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[2]

To the late
COMRADE BA HEIN

[1]

BURMA IN BATTLE
by Minn Latt

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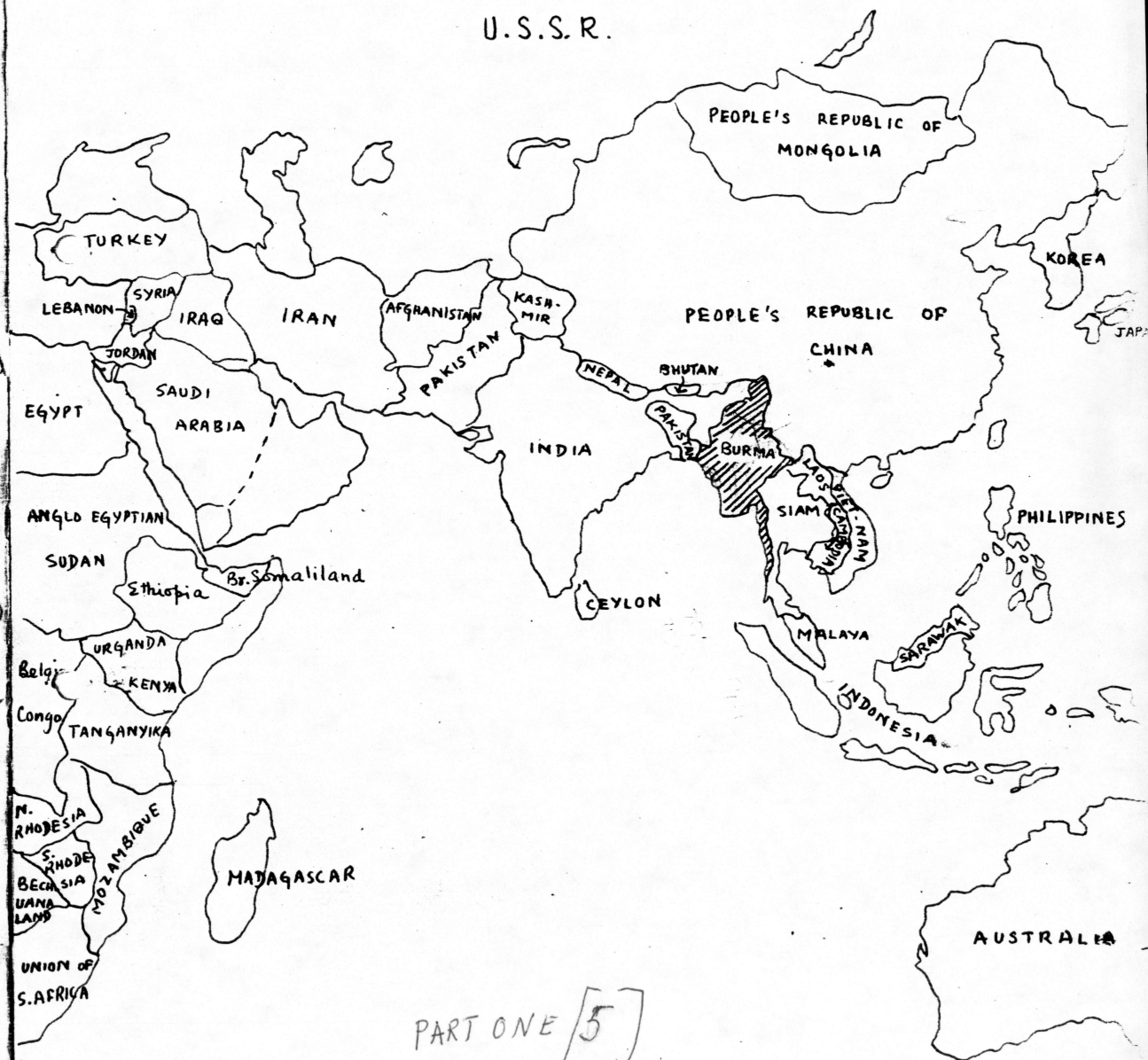

CHAPTER I

DO THEY KNOW MY COUNTRY ?

I could very well remember -- it had been raining....

Burmese rain and a rough one at that. The skies had opened up, huge drops were hurled down, then flung rudely into our faces by the ruthless wind. Drops of crystal clear rain, but what wrath they had! They bit us and stung us, rapped our cheeks and lashed our bodies. The wind roared and hissed, pushed and snarled.

We were forcing our way through the rainstorm. The water in the fields was knee deep and the mud sucked around our ankles. Sometimes we slipped and fell. No time to laugh. Not even a curse. Simply got to our feet again, then continued.

Once, my khamauk[1] blew off. My comrade dashed after it and brought it back for me.

"Blast the rain !"

"What did you say ?" My comrade did not hear. The wind was howling.

"Nothing," I yelled back, "How far we've got to go still ?"

"We're almost there."

Well, it was a relief to get such an answer. I would be only too glad to rest.

About ten miles away from us, on the Rangoon-Mandalay road, some officers of the government army would be hurrying their way in automobiles, dry and warm. Perhaps they would be smoking American cigarettes. A few days ago, maybe they had shot down some villagers. A few days hence, they would be drawing their salaries in big lumps.

Apart from my khamauk, I had on me a thin shirt and an age old silk longyi[2]. I was walking in

the rain but without any mackintosh. No rubbers. No shoes. Any way, they would not be of any use in that district even if we could afford them. No waterproof, no umbrella can keep a person dry in the Burmese rains, especially if he is walking in an open field for a distance not less than five or six miles. Especially, if he is wading through fields where water lies knee-deep.

However, if I permit truth to triumph over modesty, I must say I was proud of my suite. Two suits I had, one was light, the other warm. Outdoors during the day I would put on my thin pair of clothes. In these I would be walking in the rain, wading rivers, squatting on the mud. When we camp for the night, I would change into warm clothes, squeeze the water out from the wet ones and hang them up on bamboo rafters. By dawn, they would be dry. So change clothes again, wrap the warm clothes in rubber sheets, shove them into the haversack, then come-rain,-come-weather, we would wend our way again. It was very practical and convenient. Not every comrade had such. To add to the luxury, I even possessed a pair of worn out woollen stockings to warm my feet at night.

But that today's rain was horrible. My comrade was anxious.

"Our books will be soaked in the rain," he said, "The rain is so heavy!"

"I don't think so," I assured him, "I wrapped them in clothes, then in rubber. And the bag itself is of some help."

In rains like this, books worry us most. I was carrying all our luggage, his and mine. Our clothes occupy only half the sack, the other half was taken up by note-books, files and pamphlets. Between us, we had only one weapon, a sten-gun, and this, my friend carried.

My comrade. He was just a boy of seventeen, son of a farm labourer. When he joined us, he could hardly read or write. Now, within a year he had greatly

progressed. His squad leader took an interest not only in his military training but also in his letters, so that he could now read weekly news-bulletin published by the District Party Committee. He was ignorant before, but feudal oppression had kindled in him the art of hate. For all his family's sufferings he hated everything that ~~doe-do~~ did not suit his liking. But, in this respect as well he had advanced. Before, he hated all "white-faces". Now, he had understood that he belonged to the same camp and the same cause as that of a British worker or a Japanese peasant. Before, he sang songs about Burma's conquest over Siam and Assam. Now his songs became the ones directed against Imperialism and Feudalism.

A lock of hair had escaped from his ~~fore-head~~ cap and dangled on his forehead. He never wore a frown even in this terrible storm. He just kept plodding on: time and again, he would offer to help carry my haversack.

"Be careful, we'll now cross a stream," he warned. It was his locality and he knew every bit of it, as well as he knew the palm of his hand.

I looked forward. I could differentiate nothing. All I saw was water .... all water.

"We must make for that Lmu tree. The stream is shallow there."

The Lmu tree was waving its branches under the force of the monsoon wind. If it had not been for my comrade, I could not have known that there was a stream, even at that point. The stream had overflowed coming to a level with the flooded fields.

My friend went down first, holding the sten-gun over his head. The water came up to his neck. Then to his brows. He did not swim but walked. Two steps or maybe three. He emerged on the other bank.

"You can make it. The water will be just your neck level."

I released the haversack from my back and holding it high, descended into the slippery stream. The deepest part covered my lips, then I was on the other side.

"There's Po Tin's hut!" My young comrade pointed out towards the east. A lonesome hut amongst the acres and acres of fields greeted our gaze. That was to be our camp for the night...

Mrs. Po Tin or let me call her Ma Aye (because the Burmese wives do not take the names of their husbands) greeted us with a hearty smile for me and a "Hey kiddy!" for my comrade. She had only a skirt on her but had loosened it down to her waist to feed her baby. For modesty's sake, she pulled the skirt up over the other vacant breast when I entered. Her skin was tanned dark brown by the tropical sun and she looked thirty-five although, I found out later, she was only twenty-four.

She knew my comrade well. Everybody around that part knew him. He never was a guest, but one of the household in every home.

"Sorry I couldn't get up," she pointed with her chin towards the babe, then added, "kiddy, try and make your comrade at home. For you, you are not a guest." Next, she spoke to me, "Comrade, we have some dry clothes there. You may change. You can consider this as your own house."

"Thanks, but I suppose our clothes are dry in here," I showed her my wet haversack.

No questions. No formalities. It was something like members of a family coming home after a day's work. If we had been members of the government army we would not have found Ma Aye there. She would have fled long before we had crossed the stream.

The peasants in the fields know who we are and what we are doing. We are doing our duty and they know theirs. We are fighting ~~on the battlefields~~ in their fields: they are battling for a common cause, for freedom, peace and prosperity. On the same road. We call one another "comrades". Even amongst themselves peasants address on another as "comrades". Sometimes, as is won't in Burmese society, we pay respect to leading or elderly persons by addressing them as "Comrades Senior."

When Po Tin returned, Ma Aye had already

placed another rice-pot of rice on the stove.Meanwhile we sat down to tea and discussed some problems.

Po Tin was the vice-president of the People's Administrative Committee in his village. He was also the secretary of the village peasants' union.After we had spent a few minutes on his village plans for land distribution, he became personal.

"I don't think I ever saw you before."

"No, I am new around here."

"Where are you from ? From Rangoon ?"

I smiled and puffed away at the crude Burmese cheroot. Po Tin laughed.

"I am sorry, but one gets inquisitive at times."

We always change our names. It is safe. We never desire to tell where we come from or where we are going to. Everything has to be neat. Revolutionary fighters for the downtrodden people have to be prepared in every respect against the enemy who has better arms and better ~~equipments~~ facilities.

The dinner was wonderful. Rice and small fish well cooked by the housewife. She waited on us while we ate and politely refused our invitation to join us. Now and again she would go into the room to rock the hanging cradle.

"Baby shouldn't sleep now. She would be giving you trouble in the night," Po Tin told her.

Somebody came in. He was a courier from the 7th battalion of the People's Liberation Army. The housewife greeted him and asked him to join in at dinner.

"No, you change clothes ~~at~~ first. You'll catch cold," she said.

"No,thanks Elder Sister, but I have no time."

"Well then, pop in and eat. The rice is hot yet."

Dripping wet,the courier took a plate and joined us. Sometimes he betrayed a shiver. The housewife came over and took away an empty bowl. She brought it back later full with fish curry.

"I think I saw you at 7F," the courier said to me.

"Yes, we stopped there for lunch. You still have to continue ?"

"Yes, I must go to 5B. Urgent duty."

After dinner, he washed his own plates,slung on his rifle, thanked the hosts and went out. At the door, he turned round again.

"So long, comrades !" He gave a sharp salute then disappeared.

It had stopped raining and the water had ~~receded~~ receded, but the wind was cold. If it had been raining, it would be better but now it must be terribly cold for him.

"That comrade, he should have changed his clothes,"Po Tin was having the ~~a~~same thoughts. "It's a tough fight we are struggling. Isn't it,comrade?"

I nodded and tried to finish my dinner. I heard Ma Aye.

"But afterwards, Peace and Happiness," she said in a voice little more than a whisper.

Although I was dead tired I could not sleep till late in the night. I lay on my back, with an arm over my brow thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of organisation in a village I had studied three days ago. From afar, faint reports of bren-guns rang. There must be some fighting going on. Perhaps the patrols had clashed....

The house in which we had taken shelter was very small. It was a field-hut, about 14 feet by 20, divided into three partitions. A kitchen, a room for the couple and the front room. The last named ~~#~~ served as a prayer room, dining room, sitting room and also as bedroom for the guests. The hut had bamboo walls, bamboo floorings and thatched roof. Attached to the northern side of the house was the cowshed where a pair of oxen were kept and as the wind waved around, the smell of dung and hay enveloped us. Through the cracks in the bamboo walls and floorings, the cold gust of air kept creeping in.Once the child woke up and cried. The mother got up, grumbling sleepily and walked towards the cradle, the whole hut rock-

ing and screaming beneath her steps.

The husband snored soundly. He had had a very busy day perhaps. The peasants work very hard. They turn waste forests into fields. They transform barren lands into acres of gold. And yet, what a miserable life they had led !

This year Po Tin will not pay "rent" to the landlord. Every grain for which he toiled would be his. Next year he will improve his hut. Five years after the victory, well ... he who is free to mould his own future can expect anything. No level is too high for him.

I turned round softly and looked at my comrade. That lock of hair still dangled on his forehead. I pulled up the blanket and tucked his arms in. Then I decided to sleep.

"Comrade," he whispered. He was awake.

"Yes ?" I replied.

"Do you think they know ?" he said bluntly without any introduction, but added,"We are struggling here, suffering all hardships, overcoming difficulties, fighting, organising, dying for freedom and peace. We have liberated larges areas of the country, we have set up people's governments and are distributing land. Do you think the people outside Burma know about this ? Do they know, comrade ?"

The sleepy mother was humming a lullaby but the child was still sobbing. The bamboos creaked as the cradle swung to and fro.

....do they know, comrade, do they know ?

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCING BURMA...

The Burma, beautiful land of peacocks and gold, is very little known to the outside world.

During my stay in Europe, in a large city, a friendly lady asked me whether I hailed from Korea. I laughed and told her that I was from Burma upon which she again queried where my country lay. My European friend was utterly astounded by her ignorance but for me it was nothing extraordinary. I went on to explain to her the geographical position of my land.

Yes, we Burmese are aware of the fact that our country is so very little known to the outside world and we know whom we got to blame for all these. We understand also that once we are liberated from the yoke of feudalism and colonialism, we shall be able to come forth and join hands with the people of the entire world.

Innumerable walls that once separated Burma from other lands are today being blown up by the force of the People's Democratic Revolution. The determined struggle of the people of Burma are being heard all over the world. Our Burma (and yours as well) has marched forward. And for this reason alone, if not for any other, the struggle of this country should be studied and be given the attention it truely deserves.

Of course, compared to bigger countries and thickly populated lands, we must say that Burma is quite a small country. However, Burma has a population of 16,823,798 according to a census taken ten years ago in 1941. This may be compared to the population of Czechoslovakia (12,003,000) or to the population of Canada (12,307,000).

In size, Burma has an extensive area of 261,610 sq. miles, that is, roughly the size of France and England put together. To give another comparison, the area

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of Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania and Yugoslavia would even need a large portion of Austria to make up the size of Burma.

This country owes one of her greatest importance to the strategical position it holds in South East Asia. Towards the south, she has a very long coastline edging into the Indian Ocean. She has common frontiers with Pakistan, India, China, Indo-China(Laos) and Thailand. Overland traffic, though difficult in some cases, is possible to all these countries, the most important routes being the famous Burma Road and the Ledo (or the Stilwell) Road both leading to Kunming in China and, in the south, the Burma-Thailand Railway.

14 Now that China is ~~being~~ liberated, that Laos and Viet-Nam are shaking off the fetters of colonial rule, Burma's position has become all the more important in that it is now the immediate neighbour to the free world stretching from Leipzig and Prague in the west to Vladivostok and Peking in the east; from Arctic Ocean in the north to Samarkand and Canton in the south. Here of course, is the reason why the United States ~~govt~~ government feels very much uneasy about the frontiers and events in Burma,

Moreover, if one would ~~look~~ study the position of this country on a still larger map, another strategical ~~position~~ importance could also be noted. Make a list of the countries bordering the Indian Ocean. On one side we will find the Union of South Africa, other British colonial possessions, the Sudan Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula and the entire Middle East, then India, Pakistan and Ceylon. On the other side we will find Burma, Siam, Malaya, Indonesia and Australia. This is what the Imperial General Staff call the "great strategical triangle of the Indian Ocean". The militarists of Britain considering Burma as an integral part of this Triangle , are very much concerned about the liberation struggle of the Burmese peoples. Their anxiety mounts every time the people's forces gain an upper hand in Burma and thus they keep stressing the importance of the "Indian Ocean Triangle". It is their view that "each base depends on the other: if one goes, the entire system is imperilled".

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And it is not only this strategical position of Burma to which Imperialism is so greatly drawn. The country also possesses great natural wealth and to mention, but the main resources:-

First of all, we have rice. Burma produces 7,785,000 tons of rice every year, thus occupying the fourth position among the world's rice producing countries, i.e.,after China, India and Japan. But amongst the world's rice-exporting countries, she takes the first place followed by Siam, Indo-China and Korea.

Burma also grows beans, millet, sugarcane, sessamum, groundnuts and cotton. Pre-war cotton acreage varied from 300,000 to 550,000 acres, but have greatly declined. About this, J.R.Andrus, former Professor of Economics in the University of Rangoon, wrote in his book, "Burmese Economic Life" :-

"There is no apparent reason why Burma could not produce cotton of a much better quality. The production of very high quality, long stapled cotton in dry climates like Egypt and California suggests that the possibility of scientific agriculture, including intensive fertilization and suitable irrigation, may enable Burma to compete in the high quality cotton market".

To Professor Andrus the reason may not be ~~clear~~ apparent. For the cotton kings of the world, it is clear enough.

Though not very much there is also rubber in Burma. In 1941, the country's produce valued over nine and a half million rupees[1].

After agriculture, we shall ~~here to~~ take up forestry. Large areas of Burma are covered by valuable forests, the most important produce being the famous Burma Teak[2]. In the years following the second world war, about seventy-five per cent of the world's teak was produced by this country alone. Experts believe that an annual output of over 400,000 tons can be maintained indefinitely. There are also other hardwoods —— Pyinkado, In-Kanyin, Padauk, Thitya-Ingyin, Pyinma[3] and others, producing annually another 500,000 tons.

Also where minerals are concerned, Burma's riches had enticed bloodsuckers from all parts of the

world. First on the list— she possesses petroleum and ~~it~~ in this she ranked high among the British Empire ~~country~~ countries before the war. In 1940 she produced over two hundred and seventy million imperial gallons which were exploited at Kyaukpyu, Magwe, Minbu, Thayetmyo, Indaw and Pakkokku districts. Petroleum has also been detected in other districts but the monopolists had better reasons for not opening up more fields in the country.

Then Burma occupies second place in the world's production of tungsten. Some times ago, coal was produced from a promising mine in the Mergui district but "operations were discontinued for an unknown reason".

Not only this but also jade, rubies, sapphires and other precious stones. Dr. Coggin Brown of the Geological Survey of India wrote that the better classes of rubies and spinels from Burma were "of incomparable beauty..... and easily the best specimens found anywhere in the world".

In addition to these, Burma happens to be rich also in tin, lead, zinc and other "atomic raw materials" — uranium and thorium.

Such are the riches found in golden Burma: ~~but~~ then it is also necessary to know a few things about the peoples to whom these treasures belong.

Please look at the map of Burma. For easy reading's sake, I shall roughly divide the country under four headings:-

(1) The coastal strips of Arakan and Tenasserim.

(2) The three mountain ranges, viz., the Arakan Yomas, Pegu Yomas, and the Tenasserim Yomas.

(3) The valleys ~~of the~~ and deltas of the Irrawaddy and the Sittang rivers.

(4) The Northern Hills and the Shan Plateau.

Of course, these are neither geomorphological units nor administrative zones, but for the moment, to understand the liberation struggle of our peoples, these divisions, I hope, would suit the purpose.

The valleys and deltas of the Irrawaddy and the Sittang together with the coastal strips of the Arakan and Tenasserim constitute the most densely popu-

lated, the most politically advanced parts of the whole country. These lands have three mountain ranges running through them from north to south, forming the back-bones of the respective regions and these ranges have all along served as the bases of the people's uprisings throughout their history, the most outstanding periods being during the Peasant Revolt of 1930, the Anti-Fascist Guerilla War and the present People's Democratic Revolution.

The Northern Hills Region and the Shan Plateau bordering India, Pakistan, China and Indo-China are sparsely populated and lesser developed in political levels. However the people ~~xxx~~ here are the most oppressed, most down trodden and in many places, the most primitive forms of tribal rule exists. Here the feudal lords reign supreme, no democracy of the people even in the slightest sense, exists.

In general, the inhabitants of Burma are ~~descen~~ believed to be descendants of different Mongolian tribes, which migrated at a remote period from western China and Tibet. Out of a total of about 17 millions, the Burmese constitute about 11 millions according to the 1941 census.

The Burmese language is a monosyllabic, ~~agglutinative~~ language more allied to ~~the~~ Chinese than to the Indian languages. The dialects and languages belonging to the Burmese group are quite distinct from those spoken by the Shans, Kachins, Karens and other hill peoples.

Although the language is closer allied to Chinese, the Burmese adopted alphabets borrowed from the rock-cut Pali of India. Likewise there are traces of Indian influences side by side with Chinese, mingled in Burmese culture. The dominant religion in Burma is also Buddhism and through its monastic system, had directed the lives of the peoples for some 2000 years.

But here, I am unable to discuss anthropology, philology or the cultural history of our country. Neither am I able to describe the beauty of our lands or the hospitable and generous hearts of our peoples. I shall confine myself only to the struggle of our ~~my~~ country for its freedom, democracy and peace. Only at this task I

must set myself: for the time being no other approach to our motherland is more important or necessary.

Some people say, "Burma is a land of Pagodas". Others describe her as the land of peacocks. Many other descriptions also exist, such as, land of smiles, land of flowers, land of gold, etc.

I will not say these descriptions are entirely wrong or misleading, but it would be imperfect if we forget that Burma is also a land of heroic peoples struggling to win their freedom from the clutches of the feudal landlords and imperialist warmongers.

Dear reader, that is all what this humble book intends to inform you --- to inform you while many young patriots are giving up their lives among the golden paddy fields of our motherland.....

CHAPTER III

INVASION AND RESISTANCE

The British Imperialists waged three wars against our country in the later years of the last century and swallowed up our country in three gulps.

The first war started from 1823 to 1826. The Burmese put up a stout defence and especially under the command of General Maha Bandoola, held the invaders for quite a long time. The English used Indian troops against the Burmese defenders. They thought that the war against these people would be quite an easy affair, but they found themselves mistaken. The Burmese, they had to admit, were hardy, mobile and patriotic. In physic, courage and initiative, they were much better than the invaders. But the English side was better trained, better armed and had a reliable supply line. With superior weapons these piratical gangs were able to seize footholds in the country. And yet the Burmese fought courageously, though knowing that they were against all odds: they fought and died defending every bit of their land. English men who saw action in those days recorded how the defenders; scorning surrender, would die fighting with the swords in their hands: they wrote with repentence for the dirty invasion they waged that it was not war, but mere massacre. Maha Bandoola himself, rather than live and suffer from shame of defeat and slavery, purposely courted death and died a hero. After heavy losses on our part, and theirs as well, the Yandabo Treaty dictated by the invaders had to be accepted. By this treaty Arakan, Mergui Tavoy and Ye /that is, the two coastal strips/ had to be ceded to Britain.

In the second war in 1852, the province of Pegu, including Prome was seized by the invaders.

The Third War was in 1885-86. On November 28th 1885, the last of the Burmese monarchs, the young King Thibaw was taken into captivity.

The Third War baffled the invaders. They declared war on Upper Burma and advanced up the Irrawaddy river, but to their surprise, they met hardly any opposition. There was a little fight at the frontier fort of Minhla but beyond that, there was no resistance. The way was surprisingly open and Mandalay, the capital, fell without a shot, King Thibaw, the young incapable king was taken prisoner.

In general, the country was surprisingly peaceful. Probably, the Burmese thought that the invaders would soon retire and that a new king would come to the throne. However when the English tried to make their rule felt and started disturbing the daily life of the people, the calm ceased. The Burmese had always been a freedom loving people and when it became clear that they were being transformed into slaves of another foreign nation, they started organising resistance. The whole country arose, from Bhamo to Minhla, from the Shan Plateaus to the Chin mountains.

Mr. Fielding Hall, who had seen action in those days, wrote in his book, "The Soul of a People",

"Our authority was confined to the range of our guns. Our forts were attacked, our convoys ambushed, our steamers fired into on the rivers. There was no safety for an Englishman or a native of India, save within the lines of our troops and it was soon felt that our troops were too few to cope with the danger. To overthrow King Thibaw was easy, to subdue the people a very different thing..."

Yes, to overthrow a king was one thing, to defeat the people was another. The people had gained but little under the feudal monarch, but they were not inclined in the least to lay themselves down to foreign rule. Precisely, the resistance of 1886-1898 was the resistance of the people: in fact, the

feudal lords and the governors who had oppressed the people all along switched over to the side of the foreign invaders and collaborated with them to subdue the entire country.

However, patriots led the people in the stubborn resistance and in 1886, the whole country, including the lower zones which the British had held for so long, was up and the invaders had to bring in more troops and military police from India.

Defying guns and shells and other modern weapons, the Burmese patriots, armed only with flint locks and soft iron swords attacked the foreign armies. They were not members of regular armies, nearly all of them came direct from the ploughs. And yet they fought, and many a times, they fought well, throwing the enemy into confusion. As Mr. Hall wrote, "their natural courage overcame their bad weapons and their passionate desire for freedom gave them the necessary impulse."

But it was a resistance without a centralised headquarters. While the Myinsaing Prince revolted in Zibingyi, the Mandalay risings acknowledged as their leader, the Myingon Prince. Saw Yan Naing rose in Ava, while Teiktin Hmat revolted in Shwebo and Ye-U. They had no connections.

Anyway, the whole country was up in arms and it had been no easy matter for the well armed English to cope with the fury of revolt. Down in Natmauk, U Min Yaung challenged the foreign power while in the north U Ottama struck out from his Sinbyugyun base. Many fought persistantly, refusing to lay down their arms before they died: there was Bo Cho of Pagan who, even after his defeat evaded the foreign rulers till 1920.

It was not only the members of the royal blood and aristocracy who led the resistance. Ordinary people's leaders organised their fellow peasants to drive off the usurpers. There were men, who, during the days of monarchy had opposed the king and his feudal governors. Young men banded around these leaders and fought courageously, against the

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But they were combatting against unfair odds and nearly all the fights ended in favour of the English men. Despite all these, the struggle continued for 12 long years. Accounts of how those patriots died with the swords in hand; how a certain leader, when his ammunition was spent and his sword broken, climbed up a pagoda and twisting off pieces of cement, threw them at the enemy until he was shot down --- all these make the Burmese today feel proud of their ancestors. ~~of those days.~~

The minorities also proved to be as brave and as freedom loving as their brothers. There were Shan revolts especially the one led by the ruler of Wuntho. But the feudal rulers of the Shan States proper betrayed the wishes of their people and joined up with the British.

Despite all these heroic resistance and revolts against the invaders, the Burmese were finally defeated.

It was a struggle against superior arms -- it was a struggle of an unarmed, untrained people against a magnificently trained army and an experienced imperialist power.

The next reason why we failed were because we lacked a centre and the risings were not linked up with one another. In short we lacked organisation and strong leadership. Another important reason of our defeat was because the feudal lords and landowners betrayed the nation and sided with the imperialists who, on their part, considered the aid of this oppressing class as a formidable force to subdue the Burmese people. That is why we are justified today in saying that the feudal landlord class is not only an enemy of the peasantry but also a sworn enemy of the entire nation.

Thus the peoples of Burma had struggled against the feudal landlords and imperialism since the end of the last century.

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CHAPTER IV

ALONG THE BLOODY TRAIL

In 1862, the provinces in Burma were amalgamated by the British under a Chief Commissioner and in 1886, Upper Burma was annexed. In 1897, the charge was changed to a lieutenant governorship. In 1923 the country was constituted a governor's province under the Government of India Act of 1919 and only on the 1st April 1937, under the Government of Burma Act 1935, was the country separated from India. It was for this reason that Burma was treated not as a separate country but simply as a part of India in books that were published before 1937 April.

Even in the first three decades of the 20th century, a fresh struggle for freedom had been growing. During those days, working class movement had been nearly or totally absent as the industrialisation of the country had not as then got into stride.

The resounding echo of the Great October Revolution had sounded sharply in colonial countries heralding the national upsurges in those lands: Burma was no exception. But due to lack of workers' societies, not to say about the lack of a party to lead the working class, the upsurges that followed in the immediate years took no trace of any class struggle.

However, the colonialists had started their exploitation of the country and the people began to feel it. But there was lack of a unified leadership, and more important, lack of a united front of the people. Risings against oppression appeared in the form of search for pretenders. The peasant rebellions, such as the ones led by the hermit Bandaka and the Pretender Maung Thant, were such risings with an aim to establish their own rule instead of being oppressed by the "white faces". These rebellions, fought against unfair odds, were of course unsuccessful and many patriots were

killed, hung or imprisoned in great numbers. Nevertheless their heroic deeds had shown the foreign invaders what a freedom loving people could do. These risings sent the people searching for a policy and programme by which they could fight and attain their liberty.

