ANSWERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON MON FREEDOM MOVEMENT

1.Q. Is the ultimate end of your group political independence?
   A. Our aim is to establish an independent sovereign state unless the Burmese government is willing to permit a confederation of free nationalities exercising full right of self-determination inclusive of right of secession.

2.Q. On what grounds do you base your desires for independence? Ethnic, religion, speech?
   A. We base our right of self-determination on ethnic, history, territory and culture. Mons though reduced to a minority race in modern times both in Burma and Thailand wield a lot of influence in olden days history of Southeast Asia when they had their home lands. History of any individual country in this region would be incomplete without any mention made of Mon influence. As answers to the questionnaire were written at a place where references were far from reach, for further reference on Mon we would like to point out a few books, viz. 'The Talaing' written by Dr. Halliday, an American Baptist Missionary to Moulmein, Burma, published under the auspices of the siam Society, Thailand; 'Mon-English Dictionary' by same author; 'The Peguan Language' by Dr. Haswell, also an American Baptist Missionary, Burma, published by the American Baptist Mission Press in 1901 at Moulmein; 'History of Burma' by G. E. Harvey (London, 1925); 'History of Burma' by Arthur P. Phayre (London, 1883); 'Burma, by D.G.E. Hall (London, 1956) in the Hutchinson "University Library Series". 'A History of Modern Burma' by John F. Cady (Ithaca, 1958 and 1960); 'Old Burma' by G.H. Luce published in Great Britain, an authority on Far Eastern History; Book entitled meaning 'My Itinerary' by Maurice Collis published in Great Britain, a translation from Portuguese written by a Portuguese envoy Mr. Pinto to Mon court at Martaban; 'Mon-English Dictionary' by H.L. Shorto, Lecturer in Mon, London School of Oriental Studies and African Languages; 'The Union of Burma' by Hugh Tinker (Oxford, 1957 & 1959); 'Thailand, Burma, Laos & Cambodia' by John F.
3. Q. What is the proper name of your political group?

A. The name of our political group is the New Mon State Party (NMSP). It was formed in July 1958 under the leadership of Nai Shwe Kyin (alias), Nai Ba Lwin just after a big surrender under the leadership of the Mon People's Front (MPF) which took up armed resistance since 1948. Nai Shwe Kyin himself was a Central Committee of the Mon People's Front. There was dissension amongst the Mons on the promise given by U Nu who was Premier of the then Burmese government. U Nu promised that his government would help create an autonomous Mon State if Mons surrender and accept legality. With the lurking political intrigues by the military, few leaders of the MPF who were not convinced of the surrender parted ways with MPF and formed up the New Mon State Party to continue carrying on armed resistance. U Nu's government allowed a yearly display of Mon culture and permitted its revival while it considered the revival of an autonomous Mon State. But General Ne Win shattered these plans after his seizure of power in 1962. The reason given by General Ne Win for annulling whatever facilities given to the Mons by U Nu's government was that 'Mons and Burmese are inseparable because most of the Burmese are Mon-blooded and so separate ethnic rights need not be given to the Mons.'

Released after six years of detention, U Nu under pretext of ill health went to India and then around the world pleading for aid from sympathetic supporters to oust General Ne Win. He finally took political asylum in Thailand in 1968.

After over two years of secret negotiations agreement was reached between U Nu's Parliamentary Democracy Party, Mahn Ba Zan's Karen National Union and Nai Shwe Kyin's New Mon State Party to form a United National Liberation Front (UNLF) on 25th May, 1970 to fight against General Ne Win's government. A copy each of an appeal to the people of Burma and a joint statement by the three political parties
are attached as Appendix A and B. The Shan Patriotic Party and the Chin Democratic Party joined the Front later. U Nu, President of the Parliamentary Democracy Party (later renamed as People's Patriotic Party) became the Patron; Mahn Ba Zan, President of the KNU, the Chairman; and Nai Shwe Kyin, President of the NMSP, the General Secretary of the Front. When the Karens and the Mons pushed for the recognition of right of self-determination inclusive of right of secession, U Nu backed out and left the Front. Later, dispute on authority in Tavoy district, between the Burmese contingent headed by Bo Yan Naing and the Karen contingent, started a row between the PPP and KNU which finally led to the KNU pull-out from the Front in 1975. Thus the functions of the Front dwindled off. Had there been tolerance on both sides, with the internal situation ripe for change, the Front could have seized power, through violence, from the military dictatorship. But fate was destined the other way. The UNLF decided to create 3 more states in the Union of Burma, namely, the Arakan, the Chin and the Mon states.

