

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT
OF
POLITICAL WRITING IN BURMESE LITERATURE, 1914 - 42,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO
U LUN

Thesis for the Degree of Master of Philosophy

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A B S T R A C T

By the time of the Second World War writing on political subjects in Burmese was well established; yet right up to the early years of this century there had been nothing like it in eight centuries of Burmese literature.

This thesis attempts to trace the beginning of political writing in Burma, to point out the circumstances that led to its emergence, and to follow its development up to the end of the Second World War.

Burmese writing before the introduction of the printing press consisted mainly of verse; what prose writing existed was confined to such subjects as history, law and medicine. But with the advent of printing and a new mass readership the scope of writing was enlarged to include plays and novels. From the time of the First World War there developed a growing involvement in international affairs, hostility against the colonial government and a demand for independence; so writers came to write on politics, a subject which had now become of paramount importance for every nationalist Burmese.

Political writing became acceptable to the Burmese largely as the result of the work of one man, Saya Lun (also known as Mr. Maung Hmaing and as Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing) and that is the reason he is given special prominence in this thesis. Saya Lun had already established himself as a successful playwright and poet and had earned a considerable reputation as a scholar before he launched into political writing. He already had a willing audience whom he gently introduced into the sphere of political debate.

Apart from the influence he wielded at the time, he had no small effect on the future development of the country; he supported and encouraged the young independence fighters and shaped many of the ideas of the men who were to become leaders of an independent Burma.

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Preliminary notes:

Burmese words and names:

The vexed question of rendering Burmese words in the roman alphabet can be approached in one of two ways. One method transliterates the words as they are spelt, according to the accepted method for Pali and Sanskrit, which is accurate and consistent but is often misleading as to the pronunciation. The other disregards the spelling and attempts to indicate the sounds of Burmese words by using letters of the roman alphabet with values which they are commonly accorded in English. It not only fails, as often as not, in this objective, but is also inconsistent between one transcriber and another. The latter method has however been widely used in Western writing about Burma, and therefore it is adopted in this thesis for most Burmese names, particularly for those which there is a generally accepted romanisation (e.g. Mandalay, Wunthanu, Thakhin, Daung Tika); but Pali words (e.g. bhikkhū), words of uncommon occurrence in Western writings (e.g. le:-khyui:-kri:), some quotations in Burmese (e.g. nā:-thon-cā: ro-gā), and the Burmese book titles in the bibliography (e.g. Doñ: tī-kā), are rendered by the transliteration method according to the Table (pp. ii-iii).

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

1. Consonants.

က	ka	ခ	kha	ဂ	ga	ဃ	gha	င	na
စ	ca	ဆ	cha	ဇ	ja	ဈ	jha	ည	ña
တ	ta	ဒ	tha	ဇ	da	ဃ	dha	ဏ	na
တ	ta	ထ	tha	ဒ	da	ဇ	dha	န	na
ပ	pa	ဖ	pha	မ	ba	ဘ	bha	မ	ma
ယ	ya	ရ	ra	လ	la	လှ	la	ဝ	wa
သ	sa	ဟ	ha	ဒါ		သ	ssa	ဉ	ña

2. Vowels.

အ	'a	အာ	'ā	အိ	'i	အီ	'ī	အု	'u	အူ	'ū
အေ	'e	အဲ	'ai	အော	'o	အော်	'ō	အို	'ui	အွ	o
အူ	i	အို	ī	ဥ	u	ဦ	ū	ဧ	e	ဧ	ō

3. Other symbols.

-j	-y	G	-r	o	-w	J	-h
÷	m	-	-.	-:	-:	၏	e'

Abbreviations are written out in full ; e.g. ရှိ rwe. , ခွံ nhuik .

C H R O N O L O G Y

- 1824-1826 First Anglo-Burmese War. The annexation of part of Lower Burma by the British in India.
- 1852 Second Anglo-Burmese War. The British annex the rest of Lower Burma and part of Upper Burma.
- 1885-1886 Third Anglo-Burmese War: all Burma becomes a "province" of the "colony" of India.
- 1886-1890 Pacification of Burma.
- 1890-1920 "Golden Period of British Rule." (Dr. Htin Aung)
- 1897 Burma raised to the status of a separate province of the Indian Empire with its own Lt. Governor and a small legislative council.
- Foundation of the Sam Buddha Ghosa Anglo-Vernacular High School in Moulmein by the Sāsanādhara Society.
- Foundation of the lay Buddha Sāsanā Nuggaha High School by the Buddha Kalyāna-mitta A-thin of Myin-gyan.
- 1904 Growing strength and activity of the Rangoon College Buddhist Association.
- 1905 Japanese victory over the Russians, represents the possible end of ~~the~~ European domination to Asians.

- 1906 Y.M.B.A. founded.
- 1908 First Burmese deputy commissioner appointed.
- 1909 The Morley-Minto reforms: the legislative council is increased to 17 members, 2 elective members included, but both from British organizations.
- 1910 Foundation of the Burma Research Society.
- 1911 The Sun Daily newspaper established.
Saya Lun's Kya Tika articles in the Sun Daily.
- 1913-1914 Saya Lun's Bo Tika
- 1914 U Shwe Kyu's Russo-Japanese war published.
- 1914-1918 World War I: several books published on it.
- 1915 The legislative council increased to 30 members, all the additional members (i.e. 13 members) being appointed by the governor.
Saya Lun's novel Hma-daw-bon wutthu .
- 1917 Shoe question resolved.
Appointment of the first Burman judge of the High Court.
The Y.M.B.A. send a delegation to Calcutta for talks with Secretary Montague and Viceroy Chelmsford in December.
Britain promises limited self-government (dyarchy) to India.

- 1918 The Craddock Scheme published in December.
- 1919 Dyarchy granted to India but not to Burma. Y.M.B.A. Delegation goes to London, on behalf of the nation, to protest against the Craddock scheme: several books follow, with openly political titles.
- Saya Lun's Daung Tika.
- 1920 University Strike and the National School movement begins at the end of the year.
- 1921 Y.M.B.A. becomes G.C.B.A. ; Wunthanu Athins spread rapidly throughout rural Burma.
- Whyte's Burma Reforms Committee: boycotted by G.C.B.A.
- U Ottama jailed for the first time for political reasons.
- Foundation of the National University(Bahan College).
- 1922 Organization of the G.C.S.S. and emergence of Bu Athin.
- Elections held for the legislative council under the dyarchy system. Only 7 % of eligible voters take part.
- Beginning of the splits in the G.C.B.A.
- Saya Lun's Myauk Tika .

- 1923 Dyarchy granted to Burma, with limited power for Burmese ministers and legislature.
G.C.B.A. splits continue and G.C.S.S. divided.
- 1924 Mandalay riot in August: several people killed by the authorities.
Saya Lun's Khway Tika in the Bandoola Journal.
Saya Lun's Letters of Mr. Maung Hmaing published.
- 1925 Elections for the second legislative council under the dyarchy system: only 17 % of the eligible voters take part.
- 1926 U Ottama launches the anti-tax campaign.
Setkya Min ('prince-pretender') from Tavoy arrested.
- 1927 Saya Lun's Boycott Tika .
- 1927-1928 Uprising of Bandaka, a village hermit from Shwebo.
Elections of the third legislative council held in November. Only 18 % vote.
- 1929 Simon Commission on separation for India and Burma: reaches Burma in January to find a hostile reception.
Wall Street crash. World depression.
U Wisara arrested in March for political reasons: fasts to death (166 consecutive days hunger strike) in protest against the treatment he received.

- 1930 Separation decreed by Great Britain.
 Indo-Burman riots break out in Rangoon in May.
 Dobama founded by Thakhin Ba Thaung.
 Mutiny in Rangoon Central Jail in June.
 First India Round Table Conference convened in
 London in November.
 Sir J.A. Maung Gyi appointed acting governor.
 Saya San rebellion breaks out in the Tharrawaddy
 District in December.
- 1931 Burma Round Table Conference convened in London in
 December.
- 1932 Elections to the fourth legislative council held in
 November with a resounding victory for the Anti-
 Separation League (415,000 to 250,000).
 Saya Lun's Daung Gan-di .
- 1934 Saya Lun drops his famous pseudonym Mr. Maung
 Hmaing and becomes Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing.
- 1935 Government of Burma Act passed by the British
 Parliament in May.
- 1936 Elections held for the new Burmese legislature:
 Ngar-bwint-saing party wins majority (45 seats)

but Dr. Ba Maw of Hlaing-Myat-Paw party (12 seats) becomes Prime Minister.

Second University Strike rapidly converted to the National Students' Strike.

1937

Separation: fifty years after the annexation of Upper Burma, Burma regains her separate identity on 1st April. Beginning of the Sino-Japanese War: the Burma Road, a supply-route for China, started.

The foundation of the Nagarni Book Club.

1938

Indo-Burman riots break out in July.

Oil-fields workers' and peasants' protest march.

Students' demonstrations in front of the Rangoon

Secretariat: Bo Aung Gyaw clubbed to death by police.

All-Burma Students' Strike begins at the end of the year.

Saya Lun's Thakhin Tika.

1939

Hitler invades Poland: Britain (including Burma) declares war.

U Ottama dies in prison.

The Mandalay Massacre by British-officered troops:

17 deaths including one young boy of 12.

Dr. Ba Maw's government ousted in February: U Pu becomes Prime Minister.

First official Communist cell organized in Rangoon.

Freedom Bloc formed.

Burmese goodwill mission to China: not sponsored by the government.

1940

U Saw becomes Prime Minister.

Thakhin Aung San leaves Burma secretly in August to make contact with (Communists in) China but finds himself among the Japanese.

1941

The 'Thirty-Comrades' smuggled out of Burma to Hainan to receive military training.

Japan declares war in December and invades Burma.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

This thesis has been undertaken for three general reasons. The first is that although the novel and Khit-san literature have become well established and important parts of the modern literary scene in Burma, political literature has been largely neglected; writing on politics began relatively late in the first decade of this century and only assumed some significance in the 1930s.

The second reason is that almost all the pre-war political writings and most of the other publications have either been destroyed or lost. This enormous gap in documentation is obviously serious and an attempt must be made to narrow it. Finally, despite the very important part he played in the making of the modern Burma, the work of Saya Lun has been sadly neglected by historians and, by non-Burmese historians, almost totally ignored. This thesis was begun in his lifetime in an effort to place him more realistically in the history of the independence movement.

I have felt it important to explain something of the nature of plays and novels in the literature of Burma because the styles

employed in the writing of plays and novels were very closely linked to the style employed in political writing, especially by Saya Lun. Burmese newspapers have also played a major part in the awakening of political consciousness among the Burmese people: this aspect of the independence struggle has been rather neglected and I have included something of the history of the Burmese press solely from Burmese sources.

In writing this thesis, I have divided the history of Burmese political literature into four periods. Each chapter begins with a discussion of the political background of that period followed by a book list of the publications of that time from which I have selected various works of particular interest to comment on. Of the books that have been available to me, I have made full comments and criticisms but for the remainder I have had to rely on The Burma Catalogue of Books which gives quarterly lists of all books published in Burma from 1868 to 1941. This means that I have had to limit my observations to what is indicated by the title and what I know of the author and the background.

One major lack of the political commentaries of Burma is that they have been written with very little regard to the Burmese

point of view. Any description of the emergence of the Y.M.B.A., the G.C.B.A. and the Dobama Asi-ayone, the 1920 students' strike, the Saya San rebellion, the Indo-Burman riots, the oil-field workers and peasants' march of 1938, the Wunthanu movements, the Thakhin movements etc., must suffer if the author is not well acquainted with the Burmese situation as seen through Burmese eyes. This thesis is an attempt to remedy this.

Although Saya Lun has been given special significance I have tried to include some assessment of the works of other major writers of the period, such as U Ba Khaing , Thein Pe (Myint) , Thakhin Ba Hein , Thakhin Nu , etc.

As regards obtaining original source material, I must admit that, I have faced more difficulties than I expected. Although I did not expect that I would be able to get 50 % — even 10 % — of the political books which are listed in the Burma Catalogue of Books I did expect quite confidently to find all the works of Saya Lun , if not in the United Kingdom at least in Burma, as he was still alive at that time (1963). Unfortunately, I was wrong and I was , probably , too optimistic. Quite a number of Saya Lun's works have been reprinted recently: Bo Tika (January, 1967); Hma-daw-bone Wutthu (early 1960s); Daung Tika (May, 1960), Daung Gan-dhi (July, 1960),

Boycott Tika (1960); Letters of Mr. Maung Hmaing (1965); and Thakhin Tika (March , 1965), but no further editions of Khway Tika and Galon Tika have been published yet. U Hla, one of Saya Lun's most faithful and devoted pupils, and his wife Daw Ahmar, well known publishers and the owners of Ludu Press, appealed to the country through all media. They asked for manuscripts, old books or newspaper cuttings of Saya Lun for compilation and publication to be preserved for the sake of the nation, its future generations and in honour of the great man. They offered to pay any price for the sale of material if a loan was not possible. But in respect of the two famous works by Saya Lun, the Khway Tika and Galon Tika , their efforts were in vain. Up to now (1968), there has been no response.

I have been fortunate enough to obtain all Saya Lun's works (excluding plays) except the Khway Tika and Galon Tika . But that gap has been partly filled: Saya Zawgyi has vividly described the Khway Tika in his Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika . For this I am greatly indebted to Saya Zawgyi.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND : BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

1. Politics

From the beginning of the history until the end of the independent kingdom in 1885, the Burmese people knew no kind of political administration except the rule of an absolute monarch. Therefore although there has been Burmese writing since the twelfth century, there were, to my knowledge, no substantial political writings of any sort until Saya Lun's time. The King's power was so absolute, effective and far-reaching that the question of political rights does not seem to have exercised many people's minds. Apart from that, the King is included in the list of five traditional enemies of man — water, fire, king, thief and a disliked person — so it is no wonder that philosophising on the nature of the kingship was avoided and political awareness was negligible. Throughout the history of the Burmese kingdom, apart from very few isolated incidents of personal heroic rebellion, there were no mass political movements nor, as far as I know, any evidence of public political awareness. For example, after the end of the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) although the British captured Tenasserim and Arakan, there was no evidence of massive popular protest and indignation. There was certainly fighting but the outcome was of little concern to the civilian population. It was the same after the second Anglo-Burmese War (1852).

Even after the final British annexation of Burma in 1885 when they captured and took away the Burmese king and queen, the public reaction was not very different. Apart from a few patriots like U Min Yaung, grandfather of the late Bogyoke Aung San, who risked their lives to start isolated revolts with resources which did not compare with the might of their enemy, there was no public protest. But even in the circumstances of foreign military occupation revolts like these were rare and the Burmese people in general could hardly be said to have been conscious of the political implications of the war.

Throughout their history, the Burmese were ruled not only by Burmese kings, but also by Mons and Shans. Many Western historians seem to exaggerate the situation by describing this as 'Shan domination' or 'Mon domination'. Personally, I disagree with this emphasis. The word 'domination' may give a false impression. Buddhist teaching in Burma has always emphasised that he who attains the throne whether by legal succession or by force, possesses a certain kamma¹ or puñña². This is unquestioned merit. And it is unlikely that it occurred to the average Burman that he was being ruled by a non-Burmese king even in the Ava Period, when a great

1. kamma = a deed, action

2. puñña = merit

many Shan sawbwas¹ were on the Burmese throne. The only relevant consideration was whether he ruled badly or well, not whether he was Mon or Shan or Burmese. The fact of his kingship made him acceptable to the people but if the king proved himself a bad ruler he could be overthrown. For example, even in Ava Period, only Thohanbwa (1527-43) was overthrown by Min-gyi Yan-naung and a handful of his followers. Political theorising played no part in the lives of Burmese people. It seems to have been an easy thing for the Burmese people to accept as their king whoever was on the throne as long as he was a good administrator and allowed them to live in peace, be he Mon, Shan, Burmese, or British. This remained true even after 1885 when the Burmese monarchy was deposed and the country was under British rule.

Burma under her monarchs was completely isolated from the outside world. Burmans had no knowledge of what was happening elsewhere, how much science had contributed to mankind and how much the Western powers had progressed. Not only did they not know, they had very little curiosity. This is a situation which did not change even under British rule. The country was treated as a province of India, which was governed partly in India and largely from London. This

1. sawbwa = hereditary ruler of a Shan state

increased the barriers in the way of Burma's access to the outside world; political awakening came slowly and new ideas came not fresh but second hand, mainly through India and also according to Dr. Maung Maung from China. (Burma in the family of nations , p. 82.)

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904 was the first external event which roused Burmese consciousness. Few people at the time could have held out much hope for a small Eastern country pitting her strength against a great European power. Japan's victory over Russia was a revolution in itself and it was a revolution which found echoes of discontent, of nationalism, in Burma. Although the response to the news was by no means immediate or overwhelming the acceptance of European superiority received a severe blow and traditional attitudes to rulers in Burma began to be questioned. People took a more lively interest in international affairs and became more aware of the political implications of their own. Nevertheless, nationalism in Burma in the first few decades of the 20th century remained very much a gentleman's affair , courteous , calm and cautious.

The nationalist movement in Burma also owes a great deal to the work of the Buddhist associations to revise and bring up to date the educational system throughout the country. Buddhism in Burma has never shown any concern with worldly matters, has preached no

crusade nor worked for mass conversion and has certainly never instigated or identified itself with political activities. But in the event it was the activities of Buddhist religious associations which sparked off the beginning of Burmese nationalism.

Efforts to stimulate a renaissance of Burmese cultural and national traditions began in the 1890s. Burma owed these to a handful of Burmese individuals who were in touch not only with education in the Western style but also with political institutions and ideologies. In the late 1890s, educated lay Burmese leaders in the Moulmein area and elsewhere began to sponsor non-clerical Buddhist schools which adopted a Western-type curriculum modelled on that of the Christian mission schools. The Sāsanādhara Society of Moulmein, which was dedicated to educational and social reform, started the Sam Buddha Ghosa Anglo-vernacular High School in 1897. The founders tried to finance their venture by encouraging the public to limit their expenditure on such occasions as funerals, marriages and rhañ-pru¹ and ear-boring ceremonies. U May Aung and his wife were active in the Sāsanādhara Society and its school. Shortly afterwards, and in the same way, The Buddha Kalyāna Mitta A-thin of Myin-gyan (later of Mandalay) founded the lay Buddha Sāsanā Nuggaha School where religion

1. rhañ-pru = monastic initiatory ceremony for youth

was taught and where the Buddhist pre-Sabbath and Sabbath holidays were observed. A similar group, Asoka Society, was formed at Bassein. In 1904, The Rangoon College Buddhist Association began to hold public meetings and to publish lectures and sermons in booklet form.

The aim of the activities of these Buddhist associations was solely to raise the educational and social standards in the country and was not concerned in any way with current politics. But they were the fore-runners of the Y.M.B.A. (Young Men's Buddhist Association) which was later, in the 1920s, transformed into one of the most powerful united political interests in Burma, the G.C.B.A. (General Council of Burmese Associations).

The Y.M.B.A. was founded in 1906 by educated Burmans including U May Aung, U Ba Dun, U Ba Pe, U Ba Yin, U Sein Hla, Sir Maung Khin, Sir Maung Gyi, etc. Their aim was to refashion valuable elements of the Buddhist tradition into an articulate movement influenced by Western concepts. Hence its close approximation to the Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association). Among the organisers of the Y.M.B.A., U May Aung was a graduate of Cambridge and had qualified at London's Inns of Court; U Khin was an extremely talented person who was subsequently knighted. U Ba Pe was a graduate of the University of Rangoon and editor of the Sun Daily, a leading

politically orientated paper of the time.

At first the Y.M.B.A. was essentially a student affair devoted to the discussion of Buddhism and related subjects. Later, it extended its interests to include the revival of Burmese art and literature. The Y.M.B.A. enjoyed an immediate popularity and branches of the organisation could be found even in the small villages in the remotest parts of both Upper and Lower Burma. At the annual meeting of the whole Y.M.B.A. topics of general interest were discussed and views exchanged. It was obvious that the association was becoming more organised.

In its aims and methods the Y.M.B.A. was a very moderate organisation. Its founders were real 'gentlemen' whose interests in the early stages lay outside politics. They even sang with some pride 'God Save the King' at the opening of their meetings substituting 'Buddha' for 'God' for obvious reasons. At each annual meeting, they sent a message of loyalty and gratitude to the British Crown. As late as 1918, at the Annual General Meeting held in Moulmein, the Chairman, U Phay, in his opening speech said how grateful they were to His Majesty King George V for the advantages of the British administration, ending, ^{astonishingly} ~~astounding~~ to post-war Burmans, with a prayer 'rule over us for ever.' Despite all this, their interests

and activities lay in the revival of Burmese traditions and culture which played a vital part in the spread of nationalism.

The movement towards political awareness in Burma is , of course, very closely linked with the battle for constitutional reform. The British annexation of Upper Burma in 1885 put the whole of Burma under British rule. She was regarded not as a country separate and self-sufficient but merely as one of the districts of India. She constituted a local administrative unit under the Chief Commissioner, assisted by his secretariat. It was only in 1897 that Burma was raised to the status of a separate province of the Indian Empire with its own Lieutenant-Governor and a small Legislative Council. Local government was given the power of domestic legislation but important matters such as finance and foreign affairs were still reserved for the Central Government in India on whose councils Burma was not represented. The new Legislative Council of Burma had nine members all of whom were appointed by the Lie^utenant-Governor. The four non-official members included two Europeans, one Burman and one Shan.

In 1909, the Morley-Minto reforms brought another measure of constitutional advance. The Legislative Council was enlarged from nine to seventeen, of which two were not appointed directly by the government; they were elected from the Burma Chamber of Commerce and the

Rangoon Traders, both representing European businessmen. It was clear that the Burmese were to have no share in legislation. In fact, these reforms gave Burma a much smaller advance than any other province in the Indian Empire. For example, ' in Bombay which is representative of the larger Provinces, the Legislative Council was increased to 48 members of whom 21 were elected: in the Punjab, which ^{is} representative of the smaller Provinces, to 28 of whom 11 were elected.' (Dr. Maung Maung's Burma in the family of nations p.78)

This hesitant experiment with legislative councils may have passed unnoticed by the general public but it certainly drew the attention of the young and progressively educated persons to the nation's grievances. The movement which these young people started was neither extreme nor violent and their aims were the improvement of social conditions rather than opposition to political conditions (e.g. the Y.M.B.A. movements). But it prepared the way for the advent of a more aggressive type of nationalism in 1920.

2. Literature and the press

The earliest Burmese writings appeared in a simple prose form on stone inscriptions recording dedications in the Pagan period. Apart from inscriptions, the earliest extant specimens of Burmese

literature date from the 15th century, having originated under the auspices of Buddhism and the king. It was mainly written by Bhikkhus¹, or by laymen who had previously spent long years of study in the monastery, or occasionally by ladies of the court. Like most early literatures, it looked to the court for appreciation and patronage and wrote mostly eulogies of the reigning monarch. Its distinguishing qualities were therefore puritanism of thought and courtly refinement of language. Another feature was its heavy borrowing from the jātaka, the stories of the Buddha's previous existences. In addition, there were some accounts of national events and the deeds of the king's ancestors in verse, together with shorter nature and love poems.

This pattern remained unchanged up to the end of the 18th century, when closer relations were formed between Burma and the outside world. Thus with greater contact and growing intimacy with other countries, Burma began to emerge from her isolation. The results were to be seen not only in the economic life of the country but in her cultural life. " Thailand was temporarily annexed in 1767 and romances and plays which were brought thence to Burma gave an impetus to the writing of secular literature. The Rāmāyana and other similar stories were treated in Burmese verse in a more light-hearted manner than had been possible with the jātaka. Then in the first half of the

1. Bhikkhu = Buddhist monk

19th century there were the playwrights U Kyin U and U Pon Nya , who wrote primarily for the Court. Their plays were produced as pya-zat (stage-plays), as against their predecessors' which were long plays apparently designed to be ^{read} rather than acted. The taste for drama spread, and by about the middle of the 19th century there were numerous companies touring the country — both the kingdom of Ava to the north and the British Provinces to the south, which had been occupied after the two Anglo-Burmese Wars of 1824-26 and 1852. The authors of the plays were unknown ; the plays were adaptations of jātaka , episodes from the Rāma epic and other popular stories ".
(Dr. Hla Pe's lecture on May 20th 1965 at The Britain-Burma Society)

By the time these dramas and plays were becoming established in the later half of the 19th century, Lower Burma was ^ralready under British rule. Very soon after, in 1885, the British had annexed the whole of Burma. As part of the inevitable Western influence, there appeared in Burma a number of presses and printing plants which had a considerable effect on the development of Burmese drama. But this was to prove a mixed blessing. Previously it was impossible to make many copies of one work as the duplicating process involved a laborious copying by hand onto palm leaves. Now with the introduction of the press and the business of publishing into Burma, not only was

the scope and range of literary activity greatly enlarged but its whole character became more commercial. Writers who had hitherto seen little room for profit now became professionals with a keen interest in the business possibilities of their work. In many cases, this led to a situation where quantity rather than quality became the rule. Thus, in the later 19th century there appeared a great number of plays, many of them of doubtful merit.

The rise in popularity of the printed play is charted in the Burma's Catalogue of Books.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. OF PLAYS RECORDED</u>	<u>PRICE RANGE</u>					
		Rs - as - pyas			Rs - as - pyas		
1875	4	1	0	0			
1876	nil						
1877	4	1	0	0	-	2	0
1878	3	2	0	0			
1879	5	1	4	0	-	3	0
1880	15	1	8	0	-	2	0
1881	7	1	0	0			
1882	18	-	2	0	-	2	0
1883	50	-	1	0	-	1	0
1884	39	-	-	2	-	-	4

The sudden increase in the number of plays printed, from 3 or 4 a year to a record 50 ; the drop in price from Rs 1 or 2 to an anna or even 2 pyas; and the rise in the number of copies printed, up to 3,000 or 4,000 , are all records of one of the turning points in the history of Burmese literature : the creation of a mass reading public. Literature was no longer the preserve of a handful of learned scholars, but was available to anyone with a few annas to spare, and the demand was evidently there. The situation is described in U Thein Han's (Zawgyi) Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika as follows :--

At that period (near the end of 19th century) in Burma there was a great demand for pwe¹ and puppet shows and they enjoyed immense popularity throughout the country. Because of these pwe and puppet shows, there also appeared a considerable number of plays in book form, which, because they could be bought very cheaply, were in great demand even in the most remote parts of the country.

For those who lived in the countryside, pwe and puppet shows came round once or twice a year ; the lyrics of these shows would be remembered and sung long after the troupe had left the village, young people would sing these songs as they strolled through their villages on moonlight nights. The songs would be repeated by the men rowing the cargo boats, those

1. pwe = popular dramatic performance

driving the bullock carts, while gathering wood or transplanting rice or when they were bringing in the harvest. These songs could be heard in the oil mill, in the cheroot factory and the thatch works. Or some would gather round the lamp and read from the book of the play. Reading was a social occasion ; the audience would gather round the lamp and those who could read would read in turn, with the appropriate actions, and those who couldn't would sit sipping their tea and chewing their betel nut and listen.

The years that followed the British annexation of Upper Burma in 1885 proved to be barren of imaginative literature of any quality. With the fall of the Burmese monarchy came the virtual end of court literature in Upper Burma. In Lower Burma the presses were active in publishing the old classical poems sometimes with commentaries, and semi-historical works such as the legends of pagodas. Some of the most popular stage-plays were reprinted as late as 1897.

In the wake of the printed play come the novel. The first two works with a claim to the name were adapted translations of Western novels : Robinson Crusoe (1902) by U Hpo Zaw, and The Count of Monte Cristo (1904) by James Hla Gyaw. These however were quickly followed by ~~the~~ others with a much stronger Burmese flavour : U Kyee's

Maung Hmaing the roselle-seller and Sagadaungza (both published in 1905) are picaresque tales with rogues for heroes, fleeing from one scrape only to fall into another, in a thoroughly Burmese setting.

The early novels were much influenced by the plays which had preceded them with such success. This is noticeable in the very titles of some, which echoed the rhyming ' Mr and Mrs ' titles popular with the playwrights ; e.g. Maung Hpei Shin Ma Mei Tin (1905), Maung Ba Shwei Ma Hla Mei (1910), Maung Ei Hpei Ma Ei Mei (1912). Most obvious however is the style : prose was freely rhymed, stage directions were indicated, for example , " Maung Hmaing says "..... " Maung Hmaing grumbles "..... Verse was also included on themes of love, beauty, fear, sorrow. This was the sort of style in great demand at the time when, whether one knew how to read or not, it was the custom to gather round and listen to one person reading aloud. Therefore, a style which was musical, incorporating rhymes and rhythms and easily given to declamation was the one in greatest demand.

