CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION

The area which is known as Burma lies within the most distinctive physical environment. Shaped like an 'oyster'. In size Burma is the second largest country of Southeast Asia, with an area equal to that of Texas, (U.S.A.). It is bigger than Denmark, Netherland, France, Belgium and Luxembourg. The total area of the country is just over 261,000 sq. miles, and the population is slightly over twenty million about the same as that of Thailand and Iran. The political influence by outside nations on Burma has been brief and transitory. Consequently Burma never proved herself a real bone of contention between rival imperialist powers.

Burma lies in the tropic of Cancer and is oddly shaped, the southern most tip of which almost touches the Equator and Northwestern frontiers of Burma march with Assam, Manipur, the Lushai hill tracts with Upper Burma. The frontiers of Burma are touching China to the north, India to the west and Siam to the east and Indian ocean to the south. The lower extension

of Burma known as the tenasserim extends over four hundred miles down along the Malaya peninsula.

The character of the federation is determined by the physical and political geography of Burma. "Burma proper, the area within which the organs of the union possesses full powers, consists mainly of two riverine systems. The valley of Irrawaddy, rising in the mountains of Tibet and traversing the whole country down to the sea below Rangoon and the valley of the Sittang, running parallel to the lower Irrawaddy on the east. It also comprises the estuary of the Salween river which for part of its course forms the eastern boundary of Burma and two coastal strips, Arakan bordering the way of Bengal and tenasserim running down into the Malay peninsula. All round the Irrawaddy and Sittang valleys, range of hills, off shoots of the Tibetan mountain complex, cut off Burma from its neighbours, within these hills lie the territories of the four constituent states. Another offshoot from the same system penetrating Burma between Arakan and the Irrawaddy valley constitute the Chin Hills, a special division of Burma proper which has more in common with the hill states than with the lowlands."

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Burma is not only important to the economy of Southeast Asia but also to the strategy of Southeast Asia. Burma functions as a link between two countries, China and India, though it constitutes the weakest link in the defence system of Southeast Asia and Singapore. If Burma falls, the whole of Southeast Asia collapses, the control of the way of Bengal by enemy power imperils the security of India. Burma has at times seemed to be an enigma in the modern age. Its self-imposed isolation and an attitude of disinterested aloofness from its neighbours reveals inexplicable national psychology is a puzzle for outside world.

In the British period, the annexation of Burma pushed India's frontiers eastwards to the borders of Thailand. In the north and northeast, British diplomacy together with Chinese weakness, ensured India's security. Before Japanese invasion, India has no strategic problem on her eastern side, but the invasion of Burma by Japanese and its direct threat to India in 1942, changed this peaceful situation. So in view of such a situation arising now and then, it is quite necessary for both the countries to have friendly relations.

8. B.S.I. Murti, Nehru's Foreign Policy, New Delhi: Bacon information and publication, 1953, pp. 147-148.
The second World War has proved the strategic importance of Burma. "The blockade of the Pacific coast of China by the powerful Japanese Navy compelled China to discover new channels of intercourse with the outerworld for military supplies. The Burma road and use of the port of Rangoon gave her the life blood which she needed."

The big cities of India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and the industrial wealth of Bihar are within easy bombing range of any power which succeeds in subduing Burma. It is quite significant that the military operations for the liberation of Burma had to be entirely based upon India. There is no question of doubt that the defence of both the countries are interconnected. In the words of Sardar Panikkar, "the defence of Burma is in fact the defence of India, and it is India's primary concern no less than Burma's to see that its frontier remain inviolate."

In the event of a hostile power controlling Burma, it would threaten India's security from land, sea and air. India has to remain quite alert towards Burma, because a power which is unfriendly to India and in control of Burma, could

11. Ibid., p. 148.
not only send its ground forces across the border but also
bomb the cities of eastern India, and it also paralyse Indian
shipping in the Bay of Bengal and threaten India's communica-
tions with the pacific through the Malacca straits. It is
quite fruitful for Southeast Asia that Burma has comprehensively
adopted a strongly isolationist neutrality which has so far
prevented any requirement for the employment of foreign troops
within her borders. India is quite conscious that China's
land forces could cross her territory in a matter of days if
she wished and establish a bridgehead on the Bay of Bengal
for more potentially damaging to western strategy than any
communist take over of South-Vietnam. The first and foremost
effort of Burma is to seek a "protective cardon" of sympathetic
states around her borders. Like that which Russia has managed
to achieve in Europe.

Strategically, Burma controls one of the most important
land routes from China to Southwards. The strategic impor-
tance of this 'Burma road' was such as to incite. Japan to
exert pressure on great Britain for its closure in 1939.
The closing of this road provoked the protests not only from

13. Allen, Richard, A Short Introduction to the History and
Politics of Southeast Asia, New York : Oxford University
China but also from the U.S.A. and the Soviet Government. Burma road has a great significance that if Burma was used as a passage from Thailand to India, it could also be used as a passage from China to India. Nagas (a tribe) who live near the border area of Burma and India, may cause trouble to Indian government so, we can say that the neutrality of the government of Burma is necessary for India. After the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947, a threat to the security of India was posed due to the hostility of this new state. It is believed that with the emergence of Bangla-Desh as a friendly state on the eastern border of India, this threat has been removed.

But it should also be borne in mind that the birth of Bangla-Desh has introduced an uncertain element. Much would however, depend upon Bangla-Desh reaction to world politics. In spite of having such a strategic importance, so little is heard or known about Burma, not only in the world but also in Asia that it might be "terra-incognita in the icy wastes of antarctica" and not a neighbour who within a living memory was ruled by the British as a part of the Indian empire. Far

reaching changes are taking place in that country under the
dynamic leadership of the Revolutionary Council and this fact
is of great significance to India.

If we take Burma geographically it can be divided into
two parts, upper Burma and lower Burma. Upper Burma has a
fearsome ribe cage of mountains, the shape of horseshoe, the
opened facing the Bay of Bengal. Lower Burma may be divided
into two natural divisions the coastal region and Delta. The
Costal region is intersected by numerous hill ranges. The
Delta is a large plain with a dense population.

To the west along the border between India and Burma
are the Naga hills, to the east lies the formidable Kar⁴⁵
range bordering on Siam, and to the north are the Himalaya
which rise beyond 20,000 feet high. The drainage from Burma's
mountains bolstered by spring thaws in the Tibetan Himalayas
and augmented by monsoon rains, slash across the land and
change into huge, fast flowing rivers which empty into the Bay
of Bengal while the river Irrawaddy running through the two
great countries of the east India and China. Because of its

15. Special Correspondent, "Co-operative Farms in Burma,"

16. William, R. Peers, and Dean, Brelis, Behind the Burma Road,

17. Anil, Chandra, Banerjee, The Eastern Frontier of British
physiography, Burma is known as a "Valley state." The climate of Burma is generally tropical.

Burma partakes of the culture and life of both her more populous neighbours India and China. Burmese ancient and modern history is very much influenced by the movement of events towards or across these borders. Burma's overland communication with India is difficult because of mountains and jungle-covered ridges. The mountains play a very important role to make the boundary and to separate Burma from China, it also makes a natural boundary with Burma's eastern neighbour Thailand. The sea has proven much less of a barrier. The heart of the country is the central Irrawaddy. The entire length of the country serves as a principle means of communication.

In Burma, the Valley of Irrawaddy, rising in the mountains of Tibet and transversing the whole country down to the sea, below Langoon, and the valley of Sittang, running parallel to the lower Irrawaddy on the east Salween river forms the eastern boundary of Burma, and two coastal strips, Arakan

bodering the Bay of Bengal, and tenasserim running down into the Malaya peninsula. All round the Irrawaddy and Sittang Valleys, ranges of hills, offshoots of the Tibetan mountain complex cut off Burma from its neighbours. "Burma secluded from the outer world by mountains and the sea, appears destined for political unity by nature. Anthropological relationship and economic Circumstances reinforce the trend to unity."

The immense mountains mass of interior Asia, after forming the Himalayan bulwork across northern India, turns south along Western Yunnan and forms a tumbled mass of parallel ridges and valleys running southeast through the great peninsula of Indonesia. Burma occupies the most fertile part of this peninsula. The geographical isolation and her frontier protection have been vital factors in her historical development and remain prime considerations in her politics today. The Chinese frontier plays a very important role to make Burma's politics.

22. Ibid., p. 3.
If we see the historical aspect of Burma, the Indian influence is deep-rooted in Burmese culture and politics because it lies to the east of Bengal. Although Burma shut-off from the outer world by hills and sea, is fitted to be the home of a unified people. But even now the progress of unification, though accelerated, is incomplete; and when history began the country was a medley of tribes. So Burma has been more than the valleys of a river system.