4. Q. How old is your political party?
A. The New Mon State Party is now functioning in its twenty-seventh year. In 1963 General Ne Win called for peace parley to all political parties up in arms in Burma. The New Mon state Party was represented by Nai Shwe Kyin, Nai Htin and Nai Tet Tun at Rangoon peace negotiations. The peace parley was a farce just to deceive the people as if General Ne Win's government was champion of peace. Thus with the exception of some split faction of the Karens, all political parties that went to the negotiation table went back to the bush to struggle on unconstitution ally.

5. Q. How many different political parties among the Mons seek this end?
A. There are only two major political parties among the Mons. Both MPF and NMSP seek this end. MPF was active constitutionally after attaining legality till 1964 when under military dictatorial decree all political parties except General Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party - now officially renamed as Lanzin Party - were banned. Since then most of the rank and file of the MPF have joined hands with NMSP in its
overground and underground activities.

6. Q. Is a map available showing the positioning of a Mon State?
A. The NMSP is reclaiming part of old Mon State known in history as Rehmonnya or Hongsawatoi or Pegu comprising of five districts, namely, Mergui, Tavoy, Moulmein and Thaton districts in the Tenasserim Division (the southeastern coastal strip of Burma) and Pegu district in Pegu Division as Mon State. A miniature sketch map showing the area covering the old Mon State and the area now claimed is herewith attached as Appendix C. The old Monland in Burma covers three Divisions, namely, Tenasserim, Pegu and Irrawaddy Divisions stretching over the whole of Lower Burma.

7. Q. What would this State be called?
A. It is up to the modern Mon people to choose an appropriate name for the newly created state when it is materialized. Mons had exercised their right of self-determination as a nation possessing a history extending two thousand and five hundred years, a territory, a rich culture and a prosperous economy before they were finally conquered by the Burmese in 1757. But the Mons did not receive their due rights after independence from Great Britain in 1948. After over 37 years of bloody resistance the question of naming the state does not rest on Mons in Burma alone. Descendants of overseas Mons in Thailand and Cambodia who fled Burmese rule since Rehmonnya fell are also interested in the Mon resistance movement and their opinions would have to be respected also. Overseas Mons are intent on reclaiming all Rehmonnya covering the whole of Lower Burma as an independent sovereign state.

8. Q. What is the Mon population?
A. In a book written on Burma by an Italian Father of the Catholic Mission stationed at Rangoon after the annexation of Burma by the British in 1885 mention was made of Burmese and Mon territories with map illustration. The Burmese territory was shown in the map as Ava and the Mon territory as Pegu. The extent of each territory was even mentioned
in proximity of latitudes and longitudes. The population of Burma was then estimated at about 7 million and numerically Burmese stood first, Mons second, Karens third with other minorities following the line. (N.B. Regret in inability to give the title of the book, name of author and year of publication because it was read over 40 years ago.)

Mons as a defeated race suffered much oppression and discrimination under Burmese rule before the British came. By Burmese royal decree they were made to return themselves as 'Talaing' literally meaning 'Bastard' instead of their true national identity as 'Mon'. Thus to avoid discrimination and refusing to be dubbed as bastards most of the Mons returned themselves as Burmese. Another factor that speed up the absorption of the Mons by the Burmese was the loss of usage of Mon language as one of the official languages for over 200 years both under Burmese domination and under Burmese rule. Immediately after the conquest of Pegu the capital of Rehmonnya, by the Burmese, over 3,000 learned Mon priests invited to a sham convention at Thingangyun were massacred by the victor Burmese. The rest of learned Mon priesthood fled to Thailand thus paving the way for Burmese priests to take over the vacated monasteries. Most of the Mon literature written on palm leaves were either destroyed or burned by the conquering Burmese. Mon language was ostracized and Burmese became the medium of instruction. These atrocities deprived the Mons of maintaining their rich culture. Only in 1930s when the Mons turn a new lease on life Mon language was allowed to be taught in primary schools as an optional language in Mon dominated areas by the British.