The growth of the press in Burma is of course intimately connected with the emergence of political writing. Records are few, and copies of early newspapers still fewer, and the subject has been unduly neglected by scholars, both in the West and in Burma itself. I would like to take this opportunity therefore of reviewing briefly what is known.

According to U Yaw , retired Director of Information, Burma, (one of the present day veteran Burmese authors and journalists, Zeya), (Kuiy-twe. sa-taṅ:-cā paṅṅā pp. 30-43), the first newspaper in Burma was published in 1837, at Moulmein, under the supervision of Mr. Blundell, Commissioner of Tenasserim. U Yaw does not give the name of paper but mentions that it was in English. Not long after that , a Burmese version appeared as the result of the initial success. The editor was Mr. Hough, an American missionary, who was a colleague of the famous American missionary Dr. Judson who arrived in Burma in 1816.

Not long after Mr. Blundell's newspaper, there appeared an English newspaper, the Moulmein Chronicle . U Yaw names the editor as Mr. George Hough, but he does not indicate whether the above named Mr. Hough and Mr. George Hough were the same person. It is likely that they were the same person, because at that time, there were very few white men in Burma. In 1822, after the second annexation of Burma by the British, this press moved to Rangoon and continued its publication under the name of Rangoon Chronicle. In 1856, Mr. Thomas Godfrey, a lawyer, established the Rangoon Times. In 1878, there appeared the Rangoon Daily Mail and in 1879, Mr. Manual established the Daily Review . All these papers were in English, but were rather short-lived,

except the Rangoon Times, an independent newspaper which was in circulation until 1942, when the Japanese occupied Rangoon. The government also issued a newspaper called Rangoon Gazette and it also lasted until Japanese occupation.

Among the Burmese newspapers, as far as U Yaw knows, Dhamma-si (? Bible Knowledge or the Light of Christianity) newspaper was the earliest. It was published monthly in 1843 in Moulmein by the American missionaries. Although their main object was to propagate Christianity, they published not only Christian news but also world and Burmese news. For example, there was detailed reporting of the second Anglo-Burmese War of 1852. The style of Burmese was simple. They used short sentences with no verbose elaborations and it was a typical example of Christian missionary Burmese.

Now let us turn to the Burmese newspapers established by the Burmans themselves. Two of the earliest Burmese papers were Mran-mā saṁ-tô-chaṅ. and Ratanāpūṁ . Mran-mā saṁ-tô-chaṅ. was published in Rangoon which by then was in British Burma and Ratanāpūṁ was a Mandalay newspaper.

Although Mran-mā saṁ-tô-chaṅ. was in circulation for about 50 years up to 1920, we know very little about its origin and date of

foundation. U Yaw says that all he has discovered up to now is that it started about the same time as Ratanāpum or probably 2 or 3 years earlier, that is in the early 1870s. As for the Ratanāpum it was said that the Burmese king had to establish it to defend himself against the smear campaigns against him and his country by the English-influenced newspapers from British Burma, after the second Anglo-Burmese War. Apart from that as Burma had increased her foreign relations with other countries, King Mindon (1853-78) thought it was necessary to have a Burmese owned paper in Burmese. So he sponsored and established the Ratanāpum newspaper early in 1875. It was a weekly paper and the first editor was a Sino-Burmese called U A-hee, who was given the title Ne-myuī: sī-wa siddhi. It was said that he knew six languages. In 1876 Phuī: Wajīra was appointed as the new editor. This paper was written in a style of official language or the lhwat-tô style. The sentence constructions were clear but grand. This paper collapsed with the Burmese kingdom.

In 1873, the administrative body of British Burma issued a Burmese weekly paper called Lokī-suta-paññā. Their aim was to help vernacular education and to give general knowledge to the public.

About 1890, there appeared Hanthawaddy Newspaper from the Hanthawaddy Press and Mran-mā a-chwe Newspaper from the Rangoon Gazette Press. Both were weekly papers and published in Rangoon.

The owner-manager of the Hanthawaddy Press was Mr. Ripley, who was a school friend of Prince Thibaw (later King Thibaw 1878-85) and Prince Thoⁿze at Dr. Mark's School at Mandalay, the capital, during King Mindon's reign. It is said that Mr. Ripley knew Burmese very well, both the spoken language and the literature. Mr. Ripley's Hanthawaddy newspaper ceased publication before 1920, but Mran-mā a-chwe lasted till just after 1927.

In 1909, an educated young Burman called U Hla Pe established The Burman Weekly , with U Khin and U May Aung, both barristers and founder members of Y.M.B.A. It was the first English language newspaper published by Burmese but unfortunately it lasted only a year or so.

After The Burman collapsed prematurely U Hla Pe joined with U Ba Pe and established in 1911, The Sun Daily (Sūriya Or Thuriya), one of the great leading newspapers in the history of the Burmese. Its managers were progressively educated young men . On the editorial side it had U Ba Pe and Saya Lun and its contributors were Burmese literary giants like Sayagyi U Pwar, Mahā-gīta U Pyone Choe, Hmawbi Saya Thein Gyi , Shwe-u-daung (U Pe Thein) and the great political leader of that time Sayadaw U Ottama.

The establishment of the Y.M.B.A. and the effect of constitutional changes led not only to the beginnings of political awareness but to its expression in political writing. Thus political writing, mostly the work of Saya Lun, began with the advent of the Sun Daily. The task of the Sun Daily was not only to enlighten the Burmese public on questions of domestic affairs and local administration but also to keep them informed of events in the international sphere and to lead the crusade for social reform. The most controversial article written at that time was " phun:-kri:-pran prassanā " ¹ by Nat-kri: (U Ba Pe) ; it criticised the sacrifice not only of money and materials but also of time and energy to meaningless tradition.

To continue the story briefly beyond the bounds of the present period, up to the outbreak of the Second World War, the following papers had appeared by 1920 :

Cac-kre:-nan: published by U Shwe Kyu

Paññā.-a-lan: published by Nat-talin Saya Phyo

Mran-mā.-a-lān: one of the greatest papers in Burma

Mran-mā praññ-coṇ.

1. phun:-kri:-pran prassanā = controversy over the monks' funerals

Others, which were founded subsequently, are :

<u>Dī:dut</u>	<u>Bandhula</u>
<u>Jeyya</u>	<u>Saccā-wādī</u>
<u>'Ōñ Mran-mā</u>	<u>Wām-sā-nu</u>
<u>Tuīñ:-khyac Mran-mā</u>	<u>Liberty</u>
<u>Burma Observer</u>	<u>New Burma</u>

3. Saya Lun

The vital part played by Saya Lun in the emergence and development of political writing in Burmese literature is recognized in the title of this thesis and is examined in subsequent chapters. It will be convenient, however, to insert at this point a biographical sketch so as to provide a concise overview of his background , character, achievements, and influence.

Saya Lun was born in Wa-le village, Shwe-daung township, Prome district, Lower Burma, in 1875 when Lower Burma was under the British. His parents were U San Dun and Daw Ohn and his father had immigrated from Maung-daung-gyi village, Bu-ta-lin township , Lower Chindwin district , Upper Burma.

In his early childhood Saya Lun was taught by the Venerable Mahāthera¹ of Shwe-daung Kyee-the Lay-dat Kyaung² of Jinattha-pakasani fame. During King Thibaw's reign he continued his studies in Mandalay at Mya-daung Kyaung-taik³ while living with his Bhikkhu uncle. In 1885 on November 28th Maung Lun (Saya Lun), then ten years of age, witnessed from the Mya-daung Kyaung-taik the capture of King Thibaw and his queen by a British army unit headed by Colonel Sladen. Within the grounds of Mya-daung Kyaung-taik there was an unfinished Shwe-kyau-gyi⁴ which had been donated by Queen Su-pha-ya lat. The king and the queen were granted permission by the authorities to perform private water-pouring ceremonies for their donation. Although Saya Lun was only ten years of age at that time, the event affected him considerably as can be seen in his later, and more especially his political writings.

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1. Mahāthera = great Buddhist monk (of at least 20 years' standing)
 2. Shwe-daung Kyee-the Lay-dat Kyaung = Lay-dat Monastery of Kyee-the village, Shwe-daung township.
 3. Mya-daung Kyaung-taik = Mya-daung Monastery
 4. Shwe-kyau-gyi = Grand Golden Monastery

After the British annexation of Upper Burma, he began travelling round the country as a novice, to places like Ah-lone , Mon-ywa , Chaung-oo , Kye-mon , and Bu-ta-lin where he had many relations. He studied wherever he went but the centre of his work still lay in Mandalay. He had fully intended to become a Bhikkhu when he attained the age of 20 but while he was only nineteen, he lost his father and consequently had to reject his original plan and remain a layman in order to look after his widowed mother and himself. First, he went to Shwe-daung where his mother lived and then on to Rangoon to find a job.

He found a position as a compositor in the Zabu Kyektharay Printing Press, Su-le Pagoda Road, Rangoon and soon by his initiative and his obvious ability, he was appointed an editor. And it was while he was working at this press that he started writing.

This period coincided with a time of great prosperity for the Burmese peasants. The market for rice was good, the price high and they had money in ^{the} their pockets. The demand for entertainment, for puppet shows, plays and ^{and} pwes grew with it the demand for playwrights ; and it was in this field that Saya Lun first used his literary talents to amuse himself. His plays were an immense success

and were performed by such great artists as the puppet show actor U Phoo Nyo , pwe actors U Sein Ga-don, the great U Po Sein, the female impersonator actor U Aung Ba La and others. He estimated that he had written about eighty plays and that each play, about eighty foolscap pages long, took him one or two nights to complete. Although he was extremely successful as a playwright he never revealed his true identity as he feared the possible embarrassment that might be caused to his Sayas¹ , for example, the Venerable Mahathera of Shwe-daung Kyee-the Lay-dat Kyaung who was a very prominent and respected religious leader. It was hardly fitting that a former disciple of these venerable Sayas should be so publicly making his fame and fortune from these frivolous and worldly romantic plays. Saya Lun never took a permanent pseudonym and now it is extremely difficult to trace his works and confirm his authorship.

While he was working at the Zabu Kyektharay Printing Press he married Daw Shin of Kemmendine, Rangoon. When this press failed, he joined the newspaper Rangoon Times Press. Later, he moved to Moulmein and became an editor on the Mran-ma Times ; there he wrote some poems and articles under the pseudonym Maung Samādhī .

1. saya = teacher

In 1911 the Sun Daily newspaper came out in Rangoon, and Saya Lun, then thirty-six years of age, left Moulmein, and moved to Rangoon to take up an appointment as the Burmese Editor of the Sun Daily. This period saw the emergence of the nationalist political movements of the time, the Wunthanu movements, and by virtue of his connections with the Sun Daily, Saya Lun began to meet and associate with the young, educated and keenly nationalist politicians of that time, such as U Ba Pe, U Hla Pe and Sayadaw U Ottama. His interest in political questions grew and from then on his writing and activities were dedicated to the service of his country and more specifically, to the independence movement.

During 1913-14 he wrote a series of articles called Kya Tika and Bo Tika in the Sun Daily under the name of Mister Maung Hmaing. From Bo Tika onwards he began to devote a great deal of his effort to discussions of the history, literature and traditions of Burma as well as to critiques of current political, economic, and educational problems. After the first World War when U Ba Pe, U Pu and U Tun Shein went to London as the nation's representatives to protest against the Craddock scheme, Saya Lun wrote his Daung Tika articles in an effort to gain support for the delegates and this work is now regarded by modern literary scholars such as Zawgyi, Thein Pe Myint, etc., as the first notable landmark in the history of Burmese political writing.

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Saya Lun was a master of popular style of the plays and novels of his time. His prose includes fairly frequent rhymes and is well loaded with songs and poems. The Tikas are enlivened by the introduction of a number of characters, particularly women — Ke-tha , Be-da , Me Myint , Me Tint , Daw Sein , and others. They are cast in the role of disciples of the wise and holy man who is Saya Lun himself, and many of the poems are presented as their compositions. Their points of view and manner of speech are skilfully portrayed, and they were immensely popular, even with the older generation who might have despised professed fiction but who could read what purported to be autobiography with cleverly expressed comments on political affairs. His political writings did not provoke intervention from the government, but I believe they did more to disseminate advanced views in the country in their subtle way than books which brought on their authors the penalty of the law. For the first time something that could be called political writing was introduced to the Burmese literary scene, but in a form that was already familiar to the public.

At the end of 1920 when the University Act was imposed on the country in the face of popular opinion, the university went on strike. The strike spread not only to the National Schools but also

to the government schools throughout the country. When in 1921, the National University, otherwise known as Bahan College was founded at Bahan, Rangoon, by the nationalists, Saya Lun resigned his post with the Sun Daily against the advice of his colleagues and accepted an appointment as Professor of Burmese History and Literature on a voluntary basis. He felt strongly that it was his duty to do all he could in the service of his country and thus he began to teach the history and literature of Burma to a generation which had slowly grown away from the roots of their traditions — a generation taught in government schools but unschooled in their own culture.

In 1921 he edited the Glass Palace Chronicles for the benefit of national students and this work was prescribed as a text book by the boycotters' National Educational Council. Later, his Daung Tika articles (1919) were again published in book form and adopted as a school text book for the eighth standard by the Government sponsored National Educational Council. From that time he made his reputation not only as a journalist but also as an educationalist.

When the Prince of Wales, son of George V, visited Burma in 1921, Saya Lun was asked by the government authorities to compose rhwe-nā:-tô-swañ: e:-khyāñ:¹ for a payment of Rs. 1,000. Although

1. rhwe-nā:-tô-swañ: e:-khyāñ: = e:-khyāñ: poem for the royal ear

this would have represented a considerable fortune for him in his poverty, he had no hesitation in refusing. " Thus he showed his patriotism ", says Ludu U Hla in the book Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Ni-dan (pp. 28,29). In 1922 , he wrote the Myauk Tika articles in which he strongly criticized the so-called leaders and their politics. In 1923 when Dyarchy administration was introduced into Burma there was a great split among the Burmese Nationalist leaders and as a result the National College (Bahan) collapsed.

Then Saya Lun joined the Dagon Magazine as editor and in that year he wrote Myauk Gan-di which was a further explanation of Myauk Tika . Later he joined Bandoola Journal in which he wrote in 1925 a series of articles called Khway Tika spread over a period of nearly two years pleading for the reunification of the two splinter groups, the so-called original G.C.B.A. and the 21 Party. Not long after that, he wrote another famous book called Boycott Tika in which he described vividly the first National Students Strike of 1920 from the Burmese Nationalists' point of view.

In 1930, after the Saya San rebellion, he wrote Galon-pyan Tika — serialized articles in the Sun Daily. Just after this rebellion the Dobama Asi-ayone was founded by a group of young patriots led by

Thakhin Ba Thaung. The daring, the élan, the devotion of these young men appealed strongly to Saya Lun and in 1934 he attended the first Thakhin conference held in Yenanchaung and accepted the offer of the Chairmanship (nāyaka) of the Dobama Asi-ayone . It was then that he dropped his famous pseudonym Mister Maung Hmaing and became known as Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing . From then on, his closest associates were young educated thakhins like Thakhin Mya (famous socialist leader), Thakhin Aung San (late Bogyoke Aung San), Thakhin Nu (former Prime Minister U Nu), Thakhin Than Tun (Communist White Flag leader), Thakhin Soe (Communist Red Flag or Trotskyite leader), Thakhin Thein Pe (alias Tet-phone-gyi Thein Pe , later known as Thein Pe Myint) and others, and he worked with them, despite his age, in the independence movements. At that time, the government was extremely concerned with the activities of the Thakhin movement and took care to suppress as much as they could, mostly by frequent jail sentences. There arose a popular rhymed saying in Burmese sa-khañ pok-ca thoñ khrok-la (even a fledgeling thakhin gets six months in prison).

Saya Lun faced these difficulties and hardships with calm and resignation and never let them deflect him from his aim — the independence of Burma.

A measure of his standing in Burmese life and the political scene is the fact that whenever the question of nomination for Head of State came up, his name was always included in the list.

In 1943 under the Japanese regime, Saya Lun found himself one of the members of the ' Independence Preparation Committee.' The others included such ~~xx~~ personalities as Bogyoke Aung San, Thakhin Nu, U Chit Hlaing, former Home Minister U Aye, U Mya, U Aye Maung, U Tun Pe, Dr. San C. Po, Sir U Thwin, Sir Mya Bu, U Thein Maung, U Set, Mandalay U Khin Maung Dwe and U Kyaw. In 1957 , it was understood that he was one of the possible successors to Dr. Ba U , the first President of the Union of Burma.

However much in the limelight he was and however frequently nominated to hold positions of power, he could hardly be described as a man who sought personal fame and wealth ; he was always an extremely modest man, genuinely interested in politics, whose one great hope and ambition was the freedom of his country. He never sought popular acclaim or the publicity that could so easily have been his ; instead his best work was done behind the scenes, his greatest achievement^{was} the lectures and ~~the~~ articles with which he promoted his cause and which were an inspiration not only to his contemporaries but to the generations which followed. When the need arose he was

ready to make his own personal sacrifice : the newly established National College (Bahan) required his help and he immediately gave up the editorship of the Sun Daily and committed himself to an uncertain and insecure future.

Saya Lun was never an active member of any party except the Dobama Asi-ayone , although there existed many other groups such as the Home Rule movement, the Dyarchy movement and the Separation and Anti-separation movements. His purpose was to serve his country with his pen. The corruption of the political scene of his day filled him with disgust and he watched with distress politicians scoring points off each other and indulging in sordid backbiting for the sake of personal notoriety when there were so many great and national issues at stake. These great issues he championed in his writings.

But to give any measurable indication of his influence is almost impossible because he held no government post throughout his life, and there are no statistics, no opinion polls to gauge the degree of his influence. Through his service at the National College (Bahan) in 1920 he did a great deal of effective work in encouraging the spirit of patriotism in his students, many of whom in the forties became the leaders of the campaign for Burmese Independence. His very valuable work as a member and president of

the Dobama Asi-ayone involved the guidance and encouragement of the young group of fervent and patriotic Thakhins , among them Thakhin Aung San . The probable degree of his influence in a group like this may not be fully appreciated by non-Burmese or by those who are not very well acquainted with Burmese behaviour. But in a tradition and culture such as that of Burma, age brings venerability, and commands love and respect. Saya Lun was not only advanced in years but he had already established himself as a playwright, a novelist, a journalist, and educationalist but above all as a patriot. As such, his influence with the Thakhin movement must have been immense.

I should like to give here one example of his achievement which had its effect not only on the history of Burmese Literature and its culture but also on the history of the independence movements. This particular example concerns the name Mister Maung Hmaing .

Western influence in Burma probably reached its height at the beginning of the 1900s and it was partly to counterbalance this that young educated Burmans concerned about their country's future started the Y.M.B.A. Associations. Yet even they showed the influence of the West by modelling their organisation on the lines of the Y.M.C.A. And among the members many were very definitely pro-West , professing a great admiration for all things European, imitating in so far as they were able the manners, the customs, and the language

of the West. They were indeed ' Bogyis (Europeans) made in Burma.'

As I have already said, the Y.M.B.A. founder members included U Khin , U Pe , U May Aung , U Ba Pe , U Thein Maung , U Pu etc., and in this number were included several who had had direct experience of Western life and who were graduates of Western universities. These gentlemen, when they read out the minutes of a meeting or during the business of the Y.M.B.A. meetings, were accustomed to refer to each other as Mr. Khin , Mr. May Aung , Mr. Pu — using the word Mr. instead of the traditional prefix of address for the male person , 'U' or 'Ko' or 'Maung'. The minutes of the meetings appeared in the form that such and such resolution had been proposed by Mr. so and so (eg. Mr. Khin) and seconded by Mr. so and so (eg. Mr. May Aung).

Saya Lun was deeply disappointed when he heard of this procedure as it represented for him yet another step in the undermining future of Burmese culture. The idea that leaders of a free Burma should address each other as Mister was horrifying to him and he devised an ingenious way of ridiculing it.

He took the name Maung Hmaing from the notorious hero of U Kyee's novel Maung Hmaing the roselle seller . The name had become a byword for mischief and sexual license. A popular saying had emerged: ' Avoid Maung Hmaing , and you will never regret it.' To this name Saya Lun prefixed the snobbish 'Mister' of the Anglophile Burmans,

and used it as a pen-name for his series of articles in the Sun Daily called Bo Tika which were commentaries on the ' Bo '(Europeans). These articles written by a Mister Maung Hmaing enraged all those who liked to be referred to as ' Mister ' and generally shook the whole community.

Saya Lun got great support from the majority of Burmese in this campaign and it became a joke whenever they met anyone who had previously liked to be called ' Mister ' to call him ' a second Mister Maung Hmaing.' The risk of identification with the notorious scoundrel Maung Hmaing made a number of former Misters revert to the traditional prefixes ' U ' or ' Ko ' or ' Maung ' and the campaign was won : Saya Lun had cured what was later known as ' Bu-yo ' fever, a spoonerism for Bo-yu (European-mad).

The Burmese are therefore indebted to Saya Lun for preventing the spread of ' Mister ' and thereby preserving the Burmese prefixes ' U ' , ' Ko ' and ' Maung'. These prefixes play an important part in establishing the subtle gradations of respect and recognition of rank-differentiation in social relationships, and are an important element in Burmese culture.

Saya Lun was not a person who enjoyed being in the lime-light or sought to be in the public eye. The extent of his achievements and influence will be seen in subsequent chapters, but I should like to conclude this one with an analogy. In every curry or dish, a pinch of salt is the most important ingredient. Without salt, there is no taste. Yet in expressing our enjoyment of a meal, we comment on the chicken or the pork, we never think of mentioning the salt without which the meal would be ruined.

For me, Saya Lun represents the real pinch of salt in the curry called Burmese Independence Movement .

CHAPTER II

1914 — 1920

1. Politics

When World War I broke out in 1914 its direct impact on the development of political consciousness in Burma was relatively slight. Nevertheless, the indirect effect of the war was important, for it did much to break down Burma's provincialism and to extend the political horizons of many of its people. It demonstrated, among other things, that British power was not invincible. The Burmese people also heard about Allied war aims; they took cognisance of President Wilson's statements about self-determination. They became aware of political developments in India; they read for the first time an account published in Burma of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 and also about the present war. At the end of the war, Burma found itself carried along in the wake of a major revolutionary upheaval and constitutional reform programme centering in India. This provided Burma with the objectives and methods of political agitation. Thus, World War I clearly constituted a dividing point in Burma's political history.

This period saw the final solution — a Burmese victory — of the century-old 'Shoe question'. It first occurred during the reign of the Burmese kings when the British envoys presented themselves at the Ava Court. (See 'A question of Shoes' in E.C.V. Foucar's They reigned in Mandalay, pp.35-41 and 'The Shoe Question'

note in G.E. Harvey's History of Burma , p.336). Burmans who wear sandals always remove them as a mark of respect before entering a house, a monastery or sacred precincts, and those of sensibility and cultivation will also remove their sandals when they are in the presence of someone older than themselves. The British and European foreigners in Burma however were little disposed to adjust themselves to the customs and traditions of the country in this respect. Whether they regarded it as the privilege of the conqueror to ignore them, or whether it was more positively to humiliate a defeated nation, it is difficult to say. Whatever the intention there was no doubt as to the effect. No Burmese Buddhist could tolerate with equanimity the sight of foreigners striding about with shoes on in sacred places, especially the pagodas. In this situation, some of the pagoda's trustees, fearful of crossing the British, merely put up notice boards in front of the pagoda gates to the effect that ' apart from ~~the~~ British and Europeans nobody is allowed to enter with their shoes on'. These signboards may be considered one of the most important contributions to the growth of Burmese political awareness.

It has been seen above that, generally speaking, Burmans have traditionally had as little to do with political institutions as possible; that they were content to be allowed to live in peace

under a ruler whether native or foreign; and that rebellions and uprisings were personal rather than national, regional or ideological. But when the question concerning the exemption of Europeans from removing their shoes arose, the obvious disrespect of the foreigner for everything held in reverence and awe by the Burman was borne in on them. Even when they were brought under colonial rule, even when their king and queen were led into captivity, there were few voices raised in protest among people; but when this colonial rule permitted the sacrilege of disrespect to the holy places, the people were moved to indignation and fury. There had been many other grievances, but it was this particular grievance which became the focal point for the progressive politicians. They persuaded the Burmese people that this could not be tolerated. It was not only the question of irreverence and disrespect but also the discrimination between European and non-European which affected the issue. The former were privileged and the latter were not ; it was a bitter realization.

It was the young educated members of the Y.M.B.A. who pursued a vigorous campaign throughout the country to change the situation. Finally they won. The signboards read not ' except British and European ' but ' NOBODY may wear shoes on the pagoda and its precincts '. The fight had not been an easy one. The question was raised for the third

time at the annual conference of the Y.M.B.A. in 1901, but to no purpose. An effort made in 1912 met with the same failure. During 1916-1917 the question was again raised by a young lawyer from Prome (now retired Chief Justice U Thein Maung) and the controversy reached fresh heights of tension and bitterness until the next year the government ruled that each local phon-gyi¹ or head of a particular pagoda or pagoda trustees should decide the question on their own initiative for their locality. The Burmese had shown that there were some issues on which they would not be dictated to. The British ~~reaction~~ reaction was one of piqued disdain, declaring that ' Europeans who respect themselves or their health do not visit the (Shwe Dagon) pagoda platform '. (R.G. Brown's Burma as I saw it pp. 168-169)

Constitutional developments during this period also contributed to the spread of political consciousness. On August 20th 1917, an announcement was made by the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montague, on behalf of the British Government that they were prepared to give Home Rule to India on the successful conclusion of the war. The war ended, but the British promise to grant Home Rule did not materialize; moreover, Burma then being considered only a province of India, the British now indicated that this promise was

1. phon-gyi = lit. "great glory", Buddhist monk of full standing

intended only for India and that Burma could not be considered. A delegation from the General Council of the Y.M.B.A. went to Calcutta to talk with Secretary Montague and Viceroy Chelmsford in December, 1917. They asked primarily for Burma's separation from India governmentally and its recognition as a distinct nation within the empire. Among other things, they also stressed the individuality of Burma, its differences from India as to race, languages, social customs, and religion.

In 1919, when the Government of India Act incorporating the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms was passed, there was no mention of Burma. This greatly agitated the Y.M.B.A. and the people generally. Burmese public opinion was hurt and it felt by implication that in being omitted from the Act the people had been slighted. There arose the suspicion that a lesser scheme was being prepared for them. It was known that the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Craddock, was openly unsympathetic to any idea of self-government, and that schemes which he had proposed involved the partial devolution of existing local government by the institution of a complicated system of executive boards. This naturally provoked the people to anger and to action. The Y.M.B.A., especially, the younger generation members, who were more educated and progressive, could not accept these schemes

and argued that Burma must have its share of Home Rule to the same extent as India. So, the Y.M.B.A. sent another delegation, this time to London, on behalf of the entire nation, to protest against the Craddock schemes, in July 1919. However, when the Government of India Act was finally passed in the same year by the British Parliament, it was found that Burma again had been left out.

This was the signal for a nation-wide protest. The Burmese leaders felt that they must close ranks, agitate, and organize to get the same measure of self-government as India. They also decided that the struggle was no longer social and religious but political, and religion and nationalism must now be separated. They wanted the Y.M.B.A. movement to become more political in character and in aim. So, in September 1920, meeting in annual national convention at Prome, The Y.M.B.A. resolved to convert itself into the General Council of Burmese Associations, the G.C.B.A., which could be the alliance of all organizations, parties, and individuals in the common nationalist cause. It was the first united political front in Burma. U Chit Hlaing was elected President of the new Council and U Ba Pe was Vice-President. This action was most opportune, because as part of the protest against the exclusion of Burma from the reforms a nationalist movement called the Wunthanu movement had suddenly appeared.