World War II involved Burma in two devastating campaigns and three years occupation by Japanese troops, which destroyed two-thirds of the country's productive capacity. 25 26

The larger Nicobar and Andaman groups lying off southern Burma have never been administered by Burma, although they have traded with Burma for centuries. Both groups were administered by the government of India.


27. Christen, Leroy, John, op. cit., p. 11.
The geographical position of Burma protected her from any possible attack. On the northern side, she is bounded by the mountainous and undeveloped provinces of China. Like other countries in Southeast Asia, Burma is in no position to defend herself.

By 1940 with the single exception of the Philippines, no tropical appendage of any great power enjoyed a large degree of autonomy than did Burma.

Burma has come into close contact with India. This is relatively modern feature of Burma and came in two distinct stages. Firstly in medieval times the trade and interchange between India and China skirted Burma to the North by way of Tibet over the mountain routes and southward round the coast. Buddhism came to the Burmese along this sea-route, followed in its time by Islam which has established little more than a minor cultural influence. The Burmese traditions developed in their own way and their own pace within the protective isolation of the interior. The East India Company came to the coastwise trade route, through which the British became associated with lower Burma.

If we go through the history of Burma, we find that the early history is obscure. The Burmese chronicles began with the supposed foundation of Tagaung in 850 B.C. But the stories, they tell are the copies of Indian legends taken from Sanskrit or Pali originals. The Burmese history includes three distinct eras in terms of their contemporary impact, the pre-colonial rule of the Burmese kings, British Colonialism, and the war time Japanese occupation, left the independent Burma of UNU and General Newin.

The scholars appear to agree that the first migration into Burma took place about 500 A.D. Some of the Burmese dynasties were very powerful.

The first major state in the Irrawaddy Valley of which there is some record had a capital Srikshetra, north of Prome, founded around A.D. 638 by people called Pyu. Kshatriya tribes migrating from India. The Kshatriya kings introduced the influence of Buddhism in Burma. The

reign of king Anawrahta (1044-77) is a convenient starting point history, who founded Burma's first national kingdom of Pagan. The kingdom later conquered the Mon state of Southern Burma and put down all resistance and unified the country. "Anawrahta unified the small principalities that constituted Burma into a relatively United State. Burma's relations with other powers during this period were primarily concerned with religious relics. During the Pagan period, Anawrahta, one of the most popular and adventurous of Burmese kings, conquered the north of Arakan."

At the end of the 13th century the Pagan kingdom was destroyed by Mongol-Chinese armies (Kuola Khan) and the next four and a half centuries were marked by the absence of even the semblance of unity in Burma except for the reign of Byinmaung (1530-1581).

The Mon kingdom, which later shifted its capital to Pegu, regained its independence only to lose it again in the 16th century, when a new and powerful Burmese dynasty emerged. In 1740, when the Toungoo dynasty was on decline, the Mons revolted and revived their kingdom and conquered the whole Burma and established their regime. The next, and

the last, great dynasty was built by Alaungpaya (1752-60). This time the honour of uniting the country went to Upper Burma, the fertile delta of the South was overrun and in 1755 Alaungpaya crowned himself a king of Burma. The expansion of Alaungpaya's empire happened about the time that the British East India Company was increasing its trade activities and political hold over India. After Alaungpaya, there were few strong kings. While the Burmese empire flourished in its final glory before the inevitable disintegration set in. The East India Company was beginning to take an interest in Burma. British traders came to the Burmese court seeking concessions and treaty rights to Christen missionaries came to preach and teach. Now Burma became aware of the world, she sent mission to Europe to study and observe. However, it was rather late in the day when Burma started to wake up and move slowly in the direction of material and scientific progress. In diplomacy and foreign relations she had lagged far behind. In the eighteenth century Burma was an uncertain factor and the centre of gravity of politics was India, where the British were gaining ground over the French.

The annexation of Arakan by the king Bodawya brought the Burmese up to share a long frontier with the British in India. Victories confirmed the Burmese in their belief that the world was at their feet. The British were at first somewhat conscious and made attempts to establish diplomatic relations with their young and exuberant neighbour. The efforts of the British totally failed to get treaties of friendship or commerce from the king or to establish permanent diplomatic missions in Rangoon.

After the annexation of Arakan, King Bagyidaw conquered Assam and after the victory the disputes about borders, extradition increased. Diplomacy failed to establish friendly relations between the two powers. Militant nationalism was astir in Burma and the people were ready for war with the British. So the first Anglo-Burmese war broke out. The war was popular not only with the princes and the army but also with all classes. The Burmese defeated in this war and Burmese troops dispersed, broken and lost. The British terms for peace embodied in a draft treaty were accepted by the generals in the field and the Burmese ministers protested vigorously against the demand of Arakan and the indemnity, they said, "our forests contain fine

40. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
trees, you may cut them down, but we do not grow rupees. When the treaty was not ratified by the king, the British pushed on towards Ava. "Once more another Burmese deputation including an American Baptist missionary Dr. Price, went to negotiate peace terms and at "Yandabo" the terms were accepted unconditionally."

Diplomatic relations between the court of Ava and the British of India were thus halting and becoming difficult. Ava would not consider posting a permanent mission in India, and the king and his court only wanted to forget the treaty of Yandabo. The opening of a new regime at Ava worsened of Burma-British relations. The new king Tharawaddy was ambitious to go down into history. The shame of Yandabo must be erased and the king decided that the most convenient way to do so was to reject the treaty.

The second-Anglo-Burmese war came in 1852 and in the absence of diplomatic relations, it was unavoidable. The chief towns in lower Burma fell to the British Empire and the whole of the great maritime province of Pegu was annexed by Lord Dalhousie. So lower Burma became a part

41. Ibid., pp. 35-38.
of the British empire in 1852.

After the second Anglo-Burmese War the reign came in the hands of King Mindon. King Mindon was a man of peace. His relations with the British in lower Burma vastly improved. Mindon sent a goodwill mission to Calcutta early in 1855, and the mission warmly received by Lord Dalhousie, was a success. Diplomat Sir Arthur Phayre's successor, also negotiated a treaty, in 1857, with the king, this treaty, it is interesting to note, was merely as political as it was commercial. King Mindon was so wise and skilled in statesmanship that he tried to preserve the sovereignty of the Burmese kingdom and he was shrewd enough to see that hope must lie not in the might of arms but in diplomacy. He worked hard to build friendly relations with the West and to get Burma's sovereignty internationally recognised.

After Mindon's death, the third war between Anglo-Burma came in 1886. Burma was defeated in this war. On 1 January 1886 the independent kingdom of Ava annexed to British Burma its despotic monarch Thibaw had been deposed and exiled, and the absorption of Burma into the British

42. Jesse, F. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 29.
43. Maung, Maung, op. cit., pp. 46-49.
Indian empire. The gradual annexation of the country was the result of three wars. Burma was administered as a province of India until 1937, when it became a separate colony.

The Gurrilla warfare was going on between British troops and the Burmans from the beginning of 1886. "After the several years of Gurrilla warfare, of death and disaster, the chief leaders of rebellious had failed to supress it in lower Burma. The Gurrilla war came to an end suddenly. Those rebellions which were spread in Lower Burma; were defeated by the British Indian troops."

After the annexation of Burma in British-Indian empire, the civil administration of upper Burma was divided into fourteen districts, each under a Deputy or Assistant Commissioner with a police assistant. But the local administration of lower Burma was based on the circle with its hereditary headman.

47. D.G.E. Hall, op.cit., p. 143.
Some changes came in the machinery of the central government at the end of the 10th century. The government functioned very much like that of any other Indian province. At that time, great changes were taking place in the outside world, the effect of these changes fell upon Burma.

"A new era of economic competition had begun between the leading European powers; the rapidly expanding industries of Europe needed more raw materials from the tropics, and in consequence Big Business was demanding the more efficient exploitation of colonies." In 1897, some changes started taking place in Burma, like promotion of chief commissioner to the rank of Lieutenant Governor, assisted by the Legislative Council of nine nominated members, including five non-officials. The Judicial system was also introduced in Burma which was based upon the British principle of the separation of power. "Burma constituted a local administrative unit under chief commissioner, assisted by his secretariat, until in 1897 it was raised to the status of a separate province of the Indian empire with its own Lieutenant Governor and a small legislative council. The local government is capable to make laws for Burma, but important matter such as finance were still reserved to the central government in India on whom councils of Burma was unrepresentative."


Following the example of the government of India, the municipal institutions with limited powers were gradually introduced in Burma. Nominated municipal committees came into existence in a few towns of Burma in 1874. Eight years later the number was increased and the elective principle was also introduced in Burma. The people of Burmese towns welcomed this opportunity of having a voice in the management of their own affairs. The urban areas had four separate communities with differing interests as Burmese, Indian, Chinese and European. After the turn of the century a department of jails and hospitals, a chief court of judicature with a judicial service, a commissioner of land revenue, a chief conservator of forest, a director of agriculture, an exercise commissioner and a public health department were established. State education was extended after 1900.