According to the 1931 official census there were only 300,000 recorded as Mons. The reason was Mons who returned themselves as Buddhists were indiscriminately recorded by those who took census as Burmese without ethnical reference. Had the census been taken in ancestral statistics Mons would be in millions.

Mons in Burma number about four million. A rough estimate of Mons in Thailand is about three million. As a down trodden race without a homeland and deprived of political power as a separate identity, Mons just allow themselves to be assimilated either by the Burmese in Burma or by the Thais in Thailand. But once their right of self-determination
is regained most of them would show up their real identity.

9. Q. What is the banner of an independent Mon State look like? Is it possible to obtain a sketch if this flag with an explanation of design and colours?
   A. A miniature sketch of the flag in use by the NMSP is herewith attached as Appendix D.

   The ratio of the length and breadth of the flag is 5 feet by 3 feet. The design and colors are: On red background a yellow shell-drake (sacred goose) flies in the middle facing the hoist and at top corner of the hoist is a fivedpointed light-blue star. Red stands for courage and bravery; yellow for glory and nobility; and blue for truth.

   The golden shell-drake is the symbol of the Mons and is known in Mon language as 'bob' and written as '_qs'. In Pali this aquatic bird is expressed as hamsa; thus the derivation of Hamsavati in Pali, literally meaning shell-drake country. On Mon language it is known as Hongsawatoi and written as 'j๑๑๑๑๑๑๑๑'. In conformity with the symbol Mon is an aquatic race.

   It was written in the chronicles that eight years after enlightenment, Lord Buddha along with his disciples went air-borne around Southeast Asian countries. On his return journey while crossing the Gulf of Martaban, which happened to be at low tide, he saw two golden shell-drakes sitting, female on top of male, on peak of land protruding out of sea just enough for a bird's perch. On the strange phenomena he predicted to his disciples that one day a country where his doctrine would thrive would come into existence in this vast sea area. Mons were the first rulers of this country known in history as Hongsawatoi approximately 1500 years after the prediction. That part of the sea when it was silted up and ready for habitation was colonized by Mons from Thaton Kingdom in 825 A.D.

   The light-blue star signifies the guiding Pole Star - The symbol of our conviction.

10. Q. Was there an independent Mon State?
   A. Historical background of the Mons. - Mons of the Mon-Khmer Family
migrated from Mongolia into Thailand along the Mekong valley, into Burma along the Salween and Irrawaddy valleys and into India along the Brahmaputra valley earlier than 600 B.C. In this respect John F. Cady's book entitled 'Thailand, Burma, Laos & Cambodia' gives some historical facts about the Mons. Extracts from pp. 32-33 & 45 are given below:

"Leading Peoples: Mons and Khmers"

"The Mon-Khmer peoples, who moved into Indochina in B.C. times, were ethnically Mongoloid, but non-Chinese. Their languages are described as Austroasiatic to distinguish them from that of their Austronesian predecessors who also inhabited much of the Indochina peninsula. The Mons probably moved southward from western China via the Salween and Mekong River gorges into Lower Burma and the Menam valley and the Malay isthmus during the first millennium and prior to their making contact with north China civilization of Chou times (ending around 240 B.C.) . The Mons may have preceded their Khmer cousins by several centuries. Burma's Mons were closely associated with the Pwo Karens, probably in a master-slave relationship. Their first capital was at Thaton, which developed in early A.D. times fruitful cultural and commercial contacts with India's Telengana section of the upper Deccan and with ports of the lower Coromandel coast. On the eastern side of the Salween-Menam divide the Mons established another state known as Dvaravati, with one center at Lopburi (Lavo) on the lower Menam and a second upstream around a capital known as Haripunjaya. For a time in the tenth and eleventh centuries a loosely structured Mon confederacy called Ramanyadesa included Thaton, Dvarawati and Haripunjaya.

"The Mons were widely dispersed and poorly integrated. They were seldom dominant politically, but were important both economically and culturally. Their substantial economic skills as hydraulic agriculturalists, craftsmen, shipbuilders, seamen, and traders were matched by their civilizing role as transmitters of Indian culture. Indian governmental practices and kingship symbols, Vishnu worship, Buddhism, and Sanskrit and Pali writing systems were all transmitted by the Mons to Burman neighbours, to Khmer cousins located to the east of the Menam valley, and finally to the later-entering Thai peoples."
The Dvarawati Mons also gained control over the mouth of Menam River and down the peninsula extending southward into Malaya. Small but economically important Indianized states, notably Tambralinga and Lankasuka appeared in northern Malaya. It was not until around 800 A.D. that a united Cambodia again emerged as the successors of Funan.