Then political parties began to spring up in the light of national survival. In those days, such parties belonged to those of the ~~feudal~~ landowners , or the "political intelligentsia" most of whom later became landowners or the new bourgeoisie of the country. The General Coubil of Burmese Associations, the first attept at a united front, started to bring up a nationwide movement with programmes of non-cooperation with the imperialists, civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes, the formation of denial associations, etc.

Burma is a country hemmed in between two of the greatest lands in the world, India and China. Both these countries had influences on the Burmese in art and culture, customs and philosophy. In politics, however, India had a dominating influence on the country until about a few years ago. Hence in Burmese politics prior to the Second World War, Ghandhism and the Congress tactics had found sympathisers among the "old politicians".

The accumulation of the national revival and upsurge climbed to a great height in 1920 when a countrywide students' strike broke out under the slogan — "We don't want slave education !" This was a milestone in Burmese history marked up to now in the form of the National Day, the 10th Waning of Tazaungmon (which falls generally in the month of November). From then on, a great national upsurge arose, students left their universities and established National Schools. They had the wide support of the people and the movement itself might well be termed as the first broad resistance of the people against imperialism.

After this movement started also the revival of learning and the birth of bourgeois literature with that of the proletarian close behind. However, lack of a unity based on class conciousness had seen the political activists of those days sunk in the mire of narrow power politics, lost in the woods of Dyarchy and

Home-Rule,"asking for Independence" and the "restoration of monarchy".

But the simple people in the country gave not only a great blow to foreign rulers but also a resounding smack on the educated urban politicians when they rose again in an armed rebellion in 1930. This peasant rebellion, led by a Saya San, commenced in Tharrawaddy District and spread far and wide even into the Shan States. They were badly armed, but, unbearable as their living conditions were, they resisted with all their might and vigour holding out for two long years. From the headquarters of Alantaung (the Flag-Hill) the patriots of 1930 showed with all their praiseworthy courage, that the imperialist power can be fought and, if the people unite, defeated.

During this time a working class was gradually being formed by monopolists who wanted to exploit the country's natural resources. In the oil fields of Central Burma, in the mines of the Shan States, in the docks of Rangoon and in other concerns elsewhere, a working class was born. This took place side by side with the spreading of Marxist ideologies and the formation of Marxist Study Groups. The growth of the Burmese working class was even later than the victory of the Great October Revolution and the influence,of this first working class triumph,over the Burmese worker had been profound.

The working classof Burma, even in its young years, lunged forward to shoulder its historic duty and to lead the people forward to freedom.

In 1938, in the oil fields of Yenangyaung, Chauk, Khodaung and Nyaung-U, thw workers launched a strike in protest against their appalling living conditions. The strike spread and the oil-field workers marched hundreds of miles down to the capital of Rangoon. They bravely marched against the police and military terror: all along the way they were supported by the peasant masses. Every village and town on route (even from out of the way places) sent rice-packets and other forms of help to the marching strikers.

At that period, the Dobama Organisation

(members of which had the prefix Thakin attached to their names) was active in the political arena. In fact, a middle class organisation, it had strong leftist tendencies. Members of this party are now scattered about in many parties, communists, socialists, landlords and even quislings. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of Burma, Thakin Than Tun, was a member of that party. So was Thakin Nu, the present puppet prime minister!

But in those days of 1938, Communist groups existed in this Dobama organisation, which was the most revolutionary party in that era. This organisation organised "suicide squads" to bring the strikers through the military cordon in Magwe area, down to Shwe-da-gon Pagoda in Rangoon to expose their grievances to the world.

People were arrested in great numbers but neither threat nor bribery was possible to halt the tide of the upsurge. They arrested the late Ko Ba Hein and Ko Ba Swe, student leaders who went forward to meet the workers. Nevertheless the strikers reached Rangoon and they were followed by the peasants of Pegu District who marched from Waw to Rangoon in order to unbare their intolerable sufferings. They were later supported by peasants from Thaton, Hanthawaddy, Insein and Tharrawaddy, who also organised themselves and marched to the capital. To crown all this, the students all over the country rose up in a great strike in support of the workers. The demand for complete independence was raised, now that the movement had assumed a great political stand, and was endorsed by large sections of the people.

The British rulers had to use all forces and tricks to put down this upsurge. Puppet ministers changed one after another; the first student martyr, Bo Aung Gyaw was clubbed to death in Rangoon during a demonstration. 21 persons were shot dead including Buddhist monks were shot dead in Mandalay, the former capital of the country.

This great struggle will forever be recalled in the people's history. It was the first struggle in

which the young working class led the whole country in a glorious fight. It was the first movement in which all oppressed classes, united to the leading light of the working class, fought for independence. It was the first movement in which the working class won over a great support of the middle classes. It was a great upsurge in which many of the best cadres of the working class, the future communists, had baptism in the revolutionary movement. It was the first actual action which taught the people the knowledge of a united front on a class basis. Even by its being defeated, the heroic movement gave great lessons to the people and made it particularly felt that a party of the working class, armed with a clear cut program and the teachings of Marx and Lenin, was greatly needed. This movement showed that without such a party the working class was weaponless: that without such a party taking the lead, the people cannot attain real independence.

One of the leaders and inspirers of this movement was Comrade Ba Hein, a student leader at that time, who, since his early days had fought courageously for the working class and the entire people. He organised the All Burma Trades Union Congress and was elected president. A devout pupil of Marx and Lenin, he wrote "The Bourgeois World" and others, and was one of the organisers of the first Communist groups in the country. He became a Central Committee Member of the Communist Party in 1943, and showed great courage and efficient leadership during the Anti-Fascist Resistance but his selfless work underground effected his health which gradually cost him his life. After the defeat of Japan, he became again the president of the All Burma Trades Union Congress. A member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party by then, he edited "The People's Democracy" the organ of the party. He died in 1946.

The struggle for freedom followed the 1938 struggle in greater revolutionary strides. More and more people became convinced that British Imperialism was the root cause of their trouble and sorrows. What

had this foreign rule done for the country ? It constructed roads and railways but to serve the purpose of the monopolists in order to exploit the country better. It established schools: yes, but which served to bring up a generation of slaves. It set up some factories in order to carry away the raw material in easier loads. Nothing which was beyond their interests had been done in the country. Where was the industrialisation of the country ? Where was the development of agriculture ? Where was honour ? Where was progress ? Where was real Burmese art and culture ? No, do not indulge yourself in nonsense and utopias: a slave has no right to art and culture.

Then at least, where was food, where was work ? The peasant starved amidst his rich paddy fields. The worker suffered likewise working in factories which spelt gold for the owners.

The middle class educated ~~fell~~ found himself unemployed. The older folks succumbed as everything had turned out black for him. The youth looked forward with hope: even then, the future was as dark as a tunnel. Who profitted under British Imperialism ? Foreign monopolists, landowners, usurers, bureaucrats, traitors and some growing national bourgeoisie. But even the last named had his hatred against foreign rulers in as much as the monopolists denied their growth, in as much as many of them were smashed by foreign capital.

British Imperialism had to be overthrown: but by what means ? Armed revolt and other revolutionary slogans were raised and many progressive presses sp sprang up. The period after the defeat of the 1938 struggle to the outbreak of the II World War in the east was a period of growth as well as of confusion. The people had not as then totally overcome the danger of Indo-Burmese riots, Sino-Burmese riots, Hindu-Muslim riots and the like which the imperialists instigated to halt the tide of the mass movements. Nationalism and Trade Unionism were confused. Single journals praised both Sinn Feinn of Ireland and Ghandi of India. Still worse, some publishers publish Lenin and follow it up with exploits of secret societies including the Ku Klux Klan. Sometimes articles on Trotsky (not always against

him) and on Matahari would acquire great prominence. While demanding independence of the country on the first first page, another article, howling that Siam Cambodia, Assam and even Yunnan were subject states to the Burmese crown in days gone by, might appear on the second page boasting about the "superior Burmese race" ! Some still preached to restore the exiled royalty, some "educated" the youth how by diligent efforts, a man could rise from the ashes, so to speak, to golden riches and prosperity.

Members of the Dobama Organisation itself did not share unified views. A really consolidated ~~uni~~ united front was absent. National sentiments obscured class conciousness: weak ideological foundations gave way to serious errors.

But out of such errors and confusion are all nations built up. Thus had the entire world history been ~~constituted~~ written. Burma was also built up in this manner: her history will have to be written as such. Out of all confusion and struggles, however, the working class was mustering its forces, the Communist Party was gradually taking shape.

But the most serious error belonged to some leaders who, at the same time calling themselves Marxists, were not at all clear about Fascist Japan. This later became a national error and to wash it away, the Burmese people had bravely and generously used their blood again.....

CHAPTER V

STAR AGAINST THE RED CIRCLE

Japan declared war on Britain and the United States on 8th December 1941 thus opening up a wide front in the east. And in this war, for the first time since 1886, a Burmese Army was seen, equipped by the Japanese and fighting the British off the country.

Very lavishly, I have stated in the last chapter that it was our national error to ally ourselves for once with the Fascists: I do not want my people to deny that either. However, it would be unjust were I to forget that if there should be any blame, it was British imperialism in general and in particular, the Goverment of the United Kingdom and Mr. Churchill, who got to receive it most.

By the time Britain and Germany were in battle, the movement for independence in Burma had arisen to a feverish height. Many leaders were of the opinion that unless a promise for freedom of the country was made, Burma should not, directly or indirectly, participate in the war on the British side. Then the "Atlantic Charter" declared that the war was fought against Nazi Germany for the freedom of small nations and that the latter who cherished liberty and freedom should co-operate with the allies. On this declaration, political organisations in Burma and members of the Legislative Council of Burma cabled to Prime Minister Winston Churchill to enquire whether if Burma participated in

the war on the side of the allies, freedom would be granted to her or not. Churchill bluntly replied that the charter declaration did not apply to Burma.

All that British Imperialism gave to Burma at this critical moment were imprisonment to politicians and ruthless exploitation for the entire people. Thirty yebaws ~~comrades~~, Bo Aung San, Bo Ze Ya, Bo Let Ya, Bo Ne Win, Bo Ye Htut and others, went secretly to Japan and received military training.

There were some leaders who wanted to resist Japanese invasion, but these were flatly turned down by the British who imprisoned these people instead.

It was no wonder therefore that a great number of people got carried away by the propaganda of the Japanese about the "Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere". Youth rushed forward and joined the Burma Independence Army: the way the Japanese trusted them with arms in itself was a great difference from the attitude of the British imperialists. They sincerely believed that alliance with Japan would give them their long cherished independence.

No doubt, quite a number of people were against the Japanese invasion but it must be admitted that a larger number were in favour of "co-operating with the Nippon brothers for freedom". Communist groups ~~also~~ were as then, very weak to make their anti-fascist propaganda felt.

In spite of the fact that it was fascism with which they were mingled, those days were the ones of great patriotism. The Burmese youth showed great courage for freedom and intense hatred against imperialists. They learned on battlefields that any imperialist power can be crushed by the people. The Burma Independence Army,

despite its foolish blunders and erroneous leanings influenced by the Japanese fascist army, showed great ability. Therefore an undisputable fact remains that the British were driven out of the country so soon, in a few months' time, only because a large section of the people of Burma sided with the Japanese. "When we wanted independence, they (the British) told us that we were unable to defend ourselves. Now look how they take to their heels!": that had been the joke of the day.

But the triumph of the Burmese people had been short lived. Fascism, after having conquered the whole country, began to show its teeth and following this, co-operation from the Burmese also noticeably waned. The Burma Independence Army was transformed into the Burma Defence Army with Major General Aung San at its head. To satisfy the peole, the Fascists granted a fake freedom to the country in August 1942 with Dr. Ba Maw as Head of the State, but even that was of no great help to them. People began to see their true colours in the robberies, lootings, burnings, tortures, killings, rapes and other inhuman activities.

Japanese fascism made more enemies as days mounted on. Even the national bourgeoisie saw their hopes shattered. The intelligentsia saw their culture smashed. The peasant suffers from the requisitioning of cattle, paddy, cotton, food-stuffs and other materials including scrap iron. They took away everything they liked, from precious relics in pagodas to mahogany furnitures. Even rail-lines were ~~dowd~~ removed from the sleepers and shipped away. Workers saw their machinery taken away by the Japanese. Labour was re-

cruited in the most horrible manner equal only to those of the Nazi practices in Europe. Burma, being in the forefront of military activity suffered more pressure than any other country in S.E. Asia: for instance, a message from the Domei agency /Japanese/ on March 19, 1944 stated that Burma had supplied more labour service than any other area of South Asia. In July that year, a Japanese Embassy official in Rangoon stated that about 800,000 persons were helping the Japanese army through "voluntary service".

The entire economic system was crippled by the Japanese. They introduced a new currency which was soon overtaken by inflation. Agriculture, the life of the people of Burma, was ruined: in 1943-44 the acreage under the plough was only 7,200,000 acres against a pre-war normal of 12,400,000 acres. The crop was 3,034,000 tons of paddy against a normal six or seven million tons. Young unseasoned teak trees were cut down and taken away from the valuable forests of our rich land; British demolition had also destroyed oil industry. In all departments of national wealth, fascist impressions remain even to this day, impressions of the uncouth blood suckers who tried to suck our country dry.

They conscripted labour to build airfields, military roads, engineering projects and the Railway to Siam. This last named, known as the Death Railway throughout the world is known in Burma as Thanbyuzayat Labour Camp, and could still send a shudder among the people when they think of it. People were dragged away like beasts, from villages, from

homes, from streets, from farms into this Chwe-tat or the "Sweat-Army". Then they were sent to the Death Railway to work and to die. They died of hunger, of malaria, anaemia, beri-beri, of Japanese bullets, bayonets and tortures. Some were dragged away by tigers in the night. A labour officer in his secret report, wrote about the inhuman conditions the people were kept. Sometimes the Japanese just dumped the food on the ground and made the people eat it.

There were not only Burmese, but Indians, Chinese, Malayans and Siamese working on this project. In addition, there were also prisoners-of-war from Britain and Australia, even from Holland, who were made to toil here. A visitor to Thanbyuzayat nowadays can still see a humble cemetary of the prisoners-of-war who died there, every white cross indicating a person - and there are hundreds of them. These people at least have a cemetary, every victim a grave. But the Burmese died there just like animals, there is no written record how many had died, though they ran high into tens of thousands. The dead were simply thrown into ditches, some dying persons who fell out of column were left on the route for tigers and vultures to finish up. Only when fellow-workers could snatch a chance would a corpse get some kind of burial..,

Meanwhile the anti-fascists of the country, with the Communists in the lead, were already active. The Communist Party, in spite of the reigning terror, held its first congress secretly in 1943 at Pyapon. It led the whole country and aroused the masses to prepare for an armed revolt against fascism. The Anti-

Fascist People'sFreedom League was formed with the Communist Party, the People's Freedom Party and the Burma Defence Army, as the main organisations.

The underground movement was carried on with great success. Party Cells functioned in the Burma Defence Army and won over whole groups of soldiers. Many persons worked right under the Japanese eyes, some even working as puppet officials. Major General Aung San himself became an Anti-Fascist worker.

In spite of the great preparations and heroic underground struggles, the help received from the British had been comparatively negligible. Nevertheless, the underground fighters carried on undaunted. Sabotage works and minor clashes began taking place. In 1943 the guerillas of Arakan in West Burma rose up in armed struggle. In February 1944, a part of the Burma Defence Army in Upper Burma led by Bo Ba Htu, a member of the Communist Party, revolted, paving the way for the allied armies to approach easily.

The Japanese Kempeitai, the equivalent of the Nazi SS, was hot on the heels of the revolutionists. Many were arrested, tortured and killed. At any minute an active youth might disappear.

Nevertheless the underground organisers proved themselves much better against these Fascist hounds. Some worked as directors and officers in the Japanese controlled government, some even as ministers. The East Asiatic Youth League/ Burma/

which was the only legal organisation apart from the government party, and which had been established in the light of the Nippon ideals, proved to be a home where anti-fascists were born. Although Ko Nyi Lay, general secretary of the organisation and brother of Thakin Than Tun, was caught and murdered later, the organisation of youth became an active success. In many areas, these youth leagues became centres of revolt. Youth leaders in Henzada etc, paid for the cause with their lives.

Then the Burma Defence Army marched "to the front to fight the enemy". The Japanese military officials and others gave the army a warm send-off: they were badly in need of help. Japanese companies turned out in full force by the road side with flowers and greetings which said, "Victory to the heroic Burma Army!".

But Major General Aung San and the whole army "disappeared" among the many villages scattered all over the country. The Kempeitai gave chase, people were arrested and tortured, lined up and mowed down under machine-gun bullets. Whole villages were reduced to ashes and terror reigned supreme.

And the army, now called the Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF) fought side by side with other partisans against the fascists. They hit back and their blows landed harshly on the oppressors. Especially in Pyinmana, Toungoo and Pegu Districts, the peasant guerillas firmly organised, showed great heroism. The last days of the battles

were fought out on these zones, along the Sittang river and the decisive victory of the Burmese people was sealed.

The heroic resistance of the people of the Soviet Union had all along inspired the Burmese people. Further, the uprisings in East Europe had also strengthened their resolve. Last but certainly not the least factor, the staunch resistance of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, also helped us on the road of struggles.

The people of Burma had (much contributed) to the defeat of fascism: they had given what had been their due. Men and women of Burma fought with a desire for freedom. They fought in the mountains, on the rivers, across the fields and through the towns. Burmese youth proved their mettle as partisans, army men, paratoopers, sailors and airforce personnel. Bo Ze Ya, Bo Ye Htut, Bo Yan Aung and nearly all of those who were left of the thirty ~~comrades~~ yebaws who went to Japan, participated again in the Anti-Fascist war. Guerillas liberated Rangoon on May ~~first~~ 1st 1945, a few days before British arrival. Men, who with a hidden purpose, had submitted themselves for military training under the Japanese instructors' slaps and blows, hit back and over 20,000 Japanese troops were smashed by them alone. Even some British militarists who did not have any sympathy for the Burmese guerillas had to acknowledge the great achievements of these ill-armed people.

The people of Burma will not forget ~~also~~ Those men from all parts of the world who had been on the Burma Front, fighting to liberate our country. Some have died, many have survived, we thank them all for their great help.

But these courageous men knew nothing about the cowardly thieves and robbers who followed close behind them. They were the servants of capitalism and imperialism, many of whom were dressed in Civil Affairs Service (Burma) uniforms.(called in short Cas(B)). They refused to acknowledge all the deeds done by the Burmese people, they disarmed the anti-fascist fighters of Rangoon even while many others were still fighting on the Sittang. Many a time, they stabbed the guerillas in the back: they rejoice at our defeat rather than victory. They started the wheel of exploitation and oppression running again. We drove out the Japanese fascist army and the Japanese exploiters, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Nippon-Burma Timber Union, Fujigasu Boseki Kaisha, Nippon Genpi Kabushiki Kaisha and other companies. In their stead returned the Burmah Oil Company, Steel Brothers, Burma Corporation, Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation etc.

Burma had suffered much under the blows of this great war. Twice it had been the battlefield of major operations. For over three years it had been the front in South East Asia Sphere, subject to bombing from both sides.

When the war commenced Japanese bombs raided the country from Mergui down in the south to Mandalay far in the north. The British and the Kuomintang troops retreated destroying all what they could along their route.

Then came the B-29s over Burmese air, bombing the country thoroughly. The rich oilfields in central Burma suffered terrible losses, railways and roads were crippled. Bombing by both sides had not only been concentrated on military targets: a great deal of Rangoon city was ruined. Towns like Pyinmana, Mandalay etc. suffered to well nigh extinction. When the Japanese had to run, they also made it a point to scorch the earth as they left.

Thus when Burma faced her post-war years, she found herself amidst the enormous ruin. She looked for assistance - she saw her former exploiters extend their filthy hands....

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN OF THE PIRATES

The people of Burma were confident, however, that freedom and independence would be theirs after the hard struggle against Fascism. They looked upon Britain as an ally and not as an enemy: even if the surrendering of arms by the anti-fascist fighters had been a political error, that showed the sincerity and belief which the Burmese people had in those days. However, the British government regarded Burma as just a slave-country and strove to keep her as such.

Never before had the unity of the peoples of Burma been so complete, never was the demand for independence greater than it was in the months that followed the Japanese surrender. The people were united in a bloc, in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League /AFPFL/ which demanded that Britain recognises the independence of Burma. Many leaders had high hopes of the "Socialist" Labour Party of Mr. A ttlee, but that Party's government still dumped on the people the White Paper of May 1945, in which it was promised to give Burma only Dominion Status, and even that would have to be a gradual process!

Apparently, the colonialists and monopolists still wanted to retain their hold on the country. As had already been stated in the second chapter, Burma occupies a very important position and possesses an enormous amount of wealth, all of which they were not inclined to release.

Why the British did not wish to relinquish their hold on the country was described in a very brilliant article of A. Leonidov, in New Times Journal of February 9,

1949. In his article, "Labour Imperialism's Colonial Strategy in Burma", he not only showed the treacherous policy of the Labour Government in its true light, but also exposed the relations which the companies in Burma had with the other monopolist concerns and the ruling class of Great Britain. Reproduction of some paragraphs from his precise and efficient article would be of great help to the reader.

"In the past three decades", wrote Leonidov, "this country, with its vast and almost untouched natural resources has been a veritable Eldorado for colonial capital. Although British investments in Burma fall far short of those in India, and even in neighbouring Malaya, the profits they yield are immense.

"It has become a rule with the big capitalist companies in Burma to recoup their initial investments in a few years, or even in a few months. The firm of Steel Brothers &Co., for example, in six years paid dividends amounting to 335 per cent of its capital, in addition to 312 per cent issued in capital shares, or a total of 447 per cent. The Anglo-Burma Tin Company, five years after it began operations was paying a dividend of 130 per cent. In the period 1931-35 alone, the Burmah Oil Company provided its shareholders with a return of 113 per cent in the shape of dividends and capital shares, in 1947 it trebled its earnings. Mawchi Mines Limited, which exploits tungsten and tin deposits in South Burma, in the five years 1936-40 paid dividends amounting to 472,5 per cent, ø in other words, in each year the shareholders received the equivalent of their original investment.

"Such profits beat all records even in colonial

piracy. Burma was a gold mine to the British firms, a colonial preserve closed to the rest of the world. Without any special expenditures or technical effort, they extorted huge fortunes from the country. For this reason, the exploitation of Burma became the prerogative of a small ring of top-flight British monopolists. Only the most powerful and influential City magnates and their political clients are allowed a share in the pie.

"Virtually speaking, all Burma is to this day the private domain of five British companies, which divide among themselves the lion's share of its natural wealth, transport facilities, trade and finances. These firms own practically all the British assets in Burma, totalling some £ 50,000,000. They control every plant of any size in every branch of the industry. Burma's capitalist economy is to all intents and purposes the property of these five companies. They are the real lords of the country's seventeen million depressed and downtrodden inhabitants."

"The London firm of Steel Brothers and Co.," went on Leonidov, describing the companies in detail, "which has branches all over Asia, controls Burma's rice-trade, which is the country's main source of revenue. Rice is the staple food of the majority of the agricultural population. Burma is the largest rice exporting country in the world; its paddy fields are one third as fertile again as those of India. In value, rice makes up nearly one half of the total of Burma's exports. It is on Burma rice that India's poor largely depend for their food.

"Thanks to the monstrous commercial exploi-

tation of the peasants of Burma and the toilers of India, Steel Brothers & Co., has become one of Britain's biggest profit-earning firms. It had a hand in the frenzied rice speculation of 1943 that resulted in the terrible famine in Bengal, from which several million people died. This firm also owns cotton mills, flower mills, timber concessions and rubber plantations in Burma. Its managing director, Sir John Tait, chairman of the Burma Chamber of Commerce, carried no small political weight as a member of the Burmese Senate and is the power behind the present administration.

"The Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, a subsidiary of London Commercial house of Wallace Brothers & Co., dominates Burma's timber industry, which is the world's largest producer of teak. Two-thirds of Burma's export of this valuable product are controlled by the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation and Steel Brothers. Whole ares of the country are under the virtual rule of the corporation's agents.

"The river Irrawaddy is Burma's life artery. It bisects the country from north to south, and is navigable for nearly a thousand miles. Practically all Burma's rice and teak exports are carried by waterway. And even this river became the virtual property of a British firm, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. Before the war it owned 600 steamships, which carried seven million passengers annually. The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company had a direct hand in the subjugation of Burma in the last century. Its ships transported the British troops to subdue the inhabi-

tants. The firm also controls sea and air-lines. Since 1865, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company has been using its transport monopoly systematically to stifle Burma's economy in the interests of the colonizers.

"Burma possesses extremely rich deposits of tin, silver, lead, zinc, tungsten, copper and other metals. Practically the whole of this mineral wealth has been seized by a fourth British company, the Burma Corporation Limited. The eleven thousand workers employed in its mines in Bawdwin in the northern part of the country, are semi-slaves. But, on the other hand, the Burma Corporation's metal monopoly in Burma, together with the concessions of British firms in neighbouring Malaya, has ensured Britain the leading position in a number of international strategic material cartels.

"Burma's oil resources belong to the Burmah Oil Company, one of the most powerful of the British colonial concerns. It laid its hands on this industry sixty years ago. Since then oil output in Burma has increased 130-fold, and the shareholders' profits have risen commesurately. The Burmah Oil Company is the biggest concern in the country: it employs some 45,000 operatives, office workers and commercial agents in India and Burma. In India, the Burmah Oil Company is allied with the monopolist Tata family, who were loyal and faithful servitors of the British colonial

regime and are now the mainstay of the Nehru government. Not a single political, economic or military measure was undertaken by the British authorities in Burma without the sanction of the Burmah Oil Company, which had its trusty agents in all branches of the colonial administration.

"These five big British firms, not counting their small allies, lorded over Burma and for nearly a century have been bleeding the defenceless inhabitants white. But behind these five firms stand the flower of Britain's ruling class, whose word is law to every British government.

"The firm of Wallace Brothers, which controls the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, is closely associated with the Guests, the big barons of British heavy industry, who finance the Conservative Party. Churchill's predecessor, Neville Chamberlain, was a member of this clique. This firm also has a big influence over the apparatus of British imperialism in India; Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India in 1916-21, was one of its trusted men.

"The Burmah Oil Company is part of the British oil monopoly headed by the Shell group; the two firms together control the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the Iraq Petroleum Company, and many others. Burma oil is owned by the same British magnates who hold the Middle East in their clutches and dictate British policy in various parts of the world. Sir William Fraser, director of the Burmah Oil Company and Chairman of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, who is one of the successors of Sir Henri Deterding, is

also Petroleum Adviser to the British War Office.

"The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company is directly connected with the Guest family and with leading British shipbuilding firms. Its director, Sir Joseph Maclay, was a liberal M.P., and president of the Chamber of Shipbuilding of the United Kingdom; his father was Minister of Shipping. Steel Brothers represents powerful Anglo-Indian financial interests, whose influence by no means diminished since India received fictitious independence. The chairman of the company, James K. Michie, is also head of the National Bank of India.

"Behind the Burma Corporation, which has a monopoly of the country's mineral wealth, stands a syndicate of prominent British businessmen and politicians who operate hundreds of concessions for the mining of valuable metals in Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin America. One of the concerns connected with the Burma Corporation is the Union Corporation Limited, whose chairman is Brendan Bracken, formerly Churchill's secretary and of all the British politcians, the man most closely associated with him; during the war he was Minister of Information in his cabinet. One of the directors of the concern is Lord Leathers, former Secretary of State for the Colonies and British High Commissioner in South Africa. Oliver Lyttelton, former Conservative Minister of State, one of the most active figures in the British reactionary camp, who during the war acted as Churchill's agent in the Middle East, also belongs to this clique of millionaires who specialize in plundering the natural wealth

of colonial countries.

"Burma is a permanent source of enrichment to the whole galaxy of Britain's top plutocrats. Loss of control of this country would be a terrible blow to the City."

Comrade Leonidov was perfectly correct in adding the last two sentences. The City did not want to loose Burma and their agents endeavoured to exploit the country keeping it politically in pre-war status, no, even much lower. One of the first ~~thing~~ things they did was to declare the Japanese currency as absolutely worthless. This reduced the people to poverty overnight; the peasants suffered the worst as businessmen dumped the whole burden on the country-side. The British Military Administration arrested many patriots on faked charges of criminal actions and flung them in jail, many were murdered. Freedom of assembly, speech, processions and other democratic rights were denied.

By means of various projects, the Rice Project, the Timber Project etc, the British Administration placed all the trade and economy under the entire mangement of foreign capitalists. Under the burden of these projects, so instituted to squeeze the blood out of the workers and peasants, the people suffered in unimaginable dimensions. Little was done to rehabilitate for the benefit of the people, but the Labour Government gave 80 million pounds to the monopolist companies to restore themselves.