During this time the wave of nationalism spread all over Asia. How could Burma remain untouched by this wave. The events within Burma were influenced by other countries. Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, provided vivid evidence that the white man was not unconquerable. The hectic

political activities of the Indian national Congress led by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Nehru in India, (of which Burma was a part until 1937), constituted another important factor for Burmese nationalism which inevitably took inspiration from India's struggle for freedom. Consequently the Young Man Buddhist Association was founded in 1908. It acquired political significance as a channel for the tentative expression of nationalist goals.

"The transformation of the provincial government, which began in 1897, carried a stage further under the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909, when the Legislative Council of Burma was increased in size to a membership of thirty with a non-official majority. Only one of these was elected and he was chosen by the Burmese chamber of commerce an entirely European organization."

World War I hastened constitutional progress in India and as a part of it in Burma as well. The British government had done this in order to appease rising Indian nationalism and woo India's support in the war. Nationalism in Burma peculiarly enough, grew out of Buddhist organisation.

52. Vendenbosch, Army and Butwell, Richard, op.cit., pp. 243-244.
Burma was aware of actual political development. The first national sentiment developed in Burma in 1916-17. An announcement by the Secretary of State Mr. Montague in 1917-1918 that Burma was incapable of exercising the degree of self government, planned for India because Burmese lacked experience in representative government, which is necessary for the working of a democratic constitution on the western model. Largely for this reason the Montagu-Chelmsford Report proposed to set aside the problem of her political evaluation for future consideration. "The proposal evoked an immediate storm of protest in the country. Burmese national sentiment, long dormant, suddenly awoke and began to show itself as a force to be respected. The nationalist General Council of Burmese Associations (G.C.3.A.) carried an intense political agitation, organized boycotts and demanded home rule." Everyone took the strength of national feeling by surprise. Therefore, in 1921, the secretary of State for India recommended to parliament that the 'dyarchy' granted to India by the Government of India

55. D.G.L.Hall, op.cit., pp. 149-150.
56. (Dyarchy was the name given to the reforms of 1919-1923. In principle, it extended a measure of home rule to the province of Burma, under a British governor, two appointed members and two ministers, who represented and responsible to a unicameral legislative Council).
Act 1919 should be extended to Burma, and the government of Burma Act 1921 was passed to bring Burma into line with the other provinces of India. Dyarchy system proved unsuccessful and although the G.C.B.A. condemned dyarchy as inadequate, Burma became a Governor's Province in 1923 and the new form of government was established, though the Shan States, Karenni and the Tribal Hills were excluded from its operation. The Legislative Council was increased to 103 members of whom 79 were to be elected on a democratic franchise, 2 were ex-officio and 22 nominated. "The government was entrusted to a Governor with an Executive Council of two members in charge of reserved subjects, and two ministers, responsible to the legislature, in charge of transfer subjects. The reserved subjects comprised defence, law and order, finance and revenue. The transference of the forest department placed Burma ahead of all the other provinces of India except Bombay. The franchise was granted to householders without sex disqualification and with eighteen years as the minimum age limit." At the very movement for nationalism at the grass roots level divided, in 1924 to 1926, into two principal factions. There was a split in


the independent party. Dissidents led by U Paw Tun broke away to form a 'Swaraj Party' pledged to work for the abolition of the dyarchic system. In the elections of 1920, the Nationalist got twenty five seats, and the Swarajists nine while the independent and non-party members maintained their majority. The majority of Indian members wanted to support the Burmese Nationalist groups in legislation who was not contrary to their communal interests.

The next stage of constitutional progress was considered by the British authorities in 1928 the Burmese started demanding separation from India. They wanted direct relations with the English sovereign because they feared increasing Indian immigration and economic competition. The Burman feared "that their country might one day become a vassal state of an Indian commonwealth ruled by the Indians. This movement for separation was strongly supported by the British because British business interests in Burma favored separation; they had no desire for retention of the tariff on steel imports and many expected to wield more influence than they had under the Government of India if a separated Burma should be placed under Colonial office.

jurisdiction. Other businessmen wanted to lessen the growing Indian competition in commerce and industry and it was assumed that a separated Burma could impose a ban on further Indian immigration. Most of the British official favoured it due to local patriotism, as well as to their belief that the Burmese as a people were innately hostile to the Indians."

To see these circumstances Simon Commission which came in 1928, reported in favour of separation and soon after the publication of its report, the Round Table Conference met in London to discuss the framework of a new Indian constitution to replace the dyarchy, the delegation of Burma at the first session of the conference were less forthright on the subject of separation. Before committing their country they wanted assurances that her rate of constitutional progress and her economic relations with India would not be prejudiced. To see the unqualified support given to separation by the European civil servants and businessmen, suspicion among Burmese aroused. At the end of the conference in January 1932, the Prime Minister MacDonald announced that "the government would do with

60. Ibid., p. 41.
separation after the question has been put before the
Burma electorate."

The Anti-Separationist then declared their objective to be "federation with India with succession rights reserved." The elections result was in favour of anti-separationist. Ba Maw's party won the general election held in November 1932. London found it impossible to abide by this decision when the reforms were finally approved in 1935. The attempt of the anti-separationist Legislative Council to resolve the question of separation or federation along with alternative lines from those proposed by the London government quickly ran ground. This proposal ignored London's Sovereign Constitutional authority. The authority continued to urge the council reexamine the proposals officially set before it and submitted a summary description of the proposed separated constitution as the basis for such action. But in 1933, the authorities in London formulated the new Burma constitution in the absence of any clear expression of opinion from Burma.

The government of Burma Act of 1935 awarded "qualified dominion status" to Burma, separated from India, a status

61. Ibid., p. 43.
which was to remain until the Japanese invasion and occupation in 1942. The proposals of the British Government's "white paper of 1933" on which new constitution was based were included in the Government of India Act of 1935. These proposals passed in the critical "second reading" in the House of Commons in February 1936, by a vote of 404 to 133. The new Constitution came into effect in 1937. This provision took a degree of responsible government in Burma actually greater than that of in India. It allowed to set up two chambers of parliament, a Senate and a House of Representatives, half of the members of the Senate were to be nominated by the Governor, but the lower House was entirely elected under an extended franchise. Among the 132 members, 22 members were elected by special 'Communal Constituences' to represent the minority peoples. There were also nine European members. The government of 'Burma proper' developed into a Cabinet led by a premier and responsible to parliament. The government control over the national life; excepting only defence, foreign affairs and monetary policy. These subjects remained the direct responsibility of the governor, who was appointed by the British government. The Shan Karenni, Salween Districts and remaining hill areas remained under separate forms of administration.

64. Hugh, Tinker, op. cit., pp. 4-6.
The first election took place under this Act which brought several political parties came into political picture. The largest was the United General Council of Burma Association (G.C.B.A.) led by U. Ba Pe, but he was unable to find sufficient adherence to command a majority. But the first Prime Minister of Burma was Dr. Ba Maw whose 'Sinyetha Wunthana' Party has no majority. In February 1939 he was defeated, and a new ministry was formed out of Ba Pe's group and the new 'Myo chit' party led by the ambitious and thrusting U Saw. In September 1940 U.Saw captured the premiership, which he held until January 1942; when he completed the visit to Britain and the United States to seek assurance of independence, he was detained in Uganda on grounds of contacts with the Japanese. In the absence of U.Saw, Sir Pa Tun then became the fourth Prime Minister within five years, remaining in office until 07 the Japanese invasion.

After Dr Ba Maw's downfall his party linked with the Thaksins to form a new front called the "Freedom bloc."

65. Victor, Purcell, op.cit., p. 83.
66. (Lovers of the Nation).
67. Hugh, Tinker, op.cit., p. 5.
It followed a policy of anti-separation from India. Mr Ba Sein was the leader of the Thakins and he attended the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in 1940, which was presented by Gandhi and Nehru. On August 1, 1942 a Burma Executive Administration was set-up with Ba Maw at its head. He withdrew from his own 'Sin-yetha Party' and from the Thakin leadership. Now both the parties were merged in 'Mahbama Asiayons' (Radical nationalist) Aung San who belongs to this party went to Japan, as a leader of the 'Thirty Comrades.' They returned to Burma with the invading Japanese. The other thirty nationalists who adopted the name 'Ne Win' meaning bright sun, is a military figure. It renamed in place of 'Burma Independent Army' the 'Burmese Defence Army.' The Burmese nationalist hoped to use the Japanese to oust the British and gain their independence so the Ba Maw government became mainly a vehicle for protecting the Burmese from the harshness of Japanese rule. The Ba Maw government organised a movement to rid their country from colonialism. This organised movement became the "Anti Fascist People's Freedom League." (A.F.P.F.L.).