In the wake of the Wunthanu movement came the great university strike of December, 1920. This was the first open challenge made by nationalism to British rule in Burma. ' The University College, Rangoon had been a college affiliated to the University of Calcutta since 1880, but now it was to become the first University for Burma. The University of Rangoon Act gave entire control to the government, and there was to be no autonomy for the university. Before Rangoon, the British government, when establishing universities in India, had followed the tradition of academic freedom and autonomy of British universities, and naturally the new University Act was taken by the Burmese as yet another repressive measure '. (Dr. Htin Aung's The Stricken Peacock — pp. 102-3) On August 1, 1920, a mass meeting was convened in Rangoon under the sponsorship of the Y.M.B.A. Burmese objections to the proposed University Act, already approved in New Delhi and London, were set out in a series of resolutions. Why, it was asked, was the act being pushed through the legislative council with such undue haste, without any effort to consult Burmese opinion ? The meeting cited a deprecatory remark by Governor Craddock to the effect that Burma had too few university graduates for it to be able to govern itself and it asked whether the call by Mark Hunter, Principal of Rangoon University College, for higher

standards and a residential university, were not deliberately calculated to keep that number low. Another resolution complained that Burmese representation on the controlling bodies (five members only in a council of forty-six and two in a council of twenty-four) was far too meagre to reflect the wishes of the people. The idea of a probationary year was roundly denounced ; and so was the resolution which favoured raising the High School requirements, especially in English, making all who passed from High School eligible to enter the University.

The University Act was nevertheless duly passed by the Legislative Council on August 28, 1920. Governor Craddock, the Chancellor, was scheduled to preside over the formal opening of the university in December. Thus began a controversy of extreme political significance. The students of the newly established university went on strike, and very soon almost all the schools throughout the country, were on strike. The people, taking the strike as the focal point of their dissatisfaction with the British government, gave full support to the undergraduates and the school boys. As the strike dragged on the nationalist leaders organised the Council of National Education, and all the Y.M.B.A. schools voluntarily came under its jurisdiction,

calling themselves National Schools. Eventually, the strike was called off. It was a great victory for the people, and the strike was to have repercussions right up to the re-gaining of independence in 1948.

2. Books

List of titles selected from the Burma Catalogue 1914-1920.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1914</u>	U Shwe Kyu	The Russo-Japanese	500	173	Rs.1-	Mandalay
May		War (Part III)			4 as	
(N.B. No trace of Part I & II in the <u>Burma Catalogue</u> .)						
Sept	U Hla Pe	A brief account of the countries now at War	3,000	80	12 as	Sun Press Rangoon
Oct	U Ottama	Japan(Illustrated)	5,000	119	Rs.3	"
Nov	U Ba Pe	The German Empire	2,000	115	Rs.1- 8 as	"
"	"	The Great War in Europe (1)	"	66	12 as	"
Dec	U Shwe Kyu	The Great European War (1)	1,000	32	"	Rangoon
<u>1915</u>	U Ba Pe	The Great War in Europe (II)	2,000	64	"	Sun Press Rangoon
Jan	U Shwe Kyu	The Great European War (II)	1,000	32	"	Rangoon

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1915</u> Feb	U Ba Pe	The Great War in Europe (III)	2,000	56	12 as	Sun Press
Mar	"	" (IV)	"	48	"	"
	U Shwe Kyu	The Great European War (III)	500	32	"	Rangoon
	U Ottama	Men in Japan	5,000	18	2 pyas	Sun Press
Sept	U Khin Maung Gyi	Wunthanu Rakkhita Kyam	1,000	319	Rs.2	"
	U Ba Pe	The preservation of ancient monuments	1,000	101	8 as	"
<u>1916</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>1917</u> Dec	U Hla Pe	The United States of America	2,000	91	Rs.1- 8 as	"
<u>1918</u> Nov	U Po Latt	A short account of the Government of Burma	500	205	"	Rangoon
<u>1919</u> Oct	Maung Khin Maung and Maung Ba U	Municipalism	1,000	48	8 as	Mandalay
<u>1920</u> Jan	U Min Han	Trade & Communica- tions of the British Empire	1,000	66	12 as	Mandalay
	"	2nd Ed. July '20	1,000	"	"	"
	"	3rd Ed. Dec '20	2,000	"	"	"
	Y.M.B.A.	Advantages of the Burma Deputation to England	3,000	16	Free	"

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1920</u> Jan	The People of Burma Association	Burma,the Cinder- ella of the Indian Empire	3,000	32	Free	Mandalay
	Y.M.B.A.	Plea for the in- clusion of Burma in the Government of India Bill	"	-	"	"
May	Maung Khin Maung and Maung Ba U	Municipalism (Part II)	2,000	-	8 as	"
June	Mr. Maung Hmaing	Daung Tika	2,000	270	Rs.2	Sun Press
	U Ba Galay	A collection of songs written in memory of late U Tun Shein, a member of the Burmese Deputation to England in con- nection with Burma Reforms	3,000	29	8 as	Rangoon

U Ottama had visited Japan in 1912 and in the same year he wrote Women in Japan . It is only ^a pamphlet, but it is significant as the first known factual book about the outside world in Burmese literature. He followed this with his Japan and Men in Japan evidently wishing to make Burmans aware of the state of affairs in the most progressive Asian country of the time. These books were published

not long after the defeat of Russia in 1904, by Japan. While the Burmese were rejoicing in the success and achievements of a fellow Asian country, it was certainly the most appropriate time to encourage and to stir up nationalism in the hearts of our country men.

When World War I broke out, U Hla Pe of the Sun Daily, wrote a book called A brief account of the countries now at War . For the Burmese isolated from the outside world, this book must have thrown some light on current international affairs and general knowledge of some other countries, involved in the war.

In the next years there followed several more books on the subject of the Great War.

In 1915, the Sun Press published Wunthanu Yekkhita Kyam (adapted meaning *— nation, nationalist + to guard, protect + book, article) written by U Khin Maung Gyi . One can imagine the substance of the book from its title. In 1917, the Sun Press published a book called The United States of America. The U.S.A. had established itself as one of the great powers in the world and the book must have contributed some sort of encouragement, at least indirectly, to the nationalists.

Up to now I cannot claim that the books I have mentioned can be classed as political literature of international relevance. But these writings were the first of their kind, in the Burmese literary world. They were concerned with political and international affairs, and doubtless they were a new kind of literature for the Burmese public.

In 1919, a new kind of factual literature, not particularly political was made available to the public. A book called Municipalism Part I, was compiled and translated into Burmese by U Khin Maung and U Ba U. This book and its subject, local government and municipality must have provided a great deal of information for the people of the day as well as for the following generation. This knowledge undoubtedly helped a great deal when the Burmese had a chance to administer local government by themselves. Volume II of this book was published in 1922.

In 1920, a book called Trade and Communications of the British Empire was compiled and written by U Min Han. It seems that the public took an interest not only in politics, but also in the country's economy because within six months, 1000 copies of the second edition appeared at the same price and it was sold out.

In the same year the Y.M.B.A. published a booklet called Advantages of the Burma Deputation to England . Another booklet with the romantic title Burma, the Cinderella of the Indian Empire was also published by the People of Burma Association . As there is no price indicated both these publications were probably distributed free of charge.

3. Saya Lun's writings

By 1911 Saya Lun had already established himself as a playwright. Compared to his Tikas , the plays can be described as light literature. But , through writing these small frivolous pieces, he learned the method of presentation which was especially popular with the Burmese reading public of that time : rhyming prose style . He was an acknowledged master of this style, and it brought his work tremendous success.

The early years of this century can only be described as the most depressing period for Burmese Nationalism. After the collapse of the Konbaung Dynasty there were no revolts or disturbances on a national scale, but there were some sporadic uprisings and insurrections. Ten years or so later, because of the incomparable strength of the ruling foreigners, these uprisings and insurrections died down. It was a choice between surrender and total destruction. With no heroes, no leaders for the cause, the spirit of Burmese nationalism faltered

in the face of growing foreign domination.

The decline of indigenous Burmese culture under British rule became increasingly apparent in the decades prior to the World War I. One of the main factors was the disappearance of the Burmese royal court, which had traditionally functioned as the main inspirational centre for literature and learning, religion, music and all forms of artistic expression. With the disappearance of trained secretarial posts at the King's Court, high literary competence in the Burmese language also became an unremunerative luxury not widely esteemed. English became ^{time} in the language of the law courts, of the best secular schools, and of the legislative council, while Hindustani vied with Burmese in the hospitals and the urban bazaars. Burmese speech, reduced to its rudiments and shorn of its refinements, continued to be used mainly in rural areas and in domestic circles. (Cady's A History of Modern Burma pp. 168-9) The whole picture of the decline of the Burmese culture was really a very tragic one. So it was not surprising when people set more store by learning the A. B. C. rather than 'မ' (Ka-gyi) ' ခ ' (Kha-gway); chairs and tables, rather than the traditional mats and polished floors, came into popular use and people who wore trousers and shoes felt more important and respectable than those who wore pu-chui:-ton-rhaññ¹ and sandals.

1. pu-chui:-ton-rhaññ = traditional apparel for Burmese gentlemen

Although Saya Lun was born in Lower Burma, by then under British rule, he arrived in Mandalay, then the capital city of the Burmese kingdom, before he was ten years old. He spent his adolescence in Mandalay and its surroundings. Thus he was brought up in the centre of Burmese tradition and culture, which was a great influence on his life. When he came back to Lower Burma and its Burmese society which had become strongly influenced by a culture alien to him, he was extremely distressed. But as it was an extremely powerful trend, there was nothing he could do.

Despite his disappointment, Saya Lun witnessed during the Bo Tika period (approximately 1913-1919 according to Zawgyi) two incidents that appeared encouraging to him. One had a cultural significance and the other concerned religion. The man who showed his respect for and his desire to uplift Burmese culture, by wearing traditional national dress was the late U May Aung, and the man who made Buddhism more familiar to the Western World was the late Agga-mahā-pandita Mahā-thera Lay-tī Cha-rā-tô (Ledi Sayadaw), D.Litt.

In 1913, the British government's ' Covenanted Government Official Posts Appointment Inquiry Committee ' arrived in Burma from Britain. This mission met to convene an inquiry at the Pegu Commissioner's Office. U May Aung was one of the persons in authority who gave

evidence. He attended this meeting wearing traditional Burmese dress, i.e. pu-chui:-ton-rhaññ — etc. At that time, as I have already mentioned, the educated and upper classes were very pro-West and were aping everything British. When Saya Lun saw that U May Aung was wearing Burmese national dress at such an important government inquiry meeting he was pleased beyond measure and regarded the incident as open rebellion, at least for the sake of promoting Burmese tradition and culture. So in criticism of those who rejected their own in favour of an alien culture, he wrote the first article of Bo Tika in the Sun Daily dated the 18th February 1913.

In a way, his articles were in the style of letters to the editor. In this article, he revealed himself as a typical Burmese Buddhist gentleman, and one who considered himself a second class citizen in his own country as he knew no English at all.

But as he was very keen to accumulate more modern and wider knowledge, especially on current event and political affairs he always made a point of reading almost every Burmese newspaper.

In the Sun Daily, he read that someone under the name of Bhi-lap-pran¹ and another styling himself Mran-mā a-kyui:-choñ²

1. Bhi-lap-pran = One who returned from Britain

2. Mran-mā a-kyui:-choñ = One who stands for the benefit of the Burmese

were arguing the merits of Burmese men wearing western clothes. When Saya Lun read the favourable endorsement for western clothes, put forward by Bhi-lap-pran, he remarked sadly how modern times had changed the whole essence of Burmese life. How anglicized Burmans, those who preferred to speak English and who adopted English culture had become the cream of the society, able to get the highest posts and to whom all opportunities were open. He regarded it as a bad business.

While he believed that those English-educated renegade Burmans of so-called high society always preferred to dress in western style and looked down ^{on} their own traditional clothes, he was tremendously proud and pleased at U May Aung's effrontery in attending the very illustrious and important company of the 'Covenanted Government Official Posts Appointment Inquiry Committee' meeting in traditional dress. He wanted to share his feelings with the entire nation and to show his efforts to stimulate a renaissance of Burmese cultural and national traditions, so he composed the following te:-thap poem.

Now that our old Burmese pride and culture have faded away,
And we have nobody to rely on,
Let our traditions not disappear,
Especially at this meeting.

From what we see of those who attend,
 They are mostly very pro-Western.
 The grandeur of our traditional and royal court style dresses,
 As they were disappearing ,
 seem to me most pathetic and melancholy.
 But now, U May Aung, one of the highest government officials,
 Comes wearing Mandalay style.
 Wearing pho.-lum-phru head dress and
 thuin-ma-sim: jacket,
 What a magnificent costume to see and thanks to U May Aung,
 Now, we Burmese have some one to rely on,
 Let our fate and destiny arise again,
 I'll pour down my (water of) good will
 and I'll say my auspicious prayers.

(Mr. Maung Hmaing...18-2-13)

Here it should perhaps be said that such is the idiom of the
 Burmese language that it is virtually impossible to translate the
te:-thap or le:-khyui:-kri: or any other poetic works of Saya Lun
 into English in a way that shows its peculiar charm, its ingenious use
 of words, its classical form and characteristic elegance. All that has
 been attempted, therefore, in this and ^{the} other examples, is to convey
 the meaning in as intelligible a manner as possible.

From this first article onwards till 24-3-14 he wrote 28 articles, and because of public demand these articles were published in book form in or about 1914, under the same title, Bo Tika. The literary style of this Bo Tika and the future Tikas was ryhming prose. There were eight le:-khyui:-krī: , brilliantly written, eleven te:-thap including one rhac-chay-pô , three le:-khyui: , five sa-phran , two dwe:-khyui: , all freshly composed by him; also seven short stories, two mettā-cā , twenty-five te:-thap , four le:-khyui: , two le:-chac , two 'uin-khyañ: , one lwam:-khyañ: and other extracts from well known literary works. Although there were political motives underlying his works, not only Bo Tika, but almost all the Tikas could also be read and enjoyed merely as literature.

The second incident concerned the achievements of Ledi Sayadaw . In 1913, the Foreign Buddhist Mission Society was formed under the sponsorship of Ledi Sayadaw at Mandalay, and this gave a great deal of happiness and encouragement to Saya Lun. In his article he described his feelings and he composed his great le:-khyui:-krī: . In this poem he praised Ledi Sayadaw as follows :-

Buddhist Era has reached nearly half of its time,

Let the world be enlightened with the Light of Buddhism.

I believe this is the time to form this society,
 And the glorious Ledi, King of Mahā-thera,
 is like the great Buddhist missionary arahat Mahindra.
 It's true, I swear it,
 This is the only time we have heard such news.
 In Burma, this wonderful news filled all of us with
 delight and joy.
 That captain of the barge of dhamma which must be
 the most unusual event of all time,
 With the light of Buddha's Sasana,
 Now is going to cross
 To the pleasant Isle of England (i.e. Britain) ...

In his second le:-khyui:-kri: in connection with ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Ledi Sayadaw's great reputation, Saya Lun reminded the Burmese of
 their real life and status by making comparisons and showing the
 contrast in the most subtle way between their past and their present.

Though the Champion of the Sasana was in exile,
 From outstanding Upper Burma,

The Land of Golden Palace and Ratana Kanak¹

In the cause of the recognition of Burmese name and character,

1. Ratana Kanak = the umbrella over the royal bed

The donation for the foreign mission was great,

Now I am not down-hearted,

although Mandalay has already collapsed...

In a most ingenious way he pointed out and reminded the public that ^{their} ~~our~~ King and Queen were captured and exiled, and that now ^{they} ~~we~~ were under the rule of foreigners. At the same time he encouraged the people not to be down-hearted, to be proud of themselves as true Burmese.

Like Minister Pa-de-tha-ya-za of the Taungoo period, Saya Lun showed a keen interest in the lives of poor people and their sad predicament, but the times and the situation were completely different. Though he was born in Lower Burma, he was well acquainted not only with the poor people in Lower Burma, but also with poor peasants of Upper Burma. As I have already mentioned, he arrived in Mandalay as a young man and remained to continue his studies. After the downfall of Mandalay, he roamed to places like Ah-lone, Mon-ywa, Chaung-oo, Kye-mon, Bu-ta-lin etc., where he had many relations. Since then he had become more intimate with the lives of simple, poor peasants whom he loved and with whose fate he sympathised profoundly. So, during the Bo Tika period, although he was living in Rangoon, the capital city, amidst the sounds of railway trains and tramcars, he always remembered

the country life — he recalled a pair of beautiful oxen drawing a lovely wooden cart from Ah-lone . He remembered the innocent charm of the sweetcorn sellers and their friends chatting gaily among themselves, He visualized the corn-fields, lush cotton-fields etc., etc. He remembered the than:-khok-phā¹ and gum-pu-wā² etc. He also remembered, how the poor peasants' possessions, their meagre little landholdings and their small plantations and their own personal belongings, had disappeared into the hands of capitalist money lenders. In many cases in most unjust circumstances, they had been unable to pay back in time what they owed. They were pathetic tales.

In Lower Burma as well, in the early 1900s, the peasants were suffering from a similar fate. The landlords and traders were collecting exorbitant rents, the fixed land revenue demands were too high, paddy prices during the world depression had collapsed. These circumstances drove many cultivator-owners into the predatory arms of the money-lenders, especially the Chattyars. It was a bitter realization for Saya Lun. He remembered one sad event which occurred in Ah-lone township, when he was there in his younger days. So in his Bo Tika he composed A-ññā māṅga-lā-choṇ bhwai. (description of an Upper Burma country marriage ceremony) le:-khyui;krī: describing in the most pathetic way how a peasant lost his land. He tried to attract

1. than:-khok-phā = palm-leaf chest

2. gum-pu-wā = a kind of shawl

public attention to the rigours of the peasant's life and his appalling poverty.

The story of the le:-khyui:-kri: is as follows :- A poor peasant from Ah-lone took a loan of Rs. 100 from Daw Kha, whom he regarded as his own aunt so that he could go to Lower Burma and try to make his fortune. But unfortunately, though he worked hard and lived simply and honestly he had no luck. In fact, he could find no way of making money. Year after year as time went on, his wife still in the native village received neither news nor money from him. After a long time waiting Dwe: Khā (or Daw Kha) demanded that his wife should pay back the loan immediately. The poor wife could do nothing except apologise for the delay and ask Daw Kha to give her more time. After many similar requests Daw Kha lost her patience. She complained to the village headman and demanded legal action against the poor girl. Although he did not want to take any action, because he knew the real tragic situation, it was his duty as headman according to the law to summon the wife and demand that she repay what she owed to Daw Kha within a certain time limit. At last, the poor wife sent a letter to her husband and when he heard the sad news, this was his lament.

The loan we took from Dwe: Khā ,

That Rs. 100 of which we have not a single pya to pay back,

The headman summoned me four times,

(Oh ! Ko Hmaing) My dear, you are away and

how on earth could you do this to me (said the wife)

To my beloved children's mother,

When I think about her, worries after worries come,

Oh! my poor wife, she must be facing trouble after trouble,

When I hear all this appalling sad news,

Though I am writing my reply, saying what she ought to do,

Because of this poor mother and the children,

I think I am going mad,

Now I have no strength and I cannot bear it.....

After this introduction he continues by vividly describing the poor peasant's poverty stricken^c life and in conclusion, he describes how the poor man's tiny little plot of land , which was all he had and which represented perhaps his very lifeblood, reverted into the hands of the blood-sucking money-lenders in most unfair circumstances.

To become poor and to meet poverty is probably just my kamma.¹

The consequence of my kusala² also was most unfavourable,

In my life, even when I was in Upper Burma,

I never bet on cock-fighting, etc.,

1. kamma = deed , action

2. kusala = merit

Now from the place where I was born,

Dwe: Khā is asking me to pay back her loan

of Rs. 100 (the wife says).

When they were hitched to the cart ready to drive,

Shaking their heads with joy and alert,

This beautiful, healthy and well built pair of grey oxen —

Why not give them to the Kyōn:-ta-kā¹

And don't argue with him, just accept whatever he says,

Not only these (oxen), but also our plot of land

which was on the east side of village,

(My dear Ma Lay) Sell it and pay back what we owe.

This was not fiction nor was it an isolated case. It was a true reflection of the poor helpless peasant's life of that time in general and Saya Lun cleverly revealed it and recorded it for posterity.

In 1919, Saya Lun, by that time well known under the pseudonym ' Mr. Maung Hmaing ' (The Hermit), wrote his most famous series of articles entitled Daung Tika .

The Daung Tika articles constitute one of the early historical records of the Burmese Independence Movement then pressing for Home Rule. As I have already mentioned, in 1919 the Burmese

1. Kyōn:-ta-kā = donor of a monastery

rejection of the Craddock proposal was at its height, and at a series of meetings sponsored by the Y.M.B.A. in February, May, July and August of that year, the decision was reached to send a delegation to London to protest against the proposals. U Ba Pe, U Pu and U Tun Shein were selected to form the delegation, and it was in July 1919 that they left Burma for England. Saya Lun was of course a most ardent supporter of this movement, and in his Daung Tika articles in the Sun Daily he urged the people throughout the whole country to give their fullest support to the delegates and to the protest they were to make on the people's behalf.

At that period Saya Lun was in his early forties and had therefore reached an age of some maturity, a time when his mind, his decisions and his actions were at their clearest and most precise stage. However, he played no active part in current politics although he was very close and intimate with a group who dared openly to oppose the British Government — the Young Wunthanus — and was able to originate strong propaganda in support of their avowed aim : Home Rule. It is doubtful whether at that time Burmese public opinion ever really considered total independence. All they really wished for was Home Rule within the British Empire. That this was so is quite clear from the minutes of Y.M.B.A. meetings, the speeches of political leaders and newspaper editorials and articles of the period. (Zawgyi's Thakhin)

Kodaw Hmaing Tika p. 51) The same may similarly be said of Saya Lun who was of the opinion that King George V of Great Britain would at length place the governing of Burma in Burmese hands. When an announcement was made by the British Government that they were prepared to give Home Rule to India on the successful conclusion of the war, the Young Wunthanus were very satisfied indeed, for at that time Burma was considered as one of the provinces of the Indian Empire. Saya Lun was equally pleased, and when in 1918, the German Emperor had taken refuge in Holland and the British were shown clearly to be on the winning side, he felt sure that Burma would achieve Home Rule in a very short time. This pleasure and expectancy is shown in one of his le:-khyui:-kri: (Daung Tika , 3rd Ed. 1960, p. 88) quoted below, written when the world was once more at peace following the German defeat, and when, according to the promise of the British, Burma would be granted Home Rule.

1
 For my A-ññā-sū disciples,
 Not only from Mandalay and Ava ,
Pin-ya , Amara-pura , Sagaing and its surroundings
 But also Shwe-bo , that city which is the centre and
 seat of victory for Burmans:

1. a-ññā-sū = women of Upper Burma

Away from all evil and unpleasantness,
 Now that the Germans have been defeated in the final stage,
 My disciples who are the supporters of Home Rule are pleased,
 They smile, are happy and gay, they dance with the fullness
 of joy.

In another of his le:-khyui:- kri: Saya Lun writes
 as follows :-

Throughout the world the Burmese cannot end their
 discussion as to
 Whether it is right to pick (the blossoms) or not ,
 for all (Burmese) people;
 Our good time is, I think, approaching very near.
 Because of this, everything will be good for both sides :
 they will be smiling and gay.
 Indeed, this is the ' Home Rule Tree ',
 with its full swinging blossoms.
 Of our Burmese application
 I would say something in support and in favour.

Looking from this point I saw
 England, that land in the western hemisphere,
 Like the Pa-de-sā Tree¹ of Mrok Kywan:²
 For us the golden Burmese to pluck and to taste :
 It (i.e. Home Rule) was just like a big, plump, juicy
 and indescribable fruit.

The following extract is part of another of his le:-khyui:-
kri: . It was composed for an article dealing with the despatch of
 Burmese troops to the war front to fight hand-in-hand with the British
 against the Germans, (Chon:-pā:-khyup No. 35) and shows that Saya
 Lun trusted the British.

Now for us it is our time ; in the past

We had our own fatherly king who gave strength and power
 like the sun.

Now though we have no more His Majesty, the Burmese Emperor,
 Let us not degrade ourselves or our standards in any respect.

-
1. Pa-de-sā Tree = a ' wishing tree ', a legendary kind of tree
 that grows whatever one wishes for.
2. Mrok Kywan: = Utopia

Our English masters and lords
 Full of love and sympathy
 Will reconstruct the Burmese up to their
 Noble and ancient standard.

Saya Lun's support for the Y.M.B.A. delegation to London
 is expressed in such poems as the followings :-

Now! this is the time for changing to a New Era in the World,
 It is the grand age of our prosperity that we wish for !
 Towards the great country of England —
 That this injustice may no longer be,
 To ask the grace of His Majesty
 For his royal decree to grant (Home Rule)
 By all constitutional processes,
 This delegation is journeying.

He then composed the le:-khyui:-kri: entitled ' An auspicious
 prayer for the delegates '. This example is considered to be not only
 his greatest single work , but unrivalled in Burmese literature as a

masterpiece among le:-khyui:-kri: .

Oh! This is a matter for the country with niwe-kha-ru¹;
I pray for success,

This is the time ; the auspicious flower Sa-pre is coming out
and there are so many ready to be offered.

Pe-Pu-Shein , those three delegates who left for England,
the royal land *

May they be encouraged, proficient and successful,

In no danger and remote from any enemy.

(May they come) Back to Burma in safety and without harm.

Besides praying and wishing

I, Ko Yin Hmaing, teacher of you all,

Join with the elegant young maidens of Lai-gaing

With Me Myint alias Kaythawaddy

Also Khay-ma , the famous the-ri² and beautiful,

vivacious Mary :

Added to these, all my disciples, not only from Ah-lone —
Mon-ywa , Upper Burma and its surroundings

But also from Hanthawaddy and Dagon of Lower Burma
with Tha-ton and Tenasserim .

We, the devoted, we who never forget our delegates ,

Offer chvam:-sak-ce.³ ~~(-Dana-)~~ for them.

-
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <u>niwe-kha-ru</u> | = | silver conch |
| 2. <u>the-ri</u> | = | nun |
| 3. <u>chvam:-sak-ce.</u> | = | offering of food to a number of monks
equivalent to the years of the donor's age. |

In this, Saya Lun expressed his cetanā — that is, his action, his emotion and wishes. He also spoke for the nation. That this is so is to be judged from its being a period of the intense mass activity in the history of Burmese political scene. So one may say that this particular le:-khyui:-kri: was representative not only of Saya Lun but of the entire nation. In this poem perhaps more than in any other Saya Lun and the entire nation are as one.

Subsequent to this, political awareness within Burmese society became more active and increased its momentum. The patriotic pen of Saya Lun became sharper and sharper, and he became more and more involved in the activities of Y.M.B.A. However, although in his articles he showed clearly both his emotions and his feelings concerning political events in Burma, he nevertheless still took no active part in party politics.

Following ' An auspicious prayer for the delegates ' he continued with serialized articles in the Sun Daily using the title Daung Tika . These were a great and immediate success with the readers, so ~~in~~ in accordance with public demand the Sun Press quickly produced the Daung Tika in book form. This volume was then soon prescribed as a school text book for students. Although the original aims of the Tika

had been to stir up sufficient enthusiasm for there to be a demand for freedom in the form of Home Rule , it also attained in its whole presentation a very high literary and scholastic standard. For example, the author makes reference in it to 129 other works, includes material concerning 112 famous and historical figures and quotes 86 poets and scholars. This volume, therefore, became important not only for its political content but for its associations with Burmese history and literature as well. It may be safely said that it was a work which attracted the interest of all literate persons regardless of their age or interests.

Ludu Daw Ahmar says in the preface to Daung Tika, third Edition , —

While we were chattering about the Daung Tika , I told Sayagyi (Saya Lun) that in my younger days when I was a pupil at the National High School, Mandalay, Daung Tika was prescribed as a student's text book for the 8th Standard, and among my classmates we argued with each other whether ' Mr. Maung Hmaing ' really made the courtship of Yo-gi-ma Me Myint , one of his disciples, or not. Then Sayagyi smiled in a most pleasant and affectionate manner and said that Me Myint was a mere fictional character created by him in

honour of National U Myint , one of the prominent leaders of the 1920 Students' Strike

This example is a proof of Saya Lun's skill as a writer: not one of the Burmese reading public — and this included the High School students who, being more or less mature and who according to the Burmese standards of that time could be classed as ' intellectuals' , — suspected that they were only reading fiction. Indeed it is extremely difficult to express the real depth of Saya Lun's literary merit, and it may be safely said that scholars capable of fully appreciating Burmese literature are in positive agreement on this point.