Crude methods of exploitation combined with corruption effected the country immensely especial

ly in a period following the war, in which she has suffered greatly. Cost of living rose up to about seven times the pre-war level but wages remained between ½ to 1½ times over the former scales. The cost of living for the peasant climbed 8 to 10 times while his income was hardly doubled.

Meanwhile all the parties were united in the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League /AFPFL/, including as the main forces, the Communist Party, the Socialist Party /the former People's Freedom Party/ and the People's Volunteer Organisation. The last named was a semi-military organisation based on and around all the former members of the Patriotic Burmese Forces, thus including members of the Communist and Socialist Parties as well. The President of the AFPFL was Major General Aung San and the General Secretary, Thakin ThanTun, leader of the Communist Party.

In spite of fascist like oppressions even the first months after the liberation of the Rangoon city saw political reawakening and organisation going on in great strides. Trade Unions and Peasant Unions revived again and political education spread throughout the country. In all these movements the Communist Party had all along been in the lead.

Those were days of struggle between the returning pirates and a united people. The strength of AFPFL, united as it were, during that definite period, found no equal in previous Burmese history.

People from all walks of life, workers and peasants, traders and clerks, students and writers, artists and mechanics, all put forth a resolute demand for full independence. Peasant revolts began to break out in many districts.

By their organized power and by their united efforts the people showed the imperialists that post-war Burma was not the Burma of 1939 and lesser still the Burma of 1886.

After the faulty step of surrendering arms to the British, Major General Aung San's threats that the Burmese people would take to arms again if independence were refused, sounded a bit hollow. It was an opening in the fortress of the people's power. Nevertheless the British imperialists had already received a stunning shock to find a different Burma from that of the one they left to the mercy of Japanese fascism.

However, the slaves of the monopolists or to be more exact, the Labour Government of the United Kingdom, had resolved to keep the country in their clutches, by hook or by crook.

The state of affairs that overtook Burma was entirely different from those of the East European countries liberated by the Red Army.

CHAPTER VII

SOME CLOUDY DAYS

Although the people of Burma had been welded into a great unity during the years under fascism, although they had found the hidden might of a united people, although by means of the AFPFL united front they had showed their determination to gain independence at all costs, the servants of British imperialism were not easily put off. They set about hatching up various plots to divide the people, to weaken their strength and to mould them up as imperialism desired. They used all sorts of tricks they could employ; it was for them a do-or-die struggle. By means of divide-and-rule, whip and carrot manoeuvres they drove wedges into the ranks of the people.

While patriots who fought against fascism were victimised, quislings who served the cause of the Japanese rulers were restored to their high offices. The system of import, production and distribution of necessities was so arranged as to bribe the higher classes and to place difficulties among the poor. Slowly their agents infiltrated into AFPFL, they were taking advantage of the non-vigilance of vaccillating elements within the united front.

This infiltration of national traitors and representatives of landlords and compradores, who, up till then, had been isolated from the masses, proved to be fatal.

Then there came a great blow to the people,

a split in the Communist Party. A group of party members led by Thakin Soe, at one time the general secretary of the party, broke away and set up a new party of their own, which later became known as the "Red Flag" Communist Party. The major differences had been on the policy of a united front and land reform. Thakin Soe's group was very few in number and grossly sectarian, they advocated a very narrow united front and the "collectivisation" of land. But their greatest error had been in that they failed to carry on a correct inner-party struggle and they tried to split up the party, in so doing they harmed the cause of the proletariat.

Of the mass actions directed against the British imperialists, the general strike of September-October 1946 was of great significance. This general strike called by the All Burma Trades Union Congress and the Federation of Services Union brought out all the employees in all government departments. This strike was not only on demands for democratic rights and a better standard of living, but was also a demonstration of solidarity with the down-trodden peasants who were struggling to throw off the landlord yoke. It was also a great manifestation against a foreign rule, and a show of strength of the working people.

Terror cowered before the people's strength. Force against the people's wrath would be of no use.

By that time, the traitors who infiltrated into the AFPFL were exercising some influence. They managed to drag the vaccillating elements to their side and their blows were directed against the Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class.

The nationwide uhrest was tending to develop into an armed uprising but on top of this, the struggle for leadership arose between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; the latter was as yet not strong enough to smash the influences of the former over the masses. Meanwhile the British authorities stepped in with the manoeuvre to buy off the top leadership of the AFPFL. They offered the League representation on the so-called Governor's Executive Council, adding a promise to grant this body the functions of a provisional national government.

The right wing leadership of the League and Major General Aung San, influenced by the splitters within the united front, accepted the offer and betrayed the interests of the people. In return for the seats they received in the council, they had to put down the upsurge of the workers, peasants and the other masses and worst of all, the Communist Party, which had been the moving force within the League, was expelled from AFPFL in October 1946.

This was a triumph of bourgeois leadership and imperialism; the expulsion of the Communist Party resulted in a fatal split within the ranks of the independence fighters. Till then, bourgeois influence was still strong among the masses and the Communists were unable to totally strip off the masks from the faces of traitors within the AFPFL and to direct the people on the road to victory. However, the party of the proletariat carried on heroically, against all repressions, its opposition to the treacherous policy of the AFPFL leaders and advocated for popular strikes and rebellions of revolutionary nature to achieve the long cherished independence.

The workers and peasants were split up miserably. The Socialists set up the Trades Union Congress/Burma/

and the All Burma Peasants' Organisation against the All Burma Trades Union Congress and the All Burma Peasants' Union led by the Communist Party. In the People's Volunteer Organisation, many youth broke away and formed the People's Democratic Youth, also known as the Red Guards.

Disorder and confusion set in as splits occured throughout the land. People who had worked against the country, pro-fascists, people who championed the Japanese-controlled Dr. Ba Maw government and traitors who were opposed to the ~~Anti-fascists~~ anti-fascist revolutionaries sneaked into the League and seized offices in many plaees after driving the Communists and other progressive elments out. Those people found places on platforms decorated with the anti-fascist flag and denounced the real fighters against fascism as "traitors, opportunists" and sometimes even as "slaves of imperialism"!

And Major General Aung San found himself amidst a band of arch reactionaries, preaching the "peaceful de-colonisation" of Burma. He made many blunders and himself destroyed the love and respect he once won from the whole country. He signed the Attlee-Aung San agreement in January 1947 for the "gradual emancipation" of Burma, on the force of another general strike in which the Communists and the All Burma Trades Union Congress also joined in. However when the general strike grew into a great struggle for genuine independence, the AFPFL leadership compromised with the imperialists and suppressed the movement by brute force. The people began to see in

AFPFL leading bodies arch-reactionaries, former British Civil Servants and even men who served the secret service. Revolt broke out within AFPFL ranks, peasants took to arms in middle Burma.

Major General Aung San tried to play a double-sided game. To win confidence ~~ffe~~ from the imperialists he took repressive measures against the Communists: to secure the support of the people he made emphatic demands. In fact, Aung San was in despair perceiving step by step the corrupt and the worthless group that surrounded him: he gradually began to see that he was being tricked by imperialism. Towards the middle of 1947 he openly declared: "We must unite with the Communists."

The imperalists, too, saw danger in Aung San. With the great strides which the Communist Party was taking for unity among the revolutionary forces and with a man like Aung San heading the AFPFL, they were liable to be thrown out any moment.

On July 19, 1947, Aung San was assassinated with four other ministers and two officials. The engineers of this massacre, U Saw and others were known to be British secret service hirelings and even some British officers were implicated in the assassination plot.

Bo Aung San, at one time loved and respected throughout the land and in which manner he had had no equal in the past, died in the hands of imperialism. The people will always remember him, in two parts: first, when he worked and struggled for the people, second, when he allowed himself to sink

under the influence of the servants of imperialism. The plotters had thought that by his death, the whole blame would be placed on the Communists and that the wrath of the people would uproot the Communist Party once and for all, thus enabling them to smash the whole country's movement for independence. But instead, due to the correct leadership of the party, the people's wrath landed heavily on imperialism and dissatisfaction against the AFPFL leadership started within the ranks of the People's Volunteer Organisation and the Socialist Party. Against the opinions of the leadership, AFPFL rank and file felt the necessity of unity with the Communists.

But the enemies of the Burmese people gained in another point, in that they were able to replace the "unstable" Aung San with their faithful servant, Thakin Nu, who, step by step, restored Burma into the hands of British Imperialism.

Bo Let Ya, of his cabinet, signed the Letya-Freeman agreement for the "defence" of Burma, which virtually placed the country under British control, within the world camp of war.

Then came the Anglo-Burmese Treaty, signed on October 17, 1947 between Mr. Attlee and Thakin Nu, which was boasted by Labour leaders and Burmese traitors as a step by which the country was "peacefully granted its independence" by the British crown. Independence of Burma was officially declared on the 4th of January 1948.

No doubt, on this paper, known in Burma as the Nu-Attlee Agreement, one would find many sen-

tances which look sweet and rosy enough. For instance, Britain recognised the independence of Burma and withdrew all her troops. She renounced all claims on Burmese territory throwing into the bargain, the biggest stunt ever made in British colonist history, the permission to stay out of the British Commonwealth.

If the treaty ended there it would have been well and good for that was the well-earned right of the people. ~~The Labour leaders in Great Britain he would have earned the never ending love of the Burmese people in particular and that of the entire colonial world in general.~~ However the kindness of the Labour bosses went even further and promised "to help Burma consolidate her independence". Hence, in the treaty, it was mentioned, that Britain alone was to help Burma to train the new Burmese Army. Burma must not invite any other state in such matters. The treaty also gave British troops the right to enter Burmese territory, under many circumstances which may not be in the interests of the Burmese people; the treaty opened the Burmese ports and airfields for use by British armed forces. A British Military Mission was to be stationed in the country.

~~In a pamphlet "Burma in 1948" issued by the Director of Information of the puppet government of Burma it was stated,~~

~~"A British Service Mission with Major General Bourne as head, arrived in Burma sometime after the attainment of Independence and is at present advising~~ to advise the Burma Army on many problems confronting a newly formed army.

But what "advice!" And what "problems!" In fact, the shackling words in the treaty itself and the real facts that followed, went to show that the people still remained under the military control of the British and that the country was developing into a war base of the warmongers.

In the economic sphere too, the "generosity" of the treaty on the part of Mr. Attlee had been clearly visible. Burma's currency was firmly tied to the pound sterling with provision made for 100% sterling backing. In accordance with the treaty, the Burma Currency Board under R.V.N. Hopkins was stationed in London. The idea was to keep Burma's finances in the hands of the British bankers like Lloyd's Bank. A British Civil Servant became "Economic Advisor" to the government.

Then Burma had to acknowledge her old "debts" to Britain and India, £ 70,000.000 and $ 145,000.000 respectively. In fact these had been the British colonial expenditure and the signatories cosidered it lawful for the country which had suffered rather than gained out of it, to pay. It was, to make but a lenient comparison, Tom Sawyer's trick of whitewashing the fence. Would it not be a better logic if a demand be raised that City Magnates and their fellow-exploiters must compensate to the Burmese people for all the blood-sucking they had done during a great number of years?

There was still something more. Burma was to pay "fair compensation" for any British property she nationalised! Whom did Mr. Attlee represent when he mentioned this in the treaty? Certainly not the men in Britain's pits and docks.

Burma, after long years of colonial exploitation and after the destruction she suffered during the war, was stone broken. The last savings of the people had been expropriated when the British annulled the Japanese currency. Even if the people toil under bondage for years to come, they would not be able to repay those colossal ransoms, termed as "olddebts" and "fair compensations".

In short, the Nu-Attlee Agreement was a step by which the British monopolists collapsed the economy of the country and disrupted the unity of the territories and peoples, thereby assuming for themselves the possibility to hold Burma in their death-like clutch. Therefore it was quite understandable that even on the very day of "Independence" was declared, strong objections were observed among the masses.

If it were true that certain sections of the people believed in independence, even more truth existed in the fact an overwhelming majority of the people were indifferent to the practiced rejoicings of the Thakin Nu clique. And as days drag on, the hollow nature of the independence and the corruptness of the watchdogs of imperialism became more and more clear. The people's standard of living worsened week after week. Discontentment was everywhere.

Workers' meetings and peasant conferences began to condemn the agreement. The puppet government, as was its promised duty, suppressed the people with all their fiendish vigour. Jails began to overflow. In March a general strike broke out in Rangoon headed by the AllBurma Trades Union Congress and effected

the British owned factories, refineries, dockyards, workshops, etc. Prime Minister Thakin Nu mobilised troops to protect the British property and tried to suppress the strikers. Following it, a peasants' congress was convened by the All Burma Peasants' Union. This Assembly, attended by 200,000 peasants condemned Nu-Attlee Agreement, supported the Rangoon strikers and the peasants in Arakan who had come out in an armed revolt against forces of oppression. It was a demonstration of unity between workers and peasants.

The government issued emergency legislations, while the right wing clique of the party in power, the Socialist Party, resorted to terrorism. They wrecked presses which criticised their policy and their leaders, in the countryside murders and assaults on Communists took place. But these acts of violence only aroused the indignation of the middle classes and served to expedite the entire movement in the country.

Thakin Nu government then planned a countrywide attack and in order to smash the people's upsurge directed its main blows on the Communist Party and all democratic organisations in which Communists were taking the lead.

On March 28, 1948, only a few weeks after the declaration of independence, the puppet government, on orders from their masters, raided the abovementioned organisations and made mass arrests. Hundreds of people's leaders and Communists were thrown into jail.

CHAPTER VIII

...AND THE FINAL STRUGGLE

If the assault on March 28th was intended to be the biggest offensive of the lackeys of imperialism, it was also their biggest blunder. They not only failed to smash the democratic organisations but also sent the people on the final struggle for national independence, people's democracy and everlasting peace. The people, led by the Communist Party, took to arms.

Many Trade Union Leaders, peasant and youth leaders, Communist Party members and sympathisers were flung into jail but only one member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was arrested. The rest escaped and led the armed struggle which spread like wild fire. Armed with sticks and swords, clubs and pointed bamboos, the heroic people resisted the troops that raided their villages. Before March 28th four districts were in armed revolt but by the end of the month ten more were up in arms. In April eight others joined in, followed in the next four months by seven, bringing the grand total up to 29. Even in the first four months over 400 actions were fought by the people's forces.

The government seeing their first attack spoilt by the people, resorted to wholesale arrests and encroachment of all democratic rights. Tortures in jail were so great that they became exposed among the masses: the name "Tharawaddy prison" became as bad as Belsen or Oswiecim.

The People's Volunteer Organisation, still within the AFPFL, protested against these actions; the heroic resistance of the masses had called upon the patriotic spirit of this organisation. The government replied by arresting the members of the PVO.

Thus July and August saw the PVO taking to arms. Members of the regular army also came over to the revolutionaries, the most significant being the revolt of the ~~1rst~~ 1st and 3rd battalions of the Burma Rifles, which came out in full force, led by Bo Ze Ya, one of the ~~most~~ famous military figures of the Burmese people.

Thus the first offensive of the Thakin Nu government was repulsed. The Communist Party, far from being destroyed, had won greater masses and respect: the People's Liberation Army, armed (thanks to Thakin Nu's forces which played the Kuomintang game) with modern weapons, was taking shape. The basic ~~t~~elements of a people's government were born in the villages. Favourable circumstances to build a new united front of the people, a ~~united~~ united front of the revolutionary character, ~~were constructed.~~ came into existance.

Undaunted and with the newly received help from his masters, Thakin Nu launched the second military offensive in September 1948. His army and police used the tactics of Japanese invaders when they attacked North China, the three-all policy - "Burn all, loot all, and kill all." Two thirds of Toungoo District was burnt down. Many hundreds of people were tortured and massacred. For instance, at Kantha, vil-

lage in Pyinmana, 130 people were shot in one long line with brenguns. 84 persons, including infants and pregnant women were shot dead in a mass massere at Kyidaw village in Toungoo. At Ainggyi, a village of 21 families, 18 heads of the families were murdered in one single morning. Heads of partisans and People's Liberation Army men were cut off and exhibited at Kanyutkwin, Kywebwe and Tantabin. Biggest mass rapings of patriotic women in our history was committed by Thakin Nu's fascist forces in Pyinmana.

By ~~using~~ the so called Section 5 Public Order Preservation Act, at the discretion of any police officer, sub-inspectors and upwards, any person could be detained in jail for an indefinite period of time without any trial. Towards the end of 1948 saw over 30,000 political detenues in prison. Never in history, except of course the Japanese days, were political prisoners so badly ~~treat~~ treated as under Thakin Nu. All facilities were denied, political leaders were placed under the control of convicts. People's leaders like the President of the All Burma Trades Union Congress were slapped and kicked by convicts. In Tharrawaddy jail, the worst tortures were carried out. Sometimes male detenues were raped by convicts.

However, the people courageously carried on their revolt. Even in Rangoon city, the masses arose as one man, in spite of all intimidations and risks, (p)rotesting against government actions like the one when Bo Aye Pe, a former officer of the mutineers was arrested and sentenced to death. This heroic son of the country was saved by the people,

though up to this day the noose hovers round his neck.

The Liberation fighters went into counter offensive and repulsed the enemy attacks. They even captured important centres as Mandalay, Prome, Myingyan, Kyaukse, Lewe and Thayetmyo. ~~Because of the correct leadership of the Communist Party, the second offensive was not only repulsed but the strength of the liberation forces grew and the united organ of the people, the People's Democratic Front was born.~~

Thakin Nu found that he had lost over 8,000 men, with more than 10,000 arms including armoured cars, Bren gun carriers, mountain guns, over 100 vehicles, and steamers and launches on the Irrawaddy River. 13 of his jails were captured by the PDF and 15,000 political prisoners released including the 11 leaders of the Trades Union Congress. Out of his Union Military Police armed forces, the entire 20th and 21st battallions, with half of the 9th and 10th joined the revolutionary forces. Battalions of the so-called Burma Territorial Force were totally smashed in 8 districts.

Moreover, a general strike was being launched in February 1949, by the All Burma Students' Union, the Federation of Services Union, workers of the Railways Union and Dalla Dockyard Workers' Union. The strike spread to other towns in all the non-liberated zones and lasted for 3 months during which the heroic Dalla workers seized Dalla Town and held it for nearly 50 days. Thakin Nu government tried their best to put down the strike, but the strike culmi-

nated in the transferring of the headquarters of ABSU and FSU to the liberated areas and large numbers of workers, office employees and students joined the liberation forces.

And the apex of the people's victory over the second offensive was the birth of the People's Democratic Front.

On 24th March 1948, the forces of revolution became united in a single front. The Communist Party, the People's Volunteer Organisation /PVO/ and the Revolutionary Burma Army (the units of the regular army which revolted against the government) formed the Central Organising Committee of the People's Democratic Front and issued a programme in which the following were the main points:-

A People's government based on the People's Administrative Committees shall be established.

The traitorous treaties such as the Nu-Attlee, Letya-Freeman agreements shall be destroyed and imperialist debts repudiated.

Foreign monopoly capital shall be confiscated and all key industries be nationalised.

The 8 hour day and the forty hour week, provident funds, organising facilities, right to strike equal pay and raising of the living standards of workers, middle classes and urban poor shall be guaranteed.

Democratic rights shall be given to the people and educational system be reformed.

Landlordism shall be abolished and "Land to the Tiller" implemented.

The People's Republic shall have relations with any nation on a basis of equality. The People's Republic shall have close relations with the People's Democracies and shall work for World Peace...

This formation of the PDF was a military and political victory of revolution over Imperialism and forces of reaction. The call of the PDF was responded by the people in liberated and non-liberated areas alike.

At about the same time the PDF was established, the rising of the Karen and Mon minorities broke out. Agents of imperialism in close cooperation with the Thakin Nu cabinet succeeded to a great extent in influencing the mass upsurge of the minorities and tried to exploit it to suit their ends. They endeavoured to use the Karen minority as a tool to ~~hold the~~ halt the tide of the People's Democratic Revolution and to form the Kawthulay, a separate state which they would place on the imperialist altar for monopolists to exploit the Burmese and Karen people better than ever. After this, heavy clashes took place between the forces of PDF and the Kawthulay, but the racial riots, which the enemies expected, were barred in time.

Meanwhile liberated zones and guerilla bases became more and more ~~stabilised~~ stabilised. People's Administrative Committees replaced old bureaucratic system, People's Courts began to function. Land distribution commenced in several districts, in other places temporary allottment of land was carried out. Cooperatives were established; in the riverine areas big fisheries were run on cooperative basis.

The cultural development of the downtrodden

masses was visibly seen even in the early months of the revolution. In every village, anti-illiteracy drive went out full swing, schools were established in amazing numbers. Women, under guidance of the All Burma Women's Union, were emancipated from age old feudal yoke and took part in administration, justice, production and even on front line military service.

To guard all these rights, the people were given military training and armed. The People's Militia both of men and women, armed from anything like pointed bamboo to guns and mines made in local arsenals, constituted tens of thousands.

On the 25th August 1949, the General Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army announced that the liberated areas embraced over 71,000 sq. miles with a population of over 6 millions. This and minus the mountainous regions and the Shan Plateau, Thakin Nu' government had no need to be ashamed in getting the name of "the Rangoon Government". Even the people of Rangoon had refused to be governed by them.

Thakin Nu made clumsy efforts to save the day. To appease the people he utterred strong "leftist" words, quoted Lenin while passing bills in the parliament and wrote a book on Marxism. He brought over Buddhist relics from Ceylon for the people to worship, though later it was exposed that in the warship which brought over the relics, arms and ammunitions for his troops had been transported. To confuse the people with the Peace Movement ~~led~~ headed by the Soviet Union, he launched, on July 19th 1949, the Peace-Within-One-Year-Plan, which in fact was a step to drown the revo-

lution in the blood of the people. He sent agents infilitrating into the PVO; they influenced the new leadership in the Magwe Conference of the organisation. Next they stepped forward to disrupt the unity of the People's Democratic Front and to undermine its revolutionary struggle. Thakin Nu also asked and received help from the foreign warmongering governments.

After all these preparations, the puppet government broke a lull of several months and launched the third offensive relying on the newly acquired foreign arms and the cleverly built "fifth column" in the PVO. But once again his hopes crashed on the rocks.

Even while Thakin Nu's thrust along the Rangoo-Mandalay and the Rangoon-Prome routes was gaining momentum, the PDF held a conference in Prome, in March 1950. Agents of Thakin Nu with some vaccillating PVO leaders tried to wreck the conference and to kindle the fire of disorganisation and terror throughout the liberated areas. In spite of this the Middle Burma PDF Conference was successfully convened.

This conference was important in that it consolidated further the forces of the PDF and improved them to continue their march along the road of the protracted war to the ultimate goal.

Although the PDF had been established since March 1949, member organisations had been loosely organised. Some peasants even in the liberated zones were still not united under a common body; the same case existed for the workers. There was no unified

landreform scheme in the liberated areas. Liberation forces fought separately without a cetralised command. There were vari ous armed forces - the People's Liberation Army led by the Communist Partv, the People's Army of the PVO and the Revolutionary Burma Army, each separate on its own and not under a single headquarters.

The Prome Conference of the PDF corrected these errors. The main achievement was the decision to unify the armed forces of the movement into a single "People's Army" consisting, to begin with, a division plus one brigade. The conference confirmed the election of Thakin Than Tun, General Secretary of the Communist Party as President of the PDF and Supreme Commander of the People's Army. A unified land reform programme was adopted and steps were laid out to unite workers and peasants into single organisations.

The conference also resolved that, pending the proclamation of the People's Republic of Burma, the Central Organising Committee of the PDF was to be entrusted with full governmental powers.

Thakin Nu government, meanwhile used all his military strength to open up the Mandalay and the Prome lines from Rangoon. The PDF forces withdrew from the towns and took their defence in the countryside. The plan to disrupt the PDF from within also turned out to be a great farce. True, certain sections of the PVO broke away from the PDF Some of them, led by Thakin Nu's secret agents, surrendered to the government: others kept fighting on

Large numbers of the PVO still remain within the PDF like in Lower Burma, where a brigade of the People's Army was even formed with the PVOs and the People's Liberation Army. Therefore after he had opened the Mandalay road and the Prome road, Thakin Nu found the PDF smaller in number, narrower e in the amount of land it controlled, but stronger in force and firmer in its struggle. That was the reason why he had to report on July 19, 1950 on his Peace-within-one-year Plan in a different manner from what he expected a year ago. This London-selected Prime Minister nevertheless tried even then to deceive the people. Without an apology for his primary school arithmetic, he said that 95 per cent of his plan was achieved in a year but as the "insurgents" were still active, the remaining 5 per cent would take a much longer time to accomplish.

Day after day, people saw with hatred, the smiling mask of the Nu government slipping off. It had, to satisfy the masses and to show that it was a "socialist" government, tried to stage "nationalisations" and "land-reforms". But after a feeble show of nationalisation of the derelict Irrawaddy Flotilla Company and some saw-mills, the loudly proclaimed "nationalisation" fizzled out into a high sounding scheme of Nationalising the Atomic Energy and Steel Industry which are non-existant in Burma. It had promised that rich British oil interests in Burma will not be nationalised. The British firms still maintain their death-like grip on the entire economy of the country.

And for all his anti-capitalist words and "socialist" styles, Thakin Nu also opened the country to American exploitation. Contrary to his anti-imperialist words and freedom loving pretences he nodded approval to the American invasion of Korea.

The people had grown disgusted at his dirty demagogic tricks. The rank and file of his organisation itself began to revolt. On the other hand, the people rallied more and more ~~under~~ to the PDF and under the leadership of Thakin Than Tun, are marching forward on their way to victory.

Here, before I continue to acquaint the reader with the present developments in the country, I would like to pause a while to introduce to him (her) some sketches about the liberated areas of Burma. These sketches, I hope, would give the reader a rough idea how the people are struggling for their victory and also about the new life that is springing up in our country of peacocks and gold.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

BUILDING AN ARMY

Once, I was at the Lower Burma Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

A loudspeaker, extended from the wireless station, hang near the mess. Groups of comrades were standing around listening to the news given in the PDF broadcast. Two women and three men were clearing up the pots, plates and other utensils. Two children, about three years in age were playing around the flag-post.

The news ended and the broadcast was hyphened by a record. Then an officer of the People's Liberation Army reviewed the military situation of the fortnight. In clear plain phrases and sentences he described the strength of the armed forces of the people. In plain layman's language he exposed the military tactics of the enemy. In a rousing conclusion he called upon the people to repulse the offensive of the enemies. Then the transmission closed down.

The platoon commander blew his whistle. Roll Call. The Bureau Guards fell into line and somebody had to fetch away the two children who kept playing in and out amongst the guards.

I walked over to a place where a three-inch mortar and an oerlican was kept. The oerlicon bore the name of"Hpone Tint", a hero of the People's Liberation Army who gave up his life to capture the gun. In the seventh battalion his remains lie, distinguishable from the others by the oerlicon shell placed on the wooden box.

The Guards had finished reporting. Now they turned left to face the flag-post. There was no flag on exactly at the moment (it was hoisted only on special occasions) but they gave a salute to the flag of the Revolution.

I looked at the rifles they held. All were

either American or British rifles. I did not even find a Japanese one.

Well equipped... ready to face any enemy...a modern army, modern in the sense that it could serve the interests of the down-trodden masses, instead of serving the feudal landlords and capitalists...

It was no easy matter building such an army.

When the puppets launched their first offensive on the 28th March 1948, the arms we had were next to nothing. In order to defend ourselves and to keep the banner of the people raised, what we needed primarily for that moment had been arms and arms. Groups of volunteers started seizing arms from smaller villages where the headman and one or two of his ~~ten-houses~~ head-of-ten-houses had double barrels and in some cases, rifles to defend the village against dacoits. Then villagers of well organised villages would volunteer to "attack" another. With two or three persons holding fire-arms, groups of peasants armed only with pointed bamboos would surround larger villages and demand the landlords and the headmen to surrender their arms. Such manoeuvres met with little opposition.

Then came highway "robberies". The city newspapers carried reports about unknown bands of persons stopping motor buses on the road, "threatening" the passengers with arms. They refused, bewildered reporters said, money or jewellery which the frightened passengers would offer. All they did was to disarm the police or soldiers who happened to be along, then would permit one and all, including the police and military, to continue their journey.

In Waw Township, a group of women armed with bamboo sticks, attacked and disarmed a police patrol.

"Not all these had been clean, you know," a township party leader told me, laughing. He was an"arms gatherer" of those first days. "Once I saw by chance a sub-inspector of police with a revolver pouch proud on his hips. I whipped out my pistol from my pocket and demanded that he give me his shooter. The fellow

was so frightened that you could see his knees shake. My! How a policeman could get scared when he is not torturing innocent persons, but looking into the barrel of a gun ! I put up a very stern face, the stiffest I could make and relieved the officer of his six-shooter. But of all the joke... my pistol had no bullets ! !"

Those were the hardest days. Chased and hounded by police and troops, cadres had to keep moving from one village to another, dodging, hiding and sometimes hitting back. They sleep in one place, the next day they would be holding a meeting in another....miles away. If we were not working for the people or if the people had not been with us, the movement would have been crushed from the very beginning.

secret

With the police hot on their heels, cadres worked hard, issuing pamphlets, holding meetings, discussing, organising and seizing arms at the slightest opportunity.

Next came the attacks on large villages where police outposts were stationed. Sometimes, the police came over to join the people's fighters. Mostly battles had to be fought out.