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68. Ibid., p. 6.
We cannot ignore that the political situation in Burma, which supported Ba Maw government in the late thirties, was also directly affected by developments in neighbouring India and China. The objectives of the Indian Congress party were confined for the most part to the Thakins and to Dr. Ba Maw's following. We see that Mr. John F. Cady rightly pointed out, "Japan's Initiation in 1937 of an effort to conquer all of China found Burmese opinion generally pro-Chinese. Some of the Thakins echoed anti-imperialist agitation emanating from Indian Communist sources and began examining the general applicability of Marxist principles to Burma's economic and political problems. In general but with notable exceptions, the revolutionary nationalist movement in Burma was prepared to accept assistance from virtually any quarter, including even the Japanese, for the achievement of its political ends."

When the Japanese attacked Burma with the help of the B.I.A., the weaker British forces, which were supported by the Chinese troops under General Stilwell, were forced into a long but on the whole skillful retreat. Here new Allied forces were assembled which checked and eventually defeated a strong Japanese thrust in the region of Imphal.

which was to be the prelude to the invasion of India. At this time the Governor of Burma with some of his collaborators established an administration in exile at the Indian hill station of Simla.

The effects of the Japanese occupation on the development of the independence movement and more particularly on the attitudes of its leaders have not been thoroughly studied but it was during this time that most of the present Burman political leaders gained their first significant experience in government operations. When the IIInd World War broke-out in Europe in September, 1939, the leaders of the independence movement in Burma were attempting to bring together political groups of various interests to form a kind of united front against the British. At the beginning of the year 1940, the newly enacted Defence of Burma regulations, giving the Governor autocratic emergency powers, enabled the British administration to label the independence leaders subversive and traitorous to the state. A Burmese writer has observed that, The word 'independence' hitherto unheard of in their (Burman) lives, which Tokyo radio repeatedly held out to them, had worked like magic on their wishful imaginations.

UNU also said that the Japanese seemed to be the only eastern people that could hold its own against the west, and we came to look confidently to Japan for leadership. Some Burmese leaders were conscious about Japanese efforts to woo Indian dissidents, some of whom were working with the Japanese outside of India. There were several groups of Burmans, who had gone Japan for military training. These groups later became known as the "Thirty comrades". Among these groups, some were prominent independence leaders, but others were the followers from various walks of life. The military training was given to these men by Japanese. The other outside Burmans were also to have the contact with the Japanese secretly. Both Dr. Ba Maw, who had been the first Prime Minister under the 1935 constitution, and Dr. Thein Maung, a former Minister of commerce, had pre-invasion relations with Japanese. U Saw who followed Ba Maw as Prime Minister, was arrested and imprisoned by the British for having the relations with Japanese. The Marxist also joined hands with the Japanese.

We see that Japanese had adopted a favourable attitude towards the Burmese people at the start. The bulk of Burmese population showed no desire to resist Japan's occupation and, unless they feared being charged as British agents, they did as they were told. William C. Johnstone rightly pointed
out, "one major reason why many Burmans welcomed the Japanese and why many of the Burma independence leaders of diverse views initially believed the Japanese had come as liberators was the obvious unpreparedness of Britain to defend Burma adequately. The swiftness of the Japanese invasion in January, 1942 was as much of a shock to the Burmans as to the British, but to the Burmans the shock had a double effect. They had given little thought to a possible Japanese invasion or to any need for defense of their territory. They looked upon the war only as an event that caused the British colonial government to hamper their moves for independence. They assumed, as did the British themselves, that adequate provision would be made for defending Burma. The unexpected rapidity with which the Japanese routed the small British forces and cleared them from Burma led many Burmans first, to applaud the success of their Asian "brothers" and, second, to feel that they had, in fact, been liberated from British rule."

Before the Japanese invasion the "Thirty heroes" led by Thakin Aung San, were never in a position to attach any conditions to their assistance to the invading Japanese.

They could only gamble and hope for the best. The actual military role had no importance for them.

The British forces in Burma left the Japanese free to carry out their plans for the country as a part of the Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere. Under this plan the Burmese territory was to be used as a bait in a new peace approach to Chiang Kai-Shek. In this plan, the French were to be forced out of Indo-China and the province of Tonking offered to Chiang Kai-Shek, he was also to be offered large areas of Upper Burma. But Chiang Kai-Shek refused to accept the given independence. The Japanese were careful about propaganda in Burma and other Southeast Asian territories. The Japanese Premier Tojo promised independence to the Burma. In organizing their Japanese dominated regime in Burma they needed more experienced cooperation than that of young Thakins, and Dr. Ba Maw became their tool. In 1943, they set-up the ostensibly independent Republic of Burma with Ba Maw as head of state with the title of 'Adipati' giving him the status of a fascist leader. Aung San and UNU became respectively Ministers for Defense and Foreign Affairs. The Burmese Independence Army was dissolved and

73. John, F.Cady, op.cit., p. 575.

74. "Adipati" derived from the Pali-Sanskrit - term for head of State.
another force was organized under close Japanese supervision known as the Burma National Army. Adipadi Ba Maw made sustained efforts to qualify as Burma's ruler according to traditional symbols and standards. He undertook to maintain the prestige of both his office and of his person in his strained relations with the Japanese military. Dr Ba Maw established friendly and fruitful relations with premier Tojo. Adipadi Ba Maw also developed cordial and friendly relations with Subhas Chandra Bose, the leader of the revived 'Indian Independence League' and Indian National Army. This led to the shift by Bose of his headquarters from Singapore to Rangoon in October, 1943, and also change in the name of the organization to 'Azad Hind (Free India).

There were so many changes and developments has taken place in Burma under the Ba Maw government during the war under Japanese. It was the first occasion that many of the Burman independence leaders had the experience of the responsible government. The leaders like General Aung San, Thakin NU and many other leaders, who led the AFPFL (Anti Fascist People's Freedom League) after the Japanese defeat, gained their first political and governmental experience

under the Japanese. It may be true as UNU described, "that many Burmans welcomed the Japanese as liberators from the alien rule of the British, it was not long before the people felt the heavy hand of the Japanese military."

William, C. Johnston also rightly pointed out. It is doubtful, however, that the harsh, brutal, and arbitrary treatment of the Burmans by the Japanese military alone would have caused the Burman leaders in the "independent" government to revolt against the Japanese. They could not be sure when the war would end. It was obviously tight Japanese controls over all aspects of the economic life of the country that opened the eyes of some of the Burmese leaders like Aung San to the fact that this "made-in-Japan independence" was a shame.

"The Japanese Army had a full control over the economic life of Burma. Railway and river communications were monopolized by Japanese. The large quantity of rice supplied to Japanese military requirements. All resources to which Japanese could utilise such as cotton, minerals, timber etc. were sent out of the country. The 30,000 Burman labourers died in the construction of the infamous "railway of death" being constructed in the South between Burma and Thailand. After the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, Communist Parties
in Asia and elsewhere were against the German-Japanese Fascism. In southeast Asia, the Communist organised an underground anti-Japanese movement. They also developed their relations with the Indian Communist Party (CPI). At that time Thakin NU and other Burmese leaders were acting under P.C. Joshi's (General Secretary of the C.P.I.) instructions.

On the other side, allied preparations for the counter attack from India on the Japanese position in Burma had begun with the establishment of a South-East Asia Command at the Quebec Conference in August, 1943. Lord Louis Mountbatten was named the Supreme Commander and General Stilwell of the United States was the deputy commander. In view of the lack of Allied naval power in the Bay of Bengal and the extreme difficulties of the terrain for any overland invasion, Mountbatten was much less anxious to get on with the task than was Stilwell. But the American Commander wanted soon recovery of Burma, because Burma was important for military supplies to China, where the final struggle against the Japanese would probably be waged. Stilwell's main effort was to train a Chinese army in north-easter Indian with American aid which could drive the Japanese

from northern Burma and thus restore road Communication with Kunming via the prewar Burma Road.

The first anniversary of Burma's "independence" under the Japanese was celebrated in August 1944. The Anti Facist Organization was formed secretly by a few leaders of the Burma Defense Army. They met with both Communist and as well as Socialist leaders to form this Organisation, it later became the Anti Facist People Freedom League (A.F.P.F.L). The AFPFL established contact with Simla (Britishers) in late 1943. The objective of the League was to attain self-rule for Burma. A series of circumstances, therefore, combined to place the "Thakins, the younger political leaders of Burma," at the head of an anti-Japanese movement which cooperated with the Allied armies as they drove the Japanese out of central Burma in the race to Rangoon. "In shifting from an anti-British movement to that of an anti-Japanese movement, Aung San and his associates not only kept pace with the feelings of most of the people but emerged at the end of the war as national heros with an enthusiastic popular support. The qualities in General Aung San that helped him attain the top position of a national leader."