The Khmer learned much from the conquered Funanese, and also from the Mons, about the Indian symbols of divine kingship, Hinduism, and Buddhism. They eventually demonstrated in the Great Lake region their own superior talents in hydraulic agriculture, governmental organization, art, architecture, and literature.

Around 800 A.D. a vigorous Khmer ruler, Jayavarman II, finally succeeded in reuniting the states of Water Chenla and in establishing Cambodian control over vassal domains located around the shores of the Gulf of Siam. The lower portion of the Annam coast above modern Saigon was taken over by this time by the Hindunized Chams. Meanwhile the Buddhist Mon peoples established political and cultural ascendency along both sides of the Tenasserim watershed and up the Menam valley. Mon Thaton became the teacher of the Pagan Burmans of the eleventh century, while Mon Dvarawati (from Lopburi southward to Chaiya) and Mon Haripunjaya (at Lamph'un) to the north became the mentors of the Khmers and later the Thai. Prince Uthong, a Thai leader long resident in Mon Dvarawati, subsequently founded the Thai capital of Ayuthia in 1350.

Thus history shows that Mons have had independent states of their own tracing over two thousand and five hundred years. The most known in latter days history was Rehmonnya or Hongsawatoi (Hamsavati) or Pegu covering the whole of Lower Burma until it was wrested from them by the Burmese in 1757. During the periods when Mons were masters of lower Burma, the people were happy and prosperous. Those glorious periods were expressed by distinguished historians as golden ages under wise Mon rulers. Relations with foreign countries and foreign nationals were peaceful, cordial and harmonious. That was how the Mons
blended their native culture with Theravada Buddhism which elevated them as teachers of their neighbours throughout Southeast Asia. After being deprived of their homeland, more than half of the Mon populace migrated into Thailand where they were given refuge and treated as equals. Mons when they were masters of the olden days Thailand received the Thais when they migrated south from Yunan with open arms and they were always in close ties in history. This time it was Mons' turn to receive Thais' hospitality. Hundreds of thousands of Mons returned back to Burma - their old homeland - when it came under the British.

Mon had developed themselves into a nation possessing a rich culture and were a prosperous people. It is one of those cases in history when the people defeated in war conquer in culture.

After under Burmese rule for 67 years, Tenasserim Division which formed part of old Rehmonnya fell into the hands of the British together with Arakan Division in 1826 after the First Anglo-Burmese War. The other part of old Rehmonnya covering the present Pegu and Irrawaddy Division fell to the British in 1854 after the second Anglo-Burmese War. Finally, when Upper Burma, known in the chronicles as Ava was annexed by the British in 1885 after the Third Anglo-Burmese War, the whole of Burma came under the British as a colony till 1942, when the British withdrew from Burma during World War II.

When the British government inaugurated steps for granting independence to Burma after the second World War, Mons urged the Burmese political leaders, who were in power as Executive Councillors to the British Governor to include satisfactory provisions and safeguards for them in the Constitution which was in the making. The Burmese chauvinists instead of ceding to the Mon aspirations waved it lightly by giving a far-fetched excuse saying that Mons and Burmese are indistinguishable in racial identity and characteristics, and separate minority rights should not be contemplated. But when the demand for the right of self-determination became popular and an upsurge of Mon mass support came to a climax in 1948, the Burmese government took measures to detain some of the Mon leaders and assassinate many of them.
A four-point pledge was made between the Karens and the Mons in August 1948 for joint effort to attain Mon and Karen States. The pledge says: (1) Mons and Karens agreed to struggle jointly for the attainment of Mon and Karen States; (2) Mons and Karens committed themselves to face all obstacles even at the risk of their lives in struggling for the ultimate goal; (3) Either party should not go into any agreement with a third party without the consent of the other; and (4) When success is achieved the aspirations of Mons and Karens would be decided democratically. The fourth point was included because the claims made by the Mons and the Karens were overlapping in most areas. The pledge was signed by Nai Hla Maung for the Mons and by Saw Ba U Gyi for the Karens.

