe; and, Ko Soe, Thakin Bo, Ko Ba Hein, Ko Thein Pe and Thakin Than Tun.

former was more popular with the elite groups than with the masses. The Students' Union elite group around 1935-36 was nurtured by British socialist literature while the Thakins from Dobama Asiayone were influenced by Marxism and Leninism. The appearance of the "Social Revolution" in 1938-39 (1300 Revolution) led by Thakins and Students' elite group, demonstrated that the theories of Marx and Lenin influenced the masses - peasants and workers as well as students. More evidence can be found in the list of reference books used in the anti-fascist ideological class held by a separate communist group led by Thakin Kyaw Sein in 1943.¹²⁵ The fact of the persuasive appeal that Marxism and Leninism held for the peasants and workers in the 1930s gave the BSP good reason to teach Marxism when the socialists founded a separate party after the Second World War.

A study of the origins of Burmese socialism would be incomplete without mention of the Nagani Song. By publishing books and information papers through the Nagani Book Club, the revolutionary elite group intended to spread leftist ideology across the country. They attempted to reach rural people and those who could not read the literature with a song, Nagani, composed by Shwe Tai Nyunt and sung by the famous actor Khin Maung Yin. It was sung at the Town Hall, Rangoon around 1938. Then, in March to April 1939, it was recorded and spread through the cities and the countryside. According to the song, the Nagani Club gave guidance in overcoming poverty, so that the poor would be enabled to perform charitable deeds and to build pagodas and monasteries.¹²⁶ Most Burmese are devout Buddhists and the song was written to appeal to Buddhist sentiments. The purpose of the song was to remember "the 'gold and silver rain' that was reputed to have fallen during the Period of Pagan".¹²⁷ This appeal to Buddhism was also evident in the writing of some ideological theorists who used the term "ပဒေသပင်" (the Wishing tree) to liken Buddhism to socialism.¹²⁸ In the writings of the revolutionaries, it is a notable fact that Socialism was described in 1930s as "ဆုံဝါဒ"(Communalism or literally Communism), "လောကနိဗ္ဗာန်"(Perfect World), "သမဝိတ္တဝါဒ" (Fair-Mindedness Ideology),

125. "ထွန်းနေ့စဉ်သတင်းစာ" ၁၄၊ ၁၉၆၁။ (Htoon Daily Newspaper, 4.4.1961).

126. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေ"၊ စာ-၁၈၆။ (Daw Aye Thida, "The Nagani Literatures", p.186); E. Sarkisyanz, *op.cit.*, pp.178-179.

127. E. Sarkisyanz, *op.cit.*, p.179. Pagan was the first major state of Burma, lasting from 1044 to 1287, during which peoples could build many pagodas because of its prosperity.

128. *Ibid.*, p.173, pp.210-223. The "Pa-dei-tha pin" tree represents "Socialist" or "Leftist Ideology".

"ချမ်းသာရေးဝါဒ" (Wealthy Ideology) and "လူမွဲတို့၏ထွက်ရပ်လမ်း" (The Exit for the Poor).¹²⁹

The indigenous intellectual class studied the political literature and ideologies and then shared their convictions with the masses through translated material. Thus, the ordinary people — the peasants and workers and others were able to read it and their national sentiments and feelings against the imperialists were aroused. At this time, the remarkable fact is that the rate of literacy was high because of the monastic education since the period of the kingdoms. The elite group from the Students' Union and the Dobama Asiayone were able to disseminate socialist material widely among the population. Some from the elite group followed the books uncritically and became dogmatic communists, looking forward to a classless society in Burma. The rest of the elite group can be divided into two categories. One comprises those who were only at the patriotic stage, became unqualified nationalists and stood only for Burmese nationalism. The others, however, sought to reach beyond nationalism and became socialists. After the spread of socialist ideology to Burma in the 1930s, two organisations were practising the ideology. One was the Sinyetha (meaning "Proletarian") Wunthanu Party founded by Dr Ba Maw, which adopted a policy of revolutionary socialism. The other was Dobama Asiayone.

As discussed above, when the Dobama Asiayone was founded in 1930, it was essentially nationalist. By 1936, the adoption of Marxist ideology was supported in the speech given by Thakin Lay Maung during the Asiayone's second All-Burma Conference.¹³⁰ The revolutionary thakins, students, peasants, workers and other patriots, encouraged the oil field workers' strike and they gave speeches to the strikers about Marxism and Leninism. Thakin Thin and Thakin Lwin, who later became CEC members in the foundation of the PF(Socialist)P in 1945, organised the workers based on Nationalism and Communalism (ဘုံဝါဒ).¹³¹ To build on the achievements of the students who helped the striking oil-workers in 1938, a Preliminary Committee was set up in 1939 with the purpose of forming the All-Burma Workers' Asiayone.¹³² The

129. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေ" (Daw Aye Thida, "The Nagani Literature", pp.174-188.)
သခင်ကြီးဆိုရှယ်လစ်စင်စေါ်သမဓိတ္တ။ (Thakin Gyi wrote the book, *Socialism or Fair-Mindedness Ideology*.)

130. *Ibid.*, p.187. ; U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, p.123.

131. ဒေါ်အေးသီတာ၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေ" (Daw Aye Thida, "The Nagani Literatures", p.181, p.187.)

132. သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း" (Lwin, *op.cit.*, pp.193-194.) The members of the Preliminary Committee included: Thakins Thin, Ba, Hla Myaing (later a communist), Tin (later one of the CEC members in the Peoples' Freedom(Socialist) Party), Chit Maung (later one of the CEC members in the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party), Kyaing, Than Pe (later a communist), Lwin (later one of the CEC members in the Peoples' Freedom(Socialist) Party), Lay Maung, Hla Pe (deputy prime

Committee issued a manifesto in which one of the programs was to set up a socialist state in Burma.¹³³ Similarly, there was a conference of peasants from which emerged the Peasants' Asiayone led by Thakin Mya. In this way, the two mass organisations which would be the main supporters of a socialist society came into existence under the leadership of the Dobama thakins. The acceptance of Marxism by the Dobama thakins was "because of its powerful rhetoric and apparent logic".¹³⁴ The reason for Dr Ba Han's attraction to Marxism and Leninism was their analyses of capitalism and colonialism.¹³⁵ In fact, as a nationalist organisation, the Dobama promoted Marxism and Leninism in order to advance the interests of Peasants and Workers, and because these ideologies were against imperialism and capitalism, the main burdens imposed by a colonial society. This was especially so after the failure of the 1938-9 Ayeidawpon, which led the Dobama to realise that they needed a revolutionary army.

Socialist Thought and the Tats (Armies)

By 1939 the leaders of the nationalist struggle had become disillusioned with constitutional road to independence. One reflection of the new thinking was the formation of the PRP. Another reflection was the belief that it was necessary to incorporate armed struggle into the mass movement. Their strategies were informed by the lessons learned from the two Ayeidawpons, which had failed despite mass support. In part these failures were because it was illegal for the Burmese to hold arms. Observing other national struggles—the USA had sought help from France; Ireland obtained German aid; Poland got assistance from the allies—the young patriots believed that Burma would gain freedom only if they got military aid from other nations that were militarily strong.

The bitterness of the young revolutionary group about their lack of arms reflected in part the historic role of the Tats in Burmese society before and during colonial rule. The Burmese people were proud of Burma's long history of involvement in warfare. A British major who participated in the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-6), pointed out that the Burmese were arrogant, bold, and daring when

minister in 1948), Hla Baw, Than Tun (later a communist leader), Thakin Soe (later a communist leader).

133. *Ibid.*; Saul Rose, *op.cit.*, p.97. The aims of the Committee were: national liberation; improvements in the peasants' standard of living and in the general welfare of the impoverished mass of the people; the abolition of landlordism; nationalisation of the land; and the establishment of a socialist state under the leadership of the workers and peasants.

134. Taylor, *Marxism And Resistance In Burma*, p.3.

135. Nyun-Han, *op.cit.*, p.25.

engaged in offensive warfare; their movements were rapid and they were able to endure great fatigue.¹³⁶ Moreover, an American historian, John Cady, held the view that "Warfare was a traditional preoccupation of the Burman state and especially so in modern times".¹³⁷ Burmese take pride in the military traditions of the past, especially in the reigns of King Anawrhata, King Kyansitthar, King Bayinnaung and King Alaungpaya. The retired professor Saya U Tun Aung Chain from the History Department of Rangoon University and a member of the Historical Commission in Myanmar praised about King Bayinnaung's refusal to persecute his subjects.¹³⁸

Traditionally, the two highest positions of the old Burmese armies under the Burmese Kings were occupied by officers called Sitboh Gyokes (Military Officers), one in-charge of internal security and the other of defence against external attacks. There was no regular standing army during the Burmese kingdoms but there were detachments of regiments at the capital.¹³⁹ "Soldiers did not receive any regular salary but were supplied by the State with a quantity of food and some money....Whenever an expedition was undertaken levies were raised. The size of the levies was fixed by the Royal Orders from statistics collected."¹⁴⁰ There were specific persons who were responsible for recruitment of soldiers and officers in the traditional armies. Under the Burmese Kings, the armies were not modernised.¹⁴¹ There were two classes in society from which soldiers were recruited: the *ahmudan*, liable to regular service, and the *athi*, liable to be recruited only in an emergency.¹⁴² These features, made it difficult for the Burmese traditional armies to gain a decisive victory in the three Anglo-Burmese Wars (1824-6, 1855 and 1883).

Although the British annexed the whole of Burma as a result of these wars, they faced residual resistance and until 1890 there were spontaneous uprisings all over the country. The uprisings were led by officers of the disbanded royal armies, village headmen, former officials in the services of the King, hereditary princes, and even

136. U Ba Than (Dhammika, Retired Colonel), *The Roots of the Revolution*, Rangoon: the Government Printing Press, 1962, p.3.

137. Cady, *A History Of Modern Burma*, p.34.

138. Millennium Special Program of British Broadcasting Corporation (Burmese Section) in December 2000.

139. W.L. Barretto, *King Minton*, Rangoon: The New Light of Burma Press, 1935, p.42.

140. *Ibid.*, pp.42-43.

141. *Ibid.*, pp.42-45; also see Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, pp.34-37; D.G.E. Hall, *Burma*, New York: A.M.S Press, 1974, pp.134-135. The Burmese troops were not well equipped. Even when firearms were supplied, ammunition was insufficient. Most of the soldiers were armed with dahs and spears. They usually held firearms, dahs[knives], damas[choppers], hammers, axes and saws.

142. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma*, pp.35-36; Hall, *Burma*, pp.134-135.

Buddhist monks. Interestingly, Bogyoke Aung San's great-grandfather, ဗိုလ်မင်းရောင် (Bo Min Yaung), was a part of the resistance to the British. The British regarded the resistance fighters as bandits, but they were recognised as patriots by the people. To quell the uprisings, the colonial government had to use considerable numbers of troops.¹⁴³ Traditionally, ethnic Shan and Burmese were not allowed to take part in the Burma army service, which drew on Indians and then Karen, until Burmese got their first chance in 1887 when a field company of Sappers and Miners (Engineers) was formed using only ethnic Arakanese, Chins, Manipurs and Talaings (Mons).¹⁴⁴ During the First World War, when the Indian Army was greatly expanded, four battalions of Burma Rifles were formed for general service and thus, some Burmese got a chance to participate in the World War in Mesopotamia, but they were dissatisfied because their commanders were all British.¹⁴⁵ After the war, the colonial government reduced the armed forces and, in 1925, terminated the recruitment of Burmese. The senior Burmese unit, the Sappers and Miners, was disbanded in 1927. The only opportunity for Burmese to serve was in the military police.¹⁴⁶ In 1939, the Burma Defence Force contained only 472 Burmans as against 3,197 Karens, Chins and Kachins.¹⁴⁷

It is very clear that the Burmese military tradition was seriously harmed because of the effects of the government policies. At the same time, it was also being reinvigorated. In the 1930s, the British-run Government High School opposite the Dental College (now Central High School) arranged military-style Scout training for its students and most of the students took part.¹⁴⁸ If so, this was the first time during the colonial years that military training had been given in any school.¹⁴⁹ In any case,

143. Hall, *Burma*, p.143. Sir Frederick Roberts [the British commander in chief] had to transfer his headquarters from India to Burma from November 1886 to February 1887 and the colonial government had to use an army of 32,000 troops and 8500 military police.

144. Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, pp.312-313; Maung Htin Aung, *A History of Burma*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, p.280.

145. Htin Aung, *op. cit.*, p.281; Tinker, *op cit*, p.314.

146. Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, p.314.

147. Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War (1941-1945)*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1984, p.13.

148. Interview with U Ohn Khaing who studied under colonial education, on 18.9.2004, who stated that the scouts provided military-style training at Rangoon Government High School, and there was also a scouting movement at Sitgaing Government High School in 1932-34. But in the autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi, he said that the military training was more like a University Training Corp (UTC). According to my conversation with former Rector Dr Chit Swe on 18.9.2004, there was already a UTC since before the Second World War, so this may have been based on the training at Rangoon High School.

149. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. While he was studying in the Central Government High School, there was a library known as the "Bernard Free Library". The principal of the school was a British, Mr. F. G French, who had a wife but no children. The English language teacher was a British woman, Miss White. The science teacher was Mr. Buchanan. Thakin Mya who later became a leader in

in June 1930, the Ye Tat, a volunteer force, based on the Scouting movement, was formed, organised by U Maung Gyi.¹⁵⁰

The colonial government allowed Ye Tat to exist but without arms (except staves) and without weapons- training of any sort. Nevertheless, they ignited the imagination of a number of young men and school-boys and Ye Tat spread to the districts in 1931. The main activities of the Tat were to concentrate on drill, personal conduct, courage, and service to the people such as first aid work. Its uniform was green and thus, it was known as the "green-shirt army".¹⁵¹ The main function of Ye Tats was to celebrate the Annual National Day.¹⁵² In the early 1930s, it reached its height of popularity and later, after the 1936 student strike, it fell in popularity.¹⁵³

A parallel organisation to the green-shirt army, the Let-yon Tat (of the Dobama Asiayone) appeared after 1930.¹⁵⁴ Some assume that it appeared soon after its first conference in 1935. It was never properly drilled and disciplined in comparison with the Ye Tat in Rangoon.¹⁵⁵ The writer of the Dobama's history also mentioned that although the organisational patterns of the Dobama's Ye Tat and the green-shirt army led by U Maung Gyi were somewhat similar, their political outlook differed greatly. Later, in the First Annual Conference of the Dobama held in Yenangyaung in 1935, the green-shirt army units from Chauk, Myingyan and Toungoo transformed into the Dobama's Ye Tat. The conference also renamed the Ye Tat as Dobama Yetat and gave the task of organising it to Thakin Ba Ba of Chauk. There were also branches of

the Peoples' Revolutionary Party in 1939 and in the Peoples' Freedom (Socialism) Party in 1945 also worked at the school as a science teacher. For the military training, the students had to wear hats decorated with beautiful tassels.

150. U Maung Gyi was once a government minister and well-connected with the Governor and British officials.

151. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, pp.76-77.

152. မြန်မာ့ဖတ်စာ-တတိယတန်းပြည့်စောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာနအခြေခံပညာသင်ရိုးညွှန်းတမ်း၊ သင်ရိုးမာတိကာနှင့် ကျောင်းသုံးစာအုပ်ကော်မတီ၊ ၂၀၀၁-၂၀၀၂ ပညာသင်နှစ်၊ New Way ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၁၊ ၈-၇-၈။ *Burmese Reader (Year Three)*, The Government Of The Union Of Myanmar, Department Of Educational Planning And Training, Basic Education Curriculum And Textbook Committee, Ministry of Education, For the years 2001-2002, New Way Press, 2001, pp.7-8. The National Day is identified as the "Anniversary of the 1920 University Students' Strike" and that it was "တန်ဆောင်မုန်းလဆုတ် (၁၀)ရက် in December". The days of the Burmese and English Calendars are not the same. The Burmese Calendar is divided into 15 days of လဆန်း *lasan* (waxing moon) and 15 days of လဆုတ် *lasoak* (waning moon) for every month.

153. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, pp.76-77.

154. Khin Yi, *The Dobama Movement In Burma (1930-1938)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1988, p. 47; U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, p.235. U Maung Maung had mentioned that the Dobama Asiayone held its first parade on the Botataung sports field on 15 June 1930 while the Ye Tat by U Maung Gyi began in front of the Myoma National School on 1 June 1930.

155. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, pp.76-77.

the Dobama Yetat in Pakokku, Shwebo, Myingyan and Yanangyaung.¹⁵⁶ At the Dobama's Second Annual Conference held at Myingyan in June 1936, Thakin Hla Pe (Pinbyu) was given the task of reorganising the Dobama Yetat and it came to be known as the Bama Letyone Tat by a consensus of its leaders.¹⁵⁷ The conference also agreed to draw up a constitution for the Bama Letyone Tat and to put the draft constitution to the Dobama Central Executive Committee for approval. In the pamphlet by Hla Pe issued on the occasion of the inauguration of the Bama Letyone Tat, three methods to achieve freedom were enumerated. These were: do not trust in the generosity of the "foreign overlord" to bestow freedom upon the country; to copy the acts of the Indian nationalist movement; and to obtain assistance from countries, hostile to British colonialism, for armed resistance. The constitution of the Bama Letyone Tat was formulated by combining parts of several constitutions of youth organisations and was composed to suit the temperament of the Burmese youth. The constitution comprised one hundred and fifty items and ten headings, and was heralded as the Constitution of the Most Dependable Army of Burma.¹⁵⁸

The formation of the Bama Letyone Tats under the guidance of the Dobama Asiayone provided an outlet for the military spirit especially for the young people. The circumstances of colonial rule remained restrictive; the bearing of arms was strictly prohibited and recruitment into the regular army was denied to Burmese and Shans. During the time Thakin Aung San was general secretary of the Dobama Asiayone, the person responsible for the Bama Letyone Tats was Thakin Ba Thar (Bogyoke for the Bama Letyone Tat), who came most evenings to the headquarters of the Dobama Asiayone to discuss organisational tasks with Thakin Ba Thar, Thakin Tin Aung and Thakin Lwin (later to become Colonel Lwin) and then to go to the Bama Letyone Tat's Rangoon quarters to teach classes.¹⁵⁹ Although enlistment figures of the Tats were not recorded, there is some evidence from the

156. *Ibid.*; The prominent leaders of the *Dobama Yetats* during this time were Thakin Ba Ba (Chauk), Thakin Bo (Myingyan), Thakin Hla Maung (Toungoo), Thakin Tun Shwe (Toungoo), Thakin Tin U (Rangoon), and Thakin Ba Tha (Rangoon).

157. Khin Yi, *op.cit.*, p.47. Its leaders were Thakin Hla Baw, Thakin Tun Shwe, Thakin Hla Maung, Thakin Ba Tha (Rangoon), Thakin Tun Oo (Moulmein), Thakin Bo (Myingyan), Thakin Tin Oo (Rangoon), and Thakin Ba Ba (Chauk).

158. *Ibid.*, pp.47-48. These headings were (1) Name, place, aim, qualification, and uniform; (2) Relationship between the Dobama and the Bama Letyone Tat; (3) Relationship between the Bama Letyone Tat and other organisations; (4) Defence; (5) Communication between the units and the general head-quarters; (6) Appointment; (7) Discipline; (8) Arbitration; (9) Officer Corps; and (10) Method for amendments.

159. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

autobiographical accounts of members that, under the guidance of the Dobama, the figures were high-numbers. The lack of records may be attributable to caution; the Letyone Tats were preparing for armed struggle and could not afford to leave traces that might alert the British.

There were other Tats under the colonial rule. In 1937, the Students' Union started the Thanmani (steel) Tat but it failed to develop. Dr Ba Maw organised the Dahma (hewing knife) Tat in 1938 for his own Sinyetha Wunthanu (Poormans' Patriotic) Party.¹⁶⁰ He used the large hewing knife as the tat's symbol to attract the farmers, the largest group of the population, because it was the general cutting implement of the farmer. Also in 1938, one of the nationalists, U Saw, organised the Galon Tat and it became a very strong force of political coercion. Its strength reached 100,000 and U Saw used the Tat to threaten or beat up the opposition and thus, it turned into a partisan force.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that socialism and anti-imperialism were the basis of the dominating ideology of the Burmese nationalist movement itself strongly rooted in patriotism. Burmese society is based on traditional agriculture. The result of the export economy was to create a 'Plural Society' in which each group lived side by side but did not join together. In that society, in other words, Taylor's view which was based on a conventional analysis of the whole of Burma and which emphasises that plurality, offers better insights than Adas who concentrated on the more developed area of Burma, the delta. Most of the indigenous people living in rural areas, at the lowest level of the class structure of colonial society, were not getting the fruits from the colonial economy, and they were also denied from the social uplifting of the colonial rulers. In this condition, the Burmese revolutionary elite group, who lived in urban areas, found a leader to lead the struggle for independence. Burmese socialism originated primarily in the study of socialist literature, and it was the Burmese intellectual class in particular that undertook this role. Leftist ideologies were spread through libraries and book clubs, and organisationally through the Dobama Asiayone. The intellectual revolutionary political elite group, from the middle class, thus, translated the original books into Burmese, making anti-colonialist,

160. Some authors refer to this party as the "Proletariat Party".

161. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, pp.76-77.

anti-imperialist ideologies available to the ordinary people. This movement, made up of intellectuals from the middle class, recognised the need for both tight political organisation and armed struggle to achieve independence. The proud Burmese military tradition started to emerge again in the 1930s, with the formation of the Tats. By 1939 there were a variety of Tats, but they were divided and factionally-based. The nationalists organised to seek military assistance from outside Burma and also to form an underground party. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Creation of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, the Burma Socialist Party and the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1939-1945)

Introduction

Chapter one provided the general social and political context in Burma up to 1939. This chapter examines the emergence of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (PFP) into legality. It also examines the parallel emergence of the Burma Socialist Party. To support the analysis, it is necessary to investigate the relations between the Communists and the Socialists. This will provide a clear picture of how a separate party emerged from the CPB and the PRP. It begins by explaining the emergence of the underground Peoples' Revolutionary Party (PRP), which was also known as Burma Revolutionary Party, the Underground Party and the Unity Party, and explores how the PFP emerged from the PRP. The emergence of the PFP was closely connected to the ideological difference between the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and the PRP.

Political Complexity and Leftist Ideology

By 1939 nationalist, patriots, socialists and communists in Burma were all searching for ways to advance Burmese independence. Believing that a legal and open organisation would help build national unity in the fight for freedom, the nationalists formed the Burma Freedom Bloc between September and November 1939.¹ The name was inspired by Subhas Chandra Bose's Forward Bloc in India. Its president was Dr Ba Maw and the secretary was Thakin Aung San.² Because the Freedom Bloc was structured as a national front, it included people from all kinds of political parties: Thakin Mya, Thakin Nu, Thakin Aung San, Thakin Hla Baw, Thakin Than Tun from Dobama Asiayone; Dr Ba Maw, U Hla Min, Bandula U Sein, Saw Hpay Thar from the Proletariat Party; Dr Thein Maung and U Tun Aung from the Ngarpwintsaing

1. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း (၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈-၁၀။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, p.10.) The Bloc was born on 1 September 1939; U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p.14: The writer gives the founding date of the Freedom Bloc as 10 October 1939; Frank N. Trager, *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic*, London: the Pall Mall Press Limited, 1966, p.57.

2. Trager, *Burma*, p.57.

Party; U Ba Shwe and U Ba Oo from the Naypyidaw Party. The strategy was to unify the peoples' movement and to put demands on the British government and, if these were met, cooperate with the British in the war. Their demands were: to call a constituent assembly; to transfer the Governor's special and reserved powers to the Council of Ministers elected by the Legislature; to enfranchise the peoples in the Scheduled Areas; and to raise forces adequate for the defence of Burma. But the demands were ignored by the British government.³ The main act of the Freedom Bloc was to issue an anti-war statement forbidding Burmese from supporting the Second World War.⁴

While the Freedom Bloc professed legal and constitutional methods, Socialists and Communists within the Freedom Bloc were critical of the constitutional and legal road to independence. On the one hand, their similarities – especially their rejection of the Freedom Bloc's strategy – brought them together: they formed the nucleus of the PRP. On the other hand, their own approaches were filled with complexities. These were based on ideological differences that caused friction and eventually divided them. It was out of these complexities that the BSP was formed. In order to understand the formation of the PRP and then the BSP it is necessary to examine these complexities between the Socialists and Communists.

Conflict within the Leftist Stream

In the first phase of the revolution: the PRP's anti-British movement, both the socialists and communists were united under the banner of the PRP. Despite issuing the statements at the final stage of the movement it began with a promising start asking assistances from public servants to assist revolutionaries with revolt against imperialist British. There were, however, earlier deep differences between them. Reaction to the failure of the 1300 Ayeidawpon was the basis for the fissure between the Communists and the Socialists; the Communists blamed inadequate ideological preparation by the Socialists and the lack of arms.⁵ Their basic assumptions on the domestic strategy were based on dissimilar reading materials and thus diverse strategic items. Those who would lead the future Communist party read Marxism and

3. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.13-14: The author presented the same opinions of the thakins and the students about the Second World War. At that time, the students' elite group was involved in the Dobama Asiayon.

4. *Ibid.*, p.18.

5. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.8.); သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဒီဂျစ်စာပေ ဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၆၃၊ ၈၁-၈၄-၈၅။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *Thakin Pe Htay*, Rangoon: Wild Tide Press, 1963, pp.84-85.)

Leninism while the civilian and military elite groups, from which the leaders of the future socialist parties came, preferred the British socialist literature. The exception was that some people from both groups read the biographies of fascist leaders which led them to favour a one-party system or totalitarianism. The person who would give particularly important leadership to the socialist group, Saya Thakin Mya studied books about the freedom movements not only of neighbouring countries but also of distant countries such as Ireland and Turkey. In the PRP's propaganda department, the Communists had a more influential role than the Socialists. The result was that in the second phase of the revolution (the revolt against Japanese occupation) the Communists were more advanced in disseminating ideology while the Socialists were more practically engaged.

Other basics of the division between the two were age and practical experience; as well as education and class-instinct. According to political theorist Robert Michels, age and experience often determine who reach superiority although in some case it is an obstruction. Especially in the party life, the experienced cadres better understand the link between "cause and effect".⁶ In Socialists' leadership, older and experienced leaders Mya and Thakin Lun Baw had worked as the members of the Legislative Council within the British Constitutional reforms while Communists had none.⁷ Socialists' class-instinct was based on the intellectual middle class which had been already discussed in chapter one. To analyse the Socialists' leadership, it might rather be said that it was not really from the proletariat but it supported revolutionary war. Therefore, those could be termed as "intellectual" from bourgeoisie class. If so, why they did not choose "peaceful means" or a "gradual evolutionary process" within the Constitutional reforms by the British like the Indian National Congress in the first stage of revolution against the British? It would be for Burmese case concerning with the importance of ethnic issues previously discussed in the chapter one under the title of "Social Thought and the Tats". To examine the role of Socialists' intellectuals in the proletariat party, it would not be accurate to identify them all as revolutionaries. While they acted for freedom as revolutionaries later in there were splits based on

6. Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959, pp.76-77.

7. မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များလေ့လာစိစစ်ခြင်း (၁၉၂၀-၁၉၄၇)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာသွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂၊ ၁၆။ (Maung Ye Mya, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya (1920-1947)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1982, p.16.); People's Literature Committee and House, *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, Rangoon: Sarpaybeikman Press, 1962, pp.14-15.

ideology and their identification with Second International or Third Internationals.⁸ In overall educational background of Socialists' and Communists' leaderships, there was greater importance of education for Socialists' comparison with the Communists. Based on their education, their social outlooks on Burmese society were quite distinctive.⁹

These differences between Socialists and Communists were already apparent in the founding of the two parties and their different policies in regard to the Burmese nationalist struggle. According to Communists' historiography, the CPB was founded on 15 August 1939¹⁰ in Barr Street, Rangoon. The six founders were Thakin Soe, Thakin Hla Pe (Phyarpon) later known as Bo Let Ya, Thakin Aung San, Thakin Bo (Nyaungton), Thakin Ba Hein and H.N. Goshal.¹¹ Goshal Ba Tin, alias H.N Goshal, was a Burmese-born Bengali linked with the Indian Communist Party (ICP) through its Bengal Provincial Committee.¹² Thakin Aung San (who was later involved in PRP Central Committee) was elected general secretary, Thakin Soe was given responsibility for mass organization, Thakin Ba Hein for students' affairs, Thakin Hla Pe was elected treasurer, Goshal Ba Tin was responsible for party organization and Dr Nath was elected librarian.¹³ Although this meeting was regarded as the CPB's First Party Congress in published histories of the CPB, in reality it was only a Marxist study group, not a party, during the period 1939-41.¹⁴ There is no evidence that the

8. Robert Michels, *op.cit.*, pp.248-267.

9. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*; "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗမာ့သစ်စာပေတိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, Rangoon: Bamathick Press, 1946.); Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, Fourth Edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.389-400: Men and Women of Burma. Communists- Only Thakin Thein Pe got oversea education in Communist leadership. Soe worked in Burmah Oil Company. Thakin Than Tun worked as School Master; Socialists- Thakin Mya (BA, BL), U Kyaw Nyein (BA, BL), U Kyaw Myint (BA, BL), U Hla Maung (BA, BL) and U Tin Nyunt (BA).

10. Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1990, p.3; Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 2nd Impression, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993, p.56.

11. သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ၁၉-၈၂-၈၃။ (Thakhin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, pp.82-83): He included Thakin Bo, but not Dr Nag in the list of six participants in the Barr Street, meeting; Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.3.foot note: according to the author's interview with Thakin Ba Thein Tin, the six participants were Thakin Aung San, Thakin Hla Pe, Thakin Ba Hein, Thakin Bo, Dr Nag and H.N Goshal. He excluded Thakin Soe; Smith, *op.cit.*, p.56: The author wrote that Thakin Aung San, Soe, Ba Hein, Hla Pe, Ba Tin (Goshal) and Dr Nath were present at the meeting in Barr Street. He excluded Thakin Bo. Given these conflicting reports, the most that can be said with certainty is that there were six participants, four of whom were Thakin Aung San, Thakin Hla Pe, Thakin Ba Hein, and Goshal Ba Tin.

12. Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984, p.6.

13. *Ibid.*, p.6; Smith, *op.cit.*, p.56.

14. Patricia M. Milne, *Selected Short Stories of Thein Pe Myint*, Ithaca: New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1973, p.3; Lintner, *op.cit.*, pp.3-9; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊

CPB organized any political activities at this time but it published two manifestoes.¹⁵ But, actually the publications had been distributed within the PRP's movement.

Even though the Communists' study group was regarded as a party foundation, most of the Communist leaders, including Thakin Soe, Thakin Than Tun, H.N. Goshal, Thakin Ba Hein and Thakin Kyaw Sein, had been imprisoned by the British. Therefore, the CPB took little direct part in the anti-British movement. While the practical struggle was left in the hands of the PRP group, led by Thakin Mya, the CPB was significant because its leaders continued to formulate policy despite being imprisoned. The Communists' stand in the Second World War can be seen in the well-known Insein Sittan and Myingyan Sittan which were written by Thakin Soe while he was in prison. In 1941, many thakins were arrested by the British government including the Communist leaders mentioned in the previous paragraph. This quashed the activities of the CPB as a Marxist study group, set up in 1939. However, Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun gave lectures in Marxism while the Thakins were imprisoned at the Insein Jail Annex.¹⁶ Thakin Soe wrote the Insein Sittan in which he explained how the Burmese communists saw their roles in the Second World War; he analysed the political and military affairs of the war; and he proclaimed that the Burmese should cooperate with the democratic allies because, if Fascism gained world influence, peoples' lives would be worse. Later, he was put into the Myingyan Jail where he wrote the Myingyan Sittan which, again, was an attack on the Japanese and supportive of the allies.¹⁷ The Communists from the Insein Prison communicated their opinions about the Second World War to thakins who were not imprisoned. Therefore, the Communists assumed that the PRP group understood the Insein Sittan but nonetheless the PRP cooperated with the Japanese.¹⁸

ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ဖာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၁၉။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences during the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1956, p.19). In which, the author had mentioned that there was first apparent Marxist group during the 1300 Ayeidawpon.

15. သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ၁၈-၈၃။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, p.83.)

16. *Ibid.*, pp.64-65.

17. *Ibid.*, p.64, p.86. Thakin Pe Htay explained that Thakin Soe wrote Insein Sittan at Insein Jail and then Myingyan Sittan, based on the first sittan, when he was put inot the Myingyan Jail; ဦးနု၊

“ငါးနှစ်ရာသီ-ဗမာပြည်(၁၉၄၁-၁၉၄၅)”၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ယောဂီပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၄။ (U Nu, *During the Five Years in Burma (1941-1945)*, Rangoon: Yawgi Press, 1946, pp.12-13, p.80. Thakin Soe give Ko Nu Marxist books to study but Ko Nu did not read them while they were at the Insein Jail.); Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945: Thein Pe Myint's Wartime Traveler*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984, p.9, p.116.

18. သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ၁၈-၈၂။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, p.82.)

In tune with the Insein Sittan and Myingyan Sittan, the communists prepared to act in temporary alliance with the British against the fascist Japanese. Just after their release from the Mandalay Jail, Thakin Nu, Thakin Soe, Thakin Kyaw Sein and Thakin Mya Thwin met with Thakin Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Thein Pe at the south of Kabaing village on 30 April 1942.¹⁹ At the Kabaing meeting, there were little ideological differences between the Communists and the PRP's Thakin Kyaw Nyein (later Socialist leader U Kyaw Nyein) and the Fabian Party's Thakin Nu. Ko Kyaw Nyein proposed to the meeting that they collaborate with the Japanese as a means to expedite independence. But the Communists did not have faith in the Japanese, believing that the only way to achieve Burma's independence was to support, and get help from, the Allies. However, they all agreed that contact with the Allies should be made and also decided that each in his own way should prepare for resistance against the Japanese when the time came.²⁰ The differences that emerged at the Kabaing meeting between CPB and PRP approaches were to become crucial in the split between the CPB and the PRP.

The revolutionary group urged Thakin Soe to follow with Thakin Thein Pe Myint after they began to gradually notice that the Japanese did not keep their promise, to contact with the allied army. But, the Communists' strategy for Soe was to stay within Burma and found a Communist Party for anti-Japanese movements.²¹ In July 1942, after the Japanese invasion, Thakin Thein Pe and Thakin Tin Shwe (instead of Soe) reached Calcutta where they were introduced to the British Force 136.²² Thakin Soe was well suited to this task. Before 1938-9, he had studied Marxism and Leninism, he used to go to the bookshop where he read standing because he could not buy the Marxist books. He had the ability to recite from memory. To gain knowledge

19. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၂၇၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.127); Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma*, pp.108-109.

20. *Ibid.*

21. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၃၄၊ ၁၃၅၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.134-135.)

22. လေထီးဦးအုန်းမောင်၊ "နှစ်ပေါင်း ၅၀ ကြာသောအခါ"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုအတွဲ(၆)/အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာလ၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၁၅၄-၁၅၅၊ (Layhti U Ohn Maung, "After the 50 Years": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November 1996, pp.154-155.) At the beginning of the Second World War, the British War Cabinet formed the Special Operation Executive (SOE) which did not come under military command but reported directly to the War Cabinet and British Prime Minister through the Minister of Commerce. Force 136 was the eastern branch of the SOE. Its commander was Colin Mackenzie. Its main purposes were to get information about the Japanese movements, to disturb the Japanese administration and to make contact with and seek help from the anti-Japanese resistances. See also Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War (1941-45)*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1984, pp.574-575; Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma*, p.13; Litner, *op.cit.*, p.8; IOR: M/4/2601 (British Library, London): In this source, Thein Pe is said to have arrived in India in August 1942, a different month from other sources.

of works in English, he went to Thakin Ba Thaung who was a pioneer of the Dobama Asiayone and fluent in English.²³ Thakin Soe was an employee of the Burmah Oil Company and a member of the Dobama Asiayone.²⁴ He wrote his pioneer ideological tract, ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဝါဒ, *Hsoshelit Wada* (“Socialism”) and in 1939 he published the, ဗမာ့တော်လှန်မှု, *Bama Taw-hlan-hmu* (“Burma's Revolution”).²⁵ The Marxist lectures he gave while imprisoned and the two sittans he wrote contributed to his reputation as the Marxist prophet.²⁶ With this background and experience, Thakin Soe worked hard to re-establish the CPB during 1941 and 1942. In 1941 he secretly traveled and organized within the delta and in early 1943, he gave a course to twelve followers in the delta town of Pyapon.²⁷ It was at this point that the CPB transcended its former role as a reading and study group, and became a real political party, with Thakin Soe as its General Secretary.

In conclusion, the emergence of the CPB has also to be understood in relation to the Dobama Asiayone and the students' movement. The different political opinions among the leaders of the Dobama and the students have been mentioned in the previous chapter. Although united by a primary concern to defeat the British through nationalist revolution, their nationalism took various forms and combined a wide range of communist, socialist and other ideological views. There were supporters of the theories of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin but also of Fabian Socialism, National Socialism, totalitarianism, and monarchism. Communists' and Socialists' interpretations of the failure of the 1300 Ayeidawpon, in which students, workers, and peasants had taken part under the leadership of the Dobama Asiayone, were different. The Communists attributed the failure to ideological weakness and poor understanding of the class struggle. On the other hand, the PRP group believed that it was due to the lack of arms so they set up the underground party, the purpose of which was to seek foreign military aid. The Communists adopted more ideological approaches and attempted to contact international communist parties, especially those in neighbouring China and India. Guided by their materialist theory, they assumed

23. Interview with Myawaddi U Ye Gaung on 18.4.2001.

24. Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.66.

25. Robert H. Taylor, "Burmese Concepts of Revolution", in Mark Hobart and Robert H. Taylor (editors), *Context Meaning And Power In Southeast Asia*, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1986, p.80, p.91.

26. သခင်ဇေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဇေဌေး"၊ ၁၈-၆၄-၆၅။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, pp.64-65); Dr Maung Maung, *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph/49 1999, p.12.

27. သခင်ဇေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဇေဌေး"၊ ၁၈-၈၇။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, p.87.); Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.9.

that the historical circumstances were right to form a Communist party in Burma. The ideological differences between the Communists and the Socialists were sharpened as the Second World War proceeded. At first, the CPB wanted to cooperate with the allied group and oppose the fascists, while the PRP were keen to get assistance from foreign countries, including Japan.

The Creation of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party

Three months after the foundation of the CPB, the PRP was formed as an underground party. The PRP emerged when the patriots in the student's elite group, thakins and national school teachers, began to discuss the future of Burma. Dissatisfied with the purely legal methods of the Freedom Bloc, in 1939 weekly discussions took place at the Student Union building and at the houses of trusted colleagues. They reviewed the previous two revolutions and concluded that the failure of the revolution led by Saya San (1930) was due to a lack of arms, to inadequate preparation and to the failure to include the general population. In addition the group considered that the lessons from the 1300 Ayeidawpon reinforced the need for armed struggle and also the need to join with the mass movements which had gained strength from the 1300 Ayeidawpon. As discussed in Chapter one, they selected Thakin Mya, a man much admired for the sacrifices he had made for the country, to lead this revolutionary struggle.²⁸ Thus the appointment of a leader for their revolutionary movement, the necessity for armed struggle, and the opportunity for revolt when the British became embroiled in the Second World War, led to the creation of the PRP as an underground party in November 1939.

Despite the differences in ideology and outlook between communists and socialists, they joined together when the PRP was first formed. The central committee members of the PRP were Thakin Mya, Thakin Aung San, Ko Ba Hein (Thakin Ba Hein), Ko Ba Swe, Ko Hla Maung (Maithtila), Thakin Nu, Thakin Chit, Thakin Hla Pe (Bo Let Yar), Ko Kyaw Nyein and Ko Tun Shwe (Nagani).²⁹ Also on the Central Committee were CPB study group members- Thakin Aung San and Thakin Hla Pe. Two members, Ko Ba Hein and Thakin Chit, later joined the CPB. The role played by Communists in the early years of the PRP is also illustrated by two PRP manifestos issued in 1941 and 1942. The manifestos were titled the Communist Manifestos or

28. နေဝွန်၊ “ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း” ၈၁-၈၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.8)

29. *Ibid.*, p.12.

Burma Revolutionary Statements one and two. Although they were the proclamations of the Central Authority of the PRP they bore the name of the CPB.³⁰ The two manifestos proposed armed struggle against the imperialist British and against the Japanese if after entering Burma they did not keep their promise to support independence. They also contained declarations against the weakness of the British administration, support for nationalism and freedom, criticism of the current Prime Minister U Saw and commendations for helping revolution against colonialists and capitalist governments by peasants, workers and slaves.³¹ Indeed, those who were in charge of the ideological department of the PRP and its activities against the imperialist British later became members of the CPB so it is not surprising that they published under its name.³²

The constitution of the PRP was modeled on a secret organisation formed at the time of England's Wars of the Roses and on Ireland's Sinn Fein organisation. In the beginning, Thakin Mya was regarded as PRP's main leader and all the other comrades served as party organisers.³³ At first, they tried to organise underground units throughout the country. Appointed by the central committee, an organiser had to first form a unit composed of three to five persons and then each unit had to affiliate with a grouping of many units. The slogan of the party was 'the Imperialist war must be our victory'.³⁴ Thakin Aung San was sent overseas to establish foreign contacts, and after he returned from Japan, the PRP reorganised its administrative system and made people responsible for the various departments.

After Thakin Aung San came to an understanding with the Japanese authorities in Japan, he came back to Rangoon to report to the PRP's Central Committee headed by Leader Mya. They reorganised the party by dividing it into two parts, an internal section and an external section. Thakin Ba Hein, a CEC member of the internal section, was put in charge of the Propaganda Department. He and all the members

30. *Ibid.*, p.51. To publish the Communist Manifestos (1) and (2), Ko Kyaw Nyein (RET) and Thakin Aung Gyi (not Socialist Ko Aung Gyi) searched for the needed paper. Manifesto (1) was typed in a secret place in Shwegondine Township and then copied and bound at the Students' Union of Rangoon University. The production of Manifesto (2) was arranged by Thakin Than Pe (Hpju); it was published in the house of the brother-in-law of Thakin San Hlaing (later known as Boh Hmu Aung) at Hpju.

31. *Ibid.*, p.52.

32. *Ibid.*, p.47. Ko Ba Hein was group leader and the members were Thakin Tin Mya, Ko Thet Tin (Kyaukse), Ko Than Naing (brother of Ko Ba Hein), Thakin Than Pe (Phyu), Thakin Tin Tun (Pyinmana), Thakin Aung Gyi and Ko Kyaw Nyein (RET).

33. *Ibid.*, p.12.

34. *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

from the department later became Communists.³⁵ During the anti-imperialist period, the members of the PRP did not emphasise ideology, but concentrated on freedom for Burma. The Communists provided leadership in ideological matters. As already mentioned, Thakin Thein Pe also participated in PRP's anti-imperialist activities. He was a joint leader for the Upper-Burma Division.³⁶ Thakin Ba Thein Tin was another activist for the PRP who later became an influential leader in the CPB.³⁷ The most successful action of the PRP was to smuggle in and out of the country twenty seven people who later became members of the group known as the thirty Comrades.

The Anti-British Struggle, 1939-1942

The first phase of the revolution took the form of anti-British struggle. This meant building alliances with Japanese forces. The idea to contact Japan had been in the minds of the old politicians, mainly U Saw and Dr Ba Maw, and the Dobama's faction led by Thakin Ba Sein were in contact with the Japanese Navy since 1940, although its attempt to get military help failed.³⁸ Despite these attempts, it was the PRP that forged the most effective connection with the Japanese. The decision of the PRP to accept assistance from the fascist Japanese has been a subject of debate amongst historians. At first, the PRP intended to get aid from leftist countries, especially China and Russia. They also considered getting aid from the National Socialist government of Germany.³⁹ However, the mission to contact the Chinese Communist Party was aborted, when Japan became the main potential source of aid. This occurred when the Japanese realized that the main anti-British forces were the PRP.⁴⁰ From the point of view of the PRP the decision to collaborate with the fascist Japanese was the result of a search for effective aid. U Ba Swe stated that they

35. *Ibid.*, p.46. They were Thakin Tin Mya, Ko Thet Tin (Kyaukse), Ko Than Naing (Ko Ba Hein's brother), Thakin Than Pe (Phyu), Thakin Tin Tun (Pyinmana), Thakin Aung Gyi (not the Socialist Aung Gyi), and Ko Kyaw Nyein (Rangoon Electric Tramway).

36. *Ibid.*, p.48.

37. *Ibid.*, p.54.

38. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.24-26.

39. နေထွန်း၊ “ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း” (၁၆-၁၈)။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.16-18.)

40. Izumiya Tatsuro, *The Minami Organ*, (translated by U Tun Aung Chain), Rangoon: University Press, 1981, p.20; Also see in U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.26. It should be noted that the author U Maung Maung always presented more emphatically the students' role than thakins' role in the nationalist movement. He was blind to the fact that the nationalist movement became more effective only when the thakins and the students joined together within the Dobama Asiayone; Also see Won Z. Yoon, *Japan's Scheme For The Liberation Of Burma: The Role of the Minami Kikan and the "Thirty Comrades"*, Athens: Ohio University, Centre for International Studies, Southeast Asia Series No.27, 1973, pp.20-24.

cooperated with the Japanese because of Japanese promises and because they had been influenced by the book, *Japanese Spy*:

The Japanese are, like us, an eastern people, and they proposed to give us military training, money, arms and ammunitions... We know the Japanese are fascist militarists. We have read the book, "Japanese Spy". We heard about their cruel acts in China, Manchuria and Korea. At the same time, we read the book that depicted Japanese behaviour as good... We openly admit that the book, *Japanese Spy*, convinced us that the Japanese would not act cruelly...⁴¹

He also explained the PRP's perspective on British imperialism and Japanese fascism. He wrote:

Our main focus of criticism was British imperialism...Although there was democracy in Britain's homeland, in the colonial countries, there was only fascism, that is "democracy at home, fascism abroad"...Were we to accept imperial Britain's fascism forever? When the opportunity arose, would we fight British fascism by taking help from fascist Japan? ...We decided that to fight British imperialism, which was already firmly entrenched in Burma, we would accept help from Japan and then, if the fascist Japanese replaced British oppression with Japanese oppression, we would fight them before they were able to secure their rule.⁴²

As result of these factors, at a secret meeting between Japan's Colonel Suzuki and Thakin Mya, Suzuki promised that Japan would help the PRP by providing arms and military instructors. They drew up a "Plan for Burma's Independence" in August 1940.⁴³ The plan involved smuggling a group of young Burmese nationalists to Japan, and after receiving military training they would return to Burma to lead an armed uprising against the British.⁴⁴

To make more detailed arrangements Thakin Aung San and Thakin Hla Myaing were sent to Japan in November 1940.⁴⁵ Thakin Aung San returned with the "Freedom Plan for Burma" which he and the Japanese authorities had drawn up. The PRP met to discuss the plan at a house situated in Thingunchung Township. In the

41. ဗဆွေ(ခ:ဝယ်)"ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်ရေး"၊ရန်ကုန်၊ဗမာ့မြတ်ဗွေပိဋကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၄၆၊စာ-၁၆။ (Ba Swe (Dahwai), *Let Us Found the Socialist Burma*, Rangoon: Zabumaitswepitacart Press, 1946, p.16.

42. *Ibid.*, p.18.

43. Yoon, *op.cit.*, pp.20-21; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၃၄-၃၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.34-35.) Sources conflict about the month during which the plan for independence was drawn up; Yoon specifics "August" and U Nay Nyunt Ba Swe specifics "September".

44. Yoon, *op.cit.*, p.21.

45. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၃၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.36.)

plan, Japan agreed to provide military training, arms and ammunition—successive groups of Burmese would be sent secretly to Japan to be trained and, after their return, Japan would drop arms and munitions for them at specific places.⁴⁶ The PRP proceeded to implement the plan. Between March and July 1941 thirty Yebaws (Comrades) were sent to Japan.⁴⁷ The PRP sent twenty seven; Thakin Ba Sein's faction sent two, (Thakin Aung Than and Thakin Than Tin); and the thirtieth was the scholar Ko Saung, who was already in Japan. By selecting young men from across the factions of the PRP, Thakin Mya showed he valued the unity of future Burma above his factional power.⁴⁸

After completion of their military training the 30 Comrades travelled to Bangkok, where in December 1941 they became the nucleus of the group that formed the Burma Tatmadaw, or Burma Independence Army (BIA). While the 30 Comrades were the nucleus of the BIA, there was also a Japanese Colonel involved.⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that the mother party of the Bama Tatmadaw was actually the PRP, and that Bogoyoke Aung San, who sacrificed his life for Burma's freedom, was regarded as the father of the Tatmadaw.

When Thakin Aung San and other representatives of the PRP's external section arrived in Bangkok, they sent an advanced group⁵⁰ led by Bo Ne Win (he later became military commander for the BSP) inside Burma to prepare for the uprising coinciding with the Japanese invasion. While Thakin Aung San and members of the external section of the party were in Bangkok, it was agreed with Japan that

46. *Ibid.*, pp.42-43. The specified places were the forests of Tavoy district and Mogyoke Township and, if more drops were necessary, the forests of the Pegu mountain range, Pyinmana Forest area and Arakan mountain range.

47. *Ibid.*, pp.45-50. In the first batch, Thakin Aung San was accompanied by Thakin Hla Pe, Thakin Aye Maung, Ko Tun Shein (University), and Thakin Ba Gyan. The second batch, included Thakin Saw Lwin, Ko Soe, Ko Than Tin (Tharrawaddy), Ko Shwe (Thonse), Ko Tin Aye (Maithtila), Ko Aung Thein (Rangoon), and Ko Tun Shwe (Taunggoo). In the third batch, there were Ko Hla Maung (Bo Zeya), Thakin San Mya (Pyinmana) and Thakin Khin Maung Oo (Pyinmana). In the last batch, there were Thakin Tun Ok, Thakin Shu Maung, Thakin Tun Khin, Thakin Kyaw Sein (later, when he was referred to as one of the Thirty Comrades, he was known as Bo Moe Nyo), Thakin Thit, Thakin Ngwe who were from Thakin Ba Sein's faction and Thakin San Hlaing, Thakin Tun Lwin, Thakin Maung Aye alias Thakin Maung Maung, Ko Than Nyunt and Ko Hla who were from Thakin Ko Taw Hmaing's faction and from the Student' Union. So, there were altogether 26 persons in the third batches plus one, Thakin Hla Myaing who left at Japan.

48. တို့ပမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်းပြုစုရေးအဖွဲ့၊ "တို့ပမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း" (၃)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၆၊ စာ-၅၄၇။ (A Committee of Dobama Asiayone, *A History of Dobama Asiayone*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1976, p.547.)

49. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၇၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.72.)

50. The advanced group can be divided into two sub-groups. The sub-group that arrived first included Ko Hla Maung (Bo Ze Ya) and Thakin Tun Khin. The second sub-group consisted of the group's leader, Thakin Shu Maung (Bo Ne Win), and Bo Tar Yar, Bo Lin Yon and Bo Moe Nyo.

independence be announced after the liberating force had occupied Moulmein (now Moullamyaing) and the BIA had increased in size to 100,000 people. By January 1942, it was becoming apparent that the Japanese did not intend to honour this agreement, as the two conditions - the occupation of Moulmein and the expansion of BIA - had been achieved but Japan refused to allow independence to be proclaimed. In order to deal with this situation Thakin Mya set out for Bangkok in January 1942 for more talks with the Japanese. On the way to Bangkok, Thakin Mya was arrested by the regional rebels. After five nights he was freed, and then, the PRP leaders⁵¹ went ahead to Tavoy on 27 January 1942 where the BIA group led by Bo Let Yar had already arrived.⁵² Realising that the Japanese would betray the freedom movement by denying Burma independence, they agreed to alert Dr Ba Maw, before the Japanese took full possession of the country. Leader Thakin Mya and Ko Hla Maung (Maithtila) departed from Tavoy by plane on 28 January 1942, to discuss independence with the Japanese authorities in Bangkok but the Japanese said that only after the occupation of Moulmein could independence be proclaimed. Leader Thakin Mya continued to discuss the preparations that were needed to form a provisional government at Moulmein.

The Central Committee of the PRP issued a pamphlet, 'Appealing to Government Servants', in which it requested government employees to help the BIA, to defend Burma against the oppressive acts of the British and to stop British suppression of the revolutionary party leaders.⁵³ While the BIA along with the Japanese marched into Burma, the headquarters of the PRP issued an announcement, “တော်လှန်ကြလော့” (*Let's Revolt*), which was delivered all over the country, urging the people to crush the withdrawing British by joining the BIA and obeying the orders of the revolutionary forces, and then, when Burma was free of the British, to pursue independence with unity and discipline.⁵⁴ Moreover, the party made particular people responsible for the districts and the delta.⁵⁵

51. Thakin Mya, Ko Ba Swe, Ko Hla Maung (Maithtila).

52. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈၁-၈၃။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.83.)

53. *Ibid.*, pp.202-203.

54. *Ibid.*, pp.204-205, Appendix (a): "Let's Revolt".

55. *Ibid.*, pp.94-95: Those responsible for the Prome (Pyi) District, were U Hla Maung, Ko Thein Nyunt, Ko Tun Lwin, Ko Aung Gyi (Former Brigadier), Ko Shwe (Former Colonel), U Shein, Thakin Tin Maung (for Thekon village), Thakin San Yin (for Twinkon village), Thakin Khin Maung (for Paukkung village), Thakin Tun Maung (for Paukkung village), Thakin Than Maung (for Pataikon village) and Thakin Ei (for Sinmyeswe village). Those responsible for the Insein district, were Thakin Kyaw Dun (Tun), Thakin Tin Maung Gyi, Thakin Kyar Nyunt, Thakin Tin Mya (Okkan), Thakin Aung

Despite these contributions to the defeat of the British, the Japanese would not allow a handover of power to the BIA and refused to distribute the independence declaration.⁵⁶ Back in Rangoon, Thakin Mya continued to ask the Japanese authorities for discussions about preparations for independence and the duties to be assumed by the civilian administration but they replied that they would hold discussions about these matters only when all the political leaders (especially Dr Ba Maw) arrived back to Rangoon. Indeed, the PRP group had already decided to select Dr Ba Maw as government head.

Despite the PRP's successes against British imperialism, especially the establishment of the BIA, the goal of freedom was now being thwarted by the manipulations of the Japanese fascists. Strong feelings of distrust about the Japanese started to grow, as well as criticism of the strategy of liberation through reliance on the Japanese. One of the Thakins who later set up a Communist party during the Japanese period regarded the PRP group as fifth columnists.⁵⁷ Thakin Soe also accused the PRP group of inviting the Japanese to Burma, and the BIA and the other patriotic men of being the "Fascists' Fifth Soldiers".⁵⁸ Some accused the group of acting like "Blind Politicians". The PRP defended their strategic alliance with the Japanese. Thakin Soe Myint, who was involved in the PRP as a district leader, assumed that collaborating with the Japanese would benefit the BIA and Burma Defence Army (BDA).⁵⁹ Indeed, the desire was to set up Burma's own army, a desire made obvious in the speech given by Captain Izumi of the Minamikikan in which he said "The war has been lost, but the devotion we have given to Burma will live

Khin and Thakin Hla Maung. Those responsible for Tharrawaddy district were Thakin Sein Maung, Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), Thakin Pe Aung, Thakin Tun Aunt (student's union leader from Minhla), Thakin Mya Lay and Thakin Thein Maung. Those responsible for Pegu district, were Thakin Tin (Thonze), Thakin San Myint, Thakin Khin Maung (Kamayut) and Ko Kyi Myint. For the Delta, the responsible persons were Ko Maung Maung alias Bo Aung (Former Colonel), Ko Ba Zan alias Bo Win (Former Colonel), Ko Maung Maung alias Bo Thein Swe (Pathein), Yangon Ba Swe, Thakin Thein Pe (Warkhema), Thakin Aung Thin and Thakin Chan Mya (Myaungmya). Other appointments were Thakin Lwin for Pakhuku district and Bo Moe Nyo (one of the Thirty Comrades), Ko Thein Maung alias Bo Kyaw Khaung (Former Colonel Thein Maung) for Mandalay.

56. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိဇ္ဇာ)၊ "အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉၊ ၈-၃၂၃။ (Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979, p.323.)

57. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma*, p.10.

58. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ" (၈-၃၁၊ ၃၃။) (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, p.31, p.33.)

59. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု"၊ အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့ အထိမ်းအမှတ်ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင်အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောဆောင်းပါး။ (U Soe Myint, "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League for Democracy, *The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum*, Vol. II.) Thakin Soe Myint now a CEC member in the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, founded in 1988.

forever in the hearts of the Burmese people."⁶⁰ Later, U Ba Swe responded to the accusations by pointing out that the PRP did not invite the fascist Japanese but only received help from them. He said that at that time, Soviet Russia maintained friendly relations with Japan and Germany, and explained that the PRP intended to get military training, arms and ammunitions from Japan and then oppose the fascists themselves.⁶¹ In 1946 he wrote:

We were not wrong in collaborating with the Japanese in order to resist imperialism. We made only one mistake. It was to depend too much on outside help...It is necessary for a colonised country that is in revolt to get arms and money, but there should also be a strong internal base. The armed struggle should have the support and involvement of the general public. The struggle cannot be won with one armed force. Ideology should lead the revolution.⁶²

In the eyes of the nationalists, the period of Japanese occupation was distinguished by the establishment of a Burmese Army, something the British rulers had never allowed. This popular move was counterbalanced by the cruelty inflicted on the Burmese people by the fascist Japanese.

Despite these justifications, it became clear that the Japanese would not allow the PRP to claim that Burma had been liberated. The Japanese fascists were now the new enemy and the second phase of the revolution began when the PRP leaders began to search for alternative strategies. In their discussions throughout 1942 they agreed in rough detail, to make contact with China as well as with the allied forces in India and negotiate alliances with the enemies of Japan.⁶³

To sum up, the result of the PRP's co-operation with the Japanese fascists was the appearance, in Bangkok, of the Burma Independence Army (BIA). The BIA later became the Burmese Defence Army (BDA) and then, when the Japanese feigned the granting of independence, it was renamed the Bama Tatmadaw. The Bama Tatmadaw was also called the Burma National Army (BNA)⁶⁴ or Patriotic Burmese Forces

60. Louis Allen, *Sittan: The Last Battle*, London: Redwood Press, 1973, pp.24-25.

61. ဗဆွေ(စီးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်ရေး"၊ ၈-၂၀။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.20.)

62. *Ibid.*, p.22.

63. *Ibid.*

64. U Ba Than (Dhammika, Retired Colonel), *The Roots of The Revolution*, Rangoon: the Government Printing Press, 1962, p.25, p.36. The Burma National Army was born on 26 December 1941 at Bangkok as BIA and then, its became the Burma Defence Army (BDA) on 27 July 1942 and the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF) 30 May 1945. So, the BIA lasted just over 7 months; the BDA just over 3 years and 5 months.

(PBF) by the Allied Army. Under the name of the BNA/PBF, the Tatmadaw began to collaborate with the Allies to attack the Japanese.

The Anti-Fascist Phase and the United Front, 1944

The Japanese began their occupation of Burma with military rule in 1942 and on 1 August 1943, they declared that Burma was now independent. During the period of Japanese occupation, Thakin Mya participated as a Deputy Premier and then as Home Minister. The communist leader Thakin Than Tun served as Minister for Agriculture. They were involved in the government administration but they had no real political power. Both were seriously thinking of resigning from their posts. But PRP's Inner Circle made a tactical decision that obliged them to remain in government service.⁶⁵ One advantage of their holding office was that it allowed them to deflect some Japanese persecution of PRP members.

During this time, the BIA was reformed. It was renamed the Burma Defense Army (BDA) on 26 August 1942.⁶⁶ During the BDA period, some military officers⁶⁷ were very anxious to rise up against the Japanese and they were dissatisfied with the higher echelons of the army, and the political and government hierarchies.⁶⁸ This rebellious group of young officers joined with Lt.Colonel Ne Win and this led to the formation of the Tatmadaw Elite group within the PRP (see Chapter Eight). Similarly, within civil society, people were upset about the persecution by the Japanese and, as a result of this, the Communist Party led by Thakin Kyaw Sein emerged in December 1942.⁶⁹ Indeed, the main revolutionary leaders including Bogyoke Aung San and Thakin Mya, were waiting for the right time to increase revolutionary activity. While the anger expressed by the civilians and the young BDA officers was understandable, many of the revolutionaries were critical because of the recklessness it had created.

65. Thakin Nu, *Burma Under The Japanese*, London: Macmillan & Co.Ltd., 1954, p.38. On page 61, it is related that Thakin Mya was reduced to tears when reproached by Thakin Kodawhmaing about this wish to resign.

66. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.58; Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.8. The BIA was transformed into the BDA in 1942 and then the BNA in 1943. Just before the uprising on March 27, 1945, the BNA was 11,480 strong.

67. These military officers were Bo Aung Gyi, Bo Tin Pe, Bo Chit Khine, Bo Aye Maung, Bo Ye Htut, Bo Aung Shwe, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Bo Maung Maung and Bo Win.

68. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.58.

69. ထွန်းဇွန်စည်သတင်းစာ၊ ၄၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၆၁။ (*Tun Daily Newspaper* on 4.4.1961); Interview with Bo Mya Han and U Ohn Thwin on 11.7.1988. They described the chain of events that resulted from the foundation of the parallel communist party: party leader, Thakin Kyaw Sein was wounded as a result of an assassination attempt; he was hospitalised at Rangoon General Hospital (RGH) where the Japanese Kempaiti easily caught him; he was compelled to reveal details on the basis of which all the leading persons and followers were captured and persecuted by the Japanese.

The mood was captured by Bogyoke Aung San's byword, "the frog got killed because of the noise it made".⁷⁰ Prominent leader, Thakin Hla Kyway, reported Bogyoke Aung San as saying:

Saya Chit! Your Nga Pu⁷¹ (means Japanese) are giving deep trouble.
Conflict between the young army men and the Japanese nearly arose. Now,
be careful! Japan's Military Intelligence will infiltrate all over the country
under cover of the commodity distribution. It would be advisable to take
precautions against the infiltrators.⁷²

Even Premier Dr Ba Maw appreciated the need for a low-key approach for he pretended not to notice the preparations for revolution.⁷³ He also prevented revolutionaries from being killed by the Japanese.⁷⁴

Thus, even while it was engaged in cooperation with the Japanese regime, the PRP was preparing for the anti- fascist revolution by forming the United Front as an underground party. The organisation that would form the National Front, the Pha-Ta-Pa (ဖက်ဆစ်တိုက်ဖျက်ရေးပြည်သူ့အဖွဲ့ချုပ်) (AFO) was formed on 23 August 1944 at the residence of Thakin Nu who served as Foreign Minister during the Japanese period. Among the initial nine members of the Central Committee of the Pha-Ta- Pa (AFO), the PRP was represented by Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Ba Swe and Thakin Chit.⁷⁵ But according to Robert H. Taylor's source, Major General Aung San represented both the army and the PRP.⁷⁶ If so, it explains why he was included in the formation of the PRP's Central Committee. The Pha-Ta-Pa (AFO) was renamed as Pha-Ta-Pa-La (ဖက်ဆစ်တိုက်ဖျက်ရေးပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်) (Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League) at the meeting of Bogyoke Aung San's residence held on 1 - 3 March 1945. They also formed the Central Military Council of the AFPFL to command the revolt and to fix

70. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss /Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

71. Nga Pu means short person. Most Japanese are shorter than the Burmese Peoples used to call, and Nga Pu became a common pejorative Burmese term for the Japanese.

72. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

73. Former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi recalled that in the political table talk at his residence during the BSPP period, he and his guests - (Thakin Lay Maung, U Aung Than (a brother of Bogyoke Aung San), Thakin Chit Maung, and etc.), recognised the role played by Dr Ba Maw in support of the resistance although they were aware that he wanted to retain his premiership.

74. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၇၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.176.)

75. *Ibid.*, pp.159-160; "ဗိုလ်မဟာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ ၃၀၅-၅၈၀။ (A History of Dobama Asiayone, Vol. II, p.580.) Representing the Burma Army- were Bogyoke Aung San, Bo Let Yar and Bo Ne Win, representing the CPB- were Thakin Soe, Thakin Ba Hein and Thakin Than Tun; and representing the PRP-were Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Ba Swe and Thakin Chit. Thakin Soe was elected as chairman and Thakin Than Tun as general secretary.

76. Robert H. Taylor, "Burma": Haruhiro Fukui (Editor-in-Chief), *Political Parties of Asia And The Pacific*, Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985, p.108.

its date. The members of the council were Bogyoke Aung San as military leader, Thakin Soe as political leader, Thakin Than Tun in charge of guerilla warfare and foreign affairs, and four members without specific leadership roles, Bo Let Yar, Bo Ne Win, U Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Chit.⁷⁷ It is notable that the two communist leaders, Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun, played more significant roles in the military council than the PRP members who were members only. However, it cannot be denied that the leaders of the PRP were the initial founders of the historic resistance that would lead to Burmese freedom.

As events panned out, the vanguard of the revolution was not left in the hands of the PRP but passed to the AFPFL. To reach the stage of a United Front, the revolutionary forces had to undertake three-sided negotiations⁷⁸ involving the CPB, the PRP and the Burma Army. These talks occurred mainly due to the efforts of Bogyoke Aung San. In this way, the United Front was founded in October 1944, a product of the major forces of the anti-fascist revolution and supported by all revolutionary leftists.⁷⁹ The United Front agreement was publicly proclaimed under the name of Communist Party (Burma) on the 3 November 1944.⁸⁰ And, CPB and PRP came together as one force and they called their coalition the United Front, Vanguard of the Revolution. This was formed through an agreement between the CPB and PRP under the name of the CPB on 3 November 1944.⁸¹ The agreement included reference to statements each party had made. The CPB's statement contained an assurance that communism was not against freedom and humanism but absolutely

77. ကျော်စော်ဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာသိန္ဓာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊

ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ စာ-၁၁။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, p.11)

78. *Ibid.*, p.157.) Ko Ba Swe, Thakin Chit, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Bo Maung Maung and Bo Aung Gyi, as representatives of the BNA and the PRP, met with a group led by Thakin Soe in Daydeye Township after arrangements were made by Yangon Ba Swe. The discussion lasted for 3 days and finally it was agreed to form the "United Front"; *Ibid.*, p.158; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ စာ-၅၃-၅၅။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1961, pp.53-55.)

According to this author, Ko Kyaw Nyein and Bo Ne Win met with Thakin Soe in Daydeye in 1944; တက္ကသိုလ်စိန်တင်၊ "ရဲဘော်သုံးကျိပ်မော်ကွန်း"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဂုဏ်ထူးစာပေ၊ ၁၉၆၈၊ စာ-၁၈၉။ (Tatkatho Sein Tin, *A History of 30 Comrades*, 1st Edition, Rangoon: Gonhtoo Press, 1968, p.189). This source reports that Bogyoke Aung San himself met with Thakin Soe in Pegu at the headquarters of the Burma Army on 4 August 1944. The discussion lasted for 3 days.

79. သခင်တင်မြ၊ "ဘုံဘဝမှာဖြင့်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တသက်တာစာပေ၊ ၁၉၇၄၊ စာ-၆၅၆။ (Thakin Tin Mya, *In the Life of Commune*, Rangoon: Tathettar Press, 1974, p.656).

80. ကျော်စော်ဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.10.)

81. Appendix (b): "United Front"; U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.122. The author records that a pamphlet was later published by Thakin Soe which also described the front as the Vanguard of the Revolution. He also accused Thakin Soe of violating the spirit and text of the original agreement by adding the words, "the above two parties agreed to form one party by the name of the Communist Party, Burma".

supported them. In its statement, the PRP proclaimed its belief that Burma had to follow the path of absolute freedom—freedom, democracy and then socialism. They held ‘freedom, democracy and socialism’ to be the basis of their program. They admitted that they had made a mistake in their cooperation with the fascists who had betrayed their promise to give independence to Burma. The agreement also included the parties’ perspectives on the post- Second World War period. The CPB and the PRP agreed that a Cold War between the Allied Group and Soviet Russia would ensue (see Chapter Seven). The two parties believed that they should not rely absolutely on the British whose aims before the Second World War were to destroy the Soviet Russia by encouraging Germany and Japan to crush the dictatorship of the proletariat in the socialist countries and then to promote the global spread of capitalism. They also agreed to look at not only the international stage but also at domestic circumstances especially at their own internal affairs, and to organise the people for the anti-fascist struggle. At the same time, they decided to prepare for the anti-imperialist movement after the Japanese were defeated. It is significant that the two parties included in this agreement formed an undertaking to hide their arms in preparation for another revolution.

The military council of the AFPFL divided the country into ten military regions.⁸² After the formation of the ten military regions, the Central Committee of the AFPFL fixed on the the last week of March or the first week of April as the start of the nation-wide uprising against the Japanese. In addition, they decided to stage an earlier first step, with an ‘independent’ rebellion in upper Burma led by Bo Ba Htoo. The idea here was that Bo Ba Htoo would declare against Bogyoke Aung San and his BNA, in order to fool the Japanese. This first stage of the plan was started on 8 March 1945, with the revolt in Upper Burma.⁸³ In order to disguise the preparations for the wider revolt, there was a ceremonial send-off for the BNA on 17 March. Thakin Mya, who was Deputy Prime Minister at that time, delivered a speech which contained high praise for the army. His speech included the following words:

82. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါဝင်သမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၇-၁၅၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.171-172.) The 10 military regions were (1) Prome, Tharrawaddy, Insein and Eastern Henzada, (2) Hantharwaddy, Danubyu, Bogalay, Phyarpon and Maupin, (3) Patheingyi and Western Irrawaddy Delta, (4) Pegu, Shwekyin and Thaton District, (5) Moulmein, Tavoy and Mergui District, (6) Yemethin, Tounggu, Pyinmana, Meikhtila and Southern Shan State, (7) Thayetmyo, Ahlan, Magwe and Minbu; and the extensive regions were (8) Upper Burma, (9) Arakan Region, and (10) Rangoon Region and its surrounding areas. See also Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.8. The author mentions only 8 regions.

83. *Ibid.*, pp.173-175.

This is indeed a highly auspicious occasion, never before experienced in the history of Burma, when we the Burmese people gathered today at this place to give due honour to the soldiers of Army.⁸⁴

The military leader of the revolt against the Japanese, Major General Aung San spoke at a press conference on 18 March 1945, the day after the BNA's send-off. His intended audience was the people:

It is true in a way that, we had been doing lip service to the people. But now we are going to the very front to take part in actual fighting. We can show something to the people they will see something good in the near future.⁸⁵

In making these statements, it was clear that the two national leaders, civilian and military, stood firmly united on the eve of the revolution.

In the face of the Allied forces successes in Singapore and in Burma, the Japanese withdrew from Rangoon. Thakin Mya was instructed by the central committee of the AFPFL to follow them to Moulmein, a very dangerous commission. His main duty was to pretend to be 'pro-Japanese' and use his disguise to defend Comrades who were in the hands of the fascist Japanese.⁸⁶ Thakin Nu was also required to remain within the Japanese administration although initially he planned to go underground with Bo Let Yar. His task was to help Thakin Mya according to the suggestion of Ko Kyaw Nyein and Ko Hla Maung (Maithtila).⁸⁷

The Communists' role in this revolution was significant. CPB historian, Bertil Lintner, recognised the CPB's contribution to the struggle but admitted that: "it would have been a clear exaggeration to say that it was the CPB that actually led the struggle".⁸⁸ Dr Robert H. Taylor remarked that the "Communist movement soon assumed a major role in the political life of the country throughout the 1940s and 1950s...".⁸⁹ The observations of these two commentators are undeniable and so is the fact that the CPB played a more significant role than the PRP. However, the backbone of the revolution against the Japanese was the Burma Army. After Bogoyoke Aung San brokered the United Front, he gave permission to Thakin Soe to teach political

84. The Extracts from Greater Asia (1944-45) on Tuesday 20.3.1945, Mss/Eur D 1066/4. (British Library, London).

85. *Ibid.*

86. သခင်လှကျွေး၊ "အမျိုးသားခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးများ၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" (Thakin Hla Kyway, *Freedom For Burma by Nationalist Leaders*, pp.28-31.)

87. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၇၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.175.)

88. Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.8.

89. Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1987, p.238.

ideology within the Burma Army which was in a state of turmoil. Thakin Soe's work had a calming effect but the army remained riven by factions- the Communist group and the Socialist group; this was to lead to the civil war after independence was declared in 1948. In comparison with the Indonesian nationalist struggle, Soe's role was very similar with the role of Soetan Dr Sjahrir, a leader of the Partai Socialist Indonesia (PSI) and former Prime Minister of Indonesia in November 1945.⁹⁰ But, Soe did not become a Prime Minister of Union of Burma when Burma regained Independence.

The Emergence of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party-Burma, 1944-1945

After the defeat of the Japanese, tension rose between the British Army and the Burmese resistance. The Burmese forces wanted to prepare for the next revolution and to keep their arms. But the Allied army ordered the return of all arms used during the resistance. The Burmese forces, therefore, attempted to seize the capital, Rangoon, before it fell into the hands of the Allied army. The Burmese Patriotic Army sided with the Burmese on 1 May 1945 and occupied Rangoon.⁹¹ The Burmese resistant forces put U Ba Gyan in charge of law and order in Rangoon; he was chairman of the Asia Youth Asiayone, founded during the Japanese occupation. They changed their headquarters from 28 Bolane to 8 Komin Kochin Road, the headquarters of the Asia Youth Asiayone.⁹² U Kyaw Myint Lay, who later became one of the founders of the PF (Socialist) P, was a Vice-Chairman of the Youth Asiayone.⁹³ When the Allied army arrived at Rangoon, the city's guards were requested to handover their arms and some were then arrested. Those who lived in the resistance headquarter were surrounded by the Allied army and people who had held official positions during the Japanese occupation were interrogated.⁹⁴

Although the Allies now occupied Rangoon, the AFPFL still flew the revolutionary flag. In May 1945, the Supreme Council of the Pha Ta Pa La (AFPFL)

90. Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp.145-152; Dr Maung Maung, *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, p.141. Socialist U Kyaw Nyein told Thakin Soe that "...And if you hadn't gone into the jungle,... you would surely have become the first president of the Union."

91. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

92. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၈၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.180); ဦးဗဆွေ၊ "တော်လှန်ရေး၏ မြုပ်ကွပ်ရှုပ်ကွက်များ"၊ *ရွှေတူဂ္ဂနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၁)*၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၉၇၁၊ စာ-၃၉။ (U Ba Swe, "The Secrets of The Revolution": *Shwe Tu Journal*, Vol. I, No.1, 12.2.1971.)

93. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990.

94. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

took place. Originally, there were nine members of the Supreme Council.⁹⁵ The first meeting involved eight members including Bogyoke Aung San and they agreed to continue with military struggle against the British. The second meeting was held when CPB's Thakin Than Tun returned to Rangoon from Taunggu where he contacted and cooperated with the No (14) Allied Army. At the meeting, he presented the theory of Peaceful Development which, if adopted, would require the handover of arms to the British imperial forces. The theory, indeed, was propagated by Thakin Thein Pe who had been exposed to it when sent to India to contact the allies during the Japanese period; the Indian communist N.M Joshi, was an advocate of the theory, an adaptation of the tactics developed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, Earl Russel Browder.

Browderism was based on "American exceptionalism", an economic ideology developed in the 1920s.⁹⁶ It proposed that after the war, American imperialism would become enlightened enough to see the strength of people the world over, to see its own interests in cooperating with the other capitalist powers to rehabilitate their economics, to help underdeveloped countries and colonies to develop economically and socially and to gain independence. Browder pictured the postwar world as comprising free, equal nations working together peacefully. He argued that the only way for American capitalism to make full use of its production potential, created by the war, and to avoid economic crisis and prosper, was to assist other economies with their development. Browder's ideas were explained in books published by the Communist Party of USA.⁹⁷

Concerning the acceptance of Browderism by the CPB, Thakin Thein Pe revealed in his book, *My Political Experiences* that:

the books written by Browder, were mostly published by the Indian Communist Party...the form of Browderism accepted by the Indian Communist Party was introduced to Burma by Thakin Thein Pe and Comrade Ba Tin alias Mr Goshal.⁹⁸

The ideology of peaceful development became a main point of controversy between the CPB and the PRP after the Second World War. Having accepted

95. ဗဆွေ(ခ:ဝယ်)"ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်သူ့ထောင်လော့"၊ ၁၈-၃၀-၃၂။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.30-32.)

96. *Ibid.*, p.49.

97. Klaus Fleischmann, *Documents on Communism in Burma (1945-1977)*, Hamburg: Institut fur Asienkunde, 1988, p.231; Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma*, pp.245-246.

98. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ၁၈-၄ရ။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, p.47.)

Browderism, the CPB requested that all resistance forces relinquish their arms to the British. The PRP group opposed the request. In the meeting of the AFPFL's Supreme Council, the Communist leaders pushed the leaders from the PRP to accept the strategy of peaceful development. Bogyoke Aung San manoeuvred the two groups into a compromise; by suggesting they adopt a theory based on continuous mass struggle but would allow for armed struggle when all else failed. The two parties agreed with the suggestion by Bogyoke Aung San and the CPB and PRP became rivals in promoting his nationalist stand. Then, they decided to transform the AFPFL from an underground to an open national front, from Pha-Ta-Pa-La to Pha-Sa-Pa-La Ahpwechok (in Burmese) (AFPFL) and it attracted members from several other organisations and from all walks of life who were against imperialism and fascism.⁹⁹ The Supreme Council of the AFPFL was extended from nine to sixteen persons and then to thirty-six persons.¹⁰⁰ Chairman Thakin Mya was not included until the council increased to sixteen because of his wartime commission to go along with the Fascist Japanese to Moulmein.

Another point of difference between the CPB and the PRP started to develop around the basis of forming a national government. After the resistance, the leaders of the AFPFL attempted to keep the mass movement alive and growing. They considered promoting the recovery of Burma's freedom by incorporating the Burma Patriotic Army and the guerilla forces into a standing army. Bogyoke Aung San met with the British Army Authority at Maithila but remained the matter unresolved. Therefore, he and the other leaders from the Tatmadaw discussed the case in Pegu (now Pego).¹⁰¹ And the AFPFL leaders held a significant meeting with the Tatmadaw, the CPB and the PRP from 16 to 18 August 1945, to discuss the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF), the future for Burma and national unity.¹⁰² The result was a mass meeting at the Naythurain Theatre in Bahan Township.

At this meeting Bogyoke Aung San took the first step towards becoming a national leader when he assumed a civilian role as chairman of the meeting.

99. ဗဆွေ(ခ:ဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ ၈-၃၀-၃၁၊ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.30-31); နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၈၄-၁၈၅၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.184-185); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး (ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၈၊ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.17).

100. ဦးစံငြိမ်း၊ ဒေါက်တာဒေါ်မြင့်ကြည်၊ "၁၉၅၈-၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေးသမိုင်းအတွဲ(၁)"၊ (၃)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၉၁၊ ၈-၁၃-၁၄၊ (U San Nyein & Dr Daw Myint Kyi, (1958-1962) *Burmese Political History*, Vol. I, Second Edition, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, pp.13-14.)

101. Ba Than, *op.cit.*, p.8.

102. ဦးသန့်၊ "ပြည်တော်သာခရီး"၊ (ပ)တွဲ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ ၈-၇၄၊ (U Thant, *Pyitawtharkhayee*, Vol. I, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1961, p.74)

Participants included individuals, other parties, the CPB and the PRP.¹⁰³ The independent politician U Ba Pe proposed the formation of a constituent assembly; his proposal was carried by the meeting and the Naythurain Assembly was born. Indeed, this was the beginning of an influential period in Burmese politics for U Aung San and Thakin Than Tun, a period which lasted until the end of the Naythurain Assembly. Some authors have referred to it as the period of San and Than.¹⁰⁴ Although the Communist Party had a more influential role in the politics of the days especially in the period of Naythurain, the Party focused on internal affairs rather than on state affairs and consequently left the AFPFL in the following year. The Communists had more influence in the AFPFL and among the workers than the Socialists.¹⁰⁵

Based on these circumstances, the Communists did as they pleased. In accordance with the agreement that produced the United Front, the PRP and the CPB agreed not to set up a legal party before independence and to maintain the AFPFL as the main revolutionary force. And they understood that if they needed to form a legal party, it would have to be a joint organisation.¹⁰⁶ However, the CPB, in their Second Congress in July 1945, affirmed Browderism as their preferred strategy and then, without the knowledge of Bogoyoke Aung San or the PRP, it abolished the United Front.¹⁰⁷ The CPB issued a statement entitled 'Anti-Leftist Ideology', rejecting the United Front and giving their reasons. The CPB wrote:

After 1944, the CPB joined with the PRP which was at that time taking a more or less anti-leftist stance...Besides, although the PRP forces made a verbal promise to the Communists, they could not change their minds but

103. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "နယ်ချဲ့ဘုရင်ခံနှင့်လွတ်လပ်ရေးတို့ကွဲပြားဆုံးအဆင့်"၊ မိုးကုန်းနယ်အတွဲ(၆)၊ နံပါတ်(၁၀)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈-၁၄ရ။ (Ko Than [Kyimyindine], "Imperialist Governor and the Last Phase of the Freedom Movement": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November 1996, p.147) The seconders of U Ba Pe's proposal were U Kyaw Nyein (PRP) and U Ba Ohn (Myo Chit Party). Thakin Than Tun (CPB), a General Secretary for the AFPFL, read aloud for the people the document, *World Peace and Independent Burma*, explaining the stand taken by the AFPFL.

104. U Aung San and Thakin Than Tun are brothers by marriage.

105. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. He involving in the Communists' Workers' Union, explained the Burmese political environment around the Naythurain Assembly that Communists were more influential than Socialists. Mr Tom Driberg, a British Labour Mmember of the Parliament and British Journalist, arrived at Rangoon after he took information about the Indonesian nationalist movement against the Dutch imperialism. The Communists' Party arranged a welcomed ceremony for Mr Driberg at the Naythurain Hall. Ko Ko Gyi had to do interpreter between Mr Tom Driberg and Communists' leaders and workers.

106. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၈ရ။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.187.)

107. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ၈-၆၁-၆၃။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, pp.61-63.)

practiced the acts of the anti-leftist movements so that the CPB cut off relations with the PRP forces.¹⁰⁸

Since before the Second Congress of the CPB, there was rivalry between the CPB and the PRP. U Aung San, in his role as Chairman of the meeting of the AFPFL Supreme Council held on 25 August 1946, warned both the CPB and the PRP of the risk their rivalry represented for national politics.¹⁰⁹ It can be seen in the statement sent by the CPB to Bogyoke Aung San, Commander of Burma Army, concerning matters in the delta; it was signed by the party secretary, Thakin Than Tun, on 11 June 1945. Actually, it was written by Thakin Soe.¹¹⁰ In the statement, the CPB discussed how they could not get freedom of association in the delta and that the party and those they worked with them were victims of robberies, unlawful arrests, the continuous use of Japanese spies (who went unpunished), persecution, and interference in trade, the seizing of arms from the guerillas and the use of Japanese currencies. The Communist Party, therefore, proposed that the delta should be administered by a Military Administration replacing the Burma Army, which then ruled in the delta. The Communist Party urged Bogyoke Aung San to seize all the arms from the Burma Army, which should be returned to barracks. In response, the AFPFL and the PRP group stated that Thakin Than Tun had persuaded Bogyoke to abolish the Burma Army from the delta because the CPB was having difficulties attracting new members. They also stated that the CPB accused the Tatmadaw of being Japanese fascists yet their own programs were fascist in nature.¹¹¹

There were attempts by Bogyoke Aung San and Thakin Mya to reconcile the two parties.¹¹² There was also one attempt by the CPB group led by Thakin Thein Pe who was staying in India, to keep the CPB and the PRP united. The Central

108. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၅၈-၁၆၀ (နောက်ဆက်တွဲ-ခ)။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.158-160: Appendix B.)

109. *Ibid.*, pp.81-82; လူထုသတင်းစာ၊ ၂၈ ဩဂုတ်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Ludu (The Mass) Newspaper*, 28 August 1946.)

110. *The Collection by U Ba Swe*. In the speech in Burmese "Why did the dismissal of the Communist Party from the AFPFL" given by Bogyoke Aung San on 20 October 1946.

111. *Ibid.* When the AFPFL and the BSP received the letter [from Thakin Than Tun to Bogyoke Aung San], they added the note viewed by the AFPFL and the BSP on the letter by Communist leader Thakin Than Tun. In the collection by Thakin Hla Kyway, there is not included the note by the AFPFL and the BSP.

112. သခင်တင်မြ "တုံ့ဘဝမှာဖြင့်"၊ ၁၈-၈၀၇။ (Thakin Tin Mya, *In the Life of Commune*, p.807). Bogyoke Aung San, when he came back from Maitthila to Rangoon, pushed Ko Ba Swe and Thakin Chit not to form a separate party but to keep the PRP united with the CPB. Besides, Bogyoke encouraged Ko Ba Hein from the CPB to form one party only; Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung on 7.6.1987 and Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988. In the interviews, the old politicians reported that Thakin Mya also attempted to form one party to maintain unity between the CPB and the PRP when he came back from Mudon.