It was all due to the reason that the Japanese occupation of Burma wrecked the country's economic system. Burma suffered more from the war in comparison with any other Asiatic country. Many towns of Burma were reduced to ashes by Japanese air-raids. All her external markets were lost. Japanese also looted the machinery, scientific apparatus and even furniture, and stopped her rice export completely. The destruction of Burma came heavily because Burma used to be called as Britain's principal shop window in the war against Japan. The Burma became the main target between the self interest of Japan as well as British. To the Allies its importance lay in the maintenance of communication with China, and Japanese threat to India, which envisaged a possible link-up between their armies and the Germans.

In these circumstances, when civil government was officially restored in October 1945. The aim of Aung San and his party was complete independence. British policy at first envisaged a reconstruction period of some years as a preparation for the long-promised grant of "Dominion status." The organized strike of police and governmental officials in October 1946, Aung San and the other A.F.P.F.L. leaders won their way into the Governor's Executive Council. They also got the communist cooperation. It was necessary for attaining the power that they were compelled to view
the problems of government from the practical angle of the maintenance of law and order, the achievement of economic stability, and the establishment of public confidence. So they had to break their relations with their old allies, whose outlook and methods were quite different with them. 

To see these situation, Sir Hubert Rance, who was a major General and had served as Lord Mountbatten's Military Administrator in Burma, was appointed a successor in place of Sir Dorman Smith. The appointment was really genius. Because Sir Hubert was a friend of Aung San and as a soldiers the two could think alike and speak the same language. Soon after this Aung San promised to the people 'independence within one year' Aung San and the representatives of the Executive Council were invited to London to talk with Helement Attlee, (the Prime Minister of Labour government of London) and his cabinet. Aung San left the Rangoon, 'hoping for the best.' In London talks were frank and cordial. Mr. Attlee repeated his assurance to give full independence or either within or without the British Common-wealth.

When Aung San came again to London to discuss matters with Attlee's Labour Cabinet in January 1947, an agreement


was signed, popularly known in Burma and elsewhere as the Aung-San Attlee Agreement. By the provision of this agreement, his government was granted control over Burma's finance and army, and the right to hold a general election for a Constituent Assembly in the following April. The British Government bound itself to accept the Verdict of the Burma electorate even if the result were a vote in favour of complete independence. The agreement also safeguarded the rights of other indigenous races of Burma such as Karens, Shans, Kachins and Chins. The elections, on effect of this agreement, were held in April, Aung San won an overwhelming majority at the polls.

The first session of the Constituent Assembly was held on June 9, 1947, and the Assembly also went to work quickly. On June 17th, the Assembly adopted a resolution moved by Aung San defining the basic principles which should be breathed into the constitution, that Burma should be an 'independent sovereign republic' to be known as the "Union of Burma". According to this resolution all powers of the state were to be derived from the people and constitutional guarantee for the fundamental rights of citizens was be given

82. 'Union' (means Burma consist of specified autonomous units).
interests of minorities were safeguarded and it was stated that the sovereignty of the union shall be maintained according to justice and international law. The union should be dedicated to the idea of peace and friendly relations with all nations.

The Burma constituent Assembly passed the new constitution on 24th September 1947. But by that time Aung San was no more. On July 19th 1947, he and several of his colleagues were assassinated at a cabinet meeting. The leadership of the AFPFL and of the Government passed into the hands of Thakin NU who was the Deputy President of the League and the President of the Constituent Assembly, whose policy was in all important matters the same as that of dead leader Aung San.

After assuming the leadership in October, Thakin NU went to London to sign a treaty with His Majesty's Government, popularly known in Burma as the NU-Attlee Treaty, which made arrangements for Burma's independence, and also defined future relationship between Britain and Burma. After signing of this treaty Prime Minister Attlee introduced in the House of Commons the Burma independence Bill.

84. D.G.E.Hall, op.cit., p. 175.
In accordance with this Bill, the Union of Burma came into existence as a 'Sovereign Independence Republic' outside the British Commonwealth of Nations on January 4, 1948.

The Background of Civil War:

While Burma was going to achieve independence by peaceful agreement, the other internal political struggle started between the socialists and the communists for control of the AFPFL, which led to civil war. The reason of this internal struggle was that when in August, 1946, the AFO was reorganized as the AFPFL, at that time the leader of this organisation Aung San invited "all patriots and patriotic parties" to join the A.F.P.F.L. So this organisation became a popular front, a coalition of various political groups. The socialist gave full support to the AFPFL and its policy to attain independence by peaceful means.

The great pressure on Aung-San and his socialist allies came from the various communist groups and their extreme leftist supporters. So the communist refused to take orders from non-communist. At this time the Burma Communist Party was also divided into two wings. Thakin So and his followers

85. Maung, Maung, op.cit., p. 110.
immediately organized themselves as the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) becoming popularly known as the "Red Flag Communists" while Thakin Than Tun's group became known as the "White Flag Communists". After few months of this split, Red Flag Communist began an underground campaign of violence against the Burma government, Thakin than Tun and his White Flag Communists aimed to gain control of the Burma government. So Aung San and his successor UNU gained the cooperation of this group within the AFPFL until independence. Aung San became Deputy President of the Governor's Council in late September 1946, when Aung San refused Than Tun's pleas for greater White Flag representation in the Council. Than he declared a general strike against the AFPFL government.

The another reason for the general strike was that when the Aung San - Attlee agreement for Burma's independence was declared, the rightest and leftist both opposed it. The leaders like Ba Maw, Thakin Ba Sein and U Saw opposed it and also found "protest" strikes. The underground Red Flag Communist increased their sabotage activities. When Aung San was assassinated and Thakin NU succeeded in place of Aung San. Thakin NU's first act was to reconcile with the White Flag Communists. The efforts of Thakin NU were somewhat successful. When the NU-Attlee agreement was announced, the Burma Communist
Party, at first welcomed this agreement, but soon BCP opposed this agreement. William C. Johnston rightly observed, "Two provisions of the NU-Attlee agreement came under heavy fire from the Communists and their supporters. The first had provided for British assistance in training Burma's armed forces, and Burma had undertaken not to arrange for such assistance from any nation outside the Commonwealth. By the second provision the Burma Government had undertaken to pay equitable compensation for such British enterprises in Burma as the government might nationalize."

A meeting was held in February 1947 in the Shan states for the opposition of the government. This meeting was attended by the representatives of the Shans, Kachin and Chins. The Karens were already split between pro- and anti-government factions and looked to a measure of real autonomy, because the Karens already had put the 'Home Rule' for Karen in London. When the criticism of the AFPFL arose to take the provisions in the NU-Attlee agreement, Thakin NU replied to the opponents that the two provisions in the NU-Attlee agreement under attack by them were reasonable and normal.

in international usage, that even the Soviet Government had paid compensation to private foreign enterprises and that such communists countries as Yugoslavia had accepted this principle." The AFPFL government failed to achieve "leftist Unity", because the Burma Communist Party leaders established direct relations with the world communist movement, seeking guidance how to overthrow the Burmese government. They also began to start the plan for civil wars in South and Southeast Asia with the help of Moscow and other European Communist agents, they also developed relations with the Indian communist Party. After the "youth" conference, Thau Tun and Ghosal attended the second Congress of the Communist Party of India. There they also met with European Communist agents and party members. After returning Thakin Than Tun have told the General Committee of the BCP in 1949, "...that the Yugoslav Comrade who attended the CPI Congress in India in 1948 had advised him to go ahead with armed revolution in Burma."

So by this decision, the BCP started to follow this plan and at the end of March, 1948, "the White Flag Communists" under Thau Tun broke finally with the AFPFL government and followed the earlier example of the "Red Flages" by going underground and commencing their armed insurrection. The Burmese Communists became aware of developments in China and
they had also realised that the armed revolts of the Chinese Communists against the Kuomintang Government were much more nearly parallel to their own desires and actions. The two communist groups stuck to their program of seizing of power by violence and began their underground resistance, providing the spark for insurrections that nearly toppled the AFPFL government from power. There has been no doubt that this later development gave to the more moderate AFPFL leaders, especially the Socialists, a distinct bias against Communist methods. It was not good for the Burmese leaders that they broke future relations with the Soviet bloc nations, but it was sufficient to make them wary of any relations which might result in outside communist support for the Burma Communists. Thus, Thakin NU and his colleagues, in the first year of independence, had a strong predisposition towards steering clear of alignment with either the Anglo-American group or the communist bloc, a forerunner of their policy of "neutralism."