Of course, the government sent its police and troops combing the countryside, in search of these "insurgents" and "communist dacoits". By then, the peoples fighters were able to carry on a considerable amount of systematic guerilla warfare. Police squads which dared to probe long into the scattered villages would be attacked or ambushed, disarmed and driven off. Thus began the setting up of liberated zones and bases which were to play so important a role in the coming years of the revolution.

These brave pioneers were the neucleus of the People's Army which gallantly fights today for a new and happy life of the peoples in Burma.

Risk and danger, death or torture were things very common to them. They had many trying moments: for instance, a group of cadres were tracked down and driven to the banks of the sea. There was no other way out and these staunch fighters rowed out into the open sea in small boats. There were also women and children

amongst them and for three days they floated, then returned and made a dash landing somewhere along the Sittang river. From there they gradually drove the enemy back.

Then many members of the government forces (Burma Rifles) came over to the revolutionary fighters. By that time raids on smaller towns could even be waged. The organisation and control of the groups became more and more stabilised, and then, was born the People's Liberation Army under the direct leadership of the Communist Party. But, for a long time, "Red Guards", the name used by these earliest resistance fighters , stuck to the army: the peasants not only kept calling the armed comrades as "Red Guards" but would also speak of themselves as "Reds".

At the time I was at the Lower Burma Bureau; a single united army had not been formed as then. But the PLA was properly organised, centralised action under direct command from a General Headquarters could even be carried out. The success of building up wireless service had made it possible to have daily contacts between the GHQ and Zonal Commands. Brigade Headquarters even were starting to have wireless stations.

Defense of the liberated areas are also properly organised. In villages we have the People's Militias, under the control of the People's Administrative Committees. Cadres trained by the PLA, return to their villages and relay what they had learnt. The Peoples Militias are armed with various weapons, pointed bamboos, Burmese swords called "dahs", booby-traps, home-made firearms or Japanese rifles. Their main duty is to defend their own villages, so that they could also do their own work at the same time.

Then come the full-time guerillas, the People's Guerillas. They are a mobile force, more strict in training, better armed, operating throughout their whole township. Their duties are pretty wide --- equivalent in some cases to the PLA, blowing up bridges, sometimes participating in assaults on enemy bases. They also participate operate under the People's Administrative Committees but in full co-operation wi

with the strategy of the army.

All military service, from the Peoples Militia to the Army, are voluntary: there is always an excess of volunteers for the Army than it could receive and it is very often that many patriots had to be persuaded to work on the "inner front", and explained that production is also as important as military service.

Thus we see the building up of a People's Army in a semi-colonial country. Sons of workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and other revolutionary elements, voluntarily grouping together, training, learning, fighting, working for the people they love. Not a single one of them is paid: they are dressed modestly and eat very poor food. If there is anything which they have in abundance, it is nothing else but the love of the people, showered upon them.

Exactly opposite in many details, we find the "Union" forces of the puppet government. Apart from paying salaries to the soldiers, they enticed them to loot and plunder the villages they seized. Dressed in bright uniforms, smothered in luxury, these men proved to be very weak fighters.

Even with the lavish spendings of the government, the reactionaries find great difficulty to recruit new soldiers. Moreover, these already in the army would leave their posts in small groups and go over with arms, to the side of the revolution. The "Socialists" even baited the young students from their classrooms and after giving them a few days' training and bright uniforms with bits and ends from the USA army supplies, would send them to the front. Very soon, however, when the All Burma Students' Union took up arms against the government, the entire "students' force" of the Socialists turned out a great flop.

Then there was another dirty manoeuvre the ruling clique did to get soldiers. They let loose their forces running amok among the villages, burning, plundering. Villages were burnt to the ground and people were driven into towns.

These poor, homeless, unemployed people were at a loss to do anything at all. To put a sugar-coating on the quinine, the government established "Relief Committees", who of course could do nothing much. Eventually, army recruiting officers "ran to the rescue". Thus peasants became soldiers with orders to shoot down their own brothers. For a time, naturally, everything seemed to go well. Then guided by the propaganda service of the Communist and other revolutionary fighters, these people began to ponder before pulling their triggers. Enlightened peasant soldiers would bluntly refuse to burn and kill, knowing that it was the same experience that they had undergone.

Lacking man-power, especially man-power to carry on a ruthless resolute fight against the "Communists", the government do not even hesitate to find an ally among the bad-hats and robbers. These bands of robbers and daceits nurse not the slightest concience to consider what they are doing, and that was exactly what the government desire. Moreover these criminals knew only too well that they would be severely punished for their anti-people crimes once the Communists get hold of them. Thus, many badhats became lieutenants or captains in the government forces: these men taught their simple subordinates in detail, how to kill plunder and burn.

Sometimes it is very amusing to read some newspapers, the shameless organs of reaction. I will recall one instance in which a paper described about "Chilly" Ba Yin.

Ba Yin, the daceit, committed many crimes in the Thanatpin Township and because of his hot character comparable to chillies, the people called him "Chilly" Ba Yin. Later when the whole country rose against the government, Ba Yin styled himself as a revolutionary and seized the town. The government knew very well who he was and so they concentrated only on "Communist" villages and left Thanatpin in the hands of this daceit and raper.

However, because of the actions of the heroic PLA, situations became too hot, even for "Chilly" Ba Yin. So he left the town and struck out eastwards crossing the zone held by the PLA. Meanwhile, the honourable papers were carrying news about the misdeeds of

Chilly Ba Yin or Deceit Ba Yin. During his dash across the PLA Zone, there were also published rumours about Ba Yin's death in the hands of the Communists. In reality, Ba Yin was able to dodge the PLA and escaped crossing the Sittang river to Thaton.

In Thaton, Ba Yin 'surrendered' to a certain Bo Mo Jo, a commander of the Government Union Army, expressing his desire to fight against the revolutionaries. Eventually he was re-equipped with better arms and a larger amount of ammunitions. Newspapers at once changed their tones and sang in praise of the "patriotic commander Ba Yin" who had decided to devote his energies to the cause of restoring "peace" in the land.

A few days later found Ba Yin at his old tricks again. Public opinion in Thaton became too loud for the stuffed ears of Bo Mo Jo and Ba Yin had to be chased out.

The same newspapers carried this headline:-

"Chilly" Ba Yin, the dacoit, takes to jungles again !

CHAPTER X

ALL OUT FOR THE REVOLUTION

I remember making a journey from one major base to another, covering about 200 miles, not encountering a single enemy. Here at this moment I would just like to write about the various means of transport we had used on that trip.

Of course, we did not travel always on fine asphalt roads and rails: for the most part we were on the fields, in the jungles, over the mountain ranges. Contact between one base and another may be difficult and slow but never impossible.

We walked for a great part of our journey. Sometimes we had to take small Burmese canoes called "Bauk-tu". If we had a good bauk-tu all we had to do was to sit still, but if, by chance he found himself in one that leaked, woe-be-tied that man. He would have to keep bailing the water out at a non-stop rate, the only thing by which he could console himself was that the rains did not come down. Ah ! But sometimes they did !

Then we also rode carts drawn by oxen. There are no metalled roads between villages, hence in many parts motorised traffic is impossible. Even in summer, when motor vehicles make their way to villages near the highway, they have to follow the cart-tracks. Even in doing so they have to cut down the height of the kazins (field enbankments) which are too high for their axles. Thus in this people's war, the farther a village is away from the highway, the safer it becomes from motorised surprise attacks.

In some places, oxen are unable to pull carts through the mud and swamps. Here the buffaloes with immense horns take their place. The villagers are always willing to place these means of transport in the hands of their heroic fighters.

We also travelled by military lorries when we came to roads controlled by us; we had captured a lot of

vehicles from the enemy, including armoured cars and light tanks.

Railway was also a means we took. We travelled for about 25 miles by rail, driven by revolutionary workers. It was a pity we did not have a chance to travel by motor launches, ran by the People's Transport Service, launches that once belonged to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company.

But in the jungles and mountains, none of the abovementioned means of transport, except, of course, travelling on foot, was possible. We had taken elephants there.

Elephants, gigantic creatures as they are, conquered by tiny men. They are very useful in jungles and mountains, though they could carry less on their backs than by hauling. They can easily drag huge trunks of timber, but on their backs, they will be able to carry only about six or seven hundred pounds. They make their way through the jungles, clearing their route through overhanging bamboos. Slowly but firmly, they pick their way along the dangerous paths which are no wider than their own feet.

Once the mahout gave me command of the beast and slid down holding the huge ears. This man had a terrible malaria attacking him every now and then. When the attack came he would slide off from the elephant and lie down on the wayside covering himself with his longyi. His fellow mahouts would pay no attention to this. "It was nothing extraordinary". A few minutes later, he would appear somewhere in the front, by means of a short cut, and nimbly climb up again onto the neck of the animal. I hope, by now he is getting better with our paludrines I am afraid, he could not have improved much, anyway.

As I guided the elephant (my comrades poked fun at me because I called this huge thing my "daughter") I looked at the long line of elephants. On their hips were branded the marks of the teak companies they had once belonged.

This is not the first time that elephants are participating in warfare. In ancient Burma, they constituted a very important part of the army. When the Japanese came, they found themselves in the fight against the

British. British troops, when they waged counter-jungle-warfare, used these elephants. Brigadier Wingate's army, the Chindits, knew very well, the value of these elephants in Burma operations.

Just a single journey, but what various means of travel! By this, it can be seen how many difficulties face the guerilla in his everyday task: by this it can be judged how everything, living or unliving, big or small, primitive or modern is being utilised in this greatest people's struggle Burma has ever had. For the enemies, on the other hand, everything, even nature, seem to have sided with the revolution.

In rainy seasons, it is impossible for mechanised troops to advance. All the fields are covered with water (especially in the southern districts) and communications are possible only by small and slow moving boats. Here, for instance, is an advantage for the guerillas provided by nature.

Then take bamboo. This has also turned out to be a deadly enemy to the puppet forces. It is not only used as rafts on the rivers but could also be used as weapons. Pointed bamboo staffs, at close quarters and in experienced hands will be no less useful than bayonetted rifles. Out of bamboo, arrows are also made and with poison (also got from the jungles) on their tips, they can scare the wits out of a night sentry, simply thinking about such silent "snipes". Then also, the "Pyit-taing-daungs" (meaning upright-in-any-way-you-throw-it) are even more dreadly. These are six pointed bamboo crosses which always have three points protruding towards the sky. They are usually laid out in thousands near the village and if the enemy attacked, the village would stay "silent" until they approach near their traps. Then one or two firearms would open fire. The soldiers rushed to take cover and as they downed themselves on the ground behind good covers, the protruding pyit-taing-daungs would pierce their breasts.

No doubt, this is not very pleasant. One does not enjoy killing human lives: for many Burmans, not even the lives of animals. But we who hate killings have to wipe out the root causes that lead the world to wars.

to wars. For this we fight, for our freedom, for our very existence. For all these the people had taken up arms. Having clearly seen that this is their fight and that this is the actual road to happiness, the people respond eagerly in this heroic struggle. Their enthusiasm to defeat the enemy, in the shortest possible stretch of time, is demonstrated in the efforts they make to invent weapons.

We know fully well from lessons given by the Chinese people's struggle and by our own experiences that in a Peoples' Liberation Struggle, the imperialists would supply us with arms, of course, through the transport officers concerned. We have already received from the Chiang Kai-shek of Burma, Thakin Nu, our foremost quotas which had placed us on equal footings with the enemy.

But we do not merely hope and wait for these "gifts" alone. It is only correct that we should also work on our own at the same time. For instance, the people had invented "Yan-bon-kwin" which means, the peril-destroyer. The basic pattern is a crude weapon made out of a single barrel iron pipe, with a wooden body. Gun-powder, bits of iron and even wood are stuffed into the iron pipe and a fuse is burned through a hole in the rear.

Of course it takes time to reload and fire again and so gradual developments are being made on this first pattern. Yan-bon-kwin competitions are held all over the liberated areas. Some even died experimenting new improvements. In some areas the people's weapons have reached a very high standard. For instance, a Young Communist League organiser in Pegu District is the proud owner of a "modernised" Yanbonkwin. It works just like a rifle, only the barrel is a bit too long and wide in circumference. There is no safety catch and the bullet looks like a double barrel cartridge. Although it gets stuck sometimes, the youth organiser would not swap this treasure for any American rifle.

on Burma

I read an article written by A.T.Steele in the New York Herald Tribune of February 2nd 1951. Regarding his views it is not worth mentioning but ~~a few facts he gave could be interesting. For instance~~

a few facts he gave could be interesting. For instance he wrote:-

"The communists remain a nuisance indulging in hit and run raids, frequent acts of sabotage and terrorism."

It is clear for the knowing reader to understand what "nuisance" and "terrorism" mean: it is also a tribute to the revolutionary fighters, for how else could a strategy against superior arms in our country be ? The correspondent must have got these news from the Rangoon bosses but he had got the essence of the first years of this protracted liberation war.

Then again he said, ".... in a few cases they were reduced to using wooden bullets."

I don't know if he was trying to sneer but what a great salute Steele had given us ! He intended to make fun of his elders, but found himself bowing low in front of them.

Correct, about the wooden bullets. And the credit goes to the patriotic Karen guerillas who were not backed by the British secret agents. They were short of ammunitions but the fight for freedom had to be waged. They made bullets, but instead of metal tops, they substituted yindaik wood which, hard as it were, served equally as well.

The People's Democratic Front also have "arsenals" nearly in every district. Here they make Yanbonkwins, repair guns out of order, make rifle bullets. These arsenals use a kind of soft metal for the bullet tops, which, it must be confessed, were not as good as yindaik. Then, when fired, the amount o of smoke waving on the barrels betray the position of the gunman. But considering the amount of material obtainable, these products may be taken as satisfactory.

which went

limited

The greatest successes of these arsenals lie in the booby-traps and mines. Strong bridges broken down, lorry loads of soldiers blown up, rail lines damaged... these are just a few achievements of the Peoples' arsenals, where even women are at work.

enemy

Thus we see how the people, with bare hands, struggled to arm and defend themselves, to settle accounts with the oppressors. With next to nothing they fought against all odds and succeded in building up an army of their own. And if their efforts are remarkable, more deserving of praise is their spirit that pushed them forward to achievements.

Let me introduce Ba Tu ,to you,whom I met in one of the southern villages. He was a farm labourer: even when I saw him, he was working for a rich peasant.

Those were unstable times when we were acquainted: we had only recently entered the village and restored order. Enemies were around us, we were expecting a mopping-up any moment. The moral of the villagers had been low and co-operation was slow in coming. By experience these villagers know that once the enemy succeeded in entering their village, the people who had helped us would have to pay the worst. They were timid and restless, organisation was not strong, they would betray a start as soon as they hear a rifle shot. Some slept in trenches.

In those very moments, Ba Tu whistled while he worked. He had no illusions about the fact that our small force would have to retreat, even running the risk of being cut off and totally smashed, if the enemy chose to advance. He shared with us the hope that reinforcement might break through: he has decided that he would come with us in the event of defeat, this time. Previously there had been advances and retreats and Ba Tu knew very well about them.

"Ugh! These rogues!" he would tell us,"You know what they did ? They came around to houses, all in a hurry, asked the people whether they were hiding 'Reds' in their homes. Then they searched. And where ! Inside the hollows of bamboo rafters and so forth. These fellows know the knack, these scroundrels. They would find a five-rupee note stuck in a bamboo and at once it disappeared. They search in small cases where women's skirts are kept.... You could see them in the streets, drunk and unashamed, with women's silk skirts and underwears in one hand, a rifle in the other."

Ba Tu was an old friend of the "Reds". He had always listened to their lectures, attended demonstrations and demanded land. When the armed resistance broke out,

"I simply said: this is the thing for me. This is the way to get land. And I fought side by side with the comrades, gathering arms and the like."

He considered himself as a member of the army, though he was not, and would hurry up in his day's work so that he could offer the rest of his time to the cause. No barrier existed between him and us, he had seen action quite a number of times with a rifle in his hands.

A squad leader once told me about him, "Ba Tu is danger in himself. I wouldn't like to have him near me in battle, you know what the fellow used to do ? He doesn't like to hug the ground. He shoots standing, and in the thick of gunfire too !"

Well, this was no preferable bravery. This was foolishness and I told him so.

"Now, now, you are starting with your criticisms. Tell me, what do you want to be afraid of those fools for ? They couldn't hit a mountain if that were their target. First, I always kissed the ground, then I found out they couldn't do a thing even if I stood. You have never faced this group around here, you should see how they used their three-inch mortars.Once we were facing one another with a creek in between, within rifle range.They used that blessed mortar. All their shots went way back behind us, and just to make them angry, I danced on our cliff. They went at me with rifles, the thieves," he spat in disgust, "they couldn't even judge the range !"

"You were dancing ?"

"Yes, why not ?"

"You are a devil, Comrade Ba Tu, some day a bullet will get you in some place you will not appreciate."

He laughed with that naughty twinkle in his eyes. "if they don't get me on the nose, its O.K."

I can never forget this jovial fellow, he had been a brother to us. Sometimes we used to tell

him,

"Comrade Ba Tu, what a horrible heat your village has ! Come, let's have some tea."

"What? The heat is in your heads. And you want tea ? Can't you make it yourselves ? You lazy oxen !"

But when we got into the kitchen to make tea he would come in after us, laughing and tugging at our ears, would drive us out "in order that a fellow could boil tea in peace". Sometimes we used to cut his firewood for him in his absence and when he came back his face would be a mixture of gratitude and love but, suddenly he would assume an angry look and bawl at us,

"You monkeys, why do you have to do all this? Can't you keep to your silly trainings and literature instead of cutting faggots ?"

But when we read those "silly" literatures to him, he, an illiterate, would listen intently, sometimes with tears in his eyes, and at the end would mutter that he was glad he was working for the revolution, for that was the only means for attaining happiness for the rural proletariat.

Ba Tu is dead now. I heard he was shot in the thigh while firing at the enemy, as usual, on his feet. He dropped, looked at his wound and smiled.

"They got me one in the thigh, could have been worse."

With that he went on shooting, without drawing to the rear, disobeying the platoon commander's instruction. He was always a bad soldier in this respect. He didn't like discipline, that was why he did not want to be a member of the party, nor even of the army. After the engagement the platoon leader found him, dead, a bullet in his chest. He must have been shooting on his haunches.

Ba Tu was just a common man. He fought because he understood that this was the only way to be emancipated. He would rather die fighting than stay in slavery.

Ba Tu was a brave patriot, but no model hero. He was just one of those simple folks, who courageously fought and gave their lives to the cause.

With all his great hatred against feudal landlords, he had not proved to be a good soldier.

But the people will not forget men like Ba Tu for it was such kind of spirit that he had, which laid the foundations of the revolution. Men with such spirits, with their unswerving efforts built a healthy army of the people. However it is a sad affair that some fighters for liberty are still dispersed in other groups. These armed forces will have to be united in order to wage a final offensive against the Thakin Nu government, so that men like Ba Tu can enjoy what they had been hoping for in all these years.

CHAPTER XI

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Ohn-bin-dan village has something better than the three others neighbouring it: a street paved with red bricks runs from the village monastry on the eastern side to the white pagoda on the west. It is the central one of the three streets, I mean proper streets of course, for the villagers walk about as they like; any space between two houses becomes a path for them.

When,for the second time I went to Ohnbin-dan, I noticed a great change.The paved street had been repaired, there were no cracks nor damages as had been before, I noticed the change much more than the others because on my first visit, I tripped on a jutting stone and cut my big toe. That was why I asked the chairman of the village, that evening, how it came about that the street was so nicely repaired. He laugned and introduced to me a man who had just come into the house for a visit. "This fellow started it, ask him. He could tell you better."

Thar Gaing, a member of the village People's Militia, was one of the best activists of the village. He kept blushing before he explained to me.

"Well, it was once when Chit Maung went up to town. He came back and brought with him three bottles of country liquor. He is my boon companion, you see, so I fried one of my hens and had a boose with him in uncle's barn.All would have been well if we just kept quiet and stayed there, but we came back. Chit Maung, that joking monkey, he challenged me and laid a bet that I wouldn't dare to throw three stones on my mother-in-law's house. I was drunk, comrade, so, the devil take it, I picked up three broken bricks and hurled them neatly on that corrugated iron roof.

"My mother-in-law is a very touchy woman, always pouting and quarrelling with one or the other. By the time the second stone fell, she was already out and as soon as third one struck, she chased me with a

stick all round the village. She swore at me, called me names and would have cracked my head were she able catch hold of me. She wasn't satisfied : she came and complained here."

Thar Gaing nodded towards the village chairman who added for him,

"She came and told me: 'you are the government here. You better take action against Thar Gaing or I will.' Ah ! a dangerous woman !"

" Of course, the complaint was taken up," Thar Gaing continued," and my mother-in-law would stop at nothing short of a punishment. Besides, the People's Militias also considered this as a misconduct on my part. So the judges decided that I should do something for the village -- that is, to repair the damaged portion of the street in front of my mother-in-law's house.

"My wife quarrelled with her mother for making mountains out of molehills, but I gladly went to work because I knew I had committed something wrong. Besides,the punishment was not forced on me but the judges and I discussed what was to be done and I had agreed to the proposal. While I was working on the street, my friends came and poked fun at me: my mother-in-law sat in front of her house with a big cheroot and enjoyed looking at me toil with the bricks. Then San Htu came. He is a Communist and leader of our People's Militia, I am sure you know him,...He went and sat down near my mother-in-law and kept smiling at me.

"But that night he called a meeting and and talked about the street, how it was badly in need of repair and so forth. He told us that while we destroy the oppression of the reactionary government we must also build and construct for a better living. He proposed that the People's Militia should repair the whole street from end to end.

"These news spread and the next week we repaired the whole street. Not only the People's Militia, but the whole village turned out. And you know what ? My mother-in-law was there too !"

"But where did you get the bricks from ?" I asked them.

"Oh, there was a ruined bungalow near our village, usually used by touring officers. The township Committee gave us permission and we pulled it down for bricks."

"So, so," I mused, "I won't cut my big toe again; and do I say thanks to Comrade Thar Gaing for that ?"

But the village chairman was serious now. "No, you will be wrong," he said slowly,"we used to joke that it was because of Thar Gaing that the street was repaired, but San Htu corrected us. He said that it was because of the People's Power. Had it not been for the People's Power, Thar Gaing would have been in the stocks for two days or maybe, he might have to pay a fine to the village headman. Now, it is different."

"And I won't get drunk again. If I do, I'll be getting into trouble," Thar Gaing added.

"What sort of trouble ?"

"The People's Militia will throw me out, and I wouldn't like that."

A new Power is springing up in the liberated areas. The bureaucratic system of the old days had been overthrown, a People's Administration which guides the people and smashes the forces of reaction is being built up by the revolution.

There is a saying which the Burmese people had inherited from the past: "There are five enemies--Water,Fire,King,Thief and Hatred."For the present I shall just concern myself with the third enemy, the King, or later as the term implied, the government. Since the ancient times, kings and governments had all along been the enemies of the people. For hundreds and hundreds of years they, who did not represent the people, were mere instruments of the oppressing classes, utilised with unsparing cruelty to suppress the people.

That is the reason why in large areas of Burma the government system of the Feudal landlords and monopoly capitalists has been liquidated. However, this does not mean that the liberated areas have no government at all: on the contrary, they have a really popular, hence stronger government on all levels of administration.

In all villages of the liberated and fighting areas of Burma, People's Administrative Committees have been set up. Formerly there were the representatives of the landlords and kulaks, the so-called "Thugyi" or the headmen, managing the affairs of the village. These men were not responsible to the people over whom they bossed, hence all the more sufferings of the people. Many of the headmen collaborated with the Japanese and were responsible in many cases for conscripting poor peasants for the "Death Railway" to Siam.

For the peasants, government in any form from the village headmen upward to "white face officials", had been nothing but causes of their misery and sorrow. That was the reason why many people loathed the word "government" in itself and in some cases even objected when someone referred to the PACs as the government. That word suggests for them the township officer who put them up for trial for non-payment of heavy taxes. It suggests for them the police who tortured land tenants because they could not pay the landlord his rent. It suggests for them the headmen who tied people up in a barbaric fashion simply because they failed to keep their night-watch to guard the rich of the village. The word "government" had nothing in their favour: it meant the exploiting English, the Fascist Japanese, the landlord headmen and the bureaucratic police, for the peasants.

Now the state of affairs are entirely reversed. The new power set up by the revolution is still an instrument of suppression but there is a great change behind it. Before, the government had been an organ of the few to oppress the huge masses. Now it is an instrument of the huge masses to curb the destructive activities of the few -- the reactionary classes. And this revolutionary power is seen in the People's Administrative Committees.

The village PAC is the basic level of government formed in the liberated areas. As soon as a village is freed, the old system of government, the bureaucratic thugyi system, under which the people could have no voice but must bear everything with bowed heads, is abolished. A representative PAC is, for the time being, nominated by the People's Democratic Front. After a few months when the influence of the reactionary elements are curbed, or believed to be checked, an election for a People's Council takes place. Everybody who has attained the age of 18 is entitled to elect or to be elected, everybody except the landlords, counter-revolutionary rich peasants and other elements disfranchised for their anti-people activities. The elected People's Council will in turn elect the village PAC, a committee consisting of 5 to 11, according to the size and needs of the village. Three members of Justice are also elected by the Council. In many districts, elections have been held as high as the township level.

Major-General Aung San, after he had entered the governer's cabinet in 1946, once said, "When all of a sudden we became government, we found ourselves in a queer atmosphere."

Naturally. He had entered a cabinet which was within the framework of imperialism: the people, on the other hand, had mandated him to get independence. No wonder his position was a difficult one.

But here, in the liberated areas a new power arose. New people assume the functions of the government. A new kind of society, a new kind of life -- everything was new. Some members of the PAC are illiterate. True, it is not easy for these simple folks in many details. They learnt only how to plough, now they are being asked to rule. However, they do not find themselves at a loss. The new system demands of them only common sense, sincerity, truth and love for the people and in these, they do not lack anything. Guided by the Communist Party and the People's Democratic Front, they always know what they are about: their main tasks never go out of sight and they set themselves to these with vigour. For the new society that

is springing up, a new government is taking shape.

How the situations have changed in the liberated areas under control of the PACs ! The entire moral of the people have improved, a new kind of man is in the making/a new man, creative in labour, clean in conduct and co-operative in building in a better future.

As far as I know, theft does not occur in all liberated parts. Even if there are a few cases, during all my days in the liberated zones, I never came across a single case of theft. Once only, loss of a gold ring was reported as theft: even then it lacked evidence to prove that it was stolen. Merchants ply about in the liberated areas, and they could leave their carts loaded full of wares, under the shade of some tree to go anywhere they liked. When they come back they would always find their property intact. Once the traders' boats entered the liberated portions of the rivers and creeks, they would release a sigh of relief because they had come to the safe territories. No robber would fire at them from the banks and demand them to heave ashore, no drunken soldier would board the boat and take away whatever he likes, no sneaking thief would steal in the dark of the night. All these things are done by the unruly Thakin Nu troops in the non-liberated parts. It has become a common incident now, when the traders are asked to pay a toll in the liberated areas, they would laugh and say, "What a paltry sum ! in Thakin Nu areas they are five times greater and besides we got to bribe the military outposts as well." Then they would ask how they could donate to the funds of the People's Liberation Army. This they ask in secret, of course, they cannot let this be known to the agents of the government.

Education is one of the greatest tasks tackled by the PAC in co-operation with the organisations of the people. Burma is an agricultural country : thus the population is mainly rural. However there were very few schools in villages. One might travel sometimes through 20 villages and learn that not a single school /not even primary/ does exist there, except some sort of teaching given by the

village monks.

Reports on ancient Burma of pre-British days revealed that all Burmese who had attained of age could read and write, but thanks to the British rule, illiteracy ran high, 46% of the men and 80% of the women were illiterate, even under an official census which recorded all those who could write down their names as literate.

Now in the liberated areas, under the direction of the PACs. buildings of feudal oppressors are turned into schools: sometimes new buildings are actually built up by voluntary labour. School buildings have become the pride of the villages and competitions as to who could build a better school for children are becoming a favourite there. Side by side with elementary schools, adult education courses are conducted in all corners of the liberated zones with great success. Women, who were unable to read even the Kagyi-Khagwe /alphabets/ before the resistance, are now able to write reports to their Women's Unions.

A PLA man once remarked,

"When I hear, for a few moments, the children reciting in their class-rooms or singing and playing in school-compounds , I acquire new strength to go into ten more battles."

Yes, the people's power is leading the people in building up a better way of living. Even under the great pressure of offensives and counter-offensives, villages are being reconstructed. Some villages were burnt down by the government troops but, as if in defiance, they spring up again in better form. Houses are built in proper order , hygienic, with streets for people and cart-tracks separate, sanitation and water-drainage, school buildings and meeting halls.

The shameless British imperialism which ruled in Burma had provided but one doctor for every 30,000 people, even then, the distribution was such, that in villages where 85% of the people live -- medical attention was negligible. Now the PACs in close co-operation with the People's Army are providing medical attention for the rural population. Hospitals of the People's Army, set up in a chain throughout the liberated areas also

care for the civilians. The government put all obstacles in the way, banning the transfer of medicines into our zones. They even cut off salt from a certain part in middle Burma with the effect that the people got beri-beri and other diseases. The army and the PAC collected salt from the south and fought through the cordon to deliver it to the people, on elephant trains.