In a matter of days after the signing of the pledge the Burmese government detained 19 Mon leaders in Moulmein jail under section 5 of Public Order Preservation Act. This move on the part of government prompted the Mons and Karens to occupy Thaton and Moulmein together with a substantial part of the present Karen State without bloodshed on the 30th and 31st August, 1948 respectively. A week later the Burmese government announced that it would form a Regional Autonomy Enquiry Commission for the Mon, Karen and Arakanese. At the first meeting of the Commission, Mons put up their claim including Tenasserim, Pegu and Irrawaddy Divisions covering the whole area of old Rehmonnya to be demarcated as Mon State. The Karens claimed Tenasserim Division, Irrawaddy Division, and Toungoo District, Myaunglebin Subdivision, Hanthawaddy District, Insein District and Tharrawaddy District in Pegu Division to be incorporated as Karen State. Later the Arakanese claimed Arakan Division as Arakanese State. Situation worsen and by the third week of December 1948 the government declared illegal the two armed wings of the Mons and Karens, namely, the Mon National Defence Organization (MNDO), and the Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO).

Thus finding themselves under the same heavy hand of power as practised over other indigenous non-Burmese brethren of Burma, Mons and Karens had no other alternative but to resort to unconstitutional means to defend their democratic rights and freedom. They collabo-
rated, in a common cause, with other resistance forces to fight against the Burmese government.

The intransigent and chauvinistic national characteristics of the Burmese showed up in full and no compromise was made to any of the above ethnic groups. The Burmese leadership tried to impose its will through military force which plunged the country into civil war up till this day.

To put an end to all forms of colonialism, a resolution by the Afro-Asian group condemning colonialism and urging the colonialist powers to grant independence to their subject people was passed by the 15th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

But there is still one form of colonialism overlooked, the Burmese colonialism. The Burmese in their hey-day of their imperialist monarchical dynasty, conquered the Arakanese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Mon and Shan people and usurped their sovereignty and land of birth. They invaded Thailand but failed to hold it, leaving a trial of devastations. From these it is clear beyond doubt, that the Burmese was a colonialist on his own, which role he resumed over the non-Burmese as soon as the British restored Burma her independence under him.

It is therefore only logical and natural for the non-Burmese, to hanker for and ask for their own independence from the Burmese rule; having been under Burmese colonial rule first, then the British, and now reverting back again to the Burmese colonial rule. The Burmese have no justifiable right to be in Lower Burma or old Rehmonnya except by conquest.

After nearly four decades of Burmese administration the country is politically in turmoil and economically in slump. That clearly indicates historical failure of the Burmese leadership.

To ease up the political, economic, social and military crises General Ne Win's government had demarcated Moulmein and Thaton districts as Mon State in Article 31 of the new constitution published in April 1972 for national referendum. In the same article Arakan and Chin Divisions were demarcated as Arakanese and Chin States respectively. The National Assembly had already approved the new constitution on January, 3, 1974 at 1930 hours. Thus the three states had come into
existence since January, 1974

11.Q. What is the religion of the Mon people?
A. History tells us that it was through Mons Buddhism spread throughout southeast Asia. It was also because they gave in too much to Buddhistic way of life that they lost their homelands. About 95% of the present day Mons are Buddhists. The rest follow other faiths, namely, Christian and Islam.

12.Q. Have you had any representatives abroad to air your plea for independence?
A. We do have some. We approached Mons overseas for moral and material support. Secret contacts with agents of freedom loving powers are also made. Foreign correspondents who took sympathy to our cause help publicise our movement. A copy of such publicity given in the form of a dialogue is herewith attached as Appendix E. The name of the Mon leader was not mentioned just to avoid embarrassment of the country concerned. It was Nai Shwe Kyin himself. Moving pictures of our movement after formation of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) was also taken by the same foreign correspondent and his associates for world-wide publicity in early 1971. We were told the first copy with commentary was sold to the B.B.C. Mons in Thailand have now regained their ethnic consciousness and have deep desire to regain their old homeland (Hongsawatoi). Organisations heading for that end are now very active.