Just before concluding her preface Ludu Daw Ahmar says :-

In the last chapter of Daung Tika Sayagyi composed the 'Prayer' le:-khyui:-kri: . In this le:-khyui:-kri: , as an answer to the question raised by Me Myint , Sayagyi gives a vivid description of the courtship traditions of young lovers in the Ah-lone - Mon-ywa area. There he mentions how Ko Yin Hmaing (supposed to be himself) courted girls in Chaung-oo , Mon-yway and Kye-mon areas, and how at last Ko Yin Hmaing got married to Ma Lay the belle of Maung-daung-ywa-gyi . So, I asked Sayagyi if these are

true facts about his younger days. He burst out laughing, while chewing his betel nuts, and said :

" These are all stories and nothing to do with my own life. I am only describing the nature of traditional courtship in the Upper Burma countryside ".

From this can be appreciated the skill of Saya Lun where in serious literature such as Daung Tika , concerned as it is politics, he cleverly transformed a complete fabrication appealing to the worldly desires of his readers into a national political consciousness ...".

After delegates had been sent to England to protest against the Craddock Schemes, there occurred two incidents which particularly impressed themselves on Sayagyi's mind. The first, which took place in that same year 1919, was a meeting held in Jubilee Hall, Rangoon. The second was the death of U Tun Shein, one of the delegates who left for England to make the protest. In connection with both these incidents he expressed his patriotic nationalism forcefully, revealed himself as a radical nationalist and became more and more bold in his statements. When, for example, he composed a le:-khyui:-kri: about the Jubilee Hall mass meeting his aim was to shake the Burmese people's political consciousness, and to arouse and encourage the nationalist

cause. In the case of the le:-khyui:-kri: composed to commemorate the death of U Tun Shein he felt that it was his duty to make clear to the people the magnitude of the loss to the nation. As the result of these two le:-khyui:-kri: the Burmese people gained a sound basic foundation in political knowledge. That which Sayagyi gave and taught to the public was quite different in form from that taught by the political experts and university professors. He did not speak of party, of political systems or of administrative policies, what he taught had far greater effect and it was simple and straightforward. By ~~XXXX~~ means of his patriotic poems he encouraged the Burmese public not to get lost in the maze of their country's current affairs, but to learn to know when and how the situation was favourable for them to be proud of their country and to understand the meaning of national loss.

With this kind of instruction he shook the Burmese people to waken them from their sleep. From wakening he taught them to sit, from sitting how to stand, from standing to become alert. From silence he taught them to make themselves heard. From cowardliness he raised them to courageousness and made them realize that whether under foreign rule or not their native land was their own. He taught them to feel that way, to take an interest, to take part and to take the initiative for themselves. Thus he enlightened the public and stirred up their political awareness — that is why it was said above that the entire

nation gained a sound basic foundation in political knowledge from Sayagyi and his le:-khyui:-kri:s. (Zawgyi's Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika p. 55)

On August 17th 1919 the national mass meeting already spoken of took place at Jubilee Hall, Rangoon, and it was this meeting which Sayagyi attended and found so encouraging — so encouraging, he said, that he could joyfully have danced on the spot! From the political point of view the gathering was of the greatest importance, for its real significance lay in the background which caused it to be arranged.

At the same time as the Y.M.B.A., which was led by the younger generation, was sending its delegation to England to protest against the Craddock Proposals, the Lieutenant-Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Craddock, and his selected legislative council of leaders from the older generation would appear to have engaged themselves in something of a political conspiracy. Naturally Sir Reginald wished to create the impression that his scheme was readily acceptable to the Burmese without reservation or objections. He therefore called a special mass meeting at Jubilee Hall while the nation's delegates were on their way to England to make their ardent protest against his unacceptable proposals.

This earlier meeting convened by Sir Reginald should in no way be confused with the national mass meeting held on August 17th, for the latter was for obvious reasons not even contemplated prior to the action of Sir Reginald.

According to the newspaper reports this earlier function, although said to be a mass meeting, was restricted to those to whom invitations were issued by the Lieutenant-Governor. These were supporters of the activities of the legislative council and those who were within their circle of society. Ostensibly the meeting was a purely social one and for no political purpose; however, when the meeting was actually held it was strictly maintained that only those who held tickets should be allowed into Jubilee Hall and it was not until after the main entertainment, with food and drink, was concluded, that the real significance of this action became apparent. At that point one of the members proposed that this mass meeting should accept the Craddock proposals in their entirety, and that no support whatever should be extended to the delegation who had gone to England to protest. This resolution was accepted, a declaration to that effect was made to the country and a telegram was sent to the Government in Britain informing them of the resolution.

This apparent conspiracy by the leaders of the older generation has every appearance of making an attempt to sell the country to retain their own power and position. By their action they utterly deceived the delegates who had left for England. In arranging their mass meeting the members of the legislative council would seem to have done nothing but resort to a form of trickery in order to create the impression that the entire nation would accept only the Lieutenant-Governor's proposals. In these ways they attempted to destroy the efforts of the leaders of the younger generation, and in so doing did much to blacken the early history of modern Burmese politics.

With such provocation how could the leaders of the younger generation stand by and do nothing ? This was impossible. They therefore made their counter-attack, but in a genuine spirit of patriotism. What they had to do they believed was the best for the whole country and its people : they had therefore to denounce publicly the leaders of that older generation and declare the truth that in reality the support of the entire nation was vested in the Y.M.B.A. delegates. To do this they called the great national mass meeting of August 17th, and held it in the same Jubilee Hall. This was a meeting open to all - there were no invitation cards; moreover, those attending came not only from Rangoon but in large numbers from all over the country.

This was the first really open meeting held in Burma at which delegates from every part of the country took part in the process of bringing to life the political awareness of its whole public.

This was the meeting which Sayagyi attended and where he witnessed not only its magnitude but the active enthusiasm shown for the country by its people. It is no wonder that he was joyful at seeing such a great crowd. In his praise of it he observed that throughout the history of Burma from the Tagaung period to the close of the Mandalay period there had never occurred such an instance of unity and organization among the people of Burma. Such a gathering was almost beyond belief. So it was that in the Sun Magazine of September 1919, he described the national mass meeting in the following words :-

Oh rejoice! Here in the Jubilee Hall

With the same ideas and with unity,

Oh! What a mass, what a crowd,

Marvellous! Marvellous! Marvellous!

It is a fantasy, it is indescribable,

And I know it is for the (national) pride (of Burma)
in the world.

Here was no doubtful mind among town or country-side,
it is as a single mind.

All are so friendly and united, and there
are no differences, none whatever.

Their minds, their (states of) consciousness are
so active and alive -

All people, not lay folk alone but monks also
who should avoid worldly affairs.

Within the auspicious and motherly British Empire
Which claims that everything shall be just and fair
in accordance with real democracy

Indeed Burma will also play her part
with the solemn determination

That we may have our own share and rights.

When looking back into the past

I think that now Burma may come to stand on the prosperous
side,

For from Tagaung period until the end of the Mandalay period

In all Burmese history never has such a thing occurred.

Never such a crowd, such a mass, such unity,

Even at the Royal Command Levee

The number attending was never so great as now.

The national mass meeting of August having been the cause of such happiness for Sayagyi, it came as a great contrast of sadness when he was told of the death of U Tun Shein, who up to 1920 had been one of the foremost leaders among the younger generation and was one of the three delegates who had been to England in protest against the Craddock proposals. By the time this delegation had returned home, nationalist feeling was already so well established and firmly rooted in the people that they dared to act openly and publicly. Now they had come to realize that no matter who governed Burma at the moment it was nevertheless their own land, their own country. They also began to realize the strength and value of political unity and organization. They now considered the country's affairs as their own and their own as the country's. They realized that as citizens of their country it was impossible to disregard either the country's affairs or its politics — a quite revolutionary attitude for such traditionalists as the Burmese.

This type of political awareness can be seen in one of the 'uin-khyañ: composed by U Po Kyar, who was one of the leaders of the student strike of 1920 and later became Inspector of Schools for the National Education Board. U Po Kyar describes the public feeling and political enthusiasm attending the return in the early part of 1920.

of the Y.M.B.A.'s People's Delegates from England, after making their official protest against the Craddock proposals. They were welcomed as conquering heroes, and cheering throngs pulled their carriage from the dock through the streets to the reception maṇḍāp (Hall) on the platform of the great Shwe-da-gon Pagoda.

Oh! dearest ones, sons and daughters of Burma

When the three delegates arrived at the port,
 along the quayside and strand was a great crowd
 of numerous vehicles;

On shore all the vehicles were filled with men and women;

Along the road, up to the Pagoda,
 all was jammed with people with free offerings of
 refreshment.

Near the Pagoda and at its foot the crowds of people
 were joyfully singing and dancing.

Oh! It is impossible to describe this fabulous scene,
 and this I really mean.

When the delegates came to the shore
 they were greeted with the highest honour of having
 clean, white, fresh flowers scattered at their feet
 and along the path;

From the special carriage the sound of the kha-ru-saṇ:¹
 being blown was endless;

1. kha-ru-saṇ: = auspicious shell

Specially selected beautiful maidens offered fragrant
bouquets to the delegates,
All over the city was a clamour of joy;
Throughout the way, free refreshment and offerings of food
were countless.

On the platform at the foot of Shwe-da-gon Pagoda
people gathered and played Victory Drum music;
Women as well as men greeted each other joyfully.

One of the delegates gave a speech
first giving thanks all on behalf of the delegates;
Then he spoke of the status of the Burmese people
with full encouragement.

He also said that the status and prestige of the Burmese
women was admired and envied by the women of England
who had to fight to get ~~for~~ their own rights.

After this speech there was a striking of the Victory Drum,
and young and old danced with delight.

Later there was a presentation ceremony with a reading of
Letters of Praise —

This was led by the women-folk.

After that the ceremony was ended and the crowd dispersed.

What an experience, what a chance to witness this
in one's lifetime.

Oh! Dear grand-dad and grand-ma,
and the past generations who have lived before our time,
I wish I could show you all, dear ones,
How we Burmese progress — come look at everything
My dear ancestors who have lived before my time.

U Tun Shein was one who did much to make, confirm and establish the Burmese spirit of that time. After returning from England he travelled all over the country visiting about sixty different towns and cities, delivering speeches to stimulate the battle for Home Rule until it should be actually achieved. Wherever U Tun Shein went he whipped up the enthusiasm of the Burmese people for the nationalist cause. Patriotism emerged, bent heads were held high, darkness turned to light. The entire nation owed much to him; they showed their thanks to him, relied on him and gave their firm support. Sayagyi himself felt that now Burma had indeed got a real national hero; he felt that U Tun Shein was a young man of whom not only Burma but the whole East could be proud. Alas, while U Tun Shein was actually engaged in these efforts for the freedom movement he died quite suddenly. This was a great national loss and the country was fully aware of it. Sayagyi feeling this sorrow for the sake of Burma composed the following poem

praising U Tun Shein on behalf of Mother Burma :-

To me, Mother Burma, who bear the peacock as a symbol
of the land,

An unfortunate event happened which made me helpless,
worried and restless.

What a man! What a precious son of the country,

I was so encouraged and full of pride

Holding my head up high,

Not only I, the whole country, the entire nation was
on my side.

Because of him we took pride not only in Burma
but in the (whole) East;

This was the feeling in our minds.

U Tun Shein because of his sincere and humane aims
Was chosen as one of the delegates on behalf of the
entire nation.

This was approved not only by the towns, not only by the
cities, but throughout the whole country:

He aimed to create a Republic of Burma, the hero of our time.

Now the more deeply I think,

I, Mother Burma,

The more it makes me sad,
more deeply, more deeply, for longer and for longer.

Why, why should it be you who left for the Deva World
so suddenly ?

I wish I could ask for your pardon that the King of Death
might not take you to his land,

Yes, you who were born in the Land of the Peacock,
a true native,

Mother's beloved and best hero-son

The following extract from Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika (p. 60)
is given below for not to quote it would be to leave incomplete the
history of political writing in Burmese literature. Saya Zawgyi says:-

During 1919-20 Saya Lun's friendship with
politicians and his interest in politics became firmly
rooted, so also did his ideas and poetic talents, both of
which had for long drifted as though rudderless in the
whirlpool of political uncertainty. During that period
Sayagyi's work and the Wunthanu movement became inseparable,
and like traffic moving in one direction. Sayagyi lost
interest in composing poems in the fields his predecessors
had followed such as the beauty of nature, love, emotions
and the jātakas : he wished now to concentrate only on the
affairs of the country, on the united forces of the people

in moulding the future of Burma and to keep fertile this renaissance of Burmese nationalism. His patriotic mind and his cetanā i.e., his genuine altruism for Burma — became much clearer and more precise from the Daung Tika period onwards

The year the Daung Tika articles appeared (1919) was the year that the country's delegates, Y.M.B.A. leaders Pe-Pu-Shein, left for England to demand Home Rule and to protest against Craddock's Schemes. At that time, the entire nation, the Y.M.B.A., the Sun Daily and Sayagyi were all in the same boat, with the same aims, and with the same determination. All were united in their sincerity. But in 1920, after the national student strikes, Sayagyi found himself in disagreement with his colleagues and comrades from the Sun Daily, the most advanced and progressive politicians of that time, U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe to whom he owed so much. As a result Sayagyi became much more independent in his political views and opinions. Henceforth he determined to serve his country in his own way, and he would stand on his own feet in politics without any outside help or influence. In the political field also there was a great split between Home Rule supporters and Dyarchy supporters.

CHAPTER III1921 — 19301. Politics

In the early part of my thesis, I have already made brief mention of the political events which occurred in Burma between 1885 to 1920. These events apart from Y.M.B.A. activities and the National Student Strikes were not of very great interest on a nationwide scale. But, during the decade 1920-1930 many significant political events took place in Burma. To give a clearer picture of the political scene of Burma, during those ten years, I shall mention some important events and developments in chronological order.

The first and most significant event of the time was the increasingly political bias of the Y.M.B.A., especially in student affairs, leading finally to its transformation into the G.C.B.A. The first University Strike began on December 4, 1920. Starting from Rangoon, the strike movement spread during the early months of 1921 to all government schools as well as to nearly all the aided schools throughout Burma. Within a few days the strike was almost 100 per cent effective. This strike supported by the entire nation was sponsored by the Y.M.B.A. I have already mentioned that the original aims of the Y.M.B.A. had no political basis. But since 1916 there had been gradual infiltration of the younger members into the council anxious for the Association to extend its interests to include political questions as well as the usual fare of religious and cultural topics.

From then on the Y.M.B.A. became more and more involved in politics, and in 1919, they managed to send a delegation to London to protest against the Craddock Scheme and to demand Home Rule on behalf of the entire nation. Towards the end of 1920, Y.M.B.A. manoeuvred the

National Students' Strike and at last early in 1921, because of deeper and deeper involvements in politics, the Y.M.B.A. became known as the G.C.B.A., one of the strongest politically united organizations Burma has ever had.

Towards the end of 1921, the parliamentary committee, headed by Sir Frederick Whyte, the president of the Indian Legislative Assembly, was sent to Burma to investigate reform proposals. Members of the committee included, Dr. San C. Po (Karen) and U Myint (Burmese) both members of the Burma Legislative Council, P.P. Ginwala, an Indian member of the Legislative Assembly, Frank McCarthy, the British editor of the Rangoon Gazette and R.E.V. Arbuthnot, a senior British government official. " This Burma Reform Committee was with a view to enlisting public confidence, but its prospects of success were clouded by the decision of the G.C.B.A. , made in August- September, 1921, and confirmed at a conference held at Mandalay in October, prior to Sir Frederick's arrival, to boycott the committee's sessions and to refuse all co-operation except where it might ~~in~~ contribute to the speedy attainment of Home Rule. The words ' within the Empire ' were

expressly deleted from the home rule resolution, which was the first overt action suggesting that Burma's independence was possible ".

(Cady's A History of Modern Burma p.224)

While the G.C.B.A. and the majority of the public were trying to protest against the intended reforms, some Christian missionaries and a handful of their followers, mostly of the minority races converted to Christianity, tried to create some sort of counter attack. Mission school officials in centres other than Rangoon whose work was upset by the National Student Strike had little or no sympathy for the nationalist cause. The Burma Baptist Convention (all indigenous Christian groups) in October, 1921, acclaimed the newly promised privileges of democratic self-government as being in agreement with Christ's teachings. The convention urged all leaders to spread information concerning the proposed reformed scheme and to aid the government in making it a reality.

The Burma Reforms Committee held hearings during November and December, 1921, in Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein and Bassein. Societies and persons actively associated with the G.C.B.A. everywhere refused to testify and there were only a few people who refused to be silenced by the boycott. It was almost a year after the completion of the hearings of the Whyte Committee before Parliament passed the

necessary enabling legislation to bring Burma within the scope of the India Act. In January, 1923, the Dyarchy system was finally inaugurated. More than five years had elapsed since the Y.M.B.A. delegation had first talked with Secretary Montague at Calcutta in December, 1917. For the Burmese Nationalists this reform had had little relevance to Burma's wishes or needs.

Nationalist movements and political upheavals and tremors in Burma attained a new political and cultural dimension in 1921-22 with the emergence of Nuīn-nām-re: cha-rā-tô¹, who, although they traditionally avoided all worldly involvements, were moved to participate in the Nationalist cause. Sayadaw U Ottama was the most powerful and ardent. He was a man of some sophistication and experience; he had travelled widely in Eastern Asia since the early 1900s. In India, he had become intimately acquainted with the activities and principles of the Indian National Congress and had once been elected president of the Hindu Mahasabha organization. In 1921 he returned to Burma.

During the year 1921, Sayadaw U Ottama travelled throughout the country visiting towns and villages delivering speeches whenever he could. Wherever he went he whipped up the enthusiasm of the Burmese

1. Nuīn-nām-re: cha-rā-tô = Naing-ngan-ye sayadaw

Naing-ngan-ye + sayadaw = politics + senior Bhikkhū or monk

people for the nationalist cause. It is not surprising that he was arrested during that year on a charge of incitement to sedition and was sentenced to ten months imprisonment. When he was eventually released in 1922, he resumed where he had left off. Once again at Mandalay in 1924, he was arrested and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Released again in 1927, he took up the anti-tax campaign until he was once more confined to jail. This time it was the end of his life's journey. He became mentally unbalanced (nobody knows how and why) while in prison and eventually died in 1939.

As a result of the strenuous efforts of Sayadaw U Ottama and A-le-taw-ya Sayadaw, the General Council of Sangha Samaggi(G.C.S.S.) was organized in 1922, to co-operate with G.C.B.A. on nationalist issues. Wunthanu Athins¹ were set up as village political associations by the G.C.B.A. in 1921-22 in an effort to bring public questions to the attention of the rural population. The Burma Government faced a bafflingly difficult task attempting to cope with the grass-roots disaffection which developed so rapidly in 1921-22. Governor Craddock took vigorous repressive measures against the nationalists whether they were Bhikkhus or not. The authorities used the temporary Rowlatt Act of 1919 (to run for three years), under which local government

1. Wunthanu Athin = Own race organization

authorities could require any individual suspected of revolutionary action or intent to post a bond; they could also restrict his movements and impose arbitrary imprisonment for fifteen days. The Habitual Offenders Act of 1919 and the Criminal Tribes Act as amended in 1924 gave the police further extraordinary powers of parole, control, and detention of suspects. Eventually, the special Burma Anti-boycott Act of 1927, aimed more directly at political offenders, supplemented the standing rules against sedition and incitement to violence by levying severe penalties for promoting boycotts for purely political purposes. Press incitement to disloyalty and violence and the distribution of Indian political pamphlets were also listed as seditious offences. It is probably true to say that all these restrictions and oppressive measures had a great effect on the growing political awareness of the Burmese people.

Because of the Burma Reforms Bill, the G.C.B.A. was split in 1922, first into two major groups. Some elements of the G.C.B.A. nationalists, who were prepared to operate through legal channels to achieve their political ends, refused to accept the majority decision to boycott the elections under the reforms schemes, disintegrated and formed the 21 Party, whose leaders included U Ba Pe. The remaining majority element of the G.C.B.A. was thenceforward known as the Hlaing-Pu-Gyaw group from the names of its three principal leaders.

The 21 Party decided at a formal meeting in September, 1922, to contest the legislative council elections and to participate in council operations ' so long as the speedy attainment of Home Rule is not prejudiced thereby.' H.P.G.'s G.C.B.A. was making its best efforts to promote the activities of the village Wunthanu Athins and in co-operating with G.C.S.S. and women politicians to boycott the elections.

When the dyarchy constitution was inaugurated on January 1st 1923 Burma became a full ^vgovernor's province. Lieutenant Governor Craddock, who was recalled before the end of his term by the British Government because of his unpopularity, was replaced by Governor Sir Harcourt Butler. Under the new constitution, there were 103 members in the Legislative Council. Among them, 23 members were nominated by the governor. Fifty-eight out of the remaining 80 elected members, were chosen in general constituencies. Fifteen were elected communally (one British, one Anglo-Indian, five Karens and eight Indians), while the remaining seven represented various business groups and the University. Among the governor's appointed members two were ex-officio members of the executive council and one member represented labour. Under the dyarchy system only those ministers in charge of the transferred subjects [agriculture, excise, health, public works & except irrigation), forestry, and education] were responsible to

the legislative council. The reserved subjects, which were controlled by ~~the~~ ministers responsible directly to the governor included general administrative direction, law and order, land revenue, labour, and finance. Defence and external relations together with currency and coinage, communications and transportation control, income tax and civil and criminal law were the concern of the Central Indian Government at New Delhi. The Scheduled Areas of Burma (Karenni, the Shan States, Kachin and Chin tribal regions) were under the governor's control and he alone could legislate. He was also empowered to veto legislation, to forbid the legislative council from considering 'reserved' subjects, and to certify essential expenditure which the legislative council might decline to include in the budget.

The governor's control of financial policy severely limited any ~~of~~ discretionary power which ministers in charge of transferred subjects could exercise. In practice, the bureaucratic heads of twenty-odd administrative departments - who made up the government's executive council - actually managed budgetary allocations. Ministers in charge of the six transferred departments (two to each minister) could not compete effectively with well-established civil service officials and routine operating procedures fully backed by the governor's financial control. Therefore the result was that the activities of the elected ministers of the transferred subjects

were only political, not administrative, in character.

Because of the G.C.B.A.'s boycott in the elections of 1922, fewer than one in fourteen of the eligible voters (6.9 per cent) participated, evidence that the people were not satisfied with the Dyarchy reforms. Moreover, a large percentage of the voters gave their votes to the 21 Party candidates who publicly declared that they were ready to protest against the present administration systems, within the constitution. The 21 Party, or the Nationalists, as they preferred to be called, elected twenty-eight candidates out of fifty-eight seats, which was the largest single party group. Though they were pledged to take the initiative within the council for nationalist objectives, they could do very little. They were no match against the combined forces of the pro-government group, which consisted of 23 governor's appointed members, 15 communal members and the right-wing opportunist members. The 21 Party found themselves in a most unfortunate position, reviled by both sides.

Governor Sir Harcourt Butler conducted his relations with the first legislative council with marked tact and skill. He selected U Maung Gyee, an able member of the 21 Party, as minister for education, local government, and public health, and J.A. Maung Gyi, an Anglophile Burman member of the ephemeral so-called Progressive Party, as minister for agriculture, excise control, and forests.

Sir Maung Khin was selected as Home Minister. When he died in 1924, Sir Harcourt called U May Aung from a high judicial post to be minister of Home Affairs. When J.A. Maung Gyi was elevated to a position as judge of the High Court, in 1924, U Pu of Yamethin, another moderate nationalist, was made minister of agriculture, excise, and forests. The salary of a government minister at that time was Rs. 5,000 per month. Such a salary was large and tempting. For the Burmese politicians, 'it was like a bone thrown among starving dogs', and there appeared what was called Nā:-thon-cā: ro-gā¹ among the leaders. This resulted in the most ruthless, cruel and shameless rivalry among the politicians who attacked each other viciously not only in the political sphere but also in the personal sphere. This is a black page in Burmese history, which can never be erased.

By no means all the actions of the first council were reasonable and constructive. At the very outset, the Nationalist members seized the occasion of the budget debates to attack the police system. They obtained in March, 1923, by a 40 to 37 vote, approval of a cut of one million rupees from the proposed police budget. But the resolution to release political prisoners was not so successful. Other resolutions to obtain the release of transgressors

1. Nā:-thon-cā: ro-gā = Rs. 5,000 salary fever.

under the Anti-boycott Act and those convicted in the Mandalay Riot case of 1924 were defeated by the government coalition. The Nationalists also opposed the suppression of the outlawed Bu Athins. They almost succeeded (37 to 39) in passing a resolution to lift the emergency ban against allegedly subversive Athins, imposed under the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

The appearance of the Bu Athins in 1922 is one of the most interesting events in the history of Burmese Nationalist Movements. The word Bu comes from the phrase ma- thi-bu which means in Burmese ' I don't know'. Athin means organization or association or a group. Their members resolved to reply ' I don't know' to any inquiry by government bodies. The oath taken by the members of a Bu Athin was most impressive. It ran in part as follows:-

I will work for Home Rule heart and soul without flinching from duties even if my bones are crushed and my skin torn If I fail may I die and suffer in Hell forever. I will not drink intoxicating liquor or take opium ; I will not co-operate with the Government.....; if a member of a Bu Athin is in trouble and requires my assistance, I will help him; I will not wear apparel of foreign make; I will not marry foreigners; if a member of a Bu Athin infringes the law, and the Government asks about it, I shall say NO.

The Bu Athins sought to end the government's licensing of fisheries and the legalized sale of opium and liquor; they also resisted payment of taxes. They were declared illegal in August 1923, and were thereafter outlawed wherever they appeared. The leaders of the Bu Athins were usually men of local importance only, but they worked in close co-operation with the G.C.S.S. Their stronghold area was Tharrawaddy District. There were other similar organizations called Si-bwar-yay Athin¹. Their anti-Chettyar activities were welcomed and supported by the people, especially by the peasants who comprised the majority of the population of Burma, and who suffered a great deal from the money-lending activities of the Chettyars.

The activities of the Bu Athins were presented for formal approval at a conference of the G.C.B.A. held at Paungde in May, 1924, where an estimated 30,000 people attended. Among the various resolutions, popular support of the anti-tax resolution was probably based on economic considerations mainly. After that conference, the bonds of the alliance between moderate G.C.B.A. leaders and the radical factions of the G.C.S.S. became sharply strained. There also appeared an open rift within the G.C.B.A. A break came finally at Mandalay in August, 1924, with a riot.

1. Si-bwar-yay = development or financial matters.

The popular campaign against the payment of the capitation tax was most vigorously prosecuted in the five districts where the Bu Athins were strongest, namely Tavoy, Tharrawaddy, Henzada, Prome and Thayet. For a time, the tension was very severe. But, as the Bu Athin leaders possessed no firearms, there was no actual outbreak of fighting.

In 1925, the faction of the G.C.B.A. who objected to being dictated to by the G.C.S.S. approved the formation of the Home Rule Party led by U Pu of Tharrawaddy. U Chit Hlaing stayed with the G.C.B.A. for a time, but the third member of the Hlaing-Pu-Gyaw triumvirate, U Tun Aung Gyaw, withdrew from politics. The G.C.B.A. continued to function theoretically as a mass organization behind the Home Rule Party, but the majority group broke completely with the G.C.S.S. after February, 1925. Thereafter only the conservative faction headed by U Chit Hlaing continued to maintain any G.C.S.S. connection and that a tenuous one. In March, 1925, there appeared another splinter branch of the G.C.B.A., known as the Soe Thein G.C.B.A., which was strongly opposed to U Pu's Home Rule Party. The Tha-ya-za (Swaraj) Party also appeared as a partial defection from the G.C.B.A. under the leadership of U Tok Gyi. Among the leaders of the Tha-ya-za Party two Europeanized Burmans U Paw Tun and Dr. Ba Maw were very prominent. U Tok Gyi died shortly after the election

of 1925 and U Paw Tun thereafter took over the leadership of the party.

The spectrum of Burmese political factions as of 1925 beginning with the groups least inclined to co-operate with the government can be summarized roughly as follows: the G.C.S.S., the U Soe Thein G.C.B.A., the U Chit Hlaing G.C.B.A., U Pu's Home Rule Party, U Tok Gyi's Tha-ya-za Party, U Ba Pe's Nationalist (or 21) Party, and the Independent Burman members of the Legislative Council.