Committee of the CPB, therefore, made a decision on 1 July 1945 and then issued a statement concerning its decision taken on 7 August 1945. In the statement, the CPB informed the PRP group that the Communist Party was ready to accept members of the PRP group individually if they accepted the advice by the CPB; and the CPB emphatically urged the PRP group not to disturb the ideologies and programs of the AFPFL if the PRP did not wish to set up a separate party or to have individual members join the CPB.¹¹³ Nevertheless, the attempt to unite as single party was only building a house of cards and the leadership role in the CPB was an influential factor because the most important people in the CPB were Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun.¹¹⁴ In other words, the decision-makers in the CPB were not more eager than Thakin Ba Hein (who had suffering from yellow fever which prevented him to take part in the CPB's leadership) to reach unity with the socialists. Although the denial of CPB membership was based on ideological differences (whatever the reasons given by the CPB), there was also a great deal of interpersonal conflict. The CPB refused to accept some members from the PRP including army men who were involved in the revolutionary party.¹¹⁵ It, therefore, can be said from the flash point that the

113. *Ibid.*

114. သခင်တင်မြ၊ "ဘုံဘဝမှာဖြင့်"၊ ၈-၆၅၈။ (Thakin Tin Mya, *In the Life of Commune*, p.658). Thakin Soe gave a letter to Bogyoke Aung San rejecting the idea of one party and Bogyoke Aung San was very sad and angry; သိန်းမေဖြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ၈-၆၅-၆၆။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, pp.65-66.) At first, Thakin Soe proposed to the PRP group to set up a separate party and its wings like Peasants' and Workers' organisations and so that these could compete with the CPB and its unions. Then, he proposed, the failing organisations could be joined hands with the winning ones. Finally, he replied that it could not work within one party or one organisation; Dr Maung Maung, *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph/49 1999, p.141. U Kyaw Nyein said to Thakin Soe, "You should have admitted us all into the Communist Party: Bo Aung San, Bo Ne Win, Ba Swe, and myself... You rejected us instead. Thus, we had to give up our dream of a single party and leftist unity, and start a separate socialist party to catch up with you."; စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်

မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းတတိယတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၅-၁၉၄၈"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၅၊ ၈-၉၆။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of the Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, 1945-1948, First Edition, Rangoon: Information Department, 1995, p.96.) The CPB including Ko Ba Hein and Thakin Tin Mya, led by Thakin Soe, met with PRP members Ko Ba Swe, Thakin Chit and Thakin Wa Tin. Thakin Chit and Ko Ba Swe proposed joining together within one party for the sake of leftist unity. But, Thakin Soe said that the problems with the United Front, demonstrated a need for people to join the CPB individually, not en-bloc; he said that Ko Kyaw Nyein and Yangon Ba Swe would not be accepted into the CPB, bringing the discussion to an end.

115. သိန်းမေဖြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ၈-၂၆၀။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, p.260.) The author records that the CPB was willing to accept Ko Ba Swe and Thakin Chit as members, but not Ko Kyaw Nyein; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi on 7.5.1988. The author named those denied CPB membership as Ko Kyaw Nyein and Bo Ne Win; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၈၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.188.) The author only mentioned Ko Kyaw Nyein as not acceptable to the CPB as a member. The CPB did accept Colonel Maung Maung, Colonel Aung Gyi and Colonel Aung Shwe, but they would be granted ordinary membership only after 6 months to 1 year as reserve members or after the All-Burma Conference if they had made no mistakes. The CPB would never accept Yangon Ba Swe and Bo Kyi Win (Former Colonel). See also Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway: Yangon Ba Swe spoke out that he and Bo Ne Win were rejected for CPB membership because the CPB accused them of having

emergence of the BSP came more from the bitterness over the CPB's attitudes than from ideological differences between the two parties. There however was more concerned with their different class-instincts with Communists in the legal creation of the BSP/PRP, based on ideas of military elite's assumption which would be given more satisfactory explanation in the following presentation.

Creation of the BSP and then the PFP

In this context, the PRP group, composed of the military elite group and the civilian elite group, prepared to re-form their pre-war party to compete with the Communists. (The role of the Tatmadaw (Military) elite group in the creation of Burma Socialist Party is to be discussed in Chapter Eight). Only after the Communists put up their nameplate at (130) Bagaya Street, Sanchaung Township, did the PRP group meet to found a new party. On a day in mid-1945, before Thakin Mya returned to Rangoon, from his mission at Mudon, they gathered at the residence of Doctor U Thaung Shein and Thakinmagyi Daw Khin Chit alias Daw Daw Gyi (Mingalar St., Sanchaung), and drew up the constitution for the new party, choosing the name the Burma Socialist Party. Sources conflict about the month of the meeting¹¹⁶ but if June is correct, the PRP group began the founding process within one month of the foundation of the CPB.¹¹⁷ Its Chairman was U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein became General Secretary; the CEC members were Ko Hla Maung (Maithtila), Yangon Ba Swe, Thakin Tin, Ko Tin Nyunt, Ko Than Sein, Thakin Wa Tin and Ko Kyaw Myint Lay.¹¹⁸ At that time, the name of the party was only the BSP. However, there is reason to be sceptical about the naming of the BSP before Mya returned to Rangoon. When one of the Party founders was interviewed, he said that he was not included in

militarist spirits; Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988: Thakin Soe drove Bogyoke Aung San out from the Central Committee of the CPB and he also rejected Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Ba Swe, Lt.Colonel Ne Win and others but not Thakin Chit.

116. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၉၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.190.) According to this source, the BSP was founded under the leadership of Ko Ba Swe and Ko Kyaw Nyein, before the arrival of Thakin Mya to Rangoon, and the date given was June 1945. This information was gained from an interview with U Kyaw Nyein; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989: U Tin Pe said that the month of the meeting in Sanchaung, Mingalar Street, at the residence of Doctor U Thaung Shein and Thakinmagyi Daw Khin Chit, was August of 1945; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ ၁၉၇။ (A *History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, p.97): According to this source, the PRP group, including Bo Ne Win, Bo Maung Maung, Ko Ba Swe, Ko Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Chit and Bo Khin Maung Gale, met on 16 July 1945, having already decided to found a separate party.

117. Lintner, *op.cit.*, p.9: the CPB broke the agreement from which the United Front arose and established their party as a legal entity in May 1945, at No (130) Bargayar Street, Sanchaung Township; သခင်တင်မြ၊ "ဘုံဘဝမှာဖြင့်"၊ ၈၀၇။ (Thakin Tin Mya, *In The Life of Commune*, p.807.)

118. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၉၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.190);

the CEC until after the arrival of Leader Mya, a fact which is contradicted in the written history of the PRP.¹¹⁹

Its early records indicate that the BSP's military leadership and ideology was formed at that time. At the most significant meeting—the founding meeting at the residence in Mingalar Street, Sanchaung Township—the party's need for a Marxist theoretician was discussed. Bo Tin Pe said he could recommend someone, a friend from the time he worked at the BBTCL.¹²⁰ His friend was Ko Ko Gyi. Bo Tin Pe explained in detail how his friend had taken part in the anti-fascist movement led by Thakin Kyaw Sein. Then, he explained that his friend was a well-informed student of Marxism. Lt. Colonel Ne Win was particularly impressed with the friend's involvements in the anti-fascist movement and so they agreed to look for this Ko Ko Gyi who was already a major player in the Workers' Union¹²¹ of the CPB as a CEC member. In this way, U Ko Ko Gyi became the BSP's teacher of Marxism¹²² holding

119. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990, comparing with the Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 20.9.1984 in နေထွန်း "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁-၁၉၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.190.); Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 28.5.1982 in မောင်ရဲမြ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၁-၆၉။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.69.): U Kyaw Nyein listed only as EC members before the arrival of Thakin Mya in Rangoon, U Ba Swe (Chairman), U Kyaw Nyein (General Secretary), members: U Hla Maung, Yangon Ba Swe, Thakin Tin and U Tin Nyunt. The difference between the two MA theses, is EC list.

120. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London); Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi by Former Brigadier Tin Pe.

121. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. The Workers' Union was also called the *All-Burma Trade Union Congress (ABTUC)* and it had been formed in the residence of Thakin Ba Hein, in Myenu Street, Sanchaung Township and its headquarters were there. The members of the CEC were Thakin Ba Hein (a member of the Politburo in the CPB) as Chairman, Ko Aung Thein alias Mya Daung Nyo as Vice-Chairman (later he worked at the United Nations), Thakin Ba Tin as General Secretary, Ko Kyaw Nyein alias Chan Thar as Joint Secretary and the members were Mr Ra Jan, Thakin Hla Myaing, Thakin Chit (former PRP member), Mr Mu Khar Jee, Dr Nass, Thakin Soe and U Ko Ko Gyi (later he became a Marxist teacher in BSP). At the founding meeting, Thakin Soe nominated U Ko Ko Gyi as Vice-Chairman but U Ko Ko Gyi suggested Thakin Aung Thein alias Mya Daung Nyo; သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊

ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈၊ ၁-၂၁၆။ (Thakin Lwin, *A History of the Workers' Movement in Burma*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1968, p.216.) In July 1945, at the Headquarters of the CPB in Bargayar Street, Rangoon, the ABTUC was reorganised.

122. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. Bo Tin Pe and U Khin Maung Latt looked for U Ko Ko Gyi according to the agreement made at the meeting at Mingalar Street, Sanchaung. They met with U Ko Ko Gyi in his residence at 38, Salin Street, Kyimyindine Township. When Bo Tin Pe requested him to give lectures for the BSP, U Ko Ko Gyi explained that he was already involved in the Workers' Union of the CPB. Bo Tin Pe mentioned that Colonel Ne Win wanted him to fill the role. U Ko Ko Gyi pointed out that he did not agree with the opinions of Ko Kyaw Nyein and that he was not fluent enough in the Burmese language. Bo Tin Pe pressed him to come to their new party so that U Ko Ko Gyi said that he would give lectures about one week for the BSP leaders and then if they liked him, he would decide whether to quit or not from the Workers' Union. On the other hand, when U Ko Ko Gyi informed Thakin Ba Hein that the PRP group had invited him to teach Marxism in their party, Thakin Ba Hein said, "If you work with them, one day Kyaw Nyein will kill you" and he spoke about Ko Kyaw Nyein; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989. Bo Khin Maung Gale had complained, asking "How did your teacher become good at English?" when Bo Tin Pe represented to the PRP leaders what U Ko Ko Gyi said. At that time,

a series of seminars at 46 Tayokkyaung Street, Sanchaung Township¹²³, for the leading members, including U Ba Swe, Lt. Colonel Ne Win, Bo Tin Pe, Bo Khin Maung Gale, U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Aung Shwe, Bo Chit Khine, Bo Kyi Win, Bonpauk Thar Kyaw, Bo Saw Myint, Daw Khin Myo Chit (the wife of U Khin Maung Latt and later a famous writer of Burmese literature), Daw Thein Thein (the wife of Bo Tin Pe).¹²⁴

A second important meeting for the BSP was held on 22 July 1945 at the residence of U Kyaw Nyein, 55 Sindawat (now Bo Yar Nyunt) Street, when Thakin Mya arrived back from Mudon.¹²⁵ As soon as Saya Mya came back to Rangoon, he tried to reconcile the two parties. He assumed the chairmanship of the BSP hoping that from this position he might be able to promote national reconciliation between the two parties.¹²⁶ The strength of Thakin Mya's nationalist spirit should be recorded. Among the most important attendees were Saya Thakin Mya, U Ba Swe, U Ko Ko Gyi, Lt. Colonel Ne Win, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, U Hla Maung (Maithtila), Colonel Aung Gyi, Colonel Maung Maung, Thakin Wa Tin.¹²⁷ During the last week of August 1945, Thakin Hla Kyway and Thakin Lwin¹²⁸ also went to the residence of U Kyaw Nyein and they met with Thakin Mya and U Kyaw Nyein and applied to be members of the new party.¹²⁹ Those at the meeting agreed that the party be designated a cadre party selected by reliable people.¹³⁰ In order to maximize the chances for creating leftist unity, Thakin Mya changed the name of the party from the Burma Socialist Party to Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party - a name similar to the national

Lt. Colonel Ne Win brought about a compromise by saying "Whatever he teaches, it is O.K for us if we understand. When he comes, we can ask him questions".

123. At that time, the Tayokkyaung Street might be included in the Kyimyindine Township and now, it is including in the Sanchaung Township.

124. Interview with Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine on 23.8.1990; Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988. Both interviewees mentioned that U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale did not attend the seminar; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989. However, Bo Tin Pe mentioned that Bo Khin Maung Gale and U Kyaw Nyein attended the ideological seminar and asked questions.

125. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

126. Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung on 26.1.1992.

127. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; ဘုံပေါက်သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်အပိုင်း(၂)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၅၊ စာ-၈၉။ (Bonpauk Thar Kyaw, *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Patheon Press, 1975, p.89.)

128. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ စာ-၉၇။ (A *History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, p.97). Thakin Lwin was one of the persons dissatisfied with Browderism and admitted to being a member of the PRP.

129. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

130. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988. At the meeting held at the residence of U Kyaw Nyein, Saya Thakin Mya asked all the participants, "If we found a party, is it to be a *Mass Party* or a *Cadre Party*?" U Ko Ko Gyi replied to the question, supporting the idea of a *Cadre Party*. All the rest were silent showing they agreed with the reply.

front, the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League. He revealed the theory of Peoples' Freedom is equal to socialism. He explained that the first priority of the party was to gain national freedom and only then to set up socialist structures. He stated that the first practical undertaking of the socialist party was to restore the national front (AFPFL).

The PRP group announced in the Burmese Newspaper: "Myanmar Ahlin" (မြန်မာ့အလင်း) that they were going to set up the "Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party" in August. Bo Aung Shwe, one of the military elite persons, informed Bo Aung Gyi, Bo Kyi Win and Yangon Ba Swe of Bo Maung Maung's ideas justifying the foundation of the new party.¹³¹ Bo Maung Maung became aware that Thakin Soe Myint, one of the leading members of the PRP, was coming to Rangoon and U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Maung Maung welcomed him. Bo Maung Maung introduced U Kyaw Nyein to Thakin Soe Myint and, in reply to a question put by Thakin Soe Myint, said that the leading persons in the new party were Thakin Mya, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein.¹³²

In this way, on the 1 September 1945, at the Daiku Building of the Shwedagon Pagada, Rangoon, the first congress of the party was held and the secret Peoples' Revolutionary Party had been reincarnated as the legal organisation named the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party-Burma.¹³³ They issued a statement proclaiming the legal foundation of the party.¹³⁴ The statement gave an account of the PRP, the secret party set up in 1939 and composed of the student leaders, the Thakins, the school-teachers and other patriots who opposed the imperialist British and, later, the Fascist Japanese. Due to the post- Second World War circumstances, it was time to change from a secret party to a legal party. The purposes of the new party were "Eternal Peace, Freedom for Burma, Self-Determination and the Peoples' Freedom". The statement specified the party's ideology as Scientific Socialism. It contained advice to the party's supporters to follow the directions of the AFPFL.¹³⁵

131. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ ၁၈-၉၈။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. III, pp.98-99).

132. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992. He explained that he was dissatisfied with Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Myaing and thus, he did not join the CPB. Moreover, he could not admire the leaders of the CPB and he did not accept Browderism. Besides, he dislikes the factionalism of the CPB and its rejection of the "United Front" and with fact that the CPB had been set up lopsidedly.

133. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

134. Appendix (c): "The Official Announcement of the Foundation of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1945)"; Appendix (d): "The first CEC members of the PF (Socialist) Party in September 1945".

135. *Ibid.*

Conclusion

In the period of resistance, the CPB, the PRP and the Burma Army united as one force under an agreement that forged the United Front. After the resistance, the most important development in Burma was the ideological and tactical conflict between the communists and the socialists. Out of these conflicts the PFP emerged. Because it had the leading role in the anti-fascist resistance, the CPB had a greater ideological reach than the PRP in post-war politics. In the face of the disunity that dogged the relationships among the parties, Thakin Mya, first chairman of the new socialist party, made a united Burma his major goal and persisted in seeking ways to bring about reconciliation between Communist and Socialists. The CPB leader, Thakin Than Tun, was a general secretary in the national front, the AFPFL. But the CPB was more concerned with its own success than with the success of the national front and thus, he resigned from the AFPFL. This gave the Socialists a more influential role in the AFPFL. The immediate causes behind the setting up of the separate socialist party, the PFP, were the unsuccessful attempts to unify the two groups before the war and the lopsided foundation of the CPB. Indeed, the most importance of the immediate causes was the factionalism and the remote causes were flowing from different ideological stream which has been already rooted in their minds and bodies since before their engaging in 1939.

Chapter Three

Key Players and Second-Tier Leaders in the Burma Socialist Party

Introduction

There is a need to analyse the Socialists' leadership, recruited from educated middle class, and their ideals after the legal foundation of the BSP/PFP in post-war politics of Burma. It is so said that the reincarnation of the PRP was representing the proletariat class. Naturally, the masses from that class were not competent and mature so that they had to rely on intellectual leaders who are usually more advanced in money, experience and historical matters. The former needs the latter in the matters of solving parliamentary issues; application to the theoretical problems; moral justification of the bourgeoisie class; and setting up the foreign policy. The role of intellectuals therefore is necessary in a working class party like the BSP representing the workers, peasants and the poor although there would be definitely suspicions of working class on intellectual party leadership.¹ Generally, the connection between the two distinct classes is very rare to link into chains. In other words, it is a rare situation in the historical context that the urban class was able to improve the welfare of the class living in the countryside. In this concept, it is important to reveal how the BSP's leadership was able to lead the masses by examining their social backgrounds, education, jobs, and responsibilities. There is also a need to examine the facts of Key Players' attitude towards Socialism and when did become Socialists, 'Young or Adult'.² We will be able to categorise them into: 'What kind of Socialists: Reformist or Revolutionary'.³ The list of followers is not complete, but is based on available sources at the time and place of writing. There are other cadres that could be mentioned, but those noted here illustrate the role of the second-tier leaders more generally.

Bogyoke Aung San also known as U Aung San in post Second World War of Burmese politics, took part in the resistant movements against British colonisation in

1. Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959, pp.80-90, pp.316-329; Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964, pp.168-177. See also in Girja Shankar, *A History Of the Congress Socialist Party*, Jodhpur, India: Twenty-First Century Publishers, 1995, pp.79-102.

2. Robert Michels, *op.cit.*, pp.253-255.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.320-322.

Burma. He was born on 13 February 1915 at urban (Natmauk) of Magwe District, in central Burma. His father was a lawyer. His participation in the University Students' Union opened his eyes and started his political career.⁴ To examine when he became Socialist (youth or adult), it is revealed that he became one while young. There was a story that he did not like un-just acts or exploitation since his youth.⁵ He became a prominent student leader in 1935-1936 Second Students' Strike. He gained a BA in 1938 from Rangoon University. He assumed the title of *Thakin* by joining the Dobama Asiayone. In 1939, he became involved in the *cell* of a Communist party study group and then became one of the central leaders in the foundation of the PRP.⁶ His motives in moving towards socialism were not only youthful sentiment but also as a reader of scientific conviction as an adult. He sacrificed his life searching for foreign contact outside Burma. All his activities in the anti-British struggle and in the first part of the anti-Japanese struggle, were part of the PRP movement.⁷ He was disappointed when the BIA entering Burma and the Burmese revolutionaries were not prepared to attack the Fascists who had broken their promises to give Independence to Burma.⁸ Since the establishment of BDA, he stood as a go between linking the CPB and the PRP. However, he attended in the 1944 meeting representing both the army and the PRP.⁹ In the politic of post Second World War in Burma, he disappointed when the CPB and the PRP were not able to stay under one roof.¹⁰ His elder brothers- U Ba Win and U Aung Than joined the BSP but he did not (see below). However, he discussed with the BSP how to rehabilitate economic and social lives in post-colonial Burma following the tenets of Socialist theory.¹¹ This fact also shows that he was a

4. Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, pp. 241-242.

5. နေဝင်း(တက္ကသိုလ်)၊ “ပြည်ထောင်စုမိသကုဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း”(ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ ၁၀-၁၁။ (Ne Win (Tatkathow), “Union-Architect Bogyoke Aung San”, First Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1997, pp.103-110.)

6. Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p.389.

7. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ “ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)”၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာအတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈-၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, 1939-1946*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, p.12)

8. နေဝင်း(တက္ကသိုလ်)၊ “ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း”(၃)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ကမ္ဘာ့အေးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ ၈-၂၀။ (Ne Win, (Tatkathow), *The Record of Bogyoke Aung San in the Freedom Movements*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1998, p.209.)

9. Robert H. Taylor, “Burma” in Haruhiro Fukui (Editor-in-Chief), *Political Parties Of Asia And The Pacific*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1985, p.147.

10. ကျော်စော်ဝင်း၊ “ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)”၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာအတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ ၈-၂၂။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, p.22.)

11. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

revolutionary. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to claim he was a member of the BSP even though he did not assume formal membership.

Thakin Nu known as Kogyi Nu in Burmese politics was born in 1907 in the urban area of Myaungmya district. He gained a BA in 1929 from Rangoon University. In his University life, he wanted to be a play-writer and author although he founded 'Nagani Book Club' which was distributing leftist literature in the 1930s. After graduation he worked in Pantanaw National High School. Then he re-entered University to study for a Law degree and joined the elite of Students' Union in 1935-36. He was also a deputy leader of the Fabian Party, which was founded in 1936. He became secretary of the Dobama Asiayone in 1938 and went to China as one of the members of Goodwill Mission in 1939.¹² He became central member in the foundation of the inner-circle of the PRP in November 1939.¹³ In 1940, he was interned at Insein Prison where persuaded by Thakin Soe to study Marxism but concentrated on literature and writing plays. In 1943-45, he became an associate of Dr Ba Maw and served as a foreign minister under Dr Ba Maw government.¹⁴

After the Second World War, he tried to refrain from politic but had to re-enter the AFPFL politics to serve as Vice-Chairman.¹⁵ He was not a member of either the PFP or BSP but he was sponsored by the PFP to participate in the PFP's demonstration against the White Paper Scheme, drawn up by Governor Dorman Smith while he was in Simla during the Second World War.¹⁶ He also attended the January 1947 meeting of the Ba La Ma Sa, one of the affiliated organisations of the PFP/BSP, to win its support for the struggle for freedom under the leadership of the AFPFL.¹⁷ This fact suggests that the BSP was more successful in making allies of community organisations than the CPB. He had to hold the flag of leadership as a survivor after Aung San and Mya were assassinated in July 1947 from the triangular leadership of the AFPFL. Thus, he became the first Prime Minister of Union of

12. David I. Steinberg, *Burma: A Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia*, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982, p.128; Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, pp.252-253; Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, p.395; ဦးနု၊ "ငါးနှစ်ရာသီ-ဗမာပြည်(၁၉၄၁-၁၉၄၅)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ယောဂီပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-ရလ-၈၀။ (U Nu, *Five Years in Burma*, Rangoon: Yawgi Press, 1946, pp.79-80.)

13. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.12.)

14. ဦးနု၊ "ငါးနှစ်ရာသီ-ဗမာပြည်"၊ စာ-ရလ-၈၀။ (U Nu, *Five Years in Burma*, pp.79-80.); Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, p.395.

15. Unpublished Notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

16. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)"၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.)

17. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 26.10.1990; Interview with Daw Nang on 20.2.1992; ကျော်စော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၆၄။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.64.)

Burma in January 1948. He did not become a Socialist even though he founded the 'Nagani Book Club' distributed leftist and nationalist ideology and wrote *Socialism* (The Exit For the Poor) in 1930s. His socialism was within the frame of 'Fabian Socialism' oriented towards the 'welfare state'. He was more inclined toward Buddhist's ways of thinking and pure nationalism but remained a 'Sympathiser' of the BSP.

Leader Thakin Mya was the most important person in the party. He had no enemies, neither in political life nor social life. He however was assassinated in July 1947. (See detail in Chapter Six) He was born in 1897 in urban area Prome (now Pyi) District. He was regarded as "gentleman politician" in Burmese politics and his disappearance was a greatest lost not only for AFPFL but also for the BSP.¹⁸ I have already mentioned the reasons the revolutionaries selected him as their leader. But more needs to be said about his achievements and qualities, which were not explained in Chapter One. In 1939, he met with a member of the British Labour Party, Sir Stafford Cripps (who later became the main negotiator for the London talks in January 1947 between the British Labour government and the representatives of Burma's independence movement).¹⁹ Thakin Mya also went to meet Governor Sir Dorman Smith when Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese, and said to him "You are saddened by the fall of Singapore into the hands of the Japanese but the Burmese people were also hurt when the Burmese King Thibaw, the last King of the Konbaung Dynasty, was carried away to India".²⁰

His first consideration was to regaining independence and then in creating "Socialism". In describing Socialism, Chairman Thakin Mya said: "Socialism shall be the Peoples' Freedom and Freedom shall include Political, Economic and Social rights. All freedoms shall be achieved only when the Socialist State can be set up. So, Socialism is placed within brackets and explained as the equivalent of Freedom".²¹ Thakin Mya as a mature man, wanted to walk gradually, step-by-step, in the construction of Socialist Burma.²² In other words, he intended to construct Socialist

18. Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, p.252.

19. သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈၊ စာ-၂၀၀။ (Thakin Lwin, *A History of the Workers' Movement in Burma*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1968.)

20. မိုးကုန်းယ၊ အတွဲ(၅)၊ နံပါတ်(၁၀)၊ ၁၀၊ ဒီဇင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (*Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 10, 10.12.1997, pp.117-120.)

21. ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဧရာဝတီဆွေမီဇာတိပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-၃-၆။ (Ba Swe (Dahwai), *Let Us Found the Socialist Burma*, Rangoon: Zabumaitswepitacart Press, 1946, pp.3-6, in the Preface by Thakin Mya.)

22. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990.

Burma in an "evolutionary ", not a "revolutionary way". His method was democratic, in contrast to the method described as "insurrectionary" favoured by the Socialist Party (India)²³. The historical evidence about his vision of the class struggle can be found in the preface he wrote for the book, *Let's Found a Socialist Burma*. He said that in a future independent Burma, the proletariat class would still be oppressed by a government administration if the bourgeois class remained strong. He went on to explain that this may necessitate a period of dictatorship of the proletariat in Burma depending on how the oppressed class responded to the oppressors. The BSP did not want this process but it would be ready for class struggle if it proved necessary.²⁴ He meant that he did not want to wage class struggle but he or the Party would be ready to wage war between the capitalist class and the proletariat class if the capitalists attempted to resist change through oppression. He also referred to this process as the Democratic Transition.

To answer the question: when did he become a Socialist. It could be said as an adult. In his High-School life, he was agitated by the national spirit based on patriotism. Not only as an advocater holding a Law degree but also a parliamentarian, he resolved to solve the problems of peasants, workers and youth activists. He was also involved as a leading person in the formation of the mass organisations- Peasants and Workers, the organisational basis of Socialism. His socialism, therefore, was focussed on both "Agrarian Socialism" and "Unionism".²⁵ It is also a surprising fact that, in his reconstruction of Burma, Governor Dorman Smith selected socialist leader Thakin Mya, one of the most influential members of the Supreme Council of the AFPFL, to serve in his Executive Council as Minister for Public Works and Rehabilitation.²⁶ No one else from the AFPFL was selected for the Council. It shows that the Governor's appreciation of Thakin Mya's qualities overrode his reluctance to

23. Socialist Party (India, Central Office), *Policy Statement*, 3rd Edition, Bombay: Associated Advertisers & Printer Ltd., 1951, pp.14-15.

24. ဗဆွေ(ခ:ဝယ်)"ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ ၁၇-၅ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.5): In the Preface by Chairman Thakin Mya.

25. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ပိဋူရ)"အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ"(ပ)ကြိမ်ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉။ (Chit Maung, Thakin (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979.)

26. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p.191.

select men from the AFPFL. In the April 1947 election, he had attained 34,516 votes from the Constituency of Tharrawaddy South where he organised peasants.²⁷

Key Players

Apart from Thakin Mya the other main players of the PFP were U Ba Swe, U Ko Ko Gyi, U Kyaw Nyein, U Hla Maung (Maiththila) and Thakin Aung Than alias Bo Set Kyar (one of the thirty Comrades). All except the last were members of the party's Presidium in the years 1945-1946 and 1946-1947. The party members at their *All-Burma Annual Conference* held on 15 September 1946, at the Maysayine Rest House (မြေစာရင်းစေ့ပုံ) of the Shwedagon Pagoda, selected the five members for the Presidium from the 100 members of the Central Committee. In the Presidium were Saya Thakin Mya (Chairman), U Ba Swe (General Secretary) and the members were U Ko Ko Gyi, U Kyaw Nyein and U Hla Maung (Maiththila).²⁸ At this point, it should be noted that Saya Thakin Mya and U Ba Swe were very influential in the PFP. Bo Aung Gyi was also involved in the Party in an influential position after Mya was assassinated in July 1947. Lt. Colonel Ne Win and Colonel Maung Maung were supporters of setting up a separate party, the BSP, to challenge the Communist Party. They were involved in the two important meetings to emerge from the PFP. There is a necessary step forward in order to found a separate party to catch up with Communists, came from the idea of Colonel Maung Maung.²⁹ In the CPB, the members of the Politburo in 1946 were Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Ba Thein Tin and H.N. Goshal alias Thakin Ba Tin. In the 1945 CPB Second Congress, a twenty one-member Central Committee was elected and Thakin Than Tun was named Chairman of the Politburo and Thakin Thein Pe, the new general secretary.³⁰ Therefore, the differences between the two parties were five Presidium members in the PFP and three Politburo members in the CPB. There was no one from the Tatmadaw (military) elite among the members of the PFP's

27. Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948*, Vol: II, London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1984, p.920.

28. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဌာနယ်"၊ ၁၃၊ အောက်တိုဘာ၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-၈-၉။ (The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, 13.10.1946, pp.8-9; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986; Sein Win, *The Split Story*, Rangoon: the Guardian Press, 1959, p.13.

29. စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၅-၁၉၄၈"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၅၊ စာ-၉၈။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of the Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, 1945-1948, First Edition, Rangoon: Information Department, 1995, p.98.)

30. Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of The Communist Party of Burma (CPB)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1990, pp.9-13, p.58, p.67; Patricia M. Milne, *Selected Short Stories of Thein Pe Myint*, Ithaca: New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1973, pp.1-5.

Presidium, although U Ko Ko Gyi was attached to Bo Tin Pe (one of the influential leaders of Tat) that led him (Ko Ko Gyi) to join the PRP group. More will be revealed about the role of the Tatmadaw in Chapter Eight. Age was an important factor in the uncompromising and militant extremist ideals in the foundation of the party. In 1945, the age of key players averaged between 25 and 48. Most of all were around age 30. Dedok U Ba Cho was the eldest and Bo Maung Maung the youngest.³¹

Dedok U Ba Cho, born in 1893, was a leader of the Fabian Party that had been formed in 1930s, had been welcomed by the PFP as a patron when the party was founded in 1945.³² But, in reality, he was a Chairman of the Workers' Asiayone, the Trade Union Congress (Burma), one of the wings of the PFP founded on 4 November 1945.³³ He helped in the formation of the Women's Asiayone, the All-Burma Freedom Women's Organisation (ဗ-လ-မ-စ in Burmese) in 1946.³⁴ He was assassinated on 19 July 1947 along with his colleagues. Thus, the PFP catered for a broad range of people, providing a political voice for workers, peasants, women and many who were not attracted by the CPB.

Thakin Lun Baw was born in rural village (Kamyaing), Thayetchaung Township, Tavoy district, in 1898. He, like Leader Thakin Mya, was an ex-government minister in the CEC (Headquarters) of the PFP. He was educated in Rangoon and Calcutta. He worked as a teacher and lawyer. He joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1936. He was a member of the House of Representatives in the British period and was interned in 1941. During the Japanese regime, he served as Minister for Transport and Rehabilitation. In the withdrawal of the Japanese from Rangoon, he, along with Thakin Mya and Dr Ba Maw, was obliged by orders from the PRP's inner

31. Dedok U Ba Cho (b.1893: age 52); Thakin Mya (b.1897: age 48); Thakin Lun Baw (b.1898: age 47); U Ko Ko Gyi (b.1908: age 37); U Hla Maung (b.1911: age 34); Lt. Colonel Ne Win (b.1911: age 34); U Kyaw Myint Lay (b.1913: age 32); Bo Set Kyar (b.1916: age 31); U Ba Swe (b.1915: age 30); U Kyaw Nyein (b.1915: age 30); Colonel Maung Maung (b.1920: age 25)

32. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၂။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.42) The Fabian Party saw itself as representing the proletariat class. It aimed to work for the workers, and peasants, by reforming society, not by revolutionising it. Its Chairman was Dedok U Ba Cho and the EC were the former Premier U Nu (Vice-Chairman) and U Ba Khine (General Secretary). There were no branches and only the EC. In the 1936 Election for the 91 Departmental Administration, held in November 1936, the party got 1 seat; See also Robert H. Taylor's "Burma: Political Parties", pp.120-130.

33. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျေနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၄)"၊ ၁၈၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 4, 18.9.1946; သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ၈၁-၂၂၅။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, p.225.); နီနီအောင်၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)တီယူမီ(ဘီ)သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၅၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈၁-၃။ (Ni Ni Aung, *A History of the Trade Union Congress (Burma)(1945-1958)*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1996, p.3.)

34. Interview with Daw Nang on 20.2.1992; ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈၁-၆၁။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.61.)

circle to follow the Japanese to Moulmein.³⁵ An analysis of his role in the PFP indicates that he was respected by the PRP's younger generation; he was foreign educated and a lawyer, but was however an influential leader among the nationalists.

Let us examine the role of U Ba Swe³⁶. Unlike other Socialists, Ko Ba Swe was born in 1915 at rural area, Onbinkwin Village of Tavoy District. Since his youth, he was a dedicated patriot.³⁷ He was guided by sentimental consideration of Youth to compete with the Capitalists' exploitation in the areas of selling Newspaper, opening tea-shop and even betel-chewing by replacing it with the Students' Cooperative system.³⁸ He made contact with the 1936 Students' Strike leaders and finally joined them at the university. While he was studying at the university, Marxism dazzled and attracted him.³⁹ Also, in adult he was directed by scientific conviction. Therefore, both in Youth and mature life, he became Socialist. In 1938, he became Secretary of the All-Burma Students' Union at Rangoon University. In 1940, he acted as President of the Rangoon University Students' Union.⁴⁰ Therefore, it can be said that he had come from the Students' Union group but he was also a member of the Dobama Asiyone. But he did not call himself Thakin Ba Swe. His sympathies were with the working class, and he led the mass of workers, who were boycotting the oil fields, in a march from Yenangyaung to Rangoon in 1938; as a result, he was imprisoned by the colonial government.⁴¹ In this way, he demonstrated his ability to organise the workers, who were essential for the socialist construction of a future Burma. In the foundation of the PRP on 18 November 1939, he was one of the leading members.⁴² During the Japanese occupation, he served as Chief of the *Keibotai* (Civil Defence) at Rangoon in 1942-5. In the resistance against the Japanese, he attended the important meetings of the inner circle. He was one of the representatives of the PRP in the nine-

35. Thakin Nu, *Burma Under The Japanese*, London: Macmillan & Co.Ltd, 1954, p.128, p.284.

36. One of the most senior figures in Burmese politics. He was also known as Ba Swe (Dahwai) after his place of origin and, in the period of parliamentary democracy, as "Big Tiger Ba Swe" (ကုန်းကြီးမဆွေ).

37. Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp.134-135. The young Ba Swe and his friends formed a secret society with the purpose of organising attacks on foreigners (Indians in particular). When he grew up, he tried to fight imperialism by setting up students' co-operatives to sell newspapers, tea and even betel-nut which he hawked himself. During the colonial period, the Chinese used to run tea and coffee shops and the Indians sold betel-nut.

38. *Ibid.*; *Asian Socialist Conference New Letter No.(7)*, June 1956. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

39. *Ibid.*

40. Norman Nyun-Han, *Burma's Experiment In Socialism*, PhD thesis, University of Colorado, 1971, pp.502-503; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၅၁။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.51); People's Literature Committee and House, *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, Rangoon: Sarpaybeikman Press, 1962, pp.157-158.

41. Nyun-Han, *op.cit.*, pp.502-503; Saul Rose, *op.cit.*, pp.134-135.

42. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၂-၄၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.12, p.46.)

member Resistance Central Committee (ဖက်ဒရယ်).⁴³ When the ten Military Divisions were organised for the anti-Japanese resistance, he was made responsible for the Rangoon Division and its adjacent areas. He was arrested by the Japanese and detained for eighty-four days because of his anti-Japanese activities.⁴⁴ The significant features of his role in the two phases of the resistance were that he was a good organiser and disciplined follower.⁴⁵ He was devoted to Marxism but he did not join the CPB although he was eligible for membership.⁴⁶ He was the kind of person who was always loyal to his comrades. He did not shirk his duties.⁴⁷ With this background, it is not surprising that he was elected Chairman when the new socialist party, briefly named the Burma Socialist Party, was founded in June 1945. When Thakin Mya became chairman and renamed the party the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, U Ba Swe became General Secretary. In the Presidium of the party, he was also elected to the position of General Secretary. Thakin Mya held in high esteem the contribution U Ba Swe to the two revolutions of the 1930s and the 1940s:

No party member except Yebaw (Comrade) Ba Swe, could write the history of the party because he is the only one who knows in full what happened in the two revolutions. He initiated the two revolutions... After he became a member of the Dobama, he had to resume his university study in order to fulfil the duty given him by his comrades: to become Chairman of the Student Union. Therefore, among all the students and thakins who comprised the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, there was nobody except him to know the party's history in full detail.⁴⁸

His influence in the BSP cannot be denied, as Thakin Mya argues here. The facts of writing about Stalin; devoted to Marxism; giving leadership to working class in 1938;

43. တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်းပြုစုရေးအဖွဲ့၊ "တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ (ဒု)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၆၊ စာ-၅၈၀။ (A Committee of Dobama Asiayone, *A History of Dobama Asiayone*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1976, p.580.) The nine members were Bogyoke Aung San, Bo Let Yar and Bo Ne Win from the Burma Army; Thakin Soe, Thakin Ba Hein and Thakin Than Tun from the CPB; and, Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Ba Swe and Thakin Chit from the PRP.

44. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၇၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.172); *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, pp.157-158.

45. See in နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*); Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988.

46. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၈၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.188) The CPB accepted Thakin Chit and U Ba Swe as membership.

47. *Ibid.*, p.172. U Ba Swe was given responsible duty for capital Rangoon and its surrounding areas in anti-Japanese struggle; The source from former BSP chairman Ko Ko Gyi: when he was suffered from heart-attack at Insein prison in 1957-58, U Ba Swe arranged for him to treat at Rangoon Hospital.

48. ဗဆွေ(ဓါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ စာ-၃၊ ၄။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.3-4.): the preface by Thakin Mya.)

the participation in founding of Revolutionary Party in 1939 showed his tendency to Socialist camp was 'Revolutionary'. However, his actual stand was along with 'Reformists' in parliamentary democracy period after regaining Independence. He was defeated by Dr U Ei Maung (Clean AFPFL) in the February 1960 election at the Lanmadaw, Rangoon Constituency with 5403 votes to 12694 votes.⁴⁹

We now turn to the background of U Ko Ko Gyi and his role in the foundation of the BSP. His grandmother was an ethnic *Shan*, descendants of the *Sawbwa* (Regent). This shows that the BSP was not only concerned with the main Bama (ဗမာလူမျိုး) group, but also with other ethnicities. He was born on the urban area (Moenyo) of Tharrawaddy district, in 1908. His parents- U Poe Ba and Daw Mya, were textile-traders. In his youth especially as a year five student at Minhla High School, he was influenced by national sentiment. He went to Sitkwin as a Student's boycotter of First Students' Strike (1920). Thakin Mya was his science teacher while he was in high school. At university, he studied for an Arts degree and he was interested in history. He joined the University Training (Military) Course. In his university life, he read not only for his course curriculum but also political literature, especially British socialism. He did not finish his Bachelor degree, and only passed the Intermediate.⁵⁰ Thus, he became a Socialist in his adult years. His first job was at the Chief Court as a clerk and at that time he began to study Marxism under the guidance of Medok Thakin Thein Maung, one of the influential leaders of the Dobama Asiayone, and he also discussed Marxism with Thakin Aung Thein (alias Mya Daung Nyo). Thus, he stepped gradually into the sphere of the Thakins. He gave some money to the author Mya Daung Nyo to help him publish his political books.⁵¹

49. ဦးကျော်ဝင်း၊ဦးမြဟန်၊ဦးသိန်းလွင်၊ "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေး၊တတိယတွဲ"၊ရန်ကုန်၊တက္ကသိုလ်များပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၉၁၊စာ-၅၁။ (U Kyaw Win, U Mya Han, and U Thein Hlaing, *1958-1962 Myanmar Politics*, Vol. III, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, p.51.)

50. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with ICS (Indian Civil Servant) U Chan Thar on 6.8.1988: he mentioned that Ko Ko Gyi was his friend while they were studying at the university and Ko Ko Gyi failed in Intermediate A Class. U Chan Thar records that he polished his shoes very well and Ko Ko Gyi did his hair very nicely; ဦးချမ်းသာ၊ "ကျွန်တော်သိုင်းစံအက်(ပ်)"၊ရန်ကုန်၊မြဝတီပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၈၊စာ-?။ (U Chan Thar, *I am ICS*, Rangoon: Myawadi Press, 1988, p.?).

51. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi: When he was studying at the university, he married a wealthy woman, Daw Tin Ei, whose native town was Okpo, Tharrawaddy District. That is why he could help some thakins financially. While he was working as a clerk in the High Court, his colleague was U Soe Maung.

Ko Ko Gyi was a member of the Dobama Asiayone.⁵² His second job in c1935 was in the British company, BBTCL. He was in-charge of the sale department in BBTCL.⁵³

He was fluent in the English language; he never wrote in Burmese and used to speak mostly in English. One of his ways of reading was to learn some paragraphs by heart. He also rewrote some paragraphs in English and some he summarised. During working time, when his duties were completed, he would read the works of Marx and Lenin. He gave lectures about Marxism and Leninism, especially *Dialectical Materialism and Materialistic Conception of History* and *Law of Motion of Capitalism* to 3 or 4 young people, including Bo Tin Pe.⁵⁴ That is why he was able to teach Marxism in the BSP.

In the anti-Japanese movement, he took part in the group led by Thakin Kyaw Sein. Consequently, he was interrogated and persecuted by the Japanese military police. He ignored the family business while he was involved in the movement against the Japanese. When his wife died during the Japanese occupation, the British Army were dropping bombs onto the Kyimyindine Township and, at the same time, the *Kempeitai* came to his house to arrest him. He was compelled to flee, taking his daughter and son with him. His prevented him from looking after his wife's corpse; his neighbours, led by Thakin Hla Kyway, arranged the burial.⁵⁵ He had more time however to study Marxist literature because his wife had died during the Japanese occupation. After joining with British Army as planned, Ko Ko Gyi remained with the

52. He received a certificate of honour from the Dobama Asiayone because of his participation in the Asiayone, but he kept silent about his role in the Asiayone.

53. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe, 18.4.1989; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London): U Kyaw Nyein just mentioned that Ko Ko Gyi a fellow clerk in the BBTCL office in Pegu with Bo Tin Pe. Note. The information from my friend, Saya U Aung Myint Oo (Myintkyina College): In a ceremony of the NLD after 1988, U Khin Maung Latt mentioned the funeral of Bo Aung Gyaw that they had attended while BBTCL employees, and how they had marched wearing black arm bands.

54. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 19.11.1989; Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi retold by Former Brigadier Tin Pe.

55. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဒီရိုင်းစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၆၃။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *Thakin Pe Htay*, Rangoon: Wild Tide Press, 1963.) The anti-Japanese movement led by Thakin Kyaw Sein included Mr Ra Jan, Ko Ko Gyi, Thakin Ba Thein, Thakin Htway, Thakin Pe Htay, Thakin Than, Comrade Thar Nyunt, Comrade Soe Naing, Ma Mya Tin, Thakin Mya Than, Thakin Aye Nyein (Dhanuphyu), Ko Ko Lay, Thakin Hla Shin (Nyaungton), Maung Tin Aung (Nyaungton), Maung Kyi Gyi (Nyanungton), Thakin Thar Han (Nyaungton), Maung Hla Shin (Nyaungton), Thakin Kyaw Aye (Dhanuphyu), Thakin Hla (Dhanuphyu); "ထွန်းနေ့စဉ်သတင်းစာ"၊ ၄၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၆၁။ စာ-၄၊ (Tun Daily Newspaper, 4.4.1961, p.4): A group was formed in December 1942, by Thakin Kyaw Sein, Ko Nyi Lay, Mr Ra Jan and U Ko Ko Gyi to oppose the fascist Japanese. In June 1943, they established their headquarters at 42 Maupin Street, Sanchaung Township and the first anti-Japanese class was held.

BSP under the leadership of Ko Kyaw Nyein and Ko Ba Swe.⁵⁶ But, Ko Ko Gyi did not mention in his biography his role in the anti-Japanese movement under the PRP.

After the resistance, he was already a major player in the Workers' Union of the CPB as a CEC member.⁵⁷ He accepted the invitation from the PRP group because he knew about the troubled relationship between the CPB and the PRP and he thought that if he taught Marxism to the BSP, the cadres from the BSP would have become more sympathetic to Marxism and then, one day in a future Burma, the cadres from the CPB and the BSP would be joined together. If the cadres from the two parties joined together, their leaders would follow suit. He became a Marxist teacher not only because of his knowledge of Marxism but also because of his anti-Japanese spirit and his desire for unity among the leftist forces.⁵⁸ Therefore, he became one of the main leaders of the BSP. In the beginning of the PFP and later in the BSP, he was given the responsibility to serve in the underground section but the duty was later transferred to Ko Hla Maung.⁵⁹ Based on his knowledge of literature, he became editor for the BSP's *Socialist Front Weekly Journal* which was distributed every Wednesday.

His transition to Socialism was revolutionary way towards class struggle. The BSP in his reign remarked that the *Nu-Attlee Agreement* provided the basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁶⁰ But, he might have seen that all the classes forming the proletariat were to share in state power. Or had he seen what was later made obvious by the Cold War and Civil War in 1949, that counter-revolutionary elements were attempted to halt the transition to Socialism? His intention was to follow the ideological line of the Third Internationals founded by Lenin, and the BSP could have lead a capture of power in order to build a socialist state when in power. His way of thought was unable to materialise by the circumstances of the Cold War and domestic affairs and then forced him the eclipse of ideological leader in the BSP will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

56. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

57. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; See also unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

58. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

59. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

60. "လုပ်သားလမ်းပြဂျာနယ်" အတွဲ(၁) အမှတ်(၁)၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၇-၂၀၁၈ မာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်၊ ထုတ်ပြန်ကျေညာချက်"။ (*The Workers' Guide Journal*, Vol. I, No.1, 13.11.1947, p.20: The Statement of the Burma Socialist Party (Headquarters)).

U Kyaw Nyein was born in urban area (Pyinmana) in 1915.⁶¹ He had an intellectual mind and was composed.⁶² He had studied at the Intermediate College, Mandalay, and graduated with a BA (Hons) in 1937 and BL in 1941 from Rangoon University College.⁶³ He was one of the leaders of the University Strike in 1936, and founder of the All-Burma Student Union in 1936.⁶⁴ In the underground (PRP) movement, he was one of the leading members and was given responsibility for the Foreign Affairs and Intelligence Department.⁶⁵ He also undertook important secret duties.⁶⁶ He also served as civil servant not only during the British period but also in the Japanese period.⁶⁷ As a PRP representative, he met Thakin Soe to discuss the unity within the resistant groups. He was one of the nine people who comprised the first central committee of the AFPFL. He also attended the important meetings for the resistance.⁶⁸ When the AFPFL divided the country into ten military regions, he was made political adviser for Region (6) but he served together with U Ba Swe in Rangoon.⁶⁹ After the Japanese were defeated, he attempted to break down the barriers between the CPB and the PRP, but he was rejected as a member of the CPB. This created resentment Thakin Soe and the CPB and then to be very active in the foundation of the BSP to compete against the Communists.

In the Socialists' two camps, U Kyaw Nyein was a 'Reformist'. Since the days of the BSP/PFP's legal foundation, U Kyaw Nyein had not liked having Marxism as the party's ideology, although he claimed to be a socialist. David Rees Rees-Williams, in his narrative of events, recalled the conversations among the Burmese leaders at a

61. Tinker, *The Union of Burma*, p.393; Steinberg, *Burma: A Socialist Nation of Southeast Asia*, p.128; But in Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, p.249: as born in 1913.

62. Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992.

63. *Who's Is Who in Burma, 1961*, pp.120-121.

64. *Ibid.*, pp.120-121; According to the British Library (London) source, in the 1936 Students' Strike, Ko Kyaw Nyein was in-charge of the intelligence department.

65. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၆၄၇။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.46-47.)

66. *Ibid.*, pp.88-91, p.100, pp.119-120: He met with Bo Ne Win at Rangoon and they arranged military training for the anti-British movement. He was said to have gone to negotiate with Dr Ba Maw who was put into the Moegoat Prison, Upper Burma, concerning the formation of the future government. He, together with Thakin Tharkin and Taichit U Thein Pe, went to Moegoat to meet Dr Ba Maw who refused to follow Ko Kyaw Nyein to Rangoon. He organised those who were serving with the British Army, to flee with the arms from the British Army.

67. *Who's Who in Burma, 1961*, pp.120-121: U Kyaw Nyein served as *Appraiser* in the Customs Department. During the Japanese occupation, he served as Cabinet Secretary and as Secretary for Shan State. He acted as Vice-Minister in Foreign Affairs.

68. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၅၈-၁၆၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.158-160.)

69. *Ibid.*, pp.171-176. Some politicians accused U Kyaw Nyein of evading his duty and not going to the Division (6) because it was under the influence of the Communists. U Kyaw Nyein asked PRP historian U Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, one of the sons of U Ba Swe, to record that he could not go to the assigned duty area because his wife was about to give birth. See also in the website: www.cpburma.org/biography.htm, autobiography of former Brigadier Kyaw Zaw, now exiled in China.

lunch on 6 March 1947. When U Aung San "chided him on the slovenliness of his attire", Home Minister U Kyaw Nyein protested that "I am a member of the proletariat". U Aung San replied that "you are nothing of the kind" and "you are a petit bourgeois".⁷⁰ U Kyaw Nyein admitted in his biography, written by Thein Pe Myint, that it was his mistake to allow Marxism to be taught within the party and he had split with the former BSP chairman U Ko Ko Gyi because of Marxism. In fact, he had the opportunity to study the method favoured by Thakin Mya, democratic centralism and socialism plus dictatorship of the proletariat if necessary, when he followed his leader to London for a conference about the democratic transition to socialism in 1947. Thakin Mya was the person he most admired. But, he could not remain faithful to the example of the late Mya in his conceptual work. The reason for this failure was based on his personal orientation and on the fact that he represented only one faction in Burmese politics. Unlike his late leader Mya, he was not able after 1948 to represent all factions, in the circumstances of the Cold War. The politics of this split amongst the socialists will be detailed further in Chapter Seven.

In conclusion, he came from the Student Union Clique and participated as an influential leader in the two revolutions. That is why he was able to take a leading position in the new party, becoming first General Secretary of the BSP, then Joint Secretary of the PFP and an elected member of the Presidium.

Let us explore the role of U Hla Maung who was born in urban area (Meiktila) in 1911. His father was a civil servant as 'Forest Ranger'.⁷¹ He was also known as Maithila U Hla Maung or Ex-Ambassador of Burma.⁷² He was awarded a BA from Judson College, Rangoon and a BL in 1941. He also came from the Students' Union Clique.⁷³ In the PRP movement against the British, he was one of the leading members.⁷⁴ Also, he was given an important duty by General Aung San and Bo Moegyo to send Thakin Mya as a Burmese leader to meet the Japanese authority in

70. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, pp.877-878.

71. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, p.89.

72. He served as Ambassador in Siam (Thailand), People's Republic of China and Great Britain.

73. *Who's Who in Burma*, 1961, p.89: He was one of the leaders of the 1936 Students' Union Strike; Dr Thaung Htun, "Student Activism In Burma": *Burma Debate*, Vol. II, No. 2, April/May 1995, pp.4-5; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈၁-၅၁။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.51.)

74. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, p.89; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈၁-၁၂၊ ၁၃၀-၃၁၊ ၃၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.12, pp.30-31, and p.78), states that he was one of the leaders in the foundation of the PRP on 18 November 1939. He was sent to China through Siam under the auspicious of the PRP but he was arrested in Siam and sent back to the Burma-Siam border. He was given a duty in the anti-British movement in Tenasserim Division.

Siam.⁷⁵ He was an officer in the Burma Independence Army (BIA). In the collaboration with the Japanese, he became liaison officer on the Hiraoka Commission, the Japanese military intelligence. In the foreign office between 1943 and 1945, he served as deputy secretary. He had to pretend to be a Japanese supporter to defend and free revolutionaries who were arrested or would be arrested by the Japanese military police.⁷⁶ His wealth of political experience—with the Students' Union Clique, as a leader in the underground, with the BIA and with the intelligence service during the Japanese occupation—stood him in good stead to become a CEC member of the BSP and then of the PFP and to be chosen to be not only a member of the Presidium (1945-46 and 1946-1947) but also a head of the Public Communication Department and the Treasurer in 1946-47.⁷⁷ He was a diplomatic person and a joiner between the BSP and individual AFPFL U Nu.⁷⁸ He might be a practical man but not an ideologist.

U Kyaw Myint (Lay), born in 1913 in urban Rangoon. He became the PFP's first treasurer. He took part in the 1936 Students' Strike. He was a member in the All-Burma Federated Students' Union when Ko Aung San was president. In 1939-1940, he was Vice-Chairman of the Rangoon University Students' Union. During the Japanese occupation, he was Vice-President of the East Asiatic Youth League. He never became a member of the Dobama. He came from the Student Union Clique. To gain a Bachelors degree, he studied English, Modern History and Economics. Besides a BA., he gained a BL. He worked as a lawyer for 3 years before the Second World War. He was a native of Pegu. A look at his background shows that his father, U Thin Maung, was involved in the 'Young Men's Buddhist Associations (YMBA)' as general secretary and then worked as Mayor of Rangoon. Professionally, his father was involved in the teak industry based on the Nessee Forest. His mother, Daw Tin, was a leading member in the Wunthanu Athin, a nationalist association concerned with national cause.⁷⁹ Thus, his patriotic generation also provided for him to become

75. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၈၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.85.)

76. *Ibid.*, p.176.

77. *Ibid.*, p.190: Ko Hla Maung (Maikhtila) was one of the BSP's founding CEC members (June 1945); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၁၈၊ စက်တင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 4, 18.9.1946); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ ၁၃၊ အောက်တိုဘာ၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, 13.10.1946).

78. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986.

79. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990; *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.111; But in Dr Maung Maung' book, *Burma's Constitution*, 2nd Edition, The Hague: Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, 1961, p.15: foot note 1. U Thin Maung became secretary of the GCBA in its first year.

active in the Party's first CEC. It might be assumed that he was given the position of treasurer in the party because he was from a wealthy business family but, at first, the party wanted him to be in charge of the youth section because of his experience in the East Asiatic Youth League. It should be recorded that he did not believe that the party should establish a youth section; in his opinion, it was of national importance that the youth concentrate on obtaining a general education and leave the study of ideologies until adulthood.⁸⁰ So, at the beginning of the party, there was no youth section.

Thakin Aung Than (alias Bo Set Kyar) was born in urban area (Rangoon) in 1916, did not rejoin the military service after the Second World War but entered politics. He was an ex-medical student, was imprisoned for political activities by the British government, and was one of the Thirty Comrades. He served as a Colonel in the BDA and, in 1942, he was Deputy Defence Minister.⁸¹ During the Japanese occupation, the Japanese Military Police received information that implicated Bo Set Kyar in the Seagrim-Karen anti-Japanese affair of 1942.⁸² Thus, he was transferred to the Burmese Embassy in Tokyo as Military Attaché from 1943 to 1945.⁸³ He came from the faction in the nationalist movements led by Thakin Ba Sein and Thakin Tun Ook, but became influential among the Thirty Comrades due to his intellectual cast of mind. He also showed leadership potential when he harmonised relations between the Burmese and the Karen so that they could unite in revolt against the Japanese Army, during the early days of the Japanese Military Administration.⁸⁴ It was not strange that a member of Thakin Ba Sein's faction was accepted in the party led by Leader Thakin Mya—the leader always had his eye on national reconciliation and Burma's future. At the same time, it is true that Thakin Aung Than was a capable person and politically astute. On one occasion, Bo Mogyoe, ex-Japanese Commander-in-Chief in BIA, had knowledge about his influential role among the Thirty Comrades and the Commander said that “by pointing an accusing finger at Bo Setkya “You must be responsible for this” when Bogyoke Aung San wrote a letter to Bo Mogyoe asking for transfer of BIA Command to Burmese officers.⁸⁵ In BSP circles, it was said that he even gave information to the Party on where his wealthy father- and mother-in-law

80. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990.

81. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.152

82. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London); See also U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.88.

83. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.152.

84. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.88.

85. Maung Maung, *Aung San of Burma*, The Hague: Yale University, 1962, p.155.

hid their treasure, so that they could be robbed to augment Party's funds.⁸⁶ In difficult times, he could advise the important leaders; his experience with the diplomatic mission in Japan gave him useful insights. This history and these qualities equipped him well as one of the founders of the PFP; he became head of the party's Foreign Affairs Department. He was defeated by Communist U Thein Dan in the April 1947 election at the Toungoo South Constituency with 17,196 votes to 29,723 votes.⁸⁷

Bo Aung Gyi, later a former Brigadier of Burma Army, was a graduate of Rangoon University. His native town was Paungte, in Pyi district, and he was a member of the Dobama Asiayone, where he was known as Thakin Aung Gyi (Paungte). He served in Burma Independent Army (BIA), Burma Defence Army (BDA) and in the resistance movement and became involved in the PRP activities.⁸⁸ He was one of the leaders of the Burma Army young officers' anti-Japanese underground.⁸⁹ As a representative of PRP his responsibility was to organise anti-Japanese movements within the Burma Army.⁹⁰ After the Second World War, he re-enlisted as a Lieutenant in the regular Burma Army and was promoted to Major. Later he became Colonel and G.S.O (I) in Burma Army.⁹¹ After the resistance to the Japanese, he was also one of the people whose attempt to merge the Communist Party and the PRP was rejected by the CPB.⁹² He also attended the two meetings from which emerged the BSP.⁹³ Therefore, he was one of the founders of the BSP and PF (Socialist) Party. He studied socialist ideology in the classes opened by BSP in 1945-46. But, he was not included in the first CEC members of PF (Socialist) Party in September 1945. On 12 March 1947 he resigned from the Burma Army and then entered politics and joined the PF (Socialist) Party as a Joint Secretary.⁹⁴ In his active role in the BSP he was regarded as the mediator between the Socialist military wing

86. Story retold by U Hla Mon, a personal bodyguard of U Ko Ko Gyi. But, the story was not confirmed by U Ko Ko Gyi.

87. *IOR: M/4/2605; B/C 978-1947; B/C 1108-1947* (British Library, London).

88. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.35-36; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.94)

89. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၅၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.152); U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.131.

90. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၆၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.165)

91. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.35-36.

92. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၈၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.188.). The CPB rejected him to be a fully member and only after a reserved member for six months or one year, he would be accepted as ordinary member.

93. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၂၉။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.29.); ဘုံပေါက်သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်"၊ အပိုင်း(၂)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၅၊ စာ-၈၉။ (Thar Kyaw (Bon Pauk), *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Patheon Press, 1975, p.89)

94. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ စာ-၁၁၃၊ ၁၂၂။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. III, 1945-1948, p.113, p.122.)

and the party. In this role he was instrumental in the process of transferring weapons from the Burma Army to help the Indonesian nationalist movement in 1947. Bo Aung Gyi reached the level of Presidium within the BSP informally in 1947.⁹⁵ In the April 1947 election, he attained the highest number of votes cast in the Constituency of Prome East with 52,342.⁹⁶ He became one of the five committee members in the unity program between PVO and BSP.⁹⁷ His role in the party during the period of 1947-48 was as the man with “the Whip” (who is responsible for distributing the party’s program within the parliament).⁹⁸ He played an important role in the formation and the systematic organisation of an Auxiliary Union Military Police (AUMP) to help the Bama Tatmadaw in the civil war of 1948-49.⁹⁹ He re-entered army service on 1 October 1948 as Regional Colonel, and thus disappeared from politics.¹⁰⁰ Reviewing his participation in BSP, military and politics in Burma, he was an old member of PRP. He used to speak openly and from his heart, had an innovative mind and was good at social dealings.¹⁰¹

Lt. Colonel Ne Win, one of the founders of the BSP, was born in 1911 in urban area (Paungde), Prome district into a middle class family. His childhood name was Maung Shu Maung.¹⁰² He was educated in the university but did not graduate.¹⁰³ He become a Socialist, as an adult after leaving university and established a “charcoal business” to compete with foreigners. Therefore, his Socialist spirit was mixed with

95. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986. After the assassination of Leader Thakin Mya, Colonel Aung Gyi used to attend to discuss at the meetings when the meetings of Presidium were held although he was not a member for the Presidium legally. The members of the Presidium also accepted his discussions as good intentions.

96. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol: II, pp.919-921. Note: an Analysis of the General Election Result.

97. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၁-၁၁-၁၁ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.111.)

98. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

99. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊

"တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၁၁-၄၄။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996, p.44.); *Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary* on Wednesday 1 September 1948: Thakin Lwin, Ko Tin Nyunt and Thakin Hla Kyway met with the organiser to form AUMP, Bo Aung Gyi at the recession of the Parliament.

100. တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ "၁၁-၄၄။" (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV., p.44.)

101. Former BSP chairman U Ko Ko Gyi's remark upon Bo Aung Gyi.

102. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်းနှင့်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးခရီး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၉၊ ၁၁-၆၉။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win and Burmese Politics*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1969, p.69); according to the obituary notice in the *New Light of Myanmar* Newspaper (in Burmese) on 6.12.2002; the exact born year was 1909; *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.202-203. His father was a Revenue Surveyor and then a Merchant.

103. *Ibid.*, pp.73-74; *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.202-203.

both nationalism and entrepreneurial skills.¹⁰⁴ While he was serving as a clerk in Government Postal Department, he joined the Dobama Asiayone led by Thakin Ba Sein.¹⁰⁵ After the outbreak of Second World War, he was one of the 30 Comrades who were sent to Japan to get military training.¹⁰⁶ During that training, his competence was recognised by the Dobama faction led by Thakin Kodawhming.¹⁰⁷ During the preparations for anti-fascist movements, he joined hands with the young officers group from Bama Tatmadaw, who were very eager to start the attack on the Japanese.¹⁰⁸ This was the start of his involvement in the group who would later become Socialists. He was in charge of Delta area during Japanese resistance in 1945.¹⁰⁹ He was one of the persons who were rejected as members of the Communist Party, influenced as it was by Thakin Soe at that time.¹¹⁰ He attended the important two meetings at Mingalar Street, Sanchaung Street and Sindawat Street, where the PRP members discussed setting up a new party. He was also instrumental in inviting U Ko Ko Gyi—to teach Marxism in the new party.¹¹¹ That is one reason why he should be regarded as one of the major players in establishing the BSP as a separate party. One source said that he was even proposed as leader of the new party before the arrival of Thakin Mya in Rangoon.¹¹² But, when the PRP group legally founded the PF (Socialist) Party in September 1945, he was not included in the CEC list and so returned to military service. He was one of the initiators in the formation of Bama Tamadaw; and he actively participated as a leader in the Bama Tatmadaw.¹¹³ In the struggle of Independence for Burma, he was a key player not only by helping the Party's contingency plan but by giving some assistance to the independent movements of both Indonesia and Indochina. Without his consent, the BSP's tasks would not have been implemented successfully. In the civil war of Burma (1948-1950) too, the

104. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ ၁၈-၉၅။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, p.95.)

105. *Ibid*, pp.102-103.

106. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, pp.202-203.

107. Autobiography of former Brigadier Kyaw Zaw, pp.19-20.

108. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.118-119.

109. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, pp.202-203.

110. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway state that Yangon Ba Swe told the CEC meeting of BSP that he and Bo Ne Win were rejected as members of the Communist Party.

111. Interview with former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်"၊ အပိုင်း(၂)၊ ၁၈-၈၉။ (Thar Kyaw, *op.cit.*, p.89.)

112. Interview with former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

113. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းမတူညီတဲ့"၊ ၁၈-၁၉။ (A History of *Tatmadaw*, Vol: IV, p.19.): there was also a proposal by the "Leftist Unity Council", formed in July 1948 and led by the Tatmadaw, to select Bo Ne Win or Bo Ze Ya as C-in-C of the Burma Army and they informed Prime Minister Thakin Nu through Socialist U Kyaw Nyein.

Tatmadaw composed of Socialist group led by Lt. Colonel Ne Win joined forces with the BSP, the PVO (Yellow) and ethnic leaders.¹¹⁴ (For details about the role of Tat see Chapter Eight.) In being selected, Ne Win thus was promoted to the rank of Lieut-General and made Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home and Defence.¹¹⁵

Colonel Maung Maung, later a former Brigadier of the Burma Army, was one of the founders of the BSP. He was born in 1920 in urban (Toungoo). He was independent minded and studied at the Medical College in 1940. He was too young to engage with the Dobama Asiayone but joined the Rangoon University Student's Union in 1941-2. He had to discontinue his education because of the war and it was not until March 1953 that he received his BA (with a distinction) in History from Rangoon University.¹¹⁶ He was active in the anti-British movement in the Delta alongside Ko Ba Zan (later known as Colonel Win), Thakin Htein Win and Wakema Thein Pe.¹¹⁷ He became one of the leading people from the Burma Army young officer's group in the anti-Japanese movement, and was one of the participants in the discussion with Thakin Soe (CPB) in Dedaye about the anti-Japanese movement.¹¹⁸ He also served on Bogyoke Aung San's special staff. He was included in the military committee of the AFPFL in 1945.¹¹⁹ His initial thought in 1945 was to set up a separate party besides the Communist Party.¹²⁰ Consequently, he also attended the two important meetings held in Mingalar Street and Sindawat Street where the Socialist Party in Burma was formed.¹²¹ He then recruited men for the new party.¹²²

114. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

115. *Ibid.*; Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1950, pp.60-61: The Cabinet was led by Thakin Nu as Prime Minister, and Minister for National Planning and the members were: The Hon'ble Lieut-General Ne Win, The Hon'ble U E Maung, The Hon'ble U Tin, The Hon'ble Sao Hkun Hkio, The Hon'ble Mahn Ba Saing, The Hon'ble Sama Duwa Sinwa Nawng, The Hon'ble U Van Thu Maung, The Hon'ble Sao Wunna, The Hon'ble U Ba Gyan, The Hon'ble Mahn Win Maung, The Hon'ble U Tun Pe and The Hon'ble U Aung Zan Wai.

116. Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*, p.48; 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, p.288.

117. U Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, p.288.

118. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.120, p.131. The including members of the young officers group, who would be later socialists, were Bo Maung Maung, Bo Aung Gyi, Bo Thein Maung, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Bo Win, Bo Kyi Win, Bo Chit Khine and Bo Aung Shwe.

119. *Ibid.*, pp.125-126. The members of the military council of the AFPFL were Aung San, Let Yar, Ne Win, Zey Ya, Yan Aung, Kyaw Zaw, Saw Kyar Doe (for the Karens) and Maung Maung.

120. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းတတိယတွဲ" (စာ-၉၈၉၉) (A History of Tamadaw, Vol. III, pp.98-99.)

121. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်အပိုင်း(၂)" (စာ-၈၉၂) (Thar Kyaw, *op.cit.*, p.89.)

122. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992. Bo Maung Maung invited Thakin Soe Myint to come to Rangoon to form a new party. Bo Maung Maung and U Kyaw Nyein picked Thakin Soe Myint up at the jetty and introduced him with U Kyaw Nyein. When Thakin Soe Myint asked, "who will be

He was well informed in literature and studying world circumstances.¹²³ For these reasons he can be seen as a major player in the reincarnation of the PRP, but, he was not included in the list of the CEC members of the PF (Socialist)P in September 1945 and so stayed in the army. Colonel Maung Maung was thus one of the founders of the BSP, from the wing of Burma Army.

Another important player was Bohmu Aung. He was also one of the Thirty Comrades who went secretly to Japan for military training in 1940. His native town was urban Kyauktaga, Pegu district. He was a member of the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation and of the Dobama Asiayone. He was a Deputy Commander in the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO) and became its Commander and Vice-President of the AFPFL after the assassination of Bogyoke Aung San in July 1947.¹²⁴ He was a leading figure in the PFP's two wings, the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation and the Federation of Trade Organisations of Burma (FTOB). He served as Vice-Chairman of the former in 1947-8, although he was also a member of the PVO¹²⁵ and he was one of the CEC members (treasurer) of the FTOB.¹²⁶ Moreover, he also cooperated with the BSP leaders in their attempts to survive the Civil War 1948-50.

Thakin Chit who transferred from the Socialist Party to Communist Party, in post-war Burma, was born in 1910 in urban Thanatpin, Pegu District and worked as a teacher in Mandalay.¹²⁷ His political comrades called him "Saya Chit". He was involved in PRP from the party's foundation as a key member and actively played in PRP's two revolutions- against the British and the Japanese.¹²⁸ He had political responsibility in Military Division Four for the attack on the Japanese. He was one of

included in the new party?", Bo Maung Maung answered that Thakin Mya, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein will be".

123. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986.

124. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.1.

125. ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးဌာနချုပ်၊ "ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈။ (All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone (Headquarters), *The Constitution of All-Burma Peasants' Organisation*, Rangoon: 1948); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၉-၅၀။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.49-50.)

126. မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)၊ "မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဆိုတာဘာလဲ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈။ (F.T.O(B) (Headquarters), *What is Federation Of Trades Organisation (Burma)(FTOB)?* Rangoon: 1948?), list of the FTOB (Headquarters) CEC members.

127. Lintner, *op.cit.*, pp.57-58.

128. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၂၊ ၄၆၊ ၆၁၊ ၁၆၇။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.12, p.46, p.61, p.167.); U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.86.

the twenty-one members of the AFPFL Supreme Council in post-war Burmese politics.¹²⁹ He became a member of the CPB in September 1946.¹³⁰

Second-Tier Leaders

The main leadership of the BSP sought to establish a second-tier of leadership to support BSP policy. To do this it drew on experienced leaders who had shown their abilities in the years of struggle against the British and the Japanese. The strength of the BSP as a party that could govern liberated Burma, lay in its capacity to find a second level of leaders who represented the diverse groups within Burmese society. As the biographies in this section illustrate, the second-tier leadership was drawn from a variety of political, regional ethnic backgrounds. It also included women who had played important leadership roles.

U Aung Than¹³¹, a brother of Bogoyoke Aung San, came from the middle class and gained a BA in 1934 from Rangoon University, resigned from the Civil Service and entered politics in 1945.¹³² He joined the PFP in 1945 because to join the AFPFL, he needed to be a member of one of the affiliated parties (a condition that did not apply to the old famous politicians). Bogoyoke Aung San commented, when his brother let him know he had already joined the PFP, that "In Europe, socialists are called opportunists". He was recruited by U Kyaw Nyein into the PFP.¹³³ In 1946-7, he was President of the Magwe district branch of the AFPFL. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Magwe in 1947 and was appointed as Political Private Secretary in August 1947.¹³⁴

Yangon Ba Swe was an old member of the PRP. He took part actively in the anti-British resistance in the delta.¹³⁵ He was also known as Ko Ba Swe Lay, an old campaigner who never accepted communist ideology. He arranged and escorted the members of the PRP to see Thakin Soe to prepare for the revolt against the Japanese.¹³⁶ He was one of the members in the financial section (Headquarters) of the

129. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၇၁၊ ၁၈၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.171, p.185.)

130. Lintner, *op.cit.*, pp.57-58.

131. He is different person of Thakin Aung Than alias Bo Setkyar.

132. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, p.167.

133. Interview with U Aung Than on 22.9.1990; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်

ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၂)၊ အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၂၇၃၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No.4, 27.3.1946.)

134. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, p.167; Interview with U Aung Than on 22.9.1990.

135. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၉၅။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.95.)

136. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.120; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၅၇။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.157.)

PRP.¹³⁷ He was not allowed to be either a reserve or ordinary member of the CPB when the PRP and CPB tried to unite after the Second World War.¹³⁸ An analysis of his role in Burmese politics shows he participated in the anti-British movement as a member of the unit in the delta led by Bo Maung Maung (former Brigadier). He was an experienced guerrilla fighter. Throughout the Japanese occupation, he had to live in hiding in the delta and he made many contacts with the revolutionaries there. As a result, he was one of the founding members of the PFP and his first duty was to organise and set up branches of the party in rural areas. His second duty was to serve as one of the members of the underground section led by U Hla Maung (Maithtila).¹³⁹

U Ba Win, the eldest brother of U Aung San, was also a member of the PF (Socialist) P. He worked as Senior Master in the National High School, Yenanchaung. He served as Chairman for the party in Yenanchaung Township in 1946.¹⁴⁰ In 1947, he was a member of Governor Dorman Smith's Executive Council, holding the position of Minister for Commerce and Supply.¹⁴¹ He was not only the Magwe district representative in the Constituent Assembly but also a member of the Constitution Committee of the Constituent Assembly.¹⁴² He was a respected person in Burmese society and was recruited by the PFP because of his honesty and his influential position.¹⁴³ To have recruited relatives of Bogoyoke Aung San was a significant milestone for the PFP and gave it an advantage over the CPB. He was assassinated in July 1947 along with Bogoyoke Aung San and his colleagues.

Bo Chit Khine, a former Lt. Colonel of the Burma Army, was a supporter of the BSP. He was a student leader in the 1936 Students' Strike, in Myingyan district. In the life of Peoples' Revolutionary Party, he was a representative of the Myingyan district.¹⁴⁴ He entered into the military service when the Thirty Comrades founded the

137. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၄၇။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.47.)

138. *Ibid.*, p.188; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

139. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.194.) p.194; Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992, who said that the members of the underground section were U Hla Maung (leader), Ko Soe Myint, Ko Hla Myint, Ko Than (Kyimyindine) and Ko Kyi Lwin (Ohnpintan).

140. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၂)အမှတ်(၄)"၊ ၂၇၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No. 4, 27.3.1946.)

141. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.xlvi states that U Ba Pe resigned on 19 May 1947 and was replaced by U Ba Win who was sworn in on 27 May, 1947. Tinker seems to confuse U Win with U Ba Win, eldest brother of Bogoyoke Aung San.

142. *Ibid.*, p.901.

143. U Ko Ko Gyi told me that in one executive meeting of the AFPFL, U Aung San mentioned the honesty of his eldest brother and he wanted him to be appointed as a Cabinet minister; all the participants recognised the honesty of his eldest brother and agreed with U Aung San.

144. Interview with Former Lt. Colonel U Chit Khine on 23.8.1990. He participated into the National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a member of the EC in 1988.

Burma Independent Army (BIA) and he was in the first batch of the Cadet Training Course in the Japanese period. Then, he served in the 5th Burma Rifles. During the independence granted by the Japanese in 1943, he was in charge of the bodyguard for Dr Ba Maw. After that, he entered into the military headquarter led by Major Ne Win at Aunglan. Later, he served in the military headquarter led by Major Ba Htoo at the North-West.¹⁴⁵ In the anti-Japanese resistance, he became military leader in Myingyan district. In the changing from PRP to PF (Socialist) Party, he supported the formation of the new party and he, together with Bo Aung Shwe, Bo Kyi Win and Thakin Tin Maung, attended the socialist ideology class at Tayokkyaung Street.¹⁴⁶ His activities as student leader and founding member of the PRP, plus his military experience, made him attractive to the BSP when they were selecting their military elite.

Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung) was born in Kyangin, Henzada district in 1914. He was educated to matriculation level. He joined the Dobama Asiayone.¹⁴⁷ He was an old member of the PRP.¹⁴⁸ During the Japanese occupation, he organised the All-Burma Youth League in Myanaung. After the war, he joined the BSP.¹⁴⁹ At the foundation of the PFP, he was made one of the district leaders and became a member of the Central Committee. Later in the BSP, he gradually became an influential leader and was involved in the Social Democratic movement.

Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy)¹⁵⁰ was born in an urban area in 1915. He accepted communist ideology but he did not join the CPB. He joined the PFP in support of the stand taken by Thakin Mya.¹⁵¹ Although his native town was in Henzada district, he grew up in the Tharrawaddy district. He was a member of the Dobama Asiayone, and from 1930 he was a peasant leader in Tharrawaddy district.¹⁵² He was also involved in the PRP's activities against the British.¹⁵³ An analysis of his

145. *Ibid.*

146. *Ibid.*

147. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.86.

148. မောင်မောင် "သက်ရှိရာဇဝင်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သမာဓိတ္တပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၁၂။ (Maung Maung, *The Biography of a Human Being*, Rangoon: Thamarmaitta Press, 1956, p.128.)

149. *Ibid.*, pp.125-133; *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.86.

150. Later, he was also known as Waidura Thakin Chit Maung. This came about because, he had spoken before the parliament against an amendment to Article 116 of the 1947 Constitution and he likened Article 116 to the heart of Minister Waidura who had served in the Buddha's life. So, since then, he was known in the Burmese political arena as Waidura Thakin Chit Maung. (See in Chapter Eight)

151. Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung in 1986.

152. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.85-86.

153. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၉၉။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.99.)

connection with the PFP shows that the reason for his joining the PFP was not ideological but based on his feelings towards leading individuals. He was associated with peasant affairs. He was a general secretary for the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation (Asiayone), one of the wings of the PFP.

U Chin Sein alias Shwe Nya Maung was a film director and producer. He was born in 1911 in Nyaung-U, a son of a Higher Grade Pleader (advocator in court). He was educated at the University College 1928-31 and worked as a school master in Nyaung-U 1931-3. He was also well known as a writer, composer and singer.¹⁵⁴ However, at the time of the foundation of the PFP, he was joint-editor for *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal* and he also wrote an article that was published in the journal. He was one of the composers of the "Song For the Socialist Party".¹⁵⁵ Thus, the BSP could also persuade artists to join their cause.

Thakin Chan Tun was born in 1921. He was a division leader in the BSP. His native town was Kyaukpadaung and he studied at the Intermediate College, Mandalay. He was a leader in the 1939 Students' Strike and was imprisoned for one year. He joined the Dobama Asiayone, Mandalay. He took part in both phases of the resistance under the guidance of the PRP and, after the war, joined the BSP and served as General Secretary of the BSP in Mandalay.¹⁵⁶ He also worked in the wings of the BSP— the TUCB (Mandalay) and FTOB (Mandalay).¹⁵⁷ He became one of the members of the CC in the PFP and then BSP.

U Hla Aung was very active in the AFPFL and the BSP after 1950. He was born in 1914 in rural village (Kunzeik), Shwegyin Township. He was a son of merchants and graduated from the University of Rangoon. He served in the BIA and BDA, and was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Toungoo South and then he joined the Foreign Service in 1948, as Third Secretary in the Burmese Embassy, Thailand. He became an EC member of the BSP. He served as Joint-Secretary at the Asian Socialist Conference, in January 1953 and as Secretary in the Anti-Colonial Bureau.¹⁵⁸

Thakin Hla Kyway was born in 1916 in rural village (Zayat Hla), Yegyi Township, Bassein district. His parents were traders. He served as a stevedore in the Rangoon dockyard. He was a leader in the Stevedores' Union, Rangoon and was

154. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.145.

155. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi, on 19.5.1988.

156. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတိသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၁၂ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.112.); *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.191.

157. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.191.

158. *Ibid.*, p.3.

interned because he led the general strike in 1938.¹⁵⁹ He joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1936 and was involved in running the labour department at the Dobama's headquarters. In 1940, in the reorganisation of the Dobama Asiayone at Kyimyindine Township, he served as General Secretary. He participated in the anti-British movement under the guidance of the PRP. In March 1942 he joined the BIA but in April 1942 he changed to civilian duties on the advice by Thakin Chit.¹⁶⁰ During the Japanese occupation, he worked as General Secretary in the Central Cooperative Department. In the Dobama Sinyethar Asiayone (Proletariat Party), formed on 27 July 1942, he was the second-in-charge of the Economics Department. He was persecuted by Japanese soldiers and then formed an anti-Japanese group named "Yan Naing". In 1944, in the Cooperative Association, Hanthawaddy Division, he served as Chairman. After the anti-Japanese resistance, he met with Thakin Soe who offered him the position of General Secretary in the planned Workers' Union (CPB) but he deferred, advising Thakin Soe to wait and give the other labour leaders—Ko Ba Hein, Thakin Ba Tin, Thakin Kyaw Sein and Mya Daung Nyo—a chance to consider who were the most suitable candidate. He was made General Secretary of the All-Burma Trade Union Congress (ABTUC)¹⁶¹ which was reformed on the 24 May 1945, under the leadership of Thakin Kyaw Sein. However, the ABTUC was abolished in August 1945, when all the members of the ABTUC (except Thakin Kyaw Sein who accepted an offer to join Governor Smith's EC), decided to abolish the Union and join the Pha Ta Pa La.¹⁶² Finally, he joined the PFP. The PFP recruited Thakin Lwin and Thakin Hla Kyway not only because they were in touch with the mass of workers and the workers' affairs but also because they were old members of the underground party.

U Ko Ko Gyi also known as 'Monyo Ko Ko Gyi' to differentiate him from the senior ideological leader of the same name, was born on 26 January 1914 in Monyo, Tharrawaddy district.¹⁶³ He was a son of U Thaung Pe, a Myothugyi (a Headman in

159. *Ibid.*, pp.72-73.

160. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway: At that time, Thakin Chit was one of the leaders of the PRP and he was in-charge of the headquarters of the Dobama.

161. This ABTUC was the under the auspices of Dobama Asiayone, founded in 1940. It was not a wing of CPB. See also in the labour policy of the BSP in chapter four.

162. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

163. It is significant that he was one of the active leaders in the BSP, as a follower of U Ba Swe, after 1949-50; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.907: He has often been confused with his namesake, ex-chairman of the BSP, U Ko Ko Gyi; even the well-known historian Hugh Tinker incorrectly recorded that U Ko Ko Gyi, ex-chairman of the BSP was "born in 1914: served in the BIA 1941-42 and in the Resistance Movement; General Secretary, All Burma Ministerial Services Union 1946-48"; *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, pp.37-38; *A Letter to Mr. Julius Braunthal, Socialist*

city), and Daw Ohn. He attended Rangoon University in 1933. He served in the BIA in 1941-2 and took part in the resistance. He acted as General Secretary of the All Burma Ministerial Services Union 1946-8.¹⁶⁴ He served in the Rangoon district branch of the BSP as a leader 1950-7. He became the Secretary of the TUCB in 1950. He was Vice-Chairman of the Rangoon district AFPFL 1950-57. He was elected to Parliament as representative of Monyo in 1951 and 1956. He was a BSP delegate at the Asian Socialist Conferences of 1954 (Tokyo) and 1956 (Bombay).¹⁶⁵

Bo Khin Maung Gale was born in urban (Pintale), Meiktila district, in 1912.¹⁶⁶ He was involved in the 1936 Students' Strike as one of the student leaders. During the strike, he helped with intelligence activities run by Ko Kyaw Nyein.¹⁶⁷ He gained a BA degree from the University of Rangoon in 1937 and served as senior master in the National High School, Mandalay. His father was a retired head clerk of the Law Court, Mandalay.¹⁶⁸ In the first phase of the resistance, under the guidance of the PRP, Bo Khin Maung Gale was a leader for Upper Burma, which was later extended and made a separate division.¹⁶⁹ In 1942, he entered the BIA and was commissioned first as a captain, then as a major in the Supply Corps. He took part in the anti-Japanese resistance but left the army after the war. He became one of the leaders of the AFPFL, and was a founding member of the PFP.¹⁷⁰ A review of his role in the BSP shows that he was an influential social democrat. Bo Khin Maung Gale objected to the teaching of Marxism in the BSP, and wanted it replaced with Buddhism. He was from the union clique. He was an associate of U Kyaw Nyein from their university days at Intermediate College, Mandalay. While he was not listed as a member of the CEC (Headquarters) at the foundation of the PFP, his name was in the list of the CEC (Headquarters) members for the year 1946-7 as one of the reserve

International, from E.G. Farmer, Commonwealth Officer, 24 November 1951; A Letter to E.G Farmer from Julius Braunthal, 27 May 1952; A Letter to Dr. Julius Braunthal, Socialist International, from E.G. Farmer, Commonwealth Officer, 5 June 1952. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam). Also, British Labour Party members enquired about the two names when they wanted to persuade BSP to join with Socialist International in 1950-52. He was recognised by British Labour Party and Commonwealth Officer as important person because of a close associate of U Ba Swe.

164. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.37-38.

165. *Ibid.*

166. *Ibid.*, p.31.

167. 1936 Rangoon University Strike, Mss/Eur D 1066/3 (British Library, London); *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.31.

168. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.31.

169. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.48.)

170. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.31; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

members.¹⁷¹ According to the constitution of the PFP, he was entitled to membership of the Central Committee.¹⁷²

An examination of the role of Thakin Kyaw Tun (Dun) shows that he, like Thakin Tin, was a prominent leader in the peasants' movement. He was born in 1915 in urban township (Tantabin), Insein district. He was educated at the Anglo-Vernacular Buddhist Middle School of Tharrawaddy and the Government High School in Insein. He served as Secretary General of the Insein District branch of the Peasants' Organisation in 1938. He was imprisoned by the British Government for participation in peasant opposition to the Tenancy Bill.¹⁷³ He participated in the PRP, particularly in the Insein District in 1942 as one of the leaders.¹⁷⁴ During the Japanese occupation, he was a district organiser for the Dobama Sinyetha Asiayone and took part in the resistance against the Japanese.¹⁷⁵ So, he kept in touch with peasant affairs and took part in both phases of the revolution. As an old member of the PRP, he became a Central Executive Committee reserve member (Headquarters) of the PFP at its inception.

Thakin Lwin joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1936. His native town was Zigon, Tharrawaddy district. His parents were traders. He matriculated from the National High School, Letpadan. He was one of the student leaders in the 1936 Students' Strike. In 1937-8, he was Secretary of the Oilfield Workers' Organisation. He was imprisoned for 4 months in 1938.¹⁷⁶ In the anti-British movement led by PRP, he was a leading organiser not only for Upper Burma but also middle Burma. With Thakin Thein Pe, U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale, he later became one of the members in the Upper Burma Bureau of the PRP. Finally, during the anti-British resistance, he was in charge of the PRP's Chin Division.¹⁷⁷ He was devoted to Marxism and attended the Second CPB Congress held on 20 - 21 July 1945, which

171. ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, 13.10.1946.)

172. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

173. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.26-27; "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေးတတိယတွဲ"၊ ၈-၄။ (*1958-1962 Myanmar Politics*, p.4.)

174. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.94.); *Who's Is Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.26-27.

175. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.26-27; "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေးသမိုင်းတတိယတွဲ"၊ ၈-၄။ (*1958-1962 Myanmar Politics*, Vol. III, p.4.)

176. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.80.

177. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၉၅၊ ၁၁၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.95, p.114.): Thakin Lwin was sent to Pakaukku District to work for the anti-British movement.

resulted in factionalism and disunity.¹⁷⁸ After the resistance, Thakin Lwin and Thakin Hla Kyway joined the PFP. Thakin Mya and U Kyaw Nyein welcomed them.¹⁷⁹ He was middle class but had experience of workers' affairs before the 1300 Ayeidawpon. He did not like the factionalism of the CPB. He chose to join the PFP because it professed a more scientifically-based Marxism and sought to first achieve freedom for Burma and then to set up Socialism.¹⁸⁰

Thakin Lu Aye was not only a founding member of the PRP but also the Executive Member for Myingyan district in 1945.¹⁸¹ This entitled him to be one of the members of the PFP's Central Committee. He was born in urban (Taungtha), Myingyan district. He was a son of cultivators and traders so it could be said that he came from the middle class. He completed his formal education when he matriculated in 1931. He was a founder of the Youth Reading Club and served in the club as General Secretary in Taungtha 1932-6, and was a leading figure working for the welfare of the youth in his native town. He joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1936 and served as President of the Dobama Asiayone in Towntha Township and Myingyan District 1938-40. Also, he was a founder and General Secretary of the Rice Merchants' Association in Mahlaing 1937-9.¹⁸² He was a founder and General Secretary of the Burma Broker's and Merchant's Union, Rangoon in 1946-7. He was a member of the Supreme Council, AFPFL, 1947-50.¹⁸³ With this background, it is not surprising that he was not only a founding member but also a Secretary of Labour Section in the PFP's Secretariat, and concurrently he was General Secretary of the Rangoon district branch 1947-50.¹⁸⁴ He was elected Treasurer in one of the wings of the party's labour Asiayone, the TUCB in 1947. He was a BSP delegate to the Eighth Congress of the Indian Socialist Party in Madras in June 1950. He resigned from the AFPFL and the BSP in December 1950.¹⁸⁵

178. သိန်းဖေမြင့် "ကျော်ငြိမ်း" ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ စာ-၆၆-၇၁။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1961, pp.66-71.); Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988.

179. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

180. *Ibid.* Thakin Mya explained to Thakin Hla Kyway and Thakin Lwin what the party's ideas and intentions were.

181. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.10.

182. *Ibid.*, p.10.

183. *Ibid.*, p.10.

184. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.10.

185. *Ibid.*; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; နီနီ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း" စာ-၇၆။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.76.); သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း" စာ-၂၂၅။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, p.225.): In which, Thakin Lu Aye became a CEC member of the TUC (B) in March 1947.

Bo Min Gaung was one of the thirty Comrades. He was a son of merchants and educated at Gyobingauk and later at the Myoma National High School, Rangoon. He took part in the 1936 Students' Strike in Gyobingauk. In 1939, he became President of the Students' Union at Tharrawaddy. He served in 1942 as Major in the BDA and as Adjutant and Personal Assistant to War Minister Bogyoke Aung San 1942-5. He was general secretary of the PVO after the Second World War, and a member of the Constituent Assembly from Kyimyindine (Urban) in 1947. Later, he became an EC member of the BSP, and was one of the EC members in the TUCB in 1956.¹⁸⁶

Bo Mya Han served in the BSP as a joint secretary. His native town was Pathein. He served in the Burma Army. He attended the first ideology class for the PRP leaders in Tayokkyaug Street, Sanchaung Township. He worked as a cadre for the BSP, and was second to U Ko Ko Gyi in the teaching of ideology in the BSP. He was one of the twenty-five Central Party Organisers who were selected by the Party Conference held on 17 September 1946. He was initially made organiser for Hinthada and Myaungmya Districts but they already had organisers so then he was given Pathein City.¹⁸⁷

Thakin Maung Maung Galay¹⁸⁸ was one of the leaders of the PRP. His native town was Mandalay. His father was a merchant. He was educated at the Buddhist High School, Mandalay. He joined the Dobama Asiayone, Mandalay in 1936. He served as Treasurer and as President of the Dobama Asiayone, Mandalay, in 1938.¹⁸⁹ He took part actively in the PRP.¹⁹⁰ He joined the AFPFL Mandalay in 1946 and became President of the BSP, Mandalay district. He also served as President of the AFPFL and of the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation, Mandalay district. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Mandalay in 1947. He worked also as a parliamentary secretary.¹⁹¹ In 1951, he was one of the EC members of the TUCB.¹⁹²

186. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.32; နိနီ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း၊ ၁၀၈။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.108.): footnote.(2).

187. Interview with Bo Mya Han on 9.2.1992; Interview with U Than (Kyimyindine) on 22.1.1992; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တစ်ဦးကျနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)"၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.). He reappeared in Burmese politics after 1988 and was involved in the party led by Waidura Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy).

188. Also named as Thakin Maung Maung Lay (Mandalay) and Thakin Maung Maung Lay (Former Parliamentary Secretary) in Nay Nyunt Ba Swe's MA thesis, pp.113-120.

189. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.31-32.

190. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၁-၁၃၊ ၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.113, p.120.)

191. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.31-32.

192. နိနီ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း၊ ၈၄။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.84.)

Bo Mya Thwe was a CC member of the BSP. He was a native of Wakema, and joined the BDA there before becoming a member of the PVO, Warkhema, and then joining the BSP. He was the second leader of the BSP in Myaungmya District.¹⁹³ As one of the delta leaders for the BSP, he was a CC member. Thus, he became one of the influential leaders in the BSP, involved in the party's discussion of the Aung San-Attlee Agreement in May 1947.¹⁹⁴ Also, he was very active in forging cordial relation between the Burmese and the Karen people living in the delta, and in uniting them in Burma's fight for freedom.¹⁹⁵

Thakin Pan Myaing studied up to Year 10 in St. John's College, Rangoon. His parents were merchants. He joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1936. He was arrested for making anti-British speeches in 1938 and again in 1941. He was active in the resistance movements. He served in the Rangoon City Guard under the guidance of the PRP. A member of Foreign Minister Thakin Nu's mission to the delta in December 1944, he secretly carried revolutionary papers and manifestoes to distribute to the revolutionaries.¹⁹⁶ Due to the experiences with the two revolutions as a PRP man, he became a CC member of the BSP. Thus, he organised the FTOB in 1945 and served as Head of the Secretary General in its administration department.¹⁹⁷ He was a member of Executive Committee of the BSP in 1946 and Publicity Secretary of TUCB. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the AFPFL in 1948.¹⁹⁸

Thakin San Myint was a member of the Dobama Asiayone. His native town was Waw, in Pegu district. He was born in 1921. His parents were rice mill owners. He matriculated from St. Anthony's High School, Rangoon. He was the elected President of both the Dobama Asiayone and the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation, Thanatpin. Later, he became a member of the EC of the All-Burma Dobama Asiayone.¹⁹⁹ In the anti-British movement, he acted in Pegu District under the guidance of the PRP.²⁰⁰ He

193. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.179; "မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွင်း(၉)အမှတ်(၁)"၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလ ၁၉၉၉။ (*Moe Journal*, Vol. IX, No.1, February 1999.)

194. ဗိုလ်မြသွေး၊ "ဥက္ကဋ္ဌကြီးသခင်မြ"၊ ပြည်သူ့ကြယ်ဂျာနယ်အမှတ်(၂၁)၊ ၁၉၇၇ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၉ ရက်၊ စာ-၁၀။ (Bo Mya Thway, "Chairman Thakin Mya": *Peoples' Star*, No. 21, on 19.7.1970); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၁၂။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.112.)

195. သံတော်ဆင့်သတင်းစာ၊ ၁၆-၇-၁၉၄၇။ (Thantawsint Newspaper, on 16.7.1947.)

196. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.109-110; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၄၇၊ ၁၆၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.147, p.166.)

197. *Ibid.* ; Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992; "မိုးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ် ဆိုတာဘာလဲ"၊ ရန်ကုန်။ (*What is Federation Of Trades Organisation [Burma] [F.T.O.B.]*): In the list of the CEC member; Sein Win, *The Split Story*, Rangoon: The Guardian Press, 1959, p.15.

198. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.109-110.

199. *Ibid.*, p.112.

200. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.94.)

served in the BIA and took part in the anti-Japanese resistance. He joined the BSP and AFPFL in 1945.²⁰¹ His background made him a likely person for leadership roles in the PFP and in the BSP: he came from the middle class; he was an effective representative of the Dobama Asiayone in Pegu district; and he was an old member of the PRP. He joined the new party when the PRP group founded it in 1945. Given his PRP background, he was, by right of the party's constitution, a CC member of the PFP. There is evidence that he was one of the CEC members from the party cell in Pegu District when the BSP was reorganised in 1949.²⁰²

Thakin Soe Myint²⁰³ was caught by the spirit of the Peasants' Revolution during the revolt in 1930. His political awareness began when he heard Dedoke U Ba Cho make a speech about the problems entailed by Burma separating from or combining with the Indian colonial administration.²⁰⁴ He studied at his local National School, which was set up as a consequence of the 1920 Students' Strike, and then he joined Dobama Asiayone.²⁰⁵ In 1938, he became politically active. He and his colleagues led the setting up of a Myaungmya district branch of the Dobama Asiayone recruiting youths, Burmese peasants and ethnic Karens from more than forty villages. Working with the PRP, he established anti-British underground units in the district in December 1940, and decided to occupy all the delta areas. He and the revolutionary leaders from the area seized Myaungmya.²⁰⁶

In preparation for the anti-Japanese resistance, he and his colleagues in Myaungmya hid BIA arms and ammunition when the BIA was abolished by the Japanese. He and Ko Kyi were arrested by the Japanese *Kempaitai*. After his release,

201. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.112.

202. The Collection by Thakin Hla Kyway: "ပါတီထွင်းပြန်တမ်းအမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၅၊ ၁၉၄၉" (*The Statement Within the Party, No(5), 15.9.1949.*)

203. All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), *To Stand and Be Counted: The Suppression of Burma's Members of Parliament*, Bangkok: Press?, 1998, p.210. He is a Central Executive Committee member of the NLD, which was founded in 1988.

204. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင်အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောဆောင်းပါးစာ-၃၉-၄၃။ (U Soe Myint, "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League for Democracy, The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum, Vol. II.) U Soe Myint along with his father, went to listen to the speech by Dedoke U Ba Cho who opposed separation with India. Although there was a majority against separation in the 1932 election, the colonial government separated due to the recommendation by the Indian Statutory Commission. Eventually, the "Act of 1935" finalising this separation appeared and it was forced into being in April 1937.

205. *Ibid.*

206. Thakin Thein Maung (Bo Thein), Ko Kyi, Ko Ba Yi, Thakin Thein Han, Thakin Kyaw Sein, Thakin Ohn Mya, Thakin Tin Pe, Thakin Maung Maung, Thakin Thar Dun, Thakin Aung Pe, Thakinma (the female version of the title) Wine Sein. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" (U Soe Myint, "The Freedom For Burma".)

he went to Rangoon and took part in the anti-Japanese movement led by the PRP. He understood that the strength of the CPB and the PRP relied on maintaining cordial relations between the Burmese and the ethnic Karen. When the British Military Council arrived at Myaungmya they tried to arrest him, but he escaped to Rangoon.²⁰⁷ He was recruited by Bo Maung Maung and U Kyaw Nyein to the PFP. He was disappointed with CPB's adoption of Browderism, and its self-interested abolition of the United Front. For these reasons, he decided to join the new party.²⁰⁸ He was the main leader of the branch of the PFP that he and his colleagues set up in Myaungmya District.²⁰⁹ He was elected as one of PFP's twenty-five Central Organisers in September 1946 and was placed in charge of the Taunggu, Yemethin and Pegu Divisions as an organiser for the BSP.²¹⁰ He was a nominated candidate for the Constituent Assembly elections as a representative of the AFPFL but he requested to be replaced by Thakin Tin.²¹¹

Let us examine the role of Thakin Tin and consider how his background equipped him to become a CEC member of the PFP. He was a son of a Deputy Superintendent of Police. He matriculated in 1926 and in 1927 he passed the lower grade pleadership.²¹² He was one of the defence lawyers of the peasants who were involved in the *Saya San's Ayeidawpon*.²¹³ While he was serving as a lawyer he joined the Dobama Asiayone. In 1941, he was elected President of the All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone. He was a member of the PRP. He took part in the anti-British revolution by entering the BIA as a Major and then he played a leading role in the anti-Japanese resistance. During the Japanese occupation, he served as political secretary to the head of state and was appointed District Commissioner, Tharrawaddy, in 1944-5.²¹⁴ To summarise his role in Burmese politics: he was tertiary educated

207. *Ibid.*

208. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992.

209. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" (Soe Myint, "The Freedom For Burma"); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၃၉။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.39.); ထိန်လင်း၊ "မြောင်းမြရဲဘော်များ"၊ မိုးကျာနယ်အတွဲ(၉)၊ အမှတ်(၁)၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီ ၁၉၉၉၊ ၁၈-၂၅။ (Htein Lin, "The Comrades from Myaungmya": *Moe Journal*, Vol. IX, No.1, February 1999, pp.25-28).

210. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျာနယ်အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၅)"၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, 13.10.1946.); ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" (Soe Myint, "The Freedom For Burma".)

211. ဦးစိုးမြင့်၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု" (Soe Myint, "The Freedom For Burma".)

212. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.185; "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေး၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ ၁၈-၂၃။ (1958-1962 *Myanmar Politics*, Vol. III, pp.2-3.)

213. ဝိဇ္ဇာ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၂။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.121)

214. *Who's Is Who In Burma, 1961*, p.185; မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များလေ့လာစစ်စစ်ခြင်း" (၁၉၂၀-၁၉၄၇)၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာအတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂၊ ၁၈-၄၄။ (Maung Ye Mya, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya (1920-1947)*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1982, pp.44.); "မြန်မာ့

indicating that his parents were materially well-off; he participated as advocate in the case brought against the peasants in 1931; he became President of the Peasants' Asiayone in 1941. It can be said that his socialism was more associated with the peasants, suggesting that he was a proponent of Agrarian Socialism; he was a member of the PRP; and he served in the military service. Moreover, it is evident that he was one of the people involved in the preliminary formation of the All-Burma Workers' Asiayone on

9 January 1939.²¹⁵ These involvements set his course for participation in the PFP as a member of the CEC (Headquarters) and to assume responsibility for one of the wings of the PFP, the All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone, 1946-47.

Thakin Thin also came from the Dobama Asiayone. He and Thakin Lwin were brothers. In the All-Burma Conference of the Dobama, he was one of the sixty-three selected district representatives, representing the Prome district.²¹⁶ In 1938, he was a member of the Dobama's CEC (Headquarters).²¹⁷ He was one of the elected members in the preliminary committee for the formation of the All-Burma Workers' Asiayone in 1939.²¹⁸ In 1942, he was put in-charge of the Economics Department in the newly formed Dobama Sinyethar Asiayone led by Dr Ba Maw. In 1943, of the Central Cooperative Association, he was made foundation Vice-Chairman.²¹⁹ He was one of the influential leaders in the Dobama and his areas of expertise were economics and workers' affairs, explaining why he became one of the founders of the PFP. Records say nothing about the part he played later in the party. He was not included in the official photograph of the party's foundation on 1 September 1945, displayed on the front of the building of U Ba Yi's Zayat (Rest House).

Ko Than (Kyimyindine) was very actively involved as a follower in the BSP. He attended the socialist class opened at the Tayokkyaung Street, Sanchaung Township.²²⁰ After the class, he took charge of ideology for Kyimyindine, Rangoon Division. He was one of the twenty-five organisers for the party's organisation in 1946-47 and took charge for upper Burma but mostly he lived in Rangoon to help the

နိုင်ငံရေးတဝိယတွဲ "စာ-၂-၃။ (1958-1962 *Myanmar Politics*, Vol. III, pp.2-3.): The authors record that in 1941, Thakin Tin became a member of the All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone and only in 1946-7, was President. In fact, Thakin Tin was an elected President of the Asiayone in 1941.

215. သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၉၃-၁၉၄။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, pp.193-194.)

216. ဝိဇ္ဇာရုံ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ စာ-၁၄၆။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.146.)

217. *Ibid.*, p.164.

218. သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၉၃။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, p.193.)

219. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

220. Interview with Bo Mya Han, on 26.3.1992.

work at headquarters. He gave assistance to party leader U Hla Maung (Maithtila) in the underground and was included in the Vietnam secret mission, which was a key element of the party's program.²²¹ His participation in the BSP indicated that he was a confidant of U Ba Swe.²²²

Thakin Tin Maung Gyi was also involved in the PRP. He was politically active in Insein District during the anti-British revolution.²²³ He was in charge of the Ideology Department of the Dobama Sinyethar Asiayone.²²⁴ He became a CEC (Headquarters) member of PFP because he was a veteran of the underground party. He was the distributor of the PFP's publication, *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*.²²⁵

U Tin Nyunt was one of the leaders in the East Asiatic Youth League during the Japanese occupation. He gained a BA degree from Rangoon University in 1940.²²⁶ He came from Rangoon, and served as second-in-command in Keibotai and also took part in the anti-Japanese resistance.²²⁷ Because of his anti-Japanese activities, he was arrested by the *Kempeitai* on 30 March 1945.²²⁸ He was the PFP's organiser for Naypyidaw (Rangoon) when he became one of the CEC (Headquarters) members.

Bo Tin Pe, later a former Brigadier of Bama Tatmadaw, had a monastic education and was attached to Buddhist philosophy. He worked around in 1935 at BBTCL. While working here, he learnt the socialist ideologies of Marx and Lenin, from his colleague, Ko Ko Gyi.²²⁹ He helped to found the Nagani Book Club. After he entered into military service in the anti-Japanese movements, he was a battalion commander in the delta under the command of Colonel Ne Win. After Colonel Ne Win left for Rangoon, he became commander for all the battalions.²³⁰ When Colonel Ne Win was a battalion commander for the 4th Burma Rifle, he served under Colonel Ne Win as a commander of the squadron for administration and rations. In December

221. Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992.

222. He took part as a member of CC in the Workers' and Peasants' Party (WPP) in 1951. He became a member of the Presidium when the National Unity Party was formed by uniting altogether leftist forces in 1955-56.

223. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.94.)

224. *Ibid.*, p.141.

225. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဣနယ်အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၅)"၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, on 13.10.1946.); Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992.

226. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.124.

227. *Ibid.*, pp.124-125.

228. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၅၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.176.)

229. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

230. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "မိုလ်ချူပ်ကြီးနောင်း"၊ ၈-၂၃၃၊ ၂၄၀။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyoke Ne Win*, p.233, p.240.)

1947, Colonel Tin Pe led 4th Burma Rifle.²³¹ This relationship with the army, led him to participate in the PRP movement and attended the first important meeting of the BSP at Mingalar Street, Sanchaung township. He invited his friend U Ko Ko Gyi to teach Marxism in their new party as a decision of that meeting. He attended the first and second socialist ideological classes lectured by U Ko Ko Gyi at No 46 Tayokkyaung Street, Sanchaung Township. After the ideological classes, he went back to the army service.²³² His participation in the BSP was only as a supporter. Some argued that he was leaning to Marxism. Actually, he was just a pure soldier devoted to Buddhist philosophy.

U Than Sein was another old member of the PRP. He was not included in the CEC (Headquarters) list but he was one of the persons in the official photograph commemorating the PFP's foundation. He served in the BIA and the BDA.²³³ After joining the PFP, he served as organiser for Naypyidaw (Rangoon) in 1946.²³⁴

U Tun Win came from a middle class family; his parents were merchants of Tavoy. He was one of the strikers in the 1936 Rangoon University strike, and gained a BA degree from University College, Rangoon in 1937.²³⁵ He served as treasurer, Rangoon University Student Union in 1941 and worked as Senior Master in YMBA High School, Pantanaw and in the National High School, Meikhtila. He joined the BIA during the anti-British resistance and then he resigned when the Japanese occupied the country. He rebelled against the Japanese in Kanaung, Henzada District.²³⁶ The salient points of his personal history leading to his involvement with the BSP are that he came from the union clique; he was in the BIA during the anti-British resistance but a civilian activist against the Japanese; and he also worked as a merchant during the Japanese occupation. All the above qualities led him to become a member of the PFP's Central Committee. Later, in the BSP, he became a Social Democrat and he was one of the confidants of U Kyaw Nyein.

231. *Ibid.*, p.263, p.307, p.318.

232. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

233. *Who's Is Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.149-150.

234. ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးရှာနယ်အမှတ်(၆)အတွဲ(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal* , Vol. III, No. 6, 30.10.1946: The front page carried a photo of: U Than Sein photo with the caption, 'U Than Sein, the organiser for Naypyidaw. The first CEC (Headquarters) list, has U Tin Nyunt as the organiser appointed for Naypyidaw on 1 September 1945, but later U Tin Nyunt turned his attention to worker's affairs. Note. Since 1946, the BSP used the word for the capital of Burma, *Rangoon*, named as *Naypyidaw*. Now, the Military Government used the same word for new capital Burma/Myanmar.

235. Mss/Eur D 1066/3 (British Library, London). *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.204-205.

236. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.204-205; မောင်မောင် "သက်ရှိရာဇဝင်"၊ ၁၈-၁၀-၁၂၃။ (*Maung Maung, The Biography of Human Being*, pp.103-123.)

Thakin Thar Khin was educated in the Government High School, Sagaing. He entered politics in 1936 and he was active in the Dobama Asiayone. He went underground when the Dobama Asiayone was declared an unlawful association.²³⁷ One of his undercover missions for the PRP was to wait at the Moemate forest to receive the arms and ammunition dropped by Japanese planes for use against the British.²³⁸ He joined Bo Khin Maung Gale in the Upper Burma during the anti-British movement.²³⁹ He served under the leadership of Central Committee Members Ko Thein Pe and Bo Khin Maung Gale in Upper Burma, as a revolutionary.²⁴⁰ Ideologically, he disagreed with Ko Thein Pe Myint who believed in communism.²⁴¹ During the Japanese occupation, he served in the BIA. He was appointed District Superintendent of Police for Shwebo, and, later, for the Shan State. He participated as Commander of the BNA's Unit No. (6) in the Southern Shan State in the anti-Japanese resistance.²⁴² He was arrested after the British reoccupation and then released. He became district organiser of Moegok for the AFPFL. He became Joint-Secretary of the AFPFL in 1947. Membership of the Central Committee of the PFP was open to him. Later, he became influential in the BSP. Although he was a member of the Dobama and did not come from the union clique, his ideological leaning aligned him with the union clique and he was one of the trusted supporters of U Kyaw Nyein.²⁴³ He became an opposition leader of BSP (Stable AFPFL) in the parliament after BSP leader U Ba Swe lost in February 1960 election.²⁴⁴ The most influential factor for him serving in BSP was going on a secret mission to Indonesia to help their national struggle and thus, he was recognised and presented with Indonesia's highest national award.

Thakin Tun Ant had been a member from the beginning of the PRP. His native town was Minhla, Tharrawaddy district. His father's occupation was Head Clerk in the civil service. He matriculated from the Buddhist High School, Minhla, in 1940. He

237. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.63-64.

238. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၆၃-၆၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.63-64.)

239. *Ibid.*, p.110.

240. *Ibid.*, pp.112-113.

241. *Ibid.*, p.116.

242. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, pp.63-64.

243. Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.23.

244. "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးတော်ယဉ်"၊ စာ-၁၃၄၊ ၁၆၂၊ ၁၆၃၊ ၁၆၄။ (1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, p.134, p.216, p.228, p.236, p.294.)

was one of the EC members of the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation 1954-60.²⁴⁵ He took part in the activities of the PRP.²⁴⁶

Thakin Wa Tin was a member of the Dobama Asiayone. He was a founding member of the Prome (now Pyi) district branch of the Dobama.²⁴⁷ He was one of the sixty-three selected district representatives of the All-Burma Dobama Asiayone.²⁴⁸ In the anti-British movement, he was one of the influential leaders.²⁴⁹ He was in charge of organisation in Dr Ba Maw's Dobama Sinyethar Asiayone.²⁵⁰ This background explains why he became one of the founders of the PFP.

U Win²⁵¹ was born in 1905. He was elected Chairman of the TUC (B), one of the wings of the PFP, in December 1946.²⁵² He was appointed Burmese High Commissioner for India in 1947, obliging him to give up the TUC (B) chairmanship. He came from the middle class; his parents were timber merchants. He held three degrees—a BA, a BEd and a BL. During the years 1930-42, he served as a Senior Master in the Education Department. During the Japanese occupation, he was Deputy Director of the Labour Department 1942-4.²⁵³ With this background, he was well-qualified to take charge of the TUC (B) in 1946. There is no evidence that he took part in the PRP but, given his jobs and his education, he was a valued and respected member of the PFP and the BSP.

Ethnic Leaders

Mah Ba Khine was an ethnic Karen. He was elected as chairman of the Karen Youth Organisation (KYO) on 14 December 1945.²⁵⁴ He was sent as a delegate of the PFP, to organise the Gwaiboat Village, Myaungmya district. His competitor was Ko Win

245. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.1.

246. နေညွန့် "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၉၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.98.)

247. ဝိဇ္ဇာ "သခင်မြ"၊ စာ-၁၃၆။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.136.)

248. *Ibid.*, p.146.

249. နေညွန့် "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၃၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.134.)

250. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

251. He was the father of U Tin Maung Win who involved in Burmese exiled government.

252. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988; ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(သတင်းနှင့်ပြန်ကြားရေးဌာန)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းအဖြစ်မှန်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉-၈-၂၀၀၀၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၀၊ စာ-၆၀။ (BSP (Headquarters, Information Department), *The Truth Within the Party*, Rangoon: Pha Sa Pa La Press, 1950, p.60.); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၅၆။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.56.); *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.201, wrongly presents U Win as President of the TUC (B) for 1945-47. In fact, in 1945-46, the President of the TUC (B) was Dedok U Ba Cho.

253. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.201.

254. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၄၄။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.44.) The members of the organisation (KYO) were devoted to Socialism.

Maung (Pathein), a CPB organiser working in the same village.²⁵⁵ It might be assumed that the PFP headquarters sent him because there were many Karen people living in the delta. There is no evidence as far as I can find that he was a member of the BSP. The party's success in persuading him, an influential leader in Karen society, to work for them can be regarded as an act in support of unity between the Karen and the Burmese. He was assassinated on 19 July 1947.

U A. Soe Myint²⁵⁶ was an ethnic Karen who supported the BSP alias 'Stable AFPFL' or 'Swe-Nyein Faction' against 'Clean AFPFL' or 'Nu-Tin Faction' when the AFPFL was split in 1958. He was born in 1925 in urban (Toungoo). He was educated at Rangoon University in 1947 with BA degree. He was involved in the Karen Youth Organisation (KYO) devoted to Socialism and joined the Karen uprising in 1949. He entered into the legal fold in 1953 and became a significant leader of Karen Mass Organisation. He was elected to Parliament from Toungoo Constituency in 1956 and appointed Education Minister for the Karen State Government in 1958-60.²⁵⁷

U Nyo Tun was an ethnic Rakhine. He was very active in the anti-Japanese movement led by the PRP. During the Japanese occupation, he was in charge of the Rakhine Division in the Dobama Syinyethar Asiayone led by Dr Ba Maw.²⁵⁸ Subsequently, he became a member of the BSP and was appointed Minister for Information on 4 January 1948.²⁵⁹ On 14 September 1948 he became the Minister for Minorities.²⁶⁰ Other Rakhine involved in the PRP and who later became members of the BSP were Bonpauk Thar Kyaw, Ko Thar Kyaw (former Secretary and ex-Member of the State Council in the BSPP period?), Ko Tun Hlaing and Bo Maung Galay.²⁶¹ The BSP's success in attracting members of minority ethnic groups illustrates the

255. သခင်အောင်ဖေ၊ "ကြံရဆုံရကျွန်တော့ဘဝ" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြောင်းမြစာပေ၊ ၁၉၈၅၊ စာ-၁၀၀-၁၁၃။ (Thakin Aung Pe, *In My Life*, First Edition, Rangoon: Myaungmya Press, 1985, pp.100-113.); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၄၄။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.44.)

256. In current time, U A. Soe Myint involved as mediator in the peace talk between the military government and Karen National Union (KNU) resided in Thai-Burma Border.

257. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.113.

258. သာဘန်း၊ "ရွှေခိုင်မြို့သို့လာလှည့်ပါရွှေဇည်သည်"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုအတွဲ(၇)/အမှတ်(၃)၊ ဧပြီလ၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ စာ-၇၃-၇၉။ (Thar Ban, "Come and Visit to Shwekhinemyi", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No.3, April 1997, pp.73-79.); ဗဆွေ(ခင်းဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ စာ-၂၈။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.28.); နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၄၁။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.141.)

259. သူရိန်၊ "ရခိုင်အကြောင်းတစ်စုံတစ်ရာ"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုအတွဲ(၆)/အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာလ၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၁၄၂-၁၄၄။ (Thu Rain, "About the Rakhine", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November, 1996, pp.142-144.)

260. William C. Johnstone and the Staff, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations (1945-1958)*, Rangoon: The Rangoon-Hopkins Centre for Southeast Asia Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, p.12.

261. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၆၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.164.)

breadth of its social influence. U Nyo Tun later served as Ambassador for Burma in Australia.

Ethnic Rakhine, Bopauk Thar Kyaw, was an old member of the PRP. He actively took part in the anti-Japanese revolution and was sent to India to make contact with the Allied army.²⁶² He attended the class: *Dialectical Materialism* lectured by Thakin Soe at the Communist Party (Headquarters), Sanchaung Township.²⁶³ He and ethnic Rakhine Ko Maung Hla Kyaw also presented at the BSP's ideological seminar class held in Tayokkyaung Street, Kyimyindine Township and in the residence of author Daw Khin Myo Chit (U Khin Maung Latt's wife). Then, he was involved in the important discussions held at the residence of U Kyaw Nyein, to found the PFP/BSP in 1945.²⁶⁴

Mon Poe Cho was an ethnic Mon. He was born in Shwedaung, the son of a doctor. His qualifications included a BA and a BL. He worked as a tutor and lecturer in the Department of English, University College, Rangoon 1930-42.²⁶⁵ He entered politics and established the United Mon Association in 1945; he served as the association's President. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the AFPFL (1945-7) during the time of Bogyoke Aung San.²⁶⁶ The United Mon Association was supported by the PFP, suggesting he was a member or sympathiser of the party. The party publicised the foundation of the Mon Asiayone in the party organ, *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*.

U Vum Ko Hau was an ethnic Chin. His native town was in Fort White, in the Chin Hills. He was a son of a pastor of Cape Memorial Church, Thuklai, Fort White. He matriculated from the Government High School at Sagaing, in 1937. He served as Secretary in Chin Hills Educational Uplift Society. During the Second World War, he was a government official, working as Adjutant and Director of Intelligence to the Commander of the Chin levies. He acted as a leader of the Chins in the anti-Japanese resistance and was Chief of Staff of the Siyin Independence Army. He led a Chin delegation to the Panglong Conference on 12 February 1947. This conference was

262. *Ibid.*, p.163.

263. သခင်ဖေဌေး၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ စာ-၂၀၁။ (Thakin Pe Htay, *op.cit.*, p.201.)

264. သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်"၊ အပိုင်း(၂)၊ စာ-၈၉၊ ၉၄။ (Thar Kyaw, *op.cit.*, p.89, p.94.)

265. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.23.

266. The United Mon Association (Ethnic Mon Asiayone) was founded on (သက္ကရာဇ်-၁၃၀၇-ခု-တန်ဆောင်မုန်းလဆန်း-၅ ရက်) 9 November 1945. Its headquarters was at Mon Building, Yetarshai Street, Bahan Township; ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဌာနယ်၊ အမှတ်(၃)၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၉၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, No. III, Vol. 3, 10.9.1946.); *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.23.

part of the independence settlement for Burma, and was intended to settle the question of the rights of the ethnic minority areas, which had been governed separately by the British. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1947. Also, he was a member of the Frontier Areas Commission and was appointed as Counsellor for Chin Affairs in the Cabinet led by U Aung San in 17 March 1947. He was a member of the Constitution Drafting Committee. In the signing of the Nu-Attlee Agreement in London, 17 September 1947, he accompanied Prime Minister U Nu. After independence in 1948, he served in the Foreign Office. He was appointed Burmese Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia in August 1958.²⁶⁷ He was recruited by, and became a member of, the BSP.²⁶⁸ Clearly, the party advanced its role by being able to persuade an influential Chin leader to join its ranks.

Women Leaders

Daw Khin Hla was a President of the All-Burma Women's Freedom Asiayone (ဗ-လ-မ-စ)(Ba La Ma Sa) in 1946, one of the wings of the PFP and affiliated with the AFPFL, but she was not a member of the PFP.²⁶⁹ She had been born in Nanyaw village, Thongwa Township, Hanthawaddy district. She was a daughter of landowners.²⁷⁰ She joined the Dobama Asiayone in 1933, the first woman to do so. In the meeting of women from Rangoon Townships on 28 January 1939, held in support of Burma's struggle for freedom, she sang the "Dobama Song".²⁷¹ She was one of the members of the Constitution Drafting Committee and was elected to the Constituent Assembly from Kyimyindine North in 1946. She took part in the AFPFL as an Executive Committee member in 1947. She was Vice-President of the All-Burma Women's Freedom League.²⁷² An examination of her role in Burmese politics shows that she concentrated on the freedom movement; she loved freedom and equality.

267. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.43.

268. U Vum Ko Hau, *Profile of A Burma Frontier Man*, Bandung, Indonesia: Kilatmadju Press, 1963, p.426; Madhav Gokhale, one of leaders in the Asian Socialist Conference, wrote a letter dated 2 November 1955, to the French Socialist Party leaders introducing U Vum Ko Hau and describing him as a senior member of the Burma Socialist Party.

269. Interview with Daw Nang on 20.2.1992; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျေနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)" ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.)

270. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.46.

271. မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီဗဟိုကော်မတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအမျိုးသမီးများ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးလှုပ်ရှားမှု"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၅၊ စာ-၁၂၄၊ ၁၂၈။ (BSPP (Headquarters), *Women's Political Movement in Burma*, Rangoon: Sarpaybakeman Press, 1975, pp.124-128.)

272. အေးအေးမိုး၊ "မြန်မာလွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုတွင်ပါဝင်သောအမျိုးသမီးများ၏ အခန်းကဏ္ဍ(၁၉၁၉-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက် တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၁၊ စာ-၁၉၂။ (Aye Aye Mu, *The Role of Women in Freedom for Burma (1919-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1981, p.192.)

After Burma regained independence, she resigned from the Ba La Ma Sa and founded the Wingaba Home for Girls in Bahan Township.

Daw Khin Chit was a wife of Dr U Thaung Shein. She was also known as Daw Daw Chit and Thakinmagyi Daw Khin Chit. She was a member of the Dobama Asiyone. Her residence in Mingalar Street, Sanchaung Township was the venue for the PRP's first meeting to form the BSP.²⁷³ Her native town was in Thaton and she was a daughter of merchants. She matriculated from the ABM Morton Lane Girls' High School, Moulmein and completed nursing training at Rangoon General Hospital 1921-3 and served as Honorary Sister in the Military (BIA) Hospital, Mandalay 1941-5. She entered politics after the Second World War and was elected President of the All-Burma Women's Freedom League, Prome district, in 1946.²⁷⁴ Thus, she was a person who was connected with the socialist movement, having served in the Women's League, one of the wings of the PFP.

Ma Khin Sint Han, a sister of key player Colonel Maung Maung, also took part in the BSP. She was elected as a joint-secretary for the years of 1946-47 in the Women's Freedom Asiyone held on 18 - 20 September 1946. Daw Nwe New Yee (U Kyaw Nyein's wife) and Daw Khin Nan Mya (Bo Khin Maung Gale's wife) were also members of the EC for the years of 1946-47.²⁷⁵ She attended the All-Burma PF (Socialist) P Conference held on 15 – 23 September 1946. She was elected by the Conference for the years of 1946-47 as in-charge for Women's Department.²⁷⁶

Daw Nang²⁷⁷ served as General Secretary in the All Burma Women's Freedom Asiyone (Ba La Ma Sa) in 1946-7.²⁷⁸ She worked as a teacher. She was one of the peoples in the underground movement who supported the founding of the BSP. She attended U Ko Ko Gyi's ideology class for one month and achieved the second highest mark in the exam. After completing the ideology course, she was one of the organisers for Tenasserim Division, and was regarded as a trusted colleague by

273. Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi retold by Former Brigadier Tin Pe.

274. *Who's Who In Burma*, 1961, p.21.

275. *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, 13.10.1946, p.20.

276. *Ibid.*, p.8, p.14 & Vol. III, No.6, 30.10.1946, p.1: in the front page, the photo of Ma Khin Sint Han as Head of the Women's Department.

277. Due to the good relation in BSP between her husband and U Ne Win, U Ne Win gave donation of 500 kyats for U Pe Than Maung's funeral. Daw Nang was the mother of film director and actor U Maung Maung Myint.

278. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဣာနယ်အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)" ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, on 13.10.1946.)

Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi.²⁷⁹ To examine her participation in the BSP: she was actively involved in recruiting and organising for the Ba La Ma Sa and she took part in the BSP until 1948. Her husband, U Pe Than Maung, was also involved in the BSP. After retiring from politics in 1949, she set up a film industry company named "Thukhuma (ထုခုမ)".

Daw Sein Pu was born in rural village (Kyaikpadaing), Pegu district. Her parents were paddy-merchants. Her profession was as a school teacher. She joined the AFPFL in 1945 and served as President in Socialists' Women Asiayone in the levels of ward, township and district from 1945 to 1956. She became President of Women Asiayone in 1956 and also very active in other social and political activities.²⁸⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the political biographies of the main players and the second-tier leaders of the BSP. It shows that those who comprised the BSP had had experiences in both phases of the revolutions—the anti-imperialist resistance and the anti-fascist resistance. They came from the Dobama Asiayone and the Students' Union Clique. Some of them were concerned with the Workers' and Peasants' affairs. Two of them served as members of parliament during the British period, one becoming Deputy Premier, and both becoming ministers during the Japanese occupation. Most members of the PFP had been members of the PRP. A few of them were involved in communist activities. There were also members of the Thirty Comrades in the BSP and some of them joined the BIA and BDA. Some had experience with guerrilla warfare although not all of them joined the armed service. Women, many of whom were leaders of Burmese society, were involved in the party and one woman was concerned with rural area. Some of them were relatives of key players. Three key players plus one important leader during the Asia Socialist Movement besides one ethnic people came from rural areas. This fact also shows that Socialist leadership had connections not only with urban but also rural areas. They were not automatically come from the sky but sprung from the public. In 1930s, they led the people and showed the way to regain independence. They had had already connections with the masses- the workers, the peasants and youth. Members of the PVO and people who later became members of Yellow PVO, participated in the

279. Interview with Daw Nang on 20.2.1992.

280. *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, p.135.

party's activities. People with diverse connections—to the business world, government administration and the arts—were involved in the BSP. This wide range of experience meant they could successfully set up a new party and organize the masses. Socialist Mya was able to organise peasant mass in 1938. Other Socialist leaders like Ba Swe, Lwin, Hla Kyway, Thin, Tin Nyunt, Lu Aye were getting supports from worker mass and its organisation. Also, Socialists- Tin, Chit Maung, Kyaw Tun (Dun) and Soe Myint had sprung from peasants' organisation and got its supports. That is why, unlike the Indian Socialist Party's case, Socialists' leadership in Burma had already entered into the practical field since before the foundation of the BSP's pre-war party. The Socialist Party (India) middle class intellectuals involved in the Indian National Congress, had little experience with the masses - peasants and workers.²⁸¹ That is why, Socialist leadership in India had more international intellectual experienced than their Burmese counterparts whose were attached to the masses and reached the circle of 'state power'. They were able to extend the influence of Socialist Movement in Asia and Africa with the joint-support of Indonesian Socialists in 1950s, a matter to be discussed in Chapter Seven. The role of Thakin Mya was more important than that of any of the main players or second-tier leadership. The strength of his personality and leadership qualities engaged and held together the extremely diverse elements that comprised the BSP. His importance is highlighted by the fact that – as will be discussed in Chapter Seven—the party split after he was assassinated along with Bogoyoke Aung San and a number of other significant leaders linked to the BSP, in July 1947.

281. Girja Shankar, *A History Of The Congress Socialist Party*, p.80.

Chapter Four

The Burma Socialist Party's Constitution, Ideology, Structure, Programs and Funds (1939-1949)

Introduction

According to Marx's theory 'circumstances are created by men'. After the selection of the best cadres for the party, members of the BSP focused their attention on setting up a party characterised by the ideology of "Scientific Socialism". Guided by this ideology, they devised the constitution, structure and programs of the BSP. This chapter examines the legal foundation of the BSP in the Peoples' Revolutionary Struggle, by considering the formal constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, the forerunner of the BSP. The main characteristic of this constitution was a commitment to "democratic centralism", an organisational structure previously unknown to Burma. The definition of socialism and the ideology favoured by the party is important for understanding how the party leaders planned the construction of the future socialist society. There was a major disjunction, however, between the party's ideals and its sources of funding, and so I will also discuss the party's clandestine fundraising in order to demonstrate its pragmatic side.

Creation of the Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party

There is no evidence that when the new party took its first form as the BSP in June 1945, a constitution was drawn up. Former Brigadier Tin Pe, member of the Tatmadaw elite and a participant in the meeting at Mingalar Street, Sanchaung Township, recalled that a draft constitution had been produced.¹ However, at the meeting at 55 Sindawatt (now Boyarynyunt) Street, Dagon Township, the PRP group led by Thakin Mya prepared to write a constitution for the new party; they do not appear to have had an existing constitution to revise or adopt. Furthermore, information from one interview suggests that Thakin Mya wrote the PFP's constitution.² So, it seems likely that the founders of the first party were preparing to draft a constitution, but put the matter aside with the arrival of Thakin Mya, and then recommenced one once the PFP was actually formed.

1. Interview with former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

2. Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung in 1986.

In the preface to the constitution of the PFP, the purpose of the party and its constitution was stated. The PFP was constituted for the proletariat classes—"the peasants and workers—who were struggling for their lives with intelligence and martial prowess. The object of the party was to set up a socialist state and classless society in which there would be no oppression".³

The Presidium of the PFP announced the members of the Central Executive Committee for the year 1946-7, on 17 September 1946, the third day of the conference commemorating the anniversary of the Socialist Assembly (see Appendix-e).⁴ The constitution specified that in the CEC (Central Executive Committee (Headquarters)), there were to be ten members but in practice, there were eleven, one of whom later became the vice-president of the party. According to the constitution, the reserve members were to number five persons but in practice, there were only three. In the CEC (Headquarters) for the year 1946-47, there were five reserved members, and that was consistent with the constitution. But there were twelve members of the CEC (Headquarters), and that was also inconsistent with the constitution.

In 1949, the General Secretary of the BSP, U Ba Swe, attempted to reorganize the party, but he did not assume the title of Chairman. From 3 March 1949, they changed the party headquarters to 4 Wingabar Street, the upper storey of the office of the Peasants' Asiayone. On 15 March 1949, the Socialists tried to establish the secretariat office for the organisational tasks laid down by the Presidium. The order was signed by Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy), temporary General Secretary, and by U Than Sein, who was in charge of administration.⁵

The program for the reorganisation of the party units was announced within the Party and launched by the BSP General Secretary and the Secretary of the Central Organization Committee on 15 September 1949 and 13 December 1949 respectively.⁶ Throughout the country, there were a total of 226 cadres (some of them were included in two or more branches) in 47 BSP branches. To survive the Civil War, the BSP was

3. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ "ရန်ကုန်၊ဗမာ့သစ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၄၆၊စာ-၁။(The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, Rangoon: Bamarthick Press, 1946, p.1.)

4. Appendix (e): "Members of the CEC of PF (Socialist) Party in 1946-47".

5. Collections of Thakin Hla Kyway: (The Record of the Burma Socialist Party (Headquarter).

6. ပြည်ထောင်စုဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်းအမှတ်(၅)၊၁၅၊၁၉၄၉။"(Union of Socialist Party (Headquarters), The Statement within the Party, No(5),15.9.1949.; သခင်ချစ်မောင်(အတွင်းရေးမှူး-ဗဟိုပြန်လည်စည်းရုံးရေးကော်မတီ၊ ပါတီဌာနချုပ်)၊(၁၃၊၁၂၊၁၉၄၉)နေ့စွဲအထိပြန်လည်ဖွဲ့စည်းပြီးသောပါတီကလပ်စည်းမျဉ်းစာရင်း"။(The Report of the Party Units List signed by Thakin Chit Maung, Secretary of the Central Reorganisation Committee, on 13.12.1949.

reorganized on 5 May 1949. It claimed a membership of over 100,000 workers and peasants. It started to set up a youth movement in 1949.⁷ The cadres would be involved in solving the problems of the Civil War together with the Burma Army. Thakin Chit Maung, a Joint General Secretary, presented a report to the CEC members, listing the reorganized units of the BSP up to 13 December 1949, from which the identities of the socialist cadres in the staffs of Burmese Embassies and in the armed forces can be traced.

According to the constitution, the name of the party was to be *The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*. Headquarters would be located in Rangoon.⁸ After independence, the socialist party was named "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီ" (Burma Socialist Party) and then, the socialists tried to rename the party, "ပြည်ထောင်စုဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီ" (Union Socialist Party).⁹ Here, one interesting thing to query is the changing of the name of the party in 1949, from the BSP to USP(B)? According to the party gazette in 1949, the Socialists used the name, " Union Socialist Party, Headquarters (ပြည်ထောင်စုဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်)".¹⁰ They also used the hammer and sickle as the party's symbols here. By this, they meant that the party represented the masses: the peasants and workers. Moreover, the Burmese socialists' concept of the state can be found in their choice of the word "Union (ပြည်ထောင်စု)" in the party's name. This was not a term that emphasized their sense of unity within a national front, since it copied the name of the "Union of Burma." The BSP faced many difficulties in 1948 and 1949, particularly with obtaining broad popular support while implementing socialist strategies. At the time, destruction to some newspapers' presses by BSP's cadres occurred because of the article by Socialist Minister Thakin Tin for Agriculture and Land, 'Thakin Tin - Ma Kyin Sein Case' and the BSP chairman was being accused of corruption in what

7. *International Socialist Conference Circular No.167/50*, 31.8.1950: The International Socialist Committee Office reproduced the address delivered by Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), Joint General Secretary of the BSP. This address on the *History of the Burma Socialist Party* was presented to the Indian Socialist Party's Conference in Madras.

8. "ပြည်သူ့လွှတ်လေ့(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ", ၈-၂။(*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, p.2.)

9. Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988; "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း"အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၅၊ ၁၉၄၉။(*The Statement within the Party*, No. 5, 15.9.1949.); စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စက္ကန့်တွဲ-၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈-၁၂။(*The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996, p.12.) claims that "whether the BSP should change its name or not".

10. "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း"အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၅၊ ၁၉၄၉။၊ *The Statement within the Party*, No (5), 15.9.1949 ; " (၁၃၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၉၄၉)နေ့စွဲအထိပြန်လည်ဖွဲ့စည်းပြီးသော ပါတီကလပ်စည်းမျဉ်းစာရင်း"။(*The Report of the Party Cells Listed on 13.12.1949*; See also in Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, p.246: in Note, 68.

came to be known as the '40 lakhs case' (see below). On the other hand, the socialists were the main driving force in carrying out the tasks of the AFPFL. The BSP became half-ruling party in the popular front AFPFL. Under these circumstances, the socialists might have wanted to change their name to distinguish themselves as the state party. But the name was not popular with the people and so they were still known under the old name, Burma Socialist Party.

In Chapter II of the Constitution, a party member was defined as one who believed absolutely in socialism and served in one of the party branches according to the rules and programs of the party. There were to be two classes of member: Full-Time and Part-Time. There would be also a category for party sympathisers called Reserved Members who would have rights to participate in the party's functions but no right to vote or stand for election as a delegate. Any person of any religion or either gender, aged 16 years or above, who lived in Burma permanently, who was committed to socialist ideology and to serve the interests of the workers and peasants, would be eligible for membership. An individual seeking membership would apply to the relevant provincial branch supported by the recommendations of two members of the party who knew the applicant very well, and after completing the membership pledge. The branch would examine the pledge and then send it with a remark to the CEC. Applications would be accepted only with CEC approval.¹¹ The BSP had close links to the Indian Socialist Party, and their two constitutions were very similar, the Burmese one being modelled on the Indian. One difference between the PFP and the Socialist Party in India was the minimum age of membership: 16 years for the former, 18 years for the latter.¹²

Membership fees were specified in Chapter III of the Constitution. Every member would pay an annual fee of 2 Kyat to the party's headquarters through his or her branch; each provincial branch would have the right to collect monthly and annual fees or other support money with the approval of its Branch; the provincial branch would have the right to give fee exemptions to unemployed people and people on low incomes.¹³

11. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" ၈-၂-၃။(The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, pp.2-3.)

12. Ibid., p.2.; Socialist Party (India), *Constitution: As Amended at the Madras National Conference, 1950*, Bombay: Western Printers & Publishers, 1950, p.1.

13. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" ၈-၃။(The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party., p.3; ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(ပြန်လည်စည်းရုံးရေးကော်မတီ)"ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအခြေခံစည်းကမ်း(၁၀)ချက်"

Chapter IV of the constitution listed the rights and duties of members: (1) The members were to accept the decisions taken by the Party and then to participate in the functions of the State and the Party; (2) The members were to regularly study basic socialist ideology and then disseminate it among people who were not party members; (3) The members were to participate in the Mass Organisations of their choice; in special circumstances, the branch could relieve a member of this duty; (4) The members of the EC and CEC were to make regular reports about their party activities to the relevant provincial branch as they had been selected by the members of the Party; (5) The provincial branch was to have the right to decide the affairs of its province, providing its decisions did not conflict with the decisions, the Constitution or ideology of the Party; (6) The members were to obey the decisions taken by the Party that were agreed to by most of the people attending the relevant meeting and, in the case of important matters, that had been thoroughly debated; (7) The members were to have the right to appeal to the relevant party authority if they were dissatisfied with a decision by their branch or its EC. However, a decision taken at the All Burma Party Conference would be final and not open to appeal. In the interim between the taking of a decision and the All-Burma Party Conference, every member would be obliged to follow the decision of their branch or the EC.¹⁴

In Chapter V of the Constitution, democratic centralism was specified as the basis for the party's organisational structure. The four basic requirements of this structure were to be: All the members of the EC would be elected by the people democratically; all the EC members would report to the relevant constituency; within the party, the few must follow the decisions of the many according to party discipline; every member and each subordinate group of the party was to obey without argument the decisions taken by its immediate superior body or by the CEC.¹⁵ In what was designated the 'Statement of the Party No (1)', published by Thakin Kyaw Tun in 1949 as a members' hand-book, the socialist leaders explained why they practised democratic centralism. They favoured it as the system of party decision-making attributed to Lenin, because it overcame the oppressiveness of a bureaucracy. The right to criticise belonged to each stage of the hierarchy, the higher criticising the

ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၀-၁-၁၉၄၉ (Burma Socialist Party (Re-organisational Committee, Headquarter), *The 10 Basic Rules Of The Burma Socialist Party*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1949?, p.6)

14. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" (The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, pp.3-4.)

15. *Ibid.*, p.5.

lower and in return, the lower criticising the higher; all members of a higher stage were elected by a lower stage, obliging the lower stage to obey absolutely the order of the higher stage.¹⁶ Thus, the BSP pioneered the practice of democratic centralism in Burma. In the practices of 'democratic centralism', there may be argument about the fact that it is in accordance with 'democracy' or not. According to the principle of the 'democracy', the minority need to follow the decision of the majority. However, this majority of followers (or masses) also need to be as provided with intellectual leadership. According to Michel's theory, there is no need for argument about notable facts: "The masses are not easily stirred" and the "The most important resolutions, always emanate from a handful of the members". That is why, the system of 'democratic centralism' came into being according to the historical need but, the leadership in any ideology or system should be watched for signs of individual egoism or not.¹⁷

The Constitution stated that the party units were to comprise the foundational and lowest stage of the party; each unit would consist of four to ten members, one of whom would be elected as secretary. The party allowed the formation of the units in places of both work and residential areas. It was a different characteristic of the BSP to organise its members in comparison with the Communists who were mostly organised at work-places. It was not unusual fact that the PRP had formed basic units for members not only from mass organisations, among the Youths and Students, the volunteer corps but also from residential areas since the Party in its clandestine life in 1939. When members increased to more than ten, the unit would become a branch. In the cities of Rangoon and Mandalay, quarter branches were to be established; each quarter branch would include a Chairman, General Secretary, Financier and the EC (Executive Committee) would consist of three to six people.¹⁸

The constitution detailed the place that township units were to have in the party. The conference for the township party units would include the party units and

16. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ် (သခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်းအမှတ်-၁"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ ၁၀-၁၁၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ ၁၀-၁၁။ (BSP (Headquarters, Thakin Kyaw Tun)), *The Statement Within the Party No(1)*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948, p.21).

17. Robert Michels, *Political Parties*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959, p.50, pp.80-90, p.235, pp.316-329.

18. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ၁၈-၅-၆။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, pp.5-6.); နေညွန့်ဖေဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာအတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၁၁။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, p.13.); Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties*, London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1964, pp.30-36.

branches, and be generally held once a year; the township EC, composed of up to twenty members, would be elected in the conference; and then, the township EC would elect the CEC members, including the chairman, general secretary, financier and another six members. Party authority at township level would be organised so that supreme authority at township level would rest with the annual conference; after the first annual conference, the EC would hold this role between conferences, and between EC meetings, the CEC would do so.¹⁹

The next level in the party hierarchy would be the district parties. The district conference would be convened annually; an extraordinary district conference might be convened if an emergency arose. The District Conference would consist of all the members of the party units and party groups within the district. In the annual district conference, the EC of the district party, consisting of thirty members, would be elected. In the EC, there would be at least one member from each of the township unit ECs; the district EC would elect the CEC consisting of a chairman, general secretary, financier and six members. The supreme authority of the district party would be the district conference. The district EC would be the supreme authority committee between district conferences. The district CEC would be the supreme authority committee in between district EC meetings.²⁰

The All-Burma party conference was to be the party's supreme authority. It would be generally convened once a year (an extraordinary party conference could be held in the event of an emergency) and it would consist of delegates from all township party units (three delegates for units with not more than fifty members, and, for units with more than fifty members, three delegates for the first fifty members and one delegate for each additional twenty members). It would elect the party chairman and the 100 members for the Central Committee. In the CC, there would be at least two members from each district; the CC would elect the CEC (Headquarters). The role of the CEC would be to serve the functions of the party, together with the party chairman.²¹ The CEC (Headquarters) will be made up of:

- (a) Vice-Chairman
- (b) General Secretary
- (c) Joint Secretary

19. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" ၁၇-၆ (The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, p.6.)

20. *Ibid.*, p.7.

21. *Ibid.*, p.8.

- (d) Financier
- (e) 10 CEC Members
- (f) 5 Reserve Members²²

All five reserve members would be full-time members of the party. The All Burma party conference would be the party's final arbiter, a role to be assumed by the CC in the periods between national conferences, and by the CEC between CC meetings. Any vacancy in the CC and CEC would be temporarily filled by eligible party members, appointed by the CC or CEC, before the next ordinary meeting or conference when elections would be held.²³ A list of members of parliament who were also members of party units can be found in the 1949 BSP's gazette.²⁴

Chapter VI of the constitution fixed the functions of the meetings and conferences of all levels of the party: The quorum of the meetings and the conferences were one-third of the EC members or the delegates respectively. If a meeting was postponed because of the lack of a quorum, the attendant members could decide the agendas of the meeting.²⁵ By comparison, in the constitution of the Socialist Party of India, the quorum was one-fifth of members and delegates for the General Council and the National and Provincial Conferences, and the National Executive quorum was fixed at nine.²⁶ Therefore, the constitution of the Socialist Party (India) set less demanding requirements with regard to a quorum than the constitution of the PFP.

Chapter VII of the constitution set out the duties and powers of the Central Executive Committee (CEC). It would be the Supreme Authority Committee, second to the All Burma party conference. The Working Executive Committee (WEC) (Headquarters) would be the Supreme Authority Committee before the next meeting of the CEC. The WEC would meet at least twice monthly.²⁷

In the Chapter VIII of the constitution, the functions and duties of the district EC and district WEC were identified. The district EC would be the district party's supreme authority committee before the next conference was held and, the district WEC under the subcommittee of district EC, would be the supreme authority

22. *Ibid.*, p.9.

23. *Ibid.*

24. "(၁၃၊၁၂၊၁၉၄၉)နေ့ခွဲအထိပြန်လည်ဖွဲ့စည်းပြီးသောပါတီကလပ်စည်းမျဉ်းစာရင်း"။ (*The Report of the Party Units Listed on 13.12.1949.*)

25. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"။ ၁၀-၁၁။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, pp.10-12.)

26. Socialist Party (India), *Constitution: As Amended at the Madras National Conference, 1950*, p.6.

27. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"။ ၁၃-၁၄။ (*Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, pp.12-14.)

committee in the district. The district EC would be convened at least four times a year and the WEC at least twice monthly.²⁸

Chapter IX of the constitution presented the functions and duties of the township EC and township WEC. The township EC was to be the supreme authority committee of the township unit and it was to hold meetings at least four times a year. The WEC was to be a subcommittee of the EC, meeting at least twice monthly.²⁹

Chapter X of the constitution defined the functions and duties of the Executive Committees at village, quarter and centre city levels; it was to meet monthly. In chapter XI, the role of members of the mass organisation was addressed; they were to work among people who were not members of the party and persuade them to support the organisation and its functions. Three or more members could form a unit, which would be bound by the programs and discipline of the party.³⁰

In the Chapter XII, the party explained the discipline of the party. Members who divided the party and set up a faction within the party, would be dismissed from the party. Members who did not follow the decisions of the upper EC would have their names recorded, announced publicly, and they would be required to step down from their duties while their cases were assessed, and then, if warranted, suffer dismissal.³¹ An addendum, the ten Basic rules of the BSP, was published in 1949. According to these rules, members (1) must not be drunk or unruly; (2) must not gamble to an extent that undermines the member's moral behaviour or discredits him or her in the eyes of the people; (3) must not keep a concubine or treat women unjustly; (4) must not commit any criminal act which detracts from the dignity of the party or the member; (5) must not reveal the secrets of the party; (6) must not act impudently and rudely; (7) must not act for personal interest under the cover of the party; (8) must not neglect any duties designated by the constitution nor disobey any rules, except when following a legal course of action within the party; (9) must not break away from a group, must not set up a separate group, must not split the group and must not act from personal attachment to particular comrades; and, (10) must not damage the property of the people and the party.³²

28. *Ibid.*, pp.14-16.

29. *Ibid.*, pp.16-18.

30. *Ibid.*, pp.18-20.

31. *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.

32. "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအခြေခံစည်းကမ်း(၁၀)ချက်" စာ-၄-၅။ (10 Basic Rules of the Burma Socialist Party, pp.4-5.)

Chapter XIII specified the process for making rules. The CEC would have the powers to frame rules not inconsistent with the constitution of the party; The WEC (Headquarters) would have powers to frame rules concerning all meetings with the approval of the CEC. The process of amending the constitution was dealt with in Chapter XIV; amendments to the constitution were to be made only at the All Burma party conference.³³ In the constitution of the Socialist Party (India), constitutional amendments needed a two-thirds majority of those present at the national conference.³⁴

A comparison of the PFP constitution and the constitution of the Socialist Party (India), shows that the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party was organised into national, provincial, district and city/township branches, while the Indians had constituency branches, municipal areas and primary units. The Indian constitution was more encompassing and more detailed than the Burmese one; it might be assumed that this reflects India's greater size. In the Indian constitution, there was a provincial branch level but not so in the Burmese constitution. There was a separation of the district or city branch in the Indian Party constitution and but not in the Burmese one, which only had district branches. Moreover, there was a constituency branch in the Indian Party but in the Burmese there was not.

Ideology of the BSP

I have already argued in the introduction of this thesis that personal influence was a bigger factor than ideology in the politics of Burma/Myanmar. Burmese people voted from 'their hearts and not from brains'. That is why, they used to say concerning elections: "one ballot from the liver" (အသံကြားကမဲတပြား). In other words, they looked short-term only and rarely long-term which continues to effect Burmese politics. Ideology, however, in Burma/Myanmar was paradoxical; it attached to personal relationships, was linked to the state and, how they thought about the state, can be understood in the context of the section on the BSP's ideology. Socialist leaders and socialist ideology could not easily be separated and were this indivisible. The objective of the Burma Socialist Party was first defined in the preface of the Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party. To reach the ultimate goal of

33. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" ၁၇-၂၁။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, p.21.)

34. Socialist Party (India), *Constitution: As Amended at the Madras National Conference, 1950*, p.10; Socialist Party (India), *Forward To A Mass Party*, Bombay?: unnamed press, 1949, p.23.

the BSP towards “classless society” like the PKI in Indonesia, the party stated that first there was the need to solve three problems: to regain complete independence from the imperial British; secondly to create the circumstances for the various ethnic groups to make decisions by themselves in their own interests; and thirdly to ensure equal opportunity for all, incentives for talent and, to create a society free of racial, regional or class oppression.³⁵ Moreover, the BSP explained its picture of socialism in its publication, the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, adopting the slogan ‘Socialism intends everyone in Burma to be free of poverty, to have enough food, adequate shelter and clothes and to have a job.’³⁶

Furthermore, the party composed an anthem extolling socialism and the socialist society. This stated that they intended to eliminate poverty and that there shall be no exploitation or oppression...; that there shall be no robbery in the society...; there shall be no oppression of race by race, state by state or class by class... and that the Socialist Party was for the workers, peasants and proletariats. In the song, socialism was named "လောကနိဗ္ဗာန်" (*lokaneiban* or *nirvana*), the equivalent of ‘Paradise’ or the ultimate aim of human striving in Buddhist teachings.³⁷

The founders of the BSP came from the middle class; they were educated and intellectually inclined. So, Socialist intellectuals were to play an important part in leading the transition to socialism. However the impetus for socialism within the BSP was complicated by different opinions among the leaders about what actually constituted the transitional process. In the analysis of the process of establishing a socialist society, it is important to first look at personal approaches to the system or ideology. The ideals of the Socialist leadership had been already discussed in Chapter Three ready.

In the Statement of the foundation of the Peoples’ Freedom (Socialist) Party, the Party like the Vietnam Socialist Party, explained: "The ideology of the Party shall be

35. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ" ၁။(The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, p.1); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်" အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၉၊ ၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။(The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946.)

36. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်" အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၁၈၊ ၉၊ ၁၉၄၆။(The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. III, No.4, 18.9.1946.)

37. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်" ၁၆၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။(The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, 16.11.1946); ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့" ရန်ကုန်၊ ဇေယျမိတ်ဆွေပိဋကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ ၈-၈၊ မျက်နှာနောက်ကျောဖုံး။ (Ba Swe (Dahwai), *Let Us Found the Socialist Burma*, Rangoon: Zabumaitswepitacart Press, 1946, p. in the back cover of the book.)

Scientific Socialism. The Party shall practise the ideology according to the circumstances of Burma and the World".³⁸ Before the foundation of the PF (Socialist) P, when the party was the Burma Socialist Party led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, the decision was taken to teach Marxism to compete with the CPB. Thus, for three days an ideological class was held at 46 Tayokkyaung Street, Sanchaung Township for the leading members of the new party.³⁹ There were clearly ideological differences among the socialist leaders, but, the reason why the BSP decided to open the ideology class can be seen in U Kyaw Nyein's account:

Ideological classes were one of the fads of those days and the BSP decided that it should provide them also because otherwise it would lose its people, who were made to feel important by belonging to a party that gave such classes. That was fortunate for Ko Ko Gyi because I had no time for it. Ba Swe really could not give time to such deep thinking matters.⁴⁰

Thus, the party decided that these classes would prevent its people going to the CPB since they saw the CPB as using classes to recruit and organise, making 'ignorant people' feel 'important'.⁴¹ Then, after the arrival of Leader Thakin Mya at Rangoon from Mudon, all the socialists agreed to recruit cadres for the party.⁴² Thus, the socialist cadres attended ideology classes at several places, including the Rangoon University campus and at Pegu.⁴³ At the campus, there were secret ideology classes run by not only the BSP and but also the CPB.⁴⁴ Thus, the Sixth Training Class was completed on 1 January 1946. Up to this date, 228 members had attended these classes.⁴⁵ In 1948, ideology dictated that the main purpose of the party was to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat in Burma and to construct a socialist economy for the 'new world and new life'. So, to fulfil its purpose, the party needed to practise

38. See in Appendix (c) of Chapter Two: "The Official Announcement of the Foundation of The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in 1945"; *Secretariat- Report of ASC Mission To North Vietnam in 1956*, p.3.(IISG Archive, Amsterdam) According to the Constitution of the Vietnam Socialist Party, its ideology was also based on *Scientific Socialism*.

39. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989; Interview with Bo Mya Han and U Ohn Thwin on 10.7.1988.

40. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

41. *Ibid*.

42. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

43. No. 46 Tayokkyaung Street, Sanchaung Township; at the residence (near the Kyimyindine Station) of Bo La Yaung, one of the Thirty Comrades; the residence of Leader Thakin Mya and U Hla Maung in Shaw (now Khattar Street) Street, Sanchaung Township; in Kingbe (Ngarhtetgyi Pagoda) Street at the building of the Indigenous Medical School and at the Police station, Shwedagon Pagoda.

44. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

45. ဦးမဆွေ "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်" ရန်ကုန်၊ ပြည်သူ့စာပေတိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၃၊ စာ-၃၅၊ (U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, Rangoon: People's Literature House, 1953, p.35.)

Marxism and Leninism.⁴⁶ The reference books used for the Socialist Ideology Classes were: *Capital* by Karl Marx, *Anti-Duhring* by Frederick Engels, *The Origin of The Family, Private Property and the State* by Frederick Engels, *The Teachings of Karl Marx* by V.I Lenin, *Imperialism* by V.I Lenin, *A Hand Book of Marxism* by Emile Burns, and *Theory and Practice of Socialism* by John Strachey.⁴⁷ The party held classes not only in ideology but also in socialist planning.⁴⁸

On 31 March 1948, ideological difference was apparent within the CEC meeting of the BSP. U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale challenged the party's rule that members believe in Marxism absolutely because they claimed that Marxism was against Buddhist ideology. Although Thakin Hla Kyway proposed that an immediate decision be taken by the CEC, U Ba Swe delayed taking action by saying that it should be discussed in another meeting and concluding the meeting.⁴⁹ Ideological differences within the BSP emerged in 1948, although they were not publicly known. U Ba Swe stood between the Marxists and the Social Democrats.

Although Ko Ko Gyi was devoted to the works of Marx and Engels, of Lenin and Mao Tse Tung, after he was removed from the head of the party, the party did not instantly change ideological direction and adopt the line of the Second International but kept on studying leftist literature through the Peoples' Literature House. In fact U Ko Ko Gyi was still attending CEC meetings of the party up until April 1949. The Party arranged to purchase books from India for the House.⁵⁰ On the other hand, some of the influential leaders who were pioneers of social democratic ideology, such as U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Thakin Tin and U Kyaw Myint (Lay), refrained from studying and joining discussions at the House.⁵¹ Thakin Kyaw Sein (who had

46. "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအခြေခံစည်းကမ်း(၁၀)ချက်"၊ ၁။ (10 Basic Rules of The Burma Socialist Party, p.1.)

47. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

48. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay on 27.10.1990: He explained that he gave lectures on Socialist Planning.

49. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

50. X.X.X. "သိန်းလေးဆယ်ဦးကိုကိုကြီး"၊ ၁၄၂၊ ၂၀၀၁။ (X.X.X, *Forty Lakhs Ko Ko Gyi*, 14.2.2001.) Another Ko Ko Gyi (not the former BSP chairman) was sent to India (Calcutta) by India Airlines on 14 July 1948 to purchase the books; The collection by Thakin Hla Kyway; Interview with Waidura Thakin Chit Maung who attended these meetings; Interview with Bo Mya Han, a Joint Secretary of the BSP on 14.7.1988.

51. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ-လက်ဝဲညီညွတ်ရေးအတွက်လမ်းခင်းပေးခဲ့"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုလှိုင်၊ ၁၉၉၈။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee: Paving the Way For Leftist Unity": *Moe Journal*, July 1998, pp.107-111; the participants in the discussions at the "People's Literature House" included U Ba Swe, Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung); Colonel Kyaw Zaw (now exiled in China); Colonel Aung Gyi, a colonel from Burma Army; Thakin Kyaw Sein (who led a separate communist party during the Japanese occupation); U Win Maung, an ethnic Karen, and Ex- President of Union of Burma; Thakin Lwin; U Ba Nyein, a former BSPP economic adviser; and U Chit Hlaing, a former chief of the Political University during the BSPP period.

founded Communist Cells and taught anti-fascist ideology in 1943 and was a member of the Legislative Council selected by the British Governor in 1946-7) did. Thakin Chit Maung (Myaungaung), Lt. Colonel Kyaw Zaw (now member of the CPB in China) and Colonel Aung Gyi, who at that time had a responsible position with the United Military Police, were occasional participants in the discussions that took place at the House.⁵²

The ideological discussions developed into the Committee of the Literature House, no longer an open ideological class, and it was clear that discussion centred around whether or not to support the communist victory in China. A document used by U Ko Ko Gyi in his lectures indicates the topics of discussion and ideological line favoured by the BSP and by Indian leftist parties.⁵³ Topics included the "New Democracy", the "Asian Problems: Indonesia and Vietnam", the success of the Chinese Communist Party, the need for more study of Marxism–Leninism, and what books should be published by the Peoples' Literature House.⁵⁴

After Burma had recovered from the Civil War, there was criticism of the leftist parties and ideology in the various arenas of the AFPFL. Indian Prime Minister Nehru, who visited Rangoon in June 1950, emphasised that communism would not succeed in Asia because it would be unable to override the stronger urge of nationalism.⁵⁵ Coincidentally, Prime Minister U Nu, in his speech commemorating Martyrs Day (a day devoted to the late National Heroes, Aung San and the others assassinated in July 1947) and One Year of Tranquility, criticised the leftist parties and ideology. Moreover, in the Extraordinary Meeting of the AFPFL held on 3 August 1950, Prime Minister U Nu, as President of the AFPFL, announced that he did not believe in Leftist Ideology and he had to disassociate himself from its supporters; in this way, he challenged the BSP and PVO.⁵⁶ The two parties which were the backbone of the AFPFL, must have been amazed by these words spoken by the person (who had founded the Nagani Book Club in 1930s, the main centre for the translation

52. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင့်တိုင်), "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ" မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇူလိုင်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ စာ-၁၀၇-၁၁၁။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee": *Moe Journal*, July 1948, pp.107-111.)

53. "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအတွင်းသဘောတရားရေးဆွေးနွေးမှု"။ (*The Ideological Discussion Within the BSP*), signed by "Ko Ko Gyi", who said that the lecturer had attended the ideological discussions in India. Since Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi did not mention any trip to India in his autobiography, but the style of the manuscript is closer to that of the former Chairman than his namesake who went to Calcutta.

54. The collections of Thakin Hla Kyway.

55. William C. Johnstone and the Staff, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations, 1945-1958*, Rangoon: the Rangoon-Hopkins Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, p.20.

56. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

and dissemination of English-language socialist material). But the Prime Minister's underlying motive might have been to refrain from siding with either of the world's competing power blocs. At the same time, the BSP presented its Marxist-Buddhist ideology which was a fusion of Marxism–Leninism and Buddhist ideology. To get support from the people who were more or less devoted to Buddhism in Burma, the BSP made a theory of equation between two philosophies as follows:

Particularly this Marxist Abhidhamma [Philosophy] and the Buddhist Abhidhamma are not contradictory [to each other]. Very definitely speaking, [they are] not only similar: these two Abhidhammas [Philosophies] are a thing of one nature.⁵⁷

At this point, the question arises as to how the BSP changed from the dictatorship of the proletariat to democratic method. Changing the BSP to the line of the Second International from the Third International was based on the party strategy forced on it by the Cold War era. The main source of change came from the effects of the Cold War on Burma. International events forced the BSP to appear to be following a more neutral line. Giving more weight to Marxist-Leninist was apt before 1950, but after the departure of Marxists other organisational structures and strategies were more appropriate to Burmese Social Democrats. Socialist leadership of the BSP might not lean back to Third International but they used it when they needed Ko Ko Gyi to fuse Buddhism and Marxism.⁵⁸ The Cold War further forced the BSP into an alliance with the military. (See Chapter Six, Seven and Eight). The BSP could have been a leader among the Asian socialist parties and also have constructed cordial relations with the Second International formed by Edward Bernstein.⁵⁹ From 1950 until the BSP was abolished by the Revolutionary Council in 1964, it was led ideologically by U Kyaw Nyein, towards the Social Democratic Movement and contact with the Asian and European socialist parties. (See Chapter Seven)

Programs of the Party

57. E. Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Backgrounds Of The Burmese Revolution*, The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, p.197.

58. Interview with former Brigadier Tin Pe 18.4.1989. Bo Tin Pe said that “Buddha understand first about mind and matter” when U Ko Ko Gyi taught ‘Dialectical Materialism’ at party’s ideological class in 1945. Ko Ko Gyi said to Bo Tin Pe that “Do not say ‘Buddha’ in my class. When Ko Ko Gyi had been released from Insein Prison in 1958, Ko Ko Gyi admitted that he had studied Buddha’s Abhidhamma [Philosophy] for three years when he was in hiding place. Ko Ko Gyi went on to continue about ‘Pahtan’ and said that “Buddha’s teaching is absolutely right”. Note. Why did he study Buddha philosophy? It might be for the BSP’s fusion with Marxism.

59. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

In laying down its foundations, the BSP intended to build on features such as internal unity, mass leadership, and, the adaptation of the right strategy and tactic.⁶⁰ According to the program of the party, the socialists identified three periods in the party's development: a preparatory period; a defensive and offensive period; and an all-out offensive period. The first period followed the First Conference held on the 1 September 1945, and extended from 2 September 1945 to 31 December 1945. In this period the socialists would openly construct their party branches at district level without being provocative.⁶¹ Leader Thakin Mya himself sent out those who came later to follow those who had attended the First Conference, to establish official party branches in their districts and townships. Yangon Ba Swe was given the duty of setting up the party branches throughout the country.⁶² U Ba Swe and U Ko Ko Gyi were given responsibility for the party's organisational work.⁶³

The party's regular publication, the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, was distributed every Wednesday. The production team comprised U Ko Ko Gyi (Editor), U Chin Sein alias Shwe Nyar Maung (Joint Editor), U Tin Maung Gyi (Distributor) and U Nyunt (Publisher). The publishers of the journal were the Toetatye (တိုးတက်ရေး) and Setkyar Yatanar (စကြာရတနာ) Publishing Houses.⁶⁴ The party paid the editor 50 Kyats monthly, and the joint-editor 40 Kyats.⁶⁵ The BSP arranged to distribute the journal every Wednesday like a newspaper and subscription costs were fixed at 12 Kyats for 3 months, 22 Kyats for 6 months and 40 Kyats for 1 year.⁶⁶ But the life of the journal was not so long.⁶⁷ Other demands took priority. The socialists had to concentrate on the freedom movement, on work with the AFPFL and on government duties after the assassination of the national leaders in July 1947. U Ba Swe and U Ko Ko Gyi had to work for the party full-time in the beginning but later, especially after

60. ဗဆွေ(ခ:ဝယ်) "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထောင်စုလော့"၊ ၈-၄၄-၄၅။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.44-45.)

61. U Ba Swe, *The Burmese Revolution*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Superintendent., Union Govt. Printing and Stationary., Union of Burma, 1957, p.42: The appendix of "Guide to Socialism in Burma".

62. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၉၃-၁၉၄။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.193-194.); Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990.

63. *Ibid.*, p.194; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990. In U Nay Nyunt's thesis, did not mention about Ko Ko Gyi's responsible role in organisational work but only U Ba Swe.

64. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၄၊ ၁၉၄၆။ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.1946, 10.4.1946.)

65. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 1.6.1988.

66. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၂)၊ အမှတ်(၁)၊ ၂၅၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No.1, 27.2.1946.) According to Myawaddi U Ye Gaung, at that time, the 40 or 50 kyats is equal to the salary of a government official. The cost for one cup of tea is a quarter of a *kyat* and a fry noodle is half a *kyat*. According to the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.3, 10.9.1946, the wage of a general worker got 3 *kyats* and 2 *annas*.

67. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 1.6.1988.

the assassination of the national leaders in July 1947, were involved in the AFPFL (1947-48), the first as General Secretary and the second as member.⁶⁸

Despite these difficulties, the BSP established party branches in eighteen districts. The dispatching of party units resulted in the laying of party foundations in five districts. Preparations were completed to establish party branches in four other districts. The BSP, however, admitted that they “could not establish party branches all over the country within the stipulated time because of the lack of party funds and the inexperience of party organisers”.⁶⁹ The second period started on 1 January 1946 wherein the Socialists intended to stretch out their wings by establishing a Workers’ Asiayone, Peasants’ Asiayone, Women’s Asiayone, Youth Asiayone and Federation of Trade Asiayone, throughout the country. In that period, they had had no desire to antagonise any other party but any source of interference would be regarded as an obstacle and would be openly countered and removed.⁷⁰ Silverstein stated that no time limit was set for the second period but according to the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, the period was planned to be from 1 January 1946 to 30 June 1946.⁷¹ In the third period, the party would lead the masses with its clear-cut and well-defined policy and program. They would not stagnate at the defensive stage or the offensive stage but intended to lead the country and the masses.⁷² The party was still at its second developmental stage when it held its conference 15–23 September 1946 and it was then that it selected twenty-five Central Organisers to organise district parties, where there were already party members but where the ideological development was

68. Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma Independence Celebrations*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1948; Johnstone *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.10 ; “ဒုတိယအကြိမ်-ပြည်လုံးကျွတ် ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ ပြည်လုံးမှတ်တမ်း”၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဖဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇၊ စာ-၄၈၊ ၄၉၊ ၅၀။ (*The Record of 2nd Anniversary of All Burma AFPFL Conference*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1947), pp.48-49, p.70.

69. U Ba Swe, *The Burmese Revolution*, pp.42-43.

70. *Ibid.*; Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980, p.178; ဦးမဆွေ၊ “ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်နှင့်ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်”၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပြည်တော်မိုးစာပေ၊ ၁၉၅၅၊ စာ-၃၀-၃၁။ (U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma and Our Political Program*, Rangoon: Shwepyisoe Press, 1955, pp.30-31).

71. Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, p.178; “ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဥာနယ်”၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၆၊ ၁၇၊ ၁၈။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.5, 16.1.1946.)

72. ဦးမဆွေ၊ “ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်”၊ စာ-၂၅-၂၉။ (Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism*, pp.25-29.) This document is a report submitted by the Secretary-General and adopted unanimously at the first Conference of the All-Burma Socialist Party, which was held in December 1946, at the Land Records Department's Employees' Zayat, Bahan, near the Shwedagon Pagoda, which was presided over by leader Thakin Mya, President of the Party. (See also U Ba Swe, *The Burmese Revolution*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Supdt., Govt Printing and Stationary, Union of Burma, 1957, pp.31-45 (Appendix).

not strong.⁷³ Those organisers who had already attended the socialist ideology classes were sent to seven Divisions.⁷⁴

Guided by the constitution, the leaders steered the party through the first two development periods, from 2 September 1945 to 31 December 1945 and from 1 January 1946 to 30 June 1946. There were forty-three party branches all over the country in 1946. But the BSP admitted that they could not show the exact numbers of the party's members until 1946.⁷⁵ As mentioned above, after the assassination of national leaders in July 1947, no member of the BSP leadership could be restricted to a particular position within the party or in the AFPFL. They all had to work for the AFPFL (see next Chapter), now seen as the most important way of achieving freedom for Burma. In other words, while they were still constructing the party's foundations according to the program set out for the Second period, they had to step into the arena of power politics. The BSP like the Vietnam Socialist Party, had held only two All-Burma Conferences in its life.⁷⁶ Therefore, the Socialists found they had reached a stage where they could not convene even one annual All-Burma Conference in the absence of Leader Thakin Mya, who had been one of those assassinated in July 1947. Although the socialists could not fully implement their program, they survived rough times—the set-backs in the fight for freedom, the effects of the Cold War, the civil war and the split within the party.

The 1949 program of the party was conceptualised as comprising a maximum Program and a minimum Program: "the first shall be the creation of dictatorship of the proletariat and the second shall be the elimination of the imperialist colonial base and

73. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဇာနည်"အတွဲ(၃)၊အမှတ်(၅)၊၁၃၊၁၀၊၁၉၄၆။(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, 13.10.1946); Interview with U Than (Kyimyindine) on 22.1.1992.

74. Interview with Daw Nang on 20.2.1992, with U Hla Myint on 7.12.1992, with U Than (Kyimyindine) on 22.1.1992, with Bo Mya Han on 9.2.1992, with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992; ကျော်စောဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီ(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊မဟာမိစ္ဆာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊၁၉၉၃၊၈-ရ၄-ရရ။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, pp.74-77.) ; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဇာနည်"အတွဲ(၂)၊အမှတ်(၄)၊၂၊ရ၃၊၁၉၄၆။(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No.4, 27.3.1946), p.6; လူထုသတင်းစာ၊ ရ-၆-၁၉၄၆။(Ludu Newspaper, 7.6.46.)

75. U Ba Swe, *The Burmese Revolution*, pp.43-45; See also ဦးဗဆွေ၊ "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်"(U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*), pp.30-35.

76. *The Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference, Rangoon, 25-29 March, 1952*, p.21. U Kyaw Nyein had to admit that the party had held only two All Burma Conferences when the Indonesian leader Mr. Soedarsono asked about the history of the party in the preparatory committee of the Asian Socialist Conference held in 1952; *Secretariat- Report of ASC Mission To North Vietnam in 1956*, p.3.(IISG Archive, Amsterdam) The Socialist Party in fatherland Vietnam was founded by intellectuals who had connection with French Socialist Party, in July 1946. It was also able to hold its two national congresses in 1947 and in 1956 respectively.

the successful implementation of the new democratic revolution".⁷⁷ The party saw that implementation of the two programs and construction of a socialist society required Five Fundamentals: Peoples' Democracy, Peoples' Economy, Peoples' Education, Peoples' Health, and Peoples' Social Security.⁷⁸ To achieve these five fundamentals, the BSP aimed to replace the bureaucratic system with a Peoples' Democracy in conformity with the party's Constitution. Secondly, they sought to practise the "Three-Legged Economy" which consisted of State or Public Enterprises, Co-operative Enterprises, and Private Enterprises, until the country was economically independent, and then to nationalise major enterprises, transportation and the banking sector and control external and internal trade. Thirdly, they wanted to implement free and compulsory education. Fourthly they aimed to benefit the entire population, not only those who could pay, by means of the Peoples' Health scheme. Fifthly they sought to protect fundamental rights through a Social Security scheme.⁷⁹ The BSP reached the stage of their minimum program only, in the implementation of the democratic revolution which was only partially successful. Their undertakings as a first step to constructing socialism, could be found in the sectors of major enterprises and attempts to abolish landlordism. But the party was faced with the civil war, the split within the party and the effects of the Cold War. The party felt that after independence they were faced with the counter-revolution composed of imperialist and reactionary forces. Therefore, the party, under the auspices of the AFPFL, first tried to adjust itself to the international situation and then give its attention to the fulfilment of its program.

Party Funds

For a political party, the collection of funds is very important. It is of the nature of an underground party that it gets all its funds illegally, by robbery or through other secret sources. Relations between a party and its wealthy supporters are often troubled. The BSP appeared in the late 1930s as an underground party and then reincarnated as a legal entity in 1945.

In the revolution against the Japanese, the party received some gold coins, which were sent by Ko Thein Pe who had already cooperated with the allies in

77. U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, p.31.

78. U Ba Swe, *The Burmese Revolution*, p.16.

79. *Ibid.*, pp.16-24.

India.⁸⁰ This may have been help from the Allies. During the foundation of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in 1945-47, the party collected from each member an annual fee of 2 Kyats.⁸¹ Those who were involved in the foundation of the PFP and who served in the Burma Army while they were attending the socialist ideological classes, donated money to the party from their salaries.⁸² Former Brigadier Tin Pe of the Tatmadaw elite groups paid 30 Kyats annually while his rank was Second Lieutenant in the Burma Army.⁸³ Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine of the Tatmadaw elite groups occasionally paid into the party fund.⁸⁴ The party had to finance not only their functions within the AFPFL but also the construction of the party, so that the party was faced with financial difficulties. Thus, Chairman Thakin Mya and General Secretary U Ba Swe requested the state to give the party financial support.⁸⁵ This shows that as a legal party the BSP was transparent. It also shows the honesty of Leader Thakin Mya.

After independence, fundraising remained the party's principal problem. The party obliged Socialist Ministers to contribute 500 Kyats from their monthly salaries of 1800 Kyats⁸⁶. The other socialists who were serving as parliamentary secretaries had to pay the party one-quarter of their salaries.⁸⁷ U Aung Than, a brother of Bogyoke Aung San, serving as a parliamentary secretary, paid a monthly fee of 120 Kyats from his salary.⁸⁸ U Kyaw Nyein claimed that his factional enemy, then party Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi demanded in one CEC meeting that "the party men must take posts in the Government where they could collect funds by bribe-taking and other corrupt means; all means for getting funds for the party were justified." U Kyaw Nyein claimed that "No one dared to oppose this demand except U Win who said he could not accept such an immoral policy and could not be a member of such a

80. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိဇ္ဇာ)၊ "အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉၊ စာ-၁၀။ (Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979, p.10.)