In wartime, the efforts of the PACs for military victory are also very great. Without them, i.e. without the people, the revolutionary war could not have achieved this much. Transport and supply, defence and relief are all tacled by the PACs. They not only organise and train the People's Militias, but also manage the arsenals as well. They help the revolutionary fighters not only with transport but also with postal service. They not only act for the welfare of the people and the improvement of their living conditions, but also carry out vigilantly, the suppression of anti-revolutionary elements in their respective areas.

But these are great achievements and one would surely like to know how they could be possible: to this there is but one short reply. The ruling power has returned to the people and the PACs have the support of the masses.

In these days of revolution, trust the reactionary elements to sneak in by the back-door and seize the power. Many agents of the landlords tricked the people and became members of the PACs: then they try to sabotage the revolution. The People's Democratic Front has to be very vigilant about the subversive activities, thorough education has to given to the simple country folks in order to combat such steps, taken by the enemy classes.

I knew one instance when an agent of the landlords tricked the people into getting him elected as chairman of the PAC, in the village. He then made a show of activity, "collecting" donations and making Yanbonkwins. He could read and write better than anybody in the village, and so was quite quick in picking up "the big terms and phrases" under which he pretended as a great revolutionary. When comrades came to the village, he would find out who they were: if they were "senior" ones he would keep them in his house, make princely food for

them. If they were "juniors", they would be billeted in poor houses.

He organised Militias, but on the other hand put obstacles in their training. The simple organiser from the township PAC was just satisfied with the numerical strength of the village defence, he did not find out that the members of the Militias could not even handle a rifle.

The chairman had in front of his house a big Yanbonkwin, painted green, beautiful to look at but never tested. On the other hand he passed the word around secretly, that Yanbonkwins were dangerous and that no villager should handle them.

He was able to play at this game for quite a long time until onee, news came that the goverment army was marching towards their village. The president of the poor peasants' union demanded organisation of defence but the "chairman" tried to despair the villagers with, "What could we do against machine guns and tommy-guns ?" He gave the green Yanbonkwin to the poor peasants' leader but that night he disappeared in order to meet the puppet army and curry their favour before hand.

But he was not able to return. The People's Liberation Army intercepted the enemy and drove them back helter skelter to their bases. It was later found out that the traitor was a rich peasant and even had a son in the government army.

The president of the Poor Peasants' Union was unanimously elected as chairman of the village PAC.

CHAPTER XII

THE LEADING CLASS IN ACTION

"Come, aunty, join us at dinner!"

We called out to her as she passed our mess. She was a peasant, about 45 years of age, from the village nearby, and used to come to our camp to get medicines for her sick daughter. She came to our table and looked at us stuffing ourselves full.

"Well, this is something ! Instead of peasants inviting comrades to dinner -- it is the other way round. O.K. I think I will join in, if you really mean it."

"Of course! We are not making mere lip-service."

She got a plate from the stand and the five of us made room for her at the table. Apparently, the woman was not hungry but joined us"just for the fun of it.".We were uncultured folks, so we got to talking as we ate, making noise with the spoons and the plates; all our fingers were wet, even to the palms of our hands.

"None of you look like peasants," Aunty rudely made a rude remark.

"No, Aunty," one replied and then rudely pointed with the soup spoon towards me, "for instance this comrade was a writer, those two were students, our political commissar was a worker. We are all from towns."

"And what were you ?"

"I was an unemployed."

The woman laughed and scanned the grand banquet. There was nothing much to speak about -- boiled gourd with a splash of prawns caught by Comrade U Nyo in the nearby brook, salted fish and chillies with some green leaves to match with. But the rice was good.

" It's all right for us country folks to eat such but you urban people must find it difficult

to eat such poor food," Aunty said to us in a voice that sprang from her heart of hearts. The Company Political Commissar roared with laughter.

"Wait, Aunty ! What do you think urban folks are ? Why divide a line between urban and rural ~~folks~~ like that ? It's a funny way. Look, what do you think workers in towns eat ?"

"You tell me."

"Nothing at all, sometimes . We do not even have enough rice for the whole month. Yes, we starve, for all the back-breaking work we have to do. You ~~shou~~ should rather talk about the difference between the rich and the poor. It doesn't matter whether you live in cities or in villages, it matters whether you have money or not."

Aunty listened to him with her hand in the plate and slowly, she nodded her head.

"Yes, you are right ! When the landlords were here they didn't eat or live like us peasants."

She was ~~thoughtful~~ full of thoughts even after dinner. Although she had got her medicine by then, she lingered in the camp and approached the commissar again.

"Tell me, why do workers have to fight in this revolution ? We peasants will get land but you won't be ~~getting~~ gaining anything."

"No, who told you that ? Of course a worker will not get a factory of his own, but his life is going to be a happy one," the commissar said to her, He sat down near the woman, offered ~~her~~ a Burmese cheroot and struck out a light for her,

"Life has been terrible for the worker, Aunty; he said, rubbing his strong, masculine hands, ~~t~~the hands of the worker creates, his work is honourable. But what does he get ? He lives in broken down, dilapidated houses. There's not even clean air to ~~b~~ breathe. He eats poor food, that even , is not enough. He puts on rags, his son is denied the right to get educated. He has no relief, no enjoyment; he lives today just to work. He works today just for the sake that he may live tomorrow. He lives tomorrow just to work again To work -- all for the benefit of those fellows with protruding bellies. Still more unbear-

able, the worker whose hands create gold is looked down by society. He is a low-down creature, but a badly needed one of course, that the bosses may live in luxury over his toil."

"But after the revolution," the commissar continued, his eyes brightening up, "we will have better wages. We will have better rights to organise and improve our living standards. When we grow old, we will be looked after by the state -- we won't have to beg. We will have decent homes, not only enough ~~feed~~ food but nourishment as well. Education and culture will be within our reach, our work and we ourselves will be respected; we can stand shoulder to shoulder with any body. We shall always be secure and the work we do will be for the good of the entire people and for world peace. The country will march forward to socialism. What more can a person want ? No, Aunty, a worker is different. He doesn't want a private piece of land or a private factory of his own."

Aunty kept listening, her face in a whirl of smoke from her cheroot. It was then that I noticed two drops of tears on her wrinkled cheeks, painful to perceive but bright and glistening.

Workers of Burma are taking an active role and a leading part in this People's Democratic Revolution. The working class shows its strong discipline, heroism and self-sacrifice in this great struggle. Many workers left the factories to join the People's Liberation Forces, many carry on legal struggles. They are found in every field, military, production, organisation, and everywhere. They know their historic duty and are fulfilling their tasks.

Workers, especially in the liberated areas, know what the revolution demands of them and they set out resolutely to show that they are worthy of trust and capable of leadership. Their sense of duty is noticeably stronger when they know that they are working for the cause of emancipation the people. For example, the conciousness of the railway workers in the liberated areas.....

It was during the time when whole districts, inclusive of towns, were under the flag of the PDF. Two railway lines, from Minnla to Prome and from Natmauk to Lewe, covering a distance of 180 miles, were being run by the Transport Commission of the PDF. Railway workers on these lines were very militant and well organised. Railways were run under many difficulties, shortage of facilities, military destruction, and so forth.

Once it so happened that two trains were about to collide. The drivers of both the trains knew the danger, and had it been in the pre-revolution days, they would have jumped out of the locomotives just to save their skins and let the trains dash into one another. But now, these revolutionary workers told the stokers to jump out, but they themselves stayed at their posts, to the last moment trying to stop the engines. The trains collided but the damage was small, none of the passengers were badly hurt. Only the two brave engine drivers were carried away to hospital, seriously injured.

When they recovered, they were asked,

"Why didn't you all jump out ?"

"Why should we ?" one of them answered, "there were civilians as well as soldiers on our trains: they had put themselves in our care. Our job is to serve the people: in my case, to save them even at the cost of my life. If I had jumped down, many could have been killed. This could effect the revolution, in one way or another."

A worker, naturally, has to show his sense of responsibility and bravery in this great revolution.

Take again, the workers of the Burma Cement Company at Thayetmyo. This company was a British-owned one and after the entry of the people's forces into Thayetmyo, the PDF had been running it. In March 1950, PDF forces retreated from the town but many workers came along with them, also bringing many important parts of the machines from the Cement Works.

Not only the march of events in the international struggle, but Burmese history in itself

also showed that without the working class in the lead real independence and progress are impossible.

Peasants in Burma had struggled alone but their rebellions had been crushed. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships had called forth rather great movements but ended in betrayals and collapses. Not many years back, the AFPFL not only denied the leadership of the working class but even severed relations with large sections of the working people and also with the party of the proletariat. The result was that the highest tide ever of the mass upsurges in Burma's independence movement up to that time, was betrayed: the whole strength declined and that cheap "independence" about which we know so well was thrust upon the country.

And, the working class, without a party of its own, would be weaponless. Working class movements cannot achieve their glorious aims without a Leninist Party. Even the glorious 1938 struggle had ended in a way it should not have. But under the leadership of the Communist Party, the path of the working class had been well defined, leading towards socialism.

The Communist Party of Burma, founded during the II World War, though young in its years has acquired rich experiences and has been steeled in the thick of battles. It was this party which guided the people out from the clutches of Fascism; it was this party which pushed the masses forward to political awakening in the post-war years. It was this party which staunchly stood against the forces of British imperialism; it was this party which kept the people of Burma in touch with the struggles all over the world. This party always stood for the nationalisation of all foreign monopolist concerns and for the better life of the workers. This party always stood for the distribution of land to the peasants. This party fought for the democratic rights on behalf of all the oppressed classes. Armed with the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, this party had battled heroically at the head of the people. And to the leadership of this party have the great masses

responded, unfurling the red banner of revolution in our country. This party with Thakin Than Tun at the head, is the vanguard of the proletariat, the guide of the peasantry and the ally of the urban petty bourgeoisie.

The workers of Burma, following the guiding light of this party, marched unflinchingly since the outbreak of the revolution. Many workers who participated in the strike of 1948 were attacked by the police with undiguised brutality. Badly wounded young workers were dumped into jail with blood dripping from their foreheads. Out of a total of 17, eleven members of the Central Working Committee of the All Burma Trades Union Congress were arrested and flung into jail where they were subjected to the most inhuman tortures. But between January and March 1949, the tremendous assaults of the PDF forces liberated towns and freed all the political detenues in Insein, Mandalay, Myingyan, Thayetmyo, Prome, Paungde, Yamethin and the notorious Tharrawaddy jails. Now the All Burma Trades Union Congress is functioning ardently on revolutionary programmes.

The All Burma Liberated Areas Conference of the ABTUC held in the beginning of 1950 was attended also by representatives from the non-liberated parts, even from Rangoon, who came over in secret on behalf of their fellow workers. This conference clearly supported the revolution and vowed that the workers would carry out their historic mission to the very end, under the guidance of the Communist Party and the beloved leader of Burma, Thakin Than Tun.

The great achievements of the workers in the free territories made their echoes felt in zones held by the puppet government. In Rangoon city and elsewhere working class upsurges are recorded in never ending succession.

Not very long ago, Bo Tun Sein, a leader of the Dockyard workers who took up arms and held out from Dalla town /near Rangoon/ for three months , was arrested and sentenced to be hanged under the"High Treason Act". Immediately, protests broke out all over the whole country: Anti-High-Treason Act-Committees sprang up. These mass actions saved the workers'

leader, ~~but he still remains in jail with a new~~ ~~liable to show up any moment,~~

The entire people are together with the workers. Ever growing masses are following the leadership of the Communist Party, the party of the working class, for in this alone can they expect national freedom, people's democracy and everlasting peace.

CHAPTER XIII

HE WHO SOWS SHALL REAP

"Only the proletariat can be a consistant fighter for democracy," wrote Lenin, "it may become a victorious fighter for democracy only if the peasant masses join its revolutionary struggle."[1]

The peasants of Burma are in the thick of the revolutionary struggle led by the proletariat.

It is the ABC for all revolutionaries of Burma that the Agrarian Reform is the main axis of the revolution, the peasantry the major force and the rural countryside, the base of the revolution. In such an agricultural country a great deal of reliance has to be laid on the countryside and on the peasants, hence thorough organisation and extensive mobilisation ~~is~~ are done in the villages. In response, the peasantry of Burma have shown their great patriotism, and their spirit of alliance with the workers in this great National Liberation Struggle.

On either side of the roads and rails that run through Burma from north to south, great numbers of villages are carrying on the duties of revolution. The peasants in these villages follow the direction of the party of the proletariat, enthusiastically heading for the land reform. Many of the villages close to the roads and rails which are constantly ~~visi~~ visited by government troops even support the revolution, in secret. Some villages for instance, have two governments, the Thakin Nu troops and their own PACs. Openly they accept the entry of the government troops but in reality, the PACs underground are in power. Villagers from the non-liberated parts would ask the visitors and traders from the free zones, "When will our comrades come ?"

The organisational level of the peasants, like all other organisations, have reached to a great height. In these fighting years, the All Burma ~~Peasant~~ Peasants' Union, which was forced to go underground together with the Communist Party, have become the strongest organisation ever in the course of the

peasant struggles. As much as political education is given amongst these poor masses in the countryside, they gather together more closely in this organisation determined to carry on the revolution to the victorious end, under the guidance of the president of their Union, Thakin Than Tun, also General Secreatry of the Communist Party, Whole families, from the old village folks, down to the young boys and girls are doing what they can, to win freedom, land and progress.

They know that it is not only the work of the man on the plough but that of the past generation and the new one that is springing up as well. It means their salvation. Hence the older folks put in their share to have their own back on feudalism, the younger people struggle ardently that they shall not swim in pools of tears as their turn comes.

I always remember Apho Pan Dwe, a Granddpa of a village near the Pegu Yomas. I could very well recall, how one night -- it was a cold January night-- we sat with him around a fire under the towering trees. The fire was blazing generously and giving us warmth while dew drpps dripped from the leaves and branches above. Grandpa was telling us about his experiences with a landlord in those younger days.

"I have to go round, by the side of the house, to the back-door; I never had to set my foot on the front rooms when I visit them. ~~to pay the rent or to loan money.~~ Only sometimes I was permitted on the verandah where they take off their shoes. And everytime I go there I wasn't supposed to come barehanded. There must be some presents as well. A whole branch of bannanas, a basket of mangoes -- something must be there. If you take two chickens to them they would ask you also to kill them and take off the feathers: sometimes you are asked to bring firewood to them. This took up a lot of a mans time, as you know, a whole cart-load. And don't dare take them uncut. You will get the most stinging abuses from the mistress. They must be cut, well and small, ready for use. And what do you get for that ? Nothing !"

Grandpa Pan Dwe filled his bamboo pipe again and taking a red faggot, lit it up. In the red

glow of the fire, his silvery hairs were shining: his cheeks sucked in and out as he sucked at his pipe.

"Sometimes when they are in the mood for it I get some food to eat. But what food ! Once they let me wait till their people finished eating. When they finished the servant girls came back into the kitchen carrying plates of curry. I noticed remnants of pork, fish and some very good dishes. But the mistress came and made the girls lay those dishes aside. She gave me rice and ngapi[2] only, with half a bowlful of cold soup. Then in front of me she fed her pet dog, with all the better dishes. To her, a peasant is lower than her puppy.

"And what a tongue that woman had ! And they call themselves cultured peoples ! She could abuse with all the dirty things and lowest imaginations, she also borrowed whatever she could from her husband. Such words, something which we peasants would blush to hear! Once she abused my wife for half an hour, and I, the husband, had to stand there saying nothing. Ugh! how painful it was then. When they came to our village, once in a blue moon, they stayed here just like royalty. We had to do ~~all~~ everything to make them enjoy their trip, all, except kneel down and shikho[3] before them. My wife had to wash the dirty skirts of the woman and her daughter. And the landlord himself was a terrible shark: how many girls of our village he had spoilt ! They had a very good pretense, they would say, for instance, 'By the way, Pan Dwe, why don't you send your daughter to stay with us one or two months? She could see town life for a change, besides, we need a little help, you know,' And we couldn't refuse. If we do, we might lose our land the next year. The girl became a slave, cruelly kept under the worst possible drudgery, slapped and abused, but a person has to be glad if, only the mistress asked helped of her, and the master did not complain 'that his legs were aching'.

"All this I am telling you are some of the extra obligations we had to do. Then you would like to know about the main one, the rent. For an acre which yields 30 baskets[4] for instance, we were ob-

liged to pay 10 or 12 to the landlord. His men came every year to take the rent and they brought with them special baskets, bigger than standard measures. The names given by peasants to these baskets are sufficient to explain what that meant. There is one we call the "Wide-brim", another is called "Unable-to-reach-the-bottom", still another name -- "Axle-breaker". A cart-load usually carries 25 baskets but when they pile on 25 of those special ones, the axle was enough to break. Then we have the "Hear-the-weeping" baskets. After the agents had taken away the rent, the peasant's wife would hold the children to her breasts and weep.

"Of course we knew that we were being double crossed but what could we do ? Cause a disfavour this year and the next, you will starve. Besides how could a poor man challenge them in expensive courts ? And the police, how they tortured us just to please the landowners !"

Such had been the lot of the peasants in those days. A worse situation had faced the poor peasants and the agricultural labouers who had little or no land at all.

Therefore it is no wonder that the peasant masses took to arms and struggled against all odds to free themselves from feudal-landlordism. Many peasants had given their lives to the cause, in order that others might live.

There is, for instance, a Star over Kywebwe..

If you mention these words in the liberated areas of Burma the people will know that you are referring to Comrade Tun Thein.

Comrade Tun Thein was a peasant organiser in Kywebwe of Toungoo District. He was a hardworking, sincere and exemplary comrade, giving all his efforts to the cause of the revolution. Once, while on the way to organise some villages, he was caught by the government army and taken to Kywebwe town, together with hie companion, Saw Tha Khwa, a Karen. The fascists tortured Saw Tha Khwa, but this courageous comrade, son of the Karen people and a hero of Burma told them nothing. He was killed by the soldiers.

Comrade Tun Thein took the most severe tortures but all what he said were words directed against the government, against feudalism and capitalism.

"It's no use torturing me, because I shant tell you anything you want. Kill me. Death is better than staying in bondage under you traitors," he spat at the torturers.

They killed him, in public, at the crossroads. To the last minute he remained a revolutionary and a hero. The people of Kywebwe silently moaned and saluted this son of the peasants, the son of the people.

Men like Comrade Tun Thein have died, for a good cause. They gave up their lives to enable all peasants, regardless of their nationalities, to live a life that befits them.

And the peasants, regardless of nationality are giving all what they could pool in as their share. There are Chin villages on the Pegu Yomas, for instance, who are supporting the liberation fighters. Intermingled with Burmese villages are also Shan, Karen, Taungthu and Kadu villages in the liberated parts. In some villages, the population is mixed, I know of a village where minorities and the Burmese live together; a Kachin is the chairman of the village PAC. Such harmonious life in these villages is the sample of what the People's Republic of Burma will be like in the future.

Not only the national minorities but the Indian peasants, as well, are active. An Indian leader said, "We live here and Burma has given us homes and food and life. Why shouldn't we fight for Burma's freedom ?"

Once a government patrol came into an Indian village by surprise while there were two Burmese guerillas in a house. Without losing a moment, the Indian leader took the invaders to his own house and gave them a lot of eatables to get busy with. Meanwhile, the guerillas dismembered their sten-guns and put them in a basket. An Indian girl covered it with vegetables and, carrying the basket on her head, smuggled the weapons out of the village. Then the guerillas walked out calmly and when challenged, the Indian leader was able to convince the enemy lieutenant that they were simple cowherds from a village near at hand.

The immediate aim of these fighting peasants is the distribution of land and this is one of the most important tasks of the revolution. The economy of agricultural Burma simply cannot carry on without the agrarian reform, confiscation of land without compensation and systematic distribution.

Distribution of land, even in itself alone, is not easy. It is not like setting a paper down and cutting it to equal parts. The revolution has to consider about classes and peoples, events of the past and future. The land itself calls for careful scrutiny: the yield of every acre and the position of every plot also count. Sometimes, unexpected problems arise. Do not think that the land-hungry peasants will not refuse to accept land. Sometimes they do ! Hence there is a lot to do against the machinations of the landlord class and other counter-revolutionaries.

Many mistakes regarding land reform had been committed in these few years. The most serious ones were destruction of rich peasant economy and "equalitarianism", that is, distribution of land equally among all inhabitants of the village.

However, because Burma is in the thick of the fight, these errors are short lived. Mistakes are not slowly detected but always came as a counterblow to the revolution. But because of the sincerity of the masses such mistakes are promptly corrected without great difficulties. For instance there was a time when the policy of dividing the number of acres with the number of population was in force. The co-operation of the middle peasants visibly waned, many villages refused to make the distribution of land. However, when this erroneous policy was corrected the fighting energy of the peasants once more sprang forward in force.

Land Distribution Committees, elected by the peasants themselves are ushering in a new era for the rural populace. The Central Working Committee of the All Burma Peasants' Union reported that by the summer of 1950, land distribution was carried out in 824 villages embracing 123,000 people. In places where land-reform was as yet unable to be done, temporary allot-

ments of land are being made, the tiller getting every grain he produces.

Therefore it is not surprising to note that many landlords, not satisfied even with their paid servant Thakin Nu and his ruthless ways, enticed the soldiers with money, promising that 5,000 rupees would be rewarded to men who "free a certain village from Communist hands", 10,000 rupees for another village, and so on.

However they might try, the steady growth of the peasant masses cannot be checked. Once I overheard a teacher in a school talking to her pupils,

"Children, learn hard. Last night you heard those gunshots from the battle in the west. Your elder brothers are fighting so that you will not starve, so that you can live well. Don't disappoint them, you must thank them because they enable you to study and to live in peace. Your fathers and grandfathers never had this chance."

Changes in the life of the people are visible even in these early days. Not to mention about villages where land has been distributed, places where only temporary allotments had been done even differ in all living conditions from villages which are, as yet, not liberated. Peasants become better clad, houses improved, even with decorations adorned in them. Food is cheap and plenty. Fowls which cost 8 rupees per viss[5] in the non-liberated towns are just two rupees and a half in the free villages.

Conciously, the emancipated peasants strive to be self-sufficient. Cottage industry, encouraged by the People's Administration, prospers: weaving and fisheries took a healthy growth, by means of co-operatives as well as by private concerns. Houses in the villages where land distribution have been carried out, also have patches of land in front, evergreen with vegetables. Poultry farming and pig-rearing, which they had formerly ignored are picked up and are adding a lot to their annual incomes.

Plays and dances, celebrations and merry-makings goes on full swing throughout these happy areas Culture, once so remote, has come into their hands. And

they are not lost in enjoyments either, banners bearing the words, "Don't let the land, that is in your hands, escape !" can be seen in villages, displaying the strong determination of the people.

In a meeting held just before harvest, a peasant leader said,

"You know how, when the paddy is ripe, sparrows come in flocks. When a flock descends on a plot that part is nearly all lost. And what do we do ? We guard our fields with catapults and scarecrows, waiting in the burning sun, driving these flocks away.

"But the sparrows are nothing compared to Thakin Nu's troops with landlords close behind them. If we do not allow even sparrows to descend on our fields, why should we allow these troops to come ? We shall fight them and drive them off right into the Bay of Bengal !"

And the whole meeting hall shook as the peasants approved his words in a thunder of applause.

CHAPTER XIV

W O M E N A R I S E

If it is in the rainy season and there are puddles on the ~~road~~ unpaved street, it is already bad enough to take a walk. And if it is late in the dark of the night as well and the villagers have put out their lights, it is simply horrible.

I was going from the house where I was put up for a few days to the PAC office. It had been raining in the evening and the mud was splashed on the ~~st~~ street. Should a person step on a puddle in the way he shouldn't, the mud would come creeping up his legs to send a chill running along his spines. I was avoiding such ghastly mishaps as best I could with my torch-light glaring right and left, when suddenly, I heard a challenge.

"Halt! Who goes there ?"

I stopped sharply. "Friend !" I replied and flashed the ~~toren~~ light on my face. A figure came out of the dark: a bayonet on the rifle gleamed.

"Comrade, where are you going to, so late?" a feminine voice asked me.

I turned the torch on her. A young girl of ~~a~~ about 19, in green shirts and pants: her hair was cut short. She held her rifle with apparent ease.

Such army men are today seen in many parts of the liberated areas of the country. Conservative Burmans gasp and cry, "What ! Women with pants, in the army ! Well, I never !" They could only imagine women to be soft and helpless creatures with skirts covering their ankles.

What is the use of any "revolution" if it fails to free women of their bondage ? What is the use of shouting"freedom" ~~while~~ if women are just kept as slaves of the household, tied down by drudgery to the kitchen ? Why shout"equality" ~~when~~ if women are even denied to sit on equal places with men ?

Once I attended a district conference of the All Burma Women's Union. They were discussing about the status of the woman before and after the outbreak

of the revolution.

"Feudalism had degraded woman to a very low level," one delegate said,"it was feudalism that changed woman into a property of man which he could own and treat her in anyway as any other object he has. Feudalism in its barbarity even considered woman lower than the male animals. Just think of that saying,' A woman is inferior to a male dog.' Women were not allowed to ride a male elephant or a male horse. In the more backward places, women were not even allowed to step over the bones of a male dog. A woman's skirt is considered lowly, men must not touch them with their hands and all that. Today we have entirely done away with all these nonsense."

~~I~~ I remember, that in a book some foreigner remarked that Burmese women had a much more better status than other eastern women. True, Burmese women did not have to bind their feet nor did they have to hide their faces behind veils. But all the same, their economic and social positions are ~~not~~ much better than their Chinese or Indian sisters.

A great deal rests upon the economic status of the woman to define her social standing. To put it in simple words," the man makes money. And money , /if you please/ makes everything. Hence, woman who does not earn money, is not as worthy as man!"

Woman became just an instrument of production in some cases, just a commodity. In semi-feudal society a woman has to sell her body and soul to a single person or to many persons. Prostitution prevailed in towns while in the rural countryside, landlords and "people with money" spoiled poor peasant girls.

"I know of a woman, she is about 60 now," reported a delegate,"she said she would support the Communist Party and would give her life for it if needed. She didn't know about other matters but she knew that the Communists stand for a "single husband-single-wife" system, and that, she told me, was enough to win her sympathy. She was a concubine of a landlord during her younger years but when her beauty was spent she was stranded without a pice in her hands. We are making progress in educating the people. Before, even

women accept as truth sayings like,"A good man can keep 1000 wives". People laugh without a shudder when a dancer wished "all the best and a teen-ager every year" to a rich person who has awarded money to her. Now things are different. Women have awakened."

Yes, women have awakened.

Do let us dwell a little longer on this conference. There were representatives from various townships and guests from various departments. Some groups had fought their ways through enemy lines to attend the conference. Delegates included leaders of the township Communist Parties, members of the PACs, peasant leaders, members of justice, People's Militias, army personnel and nurses. Attending to receive prizes from the Women's Union were woman workers from the arsenals. They attended the conference with rifles and carbines which they themselves made or repaired slung over their shoulders.

In the liberated areas, a woman is equal to man. Of course, freedom of woman is not a thing which could be attained all at once, her status is not transformed as soon as she is freed from the rule of the landlord-monopolist government. But as soon as she is thus freed, the basic step towards her emancipation is won, she becomes an equal to man in the eyes of the Peoples Administration. She will become socially equal to man when she is released from low druggery and attains economic freedom.

But even in the first days of revolution , when women were explained their low status and made to see what sort of future awaits them, their enthusiasm to work for the revolution was immense. But as was admitted by the women's leaders themselves, in their all out enthusiasm, they took an anti-male aspect.

"You see, we lost sight of the class oppression and dumped all the blame on the entire opposite sex," a woman leader told me, " but the Communist Party pointed out the differences between the bourgeois and the working man, between the landlord and the poor peasant. We corrected our errors and raised the slogan: destroy feudal-landlordism and monopoly capital-

ism for the emancipation of woman. For our emancipation, it is we women ourselves who got to work most."

Once awakened from their age-long slavery, nothing could stand in the way of these women battling for the freedom of their country and their sex.

If you go to the liberated areas you will undoubtedly be challenged at the village gates by women sentries, members of the village People's Militias. Even then, many youthful girls are not satisfied with serving"at home" in the village but strove to become mobile guerillas and members of the army. There was an amusing episode in which two young girls trained themselves to become members of the PLA. Someone had told them jokingly that soldiers had to be rough and tough, they must be able to stay under water for long moments: they must be able to walk through thick and coarse rushes. These two girls, in their strong determination, practiced at these two tasks, diving under water so often that their beautiful black hair had become red, going through rushes so much until they were pitifully scratched and bruised. Anyway, they are now members of the Women's Armed Guerillas in Waw Township in Southern Burma.

The Women's Union have a lot of work facing them. One of the greatest tasks they set themselves to, was the anti-illiteracy drive. In the past days, "education is superfluous for the girl, she belongs to the kitchen." Besides it was difficult for girls to learn at the monastaries of the Buddhist monks, the only schooling generally existant for the rural population.Hence, only 20 % of the women were literate and many villages existed where not one of the females knew how to write their own names. During my travels I came across women with a very limited knowledge of the outside world --- many had not been outside their village boundaries throughout their whole lives!