The elections for the second legislative council under the dyarchy system were held in 1925. Some 16.26 per cent of the electorate participated, or one in 6 compared with one in 14 in 1922. The increased participation was probably attributable to the decision Home Rule leaders to stand as candidates. The basic question of opposition to foreign rule still remained as the political issue within the constituencies. Popular hatred of the dyarchy reforms was still very strong. It was very obvious because only one-sixth of the eligible voters took part. Because of the splits and disunity among the Burmese politicians, the outcome of the elections was a distinct disappointment to the nationalist cause. The candidates elected were the Nationalists (25), the Home Rulers (11), and the Tha-ya-za (9), totalling only 45 , which was less than a majority. To be able

to check the government and pro-government cliques, the three nationalist groups formed a united front called the People's Party with the slogan "Burma for the Burmans". They suffered severe handicaps because of their strong personal rivalries and lack of party funds and a firm policy. Indeed, some of the members were bought by the other rival groups through personal contacts or bribery, by offer of money or a government post. Although the People's Party members were pledged not to accept office, Lee Ah Yain (later knighted), one of the prominent Chinese leaders, defected from the party and accepted the ministerial post offered by the government. He became the new Minister of Forests and Agriculture in 1926.

One of the political trends apparent between 1925 and 1928 was a sharpening of the cleavage between the Burman members and the communally elected non-Burman group. The non-Burman councillors (English, Anglo-Indian, Indians, Chinese, Karens) formed the so-called Independent Party, and their president was the Burma-domiciled Oscar de Glanville, member for the English constituency. They countered the incipient threat of rising Burman nationalist feeling by voting regularly with the government regardless of the merits of the case.

Nationalist efforts within the second council to repeal the

capitation (sassamedha) tax continued. A formal motion to cancel Upper Burma's sassamedha tax, advanced in March 1926, was referred to a committee for examination and report. Nothing was done. The boycotting G.C.B.A., both the U Soe Thein and U Chit Hlaing factions, refused to give evidence to the Tax Enquiry Committee. The tax-repeal proposal was eventually defeated in June, 1927. It is hardly necessary to mention that all the nationalist efforts were defeated by the combined force of the government and pro-government non-Burmans group, determined to suppress Burmese nationalism.

The political situation changed a little after the elections of 1928. Although, 18 per cent of the eligible voters participated, the People's Party coalition emerged no stronger numerically than in 1925 and were indeed even more riven by personal rivalries. The strength of the nationalists' opposition was becoming weaker.

The People's Party had won 40 of the 59 general constituency seats. Plus five more from the ephemeral National Parliamentary Organization, their voting strength was sufficient to elect Tharrawaddy U Pu as Speaker of the Council in place of the Burma-domiciled Briton, Oscar de Glanville. But the People's Party could not outvote the majority coalition made up of a dozen Independent Burmans plus the minority representatives and governor's appointed members, who were

determined to crush the incipient threat of rising Burmese nationalist feeling.

In that time the Burmese people must have been completely demoralised. They suffered not only economic distress and racial friction but also oppression at the hand of the government(especially from the Police and the C.I.D.) and restrictions (various new laws and orders) plus heavy taxes like sassamedha, land tax, etc.

In the midst of this great depression and distress, there emerged a popular feeling of anticipation for the advent of the Mañ:-lon:¹.

Various ni-mit², ta-bhon³, and ko-la-ha-la⁴ appeared. The general trend of these prophetic rumours was that the British were about to withdraw and that the revived Burmese kingdom would then abolish all taxes and let the people live in peace and prosperity, and the Buddhist Sāsana would be revived as bright as ever. The distress and helplessness in the minds of Burmese public found some relief in

1. Mañ:-lon: = Pretenders or Saviours.

2. ni-mit . . . }

3. ta-bhon . . . } = ominous sayings

4. ko-la-ha-la . . . = rumours

anticipating the Mañ:-lōṇ: , Cakrā mañ:-lōṇ: (the famous legendary prince-pretender) at Tavoy, Lower Burma, and Mañ:-lōṇ: Bandha-ka , formerly a village hermit, at Shwebo, Upper Burma, etc.

Indeed Burma was lucky to have quite a number of Naing-ngan-ye Sayadaws such as Sayadaw U Ottama , A-le-taw-ya Sayadaw , U Ke-tu of Twante Kyaung¹, Kemmendine, U De-winda of Mahlaing, U Wi-ma-la-buddhi of Thayet-myo , U Lā-bā^h of Alan-myo, U Nā-ginda, U Candi-mā, U Nñe-yya of Tharrawaddy, Manta-lā U Ke-lā , U Ā-ca-ra of Sin-byu-kyun, nine times jailed U So-bha, U Ka-windā-dhi-pa-ti, Ā-lā-wa-ka (a) U Ā-lo-ka, U Ā-sa-bha, Rhwe-mrak-mhan U Wi-ja-ya, U Wi-ma-la-cā-ra of Gyo-bin-gauk, Me-za-li-dan Sayadaw U Ā-dicca, Ok-pho Hman-kyauṅ Sayadaw U A-ri-ya-waṁ-sa, U Dhamma-dha-ra, etc. etc. In the nationalist fight for freedom, these naing-ngan-ye sayadaws, who, in accordance with their religion, were supposed to avoid all worldly involvements , nevertheless took the initiative and fulfilled their duty as citizens for the sake of their country and nation. Among them one of the most prominent figures in the political history of Burma was U Wi-cā-ra (Wisara). He was arrested in March 1 1929, on a charge of incitement to sedition, convicted and sentenced to six years imprisonment with hard labour by the Hanthawaddy

1. Kyaung = monastery

Session Judge. The prison authorities treated him as an ordinary lay criminal. They removed his Bhikkhu robe by force. As he had not renounced his Bhikkhu status - he was still a Bhikkhu and he determined to continue as one firmly convinced that he had broken no canonical laws. Therefore, he would remain a Bhikkhu, wherever he was, whether in jail or in the monastery. U Wisara fasted to death in protest against the treatment ^{that} was given to him as a common prisoner. When the fast had passed the first week, anxiety mounted in the country, and the people and organizations sent desperate telegrams to the government daily urging that U Wisara's demands - which were that he should be allowed to wear the monk's yellow robes, instead of the prisoner's loin cloth, and observe the sabbath - be met. It was a contest between the popular will and that of the government, a contest in which a life was sacrificed and the popular will rose stronger from defeat. (Dr. Maung Maung's Burma's Constitution p.21)

U Wisara died on the 19th day of September, 1929, after 166 consecutive days' hunger strike. His last words linma rac kra pa¹ were recorded unforgettably in the annals of the political history of Burma. Indeed, Burmese people owe a great deal to those naing-ngan-ye sayadaws, known and unknown, for their services to the people and the country.

1. linma rac kra pa = behave sensibly

The India Statutory Commission reached Burma in January 1929, shortly after the election of the third legislative council on November 28, 1928. This commission, consisting of seven members headed by Sir John Simon, had been appointed by London in 1928 in pursuance of the provision of the India Reform Act of 1919 to review the operation of the dyarchy constitution after ten years. Prior to the arrival of the Simon Commission the newly elected council selected from its own membership a Burma committee of seven men to sit with the British commission. This committee included three Burmans, none of whom were associated with the largest nationalist People's Party [U Aung Thwin (Chairman of the Burma Committee), U Ba U and U Ba Shin], plus four representatives of minority groups, a Karen (Sra Shwe Ba), an Indian Hindu (M.M.Rafi), an Indian Muslim (E. Eusoof), and an Anglo-Indian (M. Campagnac). Although there were three Burmans in that commission , it can hardly be said that they represented the Burmese people.

The Simon Commission was not warmly received in Burma. The political atmosphere at that time, in early 1929, even among the moderate nationalists of the council was not encouraging for the accomplishment of their task. When they visited Mandalay and the principal cities , G.C.B.A. greeted them with its stock slogan ' Go back '.

An important discovery made by the Simon Commission was that Burma was not India and they recommended immediate separation of Burma from India. The Legislative Council had passed a motion in favour of separation, without a division, twice. First, on February 18, 1929 and then on the 9th August, 1930. The G.C.B.A. having asked the Simon Commission to go back, found itself unable to support the Commission's findings and recommendation and they pleaded for continued association with India, so that Burma might not be left out when dominion status finally came to India. Thus for the next few years the separation issue dominated the political scene in Burma.

The Separation faction was small but informed and highly vocal. It included many of the better-educated nationalists, like U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe. They regarded Burma's separation from India as an urgently necessary step for national reasons. They also envisaged with some confidence their ability to obtain for Burma an increasing measure of self-government whether inside or outside the empire. They proposed to realize their objectives by utilizing the legal channels available to them, such as the legislative council, freedom of speech, the press, and assembly.

The anti-Separationist faction consisted of three major groups. The amalgamated elements of the G.C.B.A., consisting of U Ghit Hlaing, U Maung Su and U Ba Shwe factions, the dissident U Soe Thein faction of the G.C.B.A., Tharrawaddy U Pu's Home Rule Party and the G.C.S.S. Their point of view was contrary to that of the Separationists. It stemmed mainly from distrust of British intentions regarding Burma's political future. Fear of being isolated from India in the common struggle for self-rule dated back to the bitter fight over the Craddock Scheme in the early 1920's.

The two opposition groups fought against each other over the issue of the proposed separation from India. They resorted to personal insult and abuse, and the groups waged an acrimonious campaign against each other which resulted in a loss of prestige for everybody concerned.

A significant political development of the 1930's was the growth of anti-foreign feeling, directed especially against alien Indians and Chinese. The grievances prompting them were mainly economic. The movement to boycott British goods and other similar movements of economic nationalism opened the eyes of the Burmese to the fact that they were no longer masters of their own economy. Both the Burmese small trader and the Burmese cultivator now realized that they were in no position to compete with their Indian and Chinese

counterparts. Although Burmese resentment against Indian money-lenders and Chinese shopkeeper creditors was reaching its height in 1930, it was at the level of the competition among destitute labourers, Burman and Indian, that racial trouble first developed. Indian labourers came into Burma at will without restraint of any sort and returned to India after two or three years with 90 % of their wages saved. From the point view of the British administration, Rangoon was just another Indian port, and thousands of these Indian labourers had merely to buy a ticket, board a steamer at Madras or Calcutta, and soon they were in Rangoon. The first clash occurred at Rangoon in May 1930 and the riots spread very quickly. The official report indicated around 100 killed and about 1,000 injured. The riots were not politically motivated, for mobs avoided the police and were not hostile to the British residents.

Within less than a month following the riot, a mutiny occurred in the Rangoon Central Jail on June 24th. Military Police called in to quell the outbreak were all Indians. According to Professor Cady, they killed three Burmese inmates and wounded sixty others. But Dr. Maung Maung's figures quote 28 prisoners, and several military police and jail sentries killed, and fifty-five prisoners seriously injured. Later there was further rioting,

his time directed against the Chinese, but it did not spread outside Rangoon.

By that time, the world depression of 1929 reached Burma. For all the above reasons, instability in politics and government oppression, Saya San's rebellion broke out in Tharrawaddy District, Lower Burma, on December 22, 1930. It was a peasants' rebellion, born of sheer desperation. " The irony of it was that the rebellion broke out at a time when a Burman was for the first, and last, time officiating as Governor. Sir Charles Innes, proceeding on leave, had handed over to Sir J. A. Maung Gyi, and peasants in Tharrawaddy had pleaded with " J. A. ", when he went on tour, for remission of the taxes. " J. A. ", a blunt and stubborn man who owed less for his rise to high office to the popular vote than to his good fortune, refused, and ordered that stern measures be taken to collect."

(Dr. Maung Maung's Burma's Constitution p.22.)

However, the rebellion was more than a general protest against tax collection. It was a strange blend of faith and superstition, nationalism and madness, of courage and folly. But it was a daring gesture of defiance. For long months the guerrilla war continued, but at the end, because of unequal strength, not only of manpower but also of arms and ammunition, Saya San fell into the hands of the government forces. Saya San and other rebel leaders

were hanged on November 28, 1931¹, but the nationalism that they helped to further refused to be buried with their bodies.

2. Books

List of titles selected from the Burma Catalogue 1921-1930.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1921</u>	U Pu, B.A.,	Burma and her	1,000	78	Re.1.	Sun Press
Feb	Bar at Law	Affairs			4 as	Rangoon
	U Thein	On the Constitution	1,500	40	8 as	"
	Maung,M.A.,	of the Burma				
	L.L.B., Bar	Legislative Council				
	at Law					
	"	On the British	"	"	"	"
		Parliament, the				
		Imperial Cabinet and				
		the League of Nations				
	"	On the Government of	"	49	"	"
		India, the Government				
		of Burma, and the Constitution				
		of the Indian Legislative Assembly				

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1. Ba Thaung: Ba-mā. tō-lhan-re: sa-muin: p. 216; but Dr. Maung Maung: Burma's Consittution p. 26 has November 16, 1931 and Cady: A History of Modern Burma p. 317 gives 1937, which is apparently a misprint. for 1931.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1921</u> June	U Ohn Pe	The Present Condition of Burma	1,500	24	2 as	Zigon (Tharrawaddy)
Dec	"	On Causes of Poverty among the Burmese people	"	12	1 anna	"
	U Pu	The difference between Home Rule and Dyarchy	3,000	31	Free	
<u>1922</u> March	U Shwe Tha	On Home Rule in Burma	1,000	84	8 as	Mandalay
April	U Tun Shein	Burma under Bureaucracy	1,500	110	Re.1	Rangoon
June	Maung Tin	On Present-day Politics	2,250	241	"	Mandalay
<u>1923</u> April	P. Monin	Fundamental Politics	4,000	160	Rs.2	Rangoon
July	Maung Khin Nyunt	The Treaty of Yandabo	1,000	68	Re.1 8as	Kyaiklat
Aug	C.P. Khin Maung	National Education	1,000	50	5 as	Mandalay
	U Ba Than	A Book on Non- co-operation	1,500	199	Rs.2	Rangoon
	Mr. Maung Hmaing	Myauk Tika	3,000	282	Re.1. 12 as	Rangoon
	P. Monin	A manual of Politics in 4 parts	3,000	210	Rs.2	Rangoon
	C.P.Khin Maung	Advantages of Sangha Samaggi & Wunthanu Rakkhita Associations	2,000	14	1 anna	Mandalay
	"	2nd Ed.1.1.24	3,000	"	2 as	"
	"	3rd Ed.1.7.24	3,000	"	3 as	"

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO. OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1923</u> Dec	Yan-bye Maung Maung	New rules of the G.C.B.A. & a key to National Development	3,000	32	4 as	Rangoon
	"	Commentary on the Anti-boycott Act	1,000	24	"	"
<u>1924</u> May	Maung Ba Thaw	Political points and Constitutions of G.C.B.A.	1,000	50	"	Bassein
June	Mr. Maung Hmaing	Letters of Mr. Maung Hmaing	3,000	264	Re.1. 12 as	Pyu
July	C.P. Khin Maung	Constitutional methods of political agitation in Ireland	2,000	16	5 as	Mandalay
	"	India and Burma	2,000	34	"	"
<u>1925</u> Sept	Lu Min	Kaba-a-lin	3,000	119	Re.1	Rangoon
Dec	Saya Shwe	Treaty of Yandabo	2,000	72	"	"
<u>1926</u>	NIL					
<u>1927</u>	Mr. Maung Hmaing	Boycott Tika	3,000	314	Rs.2	"
<u>1928</u>	U Su	Germany & other countries	5,000	122	8 as	"
<u>1929</u>	Than-dwe Maung	A short history of Ireland and Irish Republic Constitution	1,000	88	"	"
<u>1930</u>	G.C.B.A.	The Burma Constitu tional Reforms	1,000	73	"	Mandalay

The publications of the Sun Press in 1921 show that considerable efforts were being made to involve the public in Dyarchy - Home Rule issue. In early 1922, a book called Burma under bureaucracy written by U Tun Shein was published by Myan-ma kyet-tha-ye Press, Rangoon. It is rather difficult to discover any details of the life of the author U Tun Shein, because the book seems to have disappeared completely. From the title one might assume that the author was ~~be~~ the U Tun Shein who was a member of Pe-Pu-Shein delegation who left for England to demand Home Rule on behalf of the entire nation and to protest against Craddock's schemes, but that particular U Tun Shein died in 1920. So, unless it was delegate U Tun Shein's work published after his death, it was probably the work of another U Tun Shein.

In 1923 one of the modern literary giants of Burma, P. Monin wrote Fundamental Politics (Nuin-nam-re: a-khre-pru kram:). P. Monin, whose aim was once to become a clergyman, was brought up and educated by the Roman Catholic Mission, Tharrawaddy. He mastered not only English but also Latin. (At one time, he served as Latin master in Cushing High School, Rangoon.) Generally speaking, his background and training were rather different from the other Burmese writers and novelists. Indeed, he was one of the very few who were more than

just conversant with Western culture. He embraced western literature, philosophy and even at one time, the Christian religion. There is no doubt that his attitudes, his presentation and his literary style were very different from those of Saya Lun; he was indeed much more modern in every respect than Saya Lun. So P.Monin's Fundamental Politics , which was published by Bandoola (Journal) Press,¹ Rangoon , must certainly have enlightened the Burmese people, bearing as it did a considerable amount of political knowledge in the modern and international sense.

The Treaty of Yandabo written by Maung Khin Nyunt concerned the treaty signed on February 24th, 1826, after the Burmese were disastrously defeated by the British at the end of First Anglo-Burmese War, which broke out in the early days of 1824. The terms were extremely harsh. The Burmese lost not only the Indian provinces of Assam and Manipur, but also the Burmese maritime provinces of Arakan and Tennasserim. In addition, the Burmese had to pay as indemnity the huge sum of ten million rupees, that is, the equivalent of about one million pounds sterling. How colossal the sum was to the Burmese of those days can be judged from the fact that the cost of living of the average cultivator in 1824 was one rupee a month. (Dr. Htin Aung's The Stricken Peacock p.31) I am quite sure that the book, in revealing

1. Bandoola Journal was a very popular political journal of that time.

to the people the bitter truth of the past, especially the facts concerning the Treaty of Yandabo, would certainly have been an incentive towards the growth of Burmese nationalism.

Another work on the subject of political technique called A Book on Non-cooperation (with the Government) written by U Ba Than was probably a Burmese adaptation of Ghandism and its national movement in India.

The 1920 National Students' Strike provoked greater interest not only in political affairs but in the problems of national education. C.P. Khin Maung of Mandalay, wrote and published a book on this subject.

After the founding of the G.C.B.A., the need for more information about the newly formed people's political front was filled by Yan-bye Maung Maung's New Rules of the G.C.B.A. and a key to National Development.

The Burma Anti-boycott Act of 1922 (Burma Act No. 5 of 1922) signed by U May Aung, was issued by order of the Governor, on June 7th 1922. This act was criticised and attacked by Yan-bye Maung Maung, a very strong nationalist and an ardent supporter of G.C.B.A. in his Commentary on the Anti-boycott Act.

The Wunthanu Athins were set up as political associations centred round the village administration by the G.C.B.A. in 1921-22, and the G.C.S.S. was also organized in 1922. At that time the Wunthanu , G.C.S.S. and G.C.B.A. movements were popular and very well supported by the nation. When C.P. Khin Maung of Mandalay, wrote and published a small booklet, called The advantages and the benefits of G.C.S.S. and Wunthanu Athins , they must all have sold like hot cakes. Within four months, there appeared a 2nd edition which was evidently sold out. The 3rd edition appeared within six months, again increased in price. The response of the public was obviously an enthusiastic one.

From 1924 to 1930, probably as the result of political splits and the disillusionment of the people, not many interesting books appeared. Another effect of the splits may have been that politicians increasingly began to use the newspaper medium, always a faster and more dynamic way of reaching the masses than publication in book form. For example, Nat-kri:-le:-pā: chwe:-nwe:-khan: (the discussion of four Devas) in the Sun Daily, Khyaññ-pā-sā: and Pa-khan:-sā: in the New Light of Burma , Dī:-dut(Dee-dok) in the Burmese Review and Tañ:-but-kri: in the Bandoola Journal were all political voices of that time. Saya Lun contributed his Khway Tika articles through Bandoola Journal which was the most

notable one for political writings. A collection of Saya Lun's old articles appeared in book form, under the title of Letters of Mr. Maung Hmaing . It was published by U Maung Maung of Pyu. 3,000 copies were printed at Re. 1 and 12 annas. Another interesting publication was a small book called Constitutional methods of political agitation in Ireland by C.P. Khin Maung of Mandalay.

About the Boycott Tika I would like to make one observation. All Saya Lun's tikas were written in the period in which the events took place, except, the Boycott Tika , which he wrote six or seven years after the strike.

The book Germany and the other countries must be merely a traveller's tale, but as the Germans were the greatest rivals of the British, no doubt the Burmese public would have been interested to read it, having previously been acquainted mainly with the literature of the British masters and their everlasting glories.

Again we have a Sun Press contribution to the Burmese Nationalist movements, after a considerable gap. The book concerned Ireland, which had recently won independence and her constitution. No doubt that book aroused much interest and gave much encouragement to Burmese readers because of the similarities between the two countries, especially as regards the independence movements and the bitter struggle for freedom from the imperialist British rule.

The Burma Constitution Reforms is probably the most interesting book of that time, because, as it was published by the G.C.B.A., the facts and interpretations would certainly differ from the authorities' reports and English written sources about the Burma Reforms issue. It is likely that it explained the reason for the G.C.B.A. boycott of the enquiry commissions such as those of Whyte and Simons.

3. Saya Lun's writings

When the Y.M.B.A. leaders split, in 1920, over the issue of Home Rule or Dyarchy, Saya Lun sided with the supporters of Home Rule. At that time, the word Home Rule was translated into Burmese as Kuiy-puiñ 'up-khyup-re:¹ - in other words, no foreign rule - it meant freedom, independence. Saya Lun who was one of the outstanding authorities on Burmese history, took the meaning of Home Rule in the Burmese historical sense. Saya Lun thought that the idea of Home Rule itself was not alien to Burmese thought, because similar events had taken place in Burmese history several times. For example, during the Pagan Period, King Alaung-si-thu (1112-67) conquered Arakan, but he allowed the Arakanese Pretender, Prince Let-ya min-nan to take the

1. Kuiy-puiñ 'up-khyup-re: = Self own administration

Arakanese throne. During the Taungoo Period, although Sin-byu-shin¹ min-ta-ya, King of Hanthawaddy had conquered Ceylon - he allowed the ex-King of Ceylon to retain his throne. Allowing the ex-king or pretender to retain the throne, restoring the country to its own people after a demonstration of power - those things were not new in Burmese history and amounted to something similar to Home Rule, said Saya Lun. And he really believed this. So in his Myauk Tika, he composed a le:-khyui:-krĩ about Home Rule, as follows:-

This two-syllable word was most remarkable,

Oh! what an unusual usage - that will be pleasing to every-
body,
Make them smiling, happy and pleasant -

to all human-beings throughout the world,

Though it seems new to this present age,

That, for the Burmese kingdom (in the past) which had its own

Glories and Grandeurs, with all those gilded Golden Palaces,

"Home Rule" was not a strange thing but it was quite familiar.

Throughout Zambū-dī-pā²,

King Alaung-si-thu was famous and well known,

1. Sin-byu-shin min-ta-ya = Bayinnaung (1551-81)

2. Zambū-dī-pā = world

He was well beloved by his subjects,

Like King George (V) of England,

Those who paid their respects and made royal gifts were countless,

His strength and his power in olden-day Pagan was so great,

All other kings and rulers were very much afraid of

his might and power.

From the west country Da-nya-waddy (Arakan),

some people revolted against the King and terrorised
the country,

To escape from that terrible horror,

Min-ye-ba-ya, King of Arakan, fled to (our) Pauk-kan(Pagan),

together with his son, the Pretender, Prince Let-ya min-nan.

He (Alaung-si-thu) with much sympathy to the poor Arakan King,

was so angry with the terrorists,

That he fought against them with his powerful forces,

and after he had crushed the enemies , he gave the kingdom
back to Arakanese,

Without any war reparation or royal gifts,

or any direct or indirect taxes,

Oh ! What generosity - what a kindness (like a very rich person).

While I am writing and composing this poem,

Those prosperous and happy days seem very real to me.

From this poem, one can see that he simply believed that " Home Rule " meant " freedom from foreign rule " and the revival of a Burmese kingdom in Burma. This explains his disappointment with the proposed Dyarchy.

When the G.C.B.A. began to split up over the Dyarchy issue Saya Lun became disillusioned. He discovered that some of the nationalist leaders wished to retain their leadership at any cost; some were involved in the misuse of G.C.B.A. funds, and some were ready to accept the Dyarchy system for the chance of positions in the government. Because of the vagueness of ideology and principles, the splits and differences, the personal attacks, the selfishness and opportunism among the leaders, Saya Lun disassociated himself from this political confusion.

In his article entitled No more interest in either Dyarchy or Home Rule (Myauk Tika), he vividly described the situation in the country, through the mouths of his disciples (fictional characters) Beda and Ke-tha. Beda argued for Dyarchy and Ke-tha for Home Rule. Saya Lun concluded the article by revealing his personal point of view:-

It was real confusion,
 Mistaking one point after another,
 And as hard to escape from as a quagmire.

Like a whirlwind, going round and round unceasingly,
 You try to escape, but it is very hard,
 I, Saya Hmaing, the great yogi,
 Must flee to the jungle, away from the so-called civilized world.

There I will meditate, I will write history,
 And I will compose poems,
 With deepest sincerity and greatest love for my nation,
 And I wish, throughout Burma, that there may be Golden Pa-de-sā-pan
 and Silver Pa-de-sā-pan¹

Oh ! Yes, these were just my day-dreams,
 Though I tried very hard to achieve the magical power
 in the jungle by myself, it was in vain.
 My words were very little help
 For I can provide no money for my nation
 No silver or gold.

1. Pa-de-sā-pan = Pa-de-sā tree (see p. 65 foot-note 1)

This is the time for us to observe sī-la¹ and to pray solemnly
 For Nirvana the best condition of all, where there is no king
 (in other words, no administration, or no restriction
 - or absolute freedom).

Although he had intended to escape from the current political confusion, actually, Saya Lun, a born politician, could not manage to keep away for very long. It was only a temporary interruption. As soon as important national issues appeared, he could not stay away from politics. What drew him back was first the students' strike of 1920, and second the imprisonment of Sayadaw U Ottama by the British authorities. Saya Lun firmly supported the strike. His attitude towards the authorities suddenly changed.

The first time that Saya Lun had manifested any outward interest in politics had been in 1919, when the Y.M.B.A. managed to send delegates to England on behalf of the entire nation to protest at Craddock's schemes and to demand Home Rule. But at that time, Saya Lun had not acted aggressively. He maintained the traditional Burmese subject's attitude of observing and obeying whatever the governing authorities said or did. Even in his most famous Daung Tika,

1. sī-la = precepts

he eulogised King George V and prayed for him. Even when he took part in the Home Rule movement, his attitude could hardly be described as demanding: it was rather one of pleading, how could it have been called revolutionary? But this time, instead of pleading, or waiting patiently and calmly for the initiative from the other side, he lost his patience. He wanted now to fight for his own rights, although he was still a long way from any idea of revolution. When he heard that the students were going to strike against the authorities on behalf of the students' future and for the nation, he publicly gave his full support. This can be seen in his University le:-khyui:-kri: as follows :-

Oh ! students are boycotting the authorities,
 my sympathy and support for you all is great,
 But, because at the moment, I am far away from you,
 There is little in practice that, I , Mr. Maung Hmaing,
 can do to support or encourage you.
 But since I know that blood is thicker than water,
 as a fellow Burman, for the sake of our future,
 I shall remain always in touch with you all.
 Though I am far away,
 When the time comes for important matters,
 Blood is always thicker than water.

When I was young, before the Burmese Kingdom collapsed,
 I was just like you - a student,
 A student who feared nothing, with a future full of promise.
 Therefore, write my name at the head of the list of those
 who support your boycott.

I am on your side.

May the Lord Buddha and the angels
 Send their blessings on all people in the world.
 Would that my prayer could be added also.
 In the past, there was Saya Aung of Sa-re-khetta-rā period,
 who turned lead into silver by magic.

There were also Rhañ Ajja-go-na and Rhañ Ma-thī: of the
Pagan period, the brightest chapter in our history.

Like them, I , the great wanderer,
 Will always do my best to work my magic wherever I am.
 Yes, what I am attempting and trying to do is not for myself
 It is for the sake of my people and my country.

I wish I could really help my country.

To achieve this aim, the only way I know is to become
 a successful alchemist,
 and that is why I am so interested in alchemy and experimenting
 as much as I can.

If only I could succeed in that magic

People would then live longer - hundreds and thousands of years.

Throughout the country, there would be plenty of gold and silver

and all kinds of material wealth pouring down on everyone
like rain.