81. "မဟာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအခြေခံစည်းကမ်း ၁၀ ချက်"။ (*The 10 Basic Rules of the Burma Socialist Party.*)

82. Interview with Bo Mya Han and U Ohn Thwin on 11.7.1988.

83. Interview with former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

84. Interview with former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine on 23.8.1990.

85. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးရှာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၂)၊ နံပါတ်(၈)၊ ၂၄၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No. 8, 24.4.1946.)

86. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi: All the Cabinet Members agreed to accept 1800 Kyats as salary, an amount it was considered the State's Economy could afford.

87. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

88. Interview with U Aung Than on 22.9.1990.

party."⁸⁹ The statement was quoted in an attempt to discredit the Chairman, whom U Kyaw Nyein accused of applying the policy to himself.

The position allegedly taken by Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi needs to be seen in the context of the party's circumstances. There were problems in the collection of party funds before independence. Many members of the party did not pay fees regularly. The party had expenses but no funds. Salaries had to be found for the full-time members. Production of the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal* had to cease because the BSP could not pay the weekly printing costs of 200 Kyats plus papers.⁹⁰ Some of the party members took it upon themselves to prepare for armed struggle, and so sought to collect extra funds for this. Some of the leading members of the party, who resided in the districts, had committed robbery and taken gold plate from the pagodas built by Chettyars (Indians). If they were arrested, the party would face black-listing. To protect itself, the party had the Home Minister and Finance Minister swap positions. Thus, Leader Thakin Mya was replaced by U Kyaw Nyein in the Home Ministry.⁹¹ In January 1946, the general secretary U Ba Swe gave directions about how to collect funds when he was in Myaungmya during a tour of the delta.⁹² Thus, the BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi inherited serious problems and it is likely that he saw the taking up of ministerial posts as the main legal means of getting party funds. Although he asked for the Foreign Ministry when Thakin Nu requested his participation in government, he was given the Ministry of Commerce, Supply and Transport.⁹³

The methods by which Ko Ko Gyi was able to use the Ministry as a source of party funds remained quite well hidden. Ko Ko Gyi did not speak or write about this issue but hints can be found based on the version of the story told by his personal

89. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

90. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

91. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 2.7.1988; *The India Office And Burma Office List, 1947*, 56th Edition, London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1947, p.52; Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.3. On 10 June, 1947 Thakin Mya took charge of the Ministry of Finance and U Kyaw Nyein of Home and Judicial Affairs.

92. သခင်အောင်မေ၊ "ဒီလိုပြောချင်သည်"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈-၉။ (Thakin Aung Pe, "What He Wants To Say": *Moe Journal*, June 1996, p.97.) U Ba Swe along with Thakin Kyaw Dun (Tun) and Ko Ko Lay (Aimai) toured Myaungmya and gave 500 Kyats for the Socialist Party of Myaungmya. Then, U Ba Swe directed Thakin Soe Myint and Thakin Aung Pe to collect party funds by approaching every household and explaining the history of the BSP: "The party has not come from the sky. Before the Japanese period, in 1941, the party was formed secretly. The party unequivocally opposed the Japanese fascists. Then, it negotiated with the British when they come from India. So, please donate to the independence fund."

93. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.10; Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis Of the Social and Political Foundation Of the Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, pp.323-324: footnote 33. (The source is *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, Bristol, England, p.8736, p.8785).

bodyguard. He explained to me that U Ko Ko Gyi issued licences to importers and exporters and he gave the lists of these licences to men working for the general secretary of the BSP, U Ba Swe. The party workers then went to the merchants and requested party funds, and they gave receipts to the merchants. The former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi refused to confirm this when I questioned him and he scolded his cousin, directing him not to tell party secrets.⁹⁴ The former BSP Chairman did not reveal that the case for which he became notorious—the "40 Lakhs" case—was concerned with raising party funds. This is the explanation he gave in his autobiography:

After independence, the merchants had to apply to the Commerce Ministry for licences... At the time of the "40 Lakhs" case, the merchants were unfamiliar with the procedure and were slow submitting their applications... Some merchants ordered goods before getting official permission; their applications were still in the hands of the ministry, obliging the ministry to issue fines... Thus, there were token fines for such irregularities; this was also the practice of the old ministers... I had to decide to issue token fines for two reasons: first to keep the price of essential stores low for the customers and secondly to ensure that the goods were distributed and sold quickly because at that time there was shortages of clothes and goods because of the effect of the Second World War.⁹⁵

U Ko Ko Gyi was accused of causing his department to lose "Kyat 40 lakhs" (a lakh is 100,000 coins) of the State's revenue and labelled "40 Lakhs Ko Ko Gyi"; his character was assassinated. In reality, the loss of state revenue amounted only to K 18 lakhs.⁹⁶ In U Nu's speech before the parliament on 16 February 1950, as reported in the military history of 1996, the "40 Lakhs" case was said to be the work of a person who possessed a cunning mind, that is that it involved deliberate scheming. U Nu

94. U Hla Mon who is a cousin of U Ko Ko Gyi. U Ko Ko Gyi claimed that he was the person responsible for the party and that he would reveal all in his biography "when the time was right and without harming anyone". In his autobiography, he did not reveal that the "40 Lakhs" case was concerned with raising party funds.

95. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

96. *Ibid.*; Shwe Kalaung, "Post Independence press in retrospect (1948-1958), no 73": *The Working Peoples' Daily*, 26.10.1991. Shwe Kalaung was a Deputy Minister for the Information Department and tried to discover the party's secret by approaching Kyimyindine U Than. In X.X.X. "သိန်းလေးဆယ်ကိုကြီး"၊ ဝဋ်ပျဉ်းဝေဝေ (U Kyaw Nyein (X.X.X, *40 Lakhs Ko Ko Gyi*, 14.2.2001), based on the record of the Parliamentary Conference held on 16 February 1950, the author recorded that the Commerce Minister U Ko Ko Gyi ordered the merchants to pay only 60,000 Kyats in fines although the custom officer fixed the fines at "18 lakhs" so that the loss to the state was only K. 17,400.

claimed that in order for U Ko Ko Gyi to influence the Burmese political scene he needed two things: money and the creation of a group which would support him.⁹⁷

The "40 Lakhs" case was enough to discredit U Ko Ko Gyi, and is usually seen as the main factor that caused him to lose the Chairmanship of the BSP. In reality, of greater importance was a set of behind-the-scenes moves in which key players of the party proposed a "1948 Coup". As I will show in Chapter Six, U Ko Ko Gyi's objection to this was the main reason he was replaced by U Kyaw Nyein.

The BSP did not lose the Commerce Ministry after the removal of U Ko Ko Gyi from the Chairman's post. They still held it in 1950. Between 1948 and 1950, the Ministry was in the hands of confidants of U Nu, U Ohn and U Tin (Myanmar Ahlin).⁹⁸ Two Socialist Ministers, U Kyaw Myint (Lay) and Thakin Thar Khin, had the Portfolio between 1 March 1951 and 1 March 1954. U Kyaw Myint Lay, was accused of corrupt behaviour but he was protected by invoking legal action, and so avoided having his name defamed. He was transferred to the ministry for Democratisation of Local Government, which was newly created in 1953.⁹⁹ This contrasting case shows that someone who was not as obvious a political target could ward off personal attacks. In 1954, the Ministry of Commerce was renamed the Ministry of Trade Development. In 1955, the department was divided into two, Trade Development and Supplies and put into the hands of people who were not from the BSP. The departments remained in non-BSP hands from 1956 to 1958.¹⁰⁰ The lack of funds remained a weakness of the BSP.

Conclusion

In 1945 the BSP created its new Constitution after a long period of domination by colonial powers. The nature of the BSP constitution reflected the complex diversity

97. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊မတုတ္ထတွဲ၊၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂"၊ ၁၇-၁၂-၁၃၊ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, pp.12-13).

98. Johnstone *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp.12-18; Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: The First Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1949, p.19; Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1950.

99. Johnstone *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.22-27: In March 1952, Socialist Minister U Kyaw Myint Lay was replaced by Socialist Minister Thakin Thar Khin in the Commerce and Supply Ministry; Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay 27.10.1990; Interview with U Aung Than, 22.9.1990. The case of U Kyaw Myint Lay was also instigated by U Kyaw Nyein; the Chief Judge from the government was Dr Ba Han.

100. Johnstone *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.46-75; Director of Information, Union of Burma, *The Eighth Anniversary: Burma*, Vol. VI, No. 2, January 1956, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1956; Director of Information, Union of Burma, *The Ninth Anniversary: Burma*, Vol. VII, No. 2, January 1957, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1957.

of Burmese society and of the political groupings that were participating in its liberation struggles. The structures and the programs of the BSP demonstrated how the founders of the party envisaged that socialist society would be constructed. The major findings in this chapter are the role of individual leaders, the innovative nature of 'Democratic Centralism', the main principles of BSP's Constitution, the lack of clarity in the BSP's transitional program, the tension between moderates and extremists and the source of funding. This chapter show that the Party was organised with high ideals, but it did not have the resources to implement those ideals, and was eventually dragged down by the realities of funding and political competition. It also reflects upon how the BSP's men used their mental capabilities in socialist construction, and how this benefited both the parliamentary period and the totalitarian period.

Chapter Five

Policies of the Burma Socialist Party (1945-1958)

Introduction

This chapter examines the evolution of BSP policy. Because of the nature of the party and Burmese politics in the period 1945-49, it has been necessary to reconstruct BSP policy from a variety of sources. In 1945, the Party set up as a legal organisation, to compete with the CPB, under the umbrella of the national front, the AFPFL, taking part in the struggles for freedom till 1948. During that period (1939-1949), they recorded some of their ideas, policy and program in the party's publication, the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*. In the reorganisation of the party in 1948-49, they published various books which were generally about the history of the party's programs, ideology, foreign policy and how to construct socialism in Burma. Despite the public nature of these publications, there was a tendency of the Burmese Socialist leaders to keep their thoughts and feelings among the elite group. The reason for their relative silence was probably because they did not want to reveal their roles while they were working for the united front (AFPFL) and also their policy of "actions speak louder than words." Thus, although there are gaps in the records, there is enough material to reconstruct BSP policies in regard to labour, agrarian matters, women, ethnic groups, youth and in regard to other political groups, especially the PVO and the CPB. Finally, the BSP's foreign policy in relation to neighbouring countries is examined to show how it was based on the AFPFL's policy.

Labour Policy of the BSP

To get support from the masses, the party's primary task, the Socialists decided to build the party like an eagle, comprising a head, body and two wings. In drawing up the Constitution for the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, they included the rights and privileges of members of the wings, of the *Asiayones*.¹ The party explained that there

1. "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗမာ့သစ်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆-၄၇။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, Rangoon: Bamathick Press, 1946, p.4, p.20.)

were three kinds of Asiayone: national organisations, mass organisations and political parties, each intended to meet different circumstances. A national organisation comprised people of any race, any religion, any class and who believed in any ideology. Examples of national organisations were the Indian National Congress and Burma's own Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League in. In contrast, mass organisations were based on common interests and included those who had the same job, same religion and were of the same race; but their ideologies could be different. The Workers' Asiayone, Peasants' Asiayone, Women's Asiayone, Youth Asiayone, Student Union and ethnic associations such as the Karen Asiayone, Shan Asiayone, Rakhine Asiayone were examples of mass organisations.² The Socialists "stretched out their wings" during the "defensive and offensive Period" of the party's development, from 1 January 1946 to 30 June 1946.³ The major wings of the party were the Workers' Asiayone, Peasants' Asiayone, Women's Asiayone and the Federation of Trade Unions. The equivalent CPB organisations were the Workers' Union, Peasants' Union and Women's Union. The difference between the CPB and the PF(S)P was the choice of name, "Union" (in Burmese, သမဂ္ဂ) and "Asiayone" (in Burmese, အစည်းအရုံး).

In 1940, the All Burma Trade Union Congress (ABTUC⁴) appeared, as an indirect product of the 1300 Ayeidawpon, which had been the first attempt to bring unity to the working class. Burma was twenty years behind India in this demonstration of different backgrounds and class compositions in the two nationalist movements.⁵ It promoted cooperation of the workers and peasants in the liberation of Burma. After the Second World War, the Workers' Union and the Workers' Asiayone emerged on 30 May 1945 and on 4 November 1945 respectively.⁶ There are divergent accounts of the membership

2. ဦးဗဆွေ(အထွေထွေအတွင်းရေးမှူး)၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီဆိုတာဘာလဲ"၊ ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (U Ba Swe (General Secretary), "What is the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party": *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946.)

3. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၆၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.5, 16.1.1946.)

4. This ABTUC was a separate organization to the ABTUC founded in 1945, by the Communists.

5. Sukomal Sen, *Working Class Of India: History Of Emergence And Movement, 1830-1970*, Calcutta: Ananda Press & Publications Private Limited, 1977, p.161. The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) emerged in 1920.

6. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; cf. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 16.10.1994; နိနီအောင်၊

"အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)တိယူစီ(ဘီ)သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၅၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊

၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၃၊ (Ni Ni Aung, *A History of the Trade Union Congress (Burma), (1945-1958)*, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1996, p.3.); သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈၊ စာ-၂၁၆၊ ၂၂၅။ (Thakin Lwin,

and formation of the Workers' Union, also known as the new version of the ABTUC under the auspices of the Communist Party. The CEC members of the Workers' Union were⁷:

Chairman	Thakin Ba Hein
Vice-Chairman	Ko Aung Thein (Myadaung Nyo)
General Secretary	Thakin Ba Tin
Joint Secretary	Ko Kyaw Nyein alias Chan Thar
Members	Mr Rajan
	Thakin Hla Myaing
	Thakin Chit
	Mr Mukharji
	Dr Nat
	Thakin Soe
	U Ko Ko Gyi ⁸

It is not generally known that Thakin Chit, a member of the PRP, and U Ko Ko Gyi, were members of the Workers' Union. The Communists' ABTUC competed with

A History of Workers' Movement In Burma, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1968, p.216, p.225.), the last three all give the formation date for the ABTUC as July 1945 and the CEC members of the ABTUC as Thakin Ba Hein (Chairman), Thakin Aung Thein (Myadaung Nyo) (Vice-Chairman), Bo Ba Tin (Thantwe) (General Secretary), and, the members were U Kyaw Nyein (RET), Mu Kher Je, Sayar Ra Jan, Ko Tun Sein (Oil Field), Bo Thet Tin (Oil Field), Ko Aung Win (Organiser), Ko Aung Gyi (Organiser) and Ko Myint Swe (Phyu) (Organiser).

7. Note that the unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway give the earlier date for the organization, but, in the history of communist party, Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of The Communist Party of Burma (CPB)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1990, p.11, the date is 1 June 1945.

8. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway, who was also invited by Thakin Soe through U Ko Ko Gyi to participate in the Workers' Union. He went to see Thakin Soe in the third week of May 1945, at the religious community hall called "(သဘာဝဓမ္မဓမ္မာရုံ) Thabarwadhama" in Htitan, Kyimyindine Township, where Thakin Soe was giving an ideological class. Thakin Soe advised him to accept the position of general secretary in the Workers' Union, which would be set up in the near future. Thakin Hla Kyway advised Thakin Soe to wait other workers' leaders, including Ko Ba Hein, Thakin Ba Tin, Thakin Kyaw Sein, Myadaung Nyo, who would be going back to Rangoon very soon. Thakin Soe said angrily that "he don't want to pay Japanese spies". Thakin Hla Kyway asked, "What do you mean, the Japanese spies?" He disagreed with Thakin Soe and did not join the Workers' Union. In the Autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi he states that he went to meet with Thakin Soe in the place mentioned by Thakin Hla Kyway and proposed that it was time to stretch out the wings of the party in accordance with the characteristics of a party. Thakin Soe agreed with him and thus, the All Burma Trade Union Congress emerged. In the meeting, Thakin Soe proposed that he accept the Vice-Chairmanship but U Ko Ko Gyi said that he wanted to be an ordinary CEC member and suggested Thakin Aung Thein. The opening ceremony of the ABTUC was held in the residence of Thakin Ba Hein, at Maiynu Street, Maiyngone Township which became identified as its Headquarters.

the Socialists' Workers' Asiayone, which was also known as the Trade Union Congress (Burma) (TUC (B))⁹ over the idea of a "Trade Union Congress", since that was an international term. Significantly the BSPP was later to copy the PRP/BSP's use of "Asiayone". There were fourteen trade unions affiliated with the ABTUC and the total membership was 11,150.¹⁰

The Trade Union Congress (Burma) was formed at the residence of Dedok U Ba Cho, 225 Kyaikasan Street, Tarmwe Township. The symbol of the TUCB could be seen on its flag: a large hammer and small five-pointed white star, the hammer representing the workers and the star representing socialism. The background colour of the flag was red. The Headquarters of the TUCB was situated at the same place as the Headquarters of the PFP, in 168 Sule Pagada Road, Rangoon.¹¹ The first CEC members of the TUCB were:

Chairman	Dedok U Ba Cho
Vice-Chairman	U Ko Ko Gyi
General Secretary	Thakin Lwin
Joint Secretary	Thakin Hla Kyway
Members	U Than Sein
	U Thar Yin (Khanaungto)
	U Chit Swe (Municipal)
	Thakin Tun Khin (Kamayut)
	U Tun Yin (RET) ¹²

There were 104 organisations affiliated with the TUCB; its members totalled 35,421; and reserved members¹³ 177,100.¹⁴ The PF(S)P had three times more workers in their total membership than the CPB. In terms of total membership numbers, it was not possible in 1945 for the socialists to compete with the communists, who at that stage

9. In Burmese, the TUC (B) was called "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)".

10. Lintner, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

11. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 16.10.1994; နိနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၃-၄။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.3 and, between p.3 and 4: photo of the CEC members of the TUCB.)

12. *Ibid.*; ကျော်ဇော်ဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာသွင်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ ၈-၅၅။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party(1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, p.55.)

13. Dependent people on membership of the TUC (B).

14. ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဧပြီမြတ်ဆွေပိဋကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ ၈-၆၃။ (Ba Swe (Dahwai), *Let Us Found the Socialist Burma*, Rangoon: Zabumaitswepitacart Press, 1946, p.63.)

were reaching more people. But, gradually the socialists succeeded in passing the communists.

The PF(S)P sought amalgamation with the Fabian Party in accordance with the first and second periods of the party's program, this was one of the first steps in their expansion of membership. A letter was written to Fabian leader, Dedok U Ba Cho in 1945, during the first development period, requesting the merger and if the two parties came together, promising to select Dedok U Ba Cho as patron and Thakin Mya as president.¹⁵ In practice, Dedok U Ba Cho served just as chairman of the Workers' Asiayone.

The original constitutional document outlining the organisational structure of the TUCB is in the collection of Thakin Hla Kyway, one of the main PF(S)P/BSP leaders of the workers' movements. According to the Constitution, the Union Members formed the basis of the structure and they were organised into local trade unions which were the main cells in the structure. The local trade unions were answerable to Township Trade Councils and District Trade Councils; these councils made up the right wing of the structure. The left wing of the structure consisted of Federations and then, National Industrial Unions. Finally, at the highest level of the structure, there was the Trade Union Congress (Burma).¹⁶ The TUCB was reorganised in December 1946 because the Chairman, Dedok U Ba Cho, had to give more attention to the functions of the AFPFL and to serve as Information Minister in the Governor's Council, and the Vice-Chairman, U Ko Ko Gyi, had to concentrate on the party's functions. Thus, the new CEC members of the TUCB were:

Chairman	U Win
Vice-Chairman	Thakin Lwin
General Secretary	U Tin Nyunt
Joint Secretary (Organisation)	Thakin Hla Kyway
and representatives of the 60 local trade unions. ¹⁷	

15. မဟာဇေတ်သတင်းစာ၊ ၁၉၄၅၊ ၉၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၅။ (Bamakhit Newspaper, 9.10.1945); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီ သမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄၂။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.42.)

16. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; နိနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၆-၇။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, between pp.6 and 7; photo 4.)

17. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988; သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၂၂၅။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, p.225); နိနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၇။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.7.)

The party's labour policy can be found in the Constitution of the TUCB. The party intended first to spread the spirit of unity among the workers; to elevate the status of workers according to international standards; to cooperate fairly with employers and government officers; to cooperate with other associations with the same principles as the Workers' Asiayones; to obtain adequate wage levels based on the nature of the work, abilities of the workers and hours of work, and to improve the health, education and social conditions of workers; to encourage the workers to contribute to the rehabilitation of the State in accordance with the Cooperative System; to amend the current laws in the interests of the workers; to implement cooperation between workers and peasants; to support the moral development and noble aspirations of the workers; to review the grievances of the workers and to solve disputes between the employers and the workers fairly and quickly; to attempt to contact Workers' Associations outside Burma and to cooperate with the World Federation of Trade Unions; and to fully cooperate in the construction of the Socialist Republic.¹⁸

The Socialists founded the TUCB based on these twelve objectives. The objectives of the ABTUC were presented as 20 points and the basic policies of the ABTUC and TUCB were not much different. An interesting fact about the CPB's labour policy adopted at the July Second Party Congress was that greater importance was given to the role of the Workers' Unions than to the party's role.¹⁹ This attention to their Workers' Unions was further demonstrated by a political report submitted by Thakin Than Tun to the CPB concerning labour policy in which he proposed cooperating with the Socialist Workers' Asiayones with the aim of eventually forming one mass organisation.²⁰ But, in practice, the two parties could not fully cooperate and their union bodies remained separate. There were many unions under the umbrella of ABTUC. Its strength was made evident at an event at the Naythurain Hall where the Communists arranged to welcome Mr Tom Driberg, a Labour Party member of the British Parliament who had been visiting Indonesia in support of its struggle for independence against the Dutch. The CPB and ABTUC leaders gave speeches and the ceremony showed how successful the CPB's

18. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway: *The Constitution of the Trade Union Congress (Burma)*, pp.1-2; နိနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၄-၅။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, pp.4-5.)

19. သခင်လွင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၂၁ရ။ (Lwin, *op.cit.*, pp.215-217.)

20. *Ibid.*, pp.219-220.

investment in the union movement had been.²¹ Despite this success, the PFP's policy of slow and steady development paid off and it overtook the CPB. The slow and steady policy and party unity tipped the balance in the socialists' favour, while the CPB was weighted down by its mistakes such as its break with the national front and internal disputes, and the split of Thakin Soe's faction in particular.

Labour Policy and the Federation of Trade Organisations (Burma)

The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party believed that on the one hand, the workers and the peasants produced foods and goods by their labours; on the other hand, the class that was involved in trade fulfilled the desires of the people.²² The party divided the classes in Burma into two groups. The first group was regarded as the nucleus of the party and consisted of the working class, peasants, urban poor, and lower middle classes. In the second group was the upper classes, liberal bourgeoisie and small landowners (enlightened gentry) — the party saw this group as an auxiliary and to be neutralised. This was a policy that the BSP had absorbed from Maoism, which in 1948-49 took power in China.²³ The BSP regarded both groups as appropriate constituents of the National Front, with the first group comprising the membership of the CPB and PVO. The two groups were regarded by the party as classes in the Burmese Socialist Revolution in accordance with the New Democracy. In other words, the party persuaded the patriotic indigenous capitalists to put their support behind the movement towards Socialism according to the New Democracy espoused by the People's Republic of China. That national front policy was why, it might be assumed, the party created the federation of trade unions, the FTOB, and affiliated it with the AFPFL. According to the class policy of the BSP, the 'New Democratic Class', the driving force toward Socialism, included the indigenous bourgeoisie which should support the formation of a Federation of Trade Organisations (Burma) (FTOB). It was this idea that allowed the BSP to overtake the Communists.

21. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

22. မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)။ "မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဆိုတာဘာလဲ" ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈?၊ ၁၇-၂။ (F.T.O (B) (Headquarters), *What is Federation Of Trades Organisation (Burma) (F.T.O.B)*, Rangoon: 1948?, P.2.)

23. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်။ "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉" ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉-၁-၄၉။ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၉၊ ၁၇-၂၀၊ ၂၁။ (BSP (Headquarters), *Our Political Programme-The Statement Within the Party No. (2/49)*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1949, p. 20-21); See also the English version, U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, p. 23.

The party divided the trading classes into four sectors: Production, Distribution, Technical and Urban Poor. The liberal bourgeoisie, urban agriculturists and productive cooperatives comprised the production sector; the distribution sector encompassed merchants, urban farmers and cooperative shops; the technical sector consisted of technicians and intellectuals; and the urban poor included urban tenants, lessees and taxpayers to the municipality and homeless persons.²⁴ Most of these classes were living in the cities and towns. Recruitment by the BSP was more successful than that of the CPB, which mostly attracted the urban poor. In laying down the program for the party, the general secretary reminded his members that in the recruitment of people from these classes, especially the upper middle class, liberal bourgeoisie and small landowners, the party should provide ideological leadership and should not let them follow their own ideas.²⁵ The BSP's success in persuading people from all these classes to participate in the construction of socialism in Burma reflects the success of the National Front policy.

The FTOB was a federation of ninety-six trade unions; members of the unions totalled 14,965; and the total of reserve members was 74,800.²⁶ The organisation was led by U Kyaw Myint (Chairman) and Thakin Pan Myaing (General Secretary). The headquarters of the FTOB was the same as that of the TUCB and the PFP. Structurally, the FTOB was based on "Democratic Centralism" and its constitution specified a hierarchy of Township FTOBs, District FTOBs, and then FTOB (Headquarters).²⁷ The FTOB was meant to include the bourgeoisie class in creating a socialist society, alongside with main classes: workers and peasants. This inclusion reflected the class structure of Burma.

Agrarian Policy of the BSP

The party regarded the peasants as one of the two main forces in the construction of the Burmese socialism. In laying down its agrarian policy, the party reviewed what had happened in the lives of the peasants during the British colonial period. In their analysis

24. "မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်"၊ ၁၈-၃-၄။ (*Federation of Trades Organisation (Burma)*, pp.3-4.)

25. "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉"၊ ၁၈-၂၀-၂၁။ (*Our Political Programme—Internal Party Statement No. (2/49)*, pp.20-21); See also in the English version, U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, p.23.

26. ဗဆွေ(ဓါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်သူ့ထောင်လော့"၊ ၁၈-၆၃-၆၄။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.63-64)

27. "မီးပွားကုန်သွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်"၊ ၁၈-၄။ (*Federation of Trades Organisation (Burma)*, p.4.)

of Southeast Asian socialists, the peasants played a significant role in the national struggles not only in Burma but also in Indonesia.²⁸ The party pointed out that 75 per cent of the people in Burma were peasants. After the opening of the Suez Cannel in 1869, agricultural production was based on the self-sufficient system that typified the period of the Burmese Kings. The colonial government collected an annual land tax of more than K 370 lakhs.²⁹ Due to the World Economic Depression between 1929 and 1931, the price of paddy rice fell. The peasants had to continue to pay taxes on their cultivated lands, despite money-lenders also demanding loan repayments. Thus, the lands were in the hands of non-agriculturists and foreigners, and there were many tenant farmers and serfs in Burma. While the debt of the peasants reached nearly K 50 million lakhs in 1929-1930, Indian Chettiars became significant landowners. By the end of the colonial era Burma was a country of dispossessed and impoverished peasants and that was why the party described its vision of socialist Burma as the peasants' perfect world.³⁰ To achieve this vision, the party announced its agrarian policy that: "No land shall not be owned privately, but only by the public".³¹ And, in its program, it undertook:

- (1) To abolish the land system, which was based on long-term leases granted by the government.
- (2) To nationalise the lands owned by non-farmers through paying compensation to the owners.
- (3) To nationalise the lands rented by farmers by paying compensation to the farmers.³²

In the distribution sector too, the party would allocate the nationalised lands to the peasants and the tenants who owned no lands according to the following system:

28. *The Correspondence of Asian Socialist Conference, No: 349.ASC (B)/56: In a letter to Com. J. Braunthal, by Djohan Sjahruzah, 3.10.1956.* (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

29. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွင်း(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.) In the article of the BSP's 'Land System and Program'; သခင်မြ(ဘိအက်စ်မီ-ဘီအယ်လ်)၊ "ဆန်စပါးမည်မျှ အရေးကြီးသနည်း၊ သီးစားစေချက်လွတ်ဥပဒေထုတ်ပါ"၊ ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်အတွင်း(၁)အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (Thakin Mya (Bsc., B.L), "The importance of Paddy and the need to issue the cost of rent for cultivating a piece of land", *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.4, 13.10.1946.) In this article by the BSP's first chairman, he mentioned that the land tax for cultivation of Burma in 1938-1939, was over £ 38 million (equivalent to Burmese kyats 38,150,132).

30. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွင်း(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.)

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

- (1) To create collective farms on land not under cultivation, and
- (2) To allocate land to peasants and tenants without cost to them and in accordance with the cooperative system.³³

In this way, the party regenerated the peasants' organisation, the All Burma Peasants' Asiayone³⁴, which was organised from 1938 onwards under the leadership of the late Thakin Mya. The CEC members for 1947-8 were:

Patron	Thakin Mya
Chairman	Thakin Tin
Vice-Chairman	Thakin Wa Tin
Vice-Chairman	Bohmu Aung (One of the 30 Comrades)
General Secretary	Thakin Chit Maung
Joint Secretary	Thakin Ba Han
Joint Secretary	Thakin Kyaw Tun
Financier	Thakin Thant
Members	Thakin Kyi Myint
	Thakin Han Nyunt
	Thakin Tun Yin
	Ko Soe Myint
	Thakin Tun Khin
Reserved Member	Thakin Hla Tin

Heads of the Departments

General Administrator	Thakin Ba Han
Organisation and Registration Department	(a) Thakin Kyi Myint (b) Ko Soe Myint
Information Department	Thakin Han Nyunt
Finance, Cooperative and Economic Department	Thakin Thant
Foreign Department	Thakin Hla Tin
General Department	Thakin Tun Khin
Political Department	Thakin Kyaw Tun

33. *Ibid.*

34. ABPO (in Burmese: ဗာတလာဆာ) (Ba Ta La Sa)).

All the CEC members of the ABPO came originally from the *Dobama Asiayone*. According to the Constitution of the ABPO, the members of the CEC should have peasant backgrounds because the organisation was to be a means for the peasants to create their own future.³⁶ The slogan of the organisation was to win freedom first, then to form an independent government which was in accordance with the interests of the poor peasants and, finally, to create *lokaneiban* (Paradise) for the peasants.³⁷ The background colour of the flag of the organisation was red and in the upper left hand corner there was a white five-pointed star with a green peacock and, in the centre, a white hammer and sickle. The symbol of the organisation was a hammer and sickle in conjunction with the name of the organisation within a white star.³⁸ There were 3,584 Peasants' Asiayones; the total membership was 259,027; and the reserved members totalled 1,095,135.³⁹ The communications between the mass of peasants and socialist leadership could be observed in their conferences held in townships and districts. The leaders from CEC (Headquarters) gave their speeches at the conferences.⁴⁰

BSP Policy Regarding Women

The party encouraged women who participated in the struggle for freedom to unite and to play a part in the independence organisations. Therefore, the Burma Women's

35. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၈)၊ ၆.၂.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 8, 6.2.1946.) ; Burma Socialist Party, *The Agrarian Economy Of The Union Of Burma*, 1956, pp.8-9 (submitted by BSP to the Asian Socialist Conference in 1956 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.); *The Seventh Annual Conference of The All Burma Peasants' Organisation*, Rangoon: The Supdt., Govt Printing and Staty., 1953, p.1; ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးဌာနချုပ်၊ "ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈။ (All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone (Headquarter), *The Constitution of All-Burma Peasants' Organisation*, Rangoon: 1948.)

36. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၈)၊ ၆.၂.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 8, 6.2.1946.)

37. မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီဗဟိုကော်မတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "တောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၂၊ စာ-၂၆၀၊ ၂၇၄-၂၇၅။ (BSPP (Headquarters), *A History of the Peasants' Organisation*, First Edition, Rangoon: Sarpaybakeman Press, 1982, pp.260, 274-275.); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၄၈။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.48.)

38. "ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"။ (*The Constitution of All-Burma Peasants' Organisation*.); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၄၈။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.48.)

39. ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ စာ-၆၃-၆၄။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.63-64.)

40. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၅၁-၅၄။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.51-54.) From Socialist leadership- Thakin Lun Baw, Thakin Kyaw Tun, U Ba Swe, Thakin Wa Tin, U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy), Thakin Tin, Daw Nang, Leader Thakin Mya, Bo Khin Maung Gale and Thakin Lwin gave speeches at the mass meeting of the peasants.

Freedom League, which emerged in 1939, was supported by the party as part of its effort to rekindle the Burmese political scene. Its chairwoman was Daw Hla May, wife of Dedok U Ba Cho, and general secretary was Ma Soe Myint. The main objective of the league was to assist in the restoration of Burma's independence.⁴¹ In the beginning of the league, Daw Hla May served as chairperson, Daw Khin Hla as vice-chairwoman and Daw Nan as general secretary.⁴² The league was recognised by the national front, the AFPFL, as one of its affiliated organisations.⁴³ Thus, it became the "Burma Women's Freedom Asiayone" (in Burmese, ဗလမေ (Ba La Ma Sa)) in 1946 and its CEC members were elected⁴⁴; its objectives were to support the functions of the freedom movements in order to achieve an absolutely independent state, and to win full rights for women.⁴⁵ There was a Women's Conference from 18 - 20 September 1946, at the Police Building near the Shwedagon Pagoda, at which the CEC members for 1946-7 were elected.⁴⁶ The Conference confirmed the nine objectives submitted by the women attending the conference. These were: (1) full independence for Burma, (2) a strong economy, (3) adequate food for all, (4) improved social conditions for women (5) support for the Police and Workers' strikes, (6) government representing the working class, (7) the affairs of peasants, (8) affiliation with the AFPFL and (9) education for women. There were 123 Women's Freedom Asiayones and total membership was 45,638.⁴⁷

In 1945-6, the Women's Freedom Asiayone was independent of the party but later it came under the guidance of the BSP; its CEC was filled with the relatives of the party's

41. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၆)၊ ၂၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 6, 23.1.1946); မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီဗဟိုကော်မတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအမျိုးသမီးများ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးလှုပ်ရှားမှု"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊

ဗာပေမိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၅၊ စာ-၁၂၄-၁၂၅။ ၁၈၀။ (BSPP (Headquarters), *Women's Political Movement In Burma*, Rangoon: Sarpaybakeman Press, 1975, pp.124-125, p. 180.)

42. Interview with U Than (Kyimyindine) on 22.1.1992.

43. "အဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဖွဲ့စည်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံ အခြေခံဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-၁၂။ (*The Constitution of the A.F.P.F.L.*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1946, p.12.)

44. Daw Khin Hla (chairwoman), Daw The Nyunt (vice-chairwoman), Daw Mya Tin (general secretary), Khin Myo Yee (joint secretary), Daw Aye Khin (treasurer) and the members were Ma Khin Nyunt, Daw Ma Ma Lay, Ma Khin Kyi, Daw Tint, Daw Tin May, Daw Khin Pu, Ma Ei Kyi and Daw Hla Hla Shwe. The reserved members were Daw Ohn Sein, Daw Tin Tin, Ma Ma Lay and Daw Pu.

45. ဗမာပြည်လွတ်လပ်ရေးအမျိုးသမီးအစည်းအရုံးဌာနချုပ်၊ "ဗမာပြည်လွတ်လပ်ရေးအမျိုးသမီးအစည်းအရုံးဌာနချုပ်စည်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်မပါ၊ ခုနှစ်မပါ၊ စာ-၁။ (Women's Asiayone (Headquarters), *The Constitution of the Burma Women's Freedom Asiayone*, Rangoon: np, nd, p.1.)

46. The CEC leadership of the Ba La Ma Sa for the 1946-47 years were Daw Khin Hla (chairman), Daw Thein Nu, a wife of Bo Khin Maung Gale (vice-chairman), Ma Khin Sint Han (joint secretary), a sister of former Brigadier Maung Maung, Daw Hla May (treasurer). "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃.၁၀.၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.)

47. ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့"၊ စာ-၆၃-၆၄။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, pp.63-64.)

leaders and they were all members of the party except the President, Daw Khin Hla. The women from the Asiyone recruited and organised for the party while they were working for the AFPFL.⁴⁸ The BSPP's history of the Women's Freedom Asiyone incorrectly recorded that the Asiyone was first founded in January 1947; but it does give the CEC membership.⁴⁹ Presumably, it was referring to the reorganisation of the Asiyone and the reformation of the CEC members in 1947 because, according to the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, the Women Freedom Asiyone already had a CEC for 1946-47. It was one of the wings of the party involved in the struggle for freedom under the flag of the AFPFL.

BSP Policy Regarding Youth and Students

In the early days of the PFP, there was no intention to build a youth wing. Some members wanted to set it up but the point of view adopted by the party was that it was "a National cause that the youth should concentrate on their schoolwork and they should not be learning ideology before they became mature".⁵⁰ It is significant that this assumption, present in the party since 1945, emerged again in the foundation of the U Aung Gyi's party in 1988 by ex-members of the BSP. This was a legacy of the BSP in Burmese politics. However, around 1948, the party took steps to organise youth within the university campus. The CPB also tried to infiltrate the university campus.⁵¹ Thus, two groups emerged among the university students: the "Progressives" (in Burmese, တပ်ဦး, Tat-Oo) under the guidance of the CPB and the "Democratic Students Organisation (DSO)" controlled by the BSP.⁵² The party also took part in the Union Youth League, sponsored by the government, which was non-political, social and cultural.⁵³ The remarkable characteristic of the party's youth policy is that, despite being a hardcore party affiliated

48. Interview with Daw Nan on 20.2.1992.

49. "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအမျိုးသမီးများ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးလှုပ်ရှားမှု"၊ ၁၉၆-၁၉၇။ (*Women's Political Movement In Burma*, pp.196-197.)

50. Interview with U Kyaw Myint Lay, on 27.10.1990, who mentioned that "the BSP wanted him to be in charge of the Youth Section because he had served in the Asia Youth Asiyone as vice-chairman during the Japanese period. He, along with former Brigadier Aung Gyi, founded a party in 1988 and served as chairman in that party. They did not open a youth section because of this same belief.

51. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990. He mentioned that both he and Thakin Soe had to give ideological lectures without lights at night to the university students. He said that eventually Bo Let Yar requested both the BSP and the CPB to stop these classes.

52. *The Report, "Work Among the Youth" submitted to Asia Socialist Conference (Bureau) at Kalaw in 1954, held on May 25 to 28, 1954.* (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

53. *Ibid.*

with the AFPFL, it was prepared to take part in youth affairs under the sponsorship of the government. The government had been planning to form a Socialist Youth Section in 1954.⁵⁴ This was probably initiated by a proposal from the BSP, particularly in view of its strategy of operating as the United Front under the leadership of the non-Socialist Thakin Nu.⁵⁵ This aspect of the party's practice shows cleverness in implementing policy. In other word, the BSP did not use young pupils in their own interests and only followed the guidelines of the AFPFL and organised them in the state's interest. When the BSP organised students from Rangoon University it justified this too as bringing benefits for the state.

Distinguished persons from the youth section of the BSP were: Maung Maung Kyaw (later Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw), Ko Aung Than, Ko Khin Maung Kway⁵⁶ (later Doctor Khin Maung Kway), Ko Sein Hla, Ko Kyi Nyunt, U Than Swe, U Yan Wai, Tight Thein Maung (later a Colonel), Sein Mya Maung (later Dr Sein Mya Maung), Sein Win (later a Colonel and Division Commander in the Tatmadaw), U Win Maung, U Maung Maung Gyi⁵⁷ (Shweudaung) , U Myo Thant, U Than Kyway, Daw Than Than New, Ko Aung Myint Tun (later Deputy Head of the BBC (Burmese section)), Ko Thu Wai (at present Chairman for the Democracy Party), U Htway Myint (at present Deputy Chairman for the Democracy Party) and Ko Saw Win (Lin?) (now an elected member in Gangaw constituency in the 1990 election as a NLD candidate).⁵⁸

The BSP had to compete with the CPB. Like the CPB, the wings of the BSP were stretched out to support its main body. The party's strategy was to organise the two classes, Peasants and Workers, as the main supports in the construction of the socialist society in future Burma. The trading class, and small landowners, groups ignored by the CPB, were also organised by the BSP in accordance with the guidance of the party's

54. *Ibid.*

55. In the *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25 to 29 March, 1952*, p.17, U Kyaw Nyein explained how the BSP functioned within the United Front.

56. He is a son-in-law of Thakin Thar Khin who served as Minister for Home Affairs in AFPFL's politics.

57. Maung Maung Gyi who wrote the PhD thesis, *An Analysis Of The Social and Political Foundations Of The Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*?

58. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "အမျိုးသားလွတ်မြောက်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအပိုင်းနှင့်လက်နက်ကိုင်တိုက်ပွဲ၏အခန်းကဏ္ဍ"။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), *The Last Phase of National Freedom and The Role of Armed Struggle.*); Interview with Daw Khin Pyone, on 26.1.2001; Interview with Burmese historian Dr Aye Chan on 29.1.2005.

policy. Therefore, the organisational strength grew gradually and established firm roots in all aspects of Burmese politics, as the legacy of the Youth Wing shows.

BSP Policies on the AFPFL and the CPB

The socialists were one of the three forces comprising the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL). As shown in Chapter Two, how the AFO changed into the AFPFL was a broad front, and so there was no mention about the formal relationship between the AFPFL and the BSP in the constitution of the Party. However BSP policy on the AFPFL was outlined by party leader Thakin Mya:

It should not be forgotten that the policy of the party should reflect that the first priority of the party is the Independent Front, the AFPFL, and that the functioning of the party is second. It is evident in the fact that significant leaders of the party, U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Wa Tin and U Kyaw Myint, were assigned to the AFPFL as full-time workers. The intention of the party was to become a strong national force of the AFPFL. It was for this reason the party was founded.⁵⁹

The very name first chosen for the party during the independence struggle, Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, shared the words "Peoples' Freedom" with the national front, strongly suggesting the nature of the intended relationship. Moreover, in the selection of the CEC (Headquarters) for the year of 1946-7, those who were serving in the AFPFL as full-time members, were given only reserve membership.⁶⁰ This demonstrates that in the struggle for freedom of Burma the BSP's first priority was the state, the party as second.

The BSP revealed its policy on the AFPFL in a statement made by the Central Committee at the Party Conference held on 24 January 1946:

(1) There is a need to unite all the political parties and the mass organisations under the flag of the AFPFL in order to achieve full independence; (2) the AFPFL is a "United Front"; (3) the freedom of the colonised country depends on both internal and international circumstances; (4) as an anti-imperialist force, the AFPFL needs to encourage more cooperation between the anti-

59. ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်မဟာပြည်ထောင်စုလော့"၊ ၈-၆။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.6); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၉၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ ၈-၆။ (The *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.1946, p.6.)

60. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (The *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.): The reserved members of the CEC (Headquarters) were U Kyaw Nyein, U Kyaw Myint, U Khin Maung Gale, U Win and U Than Sein.

capitalist and anti-imperialist forces in the colonised countries with those in the capitalist countries; and (5) no other force should try to unduly influence the AFPFL. If the force of the anti-imperialist movement, including the power and strength of the AFPFL, were lessened, it would be ignored by the imperialists. Therefore, the Socialist Party shall resist any person or any party who undermines the league in any way. The party, has decided to cooperate with the AFPFL and join the resistance.⁶¹

Furthermore, the Socialists assumed that "the freedom movements would be delayed one day for every day the AFPFL did not function".⁶² They believed that "the AFPFL should stand for the anti-imperialist force, for those who want independence and for the oppressed peoples" and considered that "no force or party should try to further its self-interests through its influence on the AFPFL".⁶³ Thus, the BSP agitated and encouraged the AFPFL to step forward by writing articles for the party's publication, *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*. In other words, the party was not against any policy or function of the national front and pointed out that it was time to champion its cause.

There is also a need to examine in depth the CPB's relationship with, and policy on, the national front, since the CPB was one of the original members of the AFPFL. In fact, the CPB had been more influential in the AFPFL than the BSP, including influencing the foundation of the League and its wings. Evidence of the close relationship included the fact that the prominent communist, Thakin Than Tun, served as general secretary in the AFPFL.⁶⁴ Two other leading CPB members, Thakin Chit (originally from the PRP) and Thakin Thein Pe, were also members of the League's CEC.⁶⁵ However, Thakin Than Tun resigned in August 1946 from the position of AFPFL general secretary in order to devote

61. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၂)အမှတ်(၁)၊ ၂၇၂၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No. 1, 27.2.1946); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၈၇။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit*, p.87.)

62. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၁၉၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.1946.)

63. *Ibid.*

64. "အဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဖွဲ့စည်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံဥပဒေ"၊ ၈-၂။ (*The Constitution of the AFPFL*, p.2.); ရိုးမပေါ်ကကြယ်နီ၊ "သခင်သန်းထွန်း နှစ်(၉၀)မြောက်မွေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်စာစောင်"၊ ဗမာပြည်ကွန်မြူနစ်ပါတီဗဟိုဝါဒဖြန့်ချိရေးဌာန၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ ၈-၃၈။ (Red Star from Yoma, *The 90th Anniversary of Thakin Than Tun*, Ideological Department (CPB, Headquarters), 1993, p.38.)

65. "အဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဖွဲ့စည်းပုံအခြေခံဥပဒေ"၊ ၈-၂။ (*The Constitution of the AFPFL*, p.2.): The CEC members of the AFPFL were for the years 1946-47, Bogyoke Aung San (Chairman), Thakin Than Tun (General Secretary), U Tin (Myanmar Ahlin) (Treasurer), and the members were Thakin Mya, U Ba Pe, U Mya (Pyawbwe), U Kyaw Nyein, U Ba Gyan, U Aung San Wai, Mah Ba Khine, Dr Set, U Ba Cho, Thakin Chit, U Thein Pe and Thakin Wa Tin.

himself to his party.⁶⁶ It is clear that his resignation was based on his party's strategy; he was not forced to resign by the BSP or the AFPFL. Socialist Thakin Kyaw Nyein replaced him and Communist Thakin Thein Pe acted as joint secretary.⁶⁷ The policy of the CPB on the national front can also be seen in a remark of a former member of the Communist Workers' Union that "the characteristic attitude of the CPB to the AFPFL was to keep it as much in the hands of the CPB as possible rather than to work in unity with the BSP within the front. If the Communists within the front had continued to cooperate with others, without attempting to gain a more influential role, they would have gained leadership in the front".⁶⁸ This was the difference between the CPB and the BSP. The BSP was very influential in Burmese politics because of the "all or nothing" policy of the CPB towards the AFPFL. On the other hand, the Socialists used a "slow and steady" approach. Furthermore, the Communist leader Thakin Soe was dismissed from the AFPFL because he criticised U Ba Pe.⁶⁹ Then, after the Second CPB Congress on 20 July 1945, there was a split within the CPB and Thakin Soe broke away from it and founded a separate party called the "Red Flag Communist Party".⁷⁰ The view of the split taken by the Socialists was that it,

- (1) is a result of the competition within the CPB between the opportunist faction and the dogmatic group; (2) it will take freedom one step backward and imperialism one step forward; (3) it is dangerous for the country; (4) the two factions are enemies of the country and of the leftist force; (5) in response, the BSP will inform the people of the threat that the split poses, and it will then organise them under the Socialist flag.⁷¹

66. "သခင်သန်းထွန်းနှစ်(၉၀)မြောက်မွေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်စာစောင်"၊ စာ-၃၉။ (*The 90th Anniversary of Thakin Than Tun*, p.39); "မြန်မာ့အလင်းသတင်းစာ"၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Myanmar Ahlin Newspaper*, 3.11.1946) states that at the 4th meeting of the Supreme Council of the AFPFL Thakin Than Tun said "I consider the party as my country so that the first priority is the party and the party's interest is also the state's interest"; ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၂။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.102.)

67. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၃)၊ အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၉၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.1946, p.6) states that in the election for the new general secretary, Socialist Ko Kyaw Nyein received (52) votes and Ko Thein Pe (33).

68. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

69. ဦးစံငြိမ်း၊ ဒေါက်တာဒေါ်မြင့်ကြည်၊ "မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေးသမိုင်း(၁၉၅၈-၆၂)၊ အတွဲ(၁)"၊ ဒုတိယ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၉၁၊ စာ-၅၃။ (U San Nyein and Dr. Daw Myint Kyi, *Myanmar Politics*, Vol. I, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, p.53.)

70. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ စာ-၇၄-၇၅။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1961, p.74-75.)

71. DR: 3787 (Tatmadaw Archive, Myanmar); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၉၄။

Thus, the conflict within the CPB created a more influential role for the BSP.

CPB leaders urged the PRP groups to hand over their arms to the British when the allied army entered Burma.⁷² This was an effect of the CPB's policy of "Peaceful Coexistence". The CPB also suggested to the AFPFL that it accepted the proposal of the British Governor to enter the government, using the situations in India and Yugoslavia to support its suggestion.⁷³ Some of the most influential members of the CPB, Thakin Ba Hein, Thakin Ba Thein Tin, Thakin Than Pe and Thakin Tin Tun, were, at one time, very active under the flag of the PRP. In the Central Council of the AFPFL, the number of positions held by the CPB and the BSP was equal, fifteen persons were selected from each party's district leaders. If there had not been a split within the CPB, the total members of the CPB in the Central Council would have been increased to forty-two persons, but it remained at thirty-three.⁷⁴ The Communists supported, in the initial stage, the AFPFL's participation in British Governor Dorman Smith's Executive Council, but later the policy of the CPB changed and it accused the AFPFL of following an opportunistic policy.⁷⁵ Participation in the Governor's Council was supported by the BSP. Obviously, there were many differences between the CPB and the AFPFL, and between the CPB and the BSP. Finally, the Communists were expelled from the AFPFL on 10 October 1946. The BSP issued a statement signed by its General Secretary, U Ba Swe, in which the party argued that the cause for the expulsion was the CPB's intention

(Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.94.)

72. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၆)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 6, 30.10.1946); Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948*, Vol. I, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983, pp.291-293; Thakin Than Tun ordered the freedom fighters not to hide their arms; *IOR/R/8/30*.

73. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၆)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 6, 30.10.1946.)

74. *Ibid.*

75. Although it was described as an "Executive", the real power was in the hand of the Governor. The significance for the BSP can be seen in the nomination by Governor Dorman-Smith of Thakin Mya in the portfolio for Public Works & Rehabilitation, U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p.191; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ စာ-၁၆၀-၁၆၁။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1956, pp.160-161) states that N.M Joshi, a secretary of the Indian Communist Party, said that becoming part of the Governor's Council was a betrayal of the ayeidawpon; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ စာ-၈၂။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, p.82); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွှတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၀-၁၀၁။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.100-101.)

to destroy the AFPFL despite the League's effectiveness in fighting for the peoples' freedom.⁷⁶

Bogyoke Aung San claimed that the CPB concentrated on the party's functions only and used the name of the AFPFL for the party's interests. At a mass meeting attended by over 100,000 people held on 20 October 1946, in the western section of Shwedagon Pagoda, he gave the following explanation for the CPB's expulsion from the AFPFL:

Only the Communists had the idea of giving up arms when the British come....Thakin Than Tun and other Communist leaders said that the emergency plan to rebel that I spoke of was not compatible with the ideology of Dialectical Materialism...., The arms, gold and money provided by the allies were secretly shared among the communists... Besides, they accused our members of being "blindly patriotic", "deviators" and "fascists"... More damning is the document written and distributed by the communists revealing the Socialists' collections of arms to the Military Administration, and there is still in my hands the letter to abolish the Burma Army in the Delta that was really written by Thakin Soe and then signed by Thakin Than Tun... Although the designation of the AFPFL was accepted by the Communists, they did not do very well out of supporting the functions of the AFPFL. If they thought they might benefit from an activity, they put it under the name of the CPB. If it was too hard to handle, they transferred it to the AFPFL... The Communists broke their promise not to reveal the League's internal affairs... Becoming influential is the first priority of the CPB. We assumed that only if the force for unity, the AFPFL was stable and consolidated, could freedom for Burma be achieved quickly... Therefore, the expulsion of the Communists was inevitable...⁷⁷

At the same meeting and after Bogyoke Aung San had spoken, Socialist Thakin Tin, Chairman of the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation (ABPO), submitted a proposal seeking the agreement of the mass meeting for the expulsion of the CPB from the AFPFL, and the confirmation of the mass meeting's absolute loyalty to the AFPFL and to

76. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဣာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၇)၊ ၁၆၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 7, 16.11.1946.)

77. The collection of U Ba Swe; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဣာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၆)၊ ၃၀၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 6, 30.10.1946, pp.8-12).

the chairmanship of Bogyoke Aung San. He also requested the AFPFL to remove any obstacles to freedom and to implement full independence.⁷⁸

The Socialists did not want to see the disappearance of the CPB.⁷⁹ They explained that the expulsion of the CPB from the League was not based on conflict between the Socialists and the Communists, but was the result of the CPB's policy.⁸⁰ For the sake of national unity, U Aung San had to act in an uncompromising manner and make public his views on what the CPB was doing. His behaviour was motivated by the need for unity within the national forces on which the freedom of Burma relied. On the other hand, Socialist Party Leader Thakin Mya did not make any comment about the affair. As someone who wanted unity for the country and who gave leadership to the BSP, Thakin Mya acted in a diplomatic way. It is evident from his acts that he negotiated with the CPB, after it was no longer under the flag of the League, about important problems and decisions of the League.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the BSP gained greater influence in the front by replacing the CPB.

For the BSP, the relationship between the AFPFL leader U Nu and the Party, generally did not move smoothly or in a strait line. During the struggle for freedom movement this was probably good.⁸² But, there was a difficult period on the eve of the Independence and the civil war period. The BSP had a plan of "changing horse" while they were facing difficult times but it had not materialised.⁸³ In the later parliamentary democracy periods, up until 1957, the relationship was productive. Although there was an opposition group in the parliament after 1950, the BSP emerged as a policy maker by

78. The collection of U Ba Swe.

79. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.3, 10.9.1946.)

80. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၆)၊ ၃၀၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 6, 30.10.1946.)

81. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိရူရ)၊ "အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ"(ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၈၉၊ စာ-၄၃၃-၄၃၆။ (Thakin Chit Maung(Waidura), *National Leader Azami Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979, pp.433-436)states that Thakin Tin Maung (Kjounmange) revealed that he used to go with Thakin Mya for discussions with Communist leaders, Thakin Ba Hein and Thakin Than Tun. When important discussions were to be made, Bogyoke Aung San discussed them with Thakin Mya first and then Thakin Mya was sent out to negotiate with the Communist leaders.

82. နေညွန့်မေတ္တာ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ စာ-၁၂။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, p.12.) In the foundation of pre-war party of the BSP in 1939, Thakin Nu was a central member; *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, October 13, 1946. In the BSP's demonstration against the "White Paper Scheme", Thakin Nu also participated.

83. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

taking part in the AFPFL cabinet.⁸⁴ The role of the BSP in the cabinet was led by non-party individual U Nu, and in the 1952 election the Party won 80 seats from the AFPFL's 180 candidates. In 1956, it reached a peak in the cabinet when Socialist leader U Ba Swe became Prime Minister.⁸⁵ However, the Party's connection with the masses was in serious decline. The solution could be seen in the decrease individual members in the Affiliated Organisations to the AFPFL, which were organised by the BSP in the past.⁸⁶ Actually, it was the result of the party's split in 1950. In 1957-58, the AFPFL was divided into two: 'Clean AFPFL' and the 'Stable AFPFL'. The BSP in the last election of 1960 after the split of the AFPFL got 45 seats under the name of 'Stable AFPFL' while its competitor, the 'Clean AFPFL' gained 168 seats.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, in the parliamentary democracy period the fact that the Party linked with political power, has been explained by U Kyaw Nyein:

...the Party does not function as the Socialist Party but as the United Front, under the leadership of the non-socialist Thakin Nu. We even contest elections not as the Socialist Party but as the United Front...the program ...by the Party and put up to the AFPFL and carried out in the name of the AFPFL. Sometimes, Party decisions are not accepted by non-Socialist members of the AFPFL and we have to compromise.⁸⁸

84. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Interview with Thakin Lwin, on 11.6.1988; Dr Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*, 2nd Edition, The Hague: Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, 1961, pp.131-132; William C. Johnstone and the Staff, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations (1945-1958)*, Rangoon: The Rangoon-Hopkins Center for Southeast Asia Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, p.25; ဦးကျော်ဝင်း၊ ဦးမြဟန်၊ ဦးသိန်းလှိုင်၊ "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးတဝိယတွဲ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်များပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၉၁၊ ၈-၉ရ။ (U Kyaw Win, U Mya Han and U Thein Hlaing, *1958-1962 Myanmar Politics*, Vol. III, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, p.97.) One faction dedicated to Marxism-Leninism, was driven out from the BSP and the government in September 1950 based on the "Korean Case" and then the faction founded the "Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party" on 8 December 1950. The BWPP got six seats (in 1952 election). Later the Party mixed with the "Justice Party" led by Dr. E Maung and became a front called the "National United Front" which contested the elections and got six seats (1952), forty five seats (1956), and three seats (1960).

85. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.25, p.63.

86. *Ibid.*, p.71.

87. "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးတဝိယတွဲ"၊ ၈-၉ရ။ (1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, p.97.)

88. *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25 to 29 March 1952*, p.17. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

Besides, his concept about a political party's obligation to acquire power was that "the Party needs to be staying in office".⁸⁹ In this way, the BSP was staying under the flag of the AFPFL and participating in the cabinet as part of the state.

BSP Policy on the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation

The third wing of the AFLFL, the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO) was formed on 1 December 1945 two months after the emergence of the BSP, and included PRP members who were not part of the new army.⁹⁰ It was not the same type of organisation as the BSP because it was not based on ideology, but it was a para-military force which was an important part of the contingency plan for achieving independence should rebellion be necessary. It included those who had been forced out of the Burma Army under the Kandy Agreement.⁹¹ The PVO regarded Bogyoke Aung San as its patron and it had a military structure.⁹² Although it was seemed to be under his control, U Aung San did not use it as his pocket army and only for the country.⁹³ Most of the members of the PVO appeared in the Constituent Assembly during an emergency when the Assembly became a "Rebel Assembly" against British rule.⁹⁴

89. *Report of the Third Meeting of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25 to 28, 1954*, p.127. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

90. အောင်မြင်ဦး၊ "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်တပ်ဖွဲ့"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(ရ)၊ အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ ဒီဇင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ ၁၂၉-၁၃၂။ (Aung Myint Oo, "The Freedom Movement and the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 10, December 1997, pp.129-132), the author served as a Tutor in Myintkyinar Degree College and then was forced to retire from government service due to his participation in the democracy movement in 1988, gained a MA degree from Rangoon University by submitting a thesis entitled "A History of the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation, 1945-1964".

91. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.156-158, the number of those who could not participate in the new formation of the Burma Army was 25,000. Some of them joined the ideological classes opened by the CPB and BSP and then entered politics; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, pp.456-457: The agreement was reached on 7 September 1945 between the Supreme Allied Commander (SEA) and Major General Aung San and signed by Aung San and Than Tun. The agreement placed a limit on the Patriotic Burmese Force, of 5200 soldiers plus 200 officers, a ceiling that was to be reviewed by the Government later on.

92. အောင်မြင်ဦး၊ "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်တပ်ဖွဲ့"၊ ၁၃၂။ (Aung Myint Oo, *op. cit.*, p.132.) The PVO's command comprised Bogyoke Aung San (general), Bohmu Aung (vice-general), Bo Tun Lin (general head of the departments) and, the members were Bohmu La Yaung, Bohmu Phoe Kun, Bo Ba Tin, Bo Hla Aye, Bo Tin Ohn, Bo Thein Tan, Bo Aung Min and Bo Pu.

93. U Ko Ko Gyi's account of U Aung San, a separate document provided by the former BSP chairman while he was telling his auto-biography.

94. "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း(စာရေးသူ-ရဲဘော်သုံးကျိပ်ဝင်ဗိုလ်ရဲထွဋ်?)"၊ ဗဟိုတက္ကသိုလ်များစာကြည့်တိုက်စာအမှတ်- ၂၈၆၄၈၆။ (The Record of Freedom Movements by former Thirty Comrades Bo Ye Htut?, UCL: 286486 (University of Rangoon, Central Library)). Excluding Bogyoke Aung San, fifty-two members of the PVO were elected to the Constituent Assembly. Interview with U Tin Aung who served in the BSP as Secretary of the Natmauk Township branch in 1946-50. Natmauk is U Aung San's home-town.

The BSP regarded members of the PVO as "blind patriots" who lacked ideology. The expulsion of the CPB from the AFPFL left the BSP and PVO as the backbone of the national front. There was a problem between the two groups based on personal matters.⁹⁵ Initiated by U Aung San, Thakin Mya and U Nu, the representatives of the two groups took part in talks at the residence of U Aung San on 4 May 1946 and the problem was solved; they formed a committee composed of five members: Bo Aung (PVO), Bo Tun Lin (PVO), U Ba Swe (BSP), Bo Aung Gyi (BSP) and Thakin Nu (AFPFL), and agreed to cooperate with each others.⁹⁶ Both groups issued statements to their members to obey the decisions of the five-person Committee. One outcome of the agreement between the two groups was that the Socialist Party had to abolish its pocket "Red Shirt Army" and in return the PVO had to disband organisations such as its Peasants for the People, Workers for the People and Women for the People.⁹⁷ The Socialists assumed that if they were able to establish a harmonious relationship with the CPB (including with the Red Flag Communist Party led by Thakin Soe), it would be easy to deal with the PVO.⁹⁸ The Socialists worked in close unity with its brother organisation, the PVO, in the period before and during the civil war. Nevertheless, the BSP overwhelmed the partnership between itself and the PVO both organisationally and ideologically.

As a result of the Kandy Agreement in September 1945, 5,200 men and 200 officers would participate in the new army and those who could not do so, would be organised in a new para-military force called ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်တပ်ဖွဲ့ (Peoples' Volunteer Organisation) patronised by Bogyoke Aung San, to put it into the Standing Army under the British Command.⁹⁹

95. According to the PVO source, at the meeting of Bogyoke Aung San's residence, U Aung San had to warn both sides: 'do not regard the BSP itself as fully understanding ideology' and 'do not raise the problem between Kyaw Nyein (Socialist) and Bo Sein Hman (PVO) to your followers' and, 'prepare for fight each other' pointing to Kyaw Nyein and Bo Sein Hman. He also admonished that 'there should be unity among the young leftist forces and if not, your *bun bun* will be destroyed'.

96. The representatives of the Socialist Party were Thakin Mya, U Ko Ko Gyi, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Aung Gyi and U Khin Maung Gale. Representatives of the PVO were Bo Aung, Bo Tun Lin and Bo Sein Hman. The representatives of the AFPFL were U Aung San and Thakin Nu.

97. Collection of Thakin Hla Kyway, "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်နှင့်ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်အင်အားစု ဖူပေါင်းရေးညွှန်ကြားချက်" (စာပေလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇၊ ၈-၁-၄) (Directive to Unite Forces between The Socialists and The Pyithuyebaw, Pha Sa Pa La Press, 1947, pp.1-4.).

98. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(သခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁" (ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉-၈-၄၈) (BSP (Headquarters), Thakin Kyaw Tun), *The Statement Within the Party No.1*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948, pp.28-29.)

99. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.156-158.

BSP Policy on the Ethnic Groups

It is significant that the membership of those of non-Bama ethnicity in the PRP/BSP was obvious to any observers. As already mentioned (Chapter Three), examples included Mah Ba Khine (Karen), U Nyo Tun (Rakhine), Phoe Cho (Mon), Vum Ko Hau (Chin) and other ethnic Rakhines: Bonpauk Thar Kyaw, Ko Thar Kyaw, Ko Tun Hlaing and Bo Maung Gale. U Vum Ko Hau was a member of Bogyoke Aung San's Union Cabinet, a Cabinet delegate to the drawing up of the Nu-Attlee Treaty in London in 1947, a Chairman of Chin Leader's Freedom League, a delegate to the Panglong Conference, a Vice-President in the Supreme Council of United Hill Peoples, a Deputy Counsellor for Frontier Areas, a member of the Constituent Assembly and, the Ambassador of the Union of Burma, for Indonesia.

The party's view was that all those who live in the country belong to the mother, the Irrawaddy River, which flows from north to south, then into the Indian Ocean. The Jinhaw (Kachin) live in the northern part of Burma; the Burmese, the Mons and the Karens in the south; in the western part are the Rakhines and Chins, Nagas and others; in the east are the Shans, the Lahus, the Palaungs and the Kayars (Karenni) and others; and the main groups in the Tenasserim Coastal Region are the Daweis, the Karens, and the Mons. These indigenous peoples have distinct cultures and traditions but there are also strong ties among the groups. Under British Rule, and in the transition to independence, the Frontier Areas were treated separately from "Plains Burma" by the British, and any policy in regards to the latter required full consultation from the former. Freedom for Burma was not an easy task because the BSP wanted independence to mean that the country would "not become two Burmas", the Plains and the Frontier Areas. Therefore at the All-Burma AFPFL Assembly held from 21 to 23 January 1946, Dedok U Ba Cho, submitted proposals for a policy on the "National Minorities" who were involved in the freedom movements. Moreover, a proposal for the joining of the "Excluded (Frontier) Areas" to the nation, made by U Pe Khin received full public support.¹⁰⁰ At this time, the

100. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျနယ်" အဖွဲ့(ခ)အမှတ်(ရ)၊ ၁၀၁၀၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, 30.1.1946); Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, pp. 621-622, a report by Thakin Than Tun on the AFPFL Congress, 17-23 January 1946, IOR: L/PO/9/15.

slogan of the BSP concerning the ethnic peoples was "The Socialist Party is a sincere and honest friend of the Shan, Karen, Kachin, Chin, Taline (ethnic Mon) and Rakhine."¹⁰¹ In the setting of the policy, the party reviewed Burma before and after the British colonial times, declaring that:

before British imperialism in Burma, there were no hostile relations among the ethnic peoples... Relations were upset when, under British direction, the regions selected their own leaders... In the chronicles of Burmese history... it should be noted that there were eras of Shan and Mon rule¹⁰²....The acts of those leaders who had narrow-minded attitudes to other groups should not be seen as the responsibility of the whole race.... We denounce the Bama kings and leaders who acted badly... Similarly, other ethnic peoples should condemn those of their leaders who governed unjustly.¹⁰³

Similarly, in reviewing the British colonial period, the Party highlighted several other factors contributing to the disruption of inter-ethnic relations: the granting of direct rule to the mountainous provinces by the British Governor General; the absence of free trade among the provinces; the encouragement of Christianity and the rewriting of ethnic literatures using the English alphabet; poor communication among the ethnic peoples because of the bad transportation; and the inability of the British rulers to resolve the problems between the Burmans and the other ethnic groups.¹⁰⁴ Thus, one of the ways the party supported the functions of the national front was to issue a policy regarding the ethnic peoples that urged all the Burmese and ethnic peoples living in Burma to unite and follow the policy set up by the AFPFL Assembly.

To what extent were ethnic peoples involved in the party? There were already close relations between the PRP and those who were participating in the freedom movements not only in Rakhine but also throughout the whole of Burma. The Rakhines (Arakanese) speak a dialect of Burmese and Buddhism is a major element in Arakanese culture although some who living in Rakhine are Muslims. They had had their own kingdoms. U

101. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၂)အမှတ်(ရ)၊ ၁၇၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ (The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. II, No. 7, 17.4.1946.)

102. Ethnic Mon ruled a large part of Burma as part of the kingdom of Pegu, but they did not control the whole country. Ethnic Shan had ruled central Burma. Therefore the British colonial government had a policy that ethnic Burmans and Shans should not be included in the army.

103. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၂)အမှတ်(ရ)၊ ၁၇၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ (The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. II, No. 7, 17.4.1946.)

104. *Ibid.*

Nyo Tun, a Rakhine leader, had been involved in the 1936 Students' Strike, and was in charge of the Rakhine Division of the Dobama Sinyethar Asiayone. In the revolt against the Japanese fascists, U Nyo Tun was in the Rakhine Division, one of ten, as Political Advisor. He was first involved as a member of the BSP when it was still the underground PRP.¹⁰⁵ Thakin Mya himself attended the first anniversary of the Arakan National Congress held in May 1941.¹⁰⁶ The Rakhine Division of the PRP revolted in 1944, before the anti-fascist revolution spread to the whole country in 1945, and *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal* in 1946 reported on how Sayadaw U Sein Dar, a leading figure in the Arakan National Congress, took part in this revolt.¹⁰⁷ Rakhinese also took part in the opening ceremony of the PFP in the residence of U Kyaw Nyein.¹⁰⁸ There was also a trip led by Thakin Mya to Rakhine to organise the Rakhinese, in the first week of March 1946.¹⁰⁹ When the BSP was cooperating with the British Governor's Council, there was a discussion in Rangoon, on 5 October 1947, between the BSP and representatives from Rakhine; the Rakhinese presented themselves to BSP members working with the council.¹¹⁰ These links show how the BSP welcomed the Rakhinese presence in the freedom movements and regarded this group positively. It is evident that the BSP could rely on Rakhinese support when it had affairs to attend to in Rakhine.

The Karens were also important to the BSP. The Karens had been the main ethnic group within Burma from whom the British recruited their army, partly because large numbers of Karen had converted to Christianity. When the British Army retreated, weapons were issued to the Karens to revolt against the Japanese. The Japanese were

105. Interview with Ko Tun Ohn (Retired Municipal Commissioner of Rangoon), Mss/Eur D 1066/3, on 14.6.1976 (British Library, London); သူရိန် "ရခိုင်အကြောင်းတစ်ခုစာစောင်" မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၆)အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၁၄၂-၁၄၄၊ (Thu Rain, "About the Ethnic Rakhine": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November 1996, pp.142-144); နေညွန့် "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း" စာ-၁၅၂၊ ၁၄၀-၁၄၁၊ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.172, pp.140-141).

106. သာဘန်း၊ "ရွှေခိုင်မြို့သို့လာလှည့်ပါရွှေစည်သည်" မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၇)အမှတ်(၃)၊ ဧပြီ၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ စာ-၇၃-၇၉။ (Thar Ban, "Come and Visit Shwkhinemyi", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 3, April 1997, pp.73-79.) The Arakan National Congress was formed in Pauktaw, Rakhine Division in May 1940. Its patrons were Sayataw U Sein Dar and Sayataw U Pyinyar Thiha (monks), and the elected members were Lawyer U Thar Zan Hla (chairman), Saya U Aung Tun Oo (vice-chairman) and U San Tun Aung (general secretary).

107. ဗဆွေ (ခေါ်ဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်မဟာပြည်ထူထောင်လော့" စာ-၂၈။ (Ba Swe, *Socialist Burma*, p.28);

"ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်" အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ စာ-၄၊ ၁၈။ ("A Brief Biography of Ashin U Sein Dar", *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946, pp .4 & 18.)

108. ဘုံပေါက်သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်အပိုင်း(၂)" ရန်ကုန်၊ ယုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၅၊ စာ-၈၉။ (Bon Pauk Thar Kyaw, *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Pathein Press, 1975, p.89.)

109. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း" စာ-၁၁၇-၁၁၈။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.117-118.)

110. *Ibid.*, p.135; Unpublished notes by Thakhin Hla Kyway.

already suspicious of the Karen, and encouraged the same sentiment amongst the members of the BIA, which was established under Japanese leadership and training. Some Burmese villagers were attacked by Karen, leading to a general anti-Karen feeling. During the years in which the BIA was being formed, there were racial riots between the Burmese and Karen communities in the Delta, especially in Myaungmya district in the Irrawaddy Delta, where a massacre of Karen took place in April-May 1942. BIA administrative officials and military officials from Myaungmya asked Brigadier Kyaw Zaw for help. So, he took advice from Thakin Bo and then sent out an appropriate platoon of thirty men, together with the monk, U Pannawa, who was an ethnic Karen. They travelled around the villages and preached. Two persons whom they sent out in the platoon were killed by the Karen rebels. On a second occasion, another soldier was killed. But, the monk kept preaching and eventually the situation seemed to ease. At that time, a Japanese colonel who was sent out to take part in the peace process was killed. When the Japanese learned of the killing through the All-India Radio, they started an operation led by Col. Suzuki alias Bo Moegyo. Col Suzuki ordered Brigadier Kyaw Zaw's platoon, to attack and occupy the villages and to kill any Karen villagers who resisted. Sometimes, he ordered the officers directly and sometimes indirectly through Bo Kyaw Zaw. The former Brigadier later admitted that he shared responsibility for the killings.¹¹¹

In fact, the riots were based on the enmity between the British and the Japanese. Nevertheless, the Burmese and Karen leaders could work together against the Japanese in the latter part of 1943 after the Burmese nationalists changed their strategy to oppose the Japanese. Bo Set Kya, who became a CEC member of the BSP after the war, established special relationships with the two important Karen officers, Saw Kyar Doe and Saw San Po Thin.¹¹² Similarly Thakin Than Tun of the CPB, organised Mah Win Maung, a Karen who was prominent in Burmese politics and later President of the Union of Burma, to join the anti-fascist movement.¹¹³ The facts show that not only the BSP but also the CPB

111. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.88-89; Interview with former Brigadier Kyaw Zaw (one of the 30 Comrades) by Robert Lemkin (BBC), published as a book by refugees on the Thai-Burma border; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, p.494.

112. U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.88-89.

113. လေထီးဦးအုန်းမောင်၊ "နှစ်ပေါင်း၅၀ ကြာသောအခါ"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုဒအသံ(၆)၊ အမှတ်(၈)၊ စက်တင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈၁-၁၂၁-၁၂၅။ (Laihti U Ohn Maung, "After 50 Years Ago": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 8, September 1996, pp.121-127.)

understood the importance of gaining the support of Karen society. Another significant Karen participant in the BSP was Mah Ba Khine, who was elected as chairman in the Karen Youth Organisation (KYO) on 14 December 1945. The Karen Youth Organisation was founded in October 1945 to secure a separate Karen state and improve relations between Karens and Burmans. It was an affiliate of the AFPFL, and the members of the KYO were socialists in spirit. Mah Ba Khine was also a BSP organiser in Gwanboat Village, Myaungmya district and on 28 September 1946 became a member of the Governor's Executive Council as Minister for Industry and Labour.¹¹⁴ Mah Ba Khine was one of many BSP sympathisers in the Supreme Council of AFPFL, an advantage the party had over the CPB.

Influential members of the BSP worked for unity, including taking part in an AFPFL program to prevent racial riots between the ethnic Karen and the Burmese. Karen and Burmese leaders signed an agreement to construct friendly relations, and to prevent conflict.¹¹⁵ The BSP itself laid down a policy forbidding members from supporting racial riots and it gave influential members from the party themselves built good relations with influential Karen leaders.¹¹⁶

The Mon National League was one of four ethnic organisations in the national front, along with the Karen Central League; the Arakan League and the Burmese Muslim Congress.¹¹⁷ The links between the BSP and the ethnic Mons were very interesting. In the past, the monarchy in the south had belonged to the Mons and it was the Mons who brought Buddhism to the Burmans. During the British colonial period the significant Mon

114. သခင်အောင်ဖေ၊ "ကြိုရဆုံရကျွန်တော့ဘဝ" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မြောင်းမြစာပေ၊ ၁၉၈၅၊ ၈-၁၀၀-၁၁၃။ (Thakin Aung Pe, *In My Life*, First Edition, Rangoon: Myaungmya Press, 1985, pp.100-113.); Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. 1, p.642 (citing IOR:M/4/2422); IOR: M/4/3023, cited on pp.949-951, states that the the KYO was named the Karen Youth League (KYL) and said to be run by Mah Ba Khine, a member of AFPFL who was probably a Karen spy; but on p.499 Mah Ba Khine was mentioned as also being a member of the EC in the Karen Central Organisation (KY(C?)O).

115. "ဟံသာဝတီသတင်းစာ" ၂၄၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (Hantharwaddy Newspaper, 24.1.1947); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး (ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၆။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.106), the participants were Mah Ba Khine (Karen leader), U Hla Pe (minister in the Governor's Council and Karen leader), Saw Ba Oo Gyi (minister in the Governor's Council and Karen leader), Thar Hto (Karen leader), Dedok U Ba Cho (Burmese), Hinthada U Mya (Burmese leader and a member of the Supreme Council of the AFPFL), Thakin Nu (temporary President of the AFPFL), Sein Hman (Burmese leader and activist with PVO Headquarters), Ko Ko Gyi (member of the Supreme Council of the AFPFL) and Ba Swe (temporary general secretary of the AFPFL).

116. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint, 6.12.1992; ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး (ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၇။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.107.)

117. "အဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဖွဲ့စည်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံအခြေခံဥပဒေ"၊ စာ-၁၂။ (The Constitution of the AFPFL, p.12).

leaders were U Chit Hlaing, a leader of the GCBA, Sir J.A Maung Gyi, a Governor of Burma in 1933 and, the well-known and wealthy Sir U Thwin.¹¹⁸ The Mons founded the "Mon Asiayone" by participating in and cooperating with the brotherhood of indigenous peoples, made up of the Burmans, Karen, Shan and others. The Mon Asiayone, closely associated with the BSP, was founded in Rangoon, in the Burmese year

(သက္ကရာဇ်-၁၃၀၇-ခု-တန်ဆောင်မုန်းလဆန်း-၅-ရက်).¹¹⁹ Its chairman was Mon Po Choe, who came from a middle-class background and had been educated at Rangoon University where he served as a Tutor in English Department. He was a responsible for social work during the Japanese occupation and entered politics in 1945. Its secretary was Mon U Than.¹²⁰ The strategy of the BSP was to approach the ethnic Mon through their elite, especially Mon Po Choe, and so he was invited to served as a member of the AFPFL's executive committee in the period 1945-47.¹²¹

The most significant feature of the BSP's policy on all the ethnic peoples in Burma, can be seen very clearly in the London discussions of January 1947 between the British Labour Government and Burmese delegation. When the British side held firmly to the policy of "two Burmas", BSP leader Thakin Mya suggested that a conference be held at Panlong in the Shan State to ascertain the real wishes of the Hill Peoples as to whether their areas wanted to join the program of independence for Ministerial Burma or not.¹²² U Aung San acted on this proposal, and thus the "Panlong Agreement" was signed on 12 February 1947.

In ensuring the inclusion of all ethnic people involved in the freedom movements that made up the national front, the Chairman U Aung San met with Minister Mah Ba

118. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်" အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.46.)

119. *Ibid.*

120. *Ibid.*, The CEC members of the "Mon Asiayone" were Mon U Poe Cho, BA and former Teacher of university lecturer (chairman); Mon U Than (secretary); Mon U Ba Ohn (assistant secretary); Mon U Kyaw Hla (treasurer); Mon U Ohn Pe (accounts); Mon U Tun Yin (organisation and ideology department); Mon U Chan Mon (organisation and ideology department); and the members were U Ba Sit (from the Moulmein Association), Mon U Ba In (Kawnut), Mon U Maung Gyi, Mon U Shwe Kyaing, Mon U San Nyunt, Mon U Chit Pe, Mon U Kyaw Win and Mon U Tun Aung. Its headquarters was in Yetarshaikyaung, Yetarshai Street, Bahan Township, Rangoon.

121. People's Literature Committee and House, *Who's Who In Burma, 1961*, Rangoon: Sarpaybeikman Press, 1962, pp.23-24, he joined with those who departed from the BSP in December 1950 as a member of the Presidium when the National United Front was formed in 1955.

122. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.xxii.

Khine, U Pe Khin and ethnic Chin leaders U Vum Ko Hau, U Vawm Tu Mawng¹²³, Captain Mah Taung Naung and U Mon Tu, to discuss the affairs of the Chin areas.¹²⁴ Chin leader U Vum Ko Hau was a senior member of the BSP.¹²⁵ Socialist U Ba Swe, as general secretary of the AFPFL, was involved in discussions with U Aung San and Minister Mah Ba Khine about the matter of the union of the Jinhaw (ethnic Kachin) areas with Burma.¹²⁶ In the Second Assembly of the All-Burma AFPFL held from 20 to 23 December 1947, support from the representatives of ethnic peoples for the proposals of the socialist leaders was significant.¹²⁷ It showed the BSP's base amongst indigenous people of Burma.

A distinguishing feature of the BSP's relations with the ethnic Shan was the party's support for the election of a Shan as the first president of the Union of Burma. Sao Shwe Thaik was elected as Provisional President of the Union of Burma by the Constituent Assembly on 25 September 1947 and the nomination was made by U Nu.¹²⁸ But, as a pillar of the AFPFL and a cadre group for the state, the Party needed to confirm the nomination; before doing this, it had to enquire about the nominee's commitment to national unity. So, the BSP sent out U Ko Ko Gyi who had ethnic Shan blood, to establish the soundness of the AFPFL's choice.¹²⁹ The representative from the CPB also supported the nomination.¹³⁰ Only after the BSP agreed was the nomination implemented. Therefore, it can be seen that the Party was in the foreground of national politics and that it gave great importance to national unity by giving the green light to the election of an ethnic leader to the highest post in the Union.

The BSP had a "union consciousness" in its relations with the ethnic groups. The Party constructed its own links with them but after the assassination of Bogoyoke Aung

123. Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma Independence Celebrations*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1948, in the photo: U Vawn Tu Mawng served as Minister for Chin Affairs in the first cabinet after Burma regained independence in 1948.

124. သံတော်ဆင့်သတင်းစာ၊ ၂၇-၆-၁၉၄၇။ (*Thantawsint Newspaper*, 27.6.47)

125. U Vum Ko Hau, *Profile of Burma Frontier Man*, Bandung, Indonesia: Kilatmadju Press, 1963, p.426.

126. သံတော်ဆင့်သတင်းစာ၊ ၂၇-၆-၁၉၄၇။ (*Thantawsint Newspaper*, 27.6.47.)

127. "ဒုတိယအကြိမ်-ပြည်လုံးကျွတ် ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ ဥပဒေမူတင်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဖဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (*The Record of 2nd Assembly of All Burma AFPFL Conference*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1947.)

128. Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis of the Social and Political Foundations of The Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, p.149.

129. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986. He hosted a dinner for the Sawbwa and talked with him. Then, he reported back to the party giving the AFPFL's selection a green-light.

130. Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, p.149.

San and the other political and ethnic leaders, the party as a whole never attempted to undermine the influential role of Thakin Nu, who was a Prime Minister and an AFPFL leader by using its ethnic support against him. In his PhD thesis on the workings of executive government at that time, Maung Maung Gyi made the point that "without the cooperation of the Hill peoples, no Cabinet could be formed, and without U Nu, the Socialists would have found it hard to win their cooperation".¹³¹ While nobody could deny the role of Thakin Nu as a national figure in AFPFL politics, Maung Maung Gyi underestimated the real strength of the BSP in the support it received from the ethnic groups like Rakhines, Mons, Chins, and Kachins, and so did not see that in fact the situation was the reverse of what he described. Besides, as will be discussed later, the Party was encouraged by the Tatmadaw which consisted of many ethnic peoples.

To summarise the BSP's policy on the ethnic groups, the party followed the policy of the AFPFL and opposed the division of Burma into two states. The party attributed historical enmities to greedy kings and unscrupulous administrators, and the "divide and rule" policy of the British imperialists were seen as the main cause of division, distrust and confusion among the indigenous peoples. Therefore, the national front, the AFPFL, needed to include all the ethnic peoples in the struggle for freedom. At the same time, the party organised ethnic peoples through the ethnic elite groups and it had both members and sympathisers from the various ethnic groups since its days as an underground party.

Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of the BSP was not mentioned explicitly in party publications but it can be elicited from statements, diplomatic missions and other party activities. In fact, when it was established as a legal organisation in September 1945 to compete with the CPB, the party decided to follow and support the functions of the national front (AFPFL). The party therefore had a similar foreign policy to the national front. The party not only attempted to win freedom for Burma but also encouraged independence for other countries, especially those who were also in the hands of the imperialists. Under the guidance of Leader Thakin Mya, foreign policy was devoted primarily to neighbouring countries such as India and China. Before independence, the party intended to establish

131. *Ibid.*, p.188.

cordial relations with India because the two countries were struggling to win freedom from the British. Details of these relations will be given in Chapter Seven.

While Leader Thakin Mya and Bogoyoke Aung San were alive, they set out to help in the affairs of Indonesia and Vietnam.¹³² When in London as head of a Burmese delegation, U Aung San invited the representatives of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by Ho Chi Minh to a reception given by the Burmese delegation although the Republic was not yet independent.¹³³

During the chairmanship of U Ko Ko Gyi foreign policy tended to lean to the Soviet Bloc. He admitted that he had been inclined towards the policy of the Third Internationals led by Lenin. After Ko Ko Gyi was removed in 1948, the BSP made contact with the pre-Leninist "Second International" led by Eduard Bernstein.¹³⁴ In 1946-47 the *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, edited by U Ko Ko Gyi, published articles, which were sympathetic to the Soviet Bloc; on the other hand, it also produced articles that expressed respect and admiration for the British Labour Party and asked for advice about how to get a response from the Labour government.¹³⁵ Clearly, these approaches to the British Labour Party, which won office immediately after Second World War, indicate that foreign policy was directed at regaining freedom for Burma, although the BSP was impatient with the British, who were using delaying tactics regarding freedom for Burma

132. Josef Silverstein, *The Political Legacy Of Aung San*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1972, p.11.

133. တက္ကသိုလ်နေ့ဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၏ လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း"၊ ခုကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ကမ္ဘာ့အေးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ စာ-၁၄၄။ (Ne Win(Tatkathow), *The Record of Bogoyoke Aung San in the Freedom Movements*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1998, p.143.)

134. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 1.6.1988; *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, 15th Edition, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1998, p.926; The Preparatory Committee, (Second Congress of the Asian Socialist Conference), *Three Years Of Asian Socialist Conference*, Bombay: Mouj Printing Bureau, 1956, p.1.

135. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၄)"၊ ၉၊ ၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946) has its front page feature on Soviet Russia including the story of Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, an 18 year old girl who helped the Red Army during the Second World War and consequently was hanged on 29 November 1941; see Vladimir Karpov, *Russia At War, 1941-45*, London: John Calmann and King Ltd, 1987, p.150 (for this reference, thanks to Dr. Stephen Brown, History Department, University of Wollongong); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၂)၊ အမှတ်(၇)"၊ ၁၇၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 7, 17.4.1946.) has a front page feature expressing the party's dissatisfaction with British policy and quotes the threatened words used in the British Parliament by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Mr. Arthur Henderson, in regard to Burma's freedom and its belief that Soviet Russia held the promise of world liberation (see also the acts of Mr. Arthur Henderson in U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp. 248 & 256); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၄)"၊ ၉၊ ၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946) has a front page article about Sir Bin Smith, a Labour member of Parliament, whose past occupations had ranged from sailor, driver of a pony cart... to a government minister.

while, on the other hand, they had already made an offer to India to form a constitution and decide whether to remain in the Empire or not.

After the assassination of the national leaders, the party followed the foreign policy that they had laid down by Thakin Mya and Bogyoke Aung San. Thus, the party sent aid missions to Indonesia, Laos and Vietnam under the name of AFPFL.¹³⁶ The BSP secretly sent military aid to Indonesia while the Indian Socialist Party announced publicly that they were going to send supplies of medicines to Indonesia.¹³⁷ The reason for the mission to Indonesia, led by Thakin Thar Khin, a confidant of U Kyaw Nyein, was to show Burmese support for Indonesians in their struggle for freedom. The aid to Indonesia only amounted to 250 weapons and ammunition but it bore diplomatic fruit¹³⁸; Indonesia recognised the gesture by including it as an item in Primary School lessons, and during the period when the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) was in power, President Sukarno proposed to give the highest award of Indonesia to Thakin Thar Khin, although when the Burmese government nominated another five persons, including U Ne Win, U Nu and U Ba Swe, the award was indefinitely postponed because this clashed with the wishes of the Indonesians.¹³⁹ The mission to Vietnam included Ko Chit Hlaing, a recent BSP member and former confidant of Thakin Soe¹⁴⁰), U Ba Thein Zan, a BSP leader in Pazundaung Township¹⁴¹, Bo Phone Aung, a PVO leader¹⁴², and Kyimyindine Ko Than,

136. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi in which he briefly mentioned the aid to Indonesia, Vietnam and Laos; Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992 in which he said that the initiator of the assistance to Indonesia and Vietnam was the Former BSP chairman U Ko Ko Gyi based on the fact retold by Bo Phone Aung, one of the members to Vietnam mission; In his account of the BSP, U Hla Mon (a personal body-guard to the former BSP chairman) explained that U Ko Ko Gyi first discussed with the party secretary U Ba Swe and then U Hla Maung (Maiththilar) that he wanted to implement this program.

137. Socialist Party (India), *Resolutions passed by the National Executive and the General Council of the Socialist Party at Nagpur on the 29, 30 and 31 August, 1947*, 1947, p.20. The Indian Socialist Party's National Executive and the General Council passed resolutions, at Nagpur on the 29 - 31 August, 1947, to the effect that supplies of medicines would be flown to Jogjakarta, the capital of the Indonesian Republic during its struggle for independence, and all their branches were directed to observe "Indonesia Day" on 13 September and to organise collections for the Party's "Indonesia Medical Relief Fund".

138. Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992, who stated that the BSP made Bo Aung Gyi and Thakin Thar Khin responsible for the mission to Indonesia; Interview with Daw Khin Pyone on 26.10.2001; "မိုးဂျာနယ်" မတ်လ၉၉၆ (Moe Journal, March 1996, pp.93-96.)

139. Interview with Daw Khin Phyone on 26.10.2001: In which, during the BSPP was in power, President Sukarno proposed to give the highest award of Indonesia to Thakin Thar Khin. The program was cancelled because Indonesia wanted to give the award first to Thakin Thar Khin and to the rest later.

140. Deputy Director of the Central Political University in the BSPP period.

141. He served as personal secretary to the Home Minister in the parliamentary democracy period and as general secretary for the မြို့ပင်သာယာ (Municipality), Rangoon in BSPP period.

142. He served as parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister and as a CC member of the BSPP.

a confidant of U Ba Swe).¹⁴³ The foreign policy of the BSP was criticized by the Social Democrats within the party, who had gained influence after 1950; they claimed the policy was taking the party too far to the left. Therefore, the aid missions were kept secret in the writings of Burmese history not only in the AFPFL period but also in the BSPP and SLORC periods.

The historical evidence shows that after the CEC members of the BSP (Headquarters) agreed to support the Peoples' victory in China and prepared their June 1949 statement to that effect, the CEC opened up the matter to general discussion by the followers.¹⁴⁴ If the followers disagreed with the decision, the CEC would reconsider the matter. Careful consideration of the evidence confirms that this was the party's usual decision-making procedure. When they had important matters to resolve, they first made a preliminary decision and then opened it up to the followers for discussion. If there was no agreement at the lower level, the decision by the CEC might be changed. In the case of support for the PRC, however, it might be assumed that the BSP could take the agreement back from the CC, not from the lower level of the party according to the circumstances of the civil war in 1949. Nevertheless, this broad involvement of party supporters highlights the influential role of the BSP in Burmese politics. After U Ko Ko Gyi resigned from the party, foreign policy tended to favour the non-alignment movement. I will give a detailed account of the role played by the Social Democrats in the Asia Socialist Conference in Chapter Seven.

143. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "မြန်မာအင်ဒိုနီးရှားနယ်ချဲ့ဆန့်ကျင်ရေးသွေးစည်းညီညွတ်မှု"၊ မိုးကုန်းယမ်မတ်၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၉၃-၉၆။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "The Unity of Myanmar-Indonesia for Anti-Imperialism": *Moe Journal*, March 1996, pp.93-96.) He served in the head-quarters of the BSPP under U Ne Win. He typed his article about his experiences of the mission to Vietnam ready for publishing but the opportunity never arose. In the SLORC period, he wrote an article for a newspaper called "The Mission to Vietnam" when the Vietnamese leader visited Myanmar to promote U Ne Win's image in Burmese history by wrongly attributing responsibility for the assistance to Vietnam to U Ne Win.

144. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ"၊ မိုးကုန်းယမ်မတ်၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ စာ-၁၀၇-၁၁၁။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee", *Moe Journal*, July, 1998, pp.107-111.) wrongly stated that following agreement from the Peoples' Literature Committee, the party decided to support it, giving the impression that the Committee was the party's leading political group. Careful comparison of the article from *the Moe Journal*, with the BSP's statement: about the 'People's Victory in China', show that there had already been a decision in June 1949 by the BSP to issue the pro-PRC statement before the discussion in the Committee in September 1949.

Conclusion

A number of complex factors shaped BSP policy. The first shaping factor was that after the success of the liberation struggles in January 1948, the BSP had a chance to implement many of its policies for the first time as a governing power. The second factor was that, as the chapter shows, BSP policy was shaped by its need to compete effectively with the CPB, especially after the AFPFL split in October 1946. In order to do so the party adopted the strategy of establishing strong 'wings' by establishing Workers' and Peasants' movements. The discussions in this chapter also show that policy formation often depended on the views of the major leaders, but they were prepared to enter into consultative processes involving the leaders from second-tier.

Chapter Six

The Role of the Burma Socialist Party in the Freedom Movements and the Democratic Government in Burma (1947-1950)

Introduction

The policies of the BSP/PFP/BSP were not only the principles that guided the BSP during the critical years 1947 to 1950, but they were the reason the BSP played a key role in the crucial transformation of Burma from an occupied country to an independent state. The BSP maintained its importance because it was single-mindedly devoted to the cause of national unity. Some of its success, however, as a party was related to the events and circumstances of the time, including drawing into public sympathy the assassination of a significant part of the national leadership, including Thakin Mya, founder of the BSP. This chapter examines the PF (Socialist) P's participation in the freedom movement leading up to the regaining of independence in 1948, and shows how the party endeavoured to preserve national unity immediately after independence was declared. In examining these steps, it is necessary to explore how the BSP dealt with all the ethnic minorities in the context of the Civil War, since it aimed to include them in the noble task of regaining complete independence, and not to divide Burma on ethnic lines.

Thakin Mya had been in the position of party leadership until the Japanese came to Burma, but during the Japanese occupation, gradual changes in leadership occurred, as discussed in Chapter Two. In Burmese politics, U Aung San was becoming a pivotal leader among the nationalists, becoming more important than Thakin Mya because the military gradually transferred their support to Aung San at the end of the Second World War.¹ The British reoccupied Rangoon in mid-1945, Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC) re-established control and set up the Governor's council. The Governor, Dorman Smith, who had been in exile in India with some trusted Burmese, returned to Burma and established the civilian

1. U Ba Than (Dhammika, Retired Colonel), *The Roots of The Revolution*, Rangoon: the Government Printing Press, 1962, p.58. The Patriotic Burmese Force Commanders at the Conference held in Pegu on 12 August 1945, decided that Bogoyoke (General) Aung San should leave army service and enter into politics to lead the country.

administration on 16 October 1945.² As a result of the Dominion Status given to Burma, the Governor attempted to introduce the White Paper Scheme, which had been drawn up while he was in Simla, India, and was passed by British Parliament in May 1945.³ The party opposed the scheme and considered that it had been drawn up on the advice of the BBTCL Manager, Sir Arthur Bruce, to rehabilitate British commercial interests.⁴

The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party and Independence

To understand the important role of the PF (Socialist) P in the process of gaining independence it is necessary to understand the role of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL). This is because in its relationship with the freedom movements, the party characteristically operated like a mollusc in its shell. The party was a mollusc and its shell was the national front, the AFPFL. The two things could not move separately — if the body moved, the shell would have to move too. The part played by the BSP in the freedom movements can be seen through the activities of the AFPFL.

This role can be seen by considering the role of the socialists in the Naythurain Mass Meeting that was held on 19 August 1945.⁵ This was the crucial meeting in the struggle for independence at the end of the war, because U Aung San emerged as a civilian national leader with his participation in the mass meeting. At the time of the mass meeting, the Socialists had not yet founded their legal party but participated as the Peoples' Revolutionary Party.

After the unsuccessful negotiations between the AFPFL and conservative Governor Dorman Smith, the AFPFL held the first All-Burma Conference from 17 to 23 January 1946, at the Shwedagon Pagoda. It re-elected U Aung San as AFPFL

2. Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948*, Vol. I, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983, pp.xxviii, xxxi; U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, pp.165-167; William C. Johnstone, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations(1945-1958)*, Rangoon: The Rangoon-Hopkins Center for Southeast Asia Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, pp.1-2. The formal surrender was signed by the Japanese in Rangoon on 24 October 1945. The legal announcement that the whole of Burma was reverting to civil government was on 1 January 1946.

3. ဦးမိုးမြင့်၊ဒေါက်တာဒေါ်မြင့်ကြည်၊"မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးသမိုင်း(၁၉၅၈-၆၂)အတွဲ(၁)"၊*ဒေါ်ကြမ်းရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်*၊၁၉၉၁၊စာ-၃၁-၃၂။(U San Nyein and Dr Daw Myint Kyi, *Myanmar Politics*, Vol. I, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, pp.31-32.)

4. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်"၊*အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၂)*၊၂၆-၁၂-၁၉၄၅၊(*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 2, 26.12.1945); ကျော်စောဝင်း၊"ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊*မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာ*အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊၁၉၉၃၊စာ-၈၉-၉၁။(Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, pp.89-90.)

5. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, pp.408-410 (IOR: M/4/1239).

Chairman.⁶ The PF (Socialist) P and its organisations attended the conference. Chairman U Aung San submitted a proposal urging the League to dedicate itself to the achievement of unity. The sentiments of Socialist Chairman, Leader Thakin Mya, were revealed in his proposal demanding "Complete Independence":

The Burmese peoples will never be satisfied with Dominion Status or any status under British imperialism. Independence will be implemented by a Constituent Assembly that has been elected by a popular poll involving every adult; we will create our own future. To fulfil the real desire of Burma,... the Conference should hand over power to the Supreme Council of the AFPFL, for the freedom of Burma, in accordance with every democratic way.⁷

There were also other proposals by the Socialists.⁸ Clearly the Socialists followed the leadership of the AFPFL. On the other hand, the party itself, through its weekly journal, encouraged the national front to implement urgent and essential programs. The immediate programs urged by the party were to go to England, and for a Conference of Eastern Colonial Countries to be held. The essential programs proposed by the party were to feed and clothe the people, who were suffering; to agitate for freedom; to promote unity among all Burma's nationalities; and to stand up for the people who had been involved in the anti-fascist movement and were now oppressed. The Party was concerned particularly with the rights of workers and peasants.⁹

The Chairman of the PF (Socialist) P, Thakin Mya himself stood beside U Aung San in the national front. On the night of 19 August 1946, when a proposal to reject the White Paper Scheme was submitted to the All-Burma Socialist Party Conference, the Presidium of the party decided to stage a demonstration against the scheme. The demonstration was held at the Kandawmin Garden (now Kandawminglar Garden) (near the Shwedagon Pagoda), on 21 August 1946.¹⁰ The PF (Socialist) P arranged a

6. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)၊အမှတ်(၇)၊၃၀-၁-၁၉၄၆။(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, on 30.1.1946.)

7. ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၇၉၊နောက်ဆက်တွဲ(ချ)။(Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.179: Appendix (i).)

8. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၁)၊အမှတ်(၇)၊၃၀-၁-၁၉၄၆။(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, 30.1.1946.)

9. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၂)၊အမှတ်(၁)၊၂၇-၂-၁၉၄၆။(*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. II, No.1, 27.2.1946.)

10. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)၊အမှတ်(၅)၊၁၃-၁၀-၁၉၄၆။(*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 5, 13.10.1946.) The total numbers of participants in the procession were from 12,000 to 15,000. The slogans of the procession were demands for (1) a polices' strike; (2) a postals' strike; (3) a workers'

very systematic program for the demonstration. The significant features of the procession were the use of the AFPFL's flag to lead the procession; the involvement of Thakin Nu in the party's activities; and the general demonstration that the Socialist Party was at the forefront of the opposition to the White Paper Scheme. Communist and Socialists participated in the AFPFL's demonstration to reject the White Paper Scheme held on 29 September 1946 at the Bandoola Garden.¹¹

There were still peaceful relations between the CPB and PF (Socialist) P within the League. A police strike led by U Wan Maung, U Than Maung, U Aye and U Soe Shein, which was supported by the AFPFL, occurred on 5 September 1946 and this led to a general strike that included government servants, labourers and transportation workers.¹² U Aung San and Thakin Mya negotiated with the strikers and it finished on 5 October 1946.¹³ The settlement shows that the national leaders focused on the state's affairs and not on the party's affairs and its acquisition of power.

Although the AFPFL negotiated with Governor Dorman Smith for a place in the Executive Council, it was not successful. The League requested fifteen places on the council, including a position for Socialist Party Leader Thakin Mya, but the Governor agreed to eleven.¹⁴ The Governor rejected Thakin Thein Pe from the CPB but he viewed the Socialists as having "moderate opinions".¹⁵

After the relationship between the Governor and the AFPFL was strained, Governor Dorman-Smith was replaced by Sir Henry Knight who served his governorship for two and a half months. Knight showed greater sympathy for the position of the Frontier peoples and the Karen.¹⁶ During his reign, he declared the Red

strike; (4) a peasants' strike; (5) adequate food supplies; and (6) a cost-of-living allowance to be made immediately available. Other slogans were (7) no 'White Paper' Government; (8) set up a 'National (AFPFL) Government; (9) the rejection of the White Scheme; and (10) burning the White Scheme.

11. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃-၁၀-၁၉၄၆။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.5, 13.10.1946.) Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 9.7.1988; Interview with Thakin Soe Myint, on 6.12.1992. Bandoola was a Burmese general who fought in the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

12. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိသုဒ္ဓိ)၊ "အချိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ"(ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ ၈-၃၅။ (Thakin Chit Maung(Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979, p.372.)

13. *Ibid.*, p.375.

14. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, pp.522-525: IOR: M/4/2625.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, pp. xli-xlii.

Flag Communist Party led by Thakin Soe and its Labour Unions, including the Cultivators Unions, as unlawful associations.¹⁷

Major General Sir Hubert Rance succeeded him on 27 July 1946. His appointment had been urged by Admiral Mountbatten, since Rance, who served as brigadier in charge of the British Military Administration after the war, had a sympathetic attitude towards the Burmese and could negotiate with the AFPFL through concessions, so that the AFPFL could be included in the Governor's Council.¹⁸ Rance announced the new Governor's Executive Council in which U Aung San was Deputy Chairman, and in charge of Defence and External Affairs, and Freedom (Socialist) Party Leader Thakin Mya was in charge of Home and Judicial Affairs. Thakin Thein Pe also came in the Council from the CPB.¹⁹ The new Executive Council was sworn in on 26 September 1946. The role of the PF (Socialist) P was more influential than that of the CPB because Thakin Mya held the Home Affairs portfolio and he was regarded by the British Governor as, "a sensible and respected person".²⁰

The new Council issued a general amnesty to all "dacoits", a category which included members of the AFPFL who had been ready to take up arms for independence. While Bogyoke Aung San was in London in discussions with the British for freedom for Burma, some AFPFL members had "gone beyond set political limits", by attacking police stations in Myaungmya district, in the Arrawaddy delta, without permission from the party headquarters.²¹ The amnesty had been one of the essential programs that the PFP/BSP had urged on the national front.²²

In accordance with a condition negotiated by the AFPFL, a Burmese delegation, led by U Aung San went to London.²³ U Aung San travelled via India and Pakistan to

17. *Ibid.*, pp.872-873; "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်ယ့်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၃)၊ ၁၀-၉-၁၉၄၆၊ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No. 3, 10.9.1946); "ဟံသာဝတီသတင်းစာ"၊ ၂၅-၁-၁၉၄၇၊ (*Hantharwaddy Newspaper*, on 25.1.1947.)

18. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. I, p.xliii.

19. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp.xv-xvi.

20. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.59.

21. Interview with Bo Mya Han, on 9.12.1992; Interview with Thakin Soe Myint, on 6.12.1992; "Crime and politics were inextricably mixed, and this applied to many parts of Burma after the war", Mss/Eur C520.

22. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.868.

23. *Ibid.*, pp.226-227; တက္ကသိုလ်နေဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၏ လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း"၊ (၃)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ကမ္ဘာ့အေးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ စာ-၂၁၅၀၊ (Ne Win (Tatkathow), *The Record of Bogyoke Aung San in the Freedom Movements*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1998, p.21, p.50.) The delegates included, U Ba Pe (AFPFL), U Tin Tut (Independent), U Ba Sein (Dobama Asiayone) and U Saw (Myo Chit Party). The advisers for the delegation were U Ba Yin (political adviser from the Myo Chit Party), Thakin Chit

consult with South Asian political leaders. In the delegation, Socialist Party Chairman Thakin Mya took part as a delegate of AFPFL and U Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Aung Than (alias Bo Set Kyar) as advisers. While he was in London, Thakin Mya visited many places of relevance to his portfolios of Home and Judicial Affairs.²⁴ He studied English customs and systems more than the other delegates. The London talks were led by Prime Minister C.R Attlee and U Aung San. In the negotiation, on the British side, the moving spirit was Attlee and the principal negotiator was Sir Stafford Cripps.²⁵ The main subjects of discussions were: "the setting up of a Constituent Assembly to create Burma's Constitution; the formation of an interim Government, with full powers by the end of the month, to replace the present Executive Council, requested by Burmese representatives; and the representation of the frontier areas in the new Burma". Socialist U Kyaw Nyein pushed the delegates to ensure the "Hill Areas" were included in independent Burma.²⁶ There was also discussion about the "Dominion Issue" between the two sides, and the stand U Kyaw Nyein took was for an "Independence +" stance.²⁷ However, the former communist Thein Pe Myint, in his biography of U Kyaw Nyein, records that U Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Thein Pe had already submitted a proposal, with the approval of Socialist Party Leader Thakin Mya, demanding unconditional independence in the All-Burma AFPFL Conference of January 1946.²⁸ This was the proposal Thakin Mya read to the Conference that included the statement: "The Burmese peoples will never be satisfied with Dominion Status or any other status while they are the subjects of British imperialism".²⁹

(political adviser from the Dobama Asiayone (and member of Ba Sein's party) and, U Shwe Baw, ICS (Secretary).

24. တက္ကသိုလ်နေဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း"၊ ၈-၅-၅၇ (Ne Win (Tatkathow), *Bogyoke Aung San*, p.57) notes that Thakin Mya and U Aung San visited the British Parliament House on 11 January 1947; according to the *1947 Burmese Mission File: Burma Office, 15.1.1947* (British Library, London), Thakin Mya visited, on 16 January, 10.30am-12.45pm, Scotland Yard; Saturday, 18 January, 9am-11am, Wormwood Scrubbs Prison (Men); Tuesday, 21 January, 11am-4pm, Borstal Institution (Boys), (am) and Training Centre Maidstone Prison (pm); Friday, 24 January, 10a.m, Wormwood Scrubbs Prison (Men), 2.30 pm Scotland Yard; Saturday, 25 January, 10-10.30am, Women's Prison, Holloway; Monday, 27 January, 10.30am, Law Courts.

25. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2; *The Records from British Library (London): B.C (47) 8th and 9th Meetings*.

26. *Extract From Reuters Eastern Service (including Burma)*, dated London, 19.1.1947; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2.

27. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2.

28. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ ၈-၅-၅၇ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1961, pp.72-73.); "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဌာန"၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, 30.1.1946.)

29. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဌာန"၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, 30.1.1946.)

It is clear that the party and its chairman, Leader Thakin Mya, rejected Dominion Status. The Burmese leaders were also dissatisfied with the creation of a Constituent Assembly under the 1935 Burma Constitution.³⁰ To equip the delegation with a set of basic points for negotiation with His Majesty's Government in London, Socialist U Kyaw Nyein sought the advice of U Thein Maung and then showed his preparations to U Aung San.³¹ Assistance with constitutional matters was also obtained from India especially from Krishna Menon.³² The result of the negotiations was the agreement between U Aung San and the British Prime Minister Attlee, the "Aung San-Attlee Agreement", signed on 27 January 1947.³³

Similarly, to solve financial problems, the "Mya-Crombie Agreement" was made on 30 April 1947 between the British representative, J.I.C. Crombie, and the Socialist Party Chairman and the Finance Minister, Thakin Mya.³⁴ Thakin Mya had been transferred by the party to the Ministry of Finance after holding the Home and Judicial Affairs portfolio from 28 September 1946 to 22 February 1947. U Kyaw Nyein (Socialist) took over Home and Judicial Affairs, leaving U Tin Tut (independent) without portfolio. The BSP made these changes because it considered it needed a more practical politician than Thakin Mya in the Home Affairs portfolio to protect those of its members who were taking political matters further than the party officially intended. The transfer was to create an imbalance in post-independence political representation. The reason U Aung San gave for the change in the head of the Home Department was that "Thakin Mya was honest and straight but weak".³⁵

30. *Extract From Reuters Eastern Service (including Burma)*, dated London, 19.1.1947.

31. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2: U Kyaw Nyein explained that he got advice from U Thein Maung who said "by looking through the 1935 Act (the Burmese colonial constitution), you will see that all the powers entrusted to the Governor just need to be turned over to the Burmese ministers, and you have got Independence". U Kyaw Nyein, as general-secretary of the AFPFL, studied the 1935 Act and some other constitutions and then wrote advisory material for U Aung San.

32. *Ibid.*

33. တက္ကသိုလ်နေဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း"၊ ၈-၁၂၂။ (Ne Win (Tetkatho), *Bogyoke Aung San*, p.122); Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol.II, pp.376-377.

34. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol.II, p.xlv; p.432; J.Russell Andrus, *Burmese Economic Life*, Stanford Calif: Stanford University Press, 1947, pp.330-332.

35. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 28.5.1988, who said that he was requested by party secretary, U Ba Swe, to explain to Party Leader Thakin Mya, who put more emphasis on matters of principle than day-to-day matters, what was happening in the party, why he needed to transfer to the other ministry and be replaced by U Kyaw Nyein; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol.II, pp.409-410.

The Aung San-Attlee Agreement was criticised by the CPB.³⁶ Thakin Soe (Red Flag Party) also found fault with the agreement, saying the negotiation was an exercise in opportunism.³⁷ There were some influential BSP members who expressed opposition to some aspects of the agreement at the party congress, which was held 17-18 May 1947, in မြေစာရင်းရေးပုံ (Mjeisaryin Zayat) at the terrace of Shwedagon Pagoda. The topics of the discussion in the congress were the Aung San-Attlee Agreement, the Mya-Crombie Agreement and the Constitution for future independent Burma.³⁸ U Ko Ko Gyi initiated the discussion and was supported by General Secretary U Ba Swe. Ko Ko Gyi said that "we want Dictatorship of the Proletariat and not Parliamentary Socialism...Aung San-Attlee Agreement is "အလကားစာချုပ်" ("alaga-sargyoke" means "without reasoned agreement"). Ko Ko Gyi accused Kyaw Nyein and Mya of being afraid of Aung San. "Why must you be afraid of Aung San? Why must we obey him? The Party has authority and leadership in the countryside and must assert its power over Aung San".³⁹ U Hla Maung and U Kyaw Myint Lay tried to mediate. The discussion lasted two days and two nights without reaching a conclusion and thus, at last, Leader Thakin Mya made a remarkable speech to the party's members:

In the negotiations to gain freedom for Burma, there are necessary problems for us. If we embrace the way of armed struggle, the state will be faced with greater loss. The current grievances and the cost to pay are not so much. The grievances are necessary difficulties in the transfer of power from their administration to our administration.⁴⁰

But there were still arguments. Eventually, the influence of the chairman, and the respect he commanded, saved the situation and the argument was settled. Thakin Mya had to announce to the congress that if it was not satisfied with the agreement, he

36. ဦးသန်း၊ "ပြည်တော်သာခရီး"၊ ပထမတွဲ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ စာ-၉၈။ (U Thant, *Pyitawtharkhayee*, Vol.I, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1961, p.98.); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၇။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.107.)

37. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ စာ-၁၇၈။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyiton Press, 1956, p.178.)

38. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 20.5.1988, he said he initiated the discussion about the Aung San-Attlee Agreement and most of the members from the Delta took part and supported him. He also admitted that he shed a tear when Thakin Mya said that if the party congress did not agree with what he accomplished in London, he would resign from chairman'ship of the party; Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992; Interview with Bo Mya Han (a former joint secretary of the BSP), 11.7.1988; ဗိုလ်မြသွေး၊ "ဥက္ကဋ္ဌကြီးသခင်မြ"၊ *ပြည်သူ့ကြည်ဂျာနယ်*၊ (၂၁)၊ ၁၉၇၀၊ စာ-၁၀၁။ (Bo Mya Thway, "Chairman Thakin Mya": *Peoples' Star Journal*, No. 21, 19.7.1970, p.10); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၁၂။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.112.); Interview with Kyimyindine U Than on 22.1.1992.; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London): U Kyaw Nyein said that "there were...attacks by Ko Ko Gyi,... Bo Mya Thway, Mya Han and etc."

39. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

40. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992.

would resign from the post of Chairman and U Kyaw Nyein also said that he would resign from the CEC. At that time, U Ko Ko Gyi said that "the discussion was not intended to bring about the resignation of the two leaders but to emphasise the essence of the arrangements and to clarify what was to be included in later negotiations with the British".⁴¹ The meaning behind Thakin Mya's speech was that Burma could not get all of what it wanted without going to war. Finally, the party finally approved the Aung San-Attlee Agreement and published an acceptance statement.⁴² That the Party was able to dispute the agreement shows that it had reached a stage of substantial influence in Burmese politics; it was the party's role to decide and approve this major step for the country. Chairman Thakin Mya also allowed democracy to operate within the party. The democratic discussion within the party was not in vain as it contributed to later discussions with the British and led to the creation of the more advanced Nu-Attlee Agreement.⁴³

The influential role of the PF (Socialist) P is evidenced in the goodwill mission that was sent to London to promote a quick transfer of power to Burma. The purpose of the mission was to establish a fixed date for the transfer of power and the nature of future relations between Burma and Britain.⁴⁴ The national front, including the PF (Socialist) P, had made a promise at a mass meeting after the return of the previous Burmese delegation from London in January 1947, to secure independence for Burma within one year.⁴⁵ U Aung San himself, while in London with the first delegation, had assured Sir Stafford Cripps that "if H.M.G gives Burma independence we will remain a Dominion in the Commonwealth".⁴⁶ Three BSP leaders, U Kyaw Nyein, U Ko Ko Gyi and Bo Khin Maung Gale, were appointed to the mission by the Central Committee of the AFPFL on 16 June 1947. The mission was led by Thakin Nu, and was sent to explain the stand of Burma as a whole after the Constituent Assembly had been inaugurated. In the meetings of the mission, Thakin Nu led the discussions with the Socialist leaders taking an active part.⁴⁷ Behind the scenes, however, we can see

41. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 20.5.1988.

42. Interviewed with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

43. Interview with Thakin Soe Myint on 6.12.1992.

44. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 31.5.1988; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.591, pp.598-600.

45. ဦးသန်း "ပြည်ထောင်စုရေးရာ"၊ ပထမတွဲ၊ ၁၀၃။ (Thant, *Pyitawtharkhayee*, Vol. I, p.103.); Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.609.

46. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

47. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.607, pp.620, 644, 647; in the Burmese delegation list, Tinker mistakenly listed "U Tun Din" instead of "Bo Tun Lin".

the influence of the BSP leaders. It was with U Ko Ko Gyi that Sir Stafford Cripps negotiated important details of the delegation, including the current position of the BSP on important matters such as its attitude to staying within the British Commonwealth, the road to complete political independence, and the threat of armed struggle by the CPB.⁴⁸ Details of compensation and economic organisation were also discussed between the two men. In short, in the negotiations, Sir Stafford Cripps was a main negotiator. He enjoyed a trusting and friendly relationship with the Burmese representatives, particularly the PF (Socialist) P leaders.

The PF (Socialist) P also played a key role in planning Burma's post-Independence rehabilitation. When the Chairman of the AFPFL, U Aung San, began to draw up his "Two-Year Economic Plan" he involved the BSP leaders in the key meeting on 6 June 1947.⁴⁹ Furthermore, behind the scenes, the AFPFL Chairman U Aung San met with U Ko Ko Gyi, the Vice-Chairman of the PF (Socialist) P, in his residence on Natmauk Street, and discussed how nationalisation for future independent Burma was to be handled.⁵⁰

According to the London agreement, the AFPFL leaders were to undertake a three-staged process in order to achieve complete independence: first to hold the general elections in April; secondly to hold the Constituent Assembly; and then thirdly to draw up a draft Constitution. The Socialists were fully involved in the three tasks of the AFPFL but also in the functions of the party itself. The elections, which would be held on 9 April 1947, were supported by the PF (Socialist) P.⁵¹ Thakin Mya gave the elections his first priority. He issued a statement saying "if there are nomination papers for AFPFL candidates for constituencies for which the BSP plans to stand, he would order, after official scrutiny, that the socialist candidates withdraw their nominations".⁵² This showed Thakin Mya's concern for the national cause and

48. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 28.5.1988.

49. U Aung San was Patron of the meeting and his secretary U Chan Thar (ICS) was Master of Ceremonies. U Aung San told U Chan Thar to invite the Socialist Party Chairman to attend the economic meeting. U Chan Thar asked, "Who is the Socialist Party Chairman?" and U Aung San replied "Ko Ko Gyi", Interview with U Chan Thar (ICS), 6.8.1988. Before the assassination of Leader Thakin Mya and his comrades, U Ko Ko Gyi was Vice-Chairman; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 28.5.1988.

50. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 20.5.1988; See Appendix (f): "How to construct Socialist Economy after the Independence".

51. "မြန်မာ့အလင်းသတင်းစာ" ၂၇၃၂၁၉၄၇ (Myanmar Ahlin Newspaper, 27.3.1947); ကျော်ဇော်၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး (ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း" ၂၈-၁၁၉ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.109): one of the wings of the BSP, the FTO (B) issued a statement signed by General Secretary Thakin Pan Myaing that "the election was a stepping stone to freedom and should be used to obtain freedom from imperialism".

52. B/C 558, 1947: IOR: M/4/2605 (British Library, London).

that he could set the leadership to the PF (Socialist) P on the correct path. The policy of the CPB, led by Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Thein Pe, was "to contest only in constituencies where the party had reasonable expectation of victory".⁵³ The Communist Party led by Thakin Soe split from the CPB, boycotted the election. The right wing U Saw-Ba Maw-Ba Sein group also boycotted it.⁵⁴ The PF (Socialist) P contested the election under the flag of the AFPFL and seventy-five of the 173 AFPFL candidates belonged to the PF (Socialist) P. The CPB won seven seats.⁵⁵ The PF (Socialist) P also made the AFPFL's work for the election its first priority.

PF (Socialist) P members were involved in the drawing up of the draft constitution of 1947.⁵⁶ After its overwhelming win in the 1947 election, the national front formed a "Research Committee" to draw up a constitution for future Burma.⁵⁷ Within the PF (Socialist) P, there was a discussion about drafting the Constitution on 1 May 1947. The PF (Socialist) P itself at the urging of U Ko Ko Gyi, advised the committee to study the Constitution of Yugoslavia.⁵⁸ In the AFPFL Assembly on 20 May 1947, PF (Socialist) P leader Thakin Mya submitted fourteen basic principles for the constitution, and he also proposed the formation of a committee, consisting of 111 members, to review the principles.⁵⁹

The Socialists were also prominent in the Constituent Assembly, which was held on 10 June 1947.⁶⁰ The Socialist Party invented a uniform, consisting of a khaki two-piece suit and red necktie. Most of the members of the PVO and of the

53. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol.II, pp.498-500, IOR: M/4/2677.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *New Times of Burma*, 4, 5 February 1947 and 6 March 1947; IOR: M/4/2605; Appendix (Election).; ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၀၉။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.109);

"လူထုသတင်းစာ"၊ ၁၉၅၁၉၄၇။ (Ludu Newspaper, 19.5.1947) gives the figure of 130 seats BSP in the election; IOR: M/4/2605; see also the *Burma Gazette*, 26 April 1947 (B/C 978 1947, B/C 1108-1947) and 3 May 1947; *News Times of Burma*, 22.4.1947 (B/C 834-1947); *International Socialist Conference Committee Offices*: Circular No. 167/50, dated 31 August, 1950, signed by Julius Braunthal.;

ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်းနှင့်မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၉၊ စာ-၂၈၇။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win and Burmese Politics*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1969, p.287.)

56. Director of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Fight for Freedom: Independence Commemoration*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1948, pp.89-91: members of the Constitution Drafting Committee from the BSP were: Thakin Mya as Chairman of the Committee, Thakin Lun Baw, Thakin Tin, U Kyaw Myint alias U Kyaw Myint Lay (not Justice U Kyaw Myint), and ethnic Chin leader U Vum Ko Hau.

57. "ဣန္ဒာကျော်မဂ္ဂဇင်း"၊ အတွဲ(၈)၊ အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၂၆.၄.၁၉၄၇။ (Journalgyaw Magazine, Vol. VIII, No. 5, 26.4.1947); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၁၀။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.110.)

58. "လူထုသတင်းစာ"၊ ၁၉၅၁၉၄၇။ (Ludu Newspaper, 19.5.1947); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၁၀။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.110.); Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988.

59. "မြန်မာ့အလင်းသတင်းစာ"၊ ၂၅.၅.၁၉၄၇။ (Myanmar Ahlin Newspaper, 25.5.1947); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၁၀။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.110.)

60. မောင်ရဲမြ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ စာ-၈၉။ (Ye Mya, *op.cit.*, p.89); *Burma's Fight for Freedom*, p.90.

PF (Socialist) P, wore their khaki uniforms in the Assembly.⁶¹ Wearing the uniform for the PF (Socialist) P members in the Assembly, was to reveal the unity of the Socialists but it also led to factionalism, as Waidura Thakin Chit Maung observed in a later interview.

The Socialist Party's first Chairman, Thakin Mya, was proposed by National Leader U Aung San to serve as temporary president of the Constituent Assembly. The proposal was supported by ethnic Karen Mah Ba Khine.⁶² In his first speech as President of the Constituent Assembly, Thakin Mya emphasised three points: the need to include in the Constitution a democratic administration for Burma; the need to unite all the ethnic peoples living in Burma; and the need for the Assembly to look at the preservation of the national spirit.⁶³ The speech of PF (Socialist) P Chairman Thakin Mya summed up the central concerns of the Socialists: national spirit, unity among the peoples living in Burma and the democratic way of thought. As President in the Assembly, the Socialist Party Chairman raised the first Assembly to a higher standard.

National leader U Aung San even led Thakin Mya to the President's Chair in the assembly in his first sitting. In return, Thakin Mya supported U Aung San's "seven basic principles for the Constitution".⁶⁴ The reasons Thakin Mya gave for supporting the principles were that they were in accordance with the programs of the AFPFL; they conformed with the decision for complete independence; they would establish Burma as a "Federal State" which would be acceptable to the ethnic peoples; they outlined the form that administrative power, judicial power and people's rights and duties should take, highlighting the rights of minorities.⁶⁵ These principles reflected the Socialists' stand on state affairs.

Another indicator of the PFP's role can be seen in the financial negotiations between Britain and Burma in 1947. After the assassination of national leaders in July 1947, a "Financial Mission" led by U Tin Tut and including U Ko Ko Gyi, and PFP

61. Dr Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*, 2nd Edition, The Hague: Netherlands, Martinus Nijhoff, 1961, p.81; The front page of *The Workers' Guide Journal* shows a photo of Thakin Mya wearing the socialist uniform, "လုပ်သားလမ်းပြဂျာနယ်" အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၁)၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၇ (Workers' Guide Journal, Vol. I, No. 1, 13.11.1947), this journal was distributed every Thursday, and was probably published by the BSP's wings, the Workers' and Peasants' Asiayones. When interviewed Waidura Thakin Chit Maung said that the uniforms were a mistake.

62. မိမိရဲ့ "သခင်မြ" စာ-၃၉၈။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.398.)

63. *Ibid.*, pp.492-494.

64. *Ibid.*, p.398.

65. *Ibid.*, pp.495-499.

member Vum Ko Hau, was sent to London in September 1947.⁶⁶ In fact, the work was done by U Tin Tut and the delegation was merely to reinforce the party's position of control and decision-making; U Tin Tut, being unaligned to any party, was not fully trusted by leftwing elements.⁶⁷ The two debts that Burma needed to repay to Britain totalled 57 billions and 52 millions pounds sterling.⁶⁸ Agreement was not reached in the discussion between U Ko Ko Gyi and the British.⁶⁹ Clearly, the BSP did not agree with repaying these debts, but the nature of the delegation shows that the party played a decisive role in this matter.⁷⁰

Unfortunately, the nationalist leader U Aung San and his comrades, including Chairman Thakin Mya, were assassinated in July 1947 while they were leading Burma to freedom. That was why the rest of the comrades led by Thakin Nu had to pick up the flag as it fell towards the ground, in order to reach the goal through negotiation. Thus, Great Britain and Burma arrived at the Nu-Attlee Agreement on 17 October 1947.⁷¹ With this agreement, Burma became a sovereign state, the Union of Burma, on 4 January 1948, at 4:20 am. The agreement was criticised by the CPB which agitated to gain independence by way of armed struggle. On the other hand, the BSP held that the treaty provided a way to construct the foundations of a socialist state.⁷² The Socialists adhered to the view of their late leader: that colonial countries could not win independence by taking up arms because they would be faced with the might of British forces.

In the freedom movements for Burma, the PFP's consistent stance was to follow a peaceful path. Only if this proved unsuccessful would the party implement a plan for

66. "ဂျာနယ်ကျော်မဂ္ဂဇင်း"အတွဲ(၉)အမှတ်(၂)၊ ၂၀၁၉၄၇၊ စာ-ရ။ (*Gyarnegyaw Magazine*, Vol. IX, No. 2, 20.9.1947, p.7.)

67. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

68. ဗန်းမော်တင်အောင်၊ "ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေကျေးစာပေတိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၇၊ စာ-၃၃၃။ (*Bahmaw Tin Aung, A Burmese History During the Colonial Period*, Rangoon: Shwekyi Press, p.333.)

69. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 28.5.1988, who said that another person attending the discussion was U Ba Nyein. U Ko Ko Gyi did not attend any further meetings because he was confused about the amount of the debts that the British representative said Burma owed.

70. On the debts, see also သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ စာ-၂၇၆-၃၀၀။ (*Thein Pe Myint, His Political Experiences*, pp.276-300); When Thakin Nu came back from the London Goodwill Mission and reported to the members of the CEC (AFPFL) in the night meeting on 12 July 1947, Bogyoke Aung San said that he disagreed with the compensation, UCL: 286486 (University of Rangoon, Central Library)); "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း(စာရေးသူ-ရဲဘော်သုံးကျိပ်ဝင်ဗိုလ်ရဲထွဋ်)"၊ "ဗဟိုတက္ကသိုလ်များစာကြည့်တိုက်စာအမှတ်-၂၈၆၄၈၆"၊ (*The Record of the Freedom Movements by former Thirty Comrades Bo Ye Htut?*); The debts were also referred to in speeches by Senior General Saw Maung during the period of the State Law and Order Restoration Council.

71. ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ စာ-၁၈၅-၁၉၁။ (*Kyaw Zaw, op.cit.*, pp.185-191).

72. *Ibid*, p.141.

armed revolt.⁷³ The AFPFL also prepared a plan, in case negotiations failed, that involved changing the Constituent Assembly to a "Rebel Assembly"; this was the reason for electing members of the PVO to the Assembly.⁷⁴ The contingency plan is later discussed under the title of the State's Assassination.

To sum up, in seeking freedom for Burma, the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party followed the lead of the AFPFL under U Aung San while, at the same time, it gave advice to the national front. In other words, the party's men sheltered under the flag of the united front and they implemented its policies. They revealed their desire to stand for "Absolute Independence" within the national front. The party's first step in the freedom movement was to oppose the "White Paper Scheme". They held the flag of the AFPFL at the front of the demonstration the PFP had helped organise against the scheme. The two national leaders, Thakin Mya and U Aung San, played frontline roles in the activities of the AFPFL. The first move the PFP took to regain Burma's independence peacefully was to encourage the national leaders to join the Governor's Executive Council. Then the party continued to push to go to London to negotiate with the British. In this way, the Aung San-Attlee Agreement was reached in January 1947. But there was still a need to discuss the details of the transfer of power and whether or not Burma was to join the Commonwealth of Nations. Also, India had recently elicited from Britain a definite date for Indian independence, potentially strengthening the negotiating position of the Burmese. Therefore, the Goodwill Mission led by Thakin Nu was sent to London in June 1947. The Socialists played influential roles in both delegations. The program negotiated by the second delegation led to the AFPFL holding the Constituent Assembly and drawing up the Constitution. In the 1947 election for the Assembly, seventy-five PFP representatives,

73. ဘုံပေါက်သာကျော်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်အပိုင်း(၂)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၅၊ ၈၁-၂၂၃။ (Thar Kyaw (Bonpauk), *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Pathein Press, 1975, p.223.): BSP Leader Thakin Mya, while he was travelling to Rakhine to organise the Rakhines, explained to Sayadaw U Seindar that the party had already prepared for the armed revolt in some areas in the Delta if the negotiation with the British was not successful.

74. "ဗဟိုတက္ကသိုလ်များစာကြည့်တိုက်စာအမှတ်- ၂၈၆၄၈၆"။ (UCL: 286486 (University of Rangoon, Central Library)): 52 members from the PVO were elected as members of the Constituent Assembly.; ဦးသန်းထွန်း၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံလွတ်လပ်ရေးအတွက်ပါဝင်ဆောင်ရွက်ခဲ့မှု"၊ အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ် ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင် အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောဆောင်းပါး။ (U Than Tun, "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League For Democracy, *The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum*, Vol. II.) This document is distributed by NLD (Liberated Area, Japan Branch) and redistributed by NLD (Liberated Area, Australia Branch). This U Than Tun, a member of the CC of the BSP, is different from Thakin Than Tun and Retired Professor Dr Than Tun; Interview with U Tin Aung (secretary of the BSP's Natmauk Township branch (1946-1950), 2.11.1946; see also Dr Maung Maung, *Burma's Constitution*, p.81.

standing for the AFPFL, were elected. PFP members led the drawing up of the 1947 Constitution and the Socialists had influential roles in the Assembly. Tragically, the most important national leaders were assassinated on 19 July 1947. Nonetheless, the Nu-Attlee Agreement was fulfilled and Burma regained Complete Independence on 4 January 1948. In this way, the party's policy of regaining freedom through negotiation was realised.

The 'Assassination of the State' and the PFP

The impact of the assassination of the national leaders, on 19 July 1947, 10:37am, is best understood as the 'assassination of the state'. The ramifications were not just felt because the BSP's leaders were included in the murder, and this shattered some of the basic assumptions of the Socialist Party's membership, but also because the state lost its key members, this raised questions about what was going on behind the scenes. The death of the national leaders while they were carrying the freedom flag, and within sight of their goal, meant that the state faced a great loss. If their lives had been spared, Burma could have achieved leftist unity and would probably not have been faced with civil war.

As a result of the current political situation in Burma, some historians have accused those who were involved in the BSP and the AFPFL of being instigators of that tragedy. Some writings focus only on the question, "Who killed Bogyoke Aung San?"⁷⁵ In fact, U Aung San was not the only victim. Also killed were Thakin Mya, the first chairman of the Socialist Party, U Ba Win, a high status leader in the BSP⁷⁶, Dedok U Ba Cho, the first chairman of the TUC (B), and ethnic Karen leader, Mah Ba Khine, who organised for the party in the Delta. The fact that two leaders and two sympathisers of the party were assassinated shows that the members of the party were ready to sacrifice their lives for the state's interest. In addition, U Ba Swe, general

75. People's Partisans, *Who is a real culprit?* Known as 'the green book', this work was published in English and Burmese, and was based on the interview between the BBC reporter Robert Lemkin and Former Brigadier Kyaw Zaw, now one of the CPB's leaders and exiled in China; ဦးခင်အောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းကိုဘယ်သူသတ်သလဲ"၊ ဗန်ကောက်၊ ခေတ်ပြိုင်ဂျာနယ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၀။ (U Khin Aung, *Who Killed Bogyoke Aung San?* Bangkok: New Era Journal Press, 2000; Shelby Tucker, *Burma: The Curse Of Independence*, London: Pluto Press, 2001.

76. U Ba Win was father of Dr Sein Win who is now exiled in the USA and leading opposition movements to the current Military Government.

secretary of the Party, is reported to have given information to Bogyoke Aung San regarding the intentions of U Saw, but Bogyoke Aung San did not believe it.⁷⁷

Another indication of the influence of the BSP was the charisma of those BSP leaders who were assassinated. Thakin Mya was a man who took time to ponder before he reached his own conclusion in his own way, and who could follow any decision no matter how hard, even though his appearance was that of a passive man. Leader Mya was known as a person who never spoke rudely, who was very honest, and who intended to proceed slowly and steadily in the socialist construction of Burma; his behaviour was not that of a dictator and his views were his own and mature.⁷⁸ The socialist U Ba Win also was a very honest man and seen to have a particularly attractive and sociable disposition.⁷⁹ Dedoke U Ba Cho and Mah Ba Khine, closely associated with the BSP, were experienced people who loved Burma and strove for peace between Karens and Burmans.⁸⁰ They served the nation at great personal cost. The natural powers of these assassinated socialist leaders and sympathisers deserve to be acknowledged; the influence of these men on the peoples of Burma has had a lasting effect.

The first response from the Party to the assassination was the statement signed by Bo Aung Gyi, joint secretary of the BSP, instructing the members of the Party: "To wear a piece of black cloth on the left arm in respect for the assassinated leaders, our Leader Bogyoke Aung San and our Party Chairman Thakin Mya, until the final day of the funeral ceremony".⁸¹ In a second memorial, the members of the Party and its wings, together with members of the PVO (Yellow) and "Public Committee"⁸² held a candle-light vigil in honour of the "Martyrs", and vowed in front of their tombs to

77. Manuscript of U Ba Swe: "I had reported everything about U Saw's plan but Bogyoke Aung San did not believe it...I advised that the meeting should be postponed or moved from the Secretary's Office to the residence of Bogyoke Aung San, but he did not accept the advice... although the leaders from the PVO and the EC members of the AFPFL arranged to put guards in the Secretary's Office and two guards for Bogyoke Aung San, he rejected the two guards and drove them away from the Office...".

ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၂၅-၁၂၈။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, pp.125-128):

78. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990; *Burma's Fight For Freedom*, p.60.

79. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990.

80. *Burma's Fight For Freedom*, p.60.

81. "သံတော်ဆင့်သတင်းစာ"၊ ၂၅၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (*Thantawsint Newspaper*, 25.7.1947); ကျော်စော၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၂၅။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.125.)

82. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary records that on 8 October 1948 at 4 Wingabar Street, Bahan Township, at the BSP headquarters, there was a meeting among the BSP, PVO (Yellow) and the delegates from the mass organisations and ethnic groups, to defend the civil war and formed a "Public Committee" to carry out social work. The chairman was Bo Min Gaung and Thakin Hla Kyway was general secretary. The first task of the committee was to give respect and honour to the martyrs.

defend the country during the Civil War period.⁸³ This fact is evidence of the great respect in which members of the Party held the late national heroes.

It is interesting to examine why U Saw, who organised the assassination, also been a target for assassination himself prior to July 1947. U Saw had been Prime Minister of Burma before the Second World War, at the behest of the Governor Dorman Smith. He went to London in October 1941, to ask for Dominion Status, but was interned while he was on the way home because he was regarded as a collaborator with the Japanese. He had a history of using violent methods to achieve his political ends. After the War, he was selected by Governor Dorman Smith himself to be included in his Executive Council, to counter balance the AFPFL. Thus there was suspicion that U Saw ordered the assassination, perhaps even with the involvement of Dorman Smith.

One theory about the attempt on U Saw's life has it that it was instigated by Bo Ne Win.

The plot to assassinate U Saw was run by Bo Ne Win. Ne Win's real intention was only to wound U Saw. The only people involved in the plot were Bo Ne Win, Bo Aung Gyi, Yangon Ba Swe and Bo Mya Hlaing.

Bogyoke Aung San did not know about it. The gun used was owned by Bo Ne Win. In the shooting, Bo Mya Hlaing drove the car and Yangon Ba Swe did the shooting.⁸⁴

This was a different story from that given by the joint secretary of the BSP, Bo Mya Han who explained it in terms of the political actions of U Saw. There had been a disagreement between the British Governor and the AFPFL about the appointment of U Aung San to lead the Cabinet. The Governor had former Prime Ministers- U Pu and U Saw in mind for the position and was negotiating with them. Given that U Saw had a history of violence against his opponents, AFPFL members felt it would be dangerous if U Saw were given power. So, Bogyoke Aung San said to watch U Saw's acts, to which and a group of men in the AFPFL said, "Bogyoke! the answer is to assassinate! ". Bogyoke said that it was not possible and said in English that "what is

83. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

84. ကြင်ဟိုး၊နိုင်ဝင်း(MD)၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းနှင့်မြန်မာ့အာဇာနည်များလုပ်ကြံမှုကြီးအတွင်းရေးများ"၊(ဒု)ကြိမ်၊ဖေလော်ရီတာ၊ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်မပါ၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ ၁၀-၁၁-၁၄။ (Kyin Ho MD (alias Naing Win), *The Secrets of the Assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and Burmese Martyrs*, Florida: 2nd Edition, unnamed press, 1993, pp.10-14.); See also ဦးခင်အောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းကိုဘယ်သူသတ်သလဲ"၊ ၁၇-၁၅-၁၅။ (U Khin Aung, *Who Killed Bogyoke Aung San?* pp.150-151.)

essential in politics is to be sincere and patient". So, he was not kept informed about the case anymore, and the AFPFL men acted on their own.⁸⁵

To sum up the explanation of the cadre of the BSP, there was a power struggle between the British Governor and the national forces, especially with the AFPFL. The Governor played a political game that caused a split among the national forces, especially between U Saw and others. So, the three dominant underground groups associated with the AFPFL watched the direction taken by U Saw and they decided to assassinate him. They intended to shoot to kill but U Saw survived because the gun used in the incident was faulty.⁸⁶ There is also evidence in a British document of the meeting between the British governor and U Saw that shows that the Governor was playing politics between U Saw and the AFPFL. The Governor Sir Hubert Rance met with U Saw at about 3pm on 21 September 1946 and U Saw left just after 3:30 pm, the same time that U Aung San arrived.⁸⁷

According to Bo Mya Han, there were also some forces in the AFPFL prepared to take up arms if peaceful means proved unsuccessful, especially in the Red Army (the CPB's Army) led by Kyaw Zan, the PVO led by Bo Aung Myin and the BSP led by Yangon Ba Swe, Ye Chit and Maung Yi. These underground leaders from the three groups held discussions and agreed to assassinate U Saw. They planned to shoot U Saw when he came back to his residence on A.D Road from the Governor's House. There were three ways to go from the Governor's house to A.D Road. Responsibility for the assassination was shared equally and each of the three groups covered one of the three points. The duty of the Socialist Party was to cover the point at Myaynigone. Yangon Ba Swe, Ye Chit and Maung Yi needed a gun, and they asked Bo Mya Han if they could hire one from him. They told Bo Mya Han that it was for a political matter, not for personal interest. The gun, a Tommy-gun, was hidden at Syriam (now Tanyin) in the hands of Saya Thar Han. The gun had not been handed over to the British but listed as a Party possession. The three men were not informed of the state of repair of the gun; Tommy guns were considered the British army's best small arms. Before the allotted day, they held a dinner at the house of Kyi Lwin in Insein Street, Kyimyindine Township, and drank alcohol. That night, there was light rain. The gun

85. Interview with Bo Mya Han, former Joint Secretary of the BSP, on 26.3.1992, who elicited a promise from the author "only to reveal the case when he passed away". Note that Bo Mya Han took part in politics again after 1988, joining the party founded by Waidura Thakin Chit Maung.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol.II, p.867, IOR: Mss / Eur E 362/12, 13, 14, 15.

became rusty. They hurriedly got up in the morning and the shooting happened near Saint Flore Minus School (a girl's school). Instead of the gun shooting automatically, it fired only one shot.

To assess the two accounts of the incident – that of Kyin Ho based on an interview with Bo Mya Hlaing, and my interview on 26 March 1992 with Bo Mya Han – it might be assumed that the former, the second edition of which was published in 1993, reflects the current political grey cloud while the latter is more reliable because my source, a former cadre of the BSP, agreed to reveal his facts only on the condition that they were not made public until after his death. Bo Mya Han was not regarded favourably by the government during the BSPP period.

The main effect of the attempted assassination of U Saw, was his determination to take revenge on U Aung San and thus the "State Assassination" happened. Here, at this point, the questions that arise are: Why didn't U Saw retaliate only against U Aung San? Why did he choose the place of the Cabinet meeting? Because he chose the cabinet, the tragedy is better described as the assassination of the state, not the "Assassination of Bogyoke Aung San". In fact, the intention behind the assassination on 19 July 1947 was to gain state power. A very interesting fact emerges when the documents were re-examined: the assassins were ordered to refrain from shooting party Leader Thakin Mya.⁸⁸ Another aspect of the plot was that Thakin Nu was meant to be assassinated too. He survived, fortunately, although he was there in his room at the secretary's office.⁸⁹

Various theories have been advanced as to who was the real culprit in the "State's Assassination". One theory, put forward by dissidents opposed to the post-1962 governments, accuses Bo Ne Win of being the real perpetrator.⁹⁰ Another, more nationalist, argument has that it was a British government plot.⁹¹ This was the view of the CPB but was opposed by British writer Shelby Tucker, who stated that there was "no evidence to support this allegation...".⁹² Later having denounced the AFPFL.⁹³ He reproduced a memorandum of J.W. Baldwin which stated that the "public widely

88. Another suggested motive was that Daw Khin Nyunt, wife of Thakin Mya, had had a proposal of marriage from U Saw, မိရူး "သခင်မြ" (Waidura, *op.cit.*, pp.30-34, p.102):

89. *Ibid.*, p.31; After the assassination, Nu "spent some hours just wandering round the streets of Rangoon", Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol: II, p.xxxii.

90. ကြင်ဟိုး၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းနှင့်မြန်မာ့အာဇာနည်များလုပ်ကြံမှုကြီးအတွင်းရေးများ" (Kyin Ho, *The Secrets of the Assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and Burmese Martyrs*, p.9.)

91. People's Partisans, *Who is the real culprit?*.

92. Shelby Tucker, *Burma: The Curse Of Independence*, p.153.

93. *Ibid.*, pp.134-135.

believe (Kyaw Nyein) initiated the assassination plot. U Saw was made a scapegoat".⁹⁴ In his view, there was "no direct evidence of Saw's involvement...".⁹⁵ Moreover, he made the novel suggestion that questions should be put to "Nu, Ne Win, Kyaw Nyein and Khin Magun Gale", influential politicians at the time.⁹⁶

Let us look at the Socialists' views about the real culprit in the assassination. In the BBC 2 program broadcast on 19 July 1997, American journalist Sterling Seagrave retold the story of Bo Set Kyar (alias Thakin Aung Than), one of the CEC (Headquarters) members in the foundation of the PFP:

Bo Set Kyar told me that there was a very powerful group in London. These people, during the war, had worked in secret intelligent services. They had been involved diplomatically with Burma's military and also with the secret services. Since that time, some of them had acquired seats in the House of Lords. Others were very powerful in the upper reaches of the British government. But they were actually left over from the conservative government and now, with the new Labour government, they found themselves unable to act directly to influence British policy. So, they had to act obliquely, in a shadow, to get revenge on Aung San and to prevent Aung San's triumphant independence for Burma.⁹⁷

So, Socialist Bo Set Kyar accused the British of involvement in the tragedy. Furthermore, U Kyaw Nyein, at the time of the Assassination, Minister for Home and Judicial Affairs, also implicated the British, saying that:

British killed AS for breaking pledge of Dominion and demanding Independence faster he had pledged to Stafford-Cripps. HMG, and actually Attlee, was involved, he gave the final decision for killing AS or the whole scheme of Saw's murder plan; all things about Campbell plan also H.M.G's hand in it. Though Attlee... probably he felt the loss of the country outside very strongly as a historical loss in his personal name...The role of British military such as giving of 200 Brens...(for the killings), and the implications of British intelligence help to U Saw(to carry out the act)...⁹⁸

U Kyaw Nyein had earlier told the same interviewer:

94. *Ibid.*, p.136.

95. *Ibid.*, p.143.

96. *Ibid.*, 158.

97. *Who Really Killed Aung San*: BBC 2 Program- 19 July 1997.

98. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

Attlee must have approved though it may not originate with him: probably Force 136 or MI 6 or SIS with local British military & civil officials instigated the assassination plan. Saw got all the help from local British senior officers, including really help from Military side... Maj. Young and Capt. Vivian were not removed or taken action in any way even after the announcement by newspapers of loss of 2000⁹⁹ Bren guns. When Bur Gvt pressed for action Brit Army HQrs, said enquiry will be made, it would take a long time to arrive at some point, then action will be taken, etc; nothing very promising...U Ka Si knew the situation a bit; later Ba Maung D.I.G (...) knew more details about U Saw and AOD¹⁰⁰ Bren guns, and Brit and Tun Hla Oung's involvement¹⁰¹; this Ba Maung prepared the case, i.e., interrogation etc., police side of the Saw trial; AFGvt was trying to hurry through the whole trial and execution without any incidence."¹⁰²

U Kyaw Nyein also assumed that the main reason for the tragedy was related to the fact that "Burma opted for independence outside the British Commonwealth of Nations".¹⁰³ All the above claims by the two influential Socialists point to British involvement in the assassination. Furthermore, Thakin Nu, who replaced assassinated U Aung San, admonished the leaders with the words, "what has happened has happened, the point is to get independence quickly and without fail, and not to provoke the British authorities into acting..."¹⁰⁴

If the accusation of deep involvement by the British is right, was there evidence for any other motives? Some evidence can be found in a typed Burmese document, which was kept in the Central Library of Rangoon University. The document was about a plan produced by the AFPFL under U Aung San's leadership, to respond to a planned "White Coup" by British secret agents with rightwing affiliations, with a "Red Coup".¹⁰⁵ The plan for the Red Coup was that while the Cabinet members held a meeting at the secretary's office, Thakin Nu would be ready in the hall of the

99. The number of Bren guns should be 200.

100. AOD should be BOD (Burma Ordnance Depot).

101. Ko Than accused U Tun Hla Aung of being a "person connected with the assassination" ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "နိုင်ငံတော်လုပ်ကြံမှု": မိုးကုန်းယံအတွဲ(၇)၊ နံပါတ်(၁၀)၊ ဒီဇင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "State Assassination": *Moe Journal*, Vol.VII, No. 10, December 1997, p.137).

102. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 2 October 1979 at his house, 11:30am-2:30pm, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

103. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

104. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 2 October 1979 at his house, 11:30am-2:30pm, Mss/Eur D 1066/2, (British Library, London).

105. A "Red Coup" also occurred in Czechoslovakia around that time.

Constituent Assembly and U Ba Swe (BSP) and Bo Hmu Aung (PVO) would wait in the headquarters of the AFPFL. PVO from the Rangoon Division, equipped with arms and ammunitions, would arrest the British Governor, then Thakin Nu would declare to the world that the AFPFL had seized power. If this is true, then the English-backed rightist group was one jump ahead of the national front.¹⁰⁶ When those who took part in that period were asked about the document, one of the old politicians, Waidura Thakin Chit Maung told me that it was not true. However, in 1947 he was only a second-tier leader, and may not have been privy to such a secret plan. When a person more likely to have been a participant in the plan, PVO (Yellow) Leader Bo Hmu Aung who, according to the document, was assigned to stand by at the headquarters of the AFPFL, was questioned informally, he failed to reply "yes" or "no" and requested to be shown the document.¹⁰⁷ If the story was not true, why did the library keep the document? If the story was true, it is clear that to some extent the British and the forces of the AFPFL were there in behind the scenes, trying to manipulate events in ways neither side made public.

In conclusion, whoever was ultimately responsible or whatever created the circumstances, the tragedy left an indelible mark on the memory of all Burmese. The assassination did give Thakin Nu the chance to emerge and the martyrdom of U Aung San established Nu's legitimacy. By associating it with the British, the AFPFL ensured that there would be no return to the argument for dominion status. It may be assumed that the two states know to some extent where the guilt lies for the assassinations, and although more than 50 years have passed they still do not want this information made public. The Party gained public sympathy from being associated with the martyrs. Despite the heavy loss of the core leadership, the AFPFL in which the BSP remained at the core of the state leading by individual leader Thakin Nu continued to hold the independent flag and worked to reach the goal of a Socialist State, and complete the unfinished work of the late national heroes to unite all the political forces.

106. "ဗဟိုတက္ကသိုလ်များစာကြည့်တိုက်စာအမှတ်-၂၈၆၄၈၆" (U.C.L 286486 (University of Rangoon, Central Library))

107. The author questioned Waidura Thakin Chit Maung and, the informal questioning of Bo Hmu Aung was undertaken by the author's friend, U Aung Myint Oo, who was a former tutor of the History Department in Myintkyinar College.

The Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in the Struggle for Political Unity

As previously discussed, when the Communist Party and Socialist Party emerged as forces in Burmese politics, they were mainly composed of young nationalists. These young men were the driving force of the national front, the AFPFL. The AFPFL was interrupted at the point of achieving power by the split with the Communist party. The splits within the Communists and among the nationalists had been already discussed in previous Chapter Five. After these splits, the core of the AFPFL came from the PVO and the PFP/BSP. The influential number of Socialists could be seen in the AFPFL CEC and its departments when the Communists' departure from the League.¹⁰⁸ The 15 members of the AFPFL CEC confirmed by Supreme Council were: Bogyoke Aung San (Chairman); Thakin Nu (Vice-Chairman); U Kyaw Nyein (General Secretary); Myanmar Ahlin U Tin (Treasurer); and members were: Thakin Mya (Socialist); U Ba Pe; Pyawbwe U Mya; Hintada U Mya; Mon Poe Cho (Socialist Sympathiser); U Pe Khin; U Ba Gyan; U Aung Zan Wai (Socialist or Sympathiser?); Mah Ba Khine (Socialist Sympathiser); U Ba Cho (Socialist); Thakin Wa Tin (Socialist). Its departmental heads were: U Kyaw Nyein (Socialist)-General Secretary; U Tin Maung (Socialist?)-Joint Secretary; Myanmar Ahlin U Tin-for Economy; U Kyaw Myint (Lay) (Socialist)-for Politic; Thakin Wa Tin (Socialist)-for Organisational; Thakin Tin Maung Gyi (Socialist)- for Information and Propaganda; Thakin Lwin (Socialist)-for Worker; and Thrawaddy Thakin Chit Maung (Socialist)-for Peasant.¹⁰⁹

The two national leaders, U Aung San and Thakin Mya, were dissatisfied with the political environment after the Second World War because the unity established among the revolutionaries during the anti-fascist revolution had vanished. This was the political cloud under which the CPB and the BSP emerged. There was a significant spirit of unity in the mind of the party's first leader, Thakin Mya. He accepted the chairmanship of the new party because he saw it as a position from which he could work for unity, not just because he was leader of the PRP.¹¹⁰ The

108. ဝိရူ "သခင်မြ" (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.369)

109. *Ibid.* Note. Waidura wrongly presented this AFPFL CEC list was confirmed by Second AFPFL Supreme Council held in May 1946. The CPB was not departed on the time. The AFPFL CEC list for 1946-47 confirmed by the Supreme Council was included Communist Thakin Than Tun (General Secretary), Communist Thakin Chit (member), and Thakin Thein Pe (member). See in "အဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်မှစည်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံအခြေခံဥပဒေ" (ရန်ကုန်၊ အဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။) (Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League, *The Constitution of The A.F.P.F.L*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1946.)

110. ဝိရူ "သခင်မြ" (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.370) shows that Thakin Mya discussed ways of achieving unity with the Communist leaders, especially with Thakin Ba Hein.

same commitment to unity was displayed by the EC member of the Workers' Union, U Ko Ko Gyi, when he accepted the position of Marxist Teacher in the BSP because he saw the unifying potential of Marxist ideology.¹¹¹

The AFPFL Chairman, U Aung San, submitted a proposal advocating unity at the All-Burma AFPFL Assembly which was held from 21 to 23 January 1946 at the Shwedagon Pagoda.¹¹² As part of his commitment to the unity policy of the AFPFL, Socialist Party Leader Thakin Mya worked behind the scenes to let the Communist leaders know about the decisions of the front. The reason for the discussions was to ensure that when freedom was achieved no group would be excluded; independence would be the achievement of all the national forces. However, the CPB forced Thakin Thein Pe to resign from the Governor's Council on 22 October 1946 and then departed from the AFPFL without defending the accused 10 points by Thakin Nu, at the AFPFL Supreme Council Meeting held on 2 November 1946.¹¹³

After the national leaders were assassinated, the rest of the leaders continued to implement their program for unity. In order to unify the left, the BSP and the PFP formed an organisation called the Marxist League.¹¹⁴ The original move to form the Marxist league was made by U Aung San. Before his death, he held discussions with the CPB, BSP and PVO at his Tarwarlane (Natmauk) Street residence.¹¹⁵ There were representatives not only from the PVO, CPB and BSP but also from the Communist Parties (Thakin Soe and Thakin Tin Mya). Thakin Soe said that "they could not negotiate with the opportunists, pointing to Thakin Than Tun's group" and he and his comrades departed from the meeting. The meeting continued and U Aung San emphatically said that "leftist unity was very important". U Aung San also wanted the CPB, led by Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Thein Pe, to rejoin the AFPFL. In the discussion, there was conflict between the BSP's Asiayone wing and the CPB's

111. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi, on 7.5.1988; ကျော်ဇော်၊ “ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း၊ စာ-၃၁။ (Kyaw Zaw, *op.cit.*, p.31)

112. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်ယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၁)၊ အမှတ်(၇)၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.7, on 30.1.1946.)

113. "ဦးဗဆွေ၏ ဖုဆောင်းထားမှုများ"၊ (*The Collection of U Ba Swe.*); ဝိဇ္ဇာရ၊ "သခင်မြ"၊ စာ-၃၇၅။ (*Waidura, op.cit.*, p.375)

114. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 31.5.1988.

115. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ထော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ စာ-၉၇။ (*Thein Pe Myint, His Political Experiences*, p.97); Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.; According to former communist Professor Than Tun (Retired Professor Than Tun, not Thakin Than Tun), U Aung San had to negotiate a compromise between two university students, socialist Sein Mya Maung and communist Than Tun. The two students quarrelled with each other in front of U Aung San so that U Aung San told them to leave, ခေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၊ "ငါပြောချင်သမျှငါအကြောင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ငြိမ်းငြိမ်းချမ်းချမ်းစာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၁၊ စာ-၁၃-၁၄။ (*Dr Than Tun, What I Want to Say in My Life*, Yangon: Nyeinnyeinchanchan Press, 2001, pp.13-14).

Thamaga wing. So, U Aung San had to warn the leaders of CPB about this and the meeting concluded.¹¹⁶

The AFPFL continued to attempt to bring unity to the left after the assassination of U Aung San and his fellow leaders in July 1947. There were discussions, led by Thakin Nu and held in his residence, between the CPB and AFPFL (represented by the BSP) about the need for greater unity.¹¹⁷ There was also a series of meetings for leftist unity under the sponsorship of the AFPFL.¹¹⁸ The basic component of the unity policy of the AFPFL was the inclusion of the Communists in the Interim Government. The BSP's motive for unity with the CPB was based on the fact that if the CPB entered into the League, this step would remove the Communist's right to stand separately outside AFPFL.¹¹⁹ The Marxist League was formally proposed by Thakin Nu, with sponsorship by U Ko Ko Gyi, at a meeting at the AFPFL (Headquarters), on 24 November 1947.¹²⁰ They selected nine leaders (Vice-Premier Bo Letyar, U Ko Ko Gyi (BSP), U Ba Swe (BSP), Bo Aung Gyi (BSP), U Kyaw Nyein (BSP), Bohmu Aung (PVO), Bo Sein Hman (PVO), Bo Taik Soe (PVO) and Bo Aung Nyunt (PVO), but were criticized by the CPB.¹²¹

On 13 March 1948, in a meeting of the Peasants' Union, the CPB and its wings decided to pursue armed revolution.¹²² This situation was a reflection of the Cold War, and analysts have pointed out that at this time the CPB came under the influence of Moscow through the Indian Communist Party at the Calcutta Youth Conference in 1948. The Cominform's policy of armed struggle and a break with national front governments was implemented in Burma, Indonesia and Malaya.¹²³ Like the BSP, the CPB had its own wings such as Workers' Union, Peasants' Union, and Women's Union.

116. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ၁၈-၁၉။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, p.179.)

117. *Ibid.*, pp.259-260.)

118. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary on Friday 21 May 1948.

119. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ၁၈-၂၆။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, p.260.)

120. အောင်မြင်ဦး၊ "ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၁၉၆၄)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၅၊ ၁၈-ရ၆။ (Aung Myint Oo, *A History of the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation(P.V.O)*, 1945-1964, MA thesis, Rangoon University, 1995, p.76.)

121. "ဂျာနယ်ကျော်မဂ္ဂဇင်း"၊ အတွဲ(၁၀)၊ အမှတ်(၁၂)၊ ၂၉၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၇၊ ၈။ (Journalgyaw, Vol. X, No.12, 29.11.1947, p.8); Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, First Edition, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, p.249.

122. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

123. Peter Edwards, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts, 1948-1965*, North Sydney: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, 1992, p.29.

The BSP learned that the Workers' Union was to hold a demonstration in Rangoon against the recent declaration of martial law. Any arrest of workers from the union would have provided a reason to step outside the legal fold and resort to armed struggle.¹²⁴ At last, Thakin Nu himself gave a warning speech to the members of the Parliament on 26 March 1948 in the guest room of the Parliament, stating that if the CPB could not agree with the AFPFL, the only way was to take decisive action.¹²⁵ Therefore, on 28 March 1948, the AFPFL gave orders for the arrest of all the members of the CPB.

At the same time the AFPFL declared its disassociation from the (White) PVO.¹²⁶ The AFPFL had again continuously attempted to preserve unity with the PVO but the PVO did not want to be united with the League.¹²⁷ However, the PVO (Yellow) led by Bohmu Aung and Bo Sein Hman remained in the AFPFL and joined with the BSP.¹²⁸ The above facts show how much the national front really wanted to achieve leftist unity. On the other hand, the CPB and the White PVO were preparing to implement their policy of armed struggle. The BSP, decided to condemn the Communists only after Thakin Nu ordered their arrest.¹²⁹ Even after the Communists went underground, there was a discussion, at a basic level, between the two parties.¹³⁰

Under the Marxist League, the socialists were the main force in the attempt to make the AFPFL, now composed only of the (Yellow) PVO and the BSP, a unified coalition of the leftist parties. The "most active person from the BSP in the formation of the Marxist League was Party Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi, who believed that if the members of the PVO were taught ideology, they would be good cadres for the state".¹³¹ Thakin Nu gave a green light to the League and the most active person besides U Ko Ko Gyi was the Vice-Premier Bo Let Yar who had been involved in the

124. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

125. *Ibid.*; Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary on 26 March 1948.

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*

128. "မိုလ်မူးအောင်ကြီးမှူးသောပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်အဖွဲ့ချုပ်နှင့်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်တို့၏ပြည်တွင်းဖြစ်ပေါ်နေသောအခြေအနေများနှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ သဘောထားကျေညာချက်"။ (*The Joint Statement of the PVO led by Bohmu Aung and BSP(Headquarters) Concerning with the Internal Affairs.*)

129. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary states that on 27 March 1948, the BSP held a meeting to consider the direction taken by the CPB and PVO and decided to condemn it absolutely; in his entry for 28.3.1948, he records that the arrest of the communists by the Government had started.

130. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary records that at 8:00 pm on Tuesday 4 May 1948, Thakin Hla Kyway and Aung Win (Communist) held a discussion about unity, at Htarna Street, Kyimyindine Township.

131. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary, 5 February 1948; Interview with Bo Nyunt Maung (PVO) on 17.11.1992; see also Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, pp.95-106; and သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ စာ-၃၉၆-၄၀၆။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, pp.396-406.)

Marxist Study Group in 1939.¹³² When Prime Minister Thakin Nu, in May 1948, proposed a fifteen-point program for leftist unity, it attracted opposition not only from Britain but also internally and thus, the program had to be revised and the last point of the formation of a league for studying leftist literature, was left out.¹³³ Thakin Thein Pe of the CPB, took the view that there was still a need to construct a foundation on which the CPB, BSP and the PVO could stand united.¹³⁴ The view within was that:

Nu's policy for unity is for public unity. It is the best way of agitating to get unity for all nationalities. The path to unity would be clear to all when the 15 points of the program are revealed....Without the 15 point-program, the public could not be organised. Without having unity among the peoples, the 15 point-program could not be implemented.¹³⁵

This statement made clear that the BSP leadership supported Nu's policy and the 15-point program and it was promoted within the party by use of Mao Tse Tung's motto, "လူထုထဲမှ-လူထုထံသို့" (From the People to the People).¹³⁶ Besides, in regard to the question of why Burma needed leftist unity, the BSP analysed the class interests of the three main parties, the CPB, the BSP and the PVO, and agreed that there were sufficient similarities for these parties to be the main forces for the revolution to be called the "New Democracy", a term taken from the USSR.¹³⁷

These events show that the BSP strongly believed that it was necessary for these three parties to work in unity. Although some forces had split from the national front, the Socialists tried to unite all the leftist forces until the Civil War broke out in

132. *New Times of Burma: Independence Day Souvenir*, 4 January 1948, p.4.

133. Patricia M. Milne, *Selected Short Stories Of Thein Pe Myint*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1973, p.5, mentioned that Thakin Thein Pe drew up a Fifteen Point Leftist Unity Programme; Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, pp.101-102; Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.113; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ စာ-၃၉၆-၃၉၉၊ ၄၀၄-၄၀၅။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, pp.396-399, 404-405.) The PVO submitted a separate program, drawn from proposals of the CPB.

134. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ စာ-၃၉၆-၃၉၉၊ ၄၀၄-၄၀၅။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, pp.396-399, 404-495.)

135. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်၊ (သခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-၈ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ စာ-၉-၁၀။ (BSP (Headquarters), Thakin Kyaw Tun), *The Statement Within the Party No.1*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948, pp.9-10.)

136. *Ibid.*, p.24, meaning that power comes from the people so that it needs to be handed back to the people.

137. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-၈ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၉၊ စာ-၃၁။ (BSP (Headquarters), *Our Political Programme-The Statement Within the Party No.(2/49)*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1949, p.31.); Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary; Josef Silverstein, *Burmese Politics: The Dilemma of National Unity*, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980, pp.155-156, footnote 76, points out that "Nu had the Russian and not the Chinese model of New Democracy in mind".

Burma. The above shows how wrong Thompson and Adloff were to state that: "The program for Leftist Unity...is permeated with communist ideology,...the Burmese socialists tend to place party interests above national ones".¹³⁸ In fact, it was the other way round.

The BSP became part of the "Leftist Unity Council" formed on 16 July 1948, composed of the Burma Army, the PVO and the Communists. In the council, Bo Ne Win was chairman and Thakin Thein Pe secretary. The government included Home Minister U Kyaw Nyein, an influential person in the BSP. They released the Communist leaders from prison to participate in meetings and then to negotiate with the Communists who had gone underground in March 1948. The Leftist Unity Council held together until its ninth meeting, which took place on 31 July 1948.¹³⁹ This demonstrates how much the Socialists wanted leftist unity. Its dissolution and the related conflicts were consistent with the main trend in the political life of Burma. The leaders did not concentrate on ideology but only on personal relations so that the attempts to build unity were in vain. Not only in the BSP but also in the PVO and among the Communists, there were conflicts about the Marxist League and all the leftist unity programs. The Cold War also played a major role in influencing conflicts, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

Another significant attempt made by the BSP and PVO (Yellow) to restore unity was their joint resignation from the Cabinet on 2 April 1949. In their official announcement, the Socialist Party and the Yellow Band PVO members explained that:

Our resignation from office does not mean our withdrawal from the AFPFL nor does it mean the setting up of an Opposition to the Union Government. Neither does it mean the shirking of responsibilities required of us. We wish to reaffirm that our only desire is to double our efforts to restore peace, to launch free and fair elections as early as possible, to suppress widespread lawlessness and to stabilize the Union.¹⁴⁰

Yet within a short amount of time public opinion had turned against the BSP. The question of how this public misunderstanding of the Socialists arose needs to be

138. Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, p.105.

139. သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ၁၇-၄၀၇။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences*, p.407.)

140. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary.

answered. First, there was a major change in the BSP leadership because of the assassinations in July 1947 of Leader Thakin Mya, U Ba Win (Constituent Assembly member), Dedoke U Ba Cho (TUC (B) Chairman) and Mah Ba Khine (prominent worker for the party in the Delta). And, then, U Hla Maung, a BSP Presidium member, took up a diplomatic post in Siam (now Thailand) in 1948.¹⁴¹ The Party itself could convene its annual All-Burma National Assembly only twice before the assassination of Leader Thakin Mya and not at all afterwards.¹⁴² There was decline in public support because of the case in which socialist Minister Thakin Tin was accused of relations with a prostitute in March 1948, and Party Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi's "40 lakhs" case in July 1948.¹⁴³ The Party believed that the intention behind the case brought against Thakin Tin was to undermine the prestige of the Socialists, so it responded by holding a mass meeting, followed by protest demonstrations in front of the buildings of three of Rangoon's newspapers: *The Economic Daily Newspaper*, *The Oway Newspaper (The Voice of the Peacock)* and *The People's Forum*. However, the demonstrators became violent and physically attacked the three buildings despite being instructed by the Party CEC to restrain from violence.¹⁴⁴ Some sources allege that the Party CEC itself made the decision to hit the press.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the BSP had to take responsibility for the attacks and suffer the consequent public disapproval. It is worth noting that, at that time, the BSP was struggling to implement its "Social Revolution", which involved abolishing "landlordism" and allocating land to the peasants. The party believed the landlords were angry and encouraged the newspapers to exaggerate the reports of the demonstrations. BSP member, former Lt. Colonel,

141. Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: The First Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1949, p.57; Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1950, p.18.

142. *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon from 25 to 29 March, 1952*, p.21 (explanation about the BSP by U Kyaw Nyein).

143. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway, see the Introduction to this thesis.

144. *Ibid.*; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. The CEC of the Party did not order the demonstrators to physically attack the newspaper's buildings but only to hold demonstrations in front of these buildings. In the meeting for the discussion of Thakin Tin's case held at the residence of U Ba Swe, some of the CEC members of the Party argued for an attack on the buildings but the CEC as a whole, did not give a decisive order to do so".

145. However, U Aung Than alleges that in the CEC meeting of the BSP, there was only one member, Thakin Tin Maung Gyi, who was not in favour of an attack on the buildings of the newspapers. This means that even Thakin Kodaw Hmaing was against the acts of the demonstrators, ဦးအောင်သန်း၊ "၁၆နှစ်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်မပါ၊ ပုံနှိပ်နှစ်မပါ၊ ၁၁-?၊ (U Aung Than, *16 Years*, Rangoon: Press?, Year?, p.?).

Chit Khine, said "the attack on the presses was wrong and the conclusion drawn by the party was right".¹⁴⁶

The BSP initiated the decision to resign from Cabinet. The members of the PVO (Yellow) decided to follow the BSP and agreed to discuss the matter with Lt. Colonel Ne Win.¹⁴⁷ There was another discussion among the PVO, the BSP and the Army men centred on the question, "Should they resign or not?"¹⁴⁸ There was a debate, for and against the resignation.¹⁴⁹ U Kyaw Nyein said that "We should not take the decision to resign easily. We should not give up the posts. We are in a better position with the posts than without; they enable us to implement everything. And the two parties present here are the most responsible parties in the country. We should reconsider the decision to resign".¹⁵⁰ Finally, the CEC members from the two parties agreed to resign: the resignation was signed on 1 April 1949, and then submitted to Prime Minister U Nu at about 4pm. A short delay occurred when the Prime Minister asked the parties to reconsider the decision, but finally the agreement was upheld and announced to the state.¹⁵¹ It can be seen from this that the BSP was prepared to forego its own interests for the sake of unity and peace. Thus, the BSP relinquished power because of the misunderstanding by the public and its concern for national unity. The PVO (Yellow) stood together with the BSP, an important element when we come to consider the BSP's relationship with the military.

The formation of the Committee for the Peoples' Literature and the setting up of the "House of the Peoples' Literature" were other undertakings by the BSP to keep the leftist forces united.¹⁵² The BSP, when reorganising in 1949, saw a weakness in its

146. Interview with Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine (later CEC member of the NLD), on 23.8.1990.

147. The collections of Thakin Hla Kyway include the minutes of the resignation meeting.

148. *Ibid.*: On the 29 March, 1949, at 9am, at the residence of Lt. Colonel Ne Win in Windarmier, a meeting took place and those present included Boh Hmu Aung, Bo Sein Hman, Bo Min Gaung, Bo Taik Soe, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Chit Maung, U Ko Ko Gyi, Thakin Hla Kyway, U Tin Nyunt, Bo Kyi Win, Bo Aung Gyi. Views for and against resignation were presented. They all agreed to hold another meeting to decide the resignation.

149. In a conversation with Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), he mentioned that he submitted "a proposal in support of resignation" and Bo Khin Maung Gale a "proposal against resignation".

150. "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်အဖွဲ့တို့၏အစိုးရအဖွဲ့မှနုတ်ထွက်ရန်အစည်းအဝေးမှတ်တမ်းများ" (*The Minutes of The Resignation From the Government by the BSP and the PVO.*)

151. *Ibid.*

152. ဝိဇ္ဇာ "သခင်မြ" ၈-၂၁။ (Waidura, *op.cit.*, p.21.); ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ"၊ မိုးဥက္ကဋ္ဌနယ်၊ ဇူလိုင်၊ ၈-၁၀၇-၁၁၁။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "People's Literature Committee", *Moe Journal*, July 1998, pp.107-111.): The author mentioned that U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Thakin Tin and U Win were not members of the Literature Committee; they disapproved of the party's leftist leaning. The Committee was composed of U Ba Swe, Boh Hmu Aung, Thakin Lwin, Thakin Kyaw Sein, U Ba Nyein, Dagon U Hla Pe, U Sein Win, U Thein Maung (Thaton), U Win Maung (ex-President of

education section so set up the Literature House. Its stated purpose was not only to provide education but also to foster leftist unity. The functions of the Literature House were to distribute the leftist literature from overseas; to translate political material for those who could not read English; to publish books about Burmese affairs written from the socialist point of view; and to distribute the educational papers offering socialist-orientated solutions to current problems. The House distributed the "Peoples' Newsletter" every fifteen days. The party also intended to open and administer an ideological school.¹⁵³ The idea of opening this ideological school was realised with the establishment of the Political Science University by the revolutionary men of the BSPP period, an example of the BSP's legacy. Furthermore, the Party had a program to form a "Headquarters for the Union of the Leftist Front".¹⁵⁴ The fruits of the foundation of the "Peoples' Literature House" were enjoyed not only by the Party, but also by the underground Communists and by the army men. Ko Than listed participants in the meeting of the Committee from the Burma Army as Colonel Kyaw Zaw (a member of the CPB now exiled in China), Colonel Aung Gyi and one other colonel (Lt. Colonel Ne Win or Colonel Maung Maung?); and he had written that when the Burma Army attacked the anti-government communists in the forest, the army seized books from them which had been published and distributed by the House.¹⁵⁵ The BSP also tried to iron out its ideological differences with U Thein Pe Myint while he was under arrest in the Insein Prison and instructed Kyimyindine Ko Than and U Ko Ko Gyi (former BSP chairman?) to endeavour to settle ideological differences with U Thein Pe Myint.¹⁵⁶ This was also a program of the Party to benefit political unity. Inclusions of former CPB member U Thein Pe Myint and a founder of the separate communist party in 1942, Thakin Kyaw Sein, in the circle of the BSP's politics, shows the socialist's organisational capacity and striving for leftist unity in Burmese politics.