If women are to be totally emancipated , education is one of the first tasks -- and the first step is the anti-illiteracy drive. At first shy girls are escorted to adult schools by leaders of the Women's Union, but as the studies got into stride, even older

women of 40 to 50 years joined in.. Even during the busy months of sowing and harvest, the farm women find one way or another to keep their lessons undisturbed.

In one village there was a girl called Thai Kyi. Although she wanted to study very much, her father objected, saying, "If girls know how to write, what would they do but write love letters ?" Nevertheless, the girl attended classes in secret, bought a book and read it beyond her father's eyes. Very soon the old man discovered the"crime"his daughter was committing behind his back and raised a big noise at the village Women's Union. A stormy battle ensued between him and the village chairman of the Union, who was his playmate in his younger days. At last Thai Kyi had her way but the poor girl worked twice as ever, getting up early before dawn so that her father would not be able to say, "Look how Thai Kyi has been neglecting her household work since she took up those letters"

But today, the old man is full of smiles. He is a shop-keeper and when his friends ask him how his business goes, he pretends not to know and says,

"I don't know. You must ask Thai Kyi about such matters. She keeps the accounts, you see."

Landlords who ran away behind the protecting bayonets of the government forces would be Rip Van Winkles, were they to return to these villages. Women whom they regarded as sub-humans are now greatly changed, having advanced abreast with the men folk. They, who had just been someones on whom men were "to rest their feet" according to feudalist ideas, are now discussing about the Atlantic Pact, the UNO, India's position within the Commonwealth, the status of the Chinese women before and after the revolution, and many other problems.

Education was given not only in letters; women are taught to become workers for production. For instance in Middle and Lower Burma, women are encouraged to weave: many looms were set up with the help of the People's Administration.

Many women are also trained to become nurses. During my stay in the liberated parts, a course for

nurses was opened and after a summary course they were distributed all over the fronts. Their achievements under the difficult times are nothing but magnificent and have surprised many an orthodox doctor.

I knew two girls /by the way, they were not nurses/ who saved the life of a PLA comrade. While the boys were in grips with the enemy they went to the lines to give food and drink to their heroic fighters. To their horror, they saw that the PLA had to retreat; in front of their eyes a lad was wounded. They carried him as best they could while the enemy chased them with a rain of bullets. Nevertheless they managed to bring their "brother" out of danger.

Therefore it is quite understandable when a district leader of the PDF once remarked,

"It is difficult to believe, even for us, that women, kept way behind until of late, could fight this much. Awaken the women, and deliver them from age-old inferiority complex and they will do wonders."

Yes, they do wonders because, mothers of today and tomorrow, in Burma, want peace. But the kind of "Peace" which Thakin Nu promises means only oppression, terror and poverty, insecurity, tears and death. That is why the women of Burma are advancing with the tide of the revolution to win real peace for their own country and for the whole world.

They rally under the banner of the All Burma Women's Union whose organisational strength is now the highest ever achieved in the history of the women's movement in Burma. The leaders of this Union were members of the Women's International Democratic Federation. Members of the Union are seen in every liberated village, serving the cause side by side and marching hand in hand with men. They know that Thakin Nu's troops bring them nothing but grief and shame, one elderly member told me that there was no reason why women should not take part in this armed revolt. If the man fires one shot, she said, the wife has enough reason to fire two. She told me of an incident which happened when some girls from Pyinbongyi village in Pegu District went up to town to buy some necessities. They

CHAPTER XV

UNITED -- WE SHALL WIN

In reality, Nga Nu is a "pious cat",
Pretending to be holy
with rosary
in his hands.
Has Democracy any horns ?
We query in awe
Section 5, High Treason Act
and repressive laws:
These fascist barbarians
All our rights -- they have broken.

This is a part of one popular song sung in the liberated areas. Thakin Nu always claim that he would prefer to go into monkhood "if the country allows him" but in reality, he is oppressing the people on orders from his country, City and Wall Street combined. Hatred against this imperialist stooge grew day by day in the country and it is not only from the ranks of the workers and peasants. The urban petty bourgeoisie see through the masks of this traitor as his demagogic tricks miscarried, and ever-growing numbers from this class are joining the ranks of the revolution.

There is a wide range of intellectuals and urban people who left the towns to work in the countryside. Writers and journalists, actors and technicians, teachers and students, clerks and shopowners, they came out to the liberated areas to stay and to work with the masses for ultimate victory of the oppressed classes.

As much as the middle classes join the revolution, victory is safely ensured. It is one of the greatest tasks of the revolutionaries to win over the middle classes as we are building up a people's democratic dictatorship. And as chairman Mao Tse-tung said, "the foundation of the people's democratic dictatorship is the alliance of the working class, peasantry and urban pettit-bourgeoisie."[1]

Even the present participation of the urban petty bourgeoisie is by no means small. Especially significant are the students. It must be mentioned here that the students of Burma had all along taken a patriotic and revolutionary road for the emancipation of the country. They had been in the front during the 1920 struggle. In the 1938 movement also, they had stood as vanguards. All along, theirs had been a heroic record, their acceptance of the leadership of the working class and its party was organisationally the foremost among the urban middle class organisations.

When the Communist Party was driven underground, the All Burma Students' Union still carried on legal work. But during the 1949 General Strikes, due to the severe oppression, the ABSU was compelled to shift its headquarters to the liberated areas. Many students joined the revolution. Some became members of the army, in various departments, some carry on organisational work. They participate in agitation and propaganda, cultural activities and education. Two student leaders are included in the Education Commission of the liberated areas. Students now enjoy self administration and sit on joint boards with the teachers. Slave education is being done away with and a democratic one introduced.

The students display exemplary courage in defence work. Once, the enemy attacked a train of the PDF Transport Commission. There were two squads of guards on the train, the Revolutionary Burma Army's and the students', the Yegaungs.[2]

A student was killed, but a 16 year old boy, called Thein Win pounced upon a sten-gunner of the enemy. He wrested the gun from the man and turned fire upon them. The enemy, though they numbered about 100, retreated helter skelter chased by the two squads. Thein Win was awarded the Order of Hero by the PDF.

Members of the Federation of Services Union /FSU/ also came out together with the students. In the 1947 strikes, these employees of the government had, for the first time in history, supported the party not in power en masse, entirely crippling the British governor's cabinet. But, not only the cause of indepen-

dence was betrayed by the reactionaries within the AFPFL, who expelled the Communist Party from the united front, but the living standards of these office workers were also deeply effected by the high cost of living and low salaries. Their just demands were ignored, their leaders were thrown into jails. Many saw that the only way to win democratic rights and a decent standard of living was to overthrow the government. That is why they are following the programme of the PDF and the Communist Party.

I recall the time when the entire staffs of the district headquarters of all organisations celebrated the victory of the Chinese people together with the villagers. There was a play in the evening, with members of the staffs and villagers mixed. A writer had written a play about the life of the peasants, a Communist Party cell gathered local songs. A former superintendant of a government office acted as the landlord: that suited him well as he had a double chin, protruding stomach and all that. A former wireless operator took the role of a drunken captain of the puppet army, while a woker and a peasant acted as his subordinates. Two typists, a man and a girl, played the parts of a peasant and his daughter. A student with a dark face became the Indian usurer.

While looking at the play from my favourite grand stand, the branch of huge Kokko tree, I could not help thinking about the actors on the stage as they really were -- the superintendant, the worker, the stuent, all of them. They were all there, workers, peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie, representatives of the oppressed classes forming a symbol of the PDF among themselves. To see them together, united, co-operating and working gives one the necessary strength and confidence that the revolution will finally triumph.

For there is a saying in Burmese, "If the cattle are dispersed, the tiger will bite". In these difficult days, unity is of great importance. We can win only if we remain united, foiling the plans of the reactionaries to restore their system in the country.

Once, I asked a girl who came from Rangoon

how she liked the countryside, in these free areas.

"Very much, comrade," she told me, "I have never been to any village before, but I feel very much at home here. It is not like towns where things are so very bad. Busy and hurrying people getting nowhere suitable, brilliant lights of foreign companies, starving beggars on the pavements, half naked American actresses, bars for the rich and toddy shops for the poor, jails in the heart of the city, prostitution public as well as private."

She was sitting on a patch of grass and with a small twig, scribbled the shape of a flower on the bare ground in front. Then she went on.

"You come from the town too, you will know what sort of a life people have there. At first you'd think a clerk is better off than a peasant. You see that he is better clad, he speaks and reads English, talks about many high things, realistic ones as well as idealistic. But what's behind ? An unhappy marriage to begin with, an empty rice-pot, undernourished children. He puts on a silk longyi but that is only for today. Tomorrow it has to go to the Chinese pawnshop. I needn't talk to you about that, you know better. And as a writer too, you must have known what it is to starve!"

"No, comrade, you are wrong," I differed, "I did not earn much, but I did not starve."

"How is it possible ?"

"Quite easy. Writers starve, because they are ashamed to beg. I am not. I open my hands to get half a rupee or so from any acquaintance I have. Then again, I save money. I ~~ride trains~~ travel on trains without paying the fare. I could sneak out of the railway stations on all fours through railings and so forth. This, you must know, is the free and honourable brain-worker."

She laughed at my weak joke. I looked at her. Someone who knew her before said that she was a regular painted parrot, somewhat a flirt of a girl. But the patriotic instinct in her had brought her out to the liberated areas and now, ~~how much~~ she has improved so much during all these days that she has even become a can-

didate member of the Communist Party !

"I hate city life."

"Ever, you mean ?"

"Oh, of course,no !"she hastened to assure me,"After the liberation, towns will be changed, life would be nice then. Don't you think comrade, that our towns can be like those in the Soviet Union ?"

Such are the volunteers from the urban petty bourgeoisie who have joined the ranks of the revolution. They had to sacrifice a lot to join the liberation movement: they joined as their class ~~is~~ was called upon. Unstable elements also rolled in, but under the trying struggles, they did not last long. They went back to the cities. On the other hand,there ~~are~~ were theory-insane "old hands" who looked down upon all the urban folks as vacillating elements and refusing to trust them in any matter, sometimes going as far as to scorn at these new recruits. Such actions disheartened some new-comers and proved to be detrimental to the cause. ~~However~~ Therefore, the Communist Party educated both sides and improved their relations. Alliance of the ~~xx~~ classes is not an easy matter, every detail has to be paid attention to.

I saw various people, men who set up wireless service and radio, men who repaired tanks and heavy guns, men who go to villages to become teachers. I saw the son of an anti-communist Member of Parliament. They are all working under the banner of the PDF for the country's emancipation.

Once, even I was thrown off my feet when I saw a phongyi /Buddhist monk/ testing a Yanbonkwin. He told me,

"Look here, don't think that only you people know your duty. A phongyi wants to follow and practice the teachings of Buddha. He wants to show the people the way to Nirvanna. But it is like that saying, a person can be pious only with a full stomach. And phongyis have to go around receiving alms and rice from the people. If the people are starving, will there be a bowl of rice for the phongyi ? We want the welfare of the people and if we do not help them, where are we ? No, dagaing phongyis fought and died fighting

against the British as well as against the Japanese. We won't stay behind in this struggle."

Then we went on to discuss about the Communists and religion, landlord phongyis and"religious" fortune hunters in ~~xxxxxx~~ Buddha's robes. We saw many things eye to eye.

The unity of the oppressed classes is symbolised in the flag of the revolution adopted ~~xx~~ the Middle Burma PDF Conference of 1950. The flag consists of three golden stars in the centre of a red background with a large, red star in the upper corner near the ~~xx~~ flag-post. The red star stands for the leadership of the proletariat: the three other stars stand for the firm alliance of the workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie.

It is very much discussed in the liberated as well as in the non-liberated areas of Burma whether the national bourgeoisie should be brought into the alliance or not. These discussions are healthy and are encouraged.

But some misinformed persons accuse the forces of liberation of unnecessarily condemning the entire bourgeoisie of the country. This is not true. In its basic programme the Communist Party clearly defined its attitude to the national bourgeoisie. It clearly stated that a new capitalism would be introduced. The revolution will destroy only the compradore bourgeoisie, both politically and economically. The industrial bourgeoisie will be encouraged and helped by the government of the people. In the liberated areas, mills and factories are given the utmost possible help, with the result that the owners are co-operating with the united front of the people.

Of course, the question of alliance still remains. But the united front arises out of the march of events and out of the will of the oppressed people. It will have to be realised that ~~xx~~ in Burma, the national bourgeoisie had done very little to win the confidence of the people. In my personal opinion, if the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ national bourgeoisie come forward and prove its sincerity to struggle against the imperialists and to ~~xxxx~~ accept the hegemony of the

proletariat, there is no reason why this class should be left out in the united front.

A united front is not formed around a dinner table. It has to lay its foundations in struggles. Polite talks never give strength to any unity, deep understandings have to be arrived at.

And how the fighters for liberation wanted unity ! I remember an incident which happened when the Lower Burma PDF was being formed.

Even after the forming of the Central Organising Committee of the PDF, a united front was not achieved in the lower Burma districts. The PLA and the People's Volunteer Organisation were still clashing. Therefore the Cental Organising Committee sent a Commission to ~~form an understanding~~ bridge the differences between these two forces and to set up a PDF there.

While the talks were in progress, there was a truce along the lines. But it so happened that in a front where the PLA and the PVO had taken positions on either banks of a rivulet, shootings took place. One side was chasing some dacoits who ran away in boats, between the two boundaries. There was a mist hanging and one side could make out nothing of the other so that, while the dacoits managed to escape, the PVO and the PLA were last engaged in a thick fire. When they found out their mistake, the firing immediately stopped and the PVOs came over to the PLA , each apologising the other . One PLA comrade was killed but the commander put the embarassed PVos at their ease, saying,

"It is a sad affair of course, but we need not feel bad about it. Only, we got to build up the Lower Burma PDF at all costs."

A few days later, the united front which all these comrades had been hoping for, was won.

The People's Democratic Front of Burma is a centralised political organisation of the masses. This united front differs from the other fronts which existed before in that it is a unity based on class alliance. This force will be the main weapon in the change over of the democratic revolution to socialist revolution of the country.

And what is of the greatest importance is that the Communist Party, the party of the proletariat is accepted as the leading force within the united front. Under the leadership of this party and the beloved leader of the people, Comrade Thakin Than Tun, the revolution will triumph and the people of Burma will emerge to join hands with the free countries of the world, to work for everlasting peace and progress.

That is the reason why, in the liberated areas of this land of peacocks and gold, the people are singing this song :

In the direction our party guides
To destroy the enemy, we shall fight !
We like it and follow unswayed
Because it is the only correct way.
With us is justice
So shall victory be
Throw Nga Nu over
Hai ! Fighters ready !

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CHAPTER XVI

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"MINORITIES ON THE MARCH"

Victory for the entire people of Burma is not far ahead and its shining gate lies visible within eye-view. Nevertheless, the road forward is as yet rough and unpaved, many difficulties have yet to be overcome, and many problems cleared up. Many gaps still need to be filled, many questions answered. And one of the questions of prime importance is that of the national minorities; it would be entirely wrong for any person who considers this as small and insignificant.

Burma is a country where many nationalities / in comparison to the size and population of the country/ live within its boundaries. The Burmese constitute around 70% of the entire populace and the rest are accounted to indigenous minorities and a certain percentage of foreign groups.[1]

The largest minorities in the country are Karens, Shans, Mons, Chins and Jinghpaw /Kachins/. Many of the national minorities are again subdivided into a number of tribes and British imperialism had done comparatively very little in all these years to develop interrelations among them. In the mountainous regions where most of the minorities live, scattered about all over the vast stretches of land, communications and other forms of improvement were not established, with the result, that these tribes lived isolated from the world-isolated even from one tribe to another. They are unable to develop their language, art or culture; even among their own different tribes they had found intercourse difficult. 1931 census reported, for instance, that the Kuki-chin Language Group with 55,000 people had as many as 45 dialects among themselves.

But it was precisely the aim of the imperialists to keep the people divided, as much as possible, one from another, to cause tribal clashes and to bring about communal riots. Their policy of divide and rule was not only to bribe the upper classes and to suppress the lo-

wer but also to pitch one nation against the other. They kept the country and the people miserably divided, taught one community to hate the other and since the early days of their rule, had made it a point not to encourage relationships among different peoples. They severed the inhabitants one group from another not only by class distinction but also by racial discrimination, territorial dismemberment and suppression of healthy growth. A Burmese would take the Chin for a barbarous devil, the Karen would say the Burmese was a cunning rogue. To the Mons all Shans were smugglers and opium-addicts, the Arakanese took the Palaungs and Was as cannibals. And all along, the imperialist, with folded arms, had smiled cruelly over his chess-board. Especially they kept the minorities out from Burmese politics.

The Shans occupy most of the Eastern states on the Shan Plateau. The British had exercised their rule through the Shan Sawbwas /princes/ and, as early as 1922, had set up the so-called Federated Shan States as an "independent unit". The Shans, simple agriculturists and hunters, are cut off from the Burmese political life. Theirs is a land of precious stones and minerals, famous for its fruits and tobacco. However the people live in unimaginable poverty. They have no rights, their lives are never secure, and it was not only because wild animals or malaria and other diseases. The Sawbwas, the despots in their respective regions have all along been ruthless in their oppression of the people. No law defends the poor, but laws which gave the Sawbwas all rights to arrest or to victimise any person at their will had been implemented.

Still worse was the fate of Chins and Kachins Palaungs and Was and other minorities. They inhabit the mountainous regions on the western hills bordering India and Pakistan, the Northern Hills and the Shan Plateau bordering China, Laos and Siam. These people carry on a difficult life, their economy is so simple, money is seldom used; they cultivate rice and other cereals by means of the primitive taungya methods/or hillside type of shifting agriculture which are very tedious and exact a great amount of energy. Little was done

done to modernise these hilltribes although much had been used of them in the colonial oppression machine.

These tribes were ruled by the British through chieftains, many were kept in a very backward nature. Palaungs and Was, for instance, possess even in this middle 20th century, a very low civilisation in spite of the rule of the "cultured" British imperialism for a good number of years over Burmese territory. Patriarchal customs and low semi-slavery realtionships are retained.

The Mons present another picture. They once ruled all over Lower Burma but after their collapse in the 18th century, had become mingled so much with the Burmese that, at present, they are hardly distinguishable from the Burmans: many prominent Burmans have Mon blood. The ancient antagonism between the two nationalities, excited by the monarchs and aristocracy of both is now absent, the culture is inter-allied and the Burmese often term themselves and the country as Mon-Burmese. Even then, feudal landowners and servants of imperialism are still trying to organise clashes between these peoples. According to 1931 census, the Mons number ~~but~~ 300,000.

The Karens are the largest of all the minority groups, numbering about 2,000,000. They do not have a distinct territory like the Shans, in some places they are concentrated, in some places they live mixed with the Burmese. They live in parts of the Delta of the Irrawaddy, the Sittang Valley and in the Tenasserim. Thus inhabiting the non-isolated places they are much more progressed than either their Chin or Kachin brothers. However they also lead a hard life, many living among the less accessible jungles and mountains, and taungya cultivation was the means of living for a majority of the Karens.

The British colonial regime had used the reactionary chiefs of the minorities as one of their direct mainstays. Having bought over these backward reactionary chiefs and after giving them power to rule over their tribes, British imperialism used their services against the popular movement of the entire people. The Chins, Kachins, Shans and Karens are mobilised into their armies and police-forces: entrusted persons from

these people were appointed to military and administrative posts. Many sons of the chiefs were educated in England, they returned to Burma to serve... the foreign rule.

But the common Karen or the Kachin or any person of these minority-nationalitiesnever found his lot better in spite of the "preference" given him by the "whites" over the Burmans. He was kept low in economical development and progress: practically nothing was made, in fact, to make his life happier. These people were the most oppressed in the country, the most downtrodden, the most denied of freedom and education. Many tribes were kept in backward or in semi-backward states, a man's life always rested in the hands of his chief. Shan, Karen and Kachin labourers working in the mines would be ill paid, all their rights depended on the "kind hearts" of their employers. In fact they were semi-slaves. Unskilled labourers had to submit their energy for the most cruel and hard work, carrying heavy loads up the mountains and the like, for wages next to nothing. Education was absent in a majority of the tribes; those who received education were given in the way the "missionaries" desired. In the Chin Hills only 1.9% of the people are literate.

"Independence" on January 4th 1948 meant nothing to them. Some chieftains became ministers, a Sawbwa became "President of Burma". The upper crust from these minorities got many tempting positions. The Prime Minister Thakin Nu might come with his wife to Manaw Festival and dance with the hill-peoples.

Beyond that, there was nothing. No substantial efforts are made to raise the people's living standards, to develop their culture and to bring these hidden masses in contact with the events of the world.

Nevertheless, the oppressed peoples began to stir in the wake of the whole country's liberation upsurge. Specially sharp were the Karens who rose up in an armed revolt following the commencement of the Peoples Democratic Revolution led by the Communist Party . Many Mons also staged armed struggles.

Before discussing the pros and cons of the revolt of the Karens in relation to the People's Democratic Revolution, I would just like to report a short

course of events.

The Karens took to arms in the latter months of 1948. They seized large areas of Tenasserim and also parts of Toungoo, Pegu, Hanthawaddy, Heuzada, Insein, Maubin and some other Districts. By January 1949, they had captured Insein, only five miles away from the capital of Rangoon. In the earlier months, in some districts, groups of the People's Liberation Fighters had cooperated with the Karen National Defence Organisation, which led the Karen revolt but later, due to reactionary policies of some Karen leaders, clashes broke out between the KNDO and the PDF. The Red Flag Communists allied themselves with the KNDO.

Later, KNDO retreated from Insein and Toungoo but occupied nearly all positions east of the Sittang, their revolt spreading as far as the Shan States. Their demand was the setting up of Kawthulay, an autonomous Karen State marking the boundaries of an extensive area which included places where Karens are concentrated as well as places where they are in a minority.

This Karen revolt calls for a careful scrutiny it broke out at a time when the disorder and the confusion of the war was scarcely settled; when the Peoples Democratic Revolution had begun throughout the length and breadth of the country; when the foreign imperialist were using all forces at their command to break up the upsurge of the people; when in the whole world, the camps of peace and war had sharply been distinguished. On the one hand where there was no denying about the fact that it was the upsurge of the Karen people against oppression, facts also go to prove that on the other the revolt was mixed with unhealthy signs.

Imperialism had endeavoured to change the course of the Karen people's awakening into the channels of anti-Burmese, anti-[illegible] Communist, separatist communal riots. With their stooges taking many important leading places in the Karen National Union they tried to avert the Karen revolt into a counter revolutionary struggle.

Secret Agents like Lieutenant-Colonel Tulloch and "journalist" Alexander Campbell delivered arms and ammunitions by air and by sea to Karen chiefs. A "Friends of the Hills Peoples" Committee, headed by Sir

Reginald Dorman-Smith, ex-Governor of Burma, was fromed in London for the secret financing and political direction of the revolt. Dorman-Smith, that arch-reactionary Conservative, who had ruthlessly prosecuted the Burmese patriots, termed the Karens as the "staunchest fighters against Communism in Asia". And it is also a fact that in some KNDO bases were even some British "ex"-military personnel who were acting as "adviseres" to the Karen forces. Some Karen "leaders", the servats of Angho- American imperialism openly declared that they wanted the "support and frienship" of Great Britain. Even the press in Rangoon hinted that many Karen oprations were directed by the British Military Mission stationed in Burma.

However, it must not also be overlooked that it was also an upsurge of the Karen masses. The Karen people have long been oppressed but have entered an area of awakening. In true patriotic spirit, the Karen masses displayed their unity and courage demanding equal rights and progress. The Karen youth is worthy of respect in the great heroisms they showed in the struggle. Karen villages, alone in isolated places, could hold out any siege for many long months; their positional defence was wonderful. Karen peasants have learnt from their "Red" Burmese colleagues how to plough with guns slung over their shoulders. They had learnt from Communist-led movements that the power belongs to the people: in fact, before the KNDO uprising, many Karen villages were fighting under the leadership of the Party. They were later seized by reactionary Karen leaders and were severed all contacts with the revolution. It is an established fact therefore, that the Karen upsurge is also an uprising of the people.

Again, it must not be mistaken as if that all KNDO actions had been popular. Under the influence of some reactionary leaders, some KNDO operations had been counter-revolutionary measures. For instance, along the Sittang Plains, government forces and KNDO faced one another on the Rangoon-Mandalay highway and carried on sham battles and shellings. Actually, government forces combed the eastern side of the road while the KNDO occupied itself on the west - both of them crushing the

villages liberated by the People's liberators, destroying the bases of People's Democratic Revolution. Again, anti-communal measures like the destruction and murder by the KNDO in Maletto Village could be called nothing but counter-revolutionary. Burmese "Socialists" situated in East Rangoon, that all Karens in their streets must be "liquidated".

Thus it stood to judge the Karen revolt. Even from the few illustrations above it showed that although the Karens took to arms their revolt had not entirely assumed an anti-imperialist character: although the government armies and KNDO were engaged in battles, many traitors from both sides under mutual agreement had made it a point to crush the forces of revolution: although the popular cry against oppression was raised, reactionary Karen and Burmese leaders had done their best to bring about national hatred and communal massacres in order to divide the people and halt the revolutionary tide. Imperialists, the puppet government and the reactionary Karen leaders had worked hand in hand.

The national enmity was checked, thanks to the leadership of the Communist Party, nevertheless, clashes broke out everywhere between the KNDO and the PDF. No doubt it was a pity that much had been wasted and a great amount of harm was done by these clashes but the revolution could not relax itself to stand any obstacle which, with traces of pro-imperialist ideas, threatened the victory of the people. On the other hand it would have been fatal to continue the state of hostilities with the KNDO as the Karen upsurge gradually took a more revolutionary, popular stand. The imperialists grew alarmed at the growing tide of the Karen revolutionary awakening that it took hurried steps to smash it up. Many of their puppets were recalled, a number of Karen forces surrendered to the puppet government but the mainstream of the revolt continued under patriotic leadership.

Hence, it became clear that the revolution must assure equal rights to one and all, not only to the indigenous minorities but also to those of foreign

origin - who are citizens of Burma. All citizens, not only a Mon but an Indian as well, will be protected and have equal rights and duties with the Burmese within the boundaries of our free motherland. The revolution must assure also not only the Karens, but all minorities equal rights and freedom, the possibility to develop their dialects and languages, freedom for preservation or reform of their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. The revolution must also assure a government which would assist the minorities to develop their political, economic, cultural and educational construction work. The revolution must assure that regional autonomy shall be exercised in areas where national minorities are concentrated.

In September 1950, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Burma declared its views on the minority question and re-affirmed its Stalinist theory of the right of nations to self-determination. The Central Committe also advised the cessation of all hostilities between the KNDO and the PDF forces and to direct the spear heads against the common enemy, the Rangoon puppet government.

Recent news from Burma showed that the imperialist militarists, the puppet government forces and the reactionary minority leaders have joined hands to call off the Karen revolt but the Karen forces have not only ceased fighting the PDF on many fronts but are directing its main blows against the government.

For all the minorities in Burma it is becoming clearer day after day, that they have two roads to choose - to oppose imperialism or to support it; to establish unity and mutual aid among themselves or to create tribal wars and strife; to oppose their public enemies or to let them drag the people down into the mire of slavery; to join hands with the Burmese people or to sell their fate to the mercy of imperialism. All these are represented by the two combatting forces in the entire country, the Peoples Democratic Front or the Thakin Nu reactionary clique. There lies no other road.

And these oppressed people are gradually finding out that only the banner of the revolution can give them peace, progress and freedom. They can stand up abreast with the peoples of the whole world only when imperialism and the Thakin Nu reactionary clique are driven out from Burma.

No doubt, miracles are not performed in the middle of the 20th century, situations do not change overnight, but the national minorities in Burma have started on the march. Not only the Karens but also other minorities. Recent news from Shan States reveal that many Shan youth have set up a "People's Democratic Front" and had taken to the countryside evading arrest.

Yes, brothers in Burma are on the march!

CHAPTER XVII

AGAINST THE COMMON ENEMY

And while we brothers are on the march the enemies of peace and progress follow the daily events in Burma with sinister hatred in their hearts. They try all they could do to crush, to divide or at least confuse the revolution. Anyway it is clear for the revolutionaries that victory could not be achieved unless the people could march through the complicated situations. The enemies had set up artificial barriers between groups and classes and nationalities and unless the people could blow up these obstructions, smithereens and establish unity, it would be difficult for the revolution to triumph.

Were a map of Burma be drawn showing the situation in Burma towards the middle of March 1949, only bits and ends would be seen to have remained in the hands of the government. Of course, the inaccessible parts, the western and northern mountains need not count very much; then, only the capital of Rangoon and a very few number of towns with parts of the Shan Plateau were under the flag of the puppet Thakin Nu Governement. The population under this "Rangoon Government" would scarcely exceed 4 millions.

Then, would that mean that the other areas were totally liberated? That about 12 million people were already free ? That all these people were led by the working class and its party ?