People would be happy, they would love and be kind to each other,

because they would enjoy everything they wanted and have
no more worries.

And they would draw closer to their religion.

Then I would say very proudly " Here comes Maung Hmaing "

I, the great yogi , the very wise man, who loved and practised
meditation,

Famous and well known all over the country,

With numerous followers and disciples.

I tell you this - remember, if ...

I succeed in my magic of making gold and silver,

As once happened in the Pagan and Sa-re-khetta-rā periods.

I , who love my people and my country eternally,

Will build, will erect, will sponsor many many universities

Throughout the country, even in the remotest place,

There will be standards of education as great as Western ones

So that we can be equal with them.

So that we can be proud of ourselves.

But, beware, my dear fellow-Burmans and all future generations,
 Don't be misled and defeated,
 Because of some people's policy of ' Divide and Rule '
 Or other people's flattery,
 Have no illusions about yourselves,
 See yourselves as you really are.
 Above all, be united yourselves,
 See each other's point of view,
 Otherwise the future is black.

Although Saya Lun was encouraged and happy about the students' achievement, there were naturally some who opposed the strike, giving all sorts of reasons plausible and implausible. Among them were the Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Craddock, and the government newspaper. In the edition of February 9th 1921 of the newspaper Mran-mā tuin:-kyui: , published by the Government Information Department, were two articles which offended Saya Lun's nationalist instincts. The first was the report of Sir Reginald Craddock's speech, given at the dinner party of English Chamber of Commerce. Sir Reginald was being sarcastic about the boycott - referring to the students as ' boycotters ' and ' girl-cotters '. Another article consisted

of a discussion between Do-na pan: and Sa-jan pan: . In their discussion they made fun, in a particularly tasteless and offensive way, of the early life of the Buddha, then Prince Siddhattha Kumara . Saya Lun was very upset and angered by these articles. Playing on the double meaning of kyui: ' to break ' or ' benefit ', he asked the question - what does Mran-mā tuin:-kyui: mean ? Does it mean for the benefit, for the interest, for the advantage of Burma ? Or does it mean to break the country of Burma in pieces ? If other newspapers had exceeded the bounds of good taste, the government had the power to control them and, if necessary, take legal actions against them. But in this case it was the government's own newspaper that was offending. It was hard to see who could take action against the government's own paper. Saya Lun realized this and reacted very angrily. So he composed a le:-khyui:-kri: - about the Government Newspaper :-

His Lordship, the Governor made a joke,

He used a foul word - I feel very ashamed.

I don't find it funny or witty.

His language grieves me and makes me sad.

They called their paper Mran-mā tuñ:-kyui: .

What does it mean ? Let me explain the meaning.

It means to break our Sasana (Buddhism) and our traditions
in pieces.

The Government and the authorities seem to think

that they can do whatever they wish.

It seems that they intend to go ahead,

not only to break our hearts and make us wretched,

but even to mock and insult the life of the Lord Buddha.

How shameful. They are the government,

they should surely know better than to say

or to write things like this.

Yet they are using the language of San-da-yaw¹

Doubtless very funny and coarse,

but it makes me ashamed.

It doesn't amuse me.

No, it hurts and grieves me. I hate it.

1. San-da-yaw = a famous buffoon of that time.

I , the great yogi , from Pho-u-taung ,
the jungle valley, where I now am
Am so sad , I would like to boycott everything ,
Yes , really , everything .

Nowadays, because of these so-called clowns Do-na and Sa-jañ,
people are not happy.

They are not funny , they are not amusing ,
They are disgusting , people loathe them.

I , the great yogi , and my disciples,
after we had read these articles in the newspaper which
reached us here (a remote jungle, away from civilization).

We decided that it would be quite wrong for other people to think that the people of Burma are like those two fools, or like the people who run the government newspaper.

We must ask all those we love

To be careful and watchful

Never to allow such shameful things,

If those disgusting things occur again

We must not hesitate, we must act at once,

We must deal with them straight away.

By the people's warrant.

While the Students' Strike was a great encouragement to him, Saya Lun heard of the arrest of Sayadaw U Ottama with grief. He was arrested in 1921, by the government, on a charge of incitement to sedition, under the Indian Criminal Act 124 (A) at Su-ka-lat village, De-da-ye Township, Ma-u-bin District.

Surprisingly, Saya Lun came out firmly against those who criticised Sayadaw U Ottama and his activities, and his very progressive points of view. Saya Lun was a great traditionalist, but he was not a dogmatic conservative. In his article entitled ' Sayadaw U Ottama delivered a political lecture at Bahan ' (Myauk Tika) he wrote as follows :-

" Some thought that because Sayadaw U Ottama made political speeches and because of his involvement in politics, he was breaking canonical laws and could no longer be a genuine member of the Sangha . This is quite wrong. If you study carefully past Burmese history, you will find there many examples of the great Sayadaw and Mahātheras taking an interest in politics. Quite often they engaged in political activity on behalf of their country and their religion. For example, if we consider the recent past : during the Kon-baung period,

when Prince Tharrawaddy, who later became King between 1837-46, left for Shwebo in order to recruit his followers for an attempted Royal Coup d'état against Bagyidaw Min (1819-37), or when, Prince Mindon, who later became King between 1853-78, left for Shwebo in order to recruit his followers for an attempted Royal Coup against Pagan Min (1846-53), the Tha-tha-na-baing Sayadaws¹ went to Shwebo, to mediate between the King and the Prince, in order to prevent a civil war. In other words, it is everybody's duty, whether they are monk or layman, to take an active part in the country's affairs when there is a national crisis "...

"Even Lord Buddha himself, had to mediate among the fighting rival groups of We-sā-li Princes by giving a sermon called "A-parihāniya "...

Everybody knows that a Buddhist monk must try to observe all the 227 canonical laws. But, apart from the most important four Pārājika laws, those who accidentally violate any of the remaining 223 laws could still be treated as a bhikkhu, to whom we can pay our full respects; because he who knows or who observes even one canonical law is owed respect from men, devas and every being "...

1. Tha-tha-na-baing Sayadaw = royally appointed head of Buddhist Sangha.

Saya Lun also composed a le:-khyui:-kri: about Sayadaw U Ottama's arrest, praising him as a hero of the sāsana .

" In heaven or on earth

The Shwe-da-gon Pagoda was recognized as the most holy place,
Sakka, the King of Devas descended in a magic vehicle from heaven,
 To visit the nhak-mrat-nā:¹ of the Pagoda,

As a person who never forgets his proper duty to render homage.

I am worried and disturbed by the thunderbolt, a very evil omen:

Once very long ago,

At the worst time of the Ava period ,

There was a king , Shan by birth,

Who was a tyrant, a dacoit, a thief,

who ruled the kingdom most ruthlessly,

With all his might and power.

He was very proud and overbearing.

He ran the country according to his own will

whether or not this was just or lawful.

1. nhak-mrat-nā: = a particular top portion of a pagoda.

That king, Tho-han-bwa , son of Mo-hnyin Sawbwa ,
 Did not wish to pay respect to Buddha
 Nor to Dhamma¹ which he considered useless rubbish.
 He killed the members of the Sangha deliberately and
 systematically without any cause

I had thought that those were things of the past
 And ^{that} such things could never again occur under civilized British rule.
 Quite recently on pre-sabbath day,
 I was talking to my disciples, giving them examples from history,
 of this kind of event.

And telling them that I did not believe that similar events
 would ever again take place.

But now, alas, it appears how wrong I was.

One of our greatest leaders, Mahāthera (i.e. U Ottama)

is determined that Burma shall not remain in subjection

" We are now in the era of Buddha Sāsana ", he tells us,

" And I myself am here in Burma ,I will do all I can

without any hesitation for my country and my people."

So after frequently visiting other countries and different lands

And studying their politics and current affairs

With his great integrity and his love for the nation and country,

1. Dhamma = Buddha's teachings

He taught us how the other independent countries were
 developoing and prospering.

He urged us, for the good of the country,
 to carry out all kinds of reforms.

Now, he (U Ottama) had been arrested by the government,
 The whole nation is deeply grieved and distressed,
 I myself earnestly hope that he may be justly treated -
 Especially at a time like this, that is, during the Buddha Sāsana.
 Oh ! I don't want to think and I don't want to talk about it.
 I can still picture only too clearly the brutal way in which
 they arrested our beloved benefactor Bhikkhu (U Ottama).

Now, everyone - men , women and Bhikkhus
 Who share the same faith, culture and traditions,
 All are facing the most difficult time, we are in trouble.
 The authorities and the government are in control
 and they are exercising their power unjustly.
 So how can we plead not guilty to their deliberately unjust charges
 ?
 We, natives of Burma, the followers of U Ottama,
 can do nothing, we are helpless;
 All we can do is weep and be anxious.
 Alas for our beloved leader Mahāthera Ottama the banner and
 the symbol of Sāsana,
 Who always loved and cared for his country and his people.

The dissensions in the G.C.B.A. had become all too obvious by 1922 and Saya Lun was a sad witness of it. Zawgyi described the split thus in his Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika (p. 69).

" At that time, Sayagyi Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing (i.e. Saya Lun) was giving his service voluntarily as Professor of Burmese at the National College , Bahan - Legacy of the 1920 students' strike . He chose to wear always the national Burmese dress of that time which consisted of pañ-nī¹ jacket, Yaw pu-chui:², Ein-daw-ya thī:³. Dressed like this, he made his point that he was an ardent supporter of the nationalist movements. He always went to Bahan College on foot, from his home, Barr Street, along the road beside the Zoo. Because of the length of this journey on foot, sometimes he used to rest for a while at U Ba Choe (Deedok)'s home, Ye-da-she Street , Bahan , and sometimes at the National College Teachers' ja-rap⁴, Churchill Road (now Ko-min-ko-chin Road) , Bahan . While

1. pañ-nī = a particular kind of home-woven cloth

2. Yaw pu-chui: = a longyi worn by men woven at Yaw ,

Pakhokku District, Central Burma.

3. Ein-daw-ya thī: = an umbrella made at Ein-daw-ya Quarter,
Mandalay.

4. ja-rap = a building erected for public accommodation,
a rest-house.

he was recovering his breath at these places, he would sometimes discourse on Burmese literature especially Burmese verse and sometimes on history - not only the glories and grandeurs of our past but also its frailties and failures. But mostly he talked about the faults of the G.C.B.A. leaders and their deficiencies and disloyalty to the nation and the country and their distrust of each other, their disunity and so on with an expression of sorrow and regret."

It would be difficult to say that Saya Lun's feelings towards the political leaders were unfair and unjust in view of the state of the G.C.B.A. Saya Lun was disappointed to see the signs of deteriorating Burmese unity. He felt that the only way to achieve Home Rule was by a united effort. Each step towards the disintegration of this unity was a blow to him. He despised the obvious corruption and self-interest of the main G.C.B.A. leaders while approving their ^{personal} policy. But he had many friends among the rival group who were content to work within the framework of the Dyarchy system. Saya Lun's position appeared rather difficult, torn between personal friendship and political principle. The poems he composed, at that time, show quite clearly his feelings about the situation.

"Because of these two opposing groups' hatred for each other,

I want to go away to my retreat, that is, Sagaing(Valley).

Now I can't control and console myself,

I know that our country is bound to meet the most difficult time

Because these two rival groups are going to fight

each other with all their means and might.

I remember how the We-sa-li Kingdom collapsed,

And not only that, how we lost our King and Country which was

the great black mark in our history, that is,

the collapse of Yatanabon (i.e. Mandalay).

Now I don't want to think about these sad events.

Oh ! I must avoid all these worldly matters and I must go to

the jungle.

I must concentrate more on my meditations with solemn

determination,

To attain Nirvana, the land of peace and tranquility

which will end all my worries.

With these thoughts and day-dreams,

I am writing aimlessly (poems and history)

with nothing in particular to say.

I am sad and depressed and I can't console myself.

What a fate - what a destiny for our country.

I can't bear it and now I am fleeing to Sagaing (Valley)

Where I can stay away from all these sad events."

From this time onwards, Saya Lun dissociated himself from the leaders of both groups and he ceased to rely on either the 21 group or the main G.C.B.A. in his fight for freedom. He became more and more independent.

After the collapse of the National College where Saya Lun was teaching Burmese literature and history, he did not return to the Sun Daily, because he was so disheartened by the political confusions and cut-throat rivalries; he wanted for the second time to be out of the unpleasant political scene. So he joined Da-gon Monthly Magazine, literary which was the leading magazine in Burma of that time and which had no involvement in politics. There he wrote Ca-kuin:- pran mhā-tô-pun, Dhamma-ce-ti-man: watthu, 'I-non nan:-twañ: jat-tô-kri: watthu, etc. These were purely literary works with no political implications. But it was impossible for him to abandon politics completely. Although he kept clear of direct political involvement during that period, he busied himself compiling his famous Boycott Tika published in 1927.

The Tika was a first hand account of the 1920 National Students' Strike. His reflections on the current political scene - that is, the split in the G.C.B.A., the newspapers, and the G.C.S.S. and his personal feelings towards the country's freedom movements were clearly shown in his concluding le:-khyui:-kri: of Boycott Tika .

Here is an extract:-

"Now it is impossible.

Our age is deteriorating, like ripe fruits falling from the tree.

In Burma nowadays, what dissensions,

numerous, countless and endless.

Among the associations and the groups there is no intention of

goodwill and friendship, no sign of perseverance to achieve

unity;

Instead they are gnashing ferociously and fiercely

at each other like wild dogs.

Not only that, but because of the " next-to-none-expert-

slanderer-newspapers" and their malicious attacks on each other,

Now the situation is very similar to an event

that happened in the past.

That is, the hatred born of envy and malice between

Narathu , King of Pinya, and King of Zeya (Sagaing).

In our Burma, which is the centre of the earth, the best possible
land in the universe, the land of peacocks,
The leaders, whom we shall have to allow to decide our country's
future, seem so selfish and disunited.

Alas ! I am sad, so very sad.

Composing this poem, especially at this time of the year,
I am not happy as I was in the past.

My mind is not clear, I have no inspiration, no ideas,
And I don't even want to go to the Dhammā-yum¹ in Mandalay
(which was just across the river from Sagaing),
where I can find many of my beloved disciples.

Yes, this is the age of darkness, age of lunacy, age of selfishness
I must avoid.., I must ignore and I must escape from it.

I can't concern myself.

I, the great wise man, Saya Hmaing Gyi (Saya Lun) together with
my beautiful and flower-like disciples from the famous
Sagaing (Valley), Upper Burma,

Feeling so sad and having such great pity for those boycotters,
my beloved pupils, who were unfortunate enough to be born
in this terrible age of disunity, age of cabals,
age of malicious attacks.

Oh ! my poor beloved pupils,
now, they are in the middle of nowhere.

1. Dhammā-yum = the Sermon Hall

Here, I would like to give some background on the Boycott Tika. Saya Lun's Bo Tika, Daung Tika and Myauk Tika are collections of articles, written in the midst of the events he was describing. But the Boycott Tika was not written till five or six years after the event took place. When he wrote his Boycott Tika, containing first hand accounts of 1920 National Students' Strike, he used the same style as for the previous Tikas. As usual, the literary style was "ryhming prose" and there were 10 le:-khyui:-kri: (of this style he was the unquestioned master) and several te:-thap, caññ-tô-saṃ - etc. and a large number of extracts from other well known literary works. Although his main subject for this Tika was the 1920 National Students' Strike, he did not neglect reflection on current politics which had comprised such a large part of Daung Tika and Myauk Tika. It gives us valuable information on questions neglected by non-Burmese historians of this period. From the Burmese point of view, it tells us how the National Students' Strike started, who were the leaders, what were the causes, etc.

He also pointed out for the benefit of Burmese Buddhists, how and why sa-pit-mhok-khraṇ:¹ occurred in Buddha's life time, he explained the origin of the word "Boycott" and discussed the

1. sa-pit-mhok-khraṇ: = boycott or strike

significance of the boycott in the events of Western history. And he also mentioned how and why chwam:-tô-kri:-lon:¹ came about. He commented on notable events not only from rā-ja-waṇ² but also from ma-hā-waṇ³. He also gave the details of the history of Puṇṇa-rhaṇ Pagoda, Mra-sa-pit Pagoda; and general information about Buddha's Alms-bowl and about the famous alms-bowls in Burma. From the literary and historical point of view, he gave fifty-five different quotations containing the word maṇ:-lwaṇ and also reviewed the Taungoo and Ava periods in Burmese history.

As I have been unable to obtain a copy of Saya Lun's Khway Tika I should like to conclude this chapter with some extracts from Saya Zawgyi's Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing Tika (pp. 75 - 81) which contain information on this book.

"In 1923, the British government enforced the "Dyarchy Administration" in Burma. From this year onwards, the political activities of the Young Wunthanus, the legacy of 1919(Home Rule) Movements, began to lose their force. By 1931, the year Saya San's

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1. chwam:-tô-kri:-lon: = offering alms-rice
 2. rā-ja-waṇ = Burmese history
 3. ma-hā-waṇ = Buddhist history

Galon Rebellion was completely crushed and the Dobama Asi-ayone was firmly established, the Young Wunthanus had come completely adrift. On the subject of this aimlessness and inaction Sayagyi described his cetanā and his intentions through Bandoola Journal with his Khway Tika articles, almost weekly, to the country.

During the year 1923, the 21 group who were against the majority G.C.B.A. decision, not to accept Dyarchy, came out in open defiance and formed a splinter group. So the majority G.C.B.A. group denounced that 21 group as Duiñ-sa-mā:¹.

Later, when these 21 group members won their seats in the Legislative Council under the Dyarchy Elections, they were known as Duiñ-a-mat² and were labelled "selfish opportunists".

The 21 group members explained and publicly announced that the reason why they had accepted Dyarchy was to attack the British government from inside, with their own methods.

When the 21 group and Wunthanu G.C.B.A. openly split, Sayagyi retained his sympathy for the minority 21 group as his personal friends. But for the sake of principle and policy Sayagyi accepted the Wunthanu G.C.B.A., who were the majority

1. Duiñ-sa-mā: = Dyarchist

2. Duiñ-a-mat = Dyarchy Legislative Council Member

and gave them his support. Therefore , he composed his

Khwe:-mañ: pa-rit-tô-bhwai. le:-khyui:-krī: , as follows:-

Though my disciples make mistakes sometimes,

Because they are my own people, Burmans, and as I have
always loved them, I have no desire to hate.

Alas ! there appeared a split inside (G.C.B.A.) and
strong arguments from both sides.

What a gloomy event, and what an unfortunate affair.

Though I have my sympathy for you (21 group) still,

Yet I will have to stand on the majority side.

Anyway, as for me, for the sake of my people and my disciples,
I will pray "May our country have peace and prosperity."
...etc.

Although, Sayagyi was still drawn to the Duiñ-sa-mā: ,
yet he seemed rather angry with them. His anger was probably
caused by the fact that as a result of these Duiñ-sa-mā:
Burma's independence movements had lost their direction and were
getting nowhere. Previously, whenever he felt saddened by the
opportunist politicians, he revealed his sorrow and pity only
to them. But now, this time, one more ingredient was added, i.e.,
his ka-ru-nā do-sa¹ . When he heard that Duiñ-sa-mā: had stood

1. ka-ru-nā do-sa = a blend of anger and compassion.

for the elections and had become members of the legislative council, Saya Lun felt that this represented an abject surrender to the British. And when Saya Lun heard that someone from Duin-sa-mā: had accepted a post carrying a salary of Rs. 5,000, He could only conclude that this was a capitulation to the British government. He decided to denounce them publicly. In his O-wā-da ka-thā ma-hā le:-khyui:-krī: (Khway Tika), he wrote a satirical piece.

I , the Grand Wise-man, who did not hesitate to practice

four kinds of brahma cariya¹ laws,

Take this opportunity of the time of election:

I will give some advice, to those candidates,

How to behave like dogs.

This is the time for me to tell them... etc.

And in his "Concluding Prayer" another le:-khyui:-krī: —

When I , the ardent meditator, look and think what's

happening among the various coloured dogs(i.e. dyarch-ists)

-
1. brahma cariya (laws) = affection ; compassion ; benevolence ;
freedom from all kinds of desire.

They are disunited and fighting for a piece of bone
with astounding selfishness and greed.

Now, I'll have to write Khway Tika

(for the sake of the Dyarchists),

And I feel as if I am contributing marvellous meritorious
deeds which will open the gate of Nirvana for me
in my future existence.

My dear disciples, you nuns who carry bhan:¹

Be glad, and read this with great joy and enjoy it... etc.

The Duih-sa-mā; who split from the G.C.B.A. were once first-rate
National Leaders of the younger generation — Sayagyi himself had
relied on them and had thought a great deal of them. But now
he felt that they had become unworthy of the public trust and
his own confidence and affection had been misplaced. He showed
his embarrassment and annoyance in his O-wā-da ka-thā
le:-khyui:-kri: as follows:-

So that your Master, who provides you with food and lodging,
should rely on you and trust you,

Observe and follow these six characteristics the dogs have.

1. bhan: = circular tray made of bamboo, usually carried on the
head.

If you follow and practise enough of these traits,
don't worry, you'll become a Model Slave.

(Your personal ambitions and desires are your own. I am not
concerned with them. It is the fate of the country
which fills my thoughts.)

But I must say that I am not happy about the Students' Strike,
Ministerial posts and the politicians and above all
the increase of taxation ... etc.

In the same le:-khyui:-kri: , Sayagyi described the
prayer of one of his disciples (fictional) A-yee-Sein .

A-yee-Sein wished to become the wife of a minister who earned
a very fat salary (Rs. 5,000 per month). Sayagyi was angry
when he heard this prayer and he wanted to punish A-yee-Sein
for such unworthy sentiments. By creating a story like this,
he satirised the Duin-a-mat as follows :-

They said that they were going to attack (the government)
from the inside,

And among their wives,

Almost all of them have cars, houses, etc. etc.,

Oh ! they can be really proud of themselves and they can
hold their heads up high.

" Yes, I wish I were one of them ", said A-yee-Sein ,

" I wonder whether I have done enough meritorious deeds
in my previous lives.

If I and Master nā:-thon-cā:-kri:¹ were meant for each other,
because of our kam-pā²

May I be the wife of one of the ministers."

Daw Shwe Sein (A-yee-Sein), Donor of ^amonastery,
one of my closest disciples prayed thus.

Oh ! how disgusted I was to hear that.

People become poorer and poorer, yet they (Legislative
Council Members) would like to exploit them
as much as they can.

Now, the people are facing the Age of Difficulties
(Age of Tightness)...

1. nā:-thon-cā:-kri: = one who gets Rs. 5,000 salary.

2. kam-pā (or fe-cak-pā) = to have one's interests bound up
with those of another by reason of having
conjointly made religious offerings
in the past existences.

She who wants to be selfish, she who could not care,
 though she knew it was wrong
 She who wants to become "Rs. 5,000 salary" Minister's wife
 I (Sayagyi) would like to pound her with my elbows,
 even though it is in the precincts of the pagoda,
 though I know that it is not a proper place
 to give such punishment.

The 21 Party was not the only party which accepted the Dyarchy administrative system. There was another group called the Golden Valley Party whose official^{name} was the Progressive Party, but who were more generally known as the A-lui-tô-ri guin:¹. The 21 Party said that they were prepared to accept the enforced Dyarchy administration, because they knew that they as a party, the Burmese as a nation, had no alternative, and that the only way to get a proper chance of attacking the government systematically and effectively was to do so from the inside. There was no other way. They declared their pledge publicly. But as far as the ephemeral so-called Progressive Party was concerned none of their members had had any experience of politics before the Dyarchy. For the most part, the members were very p^rdo-British Burmans

1. A-lui-tô-ri guin: = Yes-man Party

and mostly civil servants. It was understood that the reason these people were prepared to accept the Dyarchy administration was to try to exploit the professional possibilities of the situation as much as they could. As they were completely pro-government, they easily overcame the strength of the 21 Party in the Legislative Council, with the help of the other Governor's appointed members and the anti-Nationalist clique. So in debate in the Legislative Council the 21 Party were always overwhelmed by the coalition against them. They had joined the Dyarchy administration in the hopes of furthering the nationalist cause but they were baulked at every turn while recrimination was heaped on them by both sides.

As for those who opposed the Dyarchy administration, and who claimed that they would fight for Home Rule, they became more and more disunited, split followed split, and nothing was achieved. Splinter groups, defected from various parties, appeared everywhere. There was the Tha-ya-za Party , Wunthanu G.C.B.A. , Soe Thein G.C.B.A. and so on. Because of the multi-party policies and because of the radical rivalry among the politicians, they established their own newspapers for the more convenient conduct of smearing campaigns and ferocious attacks on each other.

Political confusion reached its height in this period of splinter groups, attacks and counter attacks. So, for a person like Sayagyi , who was single-mindedly interested in only one goal, that is, Burma's Independence, the political mêlée of this time must have been particularly disheartening and infuriating to watch. He complained to all the so-called leaders - not only the Duiñ-sa-mā: — but also the leaders of Tha-ya-za Party, Wunthanu G.C.B.A., Soe Thein G.C.B.A., and all as follows :-

At this very moment, while the pride and power of Burma
are waning,
These so-called leaders do not care to observe our
traditional honours.
In every way, they commit errors,
They practise their vicious habits,
fighting and biting like old mad dogs.

After this strongly worded protest Sayagyi shows his genuine and honest concern for the harmony and unity of all four parties' leaders — and his general appeal for unity read as follows :-

Because of the quarrels between the four party leaders,
Burma's situation at present is like the body of a dog
which died from rabies.

Yet the so-called leaders are trying to exploit all they can
So that they can live in luxury with their wives,

out of the country's difficulties,

And for the sake of that Rs. 5,000 per month salary, they are
gnashing and gnawing at each other like mad dogs.

Alas ! What a misery ! What a pity ! They (the Nationalist
leaders) do not see that we all are sinking every
minute in the whirl-pool of troubles and difficulties.

Even in this kywan-khet¹ you are unaware,

you remain in your stupidity and foolishness.

And if you continue to bark and bite at each other like
mad dogs,

The period of the age of Error and Terror in Burma will
be prolonged.

Giving pleasure to the pro-government cliques,
who are only eager to enjoy Rs. 5,000 salary.

1. kywan-khet = unimportant age — i.e. the whole country
is under the absolute rule of foreigners.

Therefore , please do beware.

I am now in the Sagaing Valley,

doing my utmost to attain magic power through alchemy.

If I succeed in my aim

there will be plenty of gold and silver for you all, and

we can all live as good neighbours in loving friendship.

And I (Ko Hmaing) wish you all health and happiness,

steadfastness and security, and above all

peace and prosperity.

Though he was saddened to witness the political confusions and politicians' lack of integrity, he does not seem to have given up all his hopes for the future of the country. He appeared disheartened with current politics, yet he did not relax his own determined personal effort for the country's independence. He may not have taken part in party politics nor bothered to show much ~~bother to show much~~ interest in current politics, yet he continued his duties as a nationalist by means of his " effective pen ". This was clearly shown in his Pā-ra-mi-tô-khan: le:-khyui: kri: as follows :-

From the jungle, where the Bodhi Tree stands at the centre
 (i.e. from the place, away from the civilization,
 where he took refuge from the worldly matters)

I can't do anything. All I can do is to meditate and to
 concentrate my mind by beads which I carry in my hands.
 I am now half-way to death and my body is no longer young
 and active — it begins to decay.

But in Burma, I am ashamed of my people :

They are really in a mess, they are disunited and everybody
 wants to become a leader, trying to seize their
 opportunity at any cost.

Oh ! they are just like dogs, mentioned by Rhañ Mahā

Silawamsa in his very famous work Pā-ra-mi-tô-khan:
pyui.

They are so foolish, so stupid and so ignorant,
 And they are gnashing, gnawing at each other like mad dogs.
 And the newspapermen are also biting and barking at each
 other.

The whole country is disunited and divisions occur
 everywhere.

So, I am very unhappy, very sad and very concerned.

I thought to myself that it is better to avoid

such an unpleasant mess.

So, I , the great wiseman , moved to Upper Burma (Sagaing),
determined that, like the sun which is always bright
and whose strength and power is never weakened,
I will also act and take the initiative for the sake of
my country with my " golden peacock-feather pen "
from the valley (Sagaing) where I am staying now.

..."