13.Q. What would be the mainstay of your economy?
A. The five districts claimed as Mon state subsist on agriculture, mainly rice crop. Secondary crops such as peanut (ground nut), sesame, sugar-cane, jute, and jaggery palm are also grown. Rubber thrives well in these areas and there are large stretches of rubber plantation. Orchards growing durian, rambutan, citrus fruits, betel leaf and areca nut abound along the foot of the mountain ranges. Mineral resources such as wolfram, tin, lead, antimony, silver, gold etc. abound in the hard old rock of the
Tenasserim Range. Timber industry is another source of income. A sugar factory, a paper factory, a ceramic factory and many rice mills are already in existence in area claimed as Mon state. Fishery and pearl industries have a bright future. Oil companies prospecting oil and gas on the continental shelf of the Gulf of Martaban had struck reserves on par with the richest strikes off Indonesian waters.

The State can extend its existing potentially strategic and economically viable highways, sea ports, rail system and airfields, thereby facilitating the exploitation and marketing of its natural resources by encouraging further economic wealth in such areas as tourism, joint-venture corporation which employ innovative processes or technologies and foreign-owned industries seeking low cost labour with inherent and traditional skill that are available within the State's boundaries.

According to conservative estimates made by economists, the resources in the area now claimed as Mon State could feed 20 million when it is well developed.

14.Q. What is the per-cent of literacy among the Mon people?
A. The percentage of literacy among the Mons is about 60% in Burma and about 80% in Thailand. Out of these some are literate only in Mon only, which means their standard of education is lower compared with those who are literate either in Burmese or Thai and other western languages. To revive the culture, Mon language was permitted to be taught as optional language in primary schools in Mon dominated areas in Burma. But this was stopped after General Ne Win's seizure of power in 1962. Because of the traditional enmity against the Burmese and because of language barrier, Mons are reluctant to learn through the medium of Burmese. Most of the race-conscious parents sent their children to Mon Buddhist monasteries where Mon is taught preparatory to study Buddhist scriptures written in Mon. This deprived the children of modern education resulting in a waste of intellectual man-power amongst the Mons. Thanks to the more liberal parents there are also hundreds of Mons who attained higher academic instructions.

In Thailand where compulsory primary education is practised
Mons are more literate in terms of modern education even though the medium of instruction is in Thai. Some of the Mon Buddhist monasteries in Thailand still teach Mon language. Throughout history relations between Thais and Mons were amicable and so Mons in Thailand enjoy better life than those of their kinsmen in Burma. There are many Mons entrusted with positions of trust in Thailand and there are more well-to-do Mons in Thailand than in Burma. There are still many descendants of old Mon noblemen who fled the Burmese rule over 200 years ago.

15.Q. How many graduates are there?
A. There are about 3,000 graduates of different fields and 15 doctorates amongst the Mons in Burma. There are much more of their counterparts in Thailand.

16.Q. Is the Mon language written in its own script?
A. Mons got their script from Sanskrit and Pali along with Buddhism from India. There are 35 alphabets in the Mon language. Mon literature is highly commended by western scholars as very rich. As such several Mon manuscripts written on palm leaves were translated by different scholars into English, French and German.

Mon language could be traced back to three periods: viz., ancient Mon, medieval Mon and modern Mon. It was through the endeavours of an English scholar Dr. Blagden (deceased), who did intense research work on Mon stone inscriptions and palm leaf manuscripts that Mon language covering a historical period of over two thousand years was made readable. The present day research work on Mon is mostly based on his findings. In this respect reference could be made to Mr. H.L. Shorto, Lecturer in Mon, School of Oriental and African Languages, University of London who is an authority on Mon language. He is also the author of a new Mon-English dictionary. Professor G.H. Luce (deceased) a Briton who was Professor in the Far Eastern History at the Rangoon University before World War II is the highest authority on Mon after Dr. Blagden. His book entitled 'Old Burma' which was published in Great Britain about a few years ago portrays some indisputable
historical facts of the Mons. Dr. Franklin E. Huffman of the Yale University who was doing research work on Southeast Asian languages in Southeast Asia a few years ago is another source of information. He has met Mr. Shorto of the London University. Mr. Brian L. Foster of Chicago University who came to learn Mon language in Thailand is another source of authority. The book entitled 'The Peguan Language' written by Dr. Haswell and Mon-English dictionary by Dr. Halliday also shows how rich Mon language and literature are.

October 15, 1972.


THE NEW MON STATE PARTY.
APPENDIX A.

A public appeal made by the Parliamentary Democracy Party, the New Mon State Party and the Karen National Union to the people of the Union of Burma:

The chauvinistic and despotic regime of Bo Ne Win has been in power since 1962.