No, things were not as easy as that. True, large numbers of people and extensive areas of land were seized from the clutches of the government but these "anti-government" forces were miserably disunited. Each group acted on its own, militarily and politically. Even trade was, in many cases, impossible between zones held by different forces.

There were various "armies", fighting against the government, as well as among themselves. The country was in a state of chaos and confusion.

There was the People's Liberation Army under the direct guidance of the Communist Party. In the zones held by this PLA, the All Burma Trades Union Congress, the All Burma Peasants' Union. the All Burma Women's Union and of course, the Party, were functioning openly.

Then, there was the People's Army led by the People's Volunteer Organisation. There was also the revolutionary Burma Army, the forces that mutinied against the government. There were even student squads, ministerial services union's squads after the month of May.

Then there was the Karen National Defence forces under the guidance of the Karen National Union. Likewise the Mons had their Mon National Defence Organisation.

Last, but not the least important, were the Red Flag Communist troops, who had taken to arms even before the 28th March 1948.

Not only these, but there were bands of robbers and thugs who, like "Chilly" Ba Yin /about whom I have mentioned in chapter IX/ put on a military colour and seized towns to ransack the people. Under the joined auspices of Burmese and Pakistan reaction, moslem groups called "Mujaheins" were terrorising the Arakan /western/ borders of Burma.

I realise how confusing it must be for the dear reader to note all these names but it would be putting it mildly if I say that he peoples of Burma were equally as confused with the situation. Each group controlled parts intermingled with those of the others: hence there was not a clear front, every village gate was a front, every field a battleground.

The people were earnestly waiting for a united front to wage a combined struggle against the Thakin Nu government.

Led by the Communist Party, the PDF was formed in March 1949 as described in chapter VIII. However clashes were taking place against the KNDO, the Red Flag Communists and of course, it is unnecessary to mention, against the robber bands and gangsters.

In the previous chapter, the reader is already acquainted with the KNDO movement, hence mention

should be made here on the Red Flag Communists.

They broke away from the Communist Party February 1946 /as already mentioned earlier/ and set up a party of their own. They had, in their frenzied ways, attacked the Communist Paryty, tried all their best to weaken it and thus, even if unintentionally, threw the people into confusion. Nevertheless, they vigorously attacked the AFPFL at the same time.

Their actions were grossly sectarian, anti-popular and reached the farthest extremes. They would not even accept joint action with the Communist Party in demonstrations against imperialism and AFPFL. They even refused to attend the Empire Communist Parties' Conference, branding it as a meeting of opportunists.

As much as their actions were not popular they began to get isolated from the masses. Seizing this opportunity, the ruling clique drove them underground but they had put up an armed resistance since then. After the ~~allied~~ Karen upsurge they allied themselves with the KNDO but ~~determined~~ clashes broke out against the PDF.

In spite of their errors, they were uncompromisingly resisting the Thakin Nu government and had liberated certain parts of land. Many Red Flag Communists including toplevel leaders, however, came to realise their errors and wanted unite with the Communist Party.

Even after the establishment of the PDF, fighting had not ceased, not only with the Red Flags and KNDO, but in many parts, with groups of People's Volunteer Organisation which refused to accept the PDF leadership. Thus in many parts, like in Lower Burma, the PDF forces clashed with the other "anti-government" groups. In 1949 JUne, for instance, the southern liberated areas had to face 1/ government troops in Pegu town and other places 2/ PVO troops in Thongwa, etc., 3/ Red Flags on the Pegu + Insein border 4/KNDO troops east of the Sittang river and also in entrenched villages right in the heart of the liberated zone and 5/ robber bands in Thanatpin.

Later, the PDF was formed with a major group of the Lower Burma PVOs.

Meanwhile, the PVO leadership fell into a reaction-dominated central committee. These representatives of reaction tried to disrupt the PDF Middle Burma Conference, and fighting broke out between the PDF and the dissenting PVOs. Many PVOs remained within the united front but a greater number broke themselves apart.

Despite the fact that they broke away from the PDF, all patriotic elements within the united front would vehemently protest, were someone to brand all of them as traitors and reactionaries. The agents of the government who crept into the PVO and managed to win over a section, wanted all of them to surrender to the government. Some groups did, influenced by treacherous propaganda. But the more patriotic elements carried on their fight against the government, at the same time, a clashing with the forces of the People's Democratic Front.

It was clear. That had been a demonstratie on of midule clas vaccillation in the period of revolution. But what is the middle class ? The middle is a section of the people and not a part of the enemy. Unity must be established at all costs in order that the oppressed peoples would join together to deal a final blow gagainst imperialism and its representative in the country, the Thakin Nu government.

As it were, things had looked none too bright. The rear was never safe for any of the "anti-government" forces. Man-power and ammunition were wasted on one another, internal growth of the "freed" territories was difficult.

It had become a great necessity in the interests of the revolution to come to an understanding among these forces.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party called for a cessation of hostilities among the PDF forces and the Red Flag Communists, KNDO and the PVO groups which were continuing their re-

sistance against the government. The Central Committee pointed out, that the interests of all the groups lay in the overthrow of the Government; that this government was responsible for all the sufferings of the people; that as long as this government lasts, neither freedom nor peace of any sort could be expected. The Central Committee called upon all groups to direct their blows on the main enemy, the Thakin Nu puppet government.

An enthusiastic response answered to this call. In December 1950, the Red Flags not only issued a joint statement with the Communist Party but also with the PDF for the cessation of hostilities among the Red Flag and PDF forces and to ~~deree~~ direct the attacks on the puppets of Imperilism and feudalism - the Thakin Nu government. Not stopping at this point alone, the joint statement with the Communist Party mentioned that both parties will strive to set up a People's Democratic Dictatorship, oppose the warmongers' plans and to ally with the Peace camp headed by the Soviet Union. Steps are now being taken to form the two parties into one.

Likewise, it was reported from the liberated parts, fighting had ceased with the KNDO and PVO forces and all are now concentrating against the common enemy.

However it must be mentioned here that all the fighters for freedom are aware that such a thing as unconditional unity or a unity without basis, is erroneous and unstable. Unity cannot be achieved by merely shaking haneds. Ridges have to be bridged, gaps have to be filled up. For instance, members of the ~~Pdf~~ PDF must understand that, on principle, the demand of the Karen masses for Kawthulay autonomous state was just and correct, while on the other hand, the Karen people must realise that the existence of pro-imperialist views among certain sections of their ranks are harmful to the cause not only of the Burmans but also theirs. Both the forces must work for the freedom of the entire country from the colonial yoke, for unity among the Burmese and Karen peoples and for peace in the whole world.

Only unity based on sound understanding can meet the cherished ~~eeim~~ desire of the entire country - and the fighters for freedom realise this.

As much as the patriots drew close to one another, the masked spies and agents showed their true colours. Some so-called PVOs not only surrendered to Thakin Nu but also joined the government army to fight against the revolution. The so-called leaders of the KNDO are now collaborating either with the puppet government itself, or with other landlord parties, completely isolated from the Karen people.

Consolidate the unity and the next moment, the field is ours.

CHAPTER XVIII

DOLLARS, POUNDS AND RUPEES

Revolution in Burma, young in its years is already meeting, not only internal reaction but foreign intervention as well. Certainly this is not much of a surprise to anybody, the government that rules Burma today are the watchdogs of foreign exploiters: the revolutionists do not expect that they would have to combat only against Thakin Nu, but the necessity to face his masters as well have all along been as clear as crystal. The revolution today marches against Imperialism and Feudalism, against exploiters and warmongers from Great Britain, United States, and if you please, from India, Pakistan and Ceylon as well.

Nothing need be explained regarding Great Britain, everything is clear: besides, enough has already been mentioned in this book regarding monopolists from that country. But why India, Pakistan and Ceylon?

In spite of the fact that these are semi-colonaial and semi-feudal countries, a person can not be such a simpleton not to expect exploitation by the "upper crust" of those countries not only over their own people but over the peoples of neighbouring countries as well. In this, the sharing of plunder with native exploiters as minor shareholders, lie the strength of British colonialism, and, yes, British "Labour" Imperialism.

Even apart from the unfair "debts" which Mr. Attlee had forced Burma to promise to pay to India - i.e. $ 145,000,000 according to the Anglo-Burmese treaty of 1947; even apart from the shares the Indian Tata family and others have in monopolist concerns that exploit Burma, Indian capital had bored deep into the country.

The most despised by the Burmans are the Chettyars who came from Chettinad in Madras Presidency, South India. Even in the last three decades of the last century they had attracted widespread comment by their

ways of money-lending to simple Burmese peasants. They were the most ruthless moneylenders: the interest rates on land mortgages were 15 to 50% per annum! Gradually, the Burmese peasants began to lose their land, and the best ones at that, to these cut-throat usurers. In 1930, in the 13 principal rice-growing districts of Burma, the Chettyars held 570,000 acres of land out of a total of 9,249,000 or roughly 6 %. By 1937 in the same area they had seized as huge an acreage of 2,446,000 out of ~~9,650,00~~ 9,650,000, that is, about 25%[1]

The Pegu Settlement Report of 1932-34 revealed that Chettyars owned 36% of the land in Pegu District: the Insein Settlement Report of 1933-35 showed 31 percent of the land owned by Chettyars and another 13% by absentee landlords of "other races", presumably non-Chettyar Indians and Chinese for the most part. Land, that the Chettyars hold in Burma, were calculated in 1947 to be worth £ 56.25 millions, a sum larger than the total of all foreign investment in oil, mines, timber, rice, rubber, rail, tram, and river transport and Municipal bonds[2]

The Chettyars not only meddled in Agricultural relations but also elsewhere, in real estates etc. There were 1300 firms, members of the Nattukottai Chettyars Association, Rangoon, plus about 200 other Chettyar firms, their headquarters mainly concentrated in Mogul Street in the capital. Their agencies were set up in a thorough network, in big villages amidst the rich rice fields. These Chettyar money-lenders are hated not only by the Burmese, but by Indian peasants in Burma as well.

Indian merchants /Indians, Pakistanis, Ceylonese/ control more than a half of Burma's rice exports, there are many rice-mills, saw-mills etc. owned by Indians. Travelling all alongthe Rangoon - Insein Road from the University to Sangu, one would find a series of factories for aluminium, hosiery, umorellas, soaps and rubber with an addition of a chain of tanneries. All these were owned by Indians. Indian concerns are scattered all over the country:

of course, I am not mentioning anything about the Moslem Kaka groceries which exist nearly in every quarter and village of Burma.

A large portion of export and import trade were controlled by Mogul Street. Indian enterprises dominated Burma's imports to quite a considerable extent.--- the Jamshedpur steel mill supplied a large part of Burma's needs for steel, the coal fields of Bengal and Orissa monopolised Burma's market, and so on. Much of ocean shipping lies also in Indian hands: Indian banks in Burma complete the picture. Even after the so-called independence of Burma which gave some Burmese bourgeoisie a nibole in the pie, the grip of Indian capital is still firm.

That was the reason why, when the People's Democratic Revolution made felt its growth, not only the British government, but the governments of India, Pakistan and Ceylon rushed forth to prop up the tottering Thakin Nu clique in Burma. The people bravely faced the interventionists.

From the very beginning the British Military Mission had directed operations on the government side against the people. They are in fact, the bosses of the whole show in waging the civil war in the country.

Even when it was only a few months after the armed resistance had broken out, a new British loan was given to Thakin Nu, supplied in the form of 13 airplanes, 4 sea-going frigates, 25 powder guns and other infantry arms and ammunitions.

A few years after, because the puppets lost a good many of their arms in the fashion of Chiang Kai-shek gang, "the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference held in London decided again to strengthen their faithful servant. After the 2nd Conference held in Colombo, a six million pound sterling aid, in which the capitalist-landlord governments of India, Pakistan and Ceylon threw in their shares side by side with the government of the United Kingdom, was given to the Nu government. Under the guise of

bringing sacred relics of Buddhism, arms and ammunitions were transported from Ceylon and India in a battleship. Not only this, towards the end of 1949, the liberated areas of Burma reported that 3000 Gurkha and Lushai troops from India were operating against the people in Magwe and other districts.

Study of the struggle in Burma itself can reveal what these governments stand for, and whom they represent. The "Labour " government and "Socialist" Mr.Attlee do not stand for the working class of Great Britain, they stand for the monopolists that suck the blood of the Burmese people dry. Another "Socialist" Pandit Nehru and his government do not stand for the common Indian but for the big business: they do not stand forthe poor Indians in Zeyawaddy, but champion the cause of big bosses and Chettyars. Does Nehru stand for the peasant of Telengana and the worker of Bombay? No, he stands for the zemindars and Tatas, the mainstays of imperialism. Likewise are the governments of Pakistan and Ceylon, their hands stained with the Burmese blood. The peoples of Burma will not succumb beneath their pressure, they will not rest until Thakin Nu and his gang are overthrown and brought before a people's court: this will be our answer to foreign intervention. We will unite, not only with the free Chinese neighbours and Chinese domiciles in Burma, but also with the oppressed Indian neighbours and domiciles in the country. The peoples of Burma are aware that the progressive press in India had always kept the slogan "Hands off Burma!" raised against the ruling cliques: they are happy to have the assitance of Indian peasants on the Burmese fields. The times when the peoples could be tricked by communal riots have passed, Indian and Burmese brothers stand hand in hand opposed against Anglo-Americam imperialism as well as against Indian and Burmese reaction.

In the mad-dog rush of foreign reaction "to save the country from Communism" Wall Street is not left far behind; even into this private colony of British monopolists / it is considered that Burma

is in the zone of Br itish influence/ American capital has penetrated. Slowly but firmly, American bosses are looting footholds from the British, and the latter, anxious to consolidate their stay in the country had to concede. Shares in the British firms are falling gradually into American hands. An American director has been appointed to the board of the Burma Corporation. The United States firm of Behre Dolbrar and ~~Brothers Company~~ Co.'s consulting, mining engineers and geologists have been allotted to appointments as general consultants and technical advisors on minerals to the government of Burma: The Americans have also taken a superior hand than the British by giving an $ 11,000,000 E.C.A. Aid to Thakin Nu and establishing an "Economic Commission" in Rangeon. It was also learnt that the US "aid" to Burma contained a secret clause for a 35 million war loan. This was the price for which Thakin Nu sold Burma to the American warmongers.

What is this "aid" that the Americans gave to Burma ? What were the contents of the American Aid Agreement signed on the 13th September 1950 ?

Griffins

The agreement was the outcome of the notorious Griffins' mission which had been touring the countries of South East Asia, rallying the forces of Anti-Communism, Anti-Soviet Union and Anti-People's China. By this agreement, United States agreed to give eight to eleven million dollar aid to Burma.

But the very first clause of the agreement was well worded to the effect that in the distribution of the American Aid, the United States Government would always have the right to intervene, how to use, where to distribute, at what prices they are to be fixed and even in the question as to who should take charge of the distribution.

Then drawing up a long complicated connection between their aid and the country's economy, the Americans took the right to meddle in the entire economic life of the country. In the distribution of Burma's manpower and material resources, in laying down economic plans, in foreign currency exchange and in foreign trade, the United States government

has now a say whenever it chooses to.

The proceeds obtained from the sale of these "aid" goods must be entered in the Union Bank of Burma under a separate heading, and from this; the expenditure of the "American Aid Mission" must be met. When the Burmese government wants to spend from these accounts, consent must be obtained from the United States government.

The Burmese gained nothing from this agreement. The people do not need food, they are self sufficient in this respect : besides, Burma is a rice exporting country. They need clothing, but this also could be obtained in return for rice from India and Japan. In fact Burma had a balance of 37 million rupees in Japan. Burma needs machinery and factories for the industrialisation of the country. What Burma actually needed was not mentioned.

The first load of aid was cotton bales from Japan and as soon as these arrived, the price went up, from 35 rupees to 55. In fact, the price of cotton had already been raised by about 20 cents a pound to be pocketed by the American middle-man. Then came medicines which were not useful to the masses followed by other trash. In short, Burma became a dumping ground for American surplus goods.

From these it was clear that the so-called American aid to Burma was nothing but the submission of Burma's entire economy into American hands in return for rags and bones. Moreover when the economy was subject to their management / mismanagement/ they also obtained the power to play their hand in the political life of the whole country.

For instance, the Americans have proposed a plan. They would set up hospitals in the Shan States: they would teach the Shans to become good doctors. Karens are mostly illiterate: therefore the Americans consider it their duty to open schools in the Karen areas. Kachin territories are ideal for mulberry worms: thus it would be best to bring worms from America and teach the people how to raise them.

Not only worms, but the best pigs in the States will also be brought over and the Karens will be taught how to breed them.

When they talked about pigs and worms, the people were wondering about the British Military Mission and the American Economic Mission. What are they up to ? It was just a clear cut plan. Their idea was to get in direct touch with the minorities, the Shans, Karens and Kachins and to organise them into their anti-peace and anti-people activities. They were all the time cunningly plotting to kill two birds with a stone: to win the confidence of these people and to make them oppose the national upsurge, to make them go further on an anti-communist crusade and to make cannon fodder out of these people in a war against peace-loving countries.

But the people are seeing through their curtain of philanthrophy and are demanding that their aid be stopped. Even members of the government machinery got disgusted with all, their doings and resigned from their posts.

Even this much is but one part of the question. As the reader must have already guessed, the Americans did have other arrangements up their sleeves and those, we shall discuss in the following chapter .

CHAPTER XIX

PUPPETS AND PEOPLE

One hears quite a bit about Burma's activities in the United Nations Organisation. The representative of the Thakin Nu government often sides with the Soviet Union on issues like — the admission of People's China to the UNO, against the branding of People's China as an aggressor, so and so forth. Chiang Kai-shek's man even expressed his sorrow on the attitude taken by the Burmese goverment. Very recently, Burma refused to attend the San Francisco conference to sign the American-dictated Japanese Peace Treaty. Members of the Thakin Nu government even criticised the United States in very strong words. Time and again Thakin Nu announced the neutrality policy of his government.

In many chapters of the book, I have accused this government as a reactionary, anti-people and anti-peace clique. Should our view be changed because of the actions mentined above ?

To understand them better, we shall go into a few details that throw more light on Thakin Nu and his gang.

In 1936, Thakin Nu appraised the student movements. But in 1950 he demanded that students interested in politics leave their universities.

In 1938, he wrote a book called "The Emancipation of the Poor". In it he clearly stated that the road to emancipation lies with Bolshevism. Today he says that in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, "even brothers ans sisters, fathers and sons cannot trust one another: freedom of speech does not exist."

In 1948 , he mentioned in his 14 point programme, "We must study Marxism." In 1951, he cried "We cannot accept Marxism which is opposed to religion !"

There would be no end if one were to enumerate comparisons of Thakin Nu's own utterances of yesterday and today. The people are undoubtedly against imperialism and are for friendship with the Soviet Union and China. The people are for revolutionary changes and social developments. To curb the people's upsurge, he raised, from time to time, revolutionary slogans and presented demagogic plans. He never hesitates to withdraw or alter these promises whenever he desired.

In the sphere of the United Nations Organisation even, I would like to draw the attention of ~~my dear~~ the reader to the government's attitude towards Korea. It was a shameful affair that it had nodded consent to the US invasion of our brother nation. If the strength of the revolution had not been gaining in the country, this traitor clique might even have sent Burmese troops to fight under the Americans against the Korean people.

This is by no means a blank exageration. The puppet prime minister of Burma had often pronounced that America was "on the correct side in the Korean affair". The people, on the other hand, were against the government decision and sympathised with the Korean people. They rejoiced whenever they received news of Korean victories and this Prime Minister, very much ill at ease, said;

"Some people are overjoyed to hear about the victories of the Red Chinese and Koreans in Korea. The Americans are just making a tactical retreat, they will advance again..."

Ugh ! This filthy demagogue !

There was a time when certain organisations voiced their fears that Burma was becoming a base of the warmongers. He flared up, saying that this was just "red" propaganda. He announced that his government desired friendship and peace with the neighbouring countries.

The very moment he was uttering these words newspapers /they are, by no means progressive ones/ revealed that French planes, en-route to bomb Vietnam, landed at the Mingaladon aerodrome near Rangoon. On another date, newspapers again disclosed that British jet planes bound for Malaya landed at the same aerodrome.

What, then, is their neutrality ?

As had already been mentioned, even when the independence mask was adorned in 1948, Burma had never for once ceased to be a military servant state of imperialism. Treaties between the British government and Thakin Nu clique gave British troops many favourable conditions. At any moment they could land in the country, use air-fields and sea-ports, interfere and order all military operations of the puppet government. They have the right to go through the country to any front they might have opened in South East Asia.

Popular opinion compelled the Burmese government to exchange diplomatic relations with China, but the true intentions of these servants of imperialism are far from friendly. They had given free rein to the Kuomingtangites even in the capital of Rangoon where they resort to terror against the progressive Chinese and Chinese People's Schools. On the other hand, the intelligence service had kept trail after many Chinese who are working for the welfare of their Chinese brothers and for the World Peace Movement. Progressive Chinese Press is also subject to oppression and obstruction.

Not only these, but major unfriendly attitudes towards China can be recorded. Take the famous Burma Road for instance. This had been China's life line during the war. Even after the Chinese People's Republic was proclaimed, this road had been used by Burmese and Chinese traders: quite a good business was carried on. Now, under the command of Wall Street, the Burmese government had entered into the American blockade of China, by banning the export of "strategic materials".

Along another route called the Ledo in North Burma, Americans were reported to be active, planning for an attack into Yunnan in South China.

Once, officers of the American Embassy and some staff members of the USA Air Force visited Myitkyina and Saton, areas close to the borders of China. What could these gentlemen be doing there in those remote zones other than hatching up plans to invade China ? Do they want to start another Korea ?

In return for the Economic Aid from the United States, the Burmese government had agreed to turn the country into an American war-base. They get arms and ammunitions to suppress the internal uprisings: they receive also necessary equipments to repair or construct seaports and airfields for the American war-mongers to use.

The Burmese government is enlarging and repairing sea-ports and airfields: in some places new ones are being constructed. For instance, not far from the Sino-Burmese borders, at towns called Mandalay, Lashio, Momeik and Myitkyina, huge air-bases are being prepared for American bombers. The Mingaladon aerodrome near Rangoon is being enlarged to become the fourth largest aerodrome in the whole world.

Not only these but American agents are busily working in this country, carrying on subversive activities against People's China. And their plots, in spite of the censorship of the semi-fascist government, have leaked out very much, much more than they could appreciate.

Thus, it is an open secret now that the Americans are regrouping the Kuomingtang troops in Burma and Siam to make an assault on People's China.

When the KMT troops ran away into Burma, the Burmese government had hastened to "defend the country from the invaders". But what it actually did was to cut off these troops from coming into direct contact with the guerillas. The government quietly disarmed them and kept them safe in the capital of Mandalay and elsewhere, till, of course, the Americans were able to take over.

Some estimates state that about 20,000 of these men are being reorganised in Burma alone. Indonesian news sources state that Chiang Kai-shek's

men on the Sino-Burmese borders are under the command of the American 101 Espionage group and that the US command in Bangkok had sent two American agents to confer with the leaders of these forces. Recent news from Rangoon reveal that 14 American officers were in command of these men and that they are being supplied from America and rice from Thailand. The Burmese government is also being ordered to supply these troops.

Even the rank and file of Thakin Nu's army consider the idea of putting up with foreign troops on Burmese territory. Some sections even demanded that they be sent to fight against the Kuomingtang like the Shan Guerillas who are operating under the leadership of the People's Democratic Front.

They do not realise, however, that it was not an extraordinary case. Similar to the chain of Atlantic Pact countries in the west, another chain is being set up by the Anglo-Americans to wage a war against the Soviet Union and China. This chain of warbases spread from Japan in the north down to Singapore in the south, and the Burmese government, in spite of all its neutrality bluff, is also participating in the warmongering plans.

However, it needs also be mentioned here, that the Burmese government had cast many a vote in the UNO in support of peace and friendship among nations. Before we value these votes, it is necessary again to probe into facts how they came to be cast in that manner.

Roughly speaking, Thakin Nu government has lost all influence or hold on the people in the liberated areas. On the other hand, it is but natural, that even a government like his would have to give some moments of thpught to the people: it is necessary for him to keep the confidence of the people, at least of the government controlled zones.

That was why these reactionaries raised leftist slogans, promising heaven itself for the

people. Their programmes resembled those of a Communist Party, with a single difference -- they never trouble to carry them out. They had promised the nationalisation of the key industries but failed to carry out a resolute battle against the monopolists. They made an attempt to nationalise the derelict Irrawaddy Flotilla Company -- then fizzled out into the nationalisation of the "steel and atomic energy", two industries which are entirely non-existant in Burma. In fact they supported the companies like Burma Corporation, they called in more and more foreign capital, they promised certain monopolists that their industries would not be nationalised for a long period to come.

Then they promised land to the peasants. The Land Reform Law they passed was by no means comparable to the Land Reform of the liberated areas: even then they had shelved the law away in some quiet corner.

The standard of living of the middle classes also became worse. Taxes of all sorts, ridiculous, heavy and unbearable, became too much of a burden for the urban people. The mismanagement of foreign trade also threw a lot of people engaged in cottage industry into starvation, even small importers and exporters went bankrupt -- the trade going into monopolist hands.

Apart from the blunders made in the home affairs, the foreign policy of the government in its attitude to the Soviet Union, China and Korea also became a matter to lead the people towards revolt. These and the victories of the People's Democratic Front in the liberated areas made the people of the non-liberated parts raise their voices against the government.

The first outbreak was on May Day celebrations of 1950 when Thakin Lwin, the president of the Trades Union Congress/Burma/ and a leading member of the Socialist Party, attacked the government for not establishing contacts with the Soviet Union and for the submission of Burmese economy into the hands

of foreign monopoly.

This was an open mutiny within the AFPFL, the party in power. This was the reflection of the discontentment of the masses in the government controlled areas. Later it was followed by revolts in the hitherto toy-shop Parliament, regarding the Korean question. Thakin Lwin and the Executive Committee of the TUC/B/ were thrown out of the AFPFL. Immediately, forty prominent members of the Socialist Party, including about a dozen members of Parliament resigned and a new party, the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party, was founded in December 1950, in opposition to the government. This party pledged itself to a policy of national anti-imperialist front and world peace, vowing to follow the teachings of Marxism and Leninism.

And this was not the only split. In January 1951, the All Burma Peasants' Organisation, hitherto led by the Socialist Party, convened a congress in Rangoon. 250 delegates from 50 townships and 16 distr icts voted for support of the Workers' and Peasants' Party programme.

One month later, the Trades Union Congress /Burma/ also met. This congress, attended by a delegation from the WFTU proved to be further blow to the self-styled socialist government. 172 delegates representing 20,000 workers, adopted a general programme to fight and exterminate imperialism and to march forward to the ultimate realisation of a Socialist State in Burma. The congress also decided to change the name of the organisation to the"Burma Trades Union Congress" leaving the name of TUC/B/ to a handful of unions which still co-operates with the Socialist Party.

Simultaneously, other mass organisations-- such as those of the students in the non-liberated areas/All Burma Federation of Students' Unions/ the employees of the government offices /the Federation of Services Unions/ and small shop owners -- also raised their voices against the government policy. All these forces are trying to join their forces

to form a People's Democratic Front.

Defiance in all forms, against the Thakin Nu clique, took place all over the government-controlled areas. Workers in factories struck, notwithstanding the threats of the government, shops and cinema halls closed down in protest against heavy taxes. ~~Once, in the middle of 1950,~~

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Once, in the middle of 1950, two bye-elections were held, one in a constituency of Rangonn and ~~another~~ the other in Akyab.

In the Rangoon constituency, Thakin Nu's candidate was returned, after great laborious efforts by the top-notches of their AFPFL organisation. But the figures revealed how little the people had confidence not only in the government but ~~also~~ even in the very political structure of the "Union of Burma": Out of 49526 electors, only 5725 casted. Of this the AFPFL candidate claimed only 4326 votes !

In Akyab, the people took a different stand. The AFPFL candidate was challenged by one U Kyaw Min, ex- Indian Civil Service. The latter, an old servant of British imperialism was by no means a favourite of the people, but "what is the use of a parliament in Rangoon while our own liberation forces are close at hand ?" The people threatened to vote for U Kyaw Min. And vote they did, in spite of all bribery, threats and dramatical pious acts of Buddhism by Thakin Nu himself. The next day, after the results were known, found the members of the AFPFL committee in Akyab going into a determined fist fight among themselves.

Not only in such elections but also in other spheres, heroic revolts of the people broke out in all parts. When under the High Treason Act, the government condemned Bo Tun Sein, the leader of the Dalla dockyard workers, to the gallows; all the democratic forces protested against the sentence. The protest found so much mass support that the government was forced to release Bo Tun Sein.

The Thakin Nu clique had already had their heads filled with terror at the growth of the armed revolutionary forces, and, when such revolts broke

in their areas and within their own ranks were added to the whole atmosphere, they were thrown into a panic. That is the reason why they had shown a "progressive voice" in the UNO, but there need be little doubt that this trick had first been consented to by the City and Wall Street.

Anyway, trick or no trick, these actions arose out of the true pressure of the masses. In other words, they are the voices of the people delivered through a possible medium, hence distorted in varying degrees, to the world. That is the reason why those votes in the UNO must be given the value they truely deserve.