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CHAPTER IV1930 19371. Politics

In this chapter, I would like to consider political events and publications of the period 1930-31 - 1936-37, that is, after the outbreak of Saya San's rebellion up to the eve of the separation of Burma from the Indian Empire. The most important political issue which Burma faced during that period was whether or not the country should be separated from India, and, if so on what terms. The question was considered first at the India Round Table Conference of 1930-31 and next at the Burma Round Table Conference held a year later. The Simon Commission had recommended separation, the Government of Burma desired it, and so did London. But the G.C.B.A., having boycotted everything, found itself rejecting separation again. Political parties and groups sprang up for separation or against, or against separation for the time being but for separation later. This political issue brought forward new young leaders, like Dr. Ba Maw, Galon U Saw, with the old ambition for office. The same period witnessed the emergence of the youthful student-led Thakhin or Dobama Party, which was destined in time to fill the political vacuum.

The India Round Table Conference, which took place in London from November 12, 1930 to January 19, 1931 was attended by 73 leaders

from ' India ' which included U Ba Pe, U Aung Thin, U Maung Maung Ohn Gaing, and Oscar de Glanville (a Briton domiciled in Burma) from Burma. U Ba Pe championed the radical nationalist point of view. The other two Burmese spokesmen agreed with U Ba Pe but were relatively inarticulate. The Round Table Conference, however, accepted separation in principle, and decided to convene a separate Burma Round Table Conference to discuss and draft a new constitution for Burma. The conference took place from November 27, 1931 to January 12, 1932. There were 24 members (12 Burmese and 2 representatives each from 6 minority groups — Indians, Karens, Chinese, Shans, Anglo-Indians and British) on the delegation from Burma and two advisers to the delegates from the Shan States. The sessions and the sub-committees went thoroughly into the details of the new constitution, and at the end of their labours the constitution was in the shape and form in which it was embodied in the Government of Burma Act which was passed in 1935 and came into ~~operation~~ operation on April 1, 1937.

The British Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, made a statement on January 19, 1932, at the end of the conference. When the Prime Minister's statement was debated by the Burma Legislative Council in late February 1932, the sentiment expressed was overwhelmingly favourable to an amended motion put forward by U Ba Pe. Both Tharrawaddy U Pu

and U Ni supported U Ba Pe's position to the great discomfiture of the Anti-Separationist faction, which they had been selected to represent at London. Anti-Separationists, with the Rangoon Indian representative E. P. Pillay in the vanguard, denounced the proposed constitution as worthless and unworkable.

The most enthusiastic initiator of an Anti-Separationist League appears to have been an Indian representative at the London Conference, S. N. Haji, whose SCINDIA NAVIGATION COMPANY had a large financial stake in both passenger and freight service between Burma and India. The Anti-Separationists also had the backing of the pro-Congress Indian Association of Burma organized in 1931 and headed by Mr. Tyabji.

Naturally, the prospect of a new constitution stirred up a frenzy of political activity in Burma. New parties and new personalities emerged, new alliances were made, and new directions too. The G.C.B.A., which had so consistently stayed out of the legislature, contested the elections in November, 1932 which were fought on the major issue of separation. There was a joining of forces between the U Chit Hlaing G.C.B.A. and the U Su G.C.B.A., an alliance popularly called the Hlaing-Myat-Paw after the names of leaders, U Chit Hlaing, U Myat Tha Dun, and U (later Sir) Paw Tun. They were Anti-Separationists.

Another group of younger leaders who also took up the struggle against the separation cause were the Maw-Myint-Bye group, named after the leaders Dr. Ba Maw, U Kyaw Myint, and Yan-bye (Ramree) U Maung Maung. The story eventually emerged that the Indian Anti-Separationists financed their political meetings and the printing of election pamphlets. U Su himself declared that S. N. Haji paid him 1,000 rupees per month for seven and a half months for his services to the cause.

For ~~the~~ separation there were the People's Party, the former 21 Party led by U Ba Pe, U Pu and U Thein Maung and the Progressive Party (or the Golden Valley Party) led by Sir J. A. Maung Gyi. The Golden Valley Party was already discredited by then as the A-lui-tô-ri guin; and ' J. A. ' with his Saya San rebellion fame was not a man to lead a party to electoral victory.

The election of November, 1932, produced a resounding victory for the Anti-Separation League. They elected 42 candidates to 29 separationists and 9 neutrals. The election saw the virtual disappearance of the Golden Valley Party, even though Sir J. A. Maung Gyi managed to retain for a time his post as home minister. Another result was the emergence of Dr. Ba Maw as a rising star in the political firmament.

At last the die was cast: separation it was to be. The Government of Burma Act was passed on May 30, 1935, giving the blessing of the British Parliament to Burma's new constitution, almost six and a half years after John Simon's visit to Burma in January, 1929. Again as in 1918 and 1922, the inordinate delay involved in coming to a decision had aggravated the political problem. And so, fifty years after the annexation of Upper Burma, Burma regained her separate identity.

The controversy embittered Burmese politics, for both factions waged an abusive, acrimonious, and personal campaign against each other, like the Home Rule - Dyarchy issue, with the result that all the older political leaders lost their prestige and their hold on the masses. The Saya San rebellion of 1930-32 and the mishandling of the internal political affairs by the elder politicians created a vacuum in leadership, into which stepped some young patriots from the University of Rangoon. These young men were ardent, active and progressive and they firmly maintained their opinion that only a revolution could bring freedom back to their nation. Most of them had entered the university from national schools, where they had more chance of studying Burmese history and literature than missionary schools, more even than the Government schools. To these people, the university as it was run must have appeared very pro-British. " All the senior

administrative and academic positions were held by Englishmen, who, as civil servants, assumed an attitude of superiority over the students. All the wardens of the dormitories were English, and the sight of professors and their guests dining on the campus irked the students. In history classes the English professors belittled the achievements of the Burmese kings and tried to impress upon the students their view that the Burmese were indeed fortunate to be under the British rule. The young revolutionaries expressed their disapproval of the university by coming to classes in their shirt sleeves and walking noisily along the corridors in wooden slippers. Dressed untidily in homespun clothes, they deliberately assumed an uncouth, obstinate, and stupid appearance. All the time, however, they were reading the latest English publications on politics, economics, and socialism, and they were training themselves to be skilful orators and writers. " (Dr. Htin Aung's A History of Burma , p. 294)

Around 1930, the Dobama Asi-ayone¹ began to take form and shape. First, it was a few young men meeting ~~to~~ to exchange their views and dream together. Those who took the initiative were Thakhin Ba Thaung and his colleagues Thakhin Lay Maung, Thakhin Hla Baw, U Ohn Khin and U Ohn Pe (Wa-ke-ma) etc. When the riots with the Indians

1. Dobama Asi-ayone = We Burmese Association

broke out, Thakhin Ba Thaung issued a statement calling on the Burmese to unite and protect national honour. Thus the Dobama Asi-ayone was born. The statement was called Dobama Sa-dan, No. 1., and said it was issued to commemorate the Burmese victims who were wounded or killed while they defended themselves from the provoking malicious attacks of aggressor Indian Coringhis on May 26, 1930. On the cover page the bold letters run as follows :-

Burma is our country.

Burmese literature is our literature.

Burmese language is our language.

Love our land.

Praise our country.

Respect our language.

"Comrades, of the same blood," read the statement, " is Burma not our mother Land ? Our great duty is to love our mother country. Is it not ? Burma is for the Burmese. Is it not ? Yes, it is true. Our country Burma must be for us Burmese. Don't forget it. Always be alert. Let's help each other. Love our country, we exhort you ! ". Burma is our land, the Dobama Asi-ayone slogans went, Burmese is our language; love our land, respect our language and letters.

At first this group of ^{angry} young revolutionaries was small in number and could win over to their side neither the general body of students nor the country. It was the composition of the Dobama song (by Y.M.B.A. Saya Tin - later Thakhin Tin) which they sang regularly at busy street corners, that fired the imagination not only of students but of the entire nation in proclaiming the prior rights of Burmans to the riches of their own land. Gradually their simple slogans sent a thrill through the country.

Unfortunately, there was a split even in the very early stage. Those who could not stand the behaviour and aggressiveness of the founder leader Thakhin Ba Thaung, withdrew from the Dobama Asi-ayone, and formed a group called All Burma Youth League along the same line; its leaders included Thakhin Lay Maung, Thakhin Ba Sein, Thakhin Tun Ok, Thakhin Han and Thakhin Thein Maung . When Thakhin Ba Thaung was no longer able to lead his Dobama Asi-ayone an organization (or a political party) was formed in 1935 by the amalgamation of the All Burma Youth League (1931) and the Dobama Asi-ayone (1930). The association retained its former name, the Dobama Asi-ayone, but it was much more politically orientated. All the members of the party had to affix the term Thakhin meaning " Master " to their names as an open challenge to the British officials.

The ideology of these Thakhins was always strongly nationalist, yet they studied whatever political writings came to hand, Dr. Sun Yat Sen's San Min Chu I , the Sinn Fein movement literature of Ireland, Nietzsche, Karl Marx, and especially, the history of socialism, in particular John Strachey's Theory and Practice of Socialism and Palme Dutt's World Politics . By no means all of the Thakhins became convinced Marxists. On the whole the Dobama Asi-ayone was essentially a nationalist rather than a Communist organization, although it was revolutionary in spirit. Marxism tended to buttress its all-out opposition to capitalist imperialism, and it was no wonder that Down with capitalism became the most popular slogan.

In the 1934-35 university session Ko Nu (Later Thakhin Nu, ex Prime Minister U Nu) had return to the University to read for the post-graduate degree in laws, after spending a few years as a teacher at the National High School, at Pan-ta-naw. There he met Ko Ohn (later ex-Ambassador, and ex-Advisor to the P. M. U Nu), then a senior student, who introduced him to ~~thems~~ three figures in the college who would make history , Ko Aung San, Ko Kyaw Nyein and Ko Thein Pe (later Tet-phone-gyi Thein Pe and now known as Thein Pe Myint). They discovered their mutual affinity. In the following session, 1935-36, they all contested the elections to the Executive Committee of the

Rangoon University Students' Union (R.U.S.U.). Elections were quiet affairs before. The R.U.S.U. was a statutory institution which had the blessing and support of the University authorities and its then Principal D. J. Sloss, and it had maintained a total lack of involvement with party political issues. But the 1935-36 elections changed everything. Ko Nu offered himself as a candidate for the presidency of ~~the~~ the R.U.S.U., and Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Thein Pe, Ko Aung San and M.A. Raschid, contested membership in the Executive Committee. They all won, and under their leadership the Union became more lively, and took a keener interest in contemporary affairs. They took strict care to keep clear of party politics, but invited political leaders of opposite views to come to the Union Hall and debate publicly on subjects of national interest.

The year 1936, however, had a bigger destiny in store for the R.U.S.U. than that of a social and literary club. Early in the year Ko Nu as president of the Union, made a speech criticizing the administration of the Union by its council and the authorities. Principal Sloss became angry and served Ko Nu with an expulsion order. Soon afterwards, another expulsion order was issued, this time against Ko Aung San who, as editor of the Oway annual magazine, organ of the R.U.S.U., was responsible for an article entitled " Hell hound at large ".

The final examinations were round the corner then, and the Principal probably thought that the students would be too engrossed in their studies for the examinations to worry about the expulsions. But the contrary was the case. After a mass meeting of students, they decided to go on strike. Thus, on February 25, 1936, with carefully organized spontaneity, some 700 men students of the University College, and some 25 women students (i.e. nearly 80 per cent of the students in the University College and somewhat more than 20 per cent of the Judson College students), went to establish their striker's camp at the foot of famous Shwe-da-gon Pagoda.

The demands were unimportant. What was of historical significance was that the strike released a massive wave of nationalist movement that was to sweep people through vital years to ultimate independence. The expulsions of Ko Nu and Ko Aung San from College quickly paled and faded from sight as the strike became an expression of national defiance against alien authority. The press and the people gave the students their whole-hearted support. Food parcels and funds flowed in, and students lived well in their camp. The young leaders were national heroes. Their speeches were reported under prominent headlines; their pictures were carried by the newspapers into every home. The strike spread to schools all over the country. The Government, with Dr. Ba Maw in charge of the Education Ministry in the last dyarchical

set-up, negotiated and came to terms with the students. It was a victory, the strike was called off, and students returned ~~to~~ to their examinations. It was , for the younger leaders, their first big test, and their first real coming together. Destiny was to throw them together more for they, the young heralds of the new age, ~~g~~ had only just arrived.

Another colourful event which took place in the same year was the election campaign of 1936. It was feverishly waged by the rival candidates, but it roused very little popular enthusiasm. The acceptance of ministerial posts in 1934 by the two leading political figures, U Ba Pe and Dr. Ba Maw, and U Chit Hlaing's accession as president of the legislative council in 1935 had destroyed the foundation of the popular alignments of 1932. A faction of U Ba Pe 's People's Party turned against him, and Dr. Ba Maw was virtually abandoned by his erstwhile G.C.B.A. Anti-Separationist following. U Chit Hlaing maintained his hold on one of the G.C.B.A. factions, although his political star was clearly descending.

U Ba Pe undertook to recoup his political fortunes by sponsoring the amalgamation in early May, 1936, of his fragmented People's Party with other four groups from Upper Burma to form the so-called

Ngar-bwint-saing¹ Party. As for Dr. Ba Maw, after his initial negotiation for co-operation with the Hlaing-Myat-Paw faction of the G.C.B.A. broke down over ^{differences} concerning the distribution of seats, he undertook to create a new Sin-ye-thar² Party. The party itself was composed mainly of Dr. Ba Maw's personal followers; the name, one commonly used, was selected to catch the peasant imagination.

Under the new constitution, the House of Representatives was to consist of 132 members, all to be elected. The Upper House was to consist of 36 members of which 18 were to be elected by the House of Representatives. (The reforms introduced under the new constitution were quite substantial except that the British perpetuated their divide-and-rule policy by declaring the hill regions as frontier areas to be administered directly by the governor and by retaining the racial groupings of the electorate.) There was to be a fully responsible cabinet consisting of a prime minister and nine ministers, and it was to exercise full control over the finances of the country.

In the elections U Ba Pe was re-elected, together with 45 members of his party. Dr. Ba Maw was also returned, with only 15 members of his party. U Chit Hlaing's party captured a modest 12 seats. At first, The Thakhins boycotted the elections on the ground that the new consti-

1. Ngar-bwint-saing Party = Five Groups Alliance Party

2. Sin-ye-thar Party + Poor Man's Party

tution was as much a sham as dyarchy was. But later they decided to enter the election contest under the name of Ko-min-ko-chin¹ Party. U Ba U of Mandalay was the president and Thakhin Aung San was the secretary-general of the new party. Thakhin Mya, the able and respected founder of the Socialist Party and Thakhin Lay Maung were elected as the Ko-min-ko-chin candidates. U Ba U later defected to Dr. Ba Maw's Party.

If the 46 members elected on the Ngar-bwint-saing ticket had constituted a homogeneous group instead of a mere collection of office-seekers, U Ba Pe, U Saw, and their associates would have made up the nucleus of the new cabinet. But leaders of all five groups wanted cabinet posts, and there were not enough to go ~~xxxxx~~ round. U Ba Pe's efforts to form a cabinet ran aground when the followers of several leaders who were omitted from his lists, particularly U Pu and U Maung Gyi, defected from the party.

In the end Dr. Ba Maw managed to form a coalition cabinet, including representatives of three disparate groups. U Pu of Ngar-bwint-saing, U Paw Tun of Hlaing -Myat-Paw, ^{and} Sir Htoon Aung Gyaw, leader of a dissident Arakan splinter group. The Karen leader,

1. Ko-min-ko-chin = One's own king, one's own kind

Saw Pe Tha , was also included. Thus Burma's first government under the new 1935 constitution included Dr. Ba Maw as the Premier, two Sin-ye-thar followers, Dr. Thein Maung (Commerce and Industry) and U Tharrawaddy Maung Maung (Education), U Pu of Ngar-bwint-saing (Lands and Revenue), U Paw Tun of Hlaing-Myat-Paw (Home), Saw Pe Tha (Agriculture and Forests), and Sir Htoon Aung Gyaw (Finance).

For the next two years Dr. Ba Maw had a difficult time, especially with a nation-wide racial riot between Burmese and Indians, a labour strike and a students' strike, etc. Details of these events will be given in the next chapter. But now I would like to mention some of the books which were published during this pre-separation period (1930-31 - 1936-37).

2. BooksList of titles selected from the Burma Catalogue 1930-31 - 1936-37.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1930</u> June	Maung Ba Thaung	Dobama Sadan (1)	5,000	-	-	Rangoon
Aug	"	" (2)	"	-	-	"
<u>1931</u> Jan	Sayadaw U Wizaya and U Khin Maung Gyi	A book on Non- Separation and Round Table Conference London	4,000	34	2 as	Mandalay
	Saya Myint	Round Table Conference	5,000	60	6 as	"
Aug	U Dha-maw- dha-ya	Political advice to general public	1,000	-	"	"
<u>1932</u> March	U Tok Gyi	Self-Government	1,200	163	Rs. 2	Moulmein
	Than-dwe- Maung	Life of Napoleon Bonaparte	1,500	290	Re. 1- 4 as	Sun Press Rangoon
	Mr. Maung Hmaing	Daung Gan-di	3,000	169	Re. 1- 8 as	"
May	U Ba Yin, Member of L. C.	U Ba Yin's speeches & questions in the Legislative Council	2,000	66	1 anna	Rangoon

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1932</u> July	Saya Sein	An account on what happened to the 4th daughter of King Thibaw	1,500	36	4 as	Moulmein
	U Aye	Separation and Anti-Separation	5,000	111	"	Rangoon
Aug	U Thein Maung	Maha Bandoola	1,000	139	Re.1- 4 as	Sun Press Rangoon
Oct	U Lar Ba	Anti-Separation Statement	1,500	21	-	Taung-dwin-gyi
<u>1933</u> June	U Po Tin	The evils of Separation	1,000	10	-	Myin-gyan
Sept	U Thein Maung	A-laung-pha-yar	"	304	Re.1- 8 as	Daw Ohn Thin Rangoon
<u>1934</u>	"	Private affairs of King Thibaw at Ratanagiri	2,000	60	Re.1	Sun Press Rangoon
March	U Tin Ohn	Economic Statistics of Burma	1,000	155	"	"
Nov	U Thant (Pan-ta-naw)	The League of Nations	3,000	100	12 as	H.W.Smith Rangoon
<u>1935</u> Feb	U Ba Aye	Politics	5,000	233	Re.1- 4 as	Rangoon

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1935</u> Nov	U Hla Pe	Principles of Political Science and Self-government	1,000	49	3 as	Rangoon
<u>1936</u>	Thakhin Lay Maung	Thakhin Lay Maung's Presidential address delivered at the 2nd Annual Conference of the All Burma Dobama Asi-ayone and All Burma Youth League held at Myin-gyan	500	17	3 pyas	Moulmein
Nov	U Ba Nyein	On unity in social & political life	2,000	110	10 as	Rangoon
	U Ba Khaing (Fabian)	Burma's Political History	?	-	-	"

Dobama Sadan (1) , contributed by Maung Ba Thaung (later known as Thakhin Ba Thaung), though published as a pamphlet, shook the entire nation and created a turning point in Burmese history. This pamphlet was published (14-6-1930) on behalf of the newly formed Dobama Asi-ayone. As there is no price , I presume that it was distributed free of charge.

Two months later, another Dobama Sadan (No. 2) was published under the title of nui:-kra:-re: ca-tam: rhac-con¹. These sadan (essays) were :

- 1) On translation,
- 2) Our country, our land and our language, our literature,
- 3) When (our) monasteries became modern universities,
- 4) (We) marble statues,
- 5) 1390 (Burmese Era) (A.D. 2030) or 100 years later,
- 6) Wonders of modern science,
- 7) Science and agriculture,
- 8) How to achieve success.

These sadan were not so much political teachings as exhortations to reform. The idea was to change the whole set-up of Burmese society from top to bottom. Thakhin Ba Thaung, the author, was an ardent nationalist and a man of imagination. He was well ~~educated~~ educated and full of revolutionary ideas. The style of his writing was simple. He used no rhymes and no verbose elaborations like most of his predecessors. He wrote short but well constructed sentences in a natural, and colloquial style. Here is an example of his writing :-

1. nui:-kra:-re: ca-tam: (sadan) rhac-con = eight rousing essays

(Note: the translation in the Burma Catalogue is

" Political teachings")

ON TRANSLATION

When will our Burma, land of numerous pagodas, become a completely independent country ? The answer is easy and simple. That will be achieved when we can afford it. When will that be ? We can only afford it when we have ' eyes of wisdom '. When will we have ' eyes of wisdom ' ? After we Burmese have had a chance to read and study in Burmese the many many important subjects which are now written in other languages. You may ask, why ? Can the 'eyes of wisdom' only be acquired from foreign written sources ? No, that's not true, though I don't want to say categorically untrue. Generally speaking, you can't deny ~~that~~ that various subjects, especially in science, already contained in Burmese Literature are out of ~~date~~ date.

Lo-ka ni-ti is very good for moral teaching. Pa-rit-kri: is very good for reciting and will relieve your worries. But, that Lo-ka ni-ti and Pa-rit-kri: cannot show us how to make cars, trains or planes, nor how to weave marvellous textiles. To-day is no longer yesterday. A vast change has taken place. In olden days a city which had good walls and moats was well protected and safe. A country which was

protected by seas, mountain ranges, and thick jungles had no need to fear outside enemies. Though city-walls and moats could protect us against the swords, spears, guns, elephants, cavalry and infantry of our old enemies, we have no protection against modern artillery-guns, which have a range of 73 miles. Though seas and oceans could deter small sailing boats and barges they are helpless against modern cruisers. Mountain ranges like the Himalayas could deter ordinary cavalry and infantry soldiers but not the modern aeroplanes.

So what ? What are we going to do ? Don't worry, it's easy. Let's fry the fish in its own fat. The artillery-guns which care nothing for city-walls and moats cannot remain invincible against high altitude bombers. The cruisers which easily handle the natural strength of the seas and oceans have to pay respect to submarines and torpedoes. The aeroplanes which conquer the heights of mountains even the Himalayas have to be mindful of the A-A guns.

Therefore, ⁱⁿ this world one must know the other's weak points. One could say that this world is changing every minute. Everything is changing. Nothing is permanent. But remember, this world is a battle-field of survival. One must always struggle for survival with perseverance and determina-

tion. There are only two sides in war, winner and loser. This same principle applies to the world of survival. So there are only two kinds of person, the winner and the loser. You must not be the man in the middle, nothing is worse than to become a man of nowhere.

Dear comrades, my own dear blood, oh dear Burmans! How are we going to face the battle of survival in this world? Let's do our best to win the independence of our beloved mother-land and become self-sufficient. Let's try to ~~xxxxx~~ translate as much as possible so that all sorts of knowledge can come within the reach of the vernacular hands. Let's try to achieve the 'eyes of wisdom'. Be sure that you do not neglect your duties. If we really want it we must make an effort. It is no good relying on other people. We must help ourselves. There is nobody on whom to rely, except you yourself. You are your own saviours. So, let us work on translations which will give us the 'eyes of wisdom'. It is no ~~xxx~~ use complaining through daily newspapers and monthly journals. And it is no use relying on foreign rulers. Let's do what we have to do by ourselves.

Don't think that the task of translation is too difficult and unmanagable for us. And don't think that it is impossible. In the world there is nothing which is forbidden us, nothing we cannot achieve, We can attempt everything, and we will. We have our rights. But remember, you can't expect every road to be smooth and straight. If you want to achieve something you must face all sorts of difficulties, whether you expect them or not. But for an able man or a man of perseverance nothing is too big or too great to try. No difficulties will deflect him. " For a real man, even the furthest star in the sky is not beyond his reach." What is translation ? It is nothing. It is not a star in the sky. Even if it seems so to us now why ~~xxx~~ hesitate ? Well, comrades, come let us start. Let's try. There is more pleasure in accomplishing a difficult task than in overcoming trifles. Whatever we achieve by the labour of our own hands is better than a stranger's gift.

Therefore, ~~ixi~~ it is our duty, we Burmese, to try to make all sorts of modern knowledge available in the Burmese vernacular. Yes, we Burmese must always keep in the forefront of our minds, that we must help ourselves. We are

the only ones who can save ourselves and we must rely on ourselves. Let's do our best not only in words but in deeds. Let's accomplish that most important and venerable task. Dear comrades, how shall we do it ? There are two ways to give your help. Financially and personally. Yes, in which category do you belong ? (My friends, I ask you for your help.)

In this period four books were published on the issue of separation versus anti-separation, two in 1931, another two in 1932 and one in 1933. The majority of the books seemed to take the side of non-separation and judging by the comparatively high numbers of copies printed of these books, the topic must have been one of general interest. In 1932 biographies of Napoleon Bonaparte and of the Burmese general, war-hero of 1st Anglo-Burmese War (1824-25), Maha Bandoola were published. The following year saw the publication of the life of A-laung-pha-yar who established the third Burmese Empire. This interest in heroes who founded empires, who fought with some degree of success against the British, must have provided considerable encouragement to men fighting for their nation's independence.

Another breeze which fanned the nationalist flames was the publication in 1932 and 1934 of books telling, presumably with pathos, of the fate of the Burmese royal family at the hands of the British. A most unusual book "Economic Statistics of Burma", published in 1934 must have provided valuable information to the young patriots of the economic condition of their country. In the same year U Thant unconsciously anticipated his future position as Secretary-General of United Nations by writing a book entitled "The League of Nations".

During this period no political writings of Saya Lun appeared. His only publication was the "Daung Gan-di" which ~~was~~ merely contained explanatory notes to his previous publication "Daung Tika" (1920) which was now a prescribed text for schools.

One of the most remarkable books of this period and one which is outstanding in the whole history of Burmese political writing is U Ba Khaing's "Burma's Political History". This book is the only record in Burmese of the modern history of Burma as seen through the eyes of a contemporary politician. U Ba Khaing was himself a professed Fabian but succeeded in maintaining ~~presenting~~ a detached unbiased attitude in writing of rival parties and politicians.

He began his book by summarising the past history of Burma with a detailed description of the British colonisation followed by first hand accounts of the most important political events of his time — Wunthanu Period , G.C.B.A. Period , Sayadaw U Ottama , Wunthanu Activities , 21 party , G.C.B.A. Split , Galon Saya San and the Peasant Rebellion , Round Table Conference , Students' Strike , San Pe, the famous Highwayman , Indo-Burman Riot , Central Jail Uprising , Sino-Burmese Riot , Dobama Asi-ayone , Separation and Anti-Separation , 1936 University Students' Strike , the New Government of Burma Act 1935 , etc. In many instances U Ba Khaing's account differs considerably from the reports of the non-Burmese historians who have dealt with the same period.

One major criticism of U Ba Khaing's book is that he provides little documentation. This is due less to a lack of scholarly zeal on U Ba Khaing's part than to the traditions of scholasticism in Burma. For centuries knowledge has been preserved and passed on from generation to generation, from teacher to student, by word of mouth and learning by rote. As a result, confusions and inaccuracies have arisen. Even in the Buddhist scriptures which have been afforded comparatively greater care, divergencies can be found. The style used

in Buddhist scriptures also tends to vagueness, thus we read ' Once upon a time ' or ' Once a long time ago a certain angel approached Buddha '.

This tradition still prevails in Burma. Many writers are content to put down what they consider to be the true facts of a situation without bothering to consult sources, state references or do even elementary checking. Thus, it is quite possible to find in something which purports to be a serious article, contradictory facts, unsupported conjectures.

The value of U Ba Khaing's book, despite these inadequacies, is self-evident: it is the first attempt of any Burman to record, as a sympathetic bystander, the events and activities he witnessed in a particularly tumultuous period of his country's history. The value lies mainly in the fact that he saw the events through Burmese eyes; non-Burmese historians have described Sayadaw U Ottama as a rabble - rousing monk who was even ^{an} outcast from his fellow monks. U Ba Khaing points out the great respect in which the Sayadaw was held by the Burmans, his learning, his experiences, his patriotism, the role of the C.I.D. in the affair, the fear of involvement in political upheavals on the part of the Sangha .

Again, non-Burmese historians have, almost to a man, neglected the part which Burmese women played in the independence movement as they have neglected the part played by the ordinary citizen. U Ba Khaing lived through the period, he was a protagonist in the drama.

There is a great deal of information regarding the Shoe Question , Dobama Asi-ayone , the Thakhin and the Wunthanu movements which are omitted in the accounts given by non-Burmese historians. U Ba Khaing in his writing not only gives more information but he is able to suggest the feelings and emotions of ordinary Burmese living through this period. This is an advantage denied to non-Burmese historians however sympathetic. This is why I felt it necessary to include extracts from U Ba Khaing's book which cannot be found in the works of other historians.