The chauvinistic Bo Ne Win government continues to wage war and to cruelly strangle the instincts of equality and self-determination on the part of the Kachins, Karens, Kayahs, Chins, Mons, Pa-ohs, Shans and Arakanese.

Destroying all democratic rights, all nationals are being oppressed through the powers of a military dictatorship.

The country is being economically scalped and all means of production seized in order to benefit a group of military power-mongers.

The country's production has rapidly declined with each year, and the people are in a grave economic crisis.

The standard of living is falling lower and lower.

Throughout the course of Burma's history the condition of the people has never been worse than during Bo Ne Win's government.

People of Burma: The Bo Ne Win government is the most vile and destructive of governments; the source of all woes; most cruel and murderous; disruptive of amity with neighbouring countries; the greatest enemy of all races in the Union.

Throughout history the people of Burma have never accepted oppression, cruelty and injustice with bowed heads. They have seized the nearest weapon and revolted. Inasmuch as, in the past, the people have bravely resisted
injustice, so today they wage a revolutionary war.

Only the brave are free. The people of Burma fighting for liberation are resolute and brave. In order to give leadership and direction a National Liberation Front has been formed.

The Front will (1) keep faith with the people; (2) resolutely oppose racial and social injustice; (3) selflessly devote its human resources towards the peoples betterment; (4) strive for national unity transcending race, class, personal and political considerations; (5) be honest, upright, zealous and courageous; (6) upright the country's political, economic and cultural life; (7) formulate programmes of work; (8) foster good relations with neighbours; (9) assume responsibility as an active force for world peace.

The Front calls upon the people of Burma to join firmly with it in the fight in the National Revolution.

Down with the chauvinistic military dictator Ne Win.
Victory to the United National Liberation Front.

Sd. U Nu  Sd. Mahn Ba Zan  Sd. Nai Shwe Kyin
President  President  President
Parliamentary Democracy Party  Karen National Union  New Mon State Party
APPENDIX B
JOINT STATEMENT

The Parliamentary Democracy Party, the New Mon State Party and the Karen National Union, make the following joint statement:

1. In order to bring down the Maha Bama (chauvinistic) military dictatorship of Bo Ne Win and to give freedom, equality and democracy to the people, and to build a peaceful and prosperous Union of Burma, the PDP, KNU and NMSP met in conference from May 15 to May 22, 1970.

2. After free and friendly discussions the three parties agreed as follows:

   (1) In the overthrow of the chauvinistic military dictator Bo Ne Win a National Liberation Front be formed including the Kachins, Karens, Kayahs, Chins, Burmans, Mons, Pa-ohs, Shans, Arakanese. They will join the Front in freedom and equality and work for a progressive and democratic Burma. In organising themselves they will help one another and will have the democratic right of leaving the Front when they wish.

   (2) In organising the people for an armed struggle to overthrow the Ne Win government.

   (a) Those fulfilling the requirement of statehood, irrespective of the size of population, to be accorded self government with the state's size delimited in just manner;

   (b) The principle of equality among the races to be adopted in building up the Union, all problems among them to be settled peaceably without recourse to violence.

3. The three parties agree to the creation of the Mon State, the Arakan State and the Chin State. The confines of these states will be delimited according to accepted principles based on population, culture and language.
4. After the creation of the new states, Burma is likely to be out-represented in the Upper Chamber of Parliament. In order to obviate such imbalance the three parties are in favour of a single Chamber in which are present the true representatives of the minority races, the peasants, workers and other classes of people.

But since this subject is one of great moment it will need to be studied with care and the approval of the entire people obtained. And this fact is hereby recognised.

5. There will be equality among the religions, with all the people of the Union free to worship as they wish.

6. For economic self-sufficiency:

   (a) the living standard of the peasants will be improved through land reform and production drive in accord with natural resources;
   (b) The workers will have freely constituted labour unions, and they will be represented in formulating schemes for increased production;
   (c) Industrialists, owners, traders and brokers among nationals will be encouraged and assisted.

7. Each race of people will achieve progress and modernism in education, health and culture, with education imparted in the medium of its own language.

8. Relief and rehabilitation:

   Assistance to be provided to the families or dependants of those who fall in the fight for national liberation; also to others in economic distress.