The new government would welcome all groups who were ready to make a Burma a "Leftist Country" — British Indian, Chinese and Burmese and enabled the Burmese masses to enjoy a full right. So the new government of Burma had a double economic policy to overcome as a result of the war. First, it had to proceed with a formidable job of economic rehabilitation and reconstruction. Secondly it was committed to
undertake, hand-in-hand with economic reconstruction the development and execution of wholly new and untried economic policies and plans consistent with its socialist goals.

The new Burmese government has decided at the early days of independence that since their first important tasks were to establish the authority of their government in the face of rebellion and also firm the economic reconstruction of their country, the leaders did every attempt to remain uninvolved in cold war politics. Thus the leaders and mainly UNU established "the cornerstone of a foreign policy later labelled as neutralism."

Soon after assuming the office in 1948, UNU tried its best to unite all the leftist forces in the country. So in May 1948 UNU announced a fifteen point "Leftist Unity Programme", but the effect of this programme was quite contrary as UNU thought. This programme was criticised as having been influenced by Communist ideologies and apparently, UNU had hoped that the programme would be supported by the People's volunteer organisation (PVO) but when the PVO leaders and several other Communist refused to support the 'Leftist Unity Programme shortly after they went underground and launched a violent campaign against the government.

Another reason of the violent campaign and opposition of the UNU Government was that UNU promised to make Buddhism the state religion during an election campaign so he won the support of the powerful 'Phongiyis' and won the election. But soon he found out that the fulfilment of the promises would be very difficult and finally leading to a crisis. It was much later in 1953 UNU confessed, "I had not expected that the work of building up a nation would be so difficult. I had thought that everything could be accomplished at the stroke of a pen when one become the wielder of political power." So the government plunged after their independence into the multifold tasks of organizing their administration and deciding how and in what ways they should proceed to turn Burma into a socialist state. The government also failed to prevent the White Flag Communists from going to underground to join their Red Flag Comrades. On many occasions UNU and his colleagues felt very much alone and wondered whether their "small, weak nation" would be able to survive.

On the other hand, there was fear of possible coup become of Mujahids, and Aung San's private army, the People's

91. 'Mujahids' Muslim Marauders from Northern Arakan.
Volunteer Organization (PVO). Far more serious was a revolt of the Karens, including their regiments in the Burmese army. So the UNU government replaced the Karen Commander-in-Chief and appointed Ne Win in place of him.

There were disgruntled Karens who wished to take advantage of the Government's helplessness. A movement began in Papun to set-up a Karen government, a revolt broke out in Karenni, led by a pretender to the throne. The Karen leaders Thaton and Moulmein were busy at the end of August by Karen rebels, including Union Military Police mutineers, but all the Karen leaders worked for a peaceful settlement. The government also showed goodwill by appointing a Regional Autonomy Commission with the Chief Justice, Sir Ba U, as Chairman. In this committee of 28 members 6 were Karens, so this body was the representative of the minorities.

The insurrection of Communists, PVO's and army mutineers were checked by the government in this time. The Communists in Central Burma also suffered a heavy defeat. 3000's Communists also surrendered. A Peace mission was also formed, headed by Sir U Thwin, which made contact with the PVO and declaration was signed by the members of the mission and three PVO, leaders stating that understanding had been reached, and that the PVO would make 'unconditional surrender' to the Government. "This declaration was repudiated by the
Central Committee of fighting for the more congenial pastime of ravaging the countryside. The old BIA - Karen conflict was played upon, and in many areas the Government was powerless to intervene. In the Karen's leaders meeting at Bassein it was resolved that the "UNU shall accept responsibility for safeguarding lives and property ... in Karen majority areas." In 1948, Karen formed the a paramilitary organisation named Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO), their commander was Mahn Ba Zan. "The extremists amongst the Karens now began to force the peace. Mahn Ba Zan tried to persuade the Kachins to enter into an alliance."

But in the last months of 1948, all efforts for compromise failed because neither the UNU coalition nor the Karens could achieve a strong and unified command of the situation.

The Karen insurrection resulted in more intense guerrilla activity by the Communists and the PVO's. The outbreak of the Karen insurrection in early 1949 posed an even greater threat to existence of the AFPFL government. As Burma had refused to join the Commonwealth, so there were some members of parliament in London and many Britisher alarmed at the possibility of warfare between the Burmese and Karen minorities.

because British agents were aided Karens. Although charges that the Karens were aided by British agents were denied by the British government, but UNU and his colleagues worried that the Karen insurrectionists might get aid from the west. Due to see these circumstances, UNU and his colleagues decided that the safest way for Burma was to steer clear of alignments with major nations either in the Communist or Anglo-American bloc. The policy of non-alignment was never designed to prevent Burma from receiving help from other nations "when offered without strings attached." India invited the representatives of Britain, Pakistan, Ceylon and Australia to a conference in New Delhi to consider Karen problem. At the same time Burma Government sent a request to London and the Commonwealth countries for urgent financial aid. The conference at New Delhi suggested the conciliation of Karen differences through commonwealth meditation, through a good-offices committee of Commonwealth representatives in Rangoon. The proposal was opposed by UNU government as undue interference in internal affairs. The AFPFL leaders could not accept or tolerate this kind of assistance. To face these circumstances, additional arms were provided under the British Defense Assistance Agreement and by June the main threat of the combined communist PV0-Karen insurrection to the government had been considerably lessened. The main reason of this was
that the government still controlled the Capital, Rangoon, and was still the government of Burma dealing with foreign powers.

The Communist also put their faith in foreign aid to bring them victory. At the same time, the Chinese communists established themselves in neighbouring Yunnan later in 1949. The Chinese could assist Burmese, but there is no evidence of any such cooperation. At the time of Chinese intervention in Korea, it seemed that the general war broke-out. The Burmese Communists wanted to link their forces with the Chinese army if it should take the ancient Bhamo invasion route into Burma. But there was no contact. So the 'People's Army' was never able to function as a military force, and so broke up into bands of jungle guerrillas.

To face this situation, the rebels no longer stood as alternatives to the AFPFL Government; some security returned to Burma. The Prime Minister UNU declared that to bring the stability in Burma was an extremely difficult task. But now, the government felt secure and summoned a mass meeting at Rangoon to make the new plans for a welfare of state. But within two months, Burma was under the gravest

threat because of the menace of the Chinese Nationalists in Kentung State.

After the emergence of the Chiang Kai-Shek regime in Yunnan towards the end of 1949, a huge number of Nationalist troops straggled over into the 'wa states' and Kentung. They were led by General Limi of the Eight Army, General Liw Kuo Chwan of the twenty-sixth Army, and Major-General Mah Chaw Yee of the 93rd Division. At this stage the KMT behaved as an organized army on foreign soil. Their strength was about 2,600, this number increased up to 4,000 by April 1951. During 1952 the KMT recruited and trained more troops and their number rose to 12,000 by the end of the year. Their KMT troops posed themselves as a 'liberation army' on 'undemarcated territory'. The troop also began to act as they had acquired some legal right to occupy the borderland. They also imposed taxes on the local people and to impress them into service when required. They were strongly supported by the American Government. Towards the middle of 1952 the KMT extended their territory upto west of the Salween. They also contracted with the KNDO. To see this, White Flag Communist, who in the wake of their recent defeats, reacted against it and launched a propaganda campaign for 'national unity' against the KMT. They also made their association with the PVO and the Red Flags. So on 1 October a Triple Alliance Pact was signed near Mongwa and also the terms of cooperation were decided.
But KMT carried out a definite plan of attack towards the end of 1952. "On 8 February a combined KMT and KNDO force attacked Loikaw, capital of Kayah State, but failed to overrun the town. Three days later they captured the capital of Mongpan state, and then Kyukhok and Muse." Captured documents revealed that the Karen-KMT alliance was gaining ground and they together entered in number of towns. Thus the pretence of "borrowing" Burmese territory to prepare for LiMi's triumphal return to China was thrown overboard. The soldiers of Formosa were now openly interfering in Burma's internal affairs in an unconcealed military alliance with an armed force challenging the elected and internationally recognized government of the country. Burmese were also feared to see the Communist Chinese activity to suppress the KMT forces. "Burmese concerned about Chinese Nationalist troops in their country only because this situation could give the Peking Government a claim for intervention."

To see this situation, instead of completing the task of crushing her rebels, Burma had to use the major part of her armed forces in driving off the invaders. Burma took

the matter to the United Nations General Assembly forces. On the other hand Burma Army was now a much larger and more efficient force and could suppress the internal enemies.

At the same time in February 1954 the PVO and the Mujahids signed a 'non-aggression pact' to respect each other's territory, "even though the Mujahids were prosecuting and militating any Burman who fell into their hands." At the last, in May 1954, the Triple Alliance collapsed in a "welter" of mutual recrimination and personal abuse among the rebel leaders.