Burma), U Hla Kyi, Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), U Ko Ko Gyi (Government Servants Union), U Chit Hlaing and Ko Than (Kyimyindine). Kyimyindine U Than served in the BSPP (Headquarters).

153. မမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီ၊ "ပြန်လည်စည်းရုံးရေးအစီရင်ခံစာ၏စီမံကိန်းအပေါ်တွင်-အာဏာပိုင်အဖွဲ့မှချမှတ်လိုက်သောညွှန်ကြားချက်စီမံကိန်း။" (The Burma Socialist Party: A Directive Program by the Presidium on the Reorganizational Program For the Party signed by General Secretary U Ba Swe on 6.1.1949, p.8.), from Thakin Hla Kyway's collection.

154. *Ibid*, p.10.

155. ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ"၊ စာ-၁၀၇-၁၁၁။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee", pp.107-111.)

156. When U Thein Pe Myint wrote an account of Mao's ideas, he in fact mixed his own concepts into his explanations ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ဦးသိန်းမေမြင့်နှင့်ထောင်တွင်းလျှို့ဝှက်ဆွေးနွေးပွဲ"၊ မိုးကုန်းယုဒန်၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ စာ-၁၀၀-၁၀၄။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "A Secret Discussion with U Thein Pe Myint in the Prison": *Moe Journal*, June, 1996, pp.101-104.)

The Role of BSP in the Civil War of 1948-1950

Because of the lack of success of the "Leftist Unity Programs", the BSP reviewed the issue of sectarianism amongst leftist forces.¹⁵⁷ It should be noted that the Party also saw its own weakness in Burma's fall into civil war:

Because of the sectarianism, we have not developed the right policy on the AFPFL. We always assume that the Party is the AFPFL and the AFPFL is the Party. In reality, the Party is only the "Front" and the AFPFL is the "United Front". The Party is the captain who followed the practice of Marxism and Leninism...There is need to look at our own faults and to correct them.¹⁵⁸

Besides, the Party believed the real culprits of the insurrection were the imperialists.¹⁵⁹ It seems then that the main cause of the Civil War was factionalism which itself reflected the developing tensions in the age of the Cold War.

The descent to civil war was also brought on by the assassination of the main political leadership, especially U Aung San and Thakin Mya, the Party's first President. No longer could the country call on Thakin Mya, who could negotiate a compromise between the main two rival groups, nor on U Aung San who used to deal bluntly with the split groups. There was only one left from the leadership triangle, Thakin Nu who himself claimed to have a stubborn nature.¹⁶⁰ He intended to resign as head of state and to work exclusively for the AFPFL.

The Civil War began with the campaigns of the CPB and a faction of the PVO, on 28 March 1948 and 27 June 1948 respectively. A series of insurgent movements followed across the whole of Burma.¹⁶¹ By 10 August 1948, the Government had to stop transportation by train from Rangoon to Mandalay and by ship from Rangoon to

157. "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်းပြည့်တွင်းစစ်၏အစပြုချဉ်းငှာ။" (*Internal Party Statement of the BSP: The Origin of the Civil War*, dated on 2.7.1948.); "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁" (*The Statement within the Party No (1)*.)

158. *Ibid.*

159. "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉"၊ ၁၈-၂၆-၂၅။ (*Our Political Programme-The Statement Within the Party No.(2/49)*, pp.26-27); U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, Rangoon: the Superintendent., Union Govt. Printing and Stationary., Union of Burma, 1956, p.25.

160. Because he was born on a Saturday, see U Nu's autobiography, *Saturday's Son*.

161. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway: he recorded that some of the PVO went underground on 27 June 1948. The Karen insurgents took the "Warkind Ferry Ship" and took the goods which cost over 1 lakh; on 3 August, Thaton was occupied by Karen insurgents and the districts of Patheingyi were taken by PVO; on 9 September 1948, the insurgents entered the Kyimyindine and opened fire and, the owner of the fuel shop, U Tun Myaing, and PVO member Yebaw Tin Shwe were killed; All-Burma Youth League withdrew from AFPFL; on 27 January 1949, the CPB and the Karen insurgents occupied Toungoo, Phyu, Htantabin Township; on 31 January 1949, Insein was seized by the Karen insurgents; on 24 February, Maymyo was occupied by Karen insurgents and on 24 March, Mandalay was seized by the CPB and the Karen insurgents.

the Delta cities.¹⁶² The capital city of the Union of Burma, Rangoon, was disconnected from the other cities and the countryside.¹⁶³ So, the Government of the Union of Burma was called the "Government of Rangoon". At that time, the only forces in the national front were the BSP and its wings, the PVO (Yellow), led by Bohmu Aung and Bo Sein Hman, and the Burma Army, led by Bo Ne Win. The choice was to fight the insurgents or surrender. They agreed to form a Joint Committee and to fight for the nation.¹⁶⁴

The BSP's policies provided it with a base to weather the Civil War. For example, the BSP's ethnic policy provided it with a position on 'Karen Affairs', as can be seen in a party statement of 1949 that the Karen insurgency was "not a Karen national movement but the offensive of the imperialists..."¹⁶⁵ Moreover, the Party warned its members that in solving the Karen problems, the Party should adopt the following process: the first priority was to embark on a "political offensive" and then, secondly, a "military defensive".¹⁶⁶

In the CEC meeting of the AFPFL, there was a serious discussion during which consideration was given to renaming the "Irrawaddy Division" the "Karen Division".¹⁶⁷ As the President of the Karen National Union, Saw Ba U Gyi warned his followers through radio broadcasts, "not to resort to force as the Union Government has already decided to give the Karens a separate state within the Union of Burma".¹⁶⁸ But there was not a peaceful settlement between the two. Perhaps Karen distrust of the Burmese was the reason the Karen only attended the Pinlon Conference held in 1947 as observers. They also suspected the irregular Government levies as attempts to disarm the Karens.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, according to the historical evidence, it should be concluded that the Karen insurgency along with other insurgencies, were based on mutual suspicions, present since the arrival of the British.

162. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

163. *Ibid.* Insein was taken by Karen, the provinces beyond the Kyimyindine river by the PVO, the Dala and Thanlyin by the CPB and the eastern part of Rangoon was surrounded by the Red Flag Communist Party.

164. *Ibid.*

165. "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉" (၁၈-၂၈)။ (*Our Political Programme-The Statement Within the Party No.(2/49)*, p.28); See also U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, p.26.

166. *Ibid.*, p.29.

167. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary entry for, Tuesday 2 November 1948.

168. *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, p.17.

169. Gen. Smith Dun, *Memoirs Of The Four-Foot Colonel*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University: Southeast Asia Program No.(113), 1980, p.68.

If new BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi's memoirs are correct, the importance of the BSP was affirmed by Bo Ne Win, who plotted a coup against U Nu, in which he planned to install U Ko Ko Gyi as Prime Minister. U Ko Ko Gyi recalled this conversation in 1948 :

Lt. Colonel Ne Win: My army is at Rangoon. Let's carry out a coup.

U Ko Ko Gyi (for a few seconds, he brooded.): Who would be Prime Minister?

Lt. Colonel Ne Win: You.

U Ko Ko Gyi: I am still very junior in politics. I have not been in the limelight of the public. Changing horse while crossing a stream is no good.¹⁷⁰

As U Nu recalled it, there was a power struggle within the AFPFL and the Cabinet: "Shall I sink if he (U Ko Ko Gyi ?) wins power? Will he sink if I win power?"¹⁷¹ The Party Chairman was more concerned about state affairs than about his personal power. After U Ko Ko Gyi refused, Bo Ne Win did not say anything more, but left immediately. When the Commander had arrived at the corridor of the house of the Party Chairman, two members of the Presidium, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, were already there, having just arrived. U Ko Ko Gyi admonished them as influential party members not to plan a coup.¹⁷²

Another significant strategy of the Party to preserve the Union was to choose Bo Ne Win as Commander in Chief (CC) of the Burma Army and then to send him to stand by Prime Minister Thakin Nu to help deal with state affairs. The BSP held a special meeting of the CEC on 17 May 1948, at the residence of Socialist Minister U Ko Ko Gyi. All the members of the CEC who were in Rangoon came and the Party elected Bo Ne Win as CC of the Burma Army (See Chapter 8).¹⁷³ The Party sent U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein to inform Prime Minister U Nu of the election.¹⁷⁴ It should be noted that when the BSP approached U Nu about the implementation of its policy, generally U Hla Maung was sent to the Prime Minister. But, at that time, U Hla

170. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi: he spoke the last lines in English.

171. Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis Of The Social and Political Foundations Of The Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, pp.170-171.

172. Unpublishe autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

173. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. These five reasons were: (1) he led the anti-fascist revolution along with Bogyoke Aung San; (2) he was one of the "Thirty Comrades"; (3) he made personal sacrifices for his nation and its peoples; (4) he played the leading role in the initial tasks of the Burma Army; and (5) at the current time, he was actively involved in the Burma Army.

174. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

Maung, one of the members of the Presidium, was serving as Ambassador in Siam (Thailand).¹⁷⁵ As a result, during the Civil War, Bo Ne Win became Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home and Defence in the Cabinet.¹⁷⁶

The Party together with the PVO (Yellow), under the flag of the United Front, formed the Rangoon Inner Defence Council, the members¹⁷⁷ of which were from the PVO (Yellow), the BSP and its wings. The main duty of the Council was to defend Rangoon against the Karen National Defence Organisation (KNDO).¹⁷⁸ The TUC (B), one of the wings of the BSP, worked untiringly to preserve the Union. The functions of the organisation were the holding of meetings to explain the situation to the people, the collection of enemy information, investigation of the enemy's territories, and recruitment for the Auxiliary Union of Military Police (AUMP, discussed below), to collect food and organise staff, and to help complete activities on time.¹⁷⁹ The men from the TUC (B) were like captains and soldiers without uniforms or arms. Therefore, the roles of civilians in the preservation of the Union, should not be dismissed, even though the Army was the main force in overcoming the insurgencies. At least eleven meetings were held at workplaces to explain the Government's position and answer the many questions that arose from the propagandas disseminated by the rebels and eventually, the workers decided to support the Government.¹⁸⁰ The Asiayone also had to deal with the problems of the joblessness resulting from foreign companies and factories reducing their numbers of workers or closing down.¹⁸¹

175. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi: U Ko Ko Gyi explained to the author how the BSP approached U Nu.

176. *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, pp.60-61.

177. The members from the PVO (Yellow) were: Bo Min Gaung, Bohmu Sein Hman, Bo Taik Soe,; from the BSP: Thakin Chit Maung (Waidura), Thakin Lwin, U Tun Win (Kanaung), Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung) and U Than (Kyimyindine); from the TUC(B): Thakin Hla Kyway, Thakin Lu Aye, U Tin Nyunt; from the ABPO,; Thakin Kyaw Tun, Thakin Ba Han, Thakin Han Nyunt,; from the FTO(B)-: Thakin Pan Myaing, Yebaw Pe Tin,; from the ABWO-: Daw May May Hla, Daw Hla Kyi, Daw Khin Myo Yi,; from the Peoples' Literature House-: Thakin Kyaw Sein, U Hla Kyi (Gyarnegyaw),; from the BSP (Rangoon Division)-:U Than Sein, U Khin Hla (Bahan), U Phoe Phyu, U Than Pe; and from the Yellow PVO (Rangoon Division)-: Bo Hla, Bo Ohn Pwint and etc.

178. ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ခဲခြံအင်းမိန့်တိုက်တွင်လွှင့်ထူခဲ့သောပြည်ထောင်စုအလံများ"၊ ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း(၅)နှစ်ပတ်(၂)မတ်၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ ၈-၁၄-၁၄၇၊ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "The Union Flags were hanging at "Khawai Garden", Insein District": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 2, March 1997, pp.146-147); the members of the BSP and the PVO and the students were given arms. Moreover, they had to produce propaganda, in the form of letters, to counteract the people's low spirits and to provide food and other supplies for the battle-fields.

179. Interview with U Kyaw Thaung, head of the TUC (B), 3.1.1995: he mentioned that in the Civil War, the most effective force to support the Burma Army was TUC (B) and the workers associated with TUC (B) who worked for preservation; Thakin Hla Kyway's unpublished notes.

180. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

181. *Ibid.*

One of the tasks of those who, under the guidance of the AFPFL, were preparing to confront the rebels, was to raise the spirits of the Union's servants, a task in which members of the BSP took part.¹⁸² One of the programs of the Party to defend the Union was the formation of the Auxiliary Union of Military Police (AUMP). The Party leaders had obtained Bo Ne Win's agreement to form a civilian force able to support the Burma Army, and took a leading role in the formation of the AUMP. The backbone of this civilian army was composed of workers affiliated with the BSP and the PVO (Yellow) led by Bohmu Aung and Bo Min Gaung.¹⁸³ The Party intended to have its cadres serve in two groups, one for Upper Burma and one for Lower Burma, called "Peoples' Occupational Inspectorial Body ", whose purpose was to collect intelligence about the enemies.¹⁸⁴ The Party also secretly sent Thakin Hla Kyway to the countryside for talks with workers, BSP members and Army Officers.¹⁸⁵ The AFPFL and the CEC (BSP) also assigned a Public Committee to Upper Burma.¹⁸⁶ Another important involvement of the members of the BSP during the disturbances was in the movement to ease the social and economic impacts of the war on the people.¹⁸⁷

Another significant BSP contribution to the preservation of the Union, under the flag of the united front, was its organisation of people from the frontier areas. It has been pointed out that the Front's ability to retain the loyalty of the majority of the Hill Peoples was one of the important ways it helped quell the rebellion.¹⁸⁸ Members of the BSP attended a meeting with representatives from the frontier areas, at the residence of ethnic Chin U Wun Thu Maung, on 18 December, and arrived at an understanding with them that they would help defend the Union.¹⁸⁹ The Party could reveal the close relation between the ethnic Chin and the Burmese when a Chin, Lt.

182. *Ibid.* Responsible for this works were the AFPFL (Rangoon Division) led by Thakin Than Sein (Socialist) and the BSP (Rangoon Division) led by Thakin Hla Kyway.

183. *Ibid.*

184. *Ibid.* Thakin Hla Kyway had been assigned to this role by the party.

185. *Ibid.*

186. The Committee was led by Thakin Hla Kyway and the members were Saya Che (TUC (B)), Yebaw San Mya (Ba Ta La Sa) and Daw Mya Tin (Ba La Ma Sa).

187. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway: on 23 April 1948, a relief committee sponsored by the AFPFL was formed to help the people. There was also a member of the TUC (B) in the committee. A Central Relief Committee meeting was held on 23 December 1949 in which Daw Khin Kyi, the wife of late national hero U Aung San, proposed that representatives of the committee go to Thaton and Moulmein to aid the people and thus, U Tun Tin (the Mayor of Rangoon) and Thakin Hla Kyway were assigned to go.

188. Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, p.190.

189. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

Colonel Hrang Thio, died in the fighting with insurgents on Shwehlegyi Street, in the Hmawbi-Tantabin area, on 6 August 1949.¹⁹⁰

Although the Socialists assisted in the defeat of the rebels, they did not do so in order to win political influence but only to preserve the Union. A comment about the role of the BSP in the Civil War by Burmese historian Maung Maung Gyi was that: "Doubtless the Socialists helped to quell the rebellion by mobilizing their political forces but they did not claim credit for it." Furthermore, he praised the leaders of the BSP as "indefatigable workers".¹⁹¹ Such claims support the portrayal of the BSP as historically important, but succeeding without wanting power for itself. The party's disinterestedness during the War contributed to its legacy.

Conclusion

The BSP played a key role in the struggle for independence. Its leaders during this period, strived to secure leftist unity. At all times, BSP leaders kept in mind national goals rather than personal or party power. After the struggle to secure leftist unity failed, and civil war began, the BSP also played an influential role. When civil war and ethnic separatism threatened the unity of the country, the BSP strived to preserve the unity of Burma. During the Civil War, the national front, composed mainly of the BSP, endeavoured to compromise with the ethnic Karen but failed. Although the military role was a crucial factor in the civil war, the BSP also played a major civilian role. The socialists served the State day and night, and its workers from the TUC (B) were actively involved in the AUMP. History, therefore, should recognise the contribution of the Party to Burmese politics. In the final tasks to seal the peace, the socialist cadres shouldered many responsibilities. In reality, the insurgents failed because of disunity in their own ranks, the unity among the Burma Army, the BSP and the PVO (Yellow) and the absence of support from the people for the insurgents. But as the next chapter shows, the civil war was also one of the effects of the Cold War.

190. *Ibid.*; *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, p.135.

191. Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, p.191.

Chapter Seven

The Burma Socialist Party, Burma's Foreign Policy and the Cold War (1947-1958)

Introduction

This chapter extends the reinterpretation of the influence of the Burma Socialist Party (BSP) in Burmese politics. The examination is carried out in the context of the Cold War. The role of the BSP in Burma's foreign policy of neutralism especially in the circumstances of "gray cloud", is very distinguished as a cadre party of the AFPFL although there were Socialists' flaws in the domestic affairs for examples-the Party's splits, the political persecutions to the opposition and the Party's pocket army: "*Phyusawhti*¹ (ပျူစောထီး)". From 1945 to 1947, the Cold War was played out mainly in European arenas, and did not start to directly influence events in Burma until 1947.² The Cold War started to have effects in Burma mainly after Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the start of the Marshall Plan, and, after Andrei A. Zhdanov laid down Soviet foreign policy, giving rise to the Cominform in the autumn of 1947.³ Consequently, Zhdanov's policy spread to the CPB through India, and the Communists proclaimed insurrection to be the true path to liberation. They criticised a negotiated handover of power from Britain to the Burmese as "sham independence". This meant that there was from 1947 a deep division between the Communists and non-communists about the best way towards achieving independence for Burma.

1. စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ ၁၈၇၅-၁၉၄၇-၁၉၆၂"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈-၂၄၀-၂၄၁။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996, pp.240-241.); In the conversation with former BSP chairman Ko Ko Gyi: The *Phyusawhti* Army was formed in October 1955 according to the National Defence Council led by Prime Minister U Nu. The purpose of the formation of this army was to defend and protect the cities and towns but it later became a Pocket Army of the BSP and the defects of the army were recorded by Tatmadaw writer.

2. James L. Henderson, *Since 1945: Aspects of Contemporary World History*, London: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1966, pp.75-76, divided the period of the Cold War into the transitional period, from 1945 to 1947, and the peak period, from 1947-to 1949.

3. Henderson, *Since 1945*, p.83; Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union in World Politics: Coexistence, Revolution and Cold War, 1945-1991*, London: Routledge, 1999, pp.24-25; Zhdanov, who was a member of the Politburo, gave a speech at the Cominform Conference held in September 1947 in which, he proclaimed that "the world had divided into two camps".

This chapter focuses on key issues that arose when the Cold War started to influence Burma. It examines how the BSP formulated policies to contend with these issues, both domestically and internationally. It reexamines some issues previously covered in the light of external influences. The key issues identified for which the Cold War played a role, included the 'Commonwealth Problem' for the BSP, the split with the Communists and hosting the Asia Socialist Conference. An investigation of all of these showed that the BSP had attempted to lead Burma towards a neutral position.

The Cold War and the 'Commonwealth Problem' in Burma

The coming of the Cold War to Burma in 1947 complicated the negotiations of Anglo-Burmese relations, especially around what was known as the 'Commonwealth problem'. From the British side, the most important condition under which Burma would be granted independence was Burma's entry into the British Commonwealth of Nations with dominion status. This would place Burma in the anti-communist camp. In order to show what this meant, BSP's influential leader Thakin Lun Baw, Burma's Counsellor for Foreign Affairs, went to Australia to learn about the implications of dominion status and trade affairs. The Australian Labor government, while supporting:

... full independence, favoured Burma becoming a member of the British Commonwealth, meaning that Australia tried to persuade Burma to accept dominion status.⁴

Privately, many of the elite within the AFPFL also favoured dominion status and membership of the Commonwealth, and this group included Bogyoke Aung San himself, Dedok U Ba Cho, as a Burmese conservative who usually thought in a traditional way, and U Ba Pe.⁵ Socialist U Kyaw Nyein remained in support of the

4. Andrew Selth, *Australia's Relations With Colonial Burma, 1886-1947*, Melbourne: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University: Working Papers No. 89, 1994, pp.11-12; at that time, Thakin Lun Baw was one of the influential leaders in PFP, unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway, former Dobama member and BSP CEC member.

5. Bogyoke Aung San "had made the commitment to Stafford Cripps that if HMG gives Burma independence, Burma would remain as a dominion in Commonwealth", interview with U Kyaw Nyein 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2; သိန်းမေမြင့် "ကျော်ငြိမ်း" ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ ၈၁-၈၂-၈၃။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1961, pp.72-73); Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Sir Hubert Rance mentioned that U Aung San and Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith talked about the British Commonwealth and U Aung San said that "independence would be too risky and that, as far as he is concerned, dominion status is what he wants" Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence, 1944-1948*, Vol. II, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984, p.868, see also p.483, pp.591-592 & p.607, which show that Thakin Nu presented an argument

sovereign republic although he mentioned in an interview that personally he was more in favour of independence with dominion status, as did U Tin Tut, who was a member of the Interim Government and High Commissioner-designate to London.⁶

While most of the elite associated with the AFPFL desired independence with dominion status, they felt they could not or should not persuade their followers to have Burma join the Commonwealth. They put to one side these private and individual positions as a way of preserving Burmese unity in the context of the Cold War. They gave reasons such as: "the country could not accept allegiance to a foreign king" and "to get unity with the Communists".⁷ For example, although U Ko Ko Gyi (Vice-Chairman of the BSP) wanted dominion status, he sided with the stand of the BSP for independence.⁸ This brought him into line with other important leaders such as Thakin Mya (BSP), and Thakin Nu, (Prime Minister and AFPFL President) who both stood firmly in support of absolute independence.⁹

As a whole, the Socialist and Communist parties, as well as the National Convention which they dominated, stood for Burma becoming a sovereign republic separate from the British Commonwealth.¹⁰ However, the claim made by McKinney in 1963 that "Burman nationalists, led by the Peoples' Volunteer Organization representatives in the Union parliament, succeeded in keeping Burma out of the Commonwealth", is a distortion of the situation.¹¹ McKinney assumed that the PVO played a major role in the decision not to join the Commonwealth of Nations, and it is true that there were 52 representatives from the PVO involved in the parliament who intended to change the Assembly to a "Rebel Assembly" if peaceful efforts to win

more in the line with the option to take Burma out of the Commonwealth; India and Burma News Summary, No.17, Vol.VII: Compiled from Official and Press Sources, DG 27489/1, p.11, Reuters news report (Rangoon) on 21.4.1947; Interviewed with U Kyaw Nyein on 15, 16 November 1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

6. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.482.

7. *Ibid.*, p.595; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi. In conversation with Sir Stafford Cripps, U Ko Ko Gyi, explained that "there would be confrontation with the Communists if the AFPFL decided to remain with the Commonwealth".

8. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 19.4.1989.

9. Thakin Mya submitted a proposal for "Absolute Independence" at the meeting of First All-Burma AFPFL Conference which was held 17 – 23 January 1946 in Shwedagon Pagoda, "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဣာနယ်"၊ အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၇)၊ ၃၀၊ ၁၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ ၁၇-၂၃။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 7, 30.1.1946, p.2, p.6.)

10. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Theophilus Elisha McKinney, *An Interpretation Of Neutralism In Burma's Foreign Policy, 1948-1958*, PhD thesis, Tufts University, 1963, p. 2; Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.535.

11. McKinney, *op.cit.*, p.2.

independence from the British failed.¹² However, the PVO had fewer numbers in parliament than the PFP, as was revealed in the previous chapter. Therefore, the decision of the Union parliament was more dependent on the PFP and its delegates because of the nature of the PFP/BSP's role in the AFPFL.

The important role of the BSP can be seen in its involvement in the foreign ministry. The party understood the importance of international relations for the future of Burma. Therefore, Thakin Lun Baw, influential BSP leader, was appointed as Minister for Foreign Affairs on 2 August 1947.¹³ On 31 October 1947, the socialist foreign minister was replaced by U Tin Tut.¹⁴ The Chairman of the BSP, U Ko Ko Gyi requested the portfolio when he was approached to serve in the Cabinet.¹⁵ After regaining independence in September 1948, during the civil war, influential BSP leader, U Kyaw Nyein became responsible for Foreign Affairs.¹⁶ During his time in the department, he went to London on behalf of the Burmese Government to ask for arms and ammunition to settle the insurrections in Burma but relations with the British Labour Government were strained and it was not a successful meeting.¹⁷ One explanation for this might be that the party men in the Ministry were too preoccupied with the interests of the party? A better explanation may be that those members of the BSP who held Foreign Ministry positions worked for the interests of the state, especially in times of emergency, such as allaying misunderstandings with other countries, and in dealing with the civil war. U Win and U Hla Maung, prominent members of the BSP, served as ambassadors in India and China. In other words, the BSP's cadres supported diplomatic relations.

Anglo-Burmese Relations

The effects of the Cold War made negotiations between the British and the AFPFL increasingly difficult. Governor Sir Hubert Rance's links with U Saw, discussed in the last chapter, and even the circumstances leading to the attempted assassination, could all be connected to the Cold War atmosphere. It must be

12. "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း(စာရေးသူ-ရဲဘော်သုံးကျိပ်ဝင်ဗိုလ်ရဲလွင်)"၊ ဗဟိုတက္ကသိုလ်များစာကြည့်တိုက် စာအမှတ်-၂၈၆၄၈၆"။(The Record of Freedom Movements by former Thirty Comrades Bo Ye Htut?, UCL: 286486 (University of Rangoon, Central Library)).

13. William C. Johnstone and the Staff, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations (1945-1958)*, Rangoon: The Rangoon-Hopkins Center for Southeast Asia Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, pp.8-9.

14. *Ibid.*, p.10.

15. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

16. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.12.

17. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 13.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

remembered that the British supported U Saw as part of their opposition to the Front's choice in the Governor's Council of a communist, Thakin Thein Pe.¹⁸ Another instance of the ways the Cold War impinged on Burma was the refusal by the British government, when it had just returned to Burma from exile in India, to allow the AFPFL to have the portfolios of Defence and External Affairs.¹⁹

With the expulsion of the communists from the AFPFL, the influence of the PFP increased not only in the League but also in its control of the government machinery.²⁰ The British Government's response to the position of the PFP was to worry that communist influence would increase if the party were split.²¹ It has been already noted that the PFP sought independence by peaceful negotiations, and had a contingency plan for armed struggle only if negotiations should fail. Conversely, the CPB's initial Browderist policy of "peaceful coexistence" was then followed by the Soviet policy developed by Andrei A. Zhdanov.²² Consequently, the Communist Party launched its armed insurrection in Burma in line with the Soviet-directed Calcutta Youth Conference in February 1948.²³ The Communists also denounced the AFPFL's policy of peaceful negotiation as leading to the "sham independence".²⁴ In their recent version of the struggle for independence, the Communists have reverted to their original position, claiming that Burma would have peacefully gained freedom in 1947-48 if "Browderism" had been adopted.²⁵ This suggests that the ideological conflict between the Communists and the Socialists about how Burma should pursue freedom was a product of the Cold War.

The Marxist League and the Cold War

The desire to preserve unity by the Burmese nationalists put them at serious odds with British foreign policy. In Spring 1947, AFPFL leaders attempted to set up the Marxist League under the Program of Leftist Unity (see Chapter Six). This

18. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.15, pp.59-60.

19. *Ibid*, p.48.

20. Burma: Preliminaries of Burmese Delegation, L/PO/245 (British Library, London).

21. *Ibid*.

22. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင့်တိုင်)၊ "အမျိုးသားလွတ်မြောက်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအပိုင်းနှင့်လက်နက်ကိုင်တိုက်ပွဲ၏အခန်းကဏ္ဍ"၊ (U Than (Kyimyindine), *The Last Phase of National Freedom and the Role of Armed Struggle*); Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, p.106.

23. Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall Of The Communist Party Of Burma (CPB)*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1990, p.12.

24. *Ibid.*, p.13.; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၁၈-၃၃၅။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1956, p.335.)

25. "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာဂုဏ်"၊ အမှတ်(၂၁)၊ မတ်၊ ၂၀၀၂၊ ၁၂။ (Peoples' Power Journal, No. 21, March 2002, p.12.)

attempt to bring unity to leftist forces failed because of factionalism and the Cold War. In fact, the purpose of the Marxist League, whose leader, Bo Let Yar, was not a BSP member, was to gradually replace the AFPFL.

The British viewed the fifteen points of the Leftist Unity Program plan put forward by Bogyoke Aung San's successor Thakin Nu, as "typical Communist procedure...the country can be gathered under the dictatorship of one party, and the party line made supreme..." and "it can bring forth some unpleasant consequences, for anyone who does not swallow this program whole will then be branded a reactionary and a capitalist...".²⁶ The first and last points of the plan caused the western bloc most concern. They recommended close political and economic relations with Russia and Eastern European countries and increased state support for the propagation of Marxist ideology, in line with Aung San's original ideas (see Appendix (g)).²⁷ The last point was especially of concern and there were "criticisms and misapprehensions" not only domestically but also from abroad.²⁸

Internationally, it was feared that the Marxist League's foreign policy was a sign that Burma would side with Communist countries, prompting Foreign Minister U Tin Tut to hold a reassuring press conference in Rangoon on 17 June 1948.²⁹ The most explicitly pro-Marxist point of the propagation and studying of Marxism, was removed, leaving the plan to become the fourteen-point "Nu Policy". As a result of the establishment of the League, power struggles occurred within the BSP, and the PVO split, leaving a much smaller core of the AFPFL.³⁰ Ever since the foundation of the BSP through the Freedom (Socialist) Party, there had been dissatisfaction with the introduction of Marxism into the Party. Some leaders such as U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Khin Maung Gale, did not like teaching Marxism within the BSP although they

26. A Letter signed by Harry Harwood to The Rev. Norman Goodall, dated on 27 May 1948, Burma-Christian Council, CBMS Box 453 (SOAS Manuscript Department).

27. Appendix (g): "The 15 points of the Leftist Unity Program". Bogyoke Aung San had directed the BSP Vice-Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi to study economic developments in Eastern European countries after the work of the Goodwill Mission was accomplished, Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

28. Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.113; Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, First Edition, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, p.102.

29. U.M.A Shankar Singh, *Burma and India, 1948-1962*, New Delhi: Oxford & I.B.H Publishing Co., 1979, p. 53; See also Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, p.102.

30. ကျော်ဇော်ဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာသိဇ္ဇာသွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ ၁၇-၁၄၃။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, p.143.); Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

followed the tune according to the circumstances at that time.³¹ The PVO (Yellow), led by Bohmu Aung and Bo Sein Hman, favoured the "Nu policy" and the PVO (White), led by Bo Poe Kun and Bo La Yaung, was against it, meaning that the latter, in time, joined the Communist rebels.³²

The BSP and Foreign Policy in the Cold War Period

Even before independence, the BSP and its predecessor organization the PFP developed policies to help other countries which were still in the hands of the imperialists to regain their freedom. Thakin Mya, focused on relations with India and China, when he was leader of the PFP, because he regarded these as the most important nations for Burma in geo-political terms. Bogoyoke Aung San also understood the importance to Burma of these two big neighbours.³³ At the same time, Thakin Mya intended to build friendly relations with Great Britain. One controversial aspect of his policy was that he miscalculated the Commonwealth membership of India and Pakistan; he expected that India would not become a Commonwealth nation but that Pakistan would.³⁴

After the death of Thakin Mya in July 1947, U Ko Ko Gyi as the new chairman intended also to move towards the Russian bloc, but his leadership was short-lived (it lasted from July 1947 to July 1948) and so his foreign policy did not materialise. While he gave priority to the Leninist policies of the *Third Internationals*, as a socialist he was prepared to deal with the British Labour Party as well.³⁵ During his chairmanship, an important initiative of the BSP was to send missions to Indonesia and Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam. In fact, this work realised the desires of the two assassinated national heroes, Thakin Mya and U Aung San.³⁶ After 1949, Ko Ko Gyi

31. Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 13.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

32. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂"၊ ၁၇-၉။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, p.9.); သိန်းမောင်(ဇေယျကျော်ထင်ဗိုလ်မှူးဟောင်း)၊ "၁၉၄၉ ခု ခြောက်ပိုင်းတိုင်းစစ်ဌာနချုပ်အရေးတော်ပုံမှတ်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်? ခုနှစ်?၊ ၁၇-၄။ (Thein Maung (Zeyakyawhtin, Former Colonel), 1949: *The Revolutionary Record of the Northern Military Headquarter*, Rangoon: np., nd., p.4)

33. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.194: in a Reuters interview, Bogoyoke Aung San thought that "China would be the key to World War Three, if civil strife in that country does not end soon. The Burmese is keenly watching current international affairs, and especially events in the neighbouring countries of India and China, as they are bound to have some repercussions on Burma..."

34. *Ibid.*, pp.533-536.

35. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

36. တက္ကသိုလ်နေဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၏လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း"၊ (၃)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ကမ္ဘာ့အေးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ ၁၇၂-၁၇၃။ (Ne Win, (Tatkathow), *The Record of Bogoyoke Aung San in the Freedom Movements*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1998, pp.142-143.): the delegation to London led by Bogoyoke Aung San held a reception on 30 January 1947, 6p.m, at the Donchester Hotel, where a representation from the

advised the BSP from behind the scenes. The CPB also proposed to help Indonesia and Vietnam materially.³⁷

The BSP helped the nationalist struggles in Indonesia, Vietnam and Laos, fulfilling the party policy that sought "to help colonised countries" and to continue the task set by the assassinated national heroes. However, with the creation of the AFPFL's approach of neutralism to counter the Cold War, especially after the failure of leftist unity in the late 1940s, the social democrats within the BSP considered that the close relationships forced with Indonesia and Vietnam would take their party too far to the left.³⁸ Nevertheless, these international relationships continued to bear fruit for the three periods of Burma/Myanmar's existence: the AFPFL period, the BSPP period and the Current Tatmadaw-dominated period. Although there has not been public acknowledgement of the role of the BSP in developing these relationships, their longstanding existence is another legacy of the BSP in Burmese politics.

Three months after its inception, the Union of Burma in March 1948 was faced with insurrection, and this civil war needs to be viewed as part of the Cold War. Some writers are still searching for the real culprit of the civil war in Burma, and it has remained a key issue into present day Burmese politics. In their most recent writings, the communists have reviewed the potential culpability of a range of people, from Socialist U Kyaw Nyein to non-aligned nationalist leader U Nu.³⁹ During the time of the civil war, the BSP presented to its cadres an assessment that implicated Goshal and Thakin Than Tun, as the authors of the CPB's policy of civil war.⁴⁰ Later, the Socialist Party held the imperialists to be responsible.⁴¹

The civil war started with the underground campaign by the CPB in the last week of March 1948. Then, the PVO (White), the pro-communist faction of the PVO,

"Democratic Republic of Vietnam led by Ho Chi Minh", attended on the invitation of Aung San. At that time, Vietnam was still a French colony; Josef Silverstein, *The Political Legacy Of Aung San*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1972, p.11.

37. ဗမာပြည်ကွန်မြူနစ်ပါတီ(ဗဟိုကော်မတီ)၊ "ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ-ကွန်မြူနစ်အပြန်အလှန်ပေးစာ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပြည်သူ့အာဏာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇၊ ၁-၁၀။ (CPB (Central Committee), *The Correspondents Between AFPFL and Communist*, Rangoon: Peoples' Authority Press, 1947, pp.1-10); Letter to Acting Prime Minister Thakin Nu from Thakin Than Tun, General Secretary of CPB, dated on 14.8.1947 (from the collection of General Secretary of the BSP U Ba Swe.)

38. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 21.6.1990; Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

39. "ပြည်သူ့အာဏာပုံနယ်"၊ အမှတ်(၂၁)၊ မတ်၊ ၂၀၀၂၊ စာ-၁၂။ (*Peoples' Power Journal*, No. 21, March 2002, p.12.)

40. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.; ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(ဆခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဖ-တ-လ-စ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ စာ-၃၊ ရ။ (BSP (Headquarters), Thakin Kyaw Tun), *The Statement Within the Party No.1*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948, p.3, p.7.)

41. U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*, Rangoon: the Superintendent., Union Govt. Printing and Stationary, Union of Burma, 1956, p.25.

and some factions from the Burma Army joined them. While their ideological movement and the Karen nationalist movement's uprising coincided, the two were different. The former was definitely opposed to the western bloc, in line with Cold War divisions; their intention was to seize state power. The Karens were fighting for an autonomous state, and for this they received assistance from British secret agents and their friends in London.⁴² The communists were following the Moscow's line that was communicated to Burma through India, especially as articulated at the Calcutta Youth Conference, which presented the new Cominform policy of opposition to national leaderships.⁴³ In this way, the effect of the Cold War in Burma was very clear by 1948 and the attempts of the national front, composed of the BSP and others, to unify the country were in vain. The strategy of the BSP changed to one of letting the gray and black clouds of the Cold War open; when their earnest attempts to get leftist unity failed, the party recognised the inevitability of civil war. The practical task of the party was to find a Socialist-minded military commander and install him in the leading role for restoring peace. They considered Lt. Colonel Ne Win to be the most appropriate for this role. Thus, the party started a new historic phase. In this view, the state, under the Union flag and made up of the BSP and its branches (including Socialists from within the Burma Army), and supported by ethnic peoples, was able to remove these black and gray clouds, the Cold War. Consequently, the influential members of the BSP, touched with the bitterness of the civil war and the Cold War, constructed a new separate space to keep the two power blocs at a distance. Consequently, Burmese Socialists gained international intellectual experiences from the Socialist parties of India, Indonesia plus Social Democratic parties from Japan, and then using its own status of half-ruling party in the popular front, expanded its links with internationally.

The BSP's Split

The BSP split has been described as the "Two Splits" by journalist U Oung Myint Tun who was involved in the Burmese social democratic movements.⁴⁴ He might be counted first the split with the Marxists in 1950 and second the split among the Social Democrats in 1957. Another source has suggested that, indeed, given the

42. Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, pp.119-120.

43. Shankar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.52-53.

44. U Oung Myint Tun (Deputy Head of BBC), *Burma's Democratic Socialism and the Asian Socialist Conference (1948-1962)*.

party's close relationship with the AFPFL, there was a third and final split based on the history of the AFPFL.⁴⁵ Journalist U Sein Win considered the departure of CPB from the AFPFL was the first split and then, the division of PVO into two as the second split. It was based on the Nu's Leftist Unity plan. His view on "third and final splits" was directly concerned with the BSP.⁴⁶ From the perspective of the BSP, in fact, it had endured three splits. The earliest split within the BSP went under the name of the "Forty Lakhs Case" involving U Ko Ko Gyi. The main reason for the case was to remove the Chairman from his leadership and ministerial post.⁴⁷ The case was concerned with the power struggles within the AFPFL and the BSP, and was motivated by U Ko Ko Gyi's refusal to be part of a coup plotted by Bo Ne Win under the name of the BSP. U Ko Ko Gyi concentrated on the Program for Leftist Unity; he let Bo Let Yar know what was happening in the Party and warned that it was necessary to get leftist unity in Burma. But, Bo Let Yar informed Prime Minister Thakin Nu of the situation.⁴⁸ Thakin Lwin, an elite member of the BSP, believed that the Chairman's expulsion from the government was a move against Marxism.⁴⁹ But the split was reconciled by the party and the former chairman worked for the Party behind the scenes. This split is to some degree attributable to the influence of the Cold War, because the removal of a Marxist theoretician from the government and party chairmanship might have been considered a satisfactory outcome for the pro-western bloc.

After the earliest split and during the re-organisation of the party and restoration of law and order in Burma in 1948-49, both the social democrats and the Marxists were involved in the running of the state. The second ideological difference developing within the AFPFL and BSP between those who followed Marxism-Leninism and those who did not, was brought to a head by the Korean War (1950-3), and caused the second split of the BSP. (See detailed in Korean Problem). The nature of this split will be discussed below, but it is important to observe first that the BSP had a united position on both India and China.

45. Sein Win, *The Split Story*, Rangoon: The Guardian Press, 1959, pp.12-13.

46. *Ibid.*, pp.9-13.

47. The Party emphasized that it only wanted removal of the Chairman—interview with U Chan Thar (ICS) alias Letwai Min Nyo (pen name), on 6.8.1988.

48. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis Of The Social and Political Foundations Of The Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, pp.170-171, states that there was a power struggle within the AFPFL and the Cabinet, quoting U Nu: "Shall I sink if he wins power? Will he sink if I win power?"; The Retold story by U Hla Mon.

49. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988.

The last straw came from among the Social Democrats after the second ideological split in 1950. There was a rivalry in the Socialists' leadership between an "educated class" and an "uneducated class". U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein and his followers came from the 'Union Clique' of Rangoon University. Those who did not study at University level were Thakin Tin, Thakin Kyaw Tun (Dun), Thakin Pan Myaing and their followers. The "educated class" was more concentrated in the sectors of 'industrialisation' and 'cooperation' while the "uneducated class" handled the issues of 'agriculture' and 'local administration'. This rivalry had spread to personal dissatisfaction between U Nu and Kyaw Nyein which was developing since 1954. At last, the final split occurred in early 1957.⁵⁰ It was not completely based on ideology but relied as much on 'education' and 'profession'; the effect was to create the severe split of the AFPFL in 1958. Despite these splits and to highlight the historical lessons for later generation, the policies of the BSP on China, India, Neutralism, Asian Socialist Movement and Second International, could be examined in the context of changing emphases from domestic to international matters.

Attitude of the BSP to International Affairs: BSP's Policy on India

The BSP understood the significance of Burma's geographic contiguity with India and China. Also, India and Burma shared the same colonial master, and it is not surprising that there were similar strategies in the two countries' freedom movements. Burma copied the nationalist movements in India until the 1920s. But, from 1930 onwards, the Burmese nationalist struggle diverged from the Indian orientation in some ways. Burmese nationalist, even Leader Thakin Mya, studied the literatures of the Indian nationalist movements and traced the roles of Indian leaders. In turn, Indian nationalist leaders were interested in the struggles of Burma. The relations between British Labour Party leaders and Indian leaders were closer than those between the Burmese and British Labour Party.⁵¹ During the times of struggle, Gandhi was a very popular figure in Burma. As well, relations between Jawaharlal Nehru and U Aung San were very close, something the British government did not want.⁵² Nehru also informed U Aung San that the strength of Indian Forces would be reduced to less than half of its existing size before April 1947; possession of this sort of information by the

50. Sein Win, *op.cit.*, pp.9-20; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂" ၁၈-၂၂၄-၂၂၅။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, pp.224-225)

51. Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence*, Vol. II, p.XIII.

52. *Ibid.* pp.78-79, 225.

Burmese would be embarrassing to the British government.⁵³ Nehru also invited U Aung San to come to Delhi to promote friendship and cooperation between the two countries.⁵⁴ India arranged for one constitutional adviser Krishna Menon to accompany the Burmese delegates to London.⁵⁵ During a trip to India, U Aung San also sought to establish friendly relations with Pakistan.⁵⁶ Although the Union of Burma did not opt for membership of the British Commonwealth when she regained independence, India and Pakistan did.⁵⁷

Appreciating the value of having friends during times of struggle, the BSP developed and maintained cordial relations with India. During 1940–41, Thakin Hla Kyway was involved in establishing good relations between Burma and India.⁵⁸ He also made friends with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose when the latter visited Rangoon.⁵⁹ The influential BSP leader and TUC (B) chairman, U Win, was sent to India as ambassador.⁶⁰ Before the era of independence in Burma, a Burmese delegation led by Mah Win Maung⁶¹ attended a meeting of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) at New Delhi, in October 1947. The delegation included both BSP and CPB members. During this trip, the socialist delegates took the opportunity to strengthen relations between the two countries. They attended receptions hosted by the Governor of India, Mountbatten, and his wife, the Indian Prime Minister Nehru and Indian merchants. They made visits of respect and worship to Mahatma Gandhi according to Burmese custom and also met with Indian Socialist leaders, including Rammanohar Lohia at New Delhi, and Indian Socialist Party general secretary, Mr Harris, at Bombay.⁶² Just before independence, a Burmese delegation, including the

53. *Ibid.*, p.78.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 13.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

56. တက္ကသိုလ်နေဝင်း၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း"၊ ၈-၃၅-၄၃။ (Ne Win (Tatkatho), *Bogyoke Aung San*, pp.35-43.)

57. M.V. Ramana Rao, *A Short History Of The Indian National Congress*, New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1959, pp. 266-267; Madhu Dandavate, *Evolution of Socialist Policies and Perspective, 1934-1984*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd, 1986, p.1.

58. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma Independence Celebrations*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1948, p.23; နီနီအောင်၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများ အဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)တီယူမ်(ဘီ)သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၅၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာသွယ်အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၆၊ ၈-၃၂။ (Ni Ni Aung, *A History of the Trade Union Congress (Burma)(1945-1958)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1996, p.32.)

61. Mah Win Maung, who is an ethnic Karen, served in the Cabinet as the Minister of Industry and Labour from 2 August 1947. He received military training from the British troops in India during the Second World War.

62. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

general secretary of the BSP, went to New Delhi to meet with the Indian leaders on 2 December 1947.⁶³

The BSP continued to foster good relations between the two countries after independence. The Indian Constituent Assembly chairman, Dr Rajendra Prasad, attended Independence Day celebrations held in Rangoon in 1948. To honour him, the AFPFL, including BSP leaders, held a dinner at the Orient Club, Kandawgyi, on 6 January 1948 as a mark of the friendship between the two countries.⁶⁴ Moreover, one of the BSP leaders attended the memorial of the birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, which was held on 22 January 1948 in Rangoon, and gave a speech.⁶⁵ Furthermore, members of the BSP took part in the mass meeting to denounce the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948.⁶⁶

However, not all relations were good. There were strong reactions among Indians in both Burma and India when the party's Agrarian Policy was implemented by socialist minister Thakin Tin. The policy, which aimed to abolish "landlordism" and nationalise land ownership, also affected Indian property interests.⁶⁷ There had been anti-Indian tensions during the colonial period due to colonial policies. Indians had been a major part of the Indian Army and the colonial administration, even after Burma separated from India in 1937. The worst relations between the two nationalities were among the workers, because Burmese workers felt that they were losing their jobs to cheaper Indian labour. Another cause of the tensions was that Indian Chettiar money-lenders exploited Burmese farmers and took Burmese women as their wives. Thus, more than 400,000 Indians fled Burma during and after the Second World War and the struggle for independence.⁶⁸

However, the tensions between the two countries were eased when Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter came to Burma on 20 June 1950 for a three-day visit. Members of the BSP welcomed them and discussed mutual problems – the border problems, the case of Indians living in Burma and the problem of property owned by Chettiars (Indian money lenders) in Burma. The Indian Prime

63. Shankar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.50: The delegation was led by Thakin Nu along with Foreign Minister U Tin Tut and socialist U Ba Swe.

64. *Ibid.*, p.46.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Rao, *op.cit.*, pp.256-257.

67. Shankar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.55: the Burmese government in 1948 passed the "Land Alienation Act", the "Disposal of Tenancies Act"; and the "Burma Land Nationalisation Bill" was introduced in 1949.

68. Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, p.208.

Minister made a friendly response: "India and Burma were under the British for many years and your questions concern matters that are the bad results of colonialism".⁶⁹

The BSP also helped to organise a mass meeting for the Indian prime minister at the BAA Stadium (now Aung San Stadium) on 22 June 1950.⁷⁰ In reality, during the civil war, Burma got immediate Indian military and economic aid while the British Commonwealth and London procrastinated.⁷¹ In this way, India showed real friendship to Burma. The BSP's policy on India was to forge good relations based on a common colonial past and a vision for a non-aligned future.

The BSP's Policy on the People's Republic of China

A milestone of the Cold War – the emergence of the PRC in 1949 – had an impact on Burma especially since, as a neighbouring country, it needed to respond. After independence, the foreign policy of the Union of Burma was to maintain friendly relations with all countries, but the BSP understood that the territorial security of the Union remained of considerable importance because of her geopolitical situation: there were two crowded nations on her border, one to the east and the other to the west. The party had already decided how to deal with these important neighbours. In the case of China, since 1939–40 in the days of the BSP's precursor, the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, the party's intention was to get assistance in the fight for independence from the Chinese communists, not from the Japanese fascists.⁷² However, the Chinese Communist Party at that time was fighting two enemies – the Chinese Nationalist Government led by Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese fascists – so that they could not help the Burmese nationalists.⁷³ On the other hand, Thakin Mya as a responsible person as foreign minister of Burma, in 1944, also maintained cordial relations with the Chinese National Government. The historical evidence can be seen in the tribute by Thakin Mya, as foreign minister of Burma, to nationalist President Wang Ching-wei on his death. Thakin Mya said that:

69. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Shankar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.56-59.

72. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာသွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈၇-၂၅-၂၈။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, pp.25-28.)

73. During the Pacific War, Chinese troops fought in Burma under Allied Command in 1942 and again in 1945, Harold C. Hinton, *China's Relations with Burma and Vietnam: A Brief Survey*, New York: Institute Of Pacific Relations, 1958, p35.

The sad news of the demise of President Wang Ching-Wei has plunged the whole of East Asia into a deep gloom. In the death of this distinguished statesman, China lost the greatest patriot of the modern day and the world lost one of the ablest advocates of peace. He was the first to perceive the logic of history that the only key to China's regeneration and the restoration of world peace lies in the adherence by the Chinese people to a nationalism which is synonymous to Dr. Sun Yet-sen's principle of "Greater Asianism". This vision in the final analysis is literally the complete understanding of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Ideal, and to this understanding, he has added his tremendous zeal and courage.⁷⁴

While it was just usual diplomatic practice to response the death of the head of the Japanese puppet army during the Japanese occupation in Burma, even though his attention had been focussed on Chinese revolutionary nationalism in his statement. The regional surrounding Burma, however, should not be overlooked. The reason for making diplomatic connections between Chinese nationalists and Burma, especially in framing PRP leader Mya's tribute, seems to contradict the BSP's stand on the Communists' victory in 1949. In fact, it might be assumed that the Party had maintained its previous resolve to regain independence from the beginning of the PRP. Other reason should also be considered to explain the cordial relations with China. They were based on the size of the country and its population, and the fact that the two countries had a common border.⁷⁵ In other words, the party leaned towards pragmatism rather than ideology in its relations with China. Another reason for the BSP became pro-Chinese was that after the victory of the Communists in China, some Kuomintang (KMT) troops retreated into Burma, and joined local insurgencies, thus threatening national stability. This might have influenced Burmese attitudes towards the PRC.

The Burmese civil war coincided with the victory of the Chinese communists. The Burmese government foreshadowed its recognition of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 9 December 1949 and then on 17 December it recognised the PRC.⁷⁶ It was the first Asian country to do so. The Union also supported admission of the PRC to the United Nations (UN), which occurred on 13 November 1951.⁷⁷

74. Greater Asia, Rangoon, Thursday, 16 November 1944, Mss/Eur D 1066/4 (British Library, London).

75. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

76. Johnstone *et al.*, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17.

77. *Ibid.*, p.24.

In fact, the party had already absorbed Mao Tse-tung's New Democracy, into its ideology, through the writing of U Thein Pe Myint and in secret discussions with him at Insein Prison.⁷⁸ This shows the final direction the Party took in relation to China. The BSP responded to the communist victory in China more promptly than the state, releasing a statement both in English and in Burmese, entitled "People's victory in China and the attitude of the Burma Socialist Party", in June 1949:

The Burma Socialist Party cannot but rejoice in the successive victories won by the peoples of China... These victories are the victories of the people. The defeat of the reactionaries means the defeat of the anti-people imperialist counter-revolution.⁷⁹

The Party statement outlined the history of China: the peasants' revolution in China, how China fell into the hands of imperialist and the role of peasants and Chinese Communists in the peoples' struggle against the imperialists. The BSP drew a comparison between the struggle in Burma and China's revolution, by stating that after the construction of a socialist economy in Burma, external and internal groups interfered and tried to undermine the peoples' revolution, and the BSP believed that "The victory of the peoples of China is an aid to the victory of the people of Burma".⁸⁰

The ideological wing of the party, the "Peoples' Literature Committee", discussed whether to support the "victory" or not.⁸¹ U Than (Kyimyindine), a member of the Peoples' Literature Committee, admitted that some of the members of the party disagreed with supporting the PRC.⁸² But the state itself recognised the PRC as did the Party and thus, the ideological disputes did not come to the fore.⁸³ To construct sincere friendship with China, the state appointed U Hla Maung, a BSP Presidium member and first Burmese ambassador for Siam (1948), as the second Burmese

78. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ဦးသိန်းဖေမြင့်နှင့်လျှို့ဝှက်ထောင်တွင်းဆွေးနွေးပွဲ"၊ ၁၇-၁၀-၁၀၄။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Discussion with U Thein Pe Myint at Insein Prison", pp.101-104.)

79. Appendix (h): "Peoples' Victory in China and the Attitude of the Burma Socialist Party": The document is not only in Burmese but also in English, dated June 1949, signed by The Central Executive Committee, Burma Socialist Party (Headquarters), Rangoon. (From the Library of Thakin Hla Kyway.)

80. *Ibid.*; ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ-လက်ဝဲညီညွတ်ရေးအတွက်လမ်းခင်းပေးခဲ့"၊ ၁၇-၁၀-၁၁။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "People's Literature Committee: Paving the way for the Leftist Unity", pp.107-111.)

81. *Ibid.*

82. "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ-လက်ဝဲညီညွတ်ရေးအတွက်လမ်းခင်းပေးခဲ့"၊ ၁၇-၁၀-၁၁။ ("Peoples' Literature Committee: Paving the way for the Leftist Unity", pp.107-111.)

83. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.21: one of the social democrats from the BSP, U Win, called for the admission of the PRC to the U.N.

ambassador to China, in September 1951.⁸⁴ Before the appointment, a joint CEC meeting of the BSP and the PVO on 20 February 1950 was held to agree to the appointment, at the residence of Bo Set Kyar (alias Thakin Aung Than).⁸⁵ Comparable to its handling of factional responses to the Korean War, the BSP ultimately failed to resolve the different opinions within the party about supporting the PRC in and thereby establish a lasting compromise.

Attitude of the BSP to the Korean Problem

The Korean War (1950-53) had a marked impact on Burma, directly affecting the policy of the BSP and eventually leading to the party's split. In order to demonstrate this, several points need to be addressed. There is need to assess the response of the AFPFL, the governing body of the Union of Burma, to the "Korean Problem" which was mainly based on conflicts between "left-wing Koreans (including both communists and non-communists) against right-wing Koreans".⁸⁶ The Burmese government announced its support for the UN policy on Korea, on 9 July 1950 but it also stated that it was committed to maintaining good relations with all countries.⁸⁷ Although Burma supported the policy of the UN as a member of the world's family, she wanted to keep her distance from the two power blocs.

There was ideological conflict within the party and the AFPFL over Korea⁸⁸. In fact, the different streams of ideology had existed within the BSP since its secret foundation in 1939 and persisted when the party established itself as a legal entity in 1945. The differences did not come to the front of the party during the time the CPB

84. Ralph Pettman, *China in Burma's Foreign Policy*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973, pp.8-9: The first Burmese Ambassador to China was U Myint Thein, appointed in August 1950; Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: The First Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1949, p.57: Chronology Of Events.

85. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; နိနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်သမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၈၃-၈၄။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, pp.83-84). Bo Set Kyar retired from politics and then founded the "Set Kyar Overseas Company" on 8 January 1950 intending to bolster the national economy and to compete with the foreign capitalists who were monopolising the Burmese economy. The residence of Bo Set Kyar was the place or meetings between the BSP and the PVO. Although he was supposedly retired from political life, he re-entered politics again when the BSP broke into two in 1950; he re-organised the TUC (B) in 1951, participating as treasurer.

86. Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1984*, Fifth Edition, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, pp.99-100.

87. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.20.

88. Website: http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/korean_war. The Korean War, the first armed confrontation of the Cold War, was an escalation of border clashes between South Korea and North Korea. There was a free elections held in South Korea during May 1950. North Korea demanded to hold new elections and the Communist North Korean Army assaulted the South on 25 June 1950 when the South Korea refused the demand. The two super-powers: the United States and the Soviet Union involved in each side. Later, the Communist China (PRC) also involved from the side of North Korea. At last, the ceasefire agreement was signed on 27 July 1953.

and BSP worked side-by-side in the national front. When the party became the major group within the national front, the ideological tensions appeared. These were exacerbated after the failure of the Leftist Unity Program when discord became obvious not only in the AFPFL but also in the BSP. Under the impact of the "Korean Case", the balloon was ready to burst. After the civil war, there were many occasions when different views were expressed: in the speech by Thakin Lwin at the TUC (B)-sponsored 1950 May Day celebration; in the ideological discussions at the CEC meetings of the BSP; in the speech by Prime Minister Thakin Nu on 19 July 1950; and in the BSP's discussion at a CEC meeting of Thakin Nu's speech.⁸⁹ These examples show that ideological disputes existed in the AFPFL and the BSP before the parliamentary debate about the "Korean Case". Even if Burma had escaped the impact of the Korean War, the split within the party and the AFPFL, would most likely have occurred.

As was usual in Burmese politics, there was a need for the party to prepare for the parliamentary debate about Thakin Nu's speech concerning the Korean War. At its CEC meeting of 30 August 1950, the party gave U Kyaw Nyein the task of developing the argument in support of Thakin Nu, and to Thakin Hla Kyway that of developing the argument against.⁹⁰ U Ba Swe, who could negotiate differences between the social democrats and the Marxists, was not present at the party's final pre-debate discussion in the guest-room of the Parliament on 4 September 1950, where U Kyaw Nyein said that he wanted to talk freely and to propound the views of Thakin Hla Kyway.⁹¹ The next day, the day of the debate, there were changes: Thakin Nu's speech was referred to as a "proposal", and the order of the speakers was rearranged.⁹² Thakin Hla Kyway did not support the AFPFL's view that North Korea invaded South Korea. Consequently, the CEC meeting of the AFPFL held on 20 September 1950 took action against Thakin Lwin and Thakin Hla Kyway.⁹³

The results of the speech included the decision to join the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), originally proposed by Thakin Lwin on 1 May 1950. This

89. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. In the 1950 May Day Speech, Thakin Lwin criticised foreign policy of AFPFL favouring to the western bloc.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.* The socialist members of parliament at the meeting were: U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Hla Kyway, Thakin Thar Khin, Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung), Thakin San Myint, and U Tin Nyunt.

92. *Ibid.* The first change was renaming U Nu's speech a "proposal", the second was the changing of the order of speeches- Thakin Hla Kyway became the first speaker instead of the fifth ; နိဒါန်း "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်သမိုင်း" ၂၈-၈၀။ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.80.)

93. Interview with Thakin Lwin on 11.6.1988.

decision was against the policy of neutralism of the AFPFL; it was supported by Thakin Hla Kyway, but written by Thakin Lwin in line with a proposal by Thakin Nu. As a consequence of opposing AFPFL policy, members of the parliament and Trade Union Congress (Burma) (TUC (B)) sympathetic to North Korea, led by Thakin Lwin, Thakin Chit Maung and Thakin Hla Kyway, and including forty others, were driven out of the BSP and the government, and then they founded the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party (BWPP) on 8 December 1950. In response, the AFPFL, now dominated by Social Democrats, announced the dismissal of the people leading the split.⁹⁴ Some of the Marxists from the BSP were against the ruling front. The main reason for this split was the lack of democracy within the BSP.⁹⁵ In every Socialist Parties, there were either a faction leaning to left and or a faction to right. They all had to compromise on important matters within the party. But, the BSP had no intention to hold even one national conference to resolve the different ideas within the party since Mya's absence. Also, Ko Ko Gyi who had disappeared from the party and U Hla Maung serving as a diplomat in foreign missions, were not there in the Socialists' divided leadership. Instead of debating such major issues within the party, the meeting avoided debating these extraordinary issues.

To sum up, the social democrat faction supported the national front's policy on Korea and the Marxist faction was against it. It provoked an ideological crisis within the Front and the BSP. The reality was that the Social Democrats were more influential in the Front and in shaping government policy than the Marxist leftist group. The latter group was more involved with the mass organisations than the former. In other words, the former group was more in touch with government policy while the latter distanced itself from it. This polarisation within the BSP was a weakness based on the party's failure to hold regular All-Burma Conferences; only two had been held during the life of the party, despite their importance especially in times of controversy. An All-Burma Conference might have prevented a major split.

The Roles of BSP in Neutralism

After independence was regained and attempts to unify the left had failed, the national front adopted a foreign policy of friendship with all nations.⁹⁶ There were

94. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

95. နီနီ၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်သမိုင်း"၊ စာ- ရှု၊ (Ni Ni, *op.cit.*, p.77.)

96. Speech of Thakin Nu on 13 June 1948, Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.11.

government statements indicating that Burma did not intend to make any alliances.⁹⁷ The remaining BSP members argued that Burma should "follow a course similar to Nehru's" and "have no entangling alliances", indicative of the fact that they may have influenced U Nu's line, and were again pushing the country towards neutralism.⁹⁸ Furthermore, opinions against Marxism-Leninism were now being expressed more frequently within the AFPFL and the BSP. Although Thakin Nu had been one of the main nationalists, who in the 1930s made socialist literature a principal ideological source, he now joined the social democrats to change BSP policy. This switch may have been because the aid and the technologies from the western bloc were more enticing than those from the eastern bloc.

On 4 January 1948, in his Independence Day speech, Thakin Nu announced the foreign policy of the Union of Burma: "to other nations with all of whom we hope to live forever on terms of amity and concord, Burma...offers her co-operation in the task of making a greater and preserving the cause of perpetual peace for this harassed world."⁹⁹ Moreover, he spoke of Burma's wish for the freedom of those nations not yet free.¹⁰⁰ Socialist Foreign Minister U Kyaw Nyein also pointed out that "the world was now centred on the United Nations organisations because of... the need for peace."¹⁰¹ These words express a policy of peaceful relations with all nations and of cooperation in the task of preserving peace for the world.

Why did Burma set up a policy of friendly relations with all nations and commit herself to world peace in the era of the Cold War? The short answer to this question is "Burmese Nationalism". Independence was won not as a result of armed conflict but as the fruit of friendly negotiations. Burma had to follow the processes of negotiations with the British according to the Aung San-Attlee Agreement in January 1947 and Nu-Attlee Agreement in October 1947, in which the most important question for the future of Burma was whether or not to enter the British Commonwealth. The Burmese Executive members had to answer many questions put by the British and they followed the decisions of the Constituent Assembly, especially in its demand for

97. *Ibid.*, p.15: on 12 May 1948, the Government denied any possibility of Burma joining the Commonwealth, "solely for the purpose of restoring law and order in the country"; on 21 June, Thakin Nu, during a parliamentary debate, "indicated his fear of alliances and pacts".

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Burma Independence Celebrations*, pp.15-17; *New Times Of Burma: Independence Day Souvenir, January 4, 1948*, pp.5-6.

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Burma's Freedom: The First Anniversary*, p.45.

absolute independence from the British Commonwealth, a position favoured by the BSP. However, just after independence, Burma technically maintained her military alliance with the British according to the Let Ya–Freeman Agreement. Besides, it had to rely on assistance from the Commonwealth countries and the United States when faced with civil war. However, as Thakin Nu explained, assistance from the Commonwealth did not mean joining it – it was only for the purpose of restoring law and order.¹⁰² Burma, as a nation, was falling into the hands of the imperialists and she was afraid of losing independence again. Another factor to arouse the nationalist spirit was the assassination of national leaders, including socialist leaders, while they were struggling for Burma's freedom. So, independent Burma adopted a policy of non-alignment.

How did Burma's main neighbours, China and India, respond to Burma's neutralism? The two socialists, U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale, suggested in a parliamentary debate on 21 June 1949 that "Burmese foreign policy should follow a course similar to Nehru's" and "Burma should have no entangling alliances".¹⁰³ By taking this foreign policy direction, Burma was at odds with the policies of both Russia and China.¹⁰⁴ Mao Tse-tung stated, "It is impossible to sit on the fence...Neutralism is merely a camouflage; a third road does not exist."¹⁰⁵ On 16 November 1949, in the WFTU Conference sponsored by the Chinese Government, the independence of Burma was characterised as "the new strategy of British imperialism, for re-establishing imperialist dominion."¹⁰⁶ However, after Burma recognised the PRC in December 1949 and sent socialist U Hla Maung as ambassador to China in 1951, a new and warmer phase in Sino-Burmese relations began, even though communist China was close to the Burmese communists than the ruling socialists.

Thus, by 1954, relations between India and China, and Burma and China had clearly improved. The "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" had been agreed to in June 1954 by the three nations as a policy of neutralism. America's Cold War response to Chinese communism, based on the fear that communism would spread to the rest of Asia, was the formation of a military pact, the "South-East Asia Treaty

102. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.15.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

104. Pettman, *op.cit.*, pp.5-6: the Cominform generally denounced the idea of neutralism.

105. *Ibid.*, p.6.

106. *Ibid.*, p.7.

Organization" (SEATO) on 8 September 1954. Burma refused to join SEATO and, in line with her non-alignment policy, viewed it as "an unwarranted incitement of China"; the Chinese Prime Minister stated it was a hostile action against the PRC.¹⁰⁷ So, India and Burma were following the same foreign policy orientation and Sino-Burmese relations gradually improved, although Burma was not controlled by the Chinese communist government.

There were also many discussions of the Concept of Neutralism in Burma's Foreign Policy. U Nu, in a presentation on behalf of the Union of Burma to the Congress of United States in 1955, said that Burmese neutralism was: "an independent foreign policy designed to maintain the friendship of all nations and to avoid big power alliance."¹⁰⁸ Burma's Permanent Minister for Foreign Affairs, James Barrington, stated that: "It is neutrality in the sense that in an extended conflict in which neither side is absolutely right nor absolutely wrong, she refuses to line up absolutely with either side."¹⁰⁹ Socialist U Kyaw Nyein viewed it as, "a policy of non-provocation" to avoid a power bloc alliance.¹¹⁰ Moreover, he said it was consistent with "democratic socialism".¹¹¹ Socialist U Ba Swe pointed out that it was an expression of the principle of peaceful coexistence, which was USSR's policy from 1920 onwards to "live peacefully side-by-side with capitalist states". He also argued that the origin of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" announced by Nehru, Nu and Zhou En-lai was the old version of the policy adopted by the Soviet just after the Second World War, which was denounced by the BSP and adopted by the Burmese communists.¹¹² The concept of neutralism in Burma was based on the necessity to maintain independence so as not to become a dependent country again.

The Socialist International, the BSP and the Asian Socialist Conference

Because of the way it developed in the 1930s, Burmese Socialism was an extension of nationalism, while Socialism as an international movement came from Europe. Burmese nationalists identified Socialism's elements with indigenous ideology, specifically with Buddhism. The world socialist movement played many

107. *Ibid.*, pp.17-18.

108. McKinney, *op.cit.*, p.28.

109. *Ibid.*, p.1.

110. *Ibid.*, p.31.

111. *Ibid.*, p.36.

112. *Ibid.*, p.37; Geoffrey Roberts, *op.cit.*, p.108: Glossary of key terms; Shankar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.107-114: The five principles of peaceful coexistence discussed by Nehru, U Nu, and Chou En-lai when they met at Colombo, Ceylon in 1954.

different tunes. At the time of the foundation of the BSP, the party's ideology was the form of Marxism known as scientific socialism, and it trained the socialist cadres by teaching them Marxism–Leninism. The party, on the whole, was mostly inspired by the song of freedom. Just before independence, U Ko Ko Gyi wanted to move in tune with the Third International and its adherence to Leninism. After he was forced backstage, the party began to move in line with the Second International, as espoused by Edward Bernstein in the form of a parliamentary path to power.¹¹³ In the middle of 1950, before the BSP split of December that year, the Second Socialist International (SI) began to contact two influential BSP leaders, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, correspondence that was followed up over the next two years.¹¹⁴ The SI was afraid that the Union of Burma was leaning towards the Soviet bloc. The correspondence, which had been prompted by the Indian Socialist Party, consisted of attempts to persuade the Burmese party to establish close relations with the SI. In its approach, the SI first made enquiries about prominent BSP figures, and then directly contacted these two.¹¹⁵ Although the introductory overtures came from the side of the SI, U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maug Gale had been in touch with the European socialists while they were in Europe (in 1947), but had been unable to build on these initial contacts because of domestic affairs, the civil war in particular.

The result of the initial contacts was the instigation of the Asian Socialist Conference (ASC). One of the purposes of the first ASC, in 1953, was to establish a liaison with the SI.¹¹⁶ In fact, there were many discussions at the preliminary meeting for the ASC, held in Rangoon in March 1952, about whether or not Asian parties should join the SI. The Burmese delegate sought more information about the SI from the Indian and Japanese members of the meeting. Attitudes towards the SI varied. The

113. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

114. *Letter to Mr. U. Ba Swe, BSP General Secretary, from Julius Braunthal, SI Administrative Secretary, 9 June 1950; Letters to Mr. U Ba Swe and Mr. U Kyaw Nyein from Julius Braunthal, 31 January 1951; A Letter to Mr. Julius Braunthal from E.G. Farmer, Commonwealth Officer, 24 November 1951, in which U Ko Ko Gyi (not the former Chairman of the BSP), Chairman of the Rangoon township Socialist Party and a close associate of U Ba Swe, asked for literature from the SI (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)*

115. *Letter to U Ba Swe, from Julius Braunthal, 9 June 1950; letter to U Ba Swe from Julius Braunthal, 16 March 1951; Letter to Mr. Julius Braunthal from E.G Farmer, 24 November 1951; Letter to Michael Young from Julius Braunthal dated 1 May 1952; Letter to E.G Farmer from Julius Braunthal 27 May 1952; Letter to Dr. Julius Braunthal from E.G Farmer, 5 June 1952; Letter to Maung Maung Gyi from Julius Braunthal, 23 June 1952; Letter to Comrade Julius Braunthal from Rammanohar Lohia, Socialist Party (India), Foreign Affairs Committee, 11 July 1952 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)*

116. *Report of the First Asian Socialist Conference, Rangoon: An Asian Socialist Publication, 1953, p.34 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)*

Japanese view was that an Asiatic organisation of socialists should be established before discussions were held about SI membership. The Indonesian delegate was opposed to joining the SI and wanted to leave the matter off the agenda. The Indian delegate wanted the meeting to decide whether or not to join the SI. The Burmese were more in favour of joining, although in some respects sympathetic to the views of Indonesia.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the resolution was passed at the first ASC to establish a friendly relationship with SI and to have delegates from SI attend the ASC as a fraternal organization. Those who came included Clement Attlee, Andre Bidet, Kaj Bjork and Saul Rose.¹¹⁸ At the ASC's Fourth Bureau meeting, held from 19 to 21 November 1954, in Tokyo, a mutual understanding was reached between the ASC and the SI and a supporting statement was passed.¹¹⁹ Therefore cordial relations between the ASC and SI were the result of initial communications between the BSP and the SI except that the Indian Socialist Party played a role in these. The social democrats led the Union of Burma from nationalism into internationalism.

The holding of the Asian Socialist Conference in Burma was the result of the work of the BSP's Social Democrats. Social Democrats from the countries involved agreed at the beginning of 1950s to refrain from joining either of the two power-blocs of the Cold War. Thus, the Asian Socialist Conference emerged as an effort to link up like-minded parties in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The BSP, led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, in conjunction with the other Asian Socialist Parties, played an influential role in establishing the Asian Socialist movement and thus, ultimately the Non-Aligned Movement.

The idea to hold this kind of international conference was a result of the triangular relationship between India, Burma and Indonesia. This relationship came out of their common national struggles, with the supplementary role in supporting it played by Japan. The ideals of the Burmese social democrats were ignited during the missions to London in January and June 1947. The BSP participants in these missions, as discussed already, consisted of the major leaders from the different factions, and they all made important contacts with the British Labour Party members.

117. 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, pp.94-96, P.111, p.119. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

118. *Report of the First Asian Socialist Conference*, p.112 (Appendix C).

119. The Preparatory Committee (Second Congress of the Asian Socialist Conference), *Three Years Of Asian Socialist Conference*, Bombay: Mouj Printing Bureau, 1956, p.44. (Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi.)

The European tours taken by the BSP's two Social Democrats after the completion of the work of the Goodwill Mission were also historically important for building the base of non-aligned internationalism amongst the Socialists. U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale, went to France (Paris), Czechoslovakia (Prague) and Yugoslavia (Belgrade), where they met, amongst others, members of Labour and Socialist Parties.¹²⁰ U Ko Ko Gyi, as Vice-President of the Burma Government Planning Board and on the instructions of U Aung San, planned to study reconstruction, planning and labour organisation in Amsterdam, Prague, Warsaw, Belgrade, Geneva and Paris.¹²¹ However, he cancelled his tour when information of the assassination of the national leaders arrived from Rangoon, and he left London for Burma on 23 July.¹²² Nevertheless, the two social democrats broadened the horizons of the BSP when they went to Europe in July and August 1947.

The idea of holding an Asia Socialist Conference (ASC) at Rangoon on 6 January 1953 came from the inter-Asian Relations Conference (ARC), the non-party level conference, held from 23 March to 2 April 1947 at New Delhi.¹²³ The main objective of the ARC was to exchange ideas about the problems facing all the former colonial Asian countries in the post-war era.¹²⁴ The ARC coincided with the period in which the Burmese nationalist leaders were busy implementing the London agreement, that is, organising the election for the Constituent Assembly and the Conference for Frontier Areas. Seventeen delegates and four observers from Burma attended the ARC, the most significant of them being Thakin Mya. Officially Justice U Kyaw Myint was the leader and Thakin Mya an observer, but in reality, Thakin Mya led the delegation.¹²⁵ The Burmese who participated in the conference were the intellectuals who led the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Burma. The host country, India, had fifty-one delegates and six observers; China had eight delegates and one

120. Inward Telegram, From Governor of Burma to Secretary of State for Burma, on 7 August 1947, B/C 1549 (1947) (British Library, London) The telegram states that he returned to Rangoon on 28 August, but considering the date of the telegram, this must have been 28 July; Draft Telegram, 15.8.1947, B/C 1549/47 (British Library, London) (in reply to U Kyaw Nyein and Bo Khin Maung Gale).

121. Outward Telegram, IOR: M/4/2698 (British Library, London).

122. A Letter to Wakeling from R. V. Findlay on 19 July 1947, IOR: M/4/2698: B/C 1328/47 (British Library, London); Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

123. *Three Years of the Asian Socialist Conference*, 1956, p.4.

124. *Asian Relations being Report of the Proceedings and Documentation of the First Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March-April, 1947*, New Delhi: Asian Relations Organization, 1948, p.3.

(Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi.)

125. *Ibid*, pp.8, 39 (photo, of the Burmese delegates arriving at the Conference Auditorium), 265-266.

observer; Indonesia had twenty-five delegates and seven observers. Australia also participated.¹²⁶

There were a few principal concerns of the Burmese delegation: the need for a guarantee from India not to use her army to suppress the freedom movement of any country when she emerged as a free country; the racial problems and inter-Asian migration in Burma; the Burmese economy's need for capital; the agrarian problems of Burma; the need for scientific development in Burma; and the status of women in Burma.¹²⁷ The conference resolved to establish a permanent organisation, named the Asian Relations Organisation (ARO). In contrast to the ASC, the ARO intended to have no party affiliations and to engage in no political propaganda.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, BSP President Thakin Mya met Indonesian Socialist Party leader, Dr Sjahrir, in Rangoon and he provided a possible source of ideas for the BSP.¹²⁹ But, unfortunately, Thakin Mya was assassinated along with his colleagues two months after attending the ARC. If Thakin Mya had remained alive, the major split in 1950 within the BSP may have been avoided. And, even though there was a split, Mya was extolled as Patron in the emergent new party. If so, there might not have been a third split within the party which would have avoided the split of the AFPFL in 1957.

The BSP played an influential role in the preliminary conference for the ASC held at Rangoon from 25 to 29 March 1952. Socialist parties from India, Indonesia and both Japanese Socialist Democratic Parties (Left and Right) attended.¹³⁰ On behalf of the host nation, U Kyaw Nyein gave the speech of welcome. The main purposes of the conference that he identified in his speech were: to solve common problems; to explore the significance of Asia's colonial history; and to discuss the prevention of the "Third Great War" that threatened to emerge out of the Cold War.¹³¹ Seven members of the BSP participated, and from them U Ba Swe was appointed

126. *Ibid.*, pp.8 & 278 (Australia sent two observers, John A. McCallum from the Australian Institute of Political Science, Sydney, and Gerald Packer from the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney).

127. *Ibid.*, pp. 96, 100, 112, 188, 217, 226.

128. *Ibid.*, pp.255 & 257.

129. သခင်ချစ်မောင်(ဝိရုရ)"အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ"(ပ)ကြိမ်ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉၊ ဇူလိုင်လ။ (Thakin Chit Maung(Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979, photo.); ဟံသာဝတီသတင်းစာ၊ ၁၂၊ ၄၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (*Hantharwaddy Newspaper*, 12.4.1947).

130. *Report of the Preliminary Meeting for the Asian Socialist Conference held at Rangoon, 25 to 29 March, 1952*, pp.1 & 3.

131. *Ibid.*, pp.1-3.

chairman and U Tin Nyunt secretary. The other participants were U Kyaw Nyein, Bo Khin Maung Gale, U Tun Win, Bo Hmu Aung and Thakin Kyaw Tun (Dun).¹³²

Participants from Burma, India and Indonesia presented general reports on their parties. U Kyaw Nyein presented the "General Report of the BSP", in which he gave the following picture of the BSP. Its membership was middle class and it was called a Socialist Party because its members were leftists. Its tactic for regaining freedom for Burma was to fight the British Government constitutionally in part because the assassination of some of its leaders was at the instigation of British ex-army officers. Also in the report presented Socialist U Kyaw Nyein, he noted that it had a strong relationship with non-aligned prime minister, Thakin Nu. Its strategy was to be influential within the AFPFL led by Thakin Nu; and its work within the United Front was the key to its success. The explanation for the BSP's success was its involvement of ruling governments among Asian Socialists during the time. He detailed its method of selecting members and the way it implemented its program under the name of AFPFL. The highlight of the meeting was the account Indian Socialist Party leader, Dr. Lohia, gave of other Asian socialist parties from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Israel, Thailand, China, Malaya, Singapore, Philippines, Nepal and Egypt. In response, U Kyaw Nyein made comments and asked questions.¹³³

BSP general secretary, U Ba Swe, as chairman of the meeting, proposed that each party submit a policy statement. As an example of BSP policy, he said that the party accepted "Marxism as a guide to action". Socialist U Kyaw Nyein explained that the BSP adopted Marxism for its methodology. As a Social Democrat, he understood the weakness of capitalism and the advantages of a socialist economy.¹³⁴ Furthermore, in explaining the BSP's attitude to foreign affairs, he emphasised several points: the importance of Japan in building up a "Third Force" for the ASC; the BSP's disappointment in the SI; and the BSP's watchful and fearful policy on Red China. Bo Khin Maung Gale expressed his suspicion about the SI, saying it was "socialist at home and imperialist abroad". The four nations held important discussions about the SI, from which the BSP sought more information, wanting to know which parties had already joined the SI. The Japanese representative wished to leave this matter until the ASC was firmly established. The Indian party wanted the

132. *Report Of The First Asian Socialist Conference*, pp. 2 & 5. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

133. *Ibid.*, pp.9-21, pp.38-50.

134. *Ibid.*, p.50, pp.58-60.

meeting to decide whether the ASC should join or not. The Indonesian party proposed that the matter be dropped and pointed out that the natures of "European socialist parties are quite distinct from ours".¹³⁵ U Kyaw Nyein understood the feelings behind the Indonesian's presentation and he agreed with his proposal. He shared the experiences he had in Europe in 1947, and in particular reported how a then junior leader of the British Labour Party, Dennis Healey, had said to him, "Well Kyaw Nyein, your Asian affairs are far away. Your problems are different from ours. Why don't you have your own grouping of Asian parties?"¹³⁶

U Kyaw Nyein was one of the leading contributors to the draft statement regarding the principles, objectives and foreign policy of the three states at the preliminary meeting of the ASC. Other BSP members participated in the discussions of the draft statement, for example Bo Khin Maung Gale, stated that he did not like the inclusion of socialist and communist concepts, but preferred the terms of Buddhist philosophy, including the Buddhist concept of "Fear". U Tin Nyunt took part eagerly in the discussion of the inclusion of "capitalism", along with two other BSP members. U Tun Win suggested the recognition of the importance of a private sector during the "transitional stage" to socialism.¹³⁷

After the initial tasks were completed in 1952 by the Parties from the different countries, a larger conference consisting of socialists from nine Asian countries, Burma, Indonesia, India, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Malaya, Pakistan and Egypt, along with delegates from fraternal organisations, the Socialist International, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, the International Union of Socialist Youth, the Congress of Peoples against Imperialism, and representatives of the African freedom movements from Tunisia, Algeria, Kenya and Uganda, was opened on 6 January 1953, at City Hall, Rangoon.¹³⁸ The Steering Committee included members of the BSP.¹³⁹ U Kyaw Nyein, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, gave the speech of welcome. Burmese delegate U Hla Aung, as Secretary of the Preparatory Committee, reported on the work of his committee. U Ba Swe from the BSP was elected chairman, having been nominated by the Israeli delegate Moshe Sharett and supported

135. *Ibid.*, pp.92-93, p.111, p.116, p.117.

136. *Ibid.*, pp.119-120.

137. *Ibid.*, pp.125-126, pp.130-138, p.154.

138. *Report Of The First Asian Socialist Conference*, p.ii, pp.111-112 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

139. *Ibid.*, p.28.

by representatives from India, Indonesia and Japan.¹⁴⁰ In the Chairman's Address to the Conference, he elaborated on the problems of Asia— the threat of another Great World War; the freedom of colonial countries which "were still under foreign yoke"; the national revolutions in various countries; and the economic development of Asian countries. He also warned the Asian nations not to rely too heavily on certain industrialised, metropolitan powers but on "themselves".¹⁴¹

The Conference passed thirteen resolutions.¹⁴² U Kyaw Nyein helped draft the resolution of the "Principles and Objectives of Socialism". He told the conference that the resolution was the result of many earlier drafts and proclaimed that "Democratic socialism was the answer because it alone could guarantee the fulfilment of our aspirations to attain welfare, happiness and the dignity of mankind." Concerning the second resolution "Asia and World Peace", a Burmese delegate proposed that a "policy of non-involvement in the rivalries of the two power blocs" and "of keeping away from them..." be pursued. In the presentation of the fifth resolution, U Than Aung from the BSP acted as reporter. BSP member U Tun Win moved the eighth and ninth resolutions, "Uganda" and "Kenya".¹⁴³

After dominating this conference, the BSP became a distinguished participant in the ASC Bureau, whose function was to maintain the organisation between conferences. The purposes of the ASC were to strengthen relations between the Asian socialist parties; to co-ordinate their political attitude by consent; to establish closer relations with all socialist parties and to establish a liaison with the SI. To implement these purposes, the ASC intended to organise a biennial Conference, the Bureau of the Conference, and the Secretariat of the Conference. The Indian delegate, Jayaprakash, nominated the BSP's U Ba Swe as Bureau Chairman for the organisation's first two years, and this was seconded by the Indonesian delegate.¹⁴⁴

The second meeting of the ASC Bureau was held at Hyderabad, India, from 10 to 13 August 1953. The BSP was represented by U Ba Swe as Chairman, U Hla Aung

140. *Ibid.*, p.1-7. These representatives were Jayaprakash Narayan (India), Soetan Sjahrir (Indonesia), Matsuoka (Japan, right wing) and Suzuki (Japan, left wing)

141. *Ibid.*, pp.8-10. Appendix (i): "Chairman U Ba Swe's Address to the Asian Socialist Conference, on 6 January 1953, at City Hall, Rangoon". (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

142. *Ibid.*, p.89: These resolutions were: Principles and Objectives of Socialism; Asia and World Peace; Common Asian Problems; Agrarian Policy for Asia; Economic Development of Asia; Freedom Movements in Colonies; Malaya; Uganda; Kenya; South Africa; Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco; ILO Convention on Minimum Standards; and Organisation of Asian Organisations.

143. *Ibid.*, pp.45-49, pp.50-52, p.56.

144. *Ibid.*, p.34, pp.61-62.

as Secretary and two delegates, U Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Kyaw Tun.¹⁴⁵ At the meeting, U Ba Swe welcomed all the delegates, especially the delegates from the SI and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Morgan Phillips and Vidic respectively. A clever move of the BSP was to bring to the meeting's attention the presence of Kumintang Troops in Burma. U Kyaw Nyein presented this matter to the meeting and the delegates from India, Israel and SI gave it serious consideration; a resolution was passed.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the BSP could advance the national interest through the Bureau of the ASC.

The next significant part played by the BSP can be seen in the third meeting of the Bureau of the ASC, held at Kalaw, Burma, from 25 to 28 May 1954.¹⁴⁷ Actually, the meeting was scheduled to take place at Bandung in Indonesia from 27 to 30 April 1954 but due to the action of the Government of Indonesia, it had to be postponed and transferred to Burma.¹⁴⁸ BSP attendees were U Ba Swe (Chairman), U Hla Aung (Joint Secretary) and delegates U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Tin, U Tun Win, Thakin Kyaw Tun and U Than Aung. Also from Burma, Ko Than Myint was a delegate for the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) and, by special invitation, there were other participants from Burma: U Ko Ko Gyi¹⁴⁹, Prof. Tun Thin¹⁵⁰ and Prof. Aye Hlaing. Burmese delegate, U Hla Aung, submitted a report of his tour to Africa. One of the resolutions of the meeting concerned the IUSY Delegate, U Kyaw Nyein contributed by discussing the question of relations between the IUSY and the Asian Socialist Youth Organisation. He favoured an amalgamation of the two socialist youth organisations.¹⁵¹

At the third Bureau meeting, there was a discussion of the trade union movement in which the BSP was an overwhelming force. The meeting resolved that a study group would be appointed, consisting of one representative from each of the member parties, to study the problems of trade union movements in Asia. A Burmese

145. *Minutes of the Bureau Meeting held at Hyderabad (India) from August 10 to 13, 1953.* (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

146. *Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

147. *Report of the Third Meeting of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25 to 28, 1954.* (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

148. *Press Note of A.S.C Signed by Joint Secretary, Madhav Gokhale, dated 28 April 1954.* (IISG Archive.)