By their daily actions, the people of Burma are showing, contrary to the actions of the government, that they want friendship with nations and peace in the whole world.

The world peace movement found a home in Burma. Again, the Thakin Nu clique had tried to confuse the people, propagating that peace meant the laying down of arms and submission to the ruling class. This was what had already been mentioned, the Peace- within-one-year Plan.

Through this curtain of lies, the world peace movement found its way. In the non-liberated parts itself, the World Peace Committee was organised and the campaign for the Stockholm Appeal brought forth as many as four million signatures, in the government controlled areas. Meetings and conferences endorsed the decisions of the Warsaw Congress and the signature campaign for a ~~Five Power~~ Five Power Peace Pact is also gaining momentum.

In the liberated areas, as soon as the ~~Prague~~ Paris-Prague Congress of the Defenders of World Peace closed, pamphlets in every form, printed or mimeographed, typed or handwritten, flew from one village to another propagating about the congress. Discussions and meetings had the Peace Movement as an agenda. The people also raised a slogan "Our fight for National Independence is the fight for World Peace !" At present, the World Peace Committee of

the liberated areas of Burma has been formed and the people ~~of Burma~~ are proud to see their beloved leader Thakin Than Tun as the Chairman of the organisation. Latest news from the liberated areas reveal that an intense signature campaign for the Five Power Peace Pact is going on there and despite all difficulties ~~facing the liberated areas in their struggle for consol~~ they have as their target as high a figure as three millions.

And the people believe that friendship with the Soviet Union and People's China is of great ~~impo~~ importance to the fate of their country. They look upon the people of Soviet Union and People's China as their teachers, their leaders and their true brothers.

CHAPTER XX

THE STAR OF REVOLUTION

As if it had been only yesterday, I remember the celebrations we made in the liberated areas on the birth of the Chinese People's Republic. At that time I was in a small village in an out of the way corner of our zones. The news came only a day in advance before the celebrations and at once the people in the village cheered and rejoiced, sang and danced. Children ran into forests to bring back their fathers and brothers who were cutting wood: sampans and boats were hailed to the banks to be told about the happy tidings.

All night, the people could not sleep. I remember that the wind was chilly, but bonfires were lit up and the people sat around talking excitedly. Some activists were already drawing up posters and banners for the march. A member of the People's Guerillas, an established artist in more than seven villages, in co-operation with a courier girl, fished out a small picture of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and reproduced a huge portrait from it. When they had finished they felt miserable, because it was difficult to say whether the portrait could really be Chairman Mao's. I had to go to their rescue and praise the good points in it, telling them to write the name under the portrait. And in bold letters the word "Mao Tse-tung" was written : now everybody would know that it was Chairman Mao. The portrait of Comrade Stalin was much more easy, for the artist was used to drawing it; the unmistakable moustach and, on a suggestion from the courier girl, a pipe added, made one and all acknowledge that it was the portrait of the world's greatest leader ~~portrait~~.

In the morning, about ten villages marched to a centre shouting slogans and waving their banners. Red flags fluttered in the wind as the people shouted: "May Stalin live over a hundred years !" "May Chair-

Comrade

man Mao Tse-tung live over a hundred years". May one live over a hundred years is the Burmese equivalent for "Long live"). All over the liberated areas and even in the non- liberated parts, the people celebrated the victory of the Chinese brothers. This was the reason why Thakin Nu government had to recognise the People's Government as soon as it was able.

Yes. The Burmese people celebrated the liberation of China as if it had been their own emancipation. And they have good reasons for doing so.

The influence of the Chinese Liberation Struggle on Burma is great : the Burmese people gained a lot of lessons from it. Burma, as a semi-feudal and a semi-colonial country has nearly all conditions similar to the China of Chiang Kai-shek's days, and the Thoughts of Mao Tse-tung; based on the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, could be applied in many details, to ~~our struggle~~ her own struggle. To mention but a few, the strategy against superior arms, the land reform, People's administrative system and many others are learnt by the Burmese patriots from the Chinese Revolution. Without these lessons learnt from the Chinese people, the struggle of Burma could not have succeeded to such high levels as is being attained today. The people of Burma are following the exact path taken by her heroic neighbours.

Thus, the establishment of the People's Republic of China greatly stimulated the fight of the Burmese people. It is a proof that the path they have been taking is correct. It raises their hopes that in the very manner the Chinese people have attained their victory, and emerged triumphant and invincible, they, the people of Burma will also be victorious and free. That is the reason why the Chinese people and their leaders are so very near and dear to our people.

While writing about the great and direct influence of China on our country, we shall, by no means forget the great strength given to us by the People's Democracies ~~of Europe~~ and the People's

Republics ~~of Asia~~. Their definite march towards Peace and Socialism, their spirit of solidarity with the peoples of the colonial and semi-colonial countries are heartily appreciated by the Burmese people. Burma has also learnt a lot from their struggle and the victory of the working class and other oppressed people over the exploiting classes in these countries.

And last, /purposely last, of course/, I would like to mention the profound gratitude of the Burmese people to the great people of the Soviet Union, the Bolshevik Party and Comrade Stalin. It was the echo of the great October Revolution that sent Burma on her road to freedom and educated the oppressed workers and peasants to unite. The Burmese people are indebted to Comrade Stalin and the Party of Lenin not merely because of the fact that the Communist Party of Burma is steeled in the Bolshevik spirit, but also of the very existence of the class concious revolutionary movement in our country. It was the guidance of the Soviet Union that the patriotic fighters of Burma looked forward to, in the struggle against Japanese Fascism. ~~If there ever are progressive ideologies in Burma, followed by the people in ever growing numbers, they are~~ The teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin are deeply rooted in our country. For the Burmese people, Stalin means Emancipation and Freedom; Stalin means People's Power and Strength; Stalin means Peace and Progress; Stalin means Socialism and Communism. For all these, the Burmese people look forward to the great Soviet Union for leadership and pledges to follow the road taken by these people.

And these are the people who show us how to love life and peace in a revolutionary manner. Burma wants Peace. Burma wants friendship with other countries -- not only with the Soviet Union, China, the People's Democracies and the People's Republics, but also with all other countries which love freedom and peace and respect the sovereignty and territory of the Burmese people. The people of Burma are determined that they would stand in the

camp of Peace and Progress headed by the Soviet Uninn and opposed to imperialism, aggressive wars and colonialism.

For such a policy that is kept, for the clear cut views towards the Soviet Union and the entire camp od Peace, it has been thrown against the revolutionary fighters that they are receiving help from the foreign Communists. The Anglo-Americans and the Burmese puppets use to howl that the Burmese "Communists" are getting help from the "Reds" outside.

When they simply say"help", we do not deny. Why should we, when we are receiving invaluable help from the Soviet Union, China and other countries in the form of the wise teachings of the proletarian leaders and experiences from their struggles ?

And yes. Stalin and Mao Tse-tung armed us. They armed us with a strong theory, how to unite, how to fight and how to win.

Yes, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung guides us in every phase of our struggle. In every battle fought in Burma, there is, if you like, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. In every distribution of land, they are there: They are with us in jail, in freedom: in defeat and in victory.

But their help to us do not come in quietly through the back doors. Their help is no secret. Their help is extended not only to the liberated parts but also to the non-liberated parts -- even the Thakin Nu clique can get this help if because it is within reach to all people. Only, they do not want to accept such help.

Instead these traitors accept the warmongering American "Aid" and monopolist Commonwealth "loans". They get help from their masters in the form of arms and ammunition to kill the people. Aeroplanes and bombs, guns and gun-powder, rifles and bullets -- all these filthy "help" had been dumped on them by the foreign exploiters.

And they have the audacity to point their bloody fingers at the revolutionary fighters accusing them of getting foreign help !

To answer frankly, we do get arms from foreign countries. Yes, from the United States of America, from Britain and from India. We receive them, however, through a transport officer, otherwise Prime Minister Thakin Nu, also known as the Chiang Kai-shek of Burma.

Even as I write these last lines I can feel the confidence and the vigour of all the comrades fighting for the liberation of the entire people. I remember, for instance, the day we celebrated the October Revolution in the liberated areas. In the morning there had been meetings and in the evening after dinner, there were discussions.

It was pretty cold in the forested mountains and dew was dripping from the leaves high above. After the discussion, I came out and joined some comrades grouped round a fire.

Tired and cold as I was, I took an armful of straw from a shed and strewing them over the damp earth, lay down by the fire. Through the clearing up above, I could see the tropical winter sky.

A couple, Comrade Myint Maung and his wife came out of the hut and joined me.

"Are you tired, or, just being plain lazy?" they asked me. After a while they left me alone and began talking about the demonstration they attended in the morning. They were particularly excited when they recalled how their young son, raising his fist again and again, had shouted, "Stalin -- Mao Tse-tung --Thakin Than Tun !" "Stalin -- Mao Tse-tung --Thakin Than Tun !"

Comrade Myint Maung lay down beside me , using my right arm as a pillow.

"Look up comrades," he said,"there's the star high above, the Star of Revolution !"

But his wife differed. She placed the palm of her hand on his chest and softly corrected,

"No, you silly! The star of Revolution is not so far away. It is here. In the heart ..."

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Anyway, the Star of Revolution is everywhere, indestructable, invincible. It is everywhere; even when a comrade falls, the star of revolution shines in his pool of blood. And with this blood we dye the revolutionary flag -- the flag we shall carry forward right through the gates of freedom, to the palace of World Peace...

MINN LATT

MESSAGE TO ALL PARTISANS OF PEACE IN EVERY LAND AND TO THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD CONGRESS FOR PEACE.

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Men and Women Partisans of Peace in Every Land,

On benalf of People's Democratic Front of Burma, uniting in its ranks, the immense majority of the toiling peoples of Burma, irrespective of their race, nationality, sex, religion and political convictions, we send you our fraternal greetings on this day, October 2nd., International Fight-For-Peace day.

We support without reserve the decisions of the Paris Congress for Peace and welcome the establishment of the Permanent Committee of the Congress, which is to co-ordinate and direct the efforts of the peoples on behalf of peace.

We are convinced that the movement, for Peace, which to-day numbers hundred of millions in its ranks and which is steadily growing is capable of averting the threat of another war.

We pledge ourselves to support and promote to the utmost the propaganda and organisational activities undertaken by the Permanent Committee of the World Congress for Peace aimed at uniting all the forces battling for peace and against war.

The imperialists to-day are preparing for another World War, frenziedly piling up armaments, trying to terrify everybody with pernicious hate propaganda.

Anglo-American imperialists are the instigators of a new War that will be a war against the entire human race. They have initiated the Atlantic Pact, while the American and British people, like all the other peoples of the World, do not want War. Anglo-American imperialists have induced war hysteria and are framing it by every means at their

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command.

We believe that the World War is not inevitable. It can and must be averted.

The forces standing for peace are incalculable. The incendiaries of a new War have not and cannot have the peoples' support. As has been said by Comrade Stalin, the great leader of the Soviet Union, "the horrors of the recent war are still too fresh in the memory of the peoples, and the public forces which favour peace are too strong for Churchill's pupils in aggression to be able to overpower them and turn them towards a new War."

The forces standing for Peace are stronger than the forces for War.

At the head of the World Movement for Peace stands the Soviet Union, the land of peace and creative endeavour. It has the support of the Peoples' Democracies which have cast loose once and for all from Capitalism. On the side of peace stand the five hundred millions of China, who are shaking off the fetters of imperialism, and the peoples of other Asiatic Countries, who are devotedly fighting for National Liberation. On the side of peace stand tens of millions of common people in United States, in Western Europe and Latin America.

Anglo-American imperialists have also with the help of their lackeys, national counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, fomented Civil Wars in many countries; and thereby disturbing the peace of the world. In our country, Burma, Thakin Nu government, the subservient fool of Anglo-American imperialists have thrown the entire country into the flames of Civil and Communal War.

Our struggle against Thakin Nu Government, our struggle to establish People's Democracy and a lasting Peace, is part of this world struggle for Peace.

We call on all partisans of peace in every land to have courage and confidence in their forces,

tirelessly weld together the ranks of all the peoples who are engaged in the fight for peace, and to paralyze the forces of aggression by their vigorous action.

We are firmly convinced that our concerted efforts on behalf of humanity, in defence of peace, labour and liberty will end in our victory!

Men and Women Partisans of Peace in Every Land, unite to defend peace against the instigators of a new war!

Long live the October 2nd, the International Fight-for-Peace Day!

Long live the World Front of Struggle for Peace!

Long live the People's Democratic Front of Burma!

CENTRAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF BURMA.

Dated the 2nd, October 1949.

THE ORDER OF THE DAY TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY - issued by THAKIN THAN TUN, president of the Central Organising Committee of the People's Democratic Front. - 1950

Comrade fighters, non-commissioned officers, political commisars and commanders:

On behalf of the Central Organising Committee of the People's Democratic Front, which is also the Supreme General Staff of all the people's armed forces participating in the People's Liberation War, I greet the comrades of the various armed forces of the PDF who have arrived from various parts of Burma to serve in the People's Army.

What is the People's Army?

I. What is the People's Army of which you are members? How did the People's Army come into being?

During March, 1948, AFPFL government led by Thakin NU, the imperialist lackey and representative of the native bourgeoisie and the landlords, swindling the country with a faked independence, launched an all-out offensive against the vanguard of the people, the Communist Party of Burma, inorder to completely destroy the forces of the people. Without submitting passively to this, the Communist Party of Burma had resisted with all available forces and thus the People's Liberation War came into being.

Because of the People's armed forces fought the AFPFL government incessantly and vigorously throughout the country, the Peoples Liberation War developed in scope.

In July, 1948, the People's Volunteer Organization revolted against the AFPFL govt.

In August,1948, the Burma Army revolted against the AFPFL govt .

Although at first the people's armed forces which had revolted and fought against the AFPFL govt were divided, the People's Democratic Front was for-

med in March, 1949 based on the Communist Party of Burma, the People's Volunteer Organization and the Revolutionary Burma Army - in conformity with the demands of the masses of the people. After the formation of the PDF, the People's armed forces grew and the liberated areas were rapidly enlarged.

Because the AFPFL govern~~ment~~ failed to destroy the people's revolution with Karen-Burman racial war, it procured forther foreign aid and with the mechanized units launched an offensive against the liberated areas.

The People's Democratic Front, to be able to wage a counter-offensive against the enemy AFPFL government, endeavored to establish a single army under a single command.

Following the intensification of the enemy offensive, as the reactionary members of the PVO resorted to disrupt and sabotage in the PDF, they had to be purged; but, the Central Organising Committee of the PDF succeeded in the formation of a single People's Army based on the People's Liberation Army, the Revolutionary Burma Army and the revolutionary People's Volunteer Organization in March, 1950.

The People's Army came into being in accordance with the desire of the people and at an appropriate moment, to safeguard the permanent peace of the people.

The aims of the People's Army.

Comrades:

II. Your present task is to wage a counter-offensive ~~that will wipe out the enemy.~~ against the enemy offensive. And more than this, from counter-offensive to go over to an offensive that will wipe out the enemy.

Why is this so?

Because our ultimate objective is to wage the struggle until the enemy govern~~ment~~ led by Thakin Nu is smashed into smithereens.

The AFPFL govt, led by Thakin NU is wor-

king in accordance with the wishes of the Anglo-Americam imperialists. It is safeguarding the interests of the Anglo-American imperalists and for the continued existence of the feudal landlordism. The brute forces of Thakin Nu are burning villages, arresting people, raping women and thus the whole country has been placed in an inferno and rivers of blood have been shed.

The People's Democratic Front is fighting-

- -for the complete liberation from the rule of the Anglo-American imperialism and their lackey, Thakin Nu's AFPFL govt.
- - for complete elimination of feudal landlordism
- - for transformation of our country from a backward agrarian country towards a modern industrial development

Comrades: You, as the dearest sons of the people, as the mighty army of the people, as the hopes of the people, must fight for the achievement of the aims of the People's Democratic Front.

Only by annihilation of Thakin Nu govt. will real peace be won.

III. Under the slogan of "Peace within one year"[1] and with the aid of the imperialists, the Thakin Nu govern~~ment~~ is launching an offensive with mechanized forces against our liberated areas.

With beads[2] in one hand and a gun in the other, the Thakin Nu govern~~ment~~ is going to shed more blood in the country.

From the Thakin Nu govern~~ment~~, the people will never get real peace.

Only the complete annihilation of Thakin Nu govern~~ment~~ will real peace be won.

That is why - fight to crush the fascist forces of the enemy, Thakin Nu govern~~ment~~ for achieving real peace for the people.

What is the significance of the single army?

IV. Some are of the opinion that by the single army it signifies ~~the~~ a mere amalgamation of

the PLA, RBA and the revolutionary PVO. This is not correct.

It is true that the single army contains the PLA , RBA and the revolutionary PVO. But it is not just a mere amalgamation. It is an army that comes into being with the desire of the people and the broadened purpose of a single strategy, single tactics and single organization. It is an army that comes into being after overcoming localism and sectarianism.

That is why, you, comrades, must clean out all remnants of the old localist and sectarian standpoints.

Carry out with clear and correct ideology the tasks entrusted to you by the People's Army, Carry out the tasks asigned.

V. There may be some who are dissatisfied with regard to allocation of duties and appointments.

Do not have dissatisfaction on this score.

Carry out the duties asigned to you.

While carrying out the military instructions of the People's Army, those who have ability will surely attain eminence, those who have no ability will surely go down. No one can stop this process.

Do not judge by oneself that one has ability and that duty assigned to one is not suitable. It is also not correct to judge that way. The test of battle will decide. The decision of battle will be the truest judgment.

The leadership of the Communist Party.

VI. Our People's Army is completely different from the armies of the bourgeoisie. There is no such bourgeois regulations as there must be no politics and no one should become members of political parties.

There is only one rule: that all shall fight unyieldingly, unbendingly, unrelentlingly against imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capitalism for the achievement of the people's power.

That is why our People's Army accepts the leadership of the party of the proletariat, the Communist Party which is the most advanced in human society.

To accept the leadership of the party of the proletariat which fights with the most thoroughness for liberation from the imperialist domination, for overthrow of the rule of the capitalists and for abolition of feudal landlordism is only rational.

In the same way as the People's Armies under the leadership of the Communist Party in Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and in China has been victorious, so shall the acceptance of the leadership of the Communist Party by our People's Army is a basic factor for our ultimate victory.

Democracy inside the Army.

Comrades, our People's Army, being an army based on themost advanced politics, is unlike the rapacious troops of Thakin Nu. The fascist army of Thakin Nu is a bureaucratic army which is subservient to the dictates of the imperialist-feudalist system. Our army is an army that fights in the interests of the people.

Our army is a people's army where there is unity betweem commanders and fighting men and in which there is full democracy. It is an army which fights with firm belief for a correct political program.

Comrades,

VII. The second basic factor for our ultimate victory is the support of the people without reservation to our People's Army. As you marched to your present camps, remember how everywhere men, women, children - the entire village jubilantly welcomed you?

You all know how every village, every household contributed a basket of rice and 1/4 rupees for you as supplies.

This whole-hearted support is given because you are their dearest sons.

That is why you must defend the people with

your lives. Fight to crush the enemy that is committing aggression against the people - till not a "stem or trunk" remain of them.

Comrades, the people are your fathers and your mothers. Be polite in dealing with the people. Do not take anything - not even a matchstick -from the people without been given or without payment.

In battle, seize only the properties of the enemy. Those properties seized must be handed over to the respective commanders without fail. If it is not enemy property, do not even touch it with your fingertips. We are not like the bandit troops of the enemy, Thakin Nu.

Comrades, as the people economize and help the utmost for achieving victory, so you must be frugal. Our standards of living must not exceed that of our parents - the peasants.

As much as we make sacrifices, the victory will be expedited. Only after victory is achieved there will be good life. For future good life, be frugal.

Discard localism.

Comrades,

VIII. Our Army is a mobile army that will strike the enemy's main force where ever it is. We must struggle against localism unreservedly.

Help from guerilla warfare.

IX. In the People's Liberation War, our People's Army is the main Army. But the main army cannot fight victoriously without support from other forces. Especially help must be taken from guerilla warfare. Hence, carry out the operations of the People's Army in unison with guerilla warfare in the enemy's rear. Take the fullest help from the people's guerillas.

The offensive of the enemy.

Comrades,

X. At present, the enemy, launching an offensive, has already invaded our liberated areas.

As some areas fell into the enemy's hands, it may give a semblance of strength to the enemy.

In fact, the enemy is not strong. It is not for us to be pessimistic, The victories of the enemy are only temporary. Temporary victories will not be decisive in the leberation war. As the leader of the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin, once said: "The permanently operating factors that will give decision to the war are:

1. the stability of the rear,
2. the morale of the army,
3. the quality and quantity of the divisions,
4. the equipment of the army,
5. the organizing ability of the commanding personnel of the army."

We are tryingto achieve all the factors:

With political, organizational, administrative and economic work, we are working to make our rear strong.

The morale of our forces is hard as steel.

We are trying to equip them with good weapons.

Through military academies, military schools and military classes, we are bringing forth good commanders.

We are establishing the basis for achieving victory.

We shall be victorious.

Comrades,

We can smash the enemy's offensive and will surely be victorous.

Why is it so?

We are waging a just war. That is why victory will be achieved.

We are fighting for a new life of the people. That is why victory will be achieved.

We have the support of the whole people. The People's Democratic Front which is the united

Front of the people, is supporting us. That is why victory will be achieved.

Hence, we can defeat the enemy's offensive. We will surely be victorious.

Unrivalled Industriousness and Determination

Comrades, in 1948, with dilapidated rifles, we fought the strong Thakin Nu government. Within 2 years we have reached a stage when we can stand shoulder to shoulder with the enemy.

If we continue to fight with industriousness and determination far surpassing that of 1948, we will surely defeat the enemy ~~within two years~~.

Hence, comrades,

1. Fight with determination and industry-ousness far surpassing the enemy. Only if we surpass the enemy in determination and industry-ness, we will be victorous. Fight without giving the enemy time to rest.

2. Hate the enemy as an enemy. You must hate the enemy from the bottom of your heart. Unless the enemy surrenders, fight to smash the enemy into bits. Only when the enemy surrenders, treat him as a prisoner of war.

3. Maintain steel discipline in our Army. Eliminate anarchism. Obey the orders of the commanders implicitly.

Comrades,

4. Learn to improve your military skill. Use your weapon to attain best results. Shoot well. Kill one enemy with one bullet.

5. Commanders, strive for the best organizing ability. Give the best military leadership.

6. Wage the most intensive guerilla warfare in the enemy rear. Destroy enemy lines of communications.

7. Pledge to fight bravely. Pledge to overthrow in the shortest time the enemy Thakin Nu Government.

EXPLANATORY

CHAPTER I

1. khamauk= peasant hat, with a broad brim, made of palm leaves and bamboo.

2. longyi= national Burmese dress (equivalent to trousers) a circular skirt tied round the waist

CHAPTER II

1. rupee= monetary unit of Burma and India equivalent to about 1sh. 6d.

2/3 Teak=Tectona grandis
Pyinkado=Xylia dolabriformis
In-Kanyin= Dipterocarpus species
Padauk= Pterocarpus macrocarpus
Thitya-Ingyin=Shorea obtusa pentacme suavis
Pyinma = Lagerstroemia flosreginae

~~Chapter III~~

~~1. All italics in quotations from Mr. Fielding Hall's "The soul of a People" are mine (M.L.)~~

CHAPTER IV

1. Thakin: the word "Thakin" means master. When the British came they made the people call them ~~masterpiece~~ Thakins. Counter to this, members of the Dobama organisation have this word prefixed to their own names.

CHAPTER VII

1. After the "Red Guards" broke away from the PVO, another split occured again in this organisation in 1948. In this second split, the majority who broke away from AFPFL and took up arms against the government were called "White Band PVOs" and those who stayed behind and followed the Socialist Party were called "Yellow Band PVOs". Members of the Yellow Band formed counter revolutionary forces to suppress the armed struggle of the people but the hatred it accumulated from the masses led to its being disbanded by itself in 1950.

Chapter V Yebaw: the Burmese equivalent for comrade not necessarily a member of the Communist Party.

CHAPTER XIII

1. Lenin, Selected Works, English Edition, Moscow 1947 Vol. 1 Page 376.
2. Ngapi: a special Burmese preparation of dried salted fish equivalent to table sauce.
3. shikho: a way of paying the humblest respects. Kneeling, the person has to place the palms of his hands together and bow, making his head as well as the hands touch the floor.
4. The Burmese form of measure for rice is in baskets.
5. viss: 3.6 lbs.

CHAPTER XV

1. Nga Nu : an angry form of calling Thakin Nu, the puppet Prime Minister.
2. Mao Tse-tung, On People's Democratic Dictatorship.
3 Yegaung : the armed volunteers of the All Burma Students' Union, with duties equivalent to People's Militias, but more mobile.
4. daga : Buddhist priests address men as daga, women as dagama.

CHAPTER XVI

1. LANGUAGE GROUPS IN BURMA, 1931 CENSUS.

Total Population 14,647,756

LANGUAGE GROUP	PERSONS
Indigeneous	
Burmese	9,862,694
Karen	1,341,066
Tai (Shan)	1,021,917
Kuki-Chin	343,854
Mon	305,294
Palaung-Wa	176,024
Kachin	153,897
Lolo-Muhso	93,052
Sak	35,237
Mro	14,094
Malay	6,368
Naga	4,201
Man	947
Foreign	
Indian languages	1,079,820
Chinese languages	178,316
European languages	27,895
Others	2,851

CHAPTER XVIII

1. CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPIERS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE 13 PRINCIPAL RICE GROWING DISTRICTS OF LOWER BURMA.

YEAR	Total occupied area (1000acres)	Area occupied by Non-agriculturists (1000 ac.)	Area occupied by Chettyars (1000 ac.)	Area occupied by Non-agriculturists (per cent)	Area occupied by Chettyars (Percentage to total area occupied)
1930	9,249	2,943	570	19	6
1931	9,305	3,212	806	25	9
1932	9,246	3,770	1,347	36	15
1933	9,266	4,139	1,782	43	19
1934	9,335	4,460	2,100	47	22
1935	9,408	4,687	2,293	49	24
1936	9,499	4,873	2,393	49	25
1937	9,650	4,929	2,446	50	25

Note: Prior to the passage of Land Alienation Act 1940, many Burmese landlords who lived in towns and visited fields only on some occasions were termed "agriculturists". Hence the figures showing the amount of land owned by non-agriculturists cannot be considered as full and accurate: the percentage should have been higher.

CHAPTER XVIII

2. ROUGH ESTIMATE OF TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN BURMA by J. Russell Andrus in "Pacific Affairs" March 1944.

Foreign Corporations	£ 47,200,000
Chinese	2,800,000
Indian Chettyars	56,000,000
Government and Municipal obligations	45,000,000
Urban Real Estate	3,250,000
Indian Industrial Establishments (not included above)	1,000,000
	£ 155,250,000

APPENDAGE

ORDER OF THE DAY.

1. Peace-within-one-year : In July 1949, Thakin Nu gave the dateline of one year in which he said that he would bring peace to the whole country by suppressing all insurrections in the country. See chapterVIII
2. Beads : a meditation device used by the Buddhists in Burma similar to the rosary. Thakin Nu always poses as a devout Buddhist and revolutionary cartoonists generally depict him with a string of beads in his hands or around his neck.
3. a basket of rice and 1/4 rupee: a Burmese metaphor for aid and support.

were ordinary peasant girls who had never participated in the movement. That was why they dared to go. All the same, the enemy garrison took them into their camp and raped them. A girl went insane.

But the heroic women of our country are punishing these fascist devils with burning hatred. Women heroes of combat are being born. From the northern districts to the south, heroic women are fighting for the country. It would be impossible for me to describe the exploits of all of them, but let me introduce you to Ma Khin Nyunt, the Rider of the White Horse. She was a heroic fighter since the first days of revolution, she was the dread of the enemy armies. Many fabulous tales have been told about her, some true, some fictitious. She has won fame and love of the people both in the liberated and non-liberated areas. She used to strike at the enemy-- and so hard did she do it that it caused no small uneasiness among their ranks.

The big hats scolded their officers with, "You useless fellows ! If you can't catch a woman like that, I'll give you women's skirts to put on," in the accepted feudalist style, which looked down on skirts and women. The officers in their turn bawled at the buck-privates and these miserable creatures gave vent to their feelings on innocent villagers.

Once, mounted government troops seized a village by surprise. They had received definite information from a spy that Ma Khin Nyunt was there.

None of them had seen Ma Khin Nyunt before and the villagers denied that "the Rider of the White Horse" was there. She looked just like a peasant, so , when she caught hold of a baby and pretended to feed it on her breasts, none of the enemy saw anything amiss. All of them knew, however, that the woman they wanted was not a mother, so they paid little attention to the woman with the child. No villager would give her away-- one and all loved this heroic girl-- but the spy was coming to identify her !

Ma Khin Nyunt saw the danger. One moment as

soon as she had the chance, the child was back on the bed and she had jumped onto a horse of the dismounted enemy. The troopers were taken by surprise: when they could give chase, Ma Khin Nyunt was well ahead. Shots rang out and hoofs thundered as the cavalry pursued the lone horsewoman.

But once again, the Rider of the White Horse disappeared only showing up some time later in another attack on the government garrison.