The Burmese Army launched a new offensive against the KNDO in 1955. The KNDO fell back, deep into the jungle, surrendering their strongholds without contest. This brand of KNDO guerrilla will contrive to hang on for years, slipping over the Siam border. UNU describes his views in October 1954 in these terms: "When insurrection becomes small enough, it is nothing more than dacoity." Certainly the civil war, which at one time seemed likely to swallow Burma, is no longer a menace to the integrity of the state. Up to the end of 1954 the number of rebels giving themselves up to the government forces."

Burma's first five years of independence were a period of severe trials. One by one these crisis were surmounted and by the end of 1953, the AFPFL leaders could look to the future with some confidence. The AFPFL government had ample opportunity to put the basic concepts of its neutralist policy to test. Burma's English-style democracy was also the supporter of Burmese foreign policy. To understand the Burma's foreign policy it is necessary to see the constitutional development of Burma during the years.

After independence of Burma it is in form of an English-style democracy. The president, elected by a joint session of parliament, is little more than a constitutional figurehead. Parliament is bicameral, its cabinet body and the Chamber of Deputies. Every citizen of Burma over eighteen, having the right of vote. It is popularly elected. The chamber of nationalities or Upper house is composed of elected representatives from the six states which make up the union of Burma. The real head of the Government is the prime-minister and cabinet are collectively responsible to the Chamber of Deputies. Nominally the Union of Burma is a Federation but the policy of the Union government is to unite all the peoples of Burma.

After the establishment of the Republic, the first election took place in 1961, when the government was gaining the upper hand in civil war. The AFPFL won three quarters of the seats in the legislature.

Once again the election of 1955 appeared to be properly conducted, "except for the fantastic inefficiency with which the electoral rolls were prepared: of the Rangoon population of 737,000, only 200,000 were registered as electors. One particular feature of the 1955 Rangoon election threw a ray of light upon the pattern of contemporary politics in Burma. The one poster which the AFPFL chose to paste up everywhere around Rangoon was a portrait of determined looking young man in Japanese army uniform: Aung San. Out of the thirty five united opposition candidates, the only one to achieve election was that man's brother, Aung Than. The legend of Aung San and the 'struggle for independence' still looms large in Burmese politics."

"At the time of 1965 election, the ruling AFPFL coalition awaited with a confidence that was dangerously akin to complacency." In the election AFPFL won 173 seats in 1966. When the AFPFL split into two factions, one headed by UNU and the other by UBa Swe.

103. Lennox, A. Mills, op.cit., p. 34.
On 5 June 1956 UNU announced that he would relinquish the premiership for one year in order to undertake the reorganization of the AFPFL and the elimination of corrupt elements. During this period UBa Swe became Prime Minister with three Deputy Premiers: Kyaw Nyein (Minister for National Economy) and Thakin Tin (Minister for social services) - Ba Swe's rivals in the leadership of the socialist Party -- along with Sao Hkun Hkio as Foreign Minister. Despite NU's withdrawal from formal leadership, he remained closely associated with government policy, particularly in the realm of foreign affairs. He resumed the premiership in June 1957.

At the end of the year the opponents within the Cabinet and the party became acute. The 'Swe-Nyein' group and NU's associates failed to satisfy the socialist Party, whose programme of industrialization and nationalization had been practically suspended in consequence of the continuing balance of payment difficulties. In this situation, UNU followed the continuing religious and cultural undertakings. A disturbing factor was the growing power of the mass political organisations, Ba Swe's Trades Union congress was probably the most powerful, but it was rivalled by the All Burma Peasants' Organization of Thakin Tin and Thakin Kyaw Tun, as
well as the Federation of Trade Organizations. But UNU's influence over religious, cultural, and educational bodies was moved.

"With the socialist leaders divided and restless, UNU chose to toss an intellectual bombshell into their midst. On 29 January 1958 the Third All-Burma Congress of the AFPFL was opened." He concluded that "The AFPFL rejects Marxism as a guiding philosophy or as the ideology of the AFPFL." He also described his own idea of welfare state and also appeal for higher moral standards within the party. His supporters praised the UNU's ideas on national unity but the Swe-Nyein group accepted it as a direct challenge to its Marxist socialist Philosophy. So the relations between two group became bitter:"

On the other aspect, both faction clung to the AFPFL image. The other Swe Nyein group became the "Stable AFPFL" and UNU group called itself the "clean AFPFL", each fraction organised its trade unions. The crisis appeared in August when the budget had to be presented in parliament. The situation became worse. The disturbing factor was the growing

power of the mass political organization. Rapidly the relations between two AFPFL group became worse, and on 4th June 1968 fifteen ministers and twenty two parliamentary secretaries resigned from the government. To solve the party deadlock and to restore law and order, Premier UNU announced that Parliament would be dissolved and a general election was fixed for November and on September 26, 1968, Premier UNU announced to handover power to general Ne Win. The selection of Ne Win was unopposed and Ne Win also accepted this offer. The New Ne Win Government announced its decision to hold a general election but Ne Win government included only military men in administration.

When General Ne Win took office, he made seven reassuring commitments:–

(1) *"Fair and free elections before April 1969.*

(2) To exclude the active leaders of the political parties from the Government.

(3) To stop the army from interfering in political matters.

(4) To control and punish acts of violence and lawlessness by military personal.

(5) To act to suppress crimes as far as possible.

(6) To preserve the international peace.

(7) To maintain Burma's foreign policy of neutrality.*


The Newin Government quickly took on the characteristic of a "good government" and "reform government." But the election of 1960 brought overwhelming victory for UNU and his party. On April 4, General Newin stepped out of office and went back to his role as Commander-in-Chief of Burma's defence forces.

The policy and administration of Burma during the period of February 1960 to 1962, were not changed when UNU re-elected as a prime minister. It is quite similar as it was in 1957. The election of 1960 gave Burma a second chance to establish democracy. But UNU was not successful to pacify the opponents. On effect of this, in March 1962 General Newin again took over control, UNU was arrested along with a large number of other politicians. The legislature was suspended. General Newin became both Prime Minister and Chief of State.

The religious policy of UNU Government also provided a cause for the coup. The another reason is that UNU's efforts to soothe ill feelings could not succeeded for long if he governs poorly. However, in the past, his impatience

108. Ibid., p. 152.
with the details of administering a government and his readiness to leave them to less qualified undertakings, once he had set the policies — were his great limitations as a leader." As the English language Newspaper Nation put it, with UNU Burma has had "the world's best Prime Minister and worst administrator." To tell the truth Prime Minister UNU himself said at News conference, 'The administrative machinery is like a broken down old jeep without a steering wheel, no accelerator, no gas tank and not even any tyres on the wheels. How can you expect such a car to travel at 160 m.p.h.?" When one of the newsman observed and said, 'since he had been the driver of the jeep for ten or its twelve years, he might be considered responsible for its condition,,' the Prime Minister nearly lost his temper but the point was obvious.

The another reason of the coup that when UNU's Government presented the budget for 1960-61 in parliament, the first instalment was of a new four year plan, the rest being expected soon, the Government was cautious and conservative. They started some vague talk about using foreign aid, but there was no good planning which could attract foreign fund.

The main reason of the coup was that, the production rice, "the staple crop, is still lagging at 93 per cent of what it was 20 years ago. Where as Burma exported 3.6 million
tons rice in 1939, it exported only 2 million in 1958 that figure will be but barely looped this year. The reason is that domestic requirements due to the population increase have grown greatly since the war, because rice represents about 80% of Burma's exports, the country's ability to increase foreign exchange reserves and imports decreased. "The keys to eventual broadening of the economy depends upon an increase in rice production great enough to cover the growing needs of the country and permit an expansion of exports." Only the strong and firm leadership from the government can improve the situation.

The UNU government sharply reduced foreign control of the nation's economy through nationalization and a policy of favouring Burmese businessmen. The government started to establish new industries, and also started the social welfare programme and also build an effective defence force. In effect of this, the Burmese people can not save themselves to some degree of responsibility for the chaos and corruption UNU government was not so much firm to face the situation.

The war time head under the Japanese Dr Ba Maw put it, "The Burmese have believed for a thousand's years or more that a government exists only to promote their religious,

especially by building pagodas and other rich and costly edifices, it seems that the firm leadership is necessary, because politician depend on public approval in democracy, of course, NU found it more difficult to provide this firmness than did General Newin. On the other hand, Newin regime, for a short period also introduced so many programs for reforms which were extremely important to the nation's welfare but dangerous politically.

The Army will be standing by ready to move in a prospect that is never appealing to civilian politicians. The most important factor is that the Newin is in a position to turn his wisdom into practical achievements. These circumstances became the cause for a coup.