149. This U Ko Ko Gyi is not the former BSP chairman U Ko Ko Gyi; he was a confidant of General Secretary U Ba Swe.

150. He was a member of the Standing Committee, Economic Experts, ASC.

151. *Report of the Third Meeting Of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma)*, pp.11-12, pp.19-20. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

delegate U Ko Ko Gyi was to be convenor of the study group.¹⁵² A Burmese delegate suggested forming a co-ordination committee to implement this resolution but the meeting was not in favour; the result was a study group to be led by a Burmese delegate.¹⁵³ The BSP was particularly active in encouraging ASC members to pay more attention to strengthening their national organisations equivalent to the BSP's wings 'in such bodies as': trade unions, peasants' organisations, youth organisations, women's organisations.¹⁵⁴

The resolution entitled "Economic Development Of Asia" that had been passed at the first ASC was discussed, with BSP members participating, as well as a Burmese economist Burmese delegate, U Than Aung reported on the Bureau's work on the economy; he had taken part in the first meeting of the ASC.¹⁵⁵ The meeting passed a resolution concerning the scope of the Economic Experts Conference.¹⁵⁶ In the discussions of Asian economic development, U Kyaw Nyein led the discussion and explained why the draft proposal had been drawn up: it was the implementation of the decisions made at the ASC in Rangoon and at the Hyderabad session of the Bureau. He was more in favour of working out the place of the "complementary economy" within a socialist state but warned that the member parties should be in government.¹⁵⁷ A Burmese economic expert also explained that they chose the word "cooperation" instead of "complementary" because "we should trade among ourselves but we have clearly stated that we should also favour trade with the rest of the world because our trade will never be robust without the western countries".¹⁵⁸ Burmese delegates U Kyaw Nyein and Professor Tun Thin also participated in the meetings of the Standing Committee of Economic Experts in Rangoon and Indonesia.¹⁵⁹

152. *Minutes of the Bureau Meeting held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25-28, 1954*, p.8. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

153. *Report of the Third Meeting Of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25 to 28, 1954*, pp.74-81. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

154. *Ibid.*, p.82.

155. *Report Of the First Asian Socialist Conference*, p.31. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

156. *Asian Socialist Conference: Circular No.47, ASC (B) 1954, on 7 June 1954*, p.4. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

157. *Report of the Third Meeting Of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25 to 28, 1954*, pp.46-47. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.)

158. *Ibid.*, pp.50-51.

159. *A Progress Report submitted by the Standing Committee of Economic Experts: For The Bureau Meeting of the Asian Socialist Conference, Kalaw, May 25-28, 1954*, p.1—the meetings were held in Rangoon from 2 to 7 January 1954 and again in Djakarta and Bandung from 19 to 23 April, and 26 April 1954. In the second meeting, in Indonesia, only one Burmese delegate, Professor Dr. Tun Thin, took part (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

In an important decision of the third Bureau meeting in Kalaw, Burma was to set up an Anti-Colonial Bureau, and its Co-ordination Committee, with headquarters at Rangoon. The purpose of this task was to help bring a rapid end to colonialism. U Kyaw Nyein was a member of the Anti-Colonial Bureau.¹⁶⁰ The ASC intended to observe a "Dependent Peoples' Freedom Day" as part of the Anti-Colonial Bureau's campaign against imperialism.¹⁶¹ In the celebration of the "Dependent Peoples' Freedom Day", the BSP can be seen as a dominant force. At the third meeting of the Anti-Colonial Bureau in Kalaw, Burma also decided to celebrate the Dependent Peoples' Freedom Day each year, the purpose of the day being "to encourage dependent peoples in their for independence and against poverty."¹⁶² U Kyaw Nyein proposed 24 October, the UN Day, as the most suitable date. The delegate from Pakistan, Yusuf Khan MD, did not agree with the Burmese proposal, preferring a day in August, but the meeting agreed to the month of October, and the ASC determined it should be 30 October.¹⁶³ It is significant that the term "Peoples' Freedom", chosen by the late Thakin Mya for the first name of the legal version of the BSP in 1945, should have been used. It may also have been relevant that Bogyoke Aung San's birth month was October.

The most active mind from the BSP in the ASC was U Kyaw Nyein, who participated in many discussions of the conferences. Burmese socialists welcomed the participation of Japanese delegates and intended to get assistance from their parties in the struggle against poverty in Asia. They also acquired a lot of general knowledge about other parts of the world from Indian comrades. The BSP had an important role in deciding whether or not the ASC should join the SI. They also presented to the ASC the KMT problem in Burma and thus, the ASC passed a resolution supporting the demand that foreign troops leave Burma. The BSP was responsible, with three other parties, for drawing the "Asian Socialists' Map" and making it a part of the world map, and for helping persuade Asian peoples to link their nationalist focus with an internationalist one.

160. *Report of the Asian Socialist Conference-Bureau Meeting by Morgan Phillips dated on 2.9.1953*, p.8; *Secretariat-Report to the 3rd Meeting of the Bureau (ASC)*, p.9. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

161. *Report of the Asian Socialist Conference-Bureau Meeting by Morgan Phillips dated 2.9.1953*, p.6.

162. *Report of the Third Meeting Of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma)*, pp.8-10. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam.); *Three Years Of Asian Socialist Conference*, p.7.

163. *Report of the Third Meeting Of the Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma)*, pp.53-55; *Three Years Of Asian Socialist Conference*, p.7

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter is to explore the influential role of the BSP during the Cold War era and how the party was able to adjust both its domestic and foreign policies in accordance with the state's or the AFPFL's policy. This chapter investigated the vision of Socialist leadership and whether to join the British Commonwealth countries or not. The politics during the AFPFL's period was composed of more or less leftist forces except some less radical individuals. That is why, the BSP attempted to get political unity among all the leftist forces under the name of the *Marxist League* and why this chapter reveals how much the Party was eager to unite all under one umbrella, but it was shaped by the impact of the Cold War. This chapter is also examined the splits of the BSP. The policies of BSP on the populous two neighbouring countries- China and India were not only based on the geographic contiguity of the two nations with Burma but also on Cold War influences. One finding in this chapter is that the BSP had been rocked by the first armed confrontation of the Korean war, which in turn led to the departure of the *Marxist-Leninist* group and to other factions of the Party's alliance with the state policy of *Neutrality* in which the BSP took a major role in formulating Burma's foreign policy in alliance with non-aligned movement. Another major finding is to highlight the Burmese Social Democrats as a part of the Asian Socialist Movement joining the *Second International*. In fact, the Asian socialist movement was the foundation of the "Third Force", a response to the effects of the Cold War; in other words, the Asian socialists persuaded their people to move beyond the confines of nationalism into the arenas of internationalism. All these findings relate to the influential non-communist and changing role of the BSP during the Cold War period as experienced by Burma.

Chapter Eight

The Burma Socialist Party and the Tatmadaw (1943-1964)

Introduction

As I have already shown, the existing literature on Burmese political history pays little attention to the relationship between the BSP and the Tatmadaw. This chapter seeks to fill the gap. It reveals, perhaps for the first time, that there was a close connection between the Tatmadaw and the BSP. Far from being simply an expression of militarism, the elite of Tatmadaw were committed socialists who were important players in the formation of the BSP/PFP. In this chapter, I will investigate the pattern of relationships between the BSP and the Tatmadaw over two decades from the 1940s. I will explore how the changing relationship influenced the BSP and Tatmadaw and so political events in Burma. The Tatmadaw also played a crucial part in Burma's independence struggles and the civil war. In the process they were led to align themselves with the BSP, and against the CPB. By the late 1950s that close relationship was coming under strain, and in the political crisis of 1957-58 the Tatmadaw played a major role in filling the power vacuum. This led to their key role in the formation and legitimization of the Socialist Revolutionary Government of 1962.

Emergence of the Tatmadaw Elite Group in the PRP/BSP

The origins of the military elite of the Tatmadaw lay in the dissatisfaction that emerged with the compromises that the nationalist leadership was making with the Japanese. After October 1942, the young officers of the Bama Tatmadaw, who were members of the PRP, decided, without waiting for instructions or directions from the front-line leaders, that all the young resistance leaders would commence the anti-Japanese campaign under the leadership of Bogyoke Aung San as War Minister and Colonel Ne Win as Commander-in-Chief.¹ This event was the basis of the formation of an elite military group within the PRP, and was the basis of Colonel Ne Win's later role as the Socialist military commander for the BSP. The young officers, who were

1. U Ba Than (Dhammika, Retired Colonel), *The Roots of The Revolution*, Rangoon: the Government Printing Press, 1962, p.44, p.40: on the declaration of so-called Independence, the BDA was renamed Bama-Tatmadaw (the Burmese Armed Forces). Bogyoke Aung San became the War Minister and Bo Ne Win the C-in-C. Towards the end of 1944, the Bama-Tatmadaw was about 15,000 strong; U Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990, p.43, p.71, p.118.

mainly from the PRP, were impatient with the delay in confronting the Japanese fascists who were viciously persecuting the people living in Burma with practices such as beating, sun burning, removing fingernails, seizing goods and slave-labour.² The emergence of the socialist Tatmadaw elite group within the Burma Army thus began with the fixing of the date to start the anti-fascist revolt.

After an understanding was reached among the CPB, the PRP and the Tatmadaw, all the revolutionary groups agreed to organise within the Burma Army and delegated responsibility for this to the CPB's Thakin Tin Mya and the PRP's Colonel Maung Maung and Colonel Aung Gyi.³ The office of Colonel Ne Win was the place where revolutionary matters were discussed and where the revolutionary propaganda was printed and stored.⁴ Finally, in early 1945 the resistance began throughout Burma, composed of the CPB, the PRP and the Burma Army. Because of their crucial role in bringing this to a successful conclusion, the leaders of the Tatmadaw gained a lot of influence in the shaping of Burmese politics.

The route by which the Tatmadaw came to have such a close relationship with the BSP evolved from the way that the Tatmadaw responded to the CPB. Despite being involved in the common struggle against the Japanese, there were important ideological, personal and tactical differences which kept pushing the Tatmadaw away from longstanding involvement with the CPB. In fact, they became enemies.

Events in the Delta during the anti-fascist revolution put the relationship between the Tatmadaw socialists and the CPB on a hostile footing. When the whole country rose up against the Japanese on 27 March 1945, Commander Colonel Ne Win was in-charge of military operations and Thakin Soe was in charge of political matters.⁵ The communists accused the Burma Army in the Delta of being an anti-leftist force, of persecuting those who supported the communists, of committing

2. Ba Than, *op.cit.*, p.47; ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "အမျိုးသားလွတ်မြောက်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအပိုင်းနှင့်လက်နက်ကိုင်တိုက်ပွဲ၏ အခန်းကဏ္ဍ"၊ (Unpublished article by U Than (Kyimyindine), "The Last Phase of National Freedom and the Role of Armed Struggle", p.4.)

3. နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄၊ ၈-၁၄၅-၁၄၆။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984, pp.145-146.); Yangon Ba Swe, Bo Maung Maung and Bo Kyi Win distributed the pamphlets agitating against the Japanese fascists to Delta regions and within the Burma Army, p.165; Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.118, shows that to prepare for the uprising against the fascists, two secret military training centres were established, one in Pegu and the other in Rangoon.

4. မောင်မောင်၊ "သက်ရှိရာဇဝင်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သမာဓိတ္တပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၈-၁၅။ (Dr Maung Maung, *The Biography of a Human Being*, Rangoon: Thamarmaitta Press, 1956, p.35.); နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၅၃။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.153).

5. နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၇၁။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.171.)

crimes and unlawful acts, of giving duties to Japanese spies instead of punishing them, and of disturbing trade. The communists wrote a letter to Bogyoke Aung San requesting that the army in the Delta be disbanded and its arms seized.⁶ The Burma Army accused Thakin Soe of factionalism, of undermining cooperation between the army men and the communist guerillas. They explained that those who were labelled "Japanese spies" were actually informers for the Burma Army.⁷ These conflicts between the CPB and the Delta Socialist Tatmadaw groups reflected the Tatmadaw disagreement with the CPB policy of peaceful co-existence or Browderism (See Chapter Two & Seven). The CPB wanted to hand over their arms to the allied army, the Tatmadaw socialists did not. In this way, it can be said that, at least initially, conflict between the two groups was caused more by ideological differences than those of personality.

Another significant feature of the difference in ideology between the CPB and the Socialist Tatmadaw Elite group could be seen in the ideas of Bo Maung Maung who was the best known writer among the Tatmadaw Elite group. He wrote:

For a country to be free, democracy needs to be practically based, not ideologically based...It should be recognised that the C.P.B should stand for such a principle but it does not, so we could not accept their policy and program and believed that the goal of the Party could not be in reality scientific. Thus, if we want our vision for Burma realised, the only way is to set up a separate party to follow the definite goal, program and procedures.⁸

The importance of these ideological differences was also revealed in the way that Colonel Ne Win aligned himself with the PRP. His influence was recognised when he was given a role as one of the military commanders in the last phase of the anti-Japanese struggle, as one of the three delegates from the Bama Tatmadaw to the Supreme Committee and the Central Military Council for the AFPFL.⁹ As one of the nine members of the Supreme Committee, Ne Win sided with the PRP leaders, and

6. The collections by U Ba Swe, pp.20-26; စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၅-၁၉၄၈" (ပု)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၅၊ စာ-၁၁၅-၁၁၇။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of the Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, 1945-1948, First Edition, Rangoon: Information Department, 1995, pp.115-117.) The letter was signed by Thakin Than Tun dated 11.6.1945. But, it was written by Thakin Soe.

7. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ စာ-၁၁၅-၁၁၇။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, pp.115-117.)

8. *Ibid.*, pp.98-99.

9. ကျော်စောဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာသွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃၊ စာ-၉၊ ၁၁။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993, p.9, p.11.)

with the majority opinion of the United Front, in opposing the CPB policy of Browderism. Therefore after the anti-fascist revolution, the military took sided with the PRP.

As a result, when the PRP attempted to unify the left in one party, the CPB tried to exclude the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group. As U Ko Ko Gyi recounted in his autobiography: "Bo Ne Win and Ko Kyaw Nyein were not acceptable to the CPB as members of the proposed single party". According to other accounts by BSP insiders, the CPB objected to Yangon Ba Swe and Bo Ne Win because of their "militarist attitudes".¹⁰ Clearly, the Socialist Tatmadaw group was not acceptable to the CPB, which was at that time strongly influenced by Thakin Soe.

In this context of a deep division between the Tatmadaw leadership and the BSP, the Tatmadaw leaders sought to gain political influence by allying themselves evermore closely with the PRP and against the CPB. Although there was no documentary evidence of the presence of Socialist Tatmadaw group on the Central Executive of the PFP, they were deeply involved in the two important meetings that gave birth to the party. The Socialist Tatmadaw group was there at the creation of the BSP, and the importance of their contribution undermines any claim that the army men merely 'supported' the party.¹¹ In the first meeting at Mingalar Street, Sanchaung Township, at the home of Doctor U Thaung Shein and his wife, Thakinmagyi Daw Khin Chit (alias Daw Daw Gyi) on 16 July 1945, the participants from the Tatmadaw group were Colonel Ne Win, Major Maung Maung, Major Aung Gyi, Major Tin Pe and Major Thein Maung.¹² At this meeting, according to former brigadier Tin Pe, Commander Colonel Ne Win was chosen as chairman.¹³ At the second meeting, held at the residence of Ko Kyaw Nyein on 22 July 1945, Colonel Ne Win, Major Maung Maung and Major Aung Gyi were present.¹⁴

10. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; နေပြီနီ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၈၈။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.188); Dr Maung Maung, *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph/49 1999, p.141, states that U Kyaw Nyein said that Thakin Soe rejected "Bo Aung San, Bo Ne Win, Ba Swe, and myself".

11. နေပြီနီ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၁၈-၁၉၀။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, p.190.)

12. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989, where he mentioned that the meeting at Mingalar Street was in "August". But, I cross-checked and reliable documents, show it was in "July"; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းတတိယတွဲ"၊ ၁၈-၉၇။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. III, p.97), the meeting date was 16 July 1945 and in attendance were Bo Ne Win, Bo Maung Maung, Ko Ba Swe, Ko Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Chit and Bo Khin Maung Gale.

13. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

14. Those from the tatmadaw who attended the second meeting, held at the residence of Ko Kyaw Nyein, on 22 July 1945, were Bo Ne Win, Bo Maung Maung and Bo Aung Gyi, interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; See also သာကျော်(ဘုံပေါက်)၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်အပိုင်း(၂)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၅။

The involvement of Tatmadaw members in the formation of the PFP was not mentioned in standard accounts, because overt involvement in politics by soldiers was not permitted. Thus, when the PFP was legally founded on 1 September 1945, only those army men, such as Bo Set Kyar, who had resigned from the army to take charge of the PFP's foreign affairs unit, were officially mentioned.¹⁵ Bo Aung Gyi was appointed Joint Secretary of the PFP on 12 March 1947 after resigning from the Tatmadaw. Later, he reached the position of informal member of the BSP's Presidium.¹⁶

Further evidence of the Tatmadaw's early political importance can be seen in the fact that the BSP flag, with its green dancing peacock, was a traditional emblem of the Bama Army.¹⁷ The Socialist elite of the Tatmadaw also provided financial support to the BSP, giving five rupees of their pay per month to the party. One of the Tatmadaw Socialists paid 30 Kyats per month into party funds while he was a second lieutenant.¹⁸ Another army socialist said that he contributed to party funds sporadically (See Chapter Four).¹⁹

In 1945-6 most of the elite of the socialist Tatmadaw periodically stayed in the house owned by the BSP at 46 Tayokkyang Street, Kyimyindine Township. This historic building was the place where thirty-nine of the Tatmadaw elite, including Colonel Ne Win, studied socialist ideology and hid arms caches.²⁰ The relationship between the Tatmadaw and the BSP was of mutual benefit: while the party was greatly helped by the intellectual strength and hard work of the Tatmadaw socialists,

၈၁-၈၈-၈၉။(Thar Kyaw (Bon Pauk), *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Patheon Press, 1975, pp.88-89.)

15. Bo Set Kyar (alias Thakin Aung Than) was an original member of the CEC (Headquarters). "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၄)၊ ၁၈၉၂၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. III, No.4, 18.9.1946, front-page photo).

16. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊ ၈၁-၁၁၃-၁၁၄။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, pp.113-114); Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988 in which he explained that Bo Aung Gyi attended meetings of the Presidium; although he was not an elected member, other members of the Presidium allowed him to participate.

17. Interview with Bo Mya Han (Former Joint Secretary of BSP) and U Ohn Thwin on 11.7.1988; the socialist party's flag is used on *the Socialist Front Weekly Journal*.

18. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989: he said that "Tatmadaw did not search for funds for the party but, in the Delta, the party resorted to robbery". Did the BSPP learn from the history of the BSP, and ensure adequate and legal funding by collecting a fee from each of its members?

19. Interview with Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine on 23.8.1990.

20. Some of them were Bo Kyi Win, Bo Aung Gyi, Bo Chit Khine, Bo Thein Tok, Bo Aung Naing (who later became a PVO leader and who is still living in Rangoon) and Bo Sein Hman (who also became one of the leaders of PVO), interview with Myawaddy U Ye Gaung on 18.4.2001.

the propaganda work of the Party also helped the Tatmadaw to grow, reaching 320,000 men by the mid-1940s.²¹

Ideology of the Socialist Tatmadaw Elite

The immediate cause of the participation of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite in the formation of the PFP and the BSP lay in their commitment to establishing a socialist path for Burma as an alternative to communism. There is a gap in historical accounts about where the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group's ideology came from. This section outlines the origin of the Tatmadaw elite's socialist ideals.

At the time of the anti-Japanese revolution, the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group was still at a predominantly nationalist stage. They had not engaged yet in any clear formulation of ideology. The Socialist Tatmadaw leaders concentrated on national liberation, rather than the nature of post-liberation Burma. They thus were more attracted to the PFP cadres that were sent into the military, because they were mainly concerned with teaching guerrilla warfare and instilling an anti-Japanese spirit.²² This weakened the appeal of the CPB cadres like Thakin Tin Mya, who had moved beyond nationalism and tried to spread communist ideology in the army.²³

The Socialist Tatmadaw elite group became more ideologically-oriented with the foundation of the BSP. The records of the BSP's meetings indicate the close connection with ideology at the beginning of the party's legal foundation in 1945. At its early meeting at the house in Mingalar Street, the need for a Marxist theoretician was discussed, and U Ko Ko Gyi was selected to teach Marxism to the BSP elite, including the military Socialists.²⁴ Likewise, U Ko Ko Gyi held seminars at 46 Tayokkyau Street, Sanchaung Township, for the leading members of the PRP/PFP, including Lt. Colonel Ne Win, Bo Tin Pe, Bo Aung Shwe, Bo Chit Khine, Bo Kyi

21. ဒဂုံနိဗ္ဗာန်ချင်းစိန်၊ "ဒိုမမာတိုင်းရင်းသားတပ်မတော်ကြီး"၊ *ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကျေနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၄)*၊ ၉၊ ၁၁၊ ၁၉၄၆၊ ၈-၃-၄။ (Dagon U Chin Sein, "Dobama Taiyinthar Tatmadawgyi": (*Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946, pp.3-4.) The author was also known as Shwenyar Maung.

22. Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, pp.116-117; နေညွန့်၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း"၊ ၈-၁၄၅-၁၄၆။ (Nay Nyunt, *op.cit.*, pp.145-146.)

23. Soldiers whom the CPB recruited as a result of its teaching of communist ideology were: Major Kyaw Zaw, Bo Ye Htut, Bo Min Din, Bo Akarwaka, Bo Hla Maw, Bo Thein, Bo Thet Tun, Bo Zeya, Bo Yan Aung, Bo Taryar and Bo Tauk Htein, "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းတတိယတွဲ"၊ ၈-၁၂၂၊ ၁၂၄။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, p.122, p.124); Maung Maung, *Burmese Nationalist Movements*, p.120, said that, at that time Thakin Soe could not persuade the Tatmadaw Socialist group to be Communists, and that while Soe was in the Delta, amongst other things he taught his followers dialectical materialism and the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

24. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

Win and Bo Saw Myint from the military.²⁵ In addition, as discussed in chapter four, U Ko Ko Gyi was approached by Lt. Colonel Ne Win, Bo Aung Gyi and Bo Khin Maung Gale for tuition in the concept of "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" while he was giving a ten-day course of lectures to the cadres; his students included army men who took part in the first and second sessions.²⁶ A second Socialist ideology class was opened at the residence of Bo La Yaung, who was one of the Thirty Comrades. Members of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group attended another socialist ideology class held in a house hired at Pegu.²⁷ Influential Tatmadaw figure Bo Tin Oo, who later became a Brigadier and Chief of the Military Intelligence in the period of the BSPP government, was a participant in this class.²⁸

The Socialist Tatmadaw and the Struggle for Independence, 1945-1948

This evidence from the period of the struggle for independence indicates that the development of socialist ideology within a small elite the Tatmadaw, started during the creation of the PFP/BSP. The close connection that was forged between the Tatmadaw and the PFP/BSP continued in the struggle for independence. It is important to recognise that the evidence shows that the Tatmadaw worked together with the political parties, and some of its activities were under their control. It was because many of these activities were clandestine that the party kept no records of them. Nevertheless, the importance of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group's relationship with the BSP became obvious after complete independence was regained. At this difficult point in Burma's history, the party's strategies and debates reveal just how much the Tatmadaw was involved in the BSP.

Records of the preparations for armed struggle provide evidence of the significant role played by the Tatmadaw. There were many Socialists in all the

25. Interview with Former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine on 23.8.1990, in which he mentioned that he attended the Second session of the socialist ideology class at the Tayokkyang Street, Kyimyindine, along with Bo Aung Shwe (now NLD chairman), Bo Kyi Win and Thakin Tin Maung; Interview with U Ohn Thwin and Bo Mya Han on 11.7.1988; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe on 18.4.1989.

26. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi, on 18.5.1988.

27. *Ibid.*

28. After my grandfather, U Ko Ko Gyi passed away in 1992, I informed Former Brigadier Tin Oo (Former MI Chief) that U Ko Ko Gyi wanted to say that he was very happy about U Tin Oo's release from Insein Jail in 1988. But, in 1988, I did not want to go and see U Tin Oo because of the complicated political situation. So, in order to fulfil my grandfather's wish, I met U Tin Oo, who retold the story of the BSP's ideology class in Pegu. He said that he had asked a question of U Ko Ko Gyi and had been satisfied with his answer. When I asked U Tin Oo for a formal interview, he declined and said that "I am staying alive". While I was working in Singapore in 1994-6, U Tin Oo passed away in Rangoon (now Yangon).

divisions of the Burma Army.²⁹ After the Htantabin incident (in May 1946) in which peasants demonstrated for independence at Insein, the BSP prepared two plans to achieve independence. One was by negotiation and the other was by armed struggle. The preparations for armed struggle involved close relations between the Socialist Tatmadaw elite and the BSP. In January 1947, as the party increased preparations for armed resistance, they did so by using their Socialist Tat connections into the armed forces to collect and stockpile more arms and ammunition.³⁰ In addition, the Tatmadaw and the BSP, combined with the PVO, formulated the army's response. If the army was ordered by the British colonial government to put down mass uprisings, it would delay its preparations and not shoot the people; then, in the last stage, it would cooperate with the people by supplying arms and ammunition.³¹

To further illustrate the importance of military Socialists it should be noted that on 7 January 1947 BSP members responsible for preparing armed struggle left Rangoon for Pegu, where they made contact with Socialist leaders in the Fifth Burma Rifles such as Bo Chit Khine.³² BSP members collected and hid arms, and listed the available arms and ammunition.³³ Thakin Tin and Ko Kyi Lwin (Ohnpintan) were also given the task of contacting the socialist leaders in the military in the Northern division.³⁴ In the event, due to the negotiated settlement that transferred power from the British, these plans were not used. Nevertheless, their existence shows that the Socialist Tatmadaw leadership was deeply involved in planning Burma's

29. ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအဆင့်နှင့်နယ်ချဲ့ဘုရင်ခံ"၊ *မိုးကုန်းယဉ်းစန်နဝါရီ*၊ ၁၉၉၇၊ ၈-၁၄၉။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "The Last Phase of Freedom Movement and Imperial Governor": *Moe Journal*, January 1997, pp.142-149).

30. "အမျိုးသားလွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအပိုင်းနှင့်လက်နက်ကိုင်တိုက်ပွဲ၏အခန်းကဏ္ဍ"၊ ၈-၁၁။ ("The Last Phase of the National Freedom and the Role of Armed Struggle", p.11).

31. *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

32. U Ko Ko Gyi, Ko Than (Kyimyindine), U Hla Myint, U Than Tun (MP from Myingyan Constituency, later parliamentary secretary and CEC member of TUC (B)). It might be assumed that the party sent out a group led by its Vice-Chairman because he had taught ideology at Pegu to men from the Burma Army. U Than Tun is now a CEC member of the NLD.

33. "အမျိုးသားလွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအပိုင်းနှင့်လက်နက်ကိုင်တိုက်ပွဲ၏အခန်းကဏ္ဍ"၊ ၈-၁၆-၁၇။ ("The Last Phase of the National Freedom and the Role of Armed Struggle", pp.16-17.) This was the same date that Party Leader Thakin Mya left Burma for Great Britain to attend the "London Conference" (on their way to Pegu, the representatives from the BSP stopped near the Mingalardon Airport and were worried about Party Leader Thakin Mya when they saw a departing aeroplane over-run the airstrip), interview with Myawaddi U Ye Gaung on 29.7.2001, in which he said that the BSP hid arms which were from Tatmadaw socialists at 46 Tayokkaung Street, Kyimyindine Township where the party's ideology class was held. When the British government searched, the arms were found. U Ye Gaung claimed responsibility and thus he was sentenced to Insein prison. Consequently, when U Ye Gaung applied for the medal for မော်ကွန်းဝင်ပထမဆင့် (Noble Task First Class) in the BSPP period, former Lt. Colonel Chit Khine was willing to give a reference for him.

34. *Ibid.*, p.11.

independence, and that Tatmadaw involvement at this stage was under the guidance of the BSP.

The domestic importance of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite spilled over into foreign policy. In particular, the Tatmadaw played an important role in the BSP's support for the freedom struggles of other colonial countries. This was in line with policy set up by the BSP in the time of Thakin Mya, who intended to help independence movements especially in Vietnam, Indonesia and Laos.³⁵ Just after independence two missions were sent out, one to Vietnam and one to Indonesia, to donate medicines and military equipment, including arms and ammunition.³⁶ The Tatmadaw was essential to the fulfilment of this BSP initiated aid program, providing 500 rifles, fifty Bren guns and ammunition for the two countries.³⁷

Socialist Tatmadaw Members and the Civil War, 1948-1950

The propaganda literature as well as the historiographical literature usually portrays the Tatmadaw as operating more-or-less independently of political parties. This section will attempt to fill the gap in the literature about the extent of participation of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite in Burma's civil war. The evidence shows that in the struggle for leftist unity and for the establishment of national stability, the Tatmadaw and the BSP worked closely together. In fact the Tatmadaw was the military wing that was used to support BSP political aims. Thus, it is evident that Maj-General Ne Win and his brother officers were involved in the BSP at the highest levels. They implemented BSP policy and having become the holders of the revolutionary flag, they put down both civilian and pro-communist army rebellions.

35. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးကုန်ယ်"အတွဲ(၂)အမှတ်(၁)၂၇၂၂၁၉၄၆.၈-၆-၇၇ (Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. II, No.1, 27.2.1946, pp.6-7); Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

36. The Vietnam Mission included Ko Chit Hlaing (writer Ko Ko Maung, Vice-Director of the Tatmadaw Psychological Department), U Ba Thein Zan (a leader of Pazundaung Township and a Personal Secretary for Home Minister), Bo Phone Aung (a leader of the PVO, a parliamentary secretary for the Prime Minister and a former member of the CC of BSPP), U Tun Aung (a parliamentary secretary of the Defence Ministry) and Thakin Mya Lay, who also helped in the carrying of arms and ammunition. The only member of the Indonesia Mission was Thakin Thar Khin (ex-Home Minister) although the mission was intended to include Bo Aung Gyi. The material help to Indonesia comprised 250 arms of various types, and ammunition.

37. U Than (Kyimyindine) attempted to publish an account of his experience as a member of the mission to Vietnam during the period of the BSPP government but was not allowed, interview with U Than (Kyimyindine) 22.1.1992; ကိုသန်း(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "မြန်မာ-အင်ဒိုနီးရှားနယ်ချဲ့ဆန့်ကျင်ရေးသွေးစည်းညီညွတ်မှု"၊ နှိုးကုန်ယ်မတ်၊ ၁၉၄၆.၈-၉၇၇ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "The Unity of Myanmar-Indonesia against Imperialism", *Moe Journal*, March 1996, p.96, pp.135-140.).

The Tatmadaw men did not like Thakin Nu when he took on the leadership of the country after the assassination of national leaders in 1947. When the Burmese sky was grey and cloudy, in the years 1948 to 1950, one optional of the BSP by Maj-General Ne Win, U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein was to remove the Prime Minister (See in Chapter Six). Tatmadaw men had had more confidence in and more respect for the leaders of the party than for Thakin Nu. Furthermore, from the perspective of the revolutionary men who fought against imperialism and fascism, Thakin Nu had not been very active especially in the second revolution against Japanese and had not been keen to be a leader. He retired to the Delta when he arrived back from Mudon where he had to follow the Japanese government in their withdrawal from Burma. Party worker, Thakin Hla Kyway, saw him at the Delta and had to report back to the leaders and thus, Thakin Nu was given the position of AFPFL Vice-President and asked to stand for the Mergui constituency in the by-election following the death of elected member U Maung Maung Khin.³⁸ But, I contend, along with Sein Win, that the main reason U Nu attracted the strong disapproval of the Tatmadaw was his "extension of excessive concessions to the Communists".³⁹

At this point, let us specifically look at the second phase of U Nu's rule from July 1947 to 1950, because it was a time dominated by the connection between Tatmadaw and the party. During this period, the significant feature of the Party was the involvement of ex-army man, Bo Aung Gyi not only as joint secretary but also as informal member of the Presidium. The programs of the Party were connected with the Tatmadaw through him, and this helped ensure their successful implementation, especially programs to do with the first freedom movements in the eve of Independence, both internal and external. The connection also could be seen in the second freedom movement (from 1948 to 1950), the struggle to preserve unity and peace. However, in the second movement, the helmsman of the party, U Ko Ko Gyi, was removed not only from his ministerial post but also from the party chairmanship, ostensibly because of the "40 Lakhs Case" but in fact because of power struggles within the BSP and between the AFPFL and the BSP.

As described in Chapter Six, less than three months after independence, Burma fell into civil war, after the failure of attempts to restore leftist unity. In these

38. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; Sein Win, *The Split Story*, Rangoon: The Guardian Press, 1959, pp. 3-9.

39. Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.69.

circumstances, the Tatmadaw, led by the Socialist group, was a central part of the strategy used by the BSP to pursue the civil war. The question of why the BSP wanted to hand over the 'revolutionary flag' to the Bama Tatmadaw is not treated well in the existing literature⁴⁰. In his account of the situation, Thakin Hla Kyway stated accurately:

The AFPFL was not functioning properly. Its members were beginning to dissociate themselves, losing faith in its capacity to operate as the nation's 'united front'. The affiliated organisations no longer participated in the Front except when it was in their self-interest to do so. All these organisations were neglecting their responsibility. Due to the state's situation, all the organisations concentrated on the armed resistance.⁴¹

In an internal statement made for its cadres, the BSP admitted that the lessons of the Goshal-Than Tun CPB rebellion indicated that it was over-reliant on working through the Bureaucracy to be able to mobilize the Police and Army. It became apparent to BSP leaders that it was necessary to free all levels of the party from this dependency if it hoped to regain the support of the people, especially those who were suppressed by the bureaucratic administrative machine.⁴²

It was with these considerations in mind that the Central Executive of the BSP met on 17 May 1948 in the residence of U Ko Ko Gyi. In attendance were U Ko Ko Gyi, U Ba Swe, Bo Aung Gyi, U Hla Maung, Bo Khin Maung Gale, Thakin Tin, Thakin Chit Maung, U Tin Nyunt and Thakin Hla Kyway. The date was two months earlier than the date requested by the nine Tatmadaw members of a leftist unity committee, which had also proposed that either Bo Ne Win or Bo Ze Ya be selected as C-in-C. At this meeting all the members agreed to develop a friendly relationship between the party and the Tatmadaw.⁴³ The Central Executive dismissed objections

40. Directorate of Information, Union of Burma, *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1950, pp.17-31; သိန်းမောင်(ဇေယျကျော်ထင်၊ ဗိုလ်မှူးဟောင်း)၊ "၁၉၄၉ ခု မြောက်ပိုင်းတိုင်းစစ်ဌာနချုပ်အရေးတော်ပုံမှတ်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်?၊ ခုနှစ်?၊ (Thein Maung, (Former Colonel, Zeya Kyaw Htin), 1949: *The Revolutionary Record of the Northern Military Headquarter*, Rangoon: np., nd.); Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004, pp.114-144.

41. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

42. ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(သခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-စ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၈၊ စာ-၇-၈။ (BSP (Headquarters, Thakin Kyaw Tun), *The Statement Within the Party No (1)*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948, pp.7-8); "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်းပြည်တွင်းစစ်၏အစ၊ ၂၊ ၇၊ ၁၉၄၈"၊ စာ-၂-၃။ (*The Statement Within the BSP: The Origin of the Civil War dated on 2.7.1948*, pp.2-3 (collection of Thakin Hla Kyway).

43. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊

raised by the Communists, who requested that it be publicly announced that Bo Ne Win and some officers from the Burma Army were not members of the BSP. The Central Executive then moved on to discuss the expansion in the size of the Socialist Tatmadaw, and proceed to select Maj-General Ne Win as C-in-C of the Burma Army in recognition of his involvement in the liberation struggle.

Under the military and now political leadership of Maj-General Ne Win, the Tatmadaw played an important role in the attempt to restore leftist unity. After the failure of the Marxist League, a Leftist Unity Council (LUC) was formed on 16 July 1948, just over two weeks after U Ko Ko Gyi relinquished his post as BSP chair and stepped down from the ministry. Bo Ne Win was chair, and the members of the Council included, from the Tatmadaw, Bo Ba Sein, Bo Ye Htut, Bo Saw Tun Sein, Bo Ze Ya, from the PVO, Bo Hmu Aung, Bo Sein Hman, Bo Min Gaung, Bo La Yaung, Bo Nyunt Maung, Bo Aung Nyunt, Bo Phone Aung, and from the BSP, U Hla Maung, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, Thakin Tin, Bo Aung Gyi, as well as other Communists not part of the CPB, Bo Thein Tan, Bo Aung Min and Bo Yan Aung with the non-party U Thein Pe as General Secretary. Bo Ne Win held a leading position in the Council. This was the first time since independence that the Tatmadaw had formally ventured onto the political field.⁴⁴ Five days after the formation of the LUC, Tatmadaw leaders, principally Lt. Colonel Ne Win also participated in a meeting at the residence of Socialist Minister Thakin Tin, along with other BSP and PVO members (including U Ba Swa and U Kyaw Nyein), and members of the Communist Red Army.⁴⁵ The main issue discussed at this meeting was the need to find a negotiated solution to the unrest, one that avoided armed struggle. The discussion was led by the BSP and the response from the communist military was that "There is a difference of opinion among the imperialists and if this difference cannot be solved, other factors will not be easy to control".⁴⁶ After the final meeting in December 1948 between the BSP, the PVO (Yellow) and the pro-CPB military leaders failed to secure leftist unity, Burma rapidly moved towards conflict. A Joint Committee was formed, composed of representatives of the Tatmadaw, led by Lt.

စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂ "ရန်ကုန်သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်းဥပဒေ၊ ၁၉၆၂၊ ၁၉၆၂။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996, p.19.)

44. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ ၁၉-၁၀-၁၉၆၂။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, pp.9-10, p.19.)

45. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

46. *Ibid.*

Colonel Ne Win, of the Government, and of the BSP and the PVO (Yellow), led by Bo Hmu Aung. The Committee decided to meet at least once a week and at any time in the event of an emergency.⁴⁷

The role of Ne Win during the civil war is well documented, particularly in the writings of Thakin Hla Kyway, an influential member of the BSP. The leaders of the BSP and the PVO (Yellow) were very busy with political duties, and this left Ne Win to shoulder the responsibilities of defending not only Rangoon but the whole country. On one hand, he had to contend with mutinies, and had to organise the army very carefully. On the other hand, he had to attend to the rebels' offensives.⁴⁸ Thakin Hla Kyway praised the way the commander met the challenges of his role:

While we were fulfilling our state duties all over Rangoon, working throughout the night, catching what sleep we could by day, General Ne Win was seen very often. In the Joint Committee meetings too, he would arrive very early and at the meetings, his contributions to discussion were very eager and open. He was very active, joyful and possessed strong morale.⁴⁹

Another milestone in the role of the Socialist Tatmadaw was the formation of the Auxiliary Union Military Police (AUMP). The AUMP was formed in response to the Bama Tatmadaw's urgent need for a reserve force. At its CEC meeting of 17 May 1948, one month after the CPB went underground, the BSP had decided to extend the army, and with the approval of Ne Win, launched the program at a party meeting on 12 August 1948.⁵⁰ The meeting gave responsibility for the formation of the AUMP to Bo Min Gaung, Major Tun Tin and Yangon Ba Swe and, for military training, to Captain Ba Kyaw.⁵¹ Matters such as the need to keep discipline as in an ordinary army and to pay its members' salaries were discussed at a meeting on 1 September 1948, at the rest room of Parliament House.⁵² However, U Kyaw Nyein argued that "the AUMP, having no proper rules and authorisation like a proper Government force, had no way of giving TA (travel allowances) & DA (daily allowances) to its soldiers...".⁵³ The BSP's Thakin Hla Kyway, the person responsible for recruitment, arranged to collect the new recruits and hand them over to the appropriate

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.*

53. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein on 19.11.1979, Mss Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London).

commanders, Major Tun Tin and Ko Ba Swe Lay alias Yangon Ba Swe. The diary of Thakin Hla Kyway shows how the BSP's recruitment for the Tatmadaw worked:

Thursday 26 August 1948: 10 am, recruitment of soldiers at the Ship Workers' Asiayone; at 11 am, instruct workers to recruit at Cooperative Shop (Store); at 12 noon, instruct workers from Lanmadaw to recruit soldiers; at 1 pm, instruct workers from Burma Agency to recruit soldiers; at 3 pm, instruct workers from GCS (sic: Government Civil Servants?) to recruit soldiers; 4 pm, instruct workers from Central Medicine Distribution (Tadarkalay) to recruit soldiers.⁵⁴

By the end of 1948 there were over 100 AUMP groups, Prime Minister Thakin Nu had directed Maj-General Ne Win and Bo Aung Gyi to form additional armies not later than 31 January 1949. Indeed, on 9 September 1948, there was an order to organise the AUMP fifty-two, followed by a second order for another AUMP forty-nine.⁵⁵ It is obvious that the role of the Tatmadaw in the formation of the new armies was essential and received wholehearted political support from the BSP and PVO. The Socialist cadres not only recruited soldiers from its wings for the new armies but also they had to lead them. In other words, after the BSP decided to hand over the revolutionary flag to the Socialist Tatmadaw group, the party was ready to support the Tatmadaw when necessary. Of course, it needs to be borne in mind that the decision of the party to form these armies was approved by the Tatmadaw.

The key role of the Tatmadaw in the politics of post-war Burma is also illustrated by the importance of the new armies. The AUMP was involved from the beginning in defending Rangoon. Later, it served on many battlefields. Many lives were sacrificed for the nation and her peoples. Tatmadaw historian Dammika U Ba Than wrote that "the Defence Services acknowledge with gratitude the great debt they owe to the levies...".⁵⁶ But, on the other hand, from the Karen's point of view, the formation of new Burmese irregular levies (not standing armies) was viewed as "a policy to systematically disarm the Karen levy forces..." and "an endeavour to disarm the Karens...".⁵⁷ The formation of the new armies, initiated by the BSP and the PVO (Yellow), approved by the Socialist Commander and then ordered by Prime Minister Thakin Nu, was intended to preserve the state.

54. Thakin Hla Kyway's Diary.

55. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ" ၁၈-၄၄။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.44)

56. Ba Than, *op.cit.*, p.67.

57. Smith Dun (Gen.), *Memoirs Of The Four-Foot Colonel*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University: Southeast Asia Program No.(113), 1980, p.68.

However, in the 1950s the role of the levies deteriorated. Although they continued to stand by their cities and villages, they also committed robbery, banditry, bribery and murder. They even intervened in the electoral campaign and came to be regarded as the "pocket armies" of the BSP.⁵⁸ In later Tatmadaw accounts there is particular criticism of the *Phyusawhti* (ပျူစောထီး) pocket army of the BSP. The *Phyusawhti* was formed under the guidance of the National Defence Council led by Prime Minister U Nu. The purpose of the formation of this army was to defend and protect the cities and towns but it later became a private force outside the law.⁵⁹ This unfortunate development in the history of the BSP illustrates why a historian should work with a balance of pessimism and optimism.

The Socialist Tatmadaw leadership also played a significant role in the resignation of BSP ministers and parliamentary secretaries from the Government. For example, the Tatmadaw leaders Bo Kyi Win and Bo Aung Gyi as well as Maj-General Ne Win participated in the series of meetings of the BSP, the PVO and the Tatmadaw in March 1948 and April 1949, which led to the announcement of the resignation of Socialists and members of the PVO (Yellow) in April 1949.⁶⁰ In the discussions between the BSP and the PVO (Yellow), the former was dominant but the party depended on approval from the Socialist Tatmadaw leaders.

Peace was gradually restored to Burma through the cooperation of the Tatmadaw, the Government and political parties, with the support of the people living throughout the country. The role of the Bama Army was essential as was the leadership of Ne Win. Man and position were well-matched; as his biographer put it "General Ne Win was a good soldier, a warhorse...".⁶¹

The way the BSP dealt with the case that was brought against its chairman in the late 1940s throws light on aspects of the BSP-Bama Tatmadaw relationship in the 1950s that seems to be overlooked by historians. The Tatmadaw elite group told the BSP "to organise the party systematically, to train socialist cadres, to construct a socialist society, to set up the Party's ideology clearly and to fundraise honestly and

58. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 9.7.1988; Mary P. Callahan, "Democracy In Burma: The Lessons Of History", *Analysis: Political Legacies and Prospects for Democratic Development in Southeast Asia: Burma and Indonesia*, Vol. IX, No. 3, Seattle: the National Bureau Of Asian Research, 1998, p.13.

59. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ" ၂၈-၂၄၀-၂၄၁။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, pp.240-241.); Conversation with U Ko Ko Gyi.

60. *Ibid.*, p.16; Type-written minutes of the resignation of the BSP and the PVO (Yellow), from the collection of Thakin Hla Kyway.

61. Dr. Maung Maung, *The 1988 Uprising in Burma*, p.263.

not seek money from the merchants", probably in reference to the "40 Lakhs Case".⁶² The party had been able to reach a legal compromise in relation to U Ko Ko Gyi's role in the "40 Lakhs Case", and a committee set up by U Ba Swe had determined there was no evidence against the Chairman, while the companies involved only paid token fines.⁶³ But the extent to which the Tatmadaw was involved in the BSP's concealment of its ex-chairman requires deeper investigation. U Ko Ko Gyi had been accused of setting up a new Union of Burma Communist Party, but in fact, the underground activities of U Ko Ko Gyi were organized and sanctioned by the BSP.⁶⁴ He was probably staying at a house owned by his cousin U Soe Myint, and was easily caught because U Kyaw Nyein, then Home Minister, knew of this.⁶⁵ The party intended just to remove him from the chairmanship.⁶⁶

Later evidence shows that the former Chairman and his teaching assistant played roles in forming cadres while underground, and these roles assisted the Tatmadaw to persuade the White PVO to emerge from the underground and enter the legal fold in the 1950s. Bo Mya Han, as the BSP's joint secretary and assistant ideology teacher, had been given the duty by Bo Aung Gyi to work closely with the PVO (White Band) and teach its members ideology, and if U Kyaw Nyein's evidence is correct, U Ko Ko Gyi joined him in this action.⁶⁷ There is some evidence to suggest that the CPB was also contemplating a similar action as the result of rumours that U Ko Ko Gyi had set up his own secret Communist Party. This is supported by material provided to me by the Deputy Director of the University of Rangoon Historical Research Commission, U Kyaw Nyein: "one day in the forest, Thakin Than Tun said to his men that they needed to start operating openly because Ko Ko Gyi and Bo Mya

62. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်းနှင့်မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေးခရီး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၉၊ စာ-၃၅၂။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win and Burmese Politics*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1969, p. 352.)

63. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with Thakin Soe Myint, on 6.12.1992.

64. Virginia Thompson & Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing In Southeast Asia*, First Edition, New York: William Sloane Associates, 1950, p.249; Interview with Daw Khin Phyuone, on 26.10.2001.

65. Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, on 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London); Thompson & Adloff, *op.cit.*, p.249; ဦးအောင်သန်း၊ "၁၆ နှစ်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၈၊ စာ-၁၁၁။ (U Aung Than, *16 Years*, Rangoon: np., nd.)

66. Interview with U Chan Thar (ICS) alias Letwai Min Nyo, on 6.8.1988.

67. Interview with Bo Mya Han, on 11, 12 July 1988 and 9.2.1992. The late Bo Mya Han requested that while he was still alive I should not reveal the fact that he was sent out to follow the PVO (White) by Bo Aung Gyi. Bo Mya Han had Bo Aung Gyi's letter containing the instructions; ဦးကျော်ငြိမ်း၊

"သိန်းလေးဆယ်ဦးကိုကြိုကြီးဝေငှ၊ ၂၂၀၀၁။" (U Kyaw Nyein, *The 40 Lakhs Ko Ko Gyi*, 14.2.2001) also quotes from the "ဗမာ့ခေတ်သတင်းစာ" (*Bama Khit Newspaper*), 12.6.1958, 24.6.1958, which reported that U Ko Ko Gyi had joined Bo Mya Han and founded the "Union of Burma Communist Party" secretly and had drawn a program for a "temporary revolutionary government".

Han would be going underground".⁶⁸ All this suggests an elaborate plot to find another solution to the insurgency by attracting communists and PVO members back into the legal fold. It may have been necessary for the BSP to denounce U Ko Ko Gyi and his associates in order that he could infiltrate the Communists.⁶⁹ There is also evidence, provided by Bo Tin Pe, that U Ko Ko Gyi undertook another task for the Party while working covertly in Rangoon: researching Buddhist philosophy for its potential as party ideology (See Chapter Four).⁷⁰

The question of how much the Tatmadaw was involved in the covert program of the party remains. My own conclusions are that the Tatmadaw knew of the program but was not actively involved. There are several reasons for that. First, if his two right-hand men, Bo Aung Gyi and Bo Tin Pe, knew what was going on, Lt. Colonel Ne Win would have definitely known.⁷¹ Bo Tin Pe did not tell the other Party members even though he was one of the founders of the Party, and Bo Aung Gyi was not on good relations with non-Socialists in the Army which had earlier led Bogyoke Ne Win to place him under Bogyoke Aung San.⁷² Bo Tin Pe mentioned that the participation of Bo Aung Gyi in the BSP was not as a representative of the Tatmadaw.⁷³ The smooth relations between the Tatmadaw and the party were because of Bo Aung Gyi's high standing in the party. During the civil war, Bo Aung Gyi re-entered the Tatmadaw so that nobody from Socialist Tatmadaw elite group was left in the Party, although they probably have good relations with the civilian Defence Minister U Ba Swe who was a BSP leader in the 1950s.

Also, according to the autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi, General Ne Win knew all about the party's plan and he wanted to solve U Ko Ko Gyi's problem of being charged with embezzlement and urged him to seek a legal solution even sending a message through his wife, Daw Tin Tin, to U Ko Ko Gyi, to face his case legally, but the former chairman delayed his response.⁷⁴ Prime Minister U Nu and U Kyaw Nyein

68. Source from the central library, Rangoon University, given to me covertly by (X.X.X). I was unable to get any further bibliographic information on this magazine article from (X.X.X). (X.X.X) wrote a brief biography of U Ko Ko Gyi, but omitted using this material. It might be assumed that the (X.X.X) also intensively researched the role of the former BSP Chairman.

69. "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁"၊ ၁၈-၄၄၊ (*The Statement within The Party, No (1)*), p.44.

70. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe, on 18.4.1989.

71. *Ibid.* U Ko Ko Gyi had been responsible for Tin Pe joining the Socialists.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*

74. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Kyaw Nyein, 19.11.1979, Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London): "Bo Ne Win said he knew all about that and so did Tin Pe and Aung Gyi but I (Kyaw Nyein) didn't".

put their points of view about the case before the Parliament after the conflict had been settled.⁷⁵ U Kyaw Nyein said that the BSP did not arrange for U Ko Ko Gyi to hide, although the public thought this was the case; and Prime Minister U Nu in his parliamentary speech of 16 December 1950 said that he was afraid that the case of U Ko Ko Gyi was a possibly one of political persecution. But, U Nu went on to say that "Ex-Minister U Ko Ko Gyi's case shows that he was a veritable schemer...to implement his scheme he needs two kinds of things—a lot of money and followers who would support him absolutely".⁷⁶ So, the political picture clearly shows General Ne Win giving U Ko Ko Gyi a bamboo pole to save him and two elite civilians using a pole to drown him.

The Tatmadaw and the BSP in the Post-Civil War Period, 1949 -1957

The Socialist Tatmadaw group reached its peak of importance in the years 1948 to 1950, but its role in Burmese politics continued after the end of the civil war. As soon as the Bama Army had reoccupied territories previously in rebel hands, the leaders of the CEC BSP and the PVO (Yellow) and the Tatmadaw (led by Bogyoke Ne Win), met in December 1949 and January 1950.⁷⁷ The matters discussed at these meetings concerned preparations to rehabilitate the country as quickly as possible.⁷⁸

One of the first steps taken was to clarify the difference between military and political spheres. Lt. General Ne Win had made clear his intentions as early as 4 April 1949:

The intention in the interim period is to hold the free and fair election by seizing power temporarily. There is need to resist and prevent any attempt to take power by force. There is no intention in the interim period except to hold free and fair elections and to maintain law and order⁷⁹

True to his pledge, and after peace was gradually restored to the country, General Ne Win resigned as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home and Defence on 11 September 1950.⁸⁰

75. "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံပေါ်လီမန်လွှတ်တော်အစည်းအဝေး၊ ၁၆.၁၂.၁၉၅၀"။ (*The Record of Legislative Parliament*, 16.12.1950): before the Parliament on 16 December 1950, Prime Minister Thakin Nu and Socialist U Kyaw Nyein gave their speeches about the former BSP Chairman's "40 Lakhs case".

76. *Ibid.*; but cf "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"။ ၁၇-၁၃။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, p.13).

77. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, p.144.

78. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

79. *Ibid.*; *Burma's Freedom: Second Anniversary*, p.107.

80. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"။ ၁၇-၁၂၄။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, p. 124).

After relinquishing this overt domestic political role, there were some important changes in the relationship between the Tatmadaw and the BSP. The Tatmadaw was expanded in 1950-1952 to overcome the weakness caused by the mutiny of officers during the civil war.⁸¹ The War Office was reorganised as "Defence Services" in 1952.⁸² Commanders' Conferences were held annually, and these enabled frequent review and updating of the duties and capabilities of the Tatmadaw, including the relevance of its capacity; improvement in discipline; modernisation; winning the respect of the people; and its obligations to the state and the people.⁸³ Most of the conferences were led by General Ne Win, and the Defence Minister and Prime Minister attended a number of them. Highlights of these conferences included discussions about transportation, land nationalisation and rural development and of a new ideology for Tatmadaw that would be more suitable for Burma.⁸⁴

The important role of the Socialist Tatmadaw group was highlighted when it became involved in the preservation of the state from the incursions of the Kuomintang (White Chinese). The KMT had been attacked by the 4th Army Group of the Chinese People's Republican Forces and fled into Burmese territories. In September 1949, at a Sunday meeting of the Peoples' Literature Committee, during a discussion of the victory of the People's Republic of China (PRC), a Colonel⁸⁵ from the Bama Army predicted the danger of the Kuomintang forces moving from the Yunan Provinces into Burma to escape the 4th Army Group of the Chinese People's Republican Forces and pointed out that it was necessary to prepare militarily.⁸⁶ The policy and strategy to deal with this new situation was formulated at a meeting on 25 June 1950. In the meeting, the delegates from the Tatmadaw were General Ne Win, Bo Aung Gyi and Bo Kyi Win. The Tatmadaw, BSP and PVO (Yellow) leadership attending the meeting all agreed to drive the foreign forces very quickly from Burmese soil and to win popular support for the task.⁸⁷ The BSP, for its part, raised the matter at the Asia Socialist Conference (see Chapter Seven). The response from

81. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ ၁၇-၆၄-၈၀၊ ၁၀၀-၁၀၆။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, pp.64-81, pp.100-106.)

82. *Ibid.*, p.128.

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Ibid.*, pp.132-149.

85. The author did not mention the Colonel's name, he may have been Col. Ne Win or Col. Maung Maung.

86. ကိုသန်း(ကြည်မြင့်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ-လက်ဝဲညီညွတ်ရေးအဖွဲ့ကလမ်းခင်းပေးခဲ့"၊ မိုးကုန်းယု၊ လွိုင်၊ ၁၉၉၈၊ ၁၇-၁၀၇-၁၀၈။ (Ko Than (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee: Paving the way for Leftist Unity": *Moe Journal*, July 1998, pp.107-108.)

87. Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway.

the state was to present the problem before the United Nations (UN) which passed a resolution supporting the Burmese case.⁸⁸ Thus, there was a series of joint military meetings, started on 22 May 1953, consisting of four countries – American, Thailand, Burma and the Chinese Republic (White China). But, the Burmese delegates did not meet and negotiate directly with the delegates from the Chinese Republic. The Burmese delegation was led by Major Aung Gyi.⁸⁹ The Chinese representatives used delaying tactics and thus, Colonel Thein Maung delivered a speech to the Four-Nation Military Conference at Bangkok on 16 September 1953, in which he informed the Committee that the Burmese delegates would be compelled to withdraw from the meeting because the Chinese representative failed to accept the Burmese proposal.⁹⁰

The Tatmadaw had commenced an offensive against the Kuomintang forces in June 1950; it had reoccupied Tarchilake on 21 July.⁹¹ The Tatmadaw carried out major operations until 1961 when it was finally successful in uprooting the Kuomintang from Burmese soil after eleven years.⁹² With this long and eventually successful campaign against the Kuomintang, the Tatmadaw reached the peak of its service to the state, and the debt it was owed by the nation was gratefully acknowledged by the Parliament.⁹³ While members of the Socialist group were involved in this campaign, it should be noted that the Tatmadaw operated independently of the BSP after the civil war and under the command of General Ne Win. Besides, there were important contributions made by others, including Brigadier General Kyaw Zaw (later revealed to be a Communist) who fought the KMT forces very bravely.⁹⁴

The Tatmadaw, the BSP and the 1957 Political Crisis

The response of the Tatmadaw to the political crisis that developed in Burma in 1957 was shaped by the changes in its relationship to the BSP from 1950. The separation of political and military roles after the civil war was the context in which the leadership of the Socialist Tatmadaw began to be more critical of the BSP. The

88. ဗိုလ်မြသွေး၊ "ဗမာ့ရန်သူ-တရုန်ဖြူ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အောင်မျိုးစာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁၊ စာ-၅၂။ (Bo Mya Thway, *Burmese Enemy White Chinese*, Rangoon: Aung Myo Press, 1961, p.52.)

89. *Ibid.*, pp.53-54; "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ စာ-၅၂။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.72.)

90. "Colonel Thein Maung's Speech Delivered to The Four-Nation Military Conference At Bangkok on 16 September 1953". (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

91. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ စာ-၆၅။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.65.)

92. *Ibid.*, pp.64-80; ဗိုလ်မြသွေး၊ "ဗမာ့ရန်သူ-တရုန်ဖြူ"၊ စာ-၁၂၅-၁၂၆။ (Mya Thway, *op.cit.*, pp.125-126.)

93. ဗိုလ်မြသွေး၊ "ဗမာ့ရန်သူ-တရုန်ဖြူ"၊ စာ-၁၁၂၅-၁၂၆။ (Mya Thway, *op.cit.*, p.1, pp.125-126.)

94. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ စာ-၂၂၆။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.226.)

main reasons for the criticisms were outlined by Ne Win's biographer who said: "Bogyoke Ne Win and his officers urged the party to organise the masses systematically...to train cadres... and to raise party funds with discipline and then to keep reliable records. The criticism from the Tatmadaw was not liked by the socialist leaders".⁹⁵ These matters were criticisms based on the BSP's inability to distance itself from groups like the merchant classes, which had become an important source of party funds, and to appeal more to the masses. In addition, the Tatmadaw's withdrawal from overt involvement in domestic politics meant that the BSP could to ensure its dominance in the cabinet and the AFPFL. The Party began to take back cabinet seats in January 1950.⁹⁶ There were only three Socialist members in the cabinet between January 1950 and 4 April 1951, including the two leading BSP members, U Kyaw Nyein and U Ba Swe, the Ministers for Co-operatives and Minorities respectively.⁹⁷ In the election of 1952, there was an overwhelming victory for the AFPFL when it won 180 out of the 233 constituencies. Of the 180, about 80 were won by members of the BSP.⁹⁸ In the new cabinet, formed on 16 March 1952, the number of Socialists increased to eight.⁹⁹ On 1 January 1953, U Kyaw Nyein, influential socialist and AFPFL secretary general, re-entered the cabinet as Minister for Industries and Mines, thus bringing the number of socialists to nine and helping to make 1953 a particularly successful year for the BSP. The number of socialist members in the cabinet on 1 March 1954 was level with the 1952 number.¹⁰⁰ In 1955, the status of the BSP was increased when socialist U Ba Swe became acting Prime Minister on 28 May, while U Nu was on a world tour.¹⁰¹ In 1955, U Kyaw Nyein was not only Industrial Minister but also Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister.¹⁰² It was in the context of the growing political power of the BSP that in November 1955, at a

95. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ ၁၈-၃၄၃၊ ၃၅၂-၃၅၃။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, p.343, pp.352-353.) These officers were Brigadier General Tin Pe, Colonels-Aung Gyi, Maung Maung, Aung Shwe, Thein Maung and etc.

96. Between 3 and 5 January 1950, three socialists re-entered in the cabinet were--U Win (Minister for Rehabilitation), U Kyaw Myint (Minister for Industries and Mines) and Bo Khin Maung Gale (Minister for Agriculture and Forests), William C. Johnstone and the Staff, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations (1945-1958)*, Rangoon: The Rangoon-Hopkins Center for Southeast Asia Studies, Rangoon University, 1959, p.18; See also Maung Maung Gyi, *An Analysis Of The Social and Political Foundations Of the Burmese Executive (1948-1956)*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1958, p.183.

97. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.22.

98. *Ibid.*, p.25.

99. *Ibid.*, p.27.

100. Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, pp.40-41; Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.43, p.47.

101. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.53.

102. *Ibid.*, p.56.

meeting held at the residence of Defence Minister U Ba Swe, General Ne Win said that it was time the Tatmadaw departed from the party.¹⁰³

The BSP continued to increase its political dominance. In the national election of 1956, the AFPFL lost several seats to the National United Front (NUF) so that U Nu in June 1956 resigned as Prime Minister in order to strengthen and clean up the AFPFL. U Ba Swe, President of the Socialist Party and Vice-President of the AFPFL, replaced U Nu as Prime Minister on 6 June 1956.¹⁰⁴ By June 1956 there were eleven socialists in the cabinet, and this increased to twelve in 1957, so by 1958 the opposition had 25 more seats than it had after the 1952 elections.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the Socialists were the dominant force in the cabinet until 1957, making them the dominant policy makers for the Union of Burma. This dominance was the result of the BSP's expressed aim of maintaining its hold on political power during the 1950s.¹⁰⁶

Despite this political dominance, by 1957, the political situation in Burma was becoming extremely fractured, with numerous splits within the parties and factions of the major political players. The AFPFL had split almost exactly into two in May 1958: the 'Clean AFPFL' and the 'Stable AFPFL'. The BSP group led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, was on the side of the 'Stable AFPFL'. On the side of the Clean AFPFL, there was part of the BSP led by Thakin Tin plus the National United Front (in Burmese ဟမညတ) (NUF). At first, the Bama Tatmadaw, under the command of Ne Win, intended to refrain from involvement in the AFPFL split although it had good relations with U Ba Swe, who served as Minister of Defence for the six to seven years

103. ဒေါက်တာမောင်မောင်၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်း"၊ ၈-၃၄၃၊ ၃၅၂-၃၅၃ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win*, p.353.)

104. In the period of the AFPFL split, the number of parliamentary seats won by the NUF in 1958 totalled 45, Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.18, p.33; Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, p.186; in the 1952 election, the opposition group won 20 seats (6 for BWPP + 14 for People's Peace Front and People's Democratic Front), Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 63-64; Director of Information, Union of Burma, *The Ninth Anniversary: Burma*: Vol. VII, No.2, January 1957, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1957, pp. xvii-xx.

105. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.63-64 & 75; *The Ninth Anniversary: Burma*, pp. XVII- XX; Maung Maung Gyi, *op.cit.*, p.186.

106. In the *Report of the Third Meeting Of The Bureau held at Kalaw (Burma), May 25 to 28, 1954*, p.127 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam), in reply to the comment of Indian delegate Dr Lohia that "there should be no difference in responsibilities between a party which is in office and between a party which is in opposition", U Kyaw Nyein presented his concept about a political party's obligation to acquire power: "There is a very big difference...Today we can pass a resolution saying that India should declare a war on China. It will not be binding on Comrade Lohia and his party because they are not in Government. There is much difference between a party in office and a party not in office". U Kyaw Nyein argued against the 1949 decision of the Party to resign from the Cabinet.

preceding the split, and had kept on good terms with Prime Minister U Nu.¹⁰⁷ But eventually, the Tatmadaw got once again drawn into political activity, when they were convinced that the split in the AFPFL had paralysed its ability to govern.

The route by which this happened was complicated by the threatened split in allegiance within the middle-ranks of the district commands of the Tatmadaw. Some regional commanders wanted to give their support to the Clean AFPFL, others to the Stable AFPFL.¹⁰⁸ There were also mutual suspicion between the Tatmadaw and the AFPFL (Clean) Government since the motion of no confidence put by the BSP group (the Stable AFPFL) against the government was defeated (127 votes to 119).¹⁰⁹ The Tatmadaw suspected the Nu-Tin Government of being supported by the NUF, which favoured communist ideology and the policy of granting concessions to communists under the amnesty program.¹¹⁰ The Clean AFPFL suspected that Tatmadaw officers would be sympathetic to the Swe-Nyein (BSP) group and help them in the next election. In certain districts, some Tatmadaw officers showed bias towards the Swe-Nyein faction and thus, the 'Clean' government took early precautions and transferred their own supporters and some important leaders to the districts in question.¹¹¹ In the meeting of the All-Burma Nu-Tin AFPFL convention held from 31 August to 2 September 1958, the Tatmadaw was criticised.¹¹²

Thus, the relationship between Tatmadaw and the Clean AFPFL, led by the Nu-Tin faction, was very tense and produced lengthy discussions between the Tatmadaw leaders and Prime Minister U Nu. It was Brigadier Maung Maung in particular who encouraged the Tatmadaw to see the unstable situation as a 'political vacuum' that it should fill, although General Ne Win took responsibility for the military takeover sometime later.¹¹³ Bo Maung Maung, Bo Aung Gyi and Bo Tin Pe went to Prime Minister U Nu demanding that the reigns of government be placed in the hands of the Tatmadaw. In these discussions it became clear that the Tatmadaw was prepared to

107. Johnstone, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp.22, 25, 27, 40, 63, 75, 90; According to a relative of U Ba Swe, when U Ba Swe was appointed Minister for Defence, the chief-of-staff, General Ne Win, dropped into paying him a visit.

108. *Ibid.*, p.239.

109. Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.70; *Times* (London), 11.6.1958.

110. *Ibid.*; *Times* (London), 22.8.1958 & 5.6.1958: "according to the 'Rangoon Daily' dated 4 June 1958, the Communist leader Thakin Than Tun had made official contacts with the authorities for surrender."; the government's program was mentioned in the *Times* (London), 5.8.1958, in an article entitled "Burma Tries To Coax Rebels Into Surrender".

111. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ" ၂၄၄။ (*A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, p.244)

112. *Ibid.*, p.243, p.245; Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.75;

113. Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi on 13.12.1986.

carry out a coup, and this was avoided when U Nu agreed to transfer power to the Tatmadaw.¹¹⁴ In an attempt to legitimise the transfer of power, U Nu signed two letters addressed to Ne Win, stating the handover of power. However, this was an artificial legitimisation because both had been written under the instructions of three officers from the Tatmadaw.¹¹⁵ General Ne Win led the Caretaker Government from 28 October 1958. In comparison with other countries of Asia, there were also sudden overthrow of governments by military men in Thailand and Pakistan in 1957 and in 1958 respectively. However, the coup in Thailand led by Sarit Thanarat was leaning to Capitalists' interests and military alliance with the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) while Burmese military tried to concentrate on internal peace, to uplift ordinary peoples' social and economic lives, and to hold free and fair elections. The similarities of three military governments were to declare the state of emergency, to dissolve the Parliament, to prepare for Constitutional Amendments, and to prohibit all activities of the present parties like the situation of Pakistan since 7 October 1958.¹¹⁶

Over the next six months, Tatmadaw rule was consolidated. Initially there was a protest by U Kyaw, but the NUF members of parliament kept silent throughout the whole parliamentary proceedings.¹¹⁷ The BSP openly supported the Caretaker Government and its Tatmadaw leadership.¹¹⁸ U Nu's two letters stipulated that a free and fair election must be held within six months, that is, before the end of April 1959.¹¹⁹ But General Ne Win pointed out in the Parliament on Friday, 13 February 1959, that circumstances were not suitable to hold and supervise an election in April.¹²⁰ The General assumed that the current political conditions in the country were

114. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe, on 18.4.1989, who explained that "he was one of the persons (with Colonel Aung Gyi, and Colonel Maung Maung) who went to meet Prime Minister U Nu. Preparation for the coup was complete before going to the meeting and Bo Min Gaung, the Home Minister, who was standing beside U Nu, complained of their proposals"; Sein Win, *op.cit.*, p.83 states that U Nu defended his action to his men as a means of providing "a good chance of staging a comeback when the situation subsided".

115. Sein Win, *op.cit.*, pp.76-91.

116. *Daily Telegraph* (London) on 3.12.1958; *Asian Socialist Conference Letter, 40 Djalan Musi Djakarta I/15 Signed By Wijono dated on 27 October 1958*. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam); Director of Information, Union of Burma, *Government in the Union of Burma (GUB), 1958 Nov-1959 Feb*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1959?.

117. Director of Information, Union of Burma, *Government in the Union of Burma (GUB), 1958 Nov-1959 Feb*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1959?, p.4

118. "U Ba Swe had declared his confidence in Ne Win's caretaker Government" in a press statement released on Saturday, 1 November 1958, Letter from Albert Carthy, Secretary of the Socialist International, to Mr. Wijono dated 14 November, 1958.

119. *Government in the Union of Burma (GUB), 1958 Nov-1959 Feb*, p.2.

120. *Ibid.*, pp.15-16.

incompatible with free and fair elections and needed to occur within a specific period. This necessitated a constitutional amendment as Section 116 of the Constitution states that if a member of the government is not a member of the parliament the person must resign after six consecutive months.¹²¹ The BSP Stable AFPFL supported the Tatmadaw Government's constitutional amendment, which was passed by Parliament on 16 February.¹²² The BSP MP, U Hla Aung, explained why the party supported the Government led by the Tatmadaw:

In ordinary circumstances, we would not support this kind of action by U Nu's government. But in the present circumstances when the political atmosphere is very tense and the situation is complicated, there is no alternative but for General Ne Win, who has the status of national Leader, to take up the responsibility of forming an interim government which must be strong as well as popular.¹²³

But there was a strong objection before the Parliament to the constitutional amendment by Thakin Chit Maung, a leader of NUF, declared it "sought to infringe and violate the spirit of the Constitution".¹²⁴ This group, assumed by the BSP to be the overtly operating communists also criticised the moves of U Nu and the BSP, declaring that "the former was cleverly exploiting the situation and the latter was the instigator of the army's taking control of the country".¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the Parliament approved the amendment and General Ne Win was elected Prime Minister in February 1959.¹²⁶

121. *Ibid.*, p.16.

122. *Ibid.*: U Ba Swe temporarily supported a draft bill that U Kyaw Nyein introduced in Parliament on 16 February 1958.

123. *Publication on Parties' Activities of Asian Socialist Conference No (2), 1959*, p.4. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

124. The NUF objected to the Amendment and its twenty-nine MPs constituted the dissenting vote, *Government in the Union of Burma (GUB) 1958 Nov-1959 Feb*, pp.16-17; Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy) opposed in the Parliament the amendment of "Section 116 of the Constitution" by giving the example of "The Story of one of the Buddha's lives" (*Jataka* 545) where he was born in one life as a Minister, ဝိဇ္ဇင်္ဂ (Waidura or Vidhura) before he became a Buddha. In the story, "there was a well-known knowledgeable old minister Waidura. When the wife of the Naga (Serpent) King heard that he spoke great wisdom, she wanted to hear the cherished words of Waidura. She claimed to be sick, and told her husband that she could only be cured by 'the heart of old minister'. The King thought that his queen wanted the real heart of the old minister. Waidura visited the Naga kingdom, but realised the real intention of the queen and he was freed from being put to death." Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy) said in conclusion "Do not amend the constitution because it is look like the heart of the 'Old Minister Waidura'", by pointing to the Buddha's story. Thus, he became in Burmese politics "Waidura Thakin Chit Maung". This person was not Social Democrat Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung). Waidura Thakin Chit Maung had passed away in March 2005 in Yangon, Myanmar.

125. *Publication On Parties' Activities of Asian Socialist Conference No (2), 1959*, p.4. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

126. *Government in the Union of Burma (GUB) 1958 Nov-1959 Feb*, p.17.

The new government led by Ne Win was essentially a revised version of the last Cabinet of U Nu's AFPFL government. The Cabinet sworn in by the President of the Union of Burma on 27 February 1959, consisted of sixteen members.¹²⁷ Its membership displayed the continuity of links between the Tatmadaw and the BSP, especially as it included as new members Thakin Lun Baw, who was one of the founders of the BSP in 1945, and Brigadier Tin Pe, whose membership of the BSP dated from 1945.¹²⁸

The Tatmadaw, the BSP and the 1962 Coup

The relationship between the Tatmadaw leadership and the BSP passed a major milestone during the period of the Caretaker Government. In this period, the position taken by the BSP after the split of the AFPFL was to favour the Caretaker Government (1958-1960) led by the Tatmadaw. However, they did not win the 1960 election although some had predicted that the BSP would be the winning party.¹²⁹ Socialist leader U Ba Swe announced that "we will not oppose Gen. Ne Win's Govt. if it finds it necessary to prolong the life of the present Govt. for more than six months in order to achieve the goals set forth by him". The Caretaker Government, led by General Ne Win, held free and fair elections on 6 February 1960 and power was transferred to the winning party, the Clean AFPFL led by U Nu on 4 April 1960.¹³⁰ The election results were: the BSP group (the Stable AFPFL and its allies) got 45 seats; the Clean AFPFL and its allies won 168 seats; and the NUF won 3 seats.¹³¹ The election result showed the Burmese inclination to dislike the stronger group that suppresses the lesser, an inclination that was reasserted thirty years later in the

127. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ" ၈-၂၄၉-၂၅၁။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, pp.249-251); A Letter From the Embassy Of The Union of Burma to Albert Carthy, Secretary of Socialist International dated 22 October 1959 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam).

128. Ibid.

129. The Report of R. Barkatt from General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz-Israel to Mr. A. Carthy, Secretary, SI, dated on 9 March 1959: pp.2-3. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam) Mr Barkatt had predicted that in coming 1960 election, Socialists would be in new government with the support of the current military regime.

130. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ" ၈-၂၅၉။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.259); The Report of Asian Socialist Conference by General Secretary U Hla Aung, dated 16 March 1959, pp.1-2; The Report of Asian Socialist Conference by Vice-Chairman Wijono to Mr. Albert Carthy, SI, dated on 6 March 1960, p.1; A Letter, Ref: No.321.ASCII (B)/60, to Mr. Wijono, Vice-Chairman of the ASC, from U Hla Aung, General Secretary of the ASC, dated 4 March, 1960 (IISG Archive, Amsterdam); The Report of R. Barkatt from General Federation of Jewish Labour in Eretz-Israel to Mr. A. Carthy, Secretary, SI, dated on 9 March, 1959: pp.2-3. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

131. ဦးကျော်ဝင်း၊ ဦးမြဟန်၊ ဦးသိန်းလှိုင်၊ "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးတတိယတွဲ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်များပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၉၁၊ ၈-၉။ (U Kyaw Win, U Mya Han and U Thein Hlaing, 1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, Rangoon: University Press, 1991, p.97.)

election of 1990. It was also a mark of people in Burma who usually favoured individuals rather than any policy or program. After winning the election of 1960, the Clean AFPFL formed a new government and then renamed itself the "Union Party".¹³² The BSP, the Stable AFPFL, still held to the name of the old shell, AFPFL.

While the Union Party was in government (1960-1962), a conflict arose within its ranks between the "U-Bo Faction" and the "Thakin Faction" (these two factions did not involve the BSP group).¹³³ The BSP group, under the name of the AFPFL, had stood in opposition to the Government and thus, it opposed U Nu's 1961 proposal that Buddhism be made the state religion, on the grounds that U Nu's proposal would alienate many indigenous peoples and undermine national unity.¹³⁴ The Tatmadaw worried that a split might happen within the armed forces with its many ethnic people, and based on religious issue; its position was to support the proposal only for "Burma Proper" if enacted.¹³⁵ The NUF was the only other party that consistently objected to the proposal to adopt Buddhism as the state's religion.¹³⁶

Another problem in this period was the appearance of applications for the "Right of Separation" by indigenous leaders from the Rakhine, Mon and Chin. This had come about as a result of Bogyoke Aung San's 1947 meeting with ethnic leaders which had produced the "Pinlon Treaty". This Treaty included a constitutional "right of separation" after 10 years if desired, and that period was reached in 1957.¹³⁷ BSP policy was against separation at the time, but U Nu declared that there was need to test the desire of respective indigenous people.¹³⁸ These two matters exemplify the part played by the BSP group at this time; no longer the nation's policy or decision maker, it fulfilled the role of parliamentary opposition.

Concerning with the two issues of State: the 'State Religion' and the 'Right of Separation', the Tatmadaw's vision was that they were defects of the parliamentary democracy in Burma. This vision can be seen very clearly in the Tatmadaw's historiography on three important causes: the request of federalism by ethnic Shan Feudalists which was spreading to other ethnic people; the prospect of federalists

132. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊စာ-၂၆၀။(A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.260.); "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး၊ တတိယတွဲ"၊စာ-၁။(1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, p.1)

133. "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး၊တတိယတွဲ"၊စာ-၁၄-၁၅။(1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, pp.14-17); "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊စာ-၂၆၀-၂၆၁။(A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, pp.260-261).

134. "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး၊တတိယတွဲ"၊စာ-၁၃၄-၁၃၅။(1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, pp.134-137.)

135. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်းစတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊စာ-၂၆၂။(A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.262.)

136. "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာ့နိုင်ငံရေး၊တတိယတွဲ"၊စာ-၁၂၃။(1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, p.123.)

137. Ibid., p.215, pp.335-336.

138. Ibid., pp.215-217, 236.

would be getting outside help which were harmful to the State; and the necessary construction of Socialist Economy in Burma.¹³⁹ However, former BSP chairman Ko Ko Gyi assumed that “Kogyi Nu can sort the issue of ‘separation’ out”.¹⁴⁰ When the Tatmadaw staged a coup on 2 March 1962, it established the Revolutionary Council (RC) and set up a single party state after the promulgation of other parties as illegal in 1964.¹⁴¹ The BSP’s and AFPFL’s stand towards the Coup was explained by U Ba Swe, who said that the problem was with the proposed "Burmese Way to Socialist Program" of the Revolutionary Council, not the socialist system as such. U Kyaw Nyein pointed out that "No political system is perfect, but compared to the one-party systems of communism and fascism, parliamentary democracy is the least defective."¹⁴² And, the AFPFL spokesman Thakin Chit Maung (Myanaung) said that, "there was nothing very novel in the policy declaration of the Revolutionary Council released to the country."¹⁴³ The AFPFL President U Ba Swe and Vice-President U Kyaw Nyein were arrested on 9 August 1963 and finally, the BSP was abolished in 1964 along with all other parties except the BSPP when the RC promulgated the “Law to Protect National Solidarity” on 28 March 1964.¹⁴⁴

Re-interpreting the Coup

The conventional explanation of the coup by the military is that it was held, "because of the Feudal Shans’ Federalism", that is that the Tatmadaw had to stage a coup on 2 March 1962 to protect the state from disunity and to retain the sovereignty of the state. However, the official explanation also notes that the coup was held "to construct the socialist economy".¹⁴⁵ Other writers have underestimated the importance of the ideological element as a genuine motivation in the Coup. The key to this previously hidden element was the extraordinary role played behind the scenes, by former BSP President U Ko Ko Gyi. He produced the theoretical and ideological validation for the 1962 Socialist Revolution.

139. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ ၁၇-၂၆၆။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, p.266.)

140. In the conversation with former BSP chairman Ko Ko Gyi.

141. *The Times* (London), 3.3.1962; Robert H. Taylor, *The State in Burma*, London: C. Hurst & Co. Ltd., 1987, p.315.

142. *The collections by Socialist International; The Statement of AFPFL*, on 20.6.1962. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

143. *The Nation* (Rangoon), 2.5.1962.

144. *The Times* (London), 5.10.1963; F.K. Lehman, *Military Rule In Burma Since 1962*, Singapore: Koon Wah Press, 1981, p.31.

145. "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ"၊ ၁၇-၂၆၅-၂၆၆။ (A History of Tatmadaw, Vol. IV, pp.265-266.)

By 1957-58 the close connections between the Tatmadaw elite group and Ko Ko Gyi had become obvious during his imprisonment. When in prison U Ko Ko Gyi requested Colonel Tin Pe for books, which he used to write a thesis, based on Marxism about 200 pages long.¹⁴⁶ He sent his thesis part by part from Insein prison to his supporters from the Tatmadaw. His thesis was a response to the question that he was asked in 1957 by General Ne Win via Bo Tin Pe, as to whether "the 1947 Constitution was compatible with socialism?"¹⁴⁷ Ko Ko Gyi's thesis advised the Tatmadaw leadership that "the 1947 Constitution would permit the formation of a socialist government because he observed that Bogoyoke Aung San actually wanted to implement socialism while he was alive".¹⁴⁸

It was this advice that provided the Tatmadaw elite group with justification to bring about the 1962 Socialist Revolution.¹⁴⁹ This insight into the motivation of the Coup fills a big historiographical gap, especially for those who have been trying to discover whether or not the program of the Revolutionary Council reflected Bogoyoke Aung San's *Lanzin* (directive, program). U Ko Ko Gyi's advice became the main impetus for the cadres who led the Socialist Revolution in 1962. After Ko Ko Gyi was released from prison in October 1958, he was given approval by General Ne Win to hold a class to teach the new generation of Tatmadaw leaders—led by Brigadier Tin

146. This thesis was an analysis of the articles of the 1947 Constitution, to demonstrate how compatible they were with socialist ideology. In particular, he studied the compatibility of the economic articles of the Constitution and then put together arguments to substantiate his theory. But his thesis included democracy in the political sector. The thesis might be kept at the Tatmadaw Archive & Museum. When I interviewed Former Brigadier Tin Pe, he said that it was not in his hand. Lecturer Sayamagyi Daw Mya Mya (Yadana Hostel) from the History Department, Rangoon University spoke to me about this historical event, and said that one time, a person from the Government borrowed many books from the Department and they were not returned. So, Sayamagyi suggested I ask U Ko Ko Gyi, whether or not the books he used were returned. U Ko Ko Gyi said, "all the books were returned to Bo Tin Pe", but, when I checked, I found a book with the seal of the University Library, "Theory and Practice of Socialism" by John Strachey unreturned.

147. "မမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လမ်ပါတီဥက္ကဋ္ဌဟောင်းဦးကိုကိုကြီး၏ကိုယ်တိုင်ရေးအတ္ထုပ္ပတ္တိ"။ (Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.); "ဗိုလ်မှူးချုပ်ဟောင်းတင်ဖေပြောသောမမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လမ်ပါတီဥက္ကဋ္ဌဟောင်းဦးကိုကိုကြီး၏အတ္ထုပ္ပတ္တိ"။ (Unpublished biography of U Ko Ko Gyi, retold by Former Brigadier Tin Pe.), which notes that in 1957, while Colonel Tin Pe was living in a house in Uwisara Road, Lt. Colonel Tin Oo (who later served as MI Chief in the period of the BSPP) arrived at 5 am and informed him, "Saya's teacher was arrested unintentionally when the house he was in was searched and now he is being kept comfortably. Please tell me how you want him to be treated and I will follow your instructions."; "သိန်းလေးဆယ်ဦးကိုကိုကြီး၊ ၁၄.၂.၂၀၀၁"။ (*Theinlese U Ko Ko Gyi*, 14.12.2001) states that on 26 July 1957, U Ko Ko Gyi was arrested by the Military Intelligent Service and transferred to the Police Department and thus, he was put in Insein prison under section (5) by extension of remand for twice a month.

148. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi; Interview with U Ko Ko Gyi, on 20.5.1988, in which he stated that Bogoyoke Aung San discussed with him before the Goodwill Mission to London, "how to rehabilitate the country, what process of compensation to adopt following nationalisation and how to run imperialist firms that are nationalised"(see in Appendix: f); Interview with U Chan Thar (ICS) alias Letwai Min Nyo, on 6.8.1988.

149. Unpublished autobiography of U Ko Ko Gyi.

Pe and including Colonel Than Sein, Colonel Kyaw Soe—socialist ideology. But this had to be done secretly as the Tatmadaw was divided between right and left. The class was hurriedly completed within three or four days,¹⁵⁰ as U Maung Maung Kha who later became Prime Minister in the BSPP period, complained about the class, and General Ne Win had to pretend that it was being held without his knowledge and ordered it to stop. Nevertheless, U Ko Ko Gyi's knowledge provided these leaders with the socialist ideology through which the 1962 Coup was justified.¹⁵¹ Frustrated by what they perceived to be the "one step forward, two steps backward" progress of the parliamentary democracy road to socialism, Ko Ko Gyi's analysis of the 1947 Constitution provided the young Tatmadaw leaders with the justification of having a directive or program provided by their admired late Father of the Tatmadaw, Bogyoke Aung San. On this basis they prepared cadres ideologically for the 1962 Socialist Revolution.¹⁵²

Conclusion

The objectives of this chapter were to reveal how significant was the relationship between the Tatmadaw and the BSP since the revolution against fascist Japanese and subsequently, how they departed from the starting point to the new version of socialist revolution in 1960s. This chapter investigated and discussed the emergence of the Tatmadaw elite group in the BSP, and the role of the military socialists in the independence movement and the civil war. The ideology of Socialist Tatmadaw elite has been explored in this chapter. Cooperation between the Tatmadaw

150. Information from leading figures in the PVO ; conversation with Daw Thein Sain, wife of former Brigadier Tin Pe: She exclaimed that "not only grandfather but also his granddaughter, is teaching the family of Bo Kyaw Soe" when she noticed that U Ko Ko Gyi's granddaughter, my sister, was giving home-tuition to the grandchild of Bo Kyaw Soe.