   Assistance to orphans, the aged and infirm and the unemployed.

   There is to be maternity and infant welfare aid.

9. Defence and security:
The armed forces of National Liberation will be retained in service.
A National Guard will be raised in each state.
The Union Army will be composed of all races within the country.

10. Assistance from other countries and peoples:
This will be accepted from all those who approve of our programme.

11. Peace through Neutrality:
There will be peaceful relations with all countries regardless of their political systems on the basis of:
(a) respect for each other's independence and sovereignty;
(b) non-aggression;
(c) non-interference;
(d) equality and mutual respect;
(e) peaceful co-existence.

There will be diplomatic and trade relations with all countries.

There will be correct and good neighbourly relations with People's China, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Ceylon.

There are to be no military pacts and alliances with foreign countries. No defence arrangements with foreign countries, no military bases for stationing of foreign troops.

Sd. U Nu Sd. Mahn Ba Zan Sd. Nai Shwe Kyin
President President President
Parliamentary Democracy Karen National Union New Mon State Party.
Party.

APPENDIX C

- Mon State created by Ne Win Government in 1973, comprising Moulmein & Thaton districts.

- Five districts, namely, Mergui, Tavoy, Moulmein, Thaton & Pegu claimed as New Mon State by the NMSP.

- Area covering Old Mon State known in history as Hongsawaddy or Rehmonnya, conquered by the Burmese in 1757.
APPENDIX D

Background .................Red
Shell-drake .....................Yellow
Star ..................................Light-blue
While the world rivets its attention on Vietnam, there is another War, in Southeast Asia, a forgotten one, where it is said that the government controls but two-thirds of the country by day, and only one half by night. This is Burma: a nation of about 25 million people and numerous separate nationalities which has been beset with troubles since its independence from Britain in 1948.

In Burma all the land belongs to the state under the total nationalization program instituted by General Ne Win who dissolved the Parliamentary Government in 1962 and set up his Revolutionary Council. This established Burma as a Socialist and Neutralist government, directed by a cabinet of military men. Although General Ne Win avowed that his coup was designed to save the country from civil war about to split it, his government has done little to solve the problems of Burma's separatist nationalities - the Shans, the Kachins, the Karens, Nagas, Chins, and Mons - as well as the two Communist parties: the 'White Flag' pro Peking party and the 'Red Flag' pro Trotskyite party - all of them want their own power in Rangoon, representation in a confederated government, or complete independence within a Free State.

Many of these dissident groups which have no language or ethnic affinities with the ruling Burmese, have been fighting guerrilla wars from hideouts in the jungles along the Thailand border for the past eighteen years. The Thai government which fears a red Chinese takeover in neighbouring Burma officially pretends not to be aware of these rebel groups, although at the same time it is quietly sympathetic.

Meeting in secrecy with one of the leaders of the Mon Free Movement I was able to ask him to define his national aspirations.

Q. What is your position in the Mon Free State?
A. I am one of the leaders of the outlawed Free Mon Movement.
Q. How have you been fighting the Burmese?
A. We have been fighting them with guerilla warfare for nearly 19 years.

Q. What is the aim of your Mon people?
A. Our aim is to reclaim the traditional and historical homeland of the Mon people which was conquered by the Burmese in 1757 and which did not receive its own rights after independence from Great Britain in 1948. Our aim is to establish a sovereign state unless the Burmese government is willing to permit a confederation of free nationalities.

Q. What cooperation do you have with the other Free States?
A. They have similar aspirations as we do, and we help each other as much as we can.

Q. What goals have you achieved already?
A. Well, during premier U Nu's time the government allowed a yearly display of Mon culture and permitted its revival while it considered the revival of an autonomous Mon State. But when General Ne Win came to power in 1962 he immediately shattered these plans.

Q. What can be done to achieve greater success of your people?
A. There are three ways to achieve success in any movement. They are: as a gift, by force of circumstances, or by force of arms. We will not obtain our freedom as a gift, and force will only aggravate the people's suffering. And so it is by world opinion and recognition of our aspirations that we must hope to achieve our goal.

That was the voice of one of the leaders of the Mon Free State describing his people's efforts to establish independence from the present government in Burma, an effort which represents one of the forgotten wars daily being fought in the jungles of southeast Asia.

This is Keith Lorenz,
NBC News, Bangkok.

March, 1967