Immediately after the coup and overthrow of the UNU government a Revolutionary Council was formed on March 2, 1962, under the Chairmanship of General Newin, consisting of himself and sixteen other members belonging to the armed forces. The Revolutionary Council on the following day dissolve both the chambers of parliament, and the General Newin exercised full legislative powers. The dissolution of the union parliament produced chain-reaction under the Burmese constitution. The result of this was the dissolution

of the state legislatures also, the Revolutionary Council also dissolved the state Councils of Shan, Kachin, Karen and Kayah and he formed five state Supreme Councils, consisting of its own ministers. Full powers of the government came in the hands of General Newin. Not only the legislature but also the executive and the judicial powers came in the hands of Chairman of the Revolutionary Council. In place of High Court and Supreme Court, the new state judiciary was established consisting of a chief Judge and five other judges. The new state judiciary possessed all the powers but full judicial powers were vested in General Newin. The Revolutionary Council founded a 'Central Security Council' headed by a military officer. He also announced the nationalization of the export trade in rice and the taking over of the entire import trade.

Generally Newin allowed only one government's party, 'The Burma Socialist Programme Party.' But it had not really played any significant role at all since its establishment. The opposition of the Newin Government has come from at least five sources:


113. Ibid., p. 294.
1. The Communist
2. Karen rebellions
3. The Shans who related to neighbouring Thai.
4. Press
5. Buddhist Clergy.

Unlike UNU, Newin was pursuing a policy of maximum rapid 114 modernization rather than seeking to effect.

The economic aspect of the Revolutionary Council of Burma was to pursue a policy aimed at establishing a Socialist economy. In order to carry out socialist plan such vital means of production as agricultural and industrial production, distribution, transportation, communication, external trade etc. would be nationalized. “Without touching the question of the distribution of the existing cultivable lands, the Revolutionary Council has embarked on a plan of reclaiming virgin lands. They have build new villages on these lands and handed them over to cooperative societies. Members of the Societies are landless labourers, each of them is given 10 acres of land. Agricultural production is largely a private enterprise.” Some industries are still in the private sector. There are of course public sector

undertakings like sugar mills, cement factories, textiles mills, salt and tile factories and jute manufactures. The British owned petroleum and mining industries have been nationalized after payment of due compensation. There is effective control of the economy of the country without nationalizing the industries, the government can control them by controlling the supply of raw materials and credit facilities. “By nationalizing all the trading concerns the government has become the sole buyer of everything which is produced in the country. The government also control the prices. Many private enterprises are anxious to close down. But they can not do so without the government’s premission. Loss or no loss, the production in factories must continue.  

The Newin regime was basically totalitarian, in 1965, he also nationalized the country's private schools. The Party’s secretary General Brigadier Yu Saw rightly commented, “he (General Newin) wanted to switch from the centralized power structure towards democratic socialism. The constitution must include guarantees for non-exploitation of man by man, race by race and for full human rights. He emphasised on framing a socialist constitution and following a neutral

The slogan of Revolutionary Council is that "a system of socialist democracy based on a socialist economy." So the Revolutionary Council had tried to synthesize materialistic concepts and the tradition of Burmese society and in doing so, has shown itself to be Burmese and nationalist above all.

After exile in Bangkok, UNU became revolutionary and he also formed the "Liberation Army". He appealed to the British, the American and other countries for help. He also publicly declared that he was ready to accept help from any sources to overthrow General Newin's regime. It is uncertain whether he was succeeded in winning any significant foreign backing, although it was reported that he attended several secret discussions at the home of General Praphas Gharus 118 Thien, Thailand's Vice President. The American Embassy in Rangoon took pains to stress that it had no sympathy for UNU and the United Nations Liberation Front, and too, by the Russian Ambassador Mr. Smirnov, who in a most unusual and outspoken display of Soviet diplomacy described UNU's activities as a 'Cheap Joke.' General Newin seriously alarmed this situation.

119. The Assam Tribune, (Gauhati : 26 October 1971).
Neither UNU, who ruled from 1948 to 1962, nor General Newin, found a solution for the "grievances of Burma's minorities." The Karens and Mons agreed to form a United resistance under the leadership of UNU. Both groups want to break away from Rangoon. On the other side, UNU's promise of a 'federal solution' attracts moderates, some extremists are aiming for much more near it.

UNU, perhaps, gets the help to enlist the support of other Burmese who have suffered under Newin's brand of "State Socialism". Nationalising trade and commerce provided no solution for Burma's economic problems. Since Newin seized power in 1962, rice exports have sagged from 1.2 million tons to half a million tons. Workers have been hurt by static wages, rising prices and shortages. The people are unable to get their daily necessary things. On the other hand, army officers have enjoyed unprecedented ranks and privileges. Newin's love of secrecy and obsessive fear of assassination have made him an erratic ruler, morbidly inward looking.

Under these circumstances, General Newin takes a significant step towards the realisation of the main objectives of the people and the party to make the new administrative system. In effect of this the Burmese Government appointed a

120. By editor, "Burma", op.cit., p. 28.
97 men commission to draft a new constitution for the country. The Commission is headed by the Deputy Premier Brig. San Yu and the new Constitution was expected to ready by August 1973, according to the General Newin's promise. This new socialist constitution will be expected to be adopted by a People's Assembly to be elected in 1974.

The proposed Constitution under which Burma will become the "Socialist Republic Union of Burma" provides for religious freedom fully equality regardless of race, religion or sex, and compulsory military service. It also provides for the formation of three new states --- Chin, Mon and Arakan for a total of fourteen states.

General Newin; Chairman of the Burma Socialists Programme Party, in his address to the opening session of the First Party Congress, stressed three great tasks which call for immediate action. These tasks are: "to build a solidly United Party, to build the unity of the national races, and to draft the state Constitution." In his speech, General Newin said, "I have emphasis unity of the party which plays

122. The Indian Express, (Delhi; 24 April 1972).
the leading role as of importance because lack of such unity will not only spell the misfortune of the party but of the entire nation as well. For this reason party must have a complete solid unity and work with a clear and correct way of thinking. For the solid strength of the party, the most important pre-requisite is inner party unity. Inner party democracy is as important as party unity. In building inner party unity three must be freedom to express one's views."

A six-point feature programme of the Burma Socialist Programme Party also has been adopted by the First Party Congress. The Programme envisages:

"(1) Building a socialist democratic state.
(2) Developing a planned economy for all national races.
(3) Building firm and strong national solidarity.
(4) Forming class and mass organizations within the socialist democratic structure.
(5) Strictly pursuing a correct and independent foreign policy.
(6) Promoting the leadership role of the party."

The new role of the Lanzin Party after the 'first Party Congress' is undoubtedly most important. It is not only important for the party as it but also for the people. It is also as an indication to the world that the party has been doing what it has set out to do.

"One of the most important aspects of the new administration system is the reorganisation of the Security and Administrative Committees (S.A.C.). For the new system to be geared towards socialist democratic ideals, it is essential to give socialist democratic character to the backbone of the administrative system that is none other than the Security and Administrative Committee." The fundamental aim that rule the SAC's are that they shall be responsible to the people, attend to the voice and the will of the people, and administer public affairs, executing policies of the Government, supervising and coordinating the work of various departments—operating in such a style in essence as to clear the way for socialist construction." General Newin particularly discussed the cooperative scheme, stressing the necessity to develop cooperative societies, at least in order to have distribution of stores done smoothly, so that commodities and


consumer goods meant for the people actually might get into the hands of the people at fair prices. That indeed would be most welcome to the consumer public.

Now Prime Minister General Newin proposes to initiate reforms that might eventually widen the otherwise narrow base of the power structure he is not spared. In this they see the hand of conspirator trying to perpetuate his stranglehold on society. For example, his recent promise to give the country a new constitution that would inshrine the principles of economic equality and equality of the various ethnic minorities was said to have been made only to fool the unwary. Newin's emphasis on national unity meant no more than increased oppression of Burma's ethnic minorities that is not all. 'The proposed constitution would be a gimmick; no more it would put the seal of respectability on the authoritarian regime.' The outlook of Burma is gloomy. How long the 'native son' would be condemned to living a life of no joy and all fears, they enquire.

The Newin regime has had nearly a decade's run of the country and yet it is miles away from the goal it had set itself. The country's gross national product is one of Asia's lowest and the rice exports are down.
One must at the same time recall that this has another side too. It would be wrong to infer that the government is taking things easy assuming that the situation must get worse before it gets better. The economy is also improving in Burma; self-sufficiency in food is another redeeming feature of the economy and also leaving a surplus for export.

At another level, the Nenin Government has every reason not to be dissatisfied with its record. Burma's relations with the outside world are on a reasonably correct footing.