151. See Chapter Two for discussion of how the Second World War, Communist Thakin Soe also wrote two sittans (theses), *Insein Sittan* and *Myingyan Sittan* while he was at the two prisons, Insein and Myingyan.

152. Interview with Former Brigadier Tin Pe, on 18.4.1989 & 22.4.1989. When I asked about his experiences with U Aung San, he said that "Dr Maung Maung had asked him the same question. Then, he told me the following story. "Bogyoke Ne Win went with him to Bogyoke's house when they finished their duties, and Bogyoke (AS) said to his wife, Daw Khin Kyi, to prepare rice and curry for them. While they were eating, Bogyoke (AS) asked Bo Tin Pe, "You are a student of the monastery-school, right? If so, what is "ပိဋကံ" (Perfect World)?", Bo Tin Pe kept silent. So, Bogyoke (NW) told him to reply; Bo Tin Pe had explained the concept in Parli. When Bo Tin Pe repeated his explanation, Bogyoke (AS) said "No, it is wrong. "ပိဋကံ" means Biluck (London)". Thus, Bogyoke made a joke because he realised that his Commanders were very tired or Bogyoke highlighted British welfare state in comparison with the attractive Burmese religious word, "ပိဋကံ" because he understood that in the post Second World War in Great Britain, the British Labour Government was leading Socialist constructions for their people; in conversation with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in 1988 she stated that once when Bogyoke Ne Win went to Bogyoke Aung San's house, the former had been made to wait until Bogyoke finished reading his newspaper.

men and the BSP was particularly evident in the formation of the AUMP during the civil war. Colonel Ne Win approved the significant involvement of the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group in the formation of the AUMP. There was a ray of peace in the sky of the Union of Burma when the Socialist Commander and his officers went back to the state's service, given that they were then faced with KMT aggression. I have pointed out the reasoning behind the military coup in 1962 in Burma, that it was more based on ideology than has hitherto been assumed. In summing up, the essential role of Socialist Tatmadaw leadership can be seen in the attempts to prevent the civil war, not only in the leading part nine of its people took in the LUC but also in the support it gave to the programs of the BSP and the PVO. The Socialist Commander General Ne Win played a pivotal role; the demands made of him were great and he proved equal to them. All these events are more weight to be recorded as attempts to preserve law and order by a government led in part by the Socialist Tatmadaw elite group. At the same time, the strong civilian support enjoyed by the Tatmadaw should not be overlooked—it is a relationship that contains an important lesson of history. In this way, all the above facts meet to the objectives of this chapter: 'To what extent did the Role of the Tatmadaw (Military) in Burma Socialist Party' and the 'Filling a Big Gap what the connection between the old BSP and the 1962 Coup'.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been making a major contribution to the understanding of recent Burmese political history by investigating the importance and nature of the influence of the BSP in Burmese political history. A second goal has been to understand the role of ideology in the BSP, to show that the Party comprised two groups, a division which existed from the time the party played a key role in founding Burma as a socialist society in 1948. The two groups differed in that one chose a parliamentary system and the other chose an authoritarian or totalitarian system. Nevertheless, each attempted in its own way to construct a socialist state, the former during the 1950s and the latter in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

A third desire has been to solve the many puzzles: to what extent was the future Tatmadaw leadership of Burma deeply involved in the BSP's movements? By doing so, it would fill major gaps, what the BSP forming an intimate relationship with the Tatmadaw elite and acted in the interests of the nation, actions which have not been acknowledged in current literature. Rather recent literature, has given credit to Tatmadaw's initiatives only, despite the fact that the Party did its utmost to win and preserve both freedom for Burma and leftist unity. Therefore, this thesis has shown the value of previously ignored historical materials. It has found an important warning within those materials: that in Burmese politics, there should be cooperation between the civilians and the Tatmadaw. Indeed, such cooperation is essential to Burmese political life. At the same time, by taking historical lessons from the PKI and the BSP, this thesis has shown the importance of getting support from state's armed forces is necessary for civil society and political parties in Burma/Myanmar. This is essential for political long-term effectiveness and prosperity. The two most distinguished national two leaders, U Aung San and Thakin Mya (first President of BSP) tried to reconcile the national forces but their attempts were in vain. The implication of their inability to create a lasting unity contains a warning for those involved in the current political tensions between the governing military force and civilian politicians. Thus, this thesis has addressed, on the one hand, an existing problem that exists between the current Tatmadaw regime and the civilian opposition, and, on the other, the question of what they should do for the interests of the state if they really love their nation and its people.

In the study of the background history of the BSP before the Second World War, this work has shown how the motivation of the political leadership in Burma was based on patriotism, and a desire to regain freedom for Burma. The nationalist spirit can be seen also in the degree to which the selection of a revolutionary leader was based on Burmese tradition. This work has also brought together the scattered socialist literature of the 1930s and based on this literature provides an account of the origin of socialism in Burma. It reveals the ideas which contributed to the thinking of the Burmese socialists in the 1930s. Socialist ideology was already rooted in Burmese traditional cultural villages and in Buddha's philosophy. In this thesis, the examination of the class origins of the Socialist leadership shows that the earliest activists were intellectuals whose parents were from the merchant middle class. In reaction to British colonial policy, Burmese nationalists hungered to have their own army, which led to the formation of the underground party, the PRP, which sought military education for its members outside Burma.

Chapter Two has examined the emergence of the BSP's pre-war and post-war parties. This study explains the development of different ideological streams within socialism, particularly the differences in tactics and strategy between the Communists and the Socialists in regard to the Second World War. These differences led to the formation of separate parties, the Communist party (CPB) and the Socialist underground party, the PRP. The CPB concentrated on ideological study, while the PRP emphasised the need for Burma to form its own army, which in turn, led to collaboration with the Japanese. However, in the initial stages of the PRP's actions, those who later became Communists were especially involved in the party's ideological department. This thesis has highlighted how PRP achieved its strongest influence through the Burma Independent Army, while its greatest weakness was that it was unable to prevent the persecution of Burmese people by the Japanese. Disagreement with the strategy based on 'Browderism' by the Burmese Communists, was an indirect cause of the emergence of the BSP. In other words, the BSP's origin as a separate post-War party was characterised by factionalism from the first party's legal foundation, a consistent feature of the Burmese political scene up to the present day. There was also political complexity among the Burmese nationalists. A further impetus for the formation of the BSP, was their different ideology and class instincts, based on the distinct experience of Socialist literature and the class structure.

Chapter Three analysed Socialist leadership which I categorised into *Key players* and *Second-tier* leaders. They all came from educated lower middle class backgrounds and most were descended from the ‘Dobama Asiayone’ and the clique of the ‘University Students’ Union’. They were born and lived in both urban and rural communities. There were revolutionaries and reformists in the Socialists’ leadership, and most became Socialists as youth and adults. Even before the foundation of the Party, they already had connections with the masses and were involved in mass organisations. The Party was led by experienced men, and the actual driving forces came from those who were middle aged. They were not only from ethnic Bama but also from other ethnic groups. The significant group of the Burmese Socialist leadership was that it was composed of parliamentarians, artists, teachers, youth, lawyers and who had experience with the military, guerrilla warfare and theoretical study. In organisational terms this study has shown the role of the leadership at both levels in formulating policies, although the sources do not enable us to know in much detail how all the socialist cadres operated. What is clear, is that first BSP president, Saya Thakin Mya, was highly esteemed by all socialists, but his unifying role was lost with the murder of AFPFL leadership, following his murder along with leading BSP members, in the July 1947 assassination. This analysis has a bearing on to the current political scene, because those who took part in the BSP are still participants in current Burmese politics.

This thesis has also revealed the BSP’s pioneer work in the national administrative structure, especially through creating ‘Democratic Centralism’, which was based on the PFP’s constitution. There were undoubtedly defects in the system, but it was arguably more suitable for Burma/Myanmar whose people had no experience with democracy nor reached a politically mature stage. The discussion of ideology in the thesis shows how far the central political leadership of Burma intended to transform the country into a socialist society, as revealed through the ideas of the key political leaders. Like the PKI, the BSP’s initial ideology drew from ‘Scientific Socialism’ based on ‘Marxism and Leninism’, and then extended to the ideology of ‘Maoism’. In the construction of socialist state, the ultimate goal of the BSP was to reach a ‘classless society’ but the BSP specified that there was a need for a society to pass through three developmental periods before this could be achieved. The BSP thus was refrained from the revolutionary radicalism of the CPB. Moreover, for the BSP *Socialism* was equated as *freedom*.

This study looked at the differences that arose in implementing the BSP's detailed, three-stage program, which aimed to give discipline and coherence to the party within the AFPFL, especially through organising and training the party's cadres. However, some influential BSP leaders had to enter ministerial posts and ignored their duties within the party. They did not have enough time for their party responsibilities. Thus implementation of the program was neglected and the party suffered from a shortage of well-trained leaders who could become mature cadres. Party finances also suffered. To get party funds, the BSP approached members of the wealthy merchant class and a relationship of interdependence developed between the party and the merchant class. It is not surprising then, that the Tatmadaw elite group criticised the connection between the BSP and the merchants in the 1950s. Consequently, the legacy of the BSP became historical lessons for the next generation.

The BSP played a significant part not only in Burma's quest for independence but in the freedom struggles of other countries as well. The Party got prestige from its public image by involvement in the 'State's United Front', the AFPFL in the struggle for independence. The public image deteriorated in 1948 because the two leading Socialist leaders faced defilement. Yet, in its development and expansion in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the BSP did not create any mechanism for the systematic recording of its own history. This has left a big gap in Burmese history, a gap this thesis has endeavoured to fill. In the BSPP period since 1960s, the government has enjoyed diplomatic advantages from the fruit planted by the BSP. The BSPP, however, has not given the BSP credit for what it has enjoyed. This thesis takes the reader to the exact tree. This thesis has also thrown light on how the BSP regarded internal forces and associations, and on the perspectives it took on neighbouring countries and external relations.

Chapter Six, emphasised the role of the BSP in constructing a Socialist Economy of Burma in the post-colonial state. National Leader U Aung San drew a 'Two-Years Socialist Planning Economy' for the state and its society. The Party and U Aung San had discussed how to handle the 'Nationalisation' of foreign firms. Moreover, Eastern Europe was seen as a model for national development in the 1940s an idea strongly proclaimed for example by Bogyoke Aung San, an architect of the independence of Burma. From the 1960s, other model of Socialist Economy prevailed, evident in the extensive nationalisation to build the Socialist society of

Burma/Myanmar. During the BSPP period led by military personnel, heavy industries and all economic enterprises were nationalised by the government, regardless of the effectiveness. There was a lack of vision of a 'market economy' for example in the production of salt for distribution and selling. Those most responsible in that period did not listen to the voice of others, more experienced major player who had been in the BSP.

The history of the BSP contains lessons relevant to Burma's current situation. This work also elicits the importance of studying these lessons of the BSP. According to the policy of the BSP, the Socialists stretched their wings in 1945 not only to compete with the activities of the CPB's organisations but also to organise the masses. However, Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy), one of the leaders setting up the branches of the party, spoke out after 1988 claiming that it had been wrong of the party to establish the mass organisations under the umbrella of one party. This is an example of the continuing effect of the legacy of the BSP, and what the parties should not do in current political environment of Burma/Myanmar. At the same time, the question arises of how well the BSP remained true to the lessons of its own experience. One BSP practice, from which much can be learned, was the party's readiness to work with the propertied classes, in marked contrast to the CPB. For the BSP, shaking hands with small landowners and compliant members of the bourgeoisie was consistent with the construction of a socialist society.

As shown in the examination of the policies of the BSP, this work presents as a new understanding of the triangular relationships among the CPB, the BSP and the PVO. It shows how the BSP cultivated "a consciousness of unity" in regard to the ethnic peoples, adhering to its policy of a united nation, of how "not to become two Burmas". The BSP's policies are still fresh in Myanmar politics, both because the current Tatmadaw regime is copying the foreign policy of the Union of Burma in which the BSP was a hardcore member, at the same time, the civilian opposition against the regime also is trying to win favour from one specific member of the ASEAN (Indonesia) when the actions of the western bloc were not enough to overthrow the regime. Both of these approaches reflect the BSP's cordial diplomatic relations since the AFPFL period.

Chapter Seven discussed the effect of the Cold War on the BSP and its state. One of the milestones of the Cold War, the effect of the 'Berlin Blockage' in 1947, did not reach into Burma. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the 'Cold War' could be

seen in the ‘Anglo-Burmese Relationship’ since the struggle for independence especially in the case of entering into the British Commonwealth of nations. The foundation of the Marxist League, the civil war and the recognition of the PRC in 1949 also reflected the impact of the Cold War. Another significant feature of the Cold War was the Korean War which led to the major split of the BSP in 1950.

Another achievement of this thesis has been to show that other accounts have not demonstrated a full understanding of Burmese politics, nor of the BSP’s policy and its strategy. For example, author U Sein Win, former Guardian journalist, has used his imagination to consider ‘what if’ U Nu had taken a stronger stand against the factional disruption in the AFPFL.¹ I respect the quality of his speculation but there is need to give weight to other considerations. First, the Tatmadaw elite group did not like U Nu from the time he accepted the place of U Aung San and then sought to ‘change horses’ during the civil war. Secondly, more emphasis needs to be put on the role of U Ba Swe. Thirdly, according to the nature of the traditional form of leadership in Burmese politics, a leader cannot accept someone as his second-in-command who is more brilliant than himself. This being so, the attitudes of those Burmese in positions of power, should reflect less the spirit of being ‘*bou kya* (ဗိုလ်ကျ)’ or bullies, and more that of being ‘servant of the state’.

This thesis has strongly suggested that the BSP did its utmost to win and preserve both freedom for Burma and leftist unity. The Party, unlike the CPB, gave priority to state and its society and the ‘United Front, AFPFL’, and its second priority to sustaining the party. To save the Union from civil war, this thesis shows that the BSP formed an intimate relationship with the Tatmadaw and selected the ‘right man’ for the ‘right position’. In other words, the BSP made the right decisions when the AFPFL and its organisations were not working properly. The BSP acted in the interests of the nation, a fact that not been acknowledged in the current literature, whereas credit has been given to Tatmadaw’s role.

Chapter Seven points out, how the BSP, or the civilians, were capable of connecting with other Asian socialists and the Socialist International. This capability supports the claim that the BSP was a precursor to the non-aligned movements in Bandung (1955). History, however, should not overlook the BSP’s weaknesses in the parliamentary period of Burma/Myanmar, such as in the cases of the party’s pocket

1. Sein Win, *The Split Story*, Rangoon: The Guardian Press, 1959, p.91.

armies, the responses to opposition, the practices as bureaucrats, and the killing at Minhla.

Chapter Eight has revealed for the first time the great depth of involvement of Tatmadaw elite in the BSP's movements. The close relationship between Tatmadaw and the Civilian elite has not been mentioned in other literature. Closer examination suggests that the ideals for the military elite come from BSP's ideological seminars. The Tatmadaw from the PRP and the PVO, attended at the socialist ideological classes opened by the BSP in 1945-48. The establishment of the 'Peoples' Literature House' in 1949 to study ideology by the Party, gave benefits both for Socialists' Tat, and for the Communists who worked underground against the AFPFL government. It has highlighted the role of Socialist Tatmadaw which provided essential support in the struggles for independence, not only for Burma but also for some Asian countries under the cover of the BSP. This thesis has also explored the successful role of Tatmadaw elite who had accepted the leading flag from the Party and the AFPFL during the Burmese civil war.

Overall the thesis has shown that there were three phases in the BSP's history from the angle of 'Alliances and Ideology'. Bearing in mind the description of socialism as a battleground between two camps, 'democracy plus socialism' and 'totalitarianism plus socialism'², the BSP in its first phase, worked within the former camp, and believed Burma's development was not yet ripe for class revolution. Its association with the Tatmadaw began with the close involvement of individual soldiers, then developed into an alliance between the two organisations. In the second phase, the party intended to work within the totalitarian turn that Burma's history had taken. During this period of civil war in Burma, the party set up a policy to construct intimate relationships between the army men and party men. In the last phase, the direction of the Party taken was towards parliamentary democracy as a 'Social Democratic Party'.

This thesis had analysed the role of Tatmadaw in the late 1950s as one of filling the political vacuum caused by rivalry within the political elite, including leaders from the BSP. The relations between the party and the Tatmadaw initially looked like those between 'a bottle and a stopper' but towards the end of the 1950s the relationship changed and looked more like "revolving doors". This thesis has also

2. *Asian Socialist Conference Information No: 5/1959*, p.5. (IISG Archive, Amsterdam)

supplied fresh information about, and a new perspective on, the coups of 1958 and 1962. It examines how in gaining power the current Tatmadaw regime, which had its source in the BSP, won power. Clarifying these issues will give more weight to bring historians closer to solving the many puzzles in the existing literatures. Thus, the system known as 'Burmese military authoritarianism' was not something that the BSP supported, but was nevertheless an outcome of the political conflicts in which the BSP played a major role. As this thesis has shown, the BSP has played an important but underrated role in Burma's history. The thesis goes some way to demonstrating the significance of that role.

Appendixes

Appendix (a): "Let's Revolt"

Dear Comrades,

Since the beginning of the War, We all Burmese suffered very severely by the White Indians¹. In their withdrawn fields, our indigenous peoples and Burmese women were acted inhumanly. Our Buddha Status, Pagodas and monasteries were destroyed massively. Our possessives were robbed. The Buddha Status were used as their chairs and urinated. Our food supplies- rice, paddy and etc, were burnt. Both peoples and goods are destroyed. The destructive acts by the White Indians can be seen in everywhere. They are not able to defeat the Japanese so that persecuting Burmese.

At the time being, the British are withdrawing in Martaban, Phaang and Thaton. It is definitely that they will persecute the Burmese because of their losses.

Thus, we should not wait to attack them in the withdrawn areas due to the previous programs. Before the animals take action, we should revolt them. If we don't start, they will attack us. Must revolt with current possessive weapons and helps. There are coming to us our comrade Japanese army and Burma Independent Army which were set up in all over Burma. They are coming to help. We will join with them by revolting with the current weapons. After joining, let us advance to march with the modern weapons and attack again.

The British strengths are loosing and their troops and followers are frightening. Their dependent fortress in Singapore is being occupied. In Phaang, Thaton and Martaban too, the White Indians are defeated and withdrawing quickly. The British are failing in everywhere.

Let us the British who are going to nearly die, to die. Let us burn the disordered government building.

Dear Comrades,

Let us revolt by following the orders from the respective responsible Bos² in unity with discipline. Let us remove the undesired peoples acted as exploited persons.

Ayeidawpon..... Must be Victory.

Central Authority
Bama Revolutionary League
Burma.³

1. White Indians means the British.

2. "ဗိုလ်"(Bos) means the leading persons or the Captains.

3. This document in Burmese has been already mentioned in my Masters thesis, Rangoon University.

Appendix (b): "United Front"¹

The leaders of the two parties, namely, the party which was previously known as Peoples' Cause and the Communist (Burma) Party, agreed, after discussion, to amalgamate and work together as one single party:

1. because the Communists' Policy is not against the cause of freedom and the National cause, but gives support to such causes;
2. because the Peoples' Cause Party believes that the real independence of Burma can be achieved through freedom, democracy and socialism.

Because of these reasons the two parties agreed to work as one under the name of the "Communist Party (Burma)".²

The following Views and Rules are the latest issued by the Revolutionary Front.

Views and Rules

The people of the governing class will not voluntarily surrender their power, so the British will not give independence to Burma. In drawing up our regulations we will not base them on declarations and promises by others. We will base the regulations on the real conditions, real war situation, real National situation and the real situation of the masses. Our regulations will not be based on mere intention but will be based on action. We have made a mistake in being allied to Japan on their own promises of independence. Just because the British have not promised independence it should not be taken that British are not our allies. Why? Because: although the British did not have (a) policy or (b) carry out their regulations regarding the fate of the war and the fate of Burma and freedom of the world and freedom of Burma, there were instances contrary to the freedom of the world and freedom of Burma.

For instance, before the world war the policy of the British was: (1) to instigate Germany and Japan to oppose Soviet Union; (2) to suppress Proletariat revolution and Freedom causes (Colonial Revolutions); (3) to enhance its own power and to strengthen capital system. Even now this policy is still pursued but success of the policy was not complete.

The Soviet Union was well aware of the fact that "freedom means the understanding of the inevitable", and as she had this understanding she made alliance with America, England and France and fought with the intention of destroying Fascism. And now, (1) instead of Russia, the Fascists are being attacked on all sides; (2) there are revolts of the "Have-nots" and there are signs of colonial revolts; (3) the power of the British Empire is waning day by day.

1. The *United Front* is also called the *Vanguard of the Revolution*. According to the record of Indian Office Library, IOR: R/8/30, it was named the *Manifesto of the Revolutionary Front*.

2. One of the members of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party, Bo Maung Maung (former Brigadier) argued in his book *Burmese Nationalist Movements, 1940-1948*, that in the spirit and text of the original agreement between the CPB and the PRP, the sentence was not included and Thakin Soe violated and added the sentence. Later, between the CPB and PRP, they circulated the agreement in their own circles as each version. He also presented that because of the keeping the documents by the Communists, they had members who took no part in any fighting and could preserve documents.

Therefore, it is a deal certainty that after Fascism has been destroyed, the fight must continue against the Imperialists of the democratic Allies. But, as the democratic Allies are fighting for the freedom of small countries and so we sincerely believe they are our allies. Therefore we must be ready to prosecute the war along with the Allies till the defeat of the Fascists in our native country.

In accordance with Lenin's theory of military strategy and tactics (1) if the time is ripe to start the rebellion at once, the masses to enable them to take part in the rebellion when the time comes. The important point is what the people of Burma should do and what attitude they should assume when the Allied forces enter Burma after the Fascist Japanese have been driven out.

The attitude they should assume and the course of action they should take depend on the internal situation of Burma as well as the world situation, especially the relations between India, China, Soviet Union and other Allied countries. But internal situation should be considered to be more important. What we mean is this: (1) If we are unable to drive out the Japanese effectively and if the Allies are mainly responsible for the Japanese retreat, what should be our attitude towards the Allied forces when they come to Burma? In that event we shall not at all be able to use the word freedom. (2) If, on the other hand, we are able to drive out the Japanese with our own forces, what will be the result? The extent of our freedom will be in proportion to the strength of our forces. It must be taken for granted that if we can successfully fight the Japanese, we are politically awake, the whole country is united and we are fit for freedom. It must be considered that, if we are able to crush Fascism with the strength of the masses, we have ensured freedom for the Burmese people and raised their prestige in the world. Therefore in negotiation with the democratic Allies, the following demands shall have to be granted. Only then the Burmese people will gain freedom and prestige.

Our minimum demands:

1. Provisional Independent Government must be recognised.
2. The right to form a separate independent Burmese Army must be granted.
3. A reliable promise must be given that freedom will be granted as soon as the war is over.

We must continue to fight against any foreign power that refuses to grant us the above demands. But in continuing this fight, we must take advantage of the conflict among the foreign powers in Burma (America, Britain and China).

Why should we make the above demands? We must go on fighting ceaselessly till we reach the goal of (1) freedom (2) democracy and (3) Socialism.

But in one of the following events or situations, viz. (a) a slight improvement in economic position (reconstruction of industries and agriculture); (b) unpreparedness of the people for continuing the fight because they are war-wearied; (c) unsatisfactory world situation, especially the situation in India, China and Soviet Union. We must prepare and wait for the next opportunity to rise and in the meantime we should carry on our work

using the following stratagems: (1) Do not surrender your weapons by any means; (2) We must let constitutional struggle appear to be our main work and establish a connection between this work and our secret activities; (3) The people must be organized in *Asiayones* according to their occupation (cultivators, labourers, students), and demands must be made for their immediate and partial benefit; (4) We must fight for democratic form of government and civil liberties (liberty of writing, liberty of speech, liberty of press, liberty of meeting and liberty of organization).

The way to carry out the instruction in clause (1) i.e., do not surrender your weapons by any means, is that the armed insurgents must carry on guerilla war. If the situation is so bad that these insurgents are faced with annihilation by superior enemy forces, the constitutional agitators shall convene a mass meeting of the whole country, pass a resolution requesting pardon for the insurgents and set up a provisional committee to negotiate with the enemy forces in connexion with the resolution. At the same time weapons must be concealed as many as possible.

Instructions to be immediately carried out by party Asiayones

Therefore, instructions shall be sent to party Asiayone to carry out the following practical decision to the best of their ability:

1. To organize themselves within two months in preparation for the revolt.
2. To fix the date of revolt after consideration of the situation in Burma as well as the world situation after two months.
3. To fight the Fascist Japanese as our chief enemy.
4. To co-operate with the Soviet Union and the Allies as our allies while we are fighting the Fascist Japanese.
5. To negotiate with the democratic Allies after the Japanese have been driven out.
6. To destroy any foreign powers that restrict Burmese rights.
7. In this connexion, to separate the foreign powers that will restrict us from other powers of the democratic Allies, and to destroy them alone.

Communist Party (Burma)
(3.11.1944)³

3. This document (in Burmese) is found in the collection of Thakin Hla Kyway. The translation in English is from the book edited by Hugh Tinker, *Burma: The Struggle for Independence (1944-1948)*, Vol. I, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983, pp.76-79. According to the analysis, the date of the documents between the Burmese version from Thakin Hla Kyway and the English version from the book written by historian Hugh Tinker, are different. In the Burmese source, the date is 3.11.1944. The date in English source edited by Hugh Tinker, he presented that the date is August 1944.

Appendix (c):

"The Official Announcement of the Foundation of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1945)"

Now, the Burma Revolutionary Party (or) the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (or) the Underground Party which was against to imperialism and fascism, has changed its name to Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party and set up a legal party in accordance with the belief which is to lead the interest of peoples resolutely.

We, the selected peoples from the student leaders, the thakins, the teachers and the patriotic men, founded underground party since 1939, to regain the ancestral Burma and to create ourselves the merit and bad result by the natives. We had against the British imperialism. We had fought fascist Japanese not to settle down in Burma in a form of secret functions. Finally, we composed of Communist Party, Bama Tatmadaw and Peoples' Revolutionary Party joined hands together and then formed the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League. When the Japanese were rebelled openly, our members took party not only as army-men but also as guerilla soldiers. Our comrades had to pay their lives both in battle-fields and in the persecutions by the Japanese Kempeitai¹.

However, the current world situation has been changed ready. In all over the world, the People's Power begins to influence. There are searching eternal peace. The British in 1939 is not the British in 1945. Currently, we set up successfully the United Front composed of the multi-parties, different groups and leaders from all groups, which is necessary for the political unity in Burma. Therefore, according to the circumstance, our strategy and deception should follow to scientific method. The tactics- the secret assassination, the armed struggle and the terrorist rebellion must be discarded.

In the peaceful world, we need to follow the non-violent method to gain independence. In the age of peoples' power in the world, there is need to approach to the mass movements. The legal functions changing from the secret movements must be implemented.

Therefore, the purpose of the legal foundation of the party is because of the above facts.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is:

- (1) Eternal Peace: To construct the world democratic united family equally after the disappearance of exploitation.
- (2) Independence for State: To regain the ancestral Burma for the natives.
- (3) Racial Freedom: To create rights by the natives in Burma themselves.
- (4) Peoples' Freedom: To gain full privileges and necessary people's power for every one.

Our Ideology

Our ideology is scientific socialism. The ideology will be observed according to the world and Burmese situations.

1. The department of the Japanese Military Police.

We are creative scientists by following to the scientific method due to the circumstances and environments. We are forwarding to the progressive process and the formation. The practical words by our members are: "If I am right, follow me. If I am wrong, correct it". We will follow the words and always accept the benevolent criticism and reparation.

We were the persons who relinquished the life and wealth and sacrificed for the country. We faced with the persecutions under imperialism and the cruelties by the fascists. We had made human-sacrifices for freedoms of state and nationality. However, we are not frightened. We did bravely in the life of under-ground party in necessary secret time even though the tasks were in very danger. We are not exaggerative persons. We are the persons who show their deeds.

Therefore, we instruct our members of the party, who are in all over Burma, to serve people's interest toweringly due to the advanced program. We invite all the leftists who want to abandon the superstitious and to follow the scientific socialism according to the circumstances and the environments. We welcome the persons who love peace; who want to regain own country; who want to create their interests themselves; and who are native patriotic men. Let us together. We shall march following to the advanced program. In the current setting up of political unity, let us endeavour absolutely as a part of the Peoples' Freedom League under the leadership of the League.

Note. This document in Burmese, has been already included in the MA thesis of Rangoon University, is from the collection by Thakin Hla Kyway. Another extra Burmese sentences can be seen in other MA thesis written by Burmese historian U Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, a son of U Ba Swe, as follow:-

Immediate Program

Although we attempt to set up a legal party, the circumstance is not yet to keen on ideology. While there is constructing the 'World Democratic Coalition Family', we would be mad persons if we are in factionalism and split among ourselves. We should take responsible duty in the construction for eternal peace and development.

The current program is based on the facts that how we involved in the anti-fascist revolution and in the construction for 'World Democratic Coalition Family'.

Besides, although how much we believe in any ideology, there would be fruitless if we have no country. Our ancestral country was occupied. We must attempt to regain our country. To serve this attempt, we, like persons whose intentions are to get independence, believe in eternal peace and democracy, should not split and stay in factionalism. We need to cooperate united. We did not get victory when we had split in the anti-fascist Japanese. Only after the unity, we got success.

Therefore, we must cooperate with the AFPFL which was organised by us. Although the League was formed by our Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party, the Communist Party and Bama Tatmadaw, the League is now composed of many parties and many organisations

and groups. The League has become the 'Bama Democratic Coalition Family'. As a part of the League, Our 'Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party:-

1. To attack the remaining fascists living not only in domestic but also in the native country until their failure, in accordance with the 'Eternal Peace in the World' and the 'World Democratic Coalition Family'.
2. To help utmost in the peace and tranquility, the rehabilitation and the relief program.
3. To attempt to form the 'National Government' which would be handled effectively in the Nationalised State Construction.
4. To attempt to include the anti-fascist guerillas and the Bama Tatmadaw's men in the Burma National Army.
5. To utmost the functions of the drawing the constitution for the National Assembly which is according to the adult franchise.

Party Program

According to our party's ideology, the program of the party is as follow:-

1. Eternal Peace. To remove the exploitation from Burma and the world and, to maintain eternal peace and construct the 'Equal Democratic Coalition Government'.
2. Independence for the country. To regain the country owned by indigenous peoples and ancestry.
3. Freedom for Nationality. To get right to create by themselves for the indigenous peoples.
4. Peoples' Freedom. To get full rights for every citizens who should get necessary peoples' power.
 - (a) Freedom of Enjoyments. To get enjoyments for any religions, any races and any genders without oppressions.
 - (b) Freedom of Thought. To believe in ideology for every persons.
 - (c) Freedom of Speech and Writing. To get freedom in speech and writing according to their beliefs.
 - (d) Freedom to organise. To organise within individuals and organisations.
 - (e) Freedom of Religion. To get belief in any religion according to each person.
 - (f) Freedom of Relation. To get freedom for the separations among the class, black and white peoples and genders.
 - (g) Freedom of Business. To get freedom of business in justice without intervention.
 - (h) Freedom of Education. To get freedom to study for all peoples who should not be based on the poor and the female, only according to their qualifications.
 - (i) Freedom of Traditional Living. To get freedom of living traditionally for those who are differences based on the language and the culture.
 - (j) Freedom of Politics. To get equal right for every nationalities, religions, minorities and cultures.

- (k) Freedom of Using for Shelter and Home. To get freedom using wood, bamboo, firewood and salt because of all are native products.
- (5) Advanced Education System. To target the all education classes to develop the world advanced subjects, not to produce the slaves of the factory, only based on everyone's qualities.
- (6) Advanced Land System. To create the land technologies from the tradition using the till, the buffaloes and cows to the modern techniques based on machines and universe and then, to get possessions by the real cultivators due to the cooperative system.
- (7) Advanced Productive System. There are many raw products and metals in Burma but could run as a family handicraft functions. So, to set up the modern factories and to lead by the government itself.
- (8) Advanced Workers' Rules. Must not be unemployment. Must be freedom of organisation and strike. Must be there fair wage, working time and day and holiday. Must be there old pension, compensation and provided fund. Must be living according to the good-health environment. Must be getting free education for the children of workers.
- (9) Justice Administration without bribery. Must not be punishment for non-sinner. Must not be the administration in which there was no chance because of the cost of the court. The jail should not to be like hell, only giving place knowledge-light. Thus, it is the summing general program of the party to let you know.²

2. This document in Burmese has been already mentioned in my Master thesis, Rangoon University.

Appendix (d): The first CEC members of the PF (Socialist) Party, September 1945.

The *Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party-Burma (PFP)* was founded on the 1 September 1945, at Dai Oo's Zayat (Rest House) (ဓိုကဉ်းဇေယျာ), part of the Shwedagon Pagoda, also known as U Ba Yi's Zayat (ဦးဘရီဇေယျာ).¹

The members of the first CEC

Chairman: Thakin Mya

General Secretary: U Ba Swe (former President of Student' Union, Uni. of Rangoon)

Joint Secretary: U Kyaw Nyein, BA, BL (former secretary of a governmental department)

Treasurer: U Kyaw Myint, BA, BL (former Vice-President of the Asia Youth Organization)²

Other founding members were:

Thakin Lwin (Workers' leader from the oil fields)

Thakin Wa Tin (Division Leader)

U Ko Ko Gyi (Research and Head of the Marxist Class)³

Thakin Tin Maung Gyi

Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy)⁴

Thakin Tin (President of the Peasants' Organisation)

Thakin Lun Baw (Ex-Minister)

Thakin Aung Than alias Bo Set Kyar (Colonel from the Burma Army)

U Hla Maung, BA (former President of the All-Burma Federation of Student Unions)

U Tin Nyunt, BA (Organizer from the Naypyidaw Party)

U Ba Swe alias Yangon Ba Swe

1. Interview with Former Socialist Party Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi on 18.5.1988; Unpublished notes by Thakin Hla Kyway. This historic building was removed during the period of the State Law and Order Restoration Council.

2. He was also known as *U Kyaw Myint Lay* in Burmese politics. His real name is U Kyaw Myint but there was another U Kyaw Myint, a judge in the 75-member committee for the writing of 1947 Constitution, so that he was called *U Kyaw Myint Lay* in the BSP.

3. Later, he was also known as "သိန်းလေးဆယ် (40 lakhs) Ko Ko Gyi" in Burmese politics.

4. Later, he was also known as "ဝိဇ္ဇာ (Waidura) Thakin Chit Maung".

Reserved members were:

Thakin Thin (Pyi)⁵

Thakin Hla Kyway (Workers' Organization)

Thakin Kyaw Tun alias Thakin Kyaw Dun (Peasants' Organization)⁶

5. Interview with U Win Khet on 8.9.2002. U Win Khet said that Thakin Lwin and Thakin Thin are brothers. U Win Khet closely worked with Thakin Lwin in the publication of "ရှုထောင့်ချာနယ် (View Point Journal)" in the BSPP's period. U Win Khet was the editor of the journal. In 1988, he became one of the CC members in the NLD led by U Aung Gyi, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Aung Shwe. He is now living in Australia.

6. This document in Burmese has been already mentioned in my Master thesis, Rangoon University. The BSP's CEC list is from the inside cover of the Party's book.

Appendix (e): The Members of the CEC in PF (Socialist) Party in 1946-47.

The CEC members were:

President	Thakin Mya
General Secretary	U Ba Swe
Joint Secretary	Thakin Lwin (Organisation) Thakin Kyaw Tun (Administration)
Treasurer	U Hla Maung
In Charge of Ideology	U Ko Ko Gyi
In Charge of Foreign Affairs	Thakin Aung Than alias Bo Setkyar
In Charge of Peasants' Affairs	Thakin Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy)
In Charge of Peoples' Relations	Thakin Tin Maung Gyi
In Charge of Workers' Affairs	Thakin Hla Kyway
In Charge of Federation of Trade Unions	U Tin Nyunt
In Charge of Relations with AFPFL	Thakin Wa Tin
In Charge of Women's Affairs	Ma Khin Sint Han

Reserved Members were:

1. U Kyaw Nyein
2. U Kyaw Myint
3. U Khin Maung Gale
4. U Win
5. U Than Sein¹

Twenty-five *Central Organizers* were also selected to organise party branches and units in districts, townships and quarters which had party members whose ideological development was not strong. These organizers of the party cadres were (1) Ko Kyi Lwin, (2) Ko Khin Hla, (3) Ko Tun Nyan, (4) Ko Hla Pe, (5) Ko Ba Swe, (6) Ko Soe Myint, (7) Ko Hla Myint, (8) Ko Kyaw Nyein, (9) Ko Myint Oo, (10) Bo Mya Han, (11) Ko San Wai, (12) Ko Chit Maung, (13) Ko Thar Dun, (14) Thakin Pan Myaing (15) Ko Thein Maung, (16) Ko U Khin, (17) Ko Kun, (18) Ko Ba Thet, (19) Ko Kyaw Din, (20) Ko Ba Swe, (21) Thakin Kyi Myint, (22) Ko Tun Myint, (23) Thakin Than, (24) Ko Than, and

1. "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တန်ဦးဣာနယ်"အတွဲ(၃)အမှတ်(၅)၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (The Socialist Front Weekly Journal, Vol. III, No.5, on 13.10.1946.)

(25) Ko Saw Lin.² U Than gave details of the organiser's assigned duties: (1) Ko Kyi Lwin was assigned to Mandalay Division. (2) Ko Khin Hla (Bahan) was assigned to Rangoon Division and to the TUC (B). His duties included the collection of information about the Rangoon District. He was a trusted ally of U Ba Swe. (3) Ko Tun Nyan (Kamayut). (4) Ko Hla Pe (Maulmyaingkyun, Delta) (is now a CEC member of the NLD). (5) Ko Ba Swe alias Yangon Ba Swe was in-charge of organisation in Phyar Pon, Delta. (6) Ko Soe Myint (Myaungmya) (is now a CEC member of the NLD) was in-charge of organisation in Myaungmya. (7) Ko Hla Myint (Division Leader for Myintgyina, Bamaw, Kathar. (8) Ko Kyaw Nyein (Pegu). (9) Ko Myint Oo was organiser for Prome then member of the FTO. (10) Bo Mya Han was organiser for Patheingyi and served as joint secretary for the BSP. (11) Thakin San Wai was organiser for Maulmyingyi. (12) Ko Chit Maung (Myanaung) was organiser for Hinthata and served as secretary in "Peoples' Peace Guerrillas". (13) Ko Thar Dun was organiser for Pazundaung Township and was a parliamentary secretary. (14) Thakin Pan Myaing was a member of the FTO and a government minister. (15) Ko Thein Maung was organiser for Thaton and served as a parliamentary secretary. (16) Ko Oo Khin was organiser for Insein. (17) Ko Kun was organiser for Pakkoku and Myingyan. (18) Ko Ba Thet (Bogalay) was assigned to Minbu. (19) Ko Kyaw Din was organiser for Bait. (20) Ko Ba Swe was also known as Phonegyi (Monk) Ba Swe and he served in the Central Headquarters and in the Underground Department. He was a trusted ally of U Kyaw Nyein. (21) Thakin Kyi Myint was organiser for Tharrawaddy and he served in the All-Burma Peasants' Organisation. He was a personal assistant for Thakin Tin. (22) Ko Tun Myint was organiser for Thaton?. (23) Thakin Than was organiser for Tarmwe and served in the TUC (B). (24) Ko Than was a CEC member for the district and a Central Organiser. He was appointed organiser for Magwe, Minbu and Thayet. (25) Ko Saw Lin was organiser for Magwe (now elected member of NLD in 1990 election?). He was a member of parliament.

2. *Ibid.*; Interview with U Than (Kyimyindine) on 22.1.1992.

Appendix (f): “How to construct Socialist Economy after the Independence”

- U Aung San It is said that the BSP want to nationalise the British firms. What I want to ask: it is easy to nationalise when we have got the power, but can we run the firms efficiently after nationalisation?
- U Ko Ko Gyi In the timber production, there are Burmese¹ in the cutting of the trees and in the floating timber-raft. Of course, it is true that the Anglo-Burmese supervise the Burmese in the tree-cutting. It is also true that the Burmese are able to operate the sawmills. It is also true that in the sawmills, there are Anglo-Burmese and British in the management sectors. The British are not going to work and the assistants of the British would work if they get good salaries. The Anglo-Burmese would replace the British. So, in the timber production, there would be no difficulty. Also, the sawmilling sector is not so technically sophisticated. But, initially, in the commercial sector, there is need to appoint a company such as "Wallace Brothers" if our industry is to compete with the timbers from Siam.
- U Aung San Would there be compensation or not resulting from nationalisation?
- U Ko Ko Gyi Yes.
- U Aung San How could we pay compensation if we don't have money?
- U Ko Ko Gyi There would be compensation in the form of "Bonds". The British Labour Government also paid in a system of "Bonds". When the Arrawaddy Floatila Company is nationalised, there will not be British engineers and administrators to continue the work. The Anglo-Burmese and the Burmese will replace the British. Like the sawmills, in the Shipbuilding and the shipyards, there are experienced Anglo-Burmese and the Burmese so there will be no difficulty. The problem of compensation can be solved with the issuing of bonds.
- U Aung San After the functions of the Goodwill Mission in London are over, go on a study tour of the Eastern European countries, and then send the Auditor-General to me.
- U Ko Ko Gyi Auditor-General U Soe Maung will be sent, Bogyoke.²

1. U Ko Ko Gyi said "Burmese" as "who knot one's hair"(in Burmese, "ရောင်ကြီးမွေမြန်မာများ"). According to the Burmese culture, the ancient Burmese used to knot their hair.

2. This conversation is from the memory of former BSP chairman Ko Ko Gyi.

Appendix (g): "The 15 points of the Leftist Unity Program"

1. To secure political and economic relations with Soviet Russia and the democratic countries of Eastern Europe that are the same as the relations we have with Britain and the United States.
2. To nationalise monopolising capitalist enterprises, and to administer the resulting national enterprises by partnership between the State and the workers; to secure a living wage for all; to limit the working day to 8 hours; to ensure the right of association and the right to strike; to institute old-age pensions and other social benefits; and to consider the question of compensation only after these enterprises have been nationalised.
3. To place all trade, both export and import, into the hands of the State.
4. To transfer the Currency Board, now operating in London, to Burma.
5. To refuse any foreign aid of a kind which will compromise the political, economic and strategic independence of Burma.
6. To transform the Army of the Union into a People's Democratic Army, and to carry out the Defence program in Resolution 7 of the Second Congress of the AFPFL.
7. To abolish private ownership of land and to distribute the land only among the tillers of the soil.
8. To draw up a plan, including a timetable, for the industrialisation of the country and to begin work on it at once.
9. To establish people's governments in the Frontier Areas.
10. To transform the present bureaucratic machinery of administration into a democratic machinery.
11. To abolish all repressive laws.
12. To unite in a counter-attack against the attacks which are being launched by capitalists against the standard of living and the privileges of workers; to make wages commensurate with the high cost of living; and to protect the privileges of employees of Government together with the privileges of other workers.
13. To unite with and to assist poor town-dwellers and oppressed members of the middle classes in securing a reduction of house rents and house taxes; in the securing of house sites; in the formation of cooperative societies; and in the destruction of black markets.
14. To secure for leftist organisations the assistance of the State, to take the lead and to work with other organisations in the cause of compulsory education, of physical health and of culture.

15. To form a league for the propagation of Marxist doctrine, composed of socialists, communists, Pyithu Yebaws (PVO) and others who lean towards Marxism and to read, discuss and propagate the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung, Tito, Dimitrov and other apostles of Marxism.¹

1. Saul Rose, *Socialism In Southern Asia*, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p.112; သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလခိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆၊ ၈-၁၉၆-၁၉၇၊ ၄၀၆။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyithon Press, 1956, pp.396-399, p.406.): the AFPFL composed of the BSP, the PVO plus Thakin Nu, Bo Let Yar, U Ohn and Thakin Thein Pe, intended to declare the 15 points as its leftist program but the last point had to be left out because of internal and external criticism.

Appendix (h): “Peoples' Victory in China and the Attitude of the Burma Socialist Party”

1. The Burma Socialist Party cannot but rejoice in the successive victories won by the people of China.
2. The people of China were the first in the world to be civilized. Yet they had long been oppressed under the feudal system. When about the beginning of the nineteenth century the imperialist forces crashed into China, the people suffered at the hands of the expansionist capitalists. When later the feudal forces and the imperialist forces combined and instituted a beaurocratic regime they fell a prey to the depredations of the beaurocratic capitalists. Inspite of such successive oppressions the people of China carried on, undaunted, their struggles for freedom.
3. Through out history the people of China, the peasantry in particular, had periodically risen in revolt against oppression. When imperialism invaded China too they did not submit. They struck back. In 1842 when the British East India Company forced the opium trade on China the Opium War was fought. But due to the reactionary Manchu dynasty the war was lost. The island of Hongkong had to be ceded and seaports opened. As a consequence of the Opium War the peasantry was impoverished; village handicraft was smothered and city merchants ruined. Hence during 1848-65, a peasant revolt known as the Taiping Rebellion broke out. The imperialists played the Manchus against the rebels and extorted more privileges from the Manchus. When the privileges were obtained they helped crush the rebellion mercilessly. Again in 1873 a war had to be fought with the imperialist France. In 1894-95 Japan came on the scene and seized Formosa and Korea. Chinese customs was handed over to Imperialist powers as security for China's debts: Hence in 1900 the oppressed peasantry revolted again. This Boxer Rebellion was ruthlessly crushed by the combined forces of all imperialist powers. The peoples' forces of awakening suffered such continuous defeats because of the oppression of the Manchu emperors. Hence on October 10, 1911 the revolutionary party headed by Dr Sun Yat Sen overthrew the Manchu dynasty. However because the people were not organised and because of the interference of the imperialist powers unity could not be achieved. The country fell apart into separate sovereign countries. The imperialist powers could extort more concessions and privileges. In 1915 Japan first penetrated into Manchuria and Mongolia. The army, the railways, the ports etc were controlled by Japan. Then on May 4, 1919 the students rose and demanded war against the imperialists. The movement spread to every city, every village, to the peasantry. The workers organised. The peasants organised. In 1921 the first communist congress was called. In 1923 a national labour congress was called. In 1925 the All China Federation of Labour was born. By 1926 the Farmers' Unions included millions of members. It was on the tide of these forces that the feudal war-lords could be smashed and Shanghai captured. But the reactionary group composed of capitalists, landlords and beaurocrats came to dread the rising peoples' forces. They feared that their days of exploitation would be over. Therefore in 1926 the reactionaries started an attack on the rising peoples' forces. Ultimately owing to the few dogmatic communists South China where peoples' power had already taken roots had to be given up. After the long march of 8,000 miles a new base had to be chosen at Yen-an in North Western China.

4. From Yen-an the Communists launched their correct revolutionary programme unflinchingly. Land distribution was regarded as the basic task. Then the beaurocratic administration was scrapped and a democratic administration with election of magistrates and officials was instituted. Schools were established for the advancement of the culture of the peasantry. Public health was fostered by personal example. Hospitals were opened. Conditions were created for the emancipation of women from their traditional slavery. The peasants were organised into cooperatives for increased crops and hadicraft production. The peasants were organised into defence corps to defend the freedom they had won. Small capitalists were encouraged. Conditions were created for cooperation between labour and capital for more production and for the benefit of both parties by such increased production. By such action Chinese Communists won the support ot the peasantry and the townspeople. Even capitalists and landlords came to support them. In areas controlled by the reactionaries, however, the peasantry was further impoverished while the landlords, beaucrats and capitalists were further enriched. In the struggles against imperialist Japan also it was only the Communists who fought without any waver. The reactionaries however were making advances to the Japanese even when they were fighting the Japanese in concert with the Communists. They also continued to suppress the peoples' movement. That is the reason why the people of China withdrew support from the reactionaries and gave greater support to the Communist. That is the reason why after the war, in Manchuria the people could seize power in North China. Before long the whole of China will fall under the sway of the people.

5. These victories are the victories of the people. The defeat of the reactionaries means the defeat of the anti peoples' imperialist counter revolution.

6. In Burma also, as in China, we are waging a peoples' revolution. In 1942 the people revolted against the British Imperialist and in 1945 against the fascist Japanese. Ultimately on January 4, 1948 the people wrested independence from the British imperialist. As soon as independence was won feudal landlordism was attacked. Rents were restricted; agricultural debts scaled down; agricultural lands nationalised. Then native and foreign landlords conspired to disrupt the peoples' revolution. Such undertakings owned and controlled by foreign monopolist capitalists as timber transport and communication and rice export were nationalised. Then the foreign capitalists allied with the landlords to destroy the peoples' revolution. The old beaurocratic system of administration was attacked and a system of democratic administration ushered in. Then the beaurocratic officials allied with the foreign capitalist and the landlords to crush the peoples' revolution. Amidst all this the dogmatic destructionists, the so-called Communists, Red Flags and White Flags, split the rally of the people by their opportunist programme. Even though these destructive forces are converging from all sides the peoples' revolution can never fail. There cannot be anything worse than temporary setbacks. In as much as the Chinese people after years of bitter and diverse hardships are ultimately crowned with victory, so also the revolution of the people of Burma shall, in spite of all difficulties and interferences, see ultimate victory. The victory of the people of China is an aid to the victory of the people of Burma. As revolution of the oppressed

peoples of the world is one, the victory of the people of China means also a victory of the people of Burma.

7. Therefore the Burma Socialist Party cannot but rejoice in the successive victories won by the people of China.

The Central Executive Committee,
Burma Socialist Party (HQ),
Rangoon.

Dated the day of June 1949.¹

1. This document both in Burmese and English has been found in the collections of Thakin Hla Kyway.

Appendix (i): Chairman U Ba Swe's Address to the Asian Socialist Conference, on 6 January 1953, at City Hall, Rangoon.

Comrades, I take it as a great honour to have to act as Chairman of this Conference of Asian socialist parties which is bound to be epoch-making in world history in general and in Asian history in particular. I am sure you will agree with me when I say that the attention of the peoples of the world and especially of the colonies is just now focused on us. This is because the great problems which are subjects of discussion here like the threat of a new world war, the colonial peoples' struggle for freedom, national revolution, and the economic development of the under-developed areas, are problems which concern not only the socialist parties of Asia. These are matters of life-and-death importance for the people of the whole world. They are matters which no single political party would dare to solve alone. They will need for their solution the concerted and repeated efforts of all the participants of this Conference.

Without anticipating the results of the deliberations of this Conference, I may perhaps be permitted to make a passing reference to them one by one.

First, there is the problem of threat of another Great World War, due to the tension between the Cominform bloc led by Soviet Russia and the Western bloc led by America. Each bloc tries to win over neutral countries, with repercussions everywhere, *i.e.*, loss of hundreds of thousands of lives on battlefields, and civil war in some countries. It is common knowledge that should the Great War break out again; a great calamity would befall the world. Whichever bloc ultimately wins, it is the whole world, the whole human race that will have to face total destruction. Never in history has man perfected methods of his own destruction so much as he has done today. Do you need a better living testimony to the colossal destruction wrought by war than the present-day Rangoon, the venue of our Conference? Seven years after the cessation of war between the Allies and Japan, five years after the achievement of our Independence, despite the best efforts of our Government and people under the able leadership of our great national leader Thakin Nu to rehabilitate and restore our country, Rangoon with its small huts, damaged buildings and slums is still a living symbol of the mutilation and suffering caused by the last Great War. Of course there is no reason for despair. Our responsibility is to do our best to find a formula to prevent recurrence of such a catastrophe. I am sure you will share with me the confidence that the great masses of the world who are intensely yearning for peace will constitute a tremendous force behind us in our efforts for preserving world peace.

The second problem is the freedom of colonial countries which are still under a foreign yoke. It is needless to say that, as representatives of Asian countries, we have had bitter experience of colonial rule. Therefore our sympathies naturally go out to our less fortunate sister countries which have not yet achieved their freedom. We should make efforts to find out ways and means of combating colonialism. There can be no world peace so long as some territories continue to be colonies, for they have themselves been a cause of previous wars. We are also glad that we have with us today representatives from

those colonies and semi-colonies who can help us to understand better the real conditions prevailing there.

Closely connected with the independence struggle of colonies is also the question of national revolution in various countries. Every country has to go through its own national revolution, though there might be difference in time and circumstances. For example England has had a series of great revolutions. So also France and America. We, too, in Burma are in the throes of our own national revolution. These revolutions which are due to the revolutionary upsurge of the people cannot be destroyed or checkmated by counter revolutionary measures. This would only lead to greater unrest, dictatorship and other undesirable results. Vietnam is an instance in point. The French Government, by trying to suppress the revolutionary upsurge of the Vietnamese people for independence, has turned it into a place of world tension. My contention, therefore, is that we should help national revolutions to complete their course. I hope this problem will get the attention it deserves from this Conference.

The fourth question is the economic development of Asian countries which are more or less underdeveloped. Here also, I hope I may be permitted to express my personal views.

So far we Asian countries have relied too heavily on certain industrialised, metropolitan powers, instead of relying on ourselves. While I admit that cooperation with industrialised countries of the West is essential for economic and industrial development, I submit that we should re-orientate our outlook a little by finding out how far Asian countries can help each other. I need not add that our object should be, as far as possible, an equal, all-round development of various countries, and not one or two countries, with the rest used as suppliers of raw materials and a dumping ground for cheap manufactured goods. How far these objectives are feasible we could find out in the course of our discussions.

Then there is the problem of a permanent machinery for the Asian Socialist Conference. While it has never been the intention of the sponsors of this Conference to establish a rival International as against the existing Socialist International, they do feel that there should be a machinery for closer contact and cooperation amongst Asian parties, and also for implementing the resolutions that might be passed by this Conference. This is another question to which, I believe, this Conference can give a satisfactory answer.

These are some of the problems which we will have to face and solve.

Comrade, once again, I thank you for your kindness in electing me to preside over this historic Conference of Asian socialist parties. I am sure I would have your continued help and cooperation in piloting this Conference to a successful end. (*Loud Applause*).¹

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တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်းပြုစုရေးအဖွဲ့၊ "တို့ဗမာအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ (ပ)(ဒု)၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၆။
(A Committee of Dobama Asiayone, *A History of Dobama Asiayone*, Vol. I & II,
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"ဒုတိယအကြိမ်-ပြည်လုံးကျွတ် ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ ညီလာခံမှတ်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဖဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (*The Record of 2nd Assembly of All Burma AFPFL Conference*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1947.)

"ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်သတ္တမ-နှစ်ပတ်လည်"၊ ဇန်နဝါရီ၊ ၁၉၅၅။ (Director of Information, Union of Burma, *The Seventh Anniversary: Union of Burma, January 1955*, Rangoon: the Superintendent, Union Government Printing and Stationary, 1955.)

"ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီ၊ စည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗမာ့သစ်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Constitution of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party*, Rangoon: Bamathick Press, 1946.)

"နေသူရိန်မှတ်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သံတော်ဆင့်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*The Record of Nethurain*, Rangoon: Thandawsint Press, 1946.)

"ဖဆပလအဖွဲ့ချုပ်ဖွဲ့စည်းအုပ်ချုပ်ပုံအခြေခံဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဖဆပလပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League, *The Constitution of The A.F.P.F.L*, Rangoon: AFPFL Press, 1946.)

ဗမာပြည်ကွန်မြူနစ်ပါတီ(ဗဟိုကော်မတီ)၊ "ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ- ကွန်မြူနစ် အပြန်အလှန်ပေးစာ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပြည်သူ့အာဏာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၇။ (CPB [Central Committee], *The Correspondents Between A.F.P.F.L and Communist*, Rangoon: Peoples' Authority Press, 1947.)

ဗ-တ-လ-စ ဌာနချုပ်၊ "ဟော်လန်သွားအစီရင်ခံစာ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ လူထုတပ်ဦးသတင်းစာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၀၉။ (All Burma Peasants' Asiayone (Headquarters), *Report of the Mission to Holland*, Rangoon: Public Front Newspaper Press, 1947.)

ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးဌာနချုပ်၊ "ဗမာနိုင်ငံလုံးဆိုင်ရာတောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးစည်းမျဉ်းဥပဒေ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၄၈။ (All-Burma Peasants' Asiayone (Headquarter), *The Constitution of All-Burma Peasant's Organisation*, Rangoon: 1948.)

ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်(သခင်ကျော်ထွန်း)၊ "ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၁"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-စ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၈။ (BSP (Headquarters), Thakin Kyaw Tun), *The Statement Within the Party No.1*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1948)

ဗမာပြည်-ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်-ပါတီတွင်းပြန်တမ်း-အမှတ်-၂-၄၉"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-စ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၉။ (BSP (Headquarters), *Our Political Programme-The Statement Within the Party No.(2/49)*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1949.) Note. See also in English version of U Ba Swe, *Guide To Socialism In Burma*.

ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီဌာနချုပ် (ပြန်လည်စည်းရုံးရေးကော်မတီ)၊ "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီအခြေခံစည်းကမ်း ၁၀ချက်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗ-တ-လ-စ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၉။ (Burma Socialist Party (Reorganisation Committee, Headquarter), *The 10 Basic Rules Of The Burma Socialist Party*, Rangoon: Ba Ta La Sa Press, 1949?.)

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ဗဆွေ(ခါးဝယ်)၊ "ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဗမာပြည်တူထောင်လော့"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗေဗျူမိတ်ဆွေပိဋကတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (Ba Swe (Dahwai), *Let Us Found the Socialist Burma*, Rangoon: Zabumaitswepitacart Press, 1946.)

ဗဆွေဦး၊ "ဗမာပြည်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းညွှန်နှင့်ငါတို့၏နိုင်ငံရေးလမ်းစဉ်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်စိုးပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၅။ (Ba Swe, U. *Guide To Socialism In Burma and Our Political Program*, Rangoon: Shwepyisoe Press, 1955.)

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ဖ-ဆ-ပ-လ သတင်းစဉ် အတွဲအမှတ် ၅၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (*AFPFL News Bulletin*, Vol. I, No.1, 5.9.1946.)

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ရွှေတူဂျာနယ်။ (*Shwe Tu Journal*)

လူထုသတင်းစာ။ (*Ludu (The Mass) Newspaper.*)

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(b). Newspapers in English

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(c). Journals and Magazines in Burmese

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ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်ဦးဂျာနယ်။ (*The Socialist Front Weekly Journal.*)

တက္ကသိုလ်ကျောင်းသားသမဂ္ဂ၊ အိုးဝေမဂ္ဂဇင်း။ (*The University's Students' Union, Owe Wai Magazine.*)

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လုပ်သားလမ်းပြဂျာနယ်။(*The Workers' Guide Journal.*)

(d). Journals, Magazines and Broadcasting Programs in English

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4. INTERVIEWS

Aye Chan, Prof. Dr. (Burmese historian)

Aung Than, U. (member of BSP and a brother of Bogyoke Aung San)

Chit Maung (Tharrawaddy), Thakin. (One of the founders of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in 1945 and one of the CEC (Headquarter) members)

Chit Khine, U. (former Lt. Colonel and a member of the BSP)

Chan Thar, U., (ICS) alias Letwai Min Nyo

Hla Myint, U. (one of the BSP cadres)

Hla Mon, U. (former Senior Tutor of History Department, Rangoon University & former Personal Bodyguard of U Ko Ko Gyi)

Ko Ko Gyi, U. (former BSP Chairman)

Khin Phyone, Daw. (daughter of Thakin Thar Khin who served as Home Minister)

Kyaw Myint Lay, U. (one of the founders of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in 1945 and one of the CEC (Headquarter) members)

Kyaw Nyein, U. (one of the founder of the BSP/PFP and Burmese Socialist Democrat leader), Mss/Eur D 1066/2 (British Library, London)

Kyaw Thaung, U. (served in TUC (B) as Head of the Department)

Thakin Lwin, U. (one of the founders of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party in 1945 and one of the CEC (Headquarter) members)

Mya Han, Bo. (Former Joint Secretary of BSP and Assistant Teacher in Socialist Class)

Nang, Daw. (a General Secretary of All Burma Freedom Women Organisation and a member of the BSP)

Nyunt Maung, Bo. (former PVO member)

Ohn Khine, U.

Ohn Thwin, U. (former Personal Secretary for Former BSP Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi)

Saw Hlaing, U. (Retired Rector of Taunggyi Degree College and a cousin of BSP Leader Thakin Mya)

Soe Myint, Thakin. (district leader and CC Member in BSP and now one of the CEC members of National League for Democracy founded in 1988)

Than, U. (Kyimyindine) (BSP cadre and Mission Member to Vietnam in 1948)

Tin Aung, U. (district leader in BSP)

Tin Pe, U. (former Brigadier and one of the founders of the BSP in 1945)

Win Khet, U.

Ye Gaung, U. (Myawaddi) (former Insein Prisoner sentenced because of the BSP's hiding arms as contingency plan at No. 46 Tayokkyaung Street)

5. PUBLISHED SECONDARY SOURCES

(a) Monographs in Burmese

ကြင်ဟိုး/နိုင်ဝင်း (M.D.) "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းနှင့်မြန်မာ့အာဇာနည်များလုပ်ကြံမှုကြီးအတွင်းရေးများ" (၃)ကြိမ်၊ ဖလော်ရီတာ၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်မပါ၊ ၁၉၉၃။ (Kyin Ho alias Naing Win (M.D), *The Secrets of the Assassination of Bogyoke Aung San and the Burmese Martyrs*, 2nd Edition, Florida: np., 1993.)

ချစ်မောင်သခင် (ပီဂူရ)၊ "အမျိုးသားအာဇာနည်ခေါင်းဆောင်ကြီးသခင်မြ" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မိသားစုစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၇၉။ (Chit Maung, Thakin (Waidura), *National Leader Azarni Thakin Mya*, First Edition, Rangoon: Meettharsu Literature Press, 1979.)

ချမ်းသာဦး၊ "ကျွန်တော်အိုင်စီအက်(စ်)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ မြဝတီပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၈။ (Chan Thar, U., *I am I.C.S.*, Rangoon: Myawaddi Press, 1988.)

ခင်အောင်ဦး၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းကိုဘယ်သူသတ်သလဲ"၊ ဗန်ကောက်၊ ခေတ်ပြိုင်ဂျာနယ်၊ ၂၀၀၀။ (Khin Aung, U, *Who Killed Bogyoke Aung San?*, Bangkok: New Era Journal Press, 2000.)

စိန်တင်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်၊ "ရဲဘော်သုံးကျိပ်မော်ကွန်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဂုဏ်ထူးစာပေ၊ ၁၉၆၈။ (Sein Tin (Tatkatho), *A History of the 30 Comrades*, Rangoon: Gonhtoo Press, 1968.)

စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ တတိယတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၅-၁၉၄၈" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၅။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of the Tatmadaw*, Vol. III, 1945-1948, First Edition, Rangoon: Information Department, 1995.)

စစ်သမိုင်းပြတိုက်နှင့်တပ်မတော်မော်ကွန်းတိုက်မှူးရုံး၊ "တပ်မတော်သမိုင်း၊ စတုတ္ထတွဲ၊ ၁၉၄၈-၁၉၆၂"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (The Office of Military Historical Museum and Tatmadaw Archive, *A History of Tatmadaw*, Vol. IV, 1948-1962, Rangoon: Information Department, 1996.)

တင်မြ၊ သခင်၊ "ဘုံဘဝမှာဖြင့်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တသက်တာစာပေ၊ ၁၉၇၄။ (Tin Mya, Thakin, *In the Life of the Commune*, Rangoon: Tathettar Press, 1974.)

တင်အောင် (ဗန်းမော်)၊ "ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေကျေးစာပေတိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၇။ (Tin Aung (Bahmaw), *Burmese History during the Colonial Period*, Rangoon: Shwekyi Press, 1977.)

ထင်ကြီး (တက္ကသိုလ်)၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသတင်းစာများအညွှန်း၊ ဒုတိယတွဲ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၉၂။ (Htin Gyi, (University), *Index of Burmese Newspapers*, Vol. II, Sarpaybeikman Press, 1992.)

နုဦး၊ "ငါးနှစ်ရာသီ-ဗမာပြည် (၁၉၄၁-၁၉၄၅)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ယောဂီပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (Nu, U, *Five Years in Burma*, Rangoon: Yawgi Press, 1946.)

နေဝင်း (တက္ကသိုလ်)၊ "ပြည်ထောင်စုဗိသုကာဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း" (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Ne Win (Tatkathow), "Union-Architect Bogoyoke Aung San", First Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1997.)

နေဝင်း (တက္ကသိုလ်)၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်း၏ လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုမှတ်တမ်း" (ဒု)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ကမ္ဘာအေးအသိုင်းအဝိုင်းစာပေ၊ ၁၉၉၈။ (Ne Win, (Tatkathow), *The Record of Bogoyoke Aung San in the Freedom Movements*, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: Kabaaye Press, 1998.)

ဖေဌေး၊ သခင်၊ "သခင်ဖေဌေး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဒီရိုင်းစာပေဖြန့်ချိရေး၊ ၁၉၆၃။ (Pe Htay, Thakin, *Thakin Pe Htay*, Rangoon: Wild Tide Press, 1963.)

မောင်မောင်၊ "သက်ရှိရာဇဝင်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သမာဓိတ္တပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆။ (Dr Maung Maung, former President of Burma, *The Biography of a Human Being*, Rangoon: Thamarmaitta Press, 1956.)

မောင်မောင်၊ ဒေါက်တာ၊ "ဗိုလ်ချုပ်ကြီးနေဝင်းနှင့်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးခရီး"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၉။ (Dr Maung Maung, *Bogyokegyi Ne Win and Burmese Politics*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1969.)

မြဝင်း၊ "တပ်မတော်၏ အမျိုးသားနိုင်ငံရေးအစဉ်အလာ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ သတင်းနှင့်စာနယ်ဇင်းလုပ်ငန်း၊ ၁၉၉၁။ (Mya Win, *The Traditional National Politics of the Tatmadaw*, Rangoon: Government Information Press, 1991?.)

မြဟန်၊ "ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာ့သမိုင်းအဘိဓာန်" (တ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ တက္ကသိုလ်များသမိုင်းသုတေသနဌာန၊ ၁၉၉၉။ (Mya Han, *Burmese Historical Encyclopaedia of the Colonial Period*, 3rd Edition, University Historical Research Department, 1999.)

မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီဗဟိုကော်မတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအမျိုးသမီးများ၏နိုင်ငံရေးလှုပ်ရှားမှု"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၅။ (BSPP (Headquarters), *Women's Political Movement in Burma*, Rangoon: Sarpaybakeman Press, 1975.)

မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီဗဟိုကော်မတီဌာနချုပ်၊ "တောင်သူလယ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးသမိုင်း"၊ (ပ)ကြိမ်၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၂။ (BSPP (Headquarters), *A History of the Peasants' Organisation*, 1st Edition, Rangoon: Sarpaybakeman Press, 1982.)

မြန်မာ့ဖက်စာ-တတိယတန်း၊ ပြည်ထောင်စုမြန်မာနိုင်ငံတော်အစိုးရ၊ ပညာရေးဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ အခြေခံပညာသင်ရိုးညွှန်းတမ်း၊ သင်ရိုးမာတိကာနှင့်ကျောင်းသုံးစာအုပ်ကော်မတီ၊ ၂၀၀၁-၂၀၀၂ ပညာသင်နှစ်၊ New Way ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၁။

မြသွေး၊ ဗိုလ်၊ "ဗမာ့ရန်သူ-တရုပ်ဖြူ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ အောင်မျိုးစာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁။ (Mya Thway, Bo, *Burmese Enemy-White Chinese*, Rangoon: Augnmyo Press, 1961.)

လွင်၊ သခင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံအလုပ်သမားလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုဂံပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၈။ (Lwin, Thakin, *A History of the Workers' Movement in Burma*, Rangoon: Pagan Press, 1968.)

သန်းဦး၊ "ပြည်တော်သာခရီး"၊ ပထမတွဲ၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ စာပေဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁။ (Thant, U., *Pyitawtharkhayee*, Vol. I, Rangoon: Sarpaybaikman Press, 1961.)

သာကျော်(ဘုံပေါက်)၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးခရီးဝယ်၊ အပိုင်း(၂)"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုသိမ်စာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၈၅။ (Thar Kyaw (Bon Pauk), *During the Revolution*, Vol. II, Rangoon: Pathein Press, 1975.)

ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၏လုပ်ဖော်ကိုင်ဖက်များ၊ "ဗမာ့သမိုင်းဟင်းလေး"၊ သမိုင်းဌာန(မွန်လေးတက္ကသိုလ်)။ (The Colleagues of Dr. Than Tun, *Studies in Burmese History*, History Department, Mandalay University.) Mimeographed and privately circulated.

သန်းထွန်း(ဒေါက်တာ)၊ "ငါပြောချင်သမျှငါ့အကြောင်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ငြိမ်းငြိမ်းချမ်းချမ်းစာအုပ်တိုက်၊ ၂၀၀၁။ (Dr Than Tun, *What I Want to Say in My Life*, Yangon: Nyeinnyeinchanchan Press, 2001.)

သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "တော်လှန်ရေးကာလနိုင်ငံရေးအတွေ့အကြုံများ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်စာပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၅၆။ (Thein Pe Myint, *His Political Experiences During the Revolution*, Rangoon: Shwepyiton Press, 1956.)

သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ကျော်ငြိမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ရွှေပြည်တန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၆၁။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, Rangoon: Shwepyiton Press, 1961.)

သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ "ဘုံဝါဒနှင့်ဒီဗမာ"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗေဒစတုရစာပေ၊ ၁၉၆၇။ (Thein Pe Myint, *Communalism and Dobama*, 3rd Edition, Rangoon: Bawsataught Press, 1967.)

သိန်းမောင်(ဇေယျကျော်ထင်၊ ဗိုလ်မှူးဟောင်း)၊ "၁၉၄၉ ခု မြောက်ပိုင်းတိုင်းစစ်ဌာနချုပ်အရေးတော်ပုံမှတ်တမ်း"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်?၊ ခုနှစ်?၊ (Thein Maung, (Former Colonel, Zeya Kyaw Htin), 1949: *The Revolutionary Record of the Northern Military Headquarter*, Rangoon: np., nd.)

ဟိန်းလတ်၊ "အိန္ဒိယမျိုးချစ်သူရဲကောင်း(နေတာဂျီ)ဆူဘတ်ချန္ဒရာဘိုစ်"၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ပညာဗိမာန်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊ ၁၉၇၉။ (Hein Latt, *Indian Patriotic Hero (Naytargi) Subhas Chandra Bose*, Rangoon: Pyinnyarbaikman Press, 1979.)

ဦးကျော်ဝင်း၊ဦးမြဟန်၊ဦးသိန်းလှိုင်၊ "၁၉၅၈-၁၉၆၂ မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေး၊တတိယတွဲ"၊ရန်ကုန်၊တက္ကသိုလ်များပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊၁၉၉၁။
(Kyaw Win, U., Mya Han, U. and Thein Hlaing, U., 1958-1962 Myanmar Politics, Vol. III, Rangoon: University Press, 1991.)

ဦးစံငြိမ်း၊ဒေါက်တာဒေါ်မြင့်ကြည်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးသမိုင်း(၁၉၅၈-၆၂)၊အတွဲ(၁)"၊ဒုကြိမ်၊ရန်ကုန်၊တက္ကသိုလ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်၊
၁၉၉၁။ (San Nyein, U. and Myint Kyi, Daw. (Dr.), Myanmar Politics Vol. I, 2nd Edition, Rangoon: University Press, 1991.)

အောင်ဖေ၊သခင်၊ "ကြံ့ရဆံ့ရကျွန်တော့ဘဝ"၊(ပ)ကြိမ်၊ရန်ကုန်၊မြောင်းမြစာပေ၊၁၉၈၅။(Aung Pe, Thakin, In My Life, First Edition, Rangoon: Myaungmya Press, 1985.)

အောင်သန်း၊ဦး၊ "၁၆ နှစ်"၊ရန်ကုန်၊ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်မပါ၊ပုံနှိပ်နှစ်မပါ။(Aung Than, U., 16 Years, Rangoon: np., nd.)

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ချင်းစိန်ဦး(ဒဂုန်)၊ "ဗိုဗမာတိုင်းရင်းသားတပ်မတော်ကြီး"၊ *ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်တိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၄)*၊ ၉-၁-၁၉၄၆။
(Chin Sein, U (Dagon), "Dobama Taiyintha Tatmadawgyi": *Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No. 4, 9.1.1946.)

စိုးမြင့်ဦး၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှု"၊ *အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်ဒုတိယပိုင်း*၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင်အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏ လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သောဆောင်းပါး။
(Soe Myint, U., "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League for Democracy, *The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum*, Vol. II.)
Distributed by N.L.D (Liberated Area, Japan Branch) and redistributed by N.L.D (Liberated Area, Australia Branch).

ထင်မောင်၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေးဝါဒများ"၊ *အိုးဝေမဂ္ဂဇင်းအတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၈)*၊ ရန်ကုန်၊ ၁၉၅၆-၅၇။ (Htin, Maung, "Burmese Political Ideologies": *Owe Wai Magazines*, Vol. I, No.8, Rangoon: Students' Union (Rangoon), 1956-57.)

ထိန်လင်း၊ "မြောင်းမြရဲဘော်များ"၊ *မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၉)အမှတ်(၁)*၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီ၊ ၁၉၉၉။ (Htain Lin, "The Comrades from Myaungmya": *Moe Journal*, Vol. 9, No.1, February, 1999.)

နုမောင်၊ "ဘယ်လိုလွတ်လပ်ရေးမျိုးလဲ"၊ *သိန်းဖေမြင့်၊ ဘုံဝါဒနှင့်ဗမာ့ရန်ကုန်၊ ဗောဓိတော့စာပေ*၊ ၁၉၆၇။ (Nu, Maung, "What Kind of Independence": Thein Pe Myint, *Communalism and Dobama*, Rangoon, Bawsataught Press, 1967.)

ဗဆွေဦး(အထွေထွေအတွင်းရေးမှူး)၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီဆိုတာဘာလဲ"၊ *ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်တိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၄)*၊ ၉-၁-၁၉၄၆။ (Ba Swe, U, (General Secretary), "What is the People's Freedom (Socialist) Party": *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.4, 9.1.1946.)

ဗဆွေဦး၊ "တော်လှန်ရေး၏မြုပ်ကွက်ရှုပ်ကွက်များ"၊ *ရွှေတူဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၁)*၊ ၁၂၊ ၁၉၇၁။ (Ba Swe, U, "The Secrets of The Revolution": *Shwe Tu Journal*, Vol. I, No.1, 12.2.1971.)

မြသခင်(ဘီအက်စ်စီ-ဘီအယ်လ်)၊ "ဆန်စပါးမည်မျှအရေးကြီးသနည်း၊ သီးစားခတချက်လွတ်ဥပဒေထုတ်ပါ"၊ *ဆိုရှယ်လစ်တပ်တိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၁)အမှတ်(၄)*၊ ၁၃၊ ၁၀၊ ၁၉၄၆။ (Mya, Thakin., (Bsc., B.L), "The importance of Paddy and the need to issue the cost of rent for cultivating a piece of land", *The Socialist Front Weekly Journal*, Vol. I, No.4, 13.10.1946.)

မြသွေးဗိုလ်၊ "ဥက္ကဋ္ဌကြီးသခင်မြ"၊ *ပြည်သူ့ကြည်ဂျာနယ်အမှတ်(၂၁)*၊ ၁၉၊ ၇၊ ၁၉၇၀။ (Mya Thway, Bo, "Chairman Thakin Mya": *Peoples' Star Journal*, No. 21, 19.7.1970.)

ရိုးမပေါ်ကကြည့်နီ၊ "သခင်သန်းထွန်းနှစ်(၉၀)မြောက်မွေးနေ့အထိမ်းအမှတ်စာစောင်"၊ *ဗမာပြည်ကွန်မြူနစ်ပါတီဗဟိုဝါဒဖြန့်ချိရေးဌာန*၊ ၁၉၉၃။ (Red Star from Yoma, *The 90th Anniversary of Thakin Than Tun*, Ideological Department (CPB, Headquarters), 1993.) Note. It is from CPB's website.

သာဘန်း၊ "ရွှီခိုင်မြို့သို့လာလှည့်ပါရွှေဧည့်သည်"၊ *မိုးဂျာနယ်အတွဲ(၇)အမှတ်(၃)*၊ ဧပြီ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Thar Ban, "Come and Visit to Shwekhinemyi", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No.3, April, 1997.)

သူရိန်၊ "ရခိုင်အကြောင်းတစ်စုံတစ်ရာစာစောင်"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၆)၊ အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Thu Rain, "About the Rakhine": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November, 1996.)

သန်းထွန်းဦး၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံလွတ်လပ်ရေးအတွက် ပါဝင်ဆောင်ရွက်ခဲ့မှု"၊ အမျိုးသားဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့ချုပ်၏ ၅၂နှစ်မြောက် လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့ အထိမ်းအမှတ်ဒုတိယပိုင်း၊ ဗဟိုအလုပ်အမှုဆောင်အဖွဲ့ဝင်လူကြီးများ၏ လွတ်လပ်ရေးနှင့်ဆက်စပ်သော ဆောင်းပါး။ (Than Tun, U., "The Burmese Freedom Movement": National League For Democracy, *The 52nd Anniversary of Independent Day Memorandum*, Vol. II.) Note. This document is distributed by N.L.D (Liberated Area, Japan Branch) and redistributed by N.L.D (Liberated Area, Australia Branch.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "မြန်မာအင်ဒိုနီးရှားနယ်ချဲ့ဆန့်ကျင်ရေးသွေးစည်းညီညွတ်မှု"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ မတ်၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Than, Ko (Kyimyindine), "The Unity of Myanmar-Indonesia for Anti-Imperialism": *Moe Journal*, March 1996.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "မြန်မာအင်ဒိုနီးရှားနယ်ချဲ့ဆန့်ကျင်ရေးသွေးစည်းညီညွတ်မှု"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇွန်၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Than, Ko (Kyimyindine), "The Unity of Myanmar-Indonesia for Anti-Imperialism": *Moe Journal*, January, 1996.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ဦးသိန်းဖေမြင့်နှင့်လျှို့ဝှက်ထောင်တွင်းဆွေးနွေးပွဲ"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇွန်၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Than, Ko (Kyimyindine), "A Secret Discussion with U Thein Pe Myint in Prison": *Moe Journal*, June 1996.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "နယ်ချဲ့ဘုရင်ခံနှင့်လွတ်လပ်ရေးတိုက်ပွဲနောက်ဆုံးအဆင့်"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၆)၊ နိုဝင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Than, Ko., (Kyimyindine), "The Imperialist Governor and the Last Phase of the Freedom Movement", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November, 1996.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုနောက်ဆုံးအဆင့်နှင့်နယ်ချဲ့ဘုရင်ခံ"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇန်နဝါရီ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Than, Ko, (Kyimyindine), "The Last Phase of the Freedom Movement and the Imperial Governor", *Moe Journal*, January 1997.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ခဲခြံအင်းစိန်တစ်ဝိုက်တွင်လွှင့်ထူခဲ့သောပြည်ထောင်စုအလံများ"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၇)၊ အမှတ်(၂)၊ မတ်၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Than, Ko (Kyimyindine), "The Union Flags were Hanging at "Khawai Garden", Insein District": *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No.2, March 1997.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "နိုင်ငံတော်လုပ်ကြံမှု"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ အတွဲ(၇)၊ အမှတ်(၁၀)၊ ဒီဇင်ဘာ၊ ၁၉၉၇။ (Than, Ko (Kyimyindine), "State Assassination", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No.10, December 1997.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇူလိုင်၊ ၁၉၉၈။ (Than, Ko., (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee", *Moe Journal*, July, 1998.)

သန်းကိုး(ကြည့်မြင်တိုင်)၊ "ပြည်သူ့စာပေကော်မတီ-လက်ဝဲညီညွတ်ရေးအတွက်လမ်းခင်းပေးခဲ့"၊ မိုးဂျာနယ်၊ ဇူလိုင်၊ ၁၉၉၈။ (Than, Ko., (Kyimyindine), "Peoples' Literature Committee: Paving the way for Leftist Unity", *Moe Journal*, July, 1998.)

အေးသီတာ၊ ဒေါ်၊ "နဂါးနီစာပေနှင့်ကိုလိုနီခေတ်မြန်မာနိုင်ငံရေး"၊ ဒေါက်တာသန်းထွန်း၏လုပ်ဖော်ကိုင်ဖက်များ၊ ဗမာ့သမိုင်းဟင်းလေး၊ မန္တလေးတက္ကသိုလ်(သမိုင်းဌာန)၊ ၁၉-- ?၊ ၁၇၄-၁၈၈။ (Aye Thida, Daw, "Nagani Literature and Burmese Politics in the Colonial Period": The Colleagues of Dr Than Tun, *Studies In Burmese History*, Mandalay: Mandalay University, nd, pp.174-188.)

အောင်ဆန်း၊ဗိုလ်ချုပ်၊ "ကျောင်းသားဝတ္တရား"၊*အိုးဝေမဂ္ဂဇင်း/အတွဲ(၁)/အမှတ်(၈)/၁၉၅၆-၅၇*။ (Bogyoke Aung San, "The Responsible Duty of Student", *Owe Wai Magazine*, Vol. I, No.8, 1956- 57, Rangoon: Student's Union, 1956-57.)

အောင်ဖေ၊သခင်၊ "ဒီလိုပြောချင်သည်"၊*မိုးဂျာနယ်/ဇွန်၊၁၉၉၆*။ (Aung Pe, Thakin, "What He Wants to Say": *Moe Journal*, June, 1996.)

အောင်မြင့်ဦး၊ "လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုပမ်းမှုနှင့်ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်တပ်ဖွဲ့"၊*မိုးဂျာနယ်/အတွဲ(၇)/အမှတ်(၁၀) ဒီဇင်ဘာ၊၁၉၉၇*။ (Aung Myint Oo, "Freedom Movement and Peoples' Volunteer Organisation", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VII, No. 10, December, 1997.)

အုန်းမောင်ဦး(လေထီး)၊ "နှစ်ပေါင်း ၅၀ ကြာသောအခါ"၊*မိုးဂျာနယ်/အတွဲ(၆)/အမှတ်(၁၀)၊နိုဝင်ဘာ၊၁၉၉၆*။ (Ohn Maung, U(Lai Hti), "After 50 Years", *Moe Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 10, November, 1996.)

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6. UNPUBLISHED SECONDARY SOURCES

(a). Theses in Burmese

ကြည်ကြည်ချို "ပြည်ခရိုင်နိုင်ငံရေးလှုပ်ရှားမှုသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၈-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၆။ (Kyí Kyí Cho, *The Political Movements in Pye District (1938-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1986.)

ကျော်ဇော်ဝင်း၊ "ပြည်သူ့လွတ်လပ်ရေး(ဆိုရှယ်လစ်)ပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၄၄-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၃။ (Kyaw Zaw Win, *A History of the Peoples' Freedom (Socialist) Party (1944-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1993.)

နေညွန့်ဗဆွေ၊ "ပြည်သူ့အရေးတော်ပုံပါတီသမိုင်း(၁၉၃၉-၁၉၄၆)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၄။ (Nay Nyunt Ba Swe, *A History of the Peoples' Revolutionary Party (1939-1946)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1984.)

နီနီအောင်၊ "အလုပ်သမားအစည်းအရုံးများအဖွဲ့ချုပ်(ဗမာနိုင်ငံ)တိယူစီ(ဘီ)သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၅၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Ni Ni Aung, *A History of the Trade Union Congress (Burma)(1945-1958)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1996.)

ပပဦး၊ "မြန်မာနိုင်ငံသမိုင်းတွင်ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ပါတီ၏ အခန်းကဏ္ဍ(၁၉၄၀-၁၉၅၀)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၆။ (Pa Pa Oo, *The Role of Socialist Party in Burma History (1940-1950)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1996.)

ရဲမြ၊မောင်၊ "သခင်မြ၏ နိုင်ငံရေးဆောင်ရွက်ချက်များလေ့လာစိစစ်ခြင်း(၁၉၂၀-၁၉၄၇)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၂။ (Ye Mya, Maung, *An Analysis of the Political Role of Thakin Mya (1920-1947)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1982.)

အေးအေးမူ၊ "မြန်မာ့လွတ်လပ်ရေးကြိုးပမ်းမှုတွင်ပါဝင်သောအမျိုးသမီးများ၏ အခန်းကဏ္ဍ(၁၉၁၉-၁၉၄၈)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၈၁။ (Aye Aye Mu, *The Role of Women in Freedom for Burma (1919-1948)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1981.)

အောင်မြင့်ဦး၊ "ပြည်သူ့ရဲဘော်သမိုင်း(၁၉၄၅-၁၉၆၄)"၊ မဟာဝိဇ္ဇာဘွဲ့အတွက်တင်သွင်းသောကျမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်တက္ကသိုလ်၊ ၁၉၉၅။ (Aung Myint Oo, *A History of the Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (P.V.O) (1945-1964)*, M.A thesis, Rangoon University, 1995.)

(b). Theses in English

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McKinney, Theophilus Elisha., *An Interpretation Of Neutralism in Burma's Foreign Policy, 1948-1958*, PhD thesis, Tufts University, 1963.

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Win, Khin Maung, *Some Philosophical Problems In Contemporary Burma: A Study in The Comparative Philosophy Of Culture*, PhD thesis, Yale University, 1959.

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