Extract No. 1. (pp. 56-58)

The Sun Daily ^{began} ~~bega~~ in 1911 with three editions a week.

U Ba Pe was the Editor and U Hla Pe was Publishing Manager (Publisher). At a time when foreigners were allowed to wear their shoes in sacred places, even on the pagoda platform of the great Shwe-da-gon U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe made a protest against this by inserting a special cartoon in their paper. One of these was especially effective; the cartoon

showed Pagoda Trustee members sweating under the weight of an English couple whom they were carrying onto the Pagoda platform. The English couple were saying how grateful they were that Pagoda Trustee members were so obliging as to allow them to visit the Pagoda platform without having to take^{off} their shoes.

This cartoon aroused fury among the Europeans and Pagoda Trustee members. Mr. Shuttleworth, the Commissioner of Rangoon Police, summoned U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe and gave them a serious warning not to repeat the offence. But U Ba Pe and U Hla Pe refused to be browbeaten: they put their case and walked out of the office unrepentant. At that time, it took considerable courage to defy a Police Commissioner.

The Police Commissioner's attitude aroused the fury of the younger politicians who called a mass meeting at Jubilee Hall to discuss the Shoe Question. The older pro-establishment group sometimes known as the Tu-Tha-Thin group headed by U Ba Tu , U Po Tha , U Thin refused to register any protest against the Police Commissioner. Two distinct factions emerged from this disagreement, divided by age as well as by conviction. U Khin, U May Aung, Sir J.A. Maung Gyi (all Anglophile Burmese) joined the conservative side and U Thein Maung , U Maung Gyi , U Ba Dun , Dr. Thein Maung , U Ba Pe and others remained

with the young progressives. U Thein Maung presided over that mass protest meeting. For their part in the meeting, the C.I.D. and the Police shadowed them wherever they went and whatever they did.

Extract No. 2. (pp. 64-66)

When the G.C.B.A. was set up, hundreds and thousands of people from all over Burma joined as members. At that time, to become a Wunthanu or a member of the G.C.B.A. was a matter of pride in Burma. Those who wore homespun clothes and those who kept the long hair knot were very popular. The word Wunthanu was clearly and boldly written in front of every house. Whatever obstructions they encountered from the government authorities, they resisted all attempts to put them down with a heartening show of solidarity and strength. This time, they were at the height of their power and influence.

Every shop proudly displayed the sign Wunthanu , each person carried his Wunthanu badge with him wherever he went. Those who held Wunthanu membership cards enjoyed great popularity everywhere. Previous to the establishment of the Wunthanu associations, people had been terrified of all government authorities, of the D.C.'s, the T.O.'s and the Village Headman, even of the Headman of Ten Households. But no longer. Now, if the authorities exceeded the limits of their authority by a ~~few~~ fraction, the people had become aware of

their rights: they would protest; if necessary, they would fight. This determination to resist all encroachments of liberty not sanctioned by law, certainly made the authorities more circumspect in the pursuance of their duty. In olden days, whenever a senior civil servant paid an official visit ~~tax~~ to a village, the villagers had to provide valeting services, transport, and liquor and even provide girls for their pleasure. But now, with the Wunthanu spirit spreading throughout the land the stocks, the symbol of the village headman's power, which he had used all too freely to the fear of the villagers, now disappeared into the air. The authorities could no longer order people to patrol their villages, or to erect hedges round the village as forced labour. The village headman dared no longer overreach himself and as this change was largely the work of the Wunthanu it is no wonder they commanded such popularity and admiration. They defended the rights of the ordinary man. If one of the villagers suffered victimisation, the whole village would not rest till justice had been done. The Wunthanu members protested and carried their protest to the highest levels. The erring civil servant could not withstand the zeal and determination of the Wunthanu. Party funds were plentiful at that time; if anyone needed money to fight for justice, it was his. This financial support came not only from the Wunthanu but from the

ordinary villagers. If a man suffered as the result of breaking an unfair government restriction, if a man was arrested on a charge of incitement to sedition or if a man was gaoled because of his political convictions, the Wunthanu were on hand to help in every way. If he had a paddy field, the Wunthanu would cultivate it while he was detained, if he had dependents, wife, children, other relatives, they would be cared for with food, shelter and even money. No one was to suffer any loss as the result of his political convictions ...

Extract No. 3. (pp. 77-78)

In 1280 (B.E.), when Sayadaw U Ottama returned to Burma, after a tour of Europe, America and Japan he found the Y.M.B.A. movement in full swing and flung himself into its work with unstinting devotion. For this, he earned the uninterrupted surveillance of the C.I.D. The fear of implicating themselves in troubles with the police drove a number of the Sangha to withdraw their open support of him and to deny him shelter in their monasteries. U Ottama found himself staying in a house, somewhere in Tha-maing, Insein District, instead of a proper monastery. Despite all these difficulties, he found a staunch ally in the Sun Daily which published almost daily articles in support of him. Because of this publicity, his fame spread; more and more

people attended the Sayadaw's lectures, were stirred by his passions.

Extract No. 4. (pp. 90-95)

Among the women in the world, the Burmese women are most privileged and most independent.

Not less than the men, the Burmese women played their part in the country's independent movement. In 1919, they established an organisation called the Burmese Women's Union

Apart from the Burmese Women's Union, there is another women's organisation called the Dana Thukha Athin . Their original motive in establishing the organisation was to promote a religious revival — later they became involved in politics and changed its name to Wunthanu Kummari Athin

As the aim of the Wunthanu Kummari Athin was political freedom and the end of colonial rule, one aspect of the association was its very strong anti-government feelings and hostility towards the British, not in personal or radical terms but as colonial overlords. At the Paung-de Conference, they passed a resolution that they would boycott everything English. To symbolise their resolution they broke

their tortoise-shell combs as a public gesture of protest against the English. The significance of this is that 'tortoise-shell comb' in Burmese is lip-khwam-bhi; and the Burmese transliteration of 'English' is anga-lip. When a mass meeting was held to protest against the police treatment of Sayadaw U Ottama, the Commissioner of Police ordered the crowd to break up the meeting and disperse. Having no effect, the police decided to use force. They charged their horses into the crowd and battered the people with their clubs. Panic spread among the crowd, people, including men, began to run helter skelter out of reach of the clubs and horses' hooves. Among those who remained to defy the police were the members of the Wunthanu Kummari Athin. The horses charged directly into them and they suffered many casualties, scratches, bruises and broken bones. But their courage, their solidarity, their unity, and their sacrifice was unmatched...

There was another women's organisation called the National Council of Burmese Women. It was established long before the 1931 London Round Table Conference and its President and Secretary were Daw Mya May (Mrs. M.M.Hla Aung) and Daw Mya Shwe, D.I.S. In response to their demand, Daw Mya Sein, daughter of late U May Aung, Home Minister, was allowed to take part in London Conference as a delegate on behalf of Burmese women...

Extract No. 5. (pp. 209-211)

The main idea of the Dobama Asi-ayone was to destroy the habit of fear and the acceptance of an inferior position in the Burmese character as though they were slaves in their own land; and to carry out a social revolution on socialist lines. But actually their name Dobama Asi-ayone and their prefix Thakhin were quite contrary to the basic tenets of socialism. The word Dobama belongs to nationalism - for one race or one nation, but socialism belongs to a world proletariat, in other words, internationalism. And the word Thakhin also belongs to capitalist nationalism as it is used in upper-class society for well-to-do people and high officials. Indeed, if there is a Thakhin (Master) it follows that there must be a kywan (slave or inferior), a concept quite alien to socialism. This was a point of debate and controversy.

By this time, the Dobama Asi-ayone had become a great deal stronger. This was due to the enthusiasm of the young Thakhins who were prepared to sacrifice their promise and future prospects for the sake of their ideals. It was also due to the honesty of the Thakhin M.P.s in the Legislative Councils who took their stand against the government on behalf of the people. Most of the existing M.P.s were mere opportunists and officeseekers and in contrast to them, the young Thakhins earned the love and gratitude of the people. Most of all, the

increased strength of the Dobama Asi-ayone is due to the work of Saya Lun, otherwise known as Mr. Maung Hmaing or Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing. The entire nation respected him and trusted him. Since he became the Patron of the Dobama Asi-ayone , he toured all over the country giving lectures. Because the people worshipped Saya Lun who in turn worked with the Thakhin, the Dobama Asi-ayone, the Young Thakhin could not but win the support of most of the people.

But there were still people who although agreeing with the ideas and policy of the Thakhins were unwilling to co-operate with them; they thought the Thakhins were rude and wild in their dealings with other people and other parties and they often exceeded the bounds of good taste in their public speeches. What some people applauded as frankness and plain speech, they disapproved as vulgarities...

Extract No. 6. (pp. 271-272)

There is one very regrettable aspect of Burmese politics which seems to have no exact parallel in other countries. Parties exist in Burma but with very little foundation and largely depend on the personality of the leader. There is no such thing as Baldwin's Party, MacDonald's Party, or Lloyd George's Party in England but Conservative,

been
 Socialist and Liberal parties. Italy is never said to have led by Mussolini's Party but by the Fascist Party. Germany was not led by Hitler's Party but by the Nazi Party. However much the personality of the leader influenced the party, at least the party existed in its own right. It was not so in Burma. Because parties had no solid ideological foundations but were named after the leader and depended largely on his will and caprice however ill-judged and unpredictable, there was loyalty to no fixed ideal, no ultimate goal. The death of the leader or his failure, spelled the end of the party. This is a basic weakness in Burmese politics and it is the duty of all to right it...

Extract No. 7. (301-302)

In the 1937-38 budget it was clearly shown that income exceeded expenditure by 15.3 millions. So it became possible to abolish the Thathameda Tax. This tax called ' Capitation Tax ' in Lower Burma and ' Thathameda Tax ' in Upper Burma was an extra tax levied only on the Burmese people. No equivalent tax existed in the Indian Empire.

This sort of taxation was never heard of in any country all over the world. Therefore Burma is the country which was heavily taxed regardless of per capita income.

Although we are heavily taxed by the government, we reap the least benefit, because the country is controlled by foreigners who run it as they wish. Though Burma is our land and although we are the natives, now we have to ^{live} like strangers, as though we did not belong to our own land. Everything is in the hands of foreigners. So to regain our own rights it is our duty to fight for them. First, people must know what their rights are. The progressive people must enlighten the ordinary people. Then they will know their rights and what they have lost and they will fight to regain them. That is the most important duty of every Burman...

Not very many books on politics appeared during this period. For this, I think, there were two main reasons. The first reason may be that people became frustrated with politics, especially party-politics and their office seeking leaders and their shameful behaviour. Secondly, it could be that the majority of the people were so poor that they had no extra cash in hand to spend. The world economic depression reached Burma in the early 1930s, and it was said that the price of rice fell very sharply to the level of the 1860s. The Burmese cultivator and the Burmese labourer, without savings of any sort, found themselves unable to cope with the situation. So it is not very surprising that extreme poverty induced political apathy in people only concerned with keeping alive.

CHAPTER V1937 19421. Politics

This chapter covers the political events and publications of the period 1937-42, in other words, the climax of political writing in Burmese literature.

It is rather difficult to say that Burma's brief experience with Western-type responsible parliamentary government from March, 1937, to the outbreak of the Far Eastern War in December, 1941, has no promising aspects, although it brought to light numerous deficiencies and problems. No quick and easy solutions were found for many difficult problems, but on the whole a considerable number of public benefits were in fact introduced.

As the stakes of power were high, one problem was the unremitting struggle for control between rival politicians. The lack of any genuine responsibility of party groups to the electorate together with the absence of any generally accepted standards of permissible public conduct or tactics turned the political arena into a slaughter house. Therefore no holds were barred in the efforts made to embarrass political opponents whether inside or outside the Legislature. Members

of the government were subjected in the Legislature to a constant barrage of questions and personal attacks, whilst outside the Legislature, the newspapers employed even more sinister tactics in misrepresentating facts and in fomenting popular passions.

The new constitution under the 1935 Government of Burma Act came into force in 1937. It was popularly known as 91 Departments Administration, and provided for a bi-cameral legislature consisting a House of Representatives of 132 members, and an Upper House of 36 members. In the House of Representatives 92 seats were filled on a non-communal territorial constituency basis, while the rest were reserved for the Karens, the Indians, the Anglo-Burmans, and the Europeans, and for labour, commerce, and Rangoon University. Of the 36 seats in the Upper House, half were filled by the Governor at his discretion, and the remainder by the House of Representatives by proportional representation. The Governor and the two Houses constituted the Legislature; the assent of the Governor was necessary to give legislative force to a bill passed by both Houses, and he could withhold his assent or reserve the bill at His Majesty's pleasure. Bills could originate in either House except money bills which had first to be recommended by the Governor before they could be considered.

In his executive functions the Governor was assisted by a Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers who were collectively responsible to the Legislature. Law and order and many other executive departments were placed under the charge of the Ministers who were, technically, advisers and officers of the Governor, and holding office during his pleasure. The Governor had special functions in foreign affairs, defence, ecclesiastical affairs, the administration of the frontier areas and the control of monetary policy, currency and coinage.

However, the new constitution did bring at least some instalment of autonomy and parliamentary government. In subjects not reserved to the Governor, the Ministers and the Legislature had free play during the short-lived career of the constitution. In the Legislature there were many parties and every session therefore became a furious shifting of political alliances in an effort to oust the Government in power by censure motions. Representatives of the Europeans and other minorities and of commerce formed a bloc and held the destiny of the coalition governments in their hands. The experiment of parliamentary government worked well, and some reforming zeal was shown in the making of laws—when members were not too busy making and breaking governments.

The new constitution brought about no change in the status of Burma, in international relations, either legally or in fact. External affairs and defence were the Governor's special prerogative in which Burmans had no voice. The Legislature could not pass any law imposing restrictions on the right of entry to Burma of British subjects domiciled in the United Kingdom, nor any law which detracted from the rights and privileges enjoyed by British or Indian companies carrying on business in Burma. On separation from India, Burma was set up as a ~~an~~ distinct entity in the British Empire, with a status somewhat higher than that of a Crown Colony but not as high as that of a Dominion. But the new constitution ~~an~~ did not give Burma any international personality. India had signed the Peace Treaty separately after World War I, and also the Covenant of the League of Nations. Thus India was making ^{her} ~~debut~~ in international relations, while Burma remained under the shadow of her great neighbour even after the separation. No separate membership was sought for Burma in the League of Nations, nor in the International Labour Organization. Burma was not represented in London by her own High Commissioner; nor was a separate Secretary of State for Burma appointed in His Majesty's Government, although such an office had already been created.

Therefore, internationally, Burma continued to remain an appendage to India, despite the separation, and the new constitution failed to appease nationalist demands.

Among the nationalists, the young Thakhins were strongly opposed to the new constitution. Though three of their comrades won their way into the House of Representatives, their vow was to wreck the constitution, rather than work it. One of the three was Thakhin Mya, later a founder of the Burma Socialist Party and probably one of the most important Thakhin leaders of the late 1930's. To proclaim their disinterest in any profit for themselves they refused to draw their salary as members. On April 1st, 1937, the day that the new constitution came into life, Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Htein Win and some fellow Thakhins stood solemnly in front of the High Court Buildings and burnt the Union Jack and a copy of the Government of Burma Act in a gesture of contempt.

The Thakhins , especially young educated Thakhins with a progressive outlook like Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Aung San, etc., sought to end British control not only in the political realm but also in the area of education. In 1937, Thakhin Nu, sponsored the establishment of a ' national college ' (located at the Myoma National High School, Rangoon) to compete with the ' colonial ' University of Rangoon. Unfortunately financial difficulties forced it to close after only a year.

In December 1937, Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Than Tun, U Ohn Khin, Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Thein Pe and their colleagues founded the famous Nagarni (Red Dragon) Book Club. Thakhin Nu was the first President. The club had some five or six thousand members. The books issued by the club dealt primarily with contemporary politics. Two of the more popular books were John Strachey's Theory and Practice of Socialism and Palme Dutt's World Politics. Saya Hein translated Batt O'connor's With Michael Collins in the fight for Irish Independence and ~~Barry Brennan's~~ Dan Breen's My fight for Irish Freedom. A translation of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's San Min Chu I was edited by Thakhin Thein Pe. A number of original works by Burmese writers were also issued. Among them were Thein Pe's biography of Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing, the club's first issue, and his two-volume novel Student Boycatter; a book by Thakhin Soe on socialism; and studies of Hitler, Marx, the Paris Commune, Soviet Democracy etc.

1938, the year 1300 of the Burmese Era, was the year of great events in Burma's political history. The 1938 All Burma Students Strike and Oil-field Workers' and Peasants' March were popularly known as the Revolution of Burmese Era 1300. A serious Indo-Burman riot broke out in July, 1938. ~~The~~ The cause was religious. A Muslim teacher called Saya Shwe Phi from Mye-du, a village in Shwe-bo

Township, had, in 1931, brought out a booklet of religious discussion, in which Buddhism was somewhat scathingly criticized. The first edition of the book went almost unnoticed. A new edition was brought out in 1936 by a Rangoon Indian publisher, and this time, with nationalist feelings at a high pitch, Saya Shwe Phi's comments on Buddhism were taken by the Burmese who read the booklet as an insult. The booklet was reviewed in the Sun, the New Light of Burma, and New Burma newspapers, and it was thus in July 1938 that the booklet and its contributor drew upon themselves the anger of the Burmese. The riots began on July 26 and for several days the rioters ran wild, and it was only towards the end of August that the Government could pronounce the situation normal. A Riots Enquiry Commission was formed, and presented its report in due course, but the riots had left their deep mark on the uneasy scene which could not be erased by the Commission.

During the August session of the House of Representatives in 1938, U Saw and his Myo-chit Party led the fight to oust Dr. Ba Maw's coalition government. The censure motion of confidence came to a vote on August 26, but the motion was defeated by 66 votes to 61, because the European bloc stood firmly behind the government, despite its dislike of Dr. Ba Maw. Thus, U Saw had failed in the immediate

realization of his political objective, but his paper the Sun (of that day) and his Myo-chit followers continued to foment unrest in the succeeding months.

Not long after the riots, in 1938, came the troubles in the oil-field areas (Chauk, Yenan-gyaung and also Syriam). Workers there had made their demands for better conditions: the employer, the British-owned Burma Oil Company, did not respond. Oil was one of the few British industries in which Burman labour was extensively employed, and prevailing working conditions were up to sixty hours per week for sometimes as little as 13 rupees per month (about £ 1). For some months the workers waited, and then they decided to go on strike and march down to Rangoon, some 400 miles away, to put their grievances direct to the Government authorities. The march became one of the great epic incidents in the history of Burma's political movement. it caught the imagination of the entire nation, especially of the students, the most progressive element of all. The marchers won the enthusiastic support of the nationalist press. Prime Minister Dr. Ba Maw sent one of his ministers to Yenan-gyaung to act as mediator, but the mission was fruitless because the B.O.C. refused to yield. Some 2,000 oil-field workers headed by Thakhin Po Hla Gyi, joined the march.

They were fed and encouraged by the entire nation all along the way. The All Burma Student Union sent out from Rangoon its president Ko Ba Hein and its secretary Ko Ba Swe, to meet the marchers and to boost their morale. At Magwe, the march was stopped by Government order. Ko Ba Hein, Ko Ba Swe, Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Po Hla Gyi, Thakhin Pe Than, Thakhin Htein Win and many others were placed under arrest.

The country caught its breath at this unexpected incident. There was uproar in Rangoon. Students protested especially against the arrest of their leaders, Ko Ba Hein and Ko Ba Swe. Shortly after that, an epidemic of school strikes began. The R.U.S.U. passed resolutions and held demonstrations. An unfortunate student incident occurred on December, 20, 1938, when a large number of University students and school children from Rangoon and its suburbs tried to picket the entrances to the secretariat at Rangoon in support of their demand to release their patriot student leaders from prison. They carried banners bearing the slogans " Are Ba Hein and Ba Swe criminals ? " ; " Release our president " ; " No government (or King) can exist if we oppose it in unity " ; " Down with petty laws and restrictions " ; " We don't want capitalism " - " We don't want imperialists " ; " We don't accept Section No. 107 (of the Indian Penal

Code) " ; " Coalition government out, out " ; " Down with imperialism -ism " ; " Let's face the challenge whatever the cost " ; " Come on let's fight " ; " Dare-devil wanted " , etc. And for the first time in Burma, the Communist flag of the hammer and sickle was prominently displayed during the demonstrations. The violence flared up only when the demonstrators were about to disperse. Many were hurt and Maung Aung Gyaw, a 22 year old Judson College student from Henzada, was struck on the head several times by heavy baton blows. He was admitted into hospital where he died. Maung Aung Gyaw immediately became a martyr, A-za-ni Bo Aung Gyaw ; his funeral became a huge rally of silent protest unprecedented in Burmese history, and all over the country people mourned the death as if it were that of their own son. A Secretariat Incident Enquiry Committee was appointed by the Government, but the Committee could not cope with the situation.

The secretariat incident caused such a political furore that the government again invoked the Rangoon Emergency Security Act, on December 22, 1938. But the progressive nationalists paid no attention and continued their activities without hesitation. The oil-field workers from Yenan-gyaung were on their march despite police obstructions. The peasants, organized by the All Burma Peasants Organization,

a wing of Dobama Asi-ayone were also on the march. They came out from Tharrawaddy, from Pyu , and from Pegu , in sympathy with oil-field workers. There were also strikes of workers in Rangoon factories ; even the girls who rolled cheroots at Ma Sein Nyunt's shop in Rangoon went on strike. The strike spread like wild fire throughout the country, and early in 1939, the students went on strike again to lend support to the nationalist movement and probably to avoid their coming examinations. The arrest of the Thakhin leaders at the Shwe-da-gon Pagoda, their strike headquarters, on January 23, 1939, and the police seizure of allegedly incriminating papers did nothing to quiet popular recrimination against the government. The situation reached the point on February 10, 1939, that British-officered troops, armed with rifles and machine-guns, ~~pm~~ opened fire to disperse unarmed student-sangha demonstrators in Mandalay, killing seventeen within the space of a few moments. Seven were members of the sangha , and the rest were students and civilians, of whom one boy Maung Tin Aung was only 12 years old. Those who lost their lives in that incident came to be known popularly among the Burmese as the Seventeen Heroes of Mandalay.

Under such chaotic circumstances of spreading disorder, the European bloc in the House of Representatives apparently withdrew their support of Dr. Ba Maw's government. Shortly after the opening of the

February session of Parliament, they voted with the Opposition factions to unseat the present government. U Pu , who was Minister in the Dr. Ba Maw Cabinet, became Prime Minister. Sir Paw Tun remained with U Htoon Aung Gyaw, in the new cabinet. The other members were U Saw and U Aye of the Myo-chit Party , U Ba Pe and U Tun from the Ngar-bwint-saing remnant, and Saw Po Chit , Karen Independent. Barring one ~~shakeup~~ shakeup in January, 1940, when U Ba Pe was dropped, this cabinet lasted for some nineteen months.

The political atmosphere throughout Eastern Asia was changing rapidly during the late 1930's. The new climate was sharply reflected in Burma. The Kuomintang Revolution in China contributed to a heightening of nationalist sentiment in Burma throughout that period. When Japan began her all-out effort to conquer China in 1937, Burmese opinion was largely in favour of the Chinese cause. Because of continuing popular antipathy to the exploiting Indian residents, Burmese sympathy for the Indian Congress Party was less widespread; it was confined largely to leftist revolutionary elements such as Thakhins. But important political developments within India had an inevitable reaction across the bay, because Britain was still the common imperialist overlord of India and Burma. Burma sent goodwill missions, in the late 30's,

to China which included in their number moderate political leaders, although it was an unofficial affair. On the other hand, those who were in contact with Indian revolutionaries were mainly radical young extremists. Both sources contributed materially to the changing political climate.

The influence from India in the late 30's was leftist in character, either Communist, Socialist or Chauvinist. After 1938, the Dobama Asi-ayone regularly sent delegates to the annual meetings of the Indian Congress Party. From then on, they came into closer contact with Gandhi, Nehru and the Socialist Jayprakash Narain and with Indian Communist elements operating within the Congress-Socialist ranks. In 1939, Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Ba Hein, Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Thein Pe (Myint), Thakhin Hla Pe (Bo Let Ya) and Thakhin Ba Tin alias Goshal organized the first official Communist cell in Rangoon, directly linked with the Indian Communist Party.

The outbreak of war in Europe on September 1, 1939, had an immediately sobering effect throughout Burma's political spectrum. The Freedom Bloc appeared. It was an amalgam of Dr. Ba Maw's Sin-ye-thar Party, some minor elements of the dying Ngar-bwint-saing Party, and

the Dobama Asi-ayone , except for those extremists who were in favour of orthodox Communist policy. Dr. Ba Maw was president and Thakhin Aung San, the general secretary. Other leaders included Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Ba Swe, Thakhin Mya, and Thakhin Hla Baw, who was the president of the Dobama Asi-ayone at that time. The three main points they put forward were: (1) Britain's recognition of Burma's right to independence, (2) preparations for calling a Constituent Assembly, and (3) bringing all the special authorities of the governor immediately within the purview of the cabinet. But the immediate step of the Freedom Bloc leaders was to demand that U Pu's government accept their programme or resign from office.

The Thakhin faction within the Freedom Bloc was clearly divided. Thakhin Ba Sein favoured using the Japanese to end British rule, but on the other hand, the pro-Communist group, like Thakhin Ba Hein, opposed all fascists including the Japanese. Thakhin Nu and Thakhin Aung San in 1939 were publicly strongly pro-Chinese opposing Japanese imperialist aggression. Thakhin Nu joined the political moderates, such as the highly respected Fabian Socialist U Ba Choe (Dee-dok), U Ba Lwin (Myoma) and U Ba (Teacher's Training College) , both educationists, and Daw Mya Sein, in participating in late 1939

and 1940 in a good-will mission to China. The Chinese nationalists (under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek) sent a return mission in 1941. Subsequently some of the Thakhins conceived the idea that Communist China might even be of possible assistance.

Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Than Tun, Thakhin Tin Maung, Thakhin Ohn Pe(Wa-ke-ma), and Thakhin Khin Aung, five delegates of Dobama Asi-ayone attended the Indian Congress Party meeting at Ramgarh in 1940 to maintain contacts with Indian friends, both Congress and Communist. The " No war effort " slogan of the Indian Congress Party was adopted by the Dobama Asi-ayone at the Tharrawaddy Conference, 1940. At the same time, pro-Communist Thakhins within the Freedom Bloc were sponsoring classes in Marxist doctrine for their followers and sympathisers.

The Freedom Bloc as a whole was leftist and revolutionary, but it is very clear that nationalism came before ideology. And in support of its basic objective of the independence of Burma from British rule, it was very obvious that they were ready to accept outside assistance from any quarter, if it proved necessary. The Freedom Bloc leaders resumed their anti-war propaganda in May and June, 1940. Three Thakhins were arrested in May, 1940, under the governor's newly

promulgated Defense of Burma Act. The Act extended the arbitrary police power of the governor to cover actions that prejudiced British relations abroad, fomented enmity and strife within Burma, or were in opposition to Burma's safety and defence. The duration of the act was wartime plus six months, ~~and~~ and offenders under it were to be tried by special tribunals. This act aroused protests even from the government ministry. Dr. Ba Maw's speech on June 9th, 1940, in which he advocated neutrality in the European war was the prelude to the Freedom Bloc's open break with the law in July and August. In early July, Thakhin Lay Maung, Thakhin Than Tun, and Thakhin Soe, leading members of the Working Committee of the Dobama Asi-ayone , as well as many district leader Thakhins were arrested for urging villagers not to aid the war effort. Thakhin Nu was arrested on July 16th after his speech at Jubilee Hall, Rangoon. He was sentenced to one year's imprisonment on July 24. Dr. Thein Maung was similarly arrested on July 27. Dr. Ba Maw resigned from the House of Representatives in late July, and gave a speech at ~~MR~~ Mandalay attacking U Pu's policy of supporting the war. He was arrested on August 6. Thakhin Mya, president of All Burma Peasants' Union, became the leader of the Freedom Bloc

On September 7, 1940, U Ba Pe sponsored a no-confidence motion and U Pu's government was defeated. Although there was growing

popular unrest caused by the Freedom Bloc, politicians within the legislature were not ready to sabotage the war. Unfortunately, again, U Ba Pe was not able to form a government. On September 9, the governor asked U Saw to try to form a cabinet and he succeeded. He kept three members from U Pu's old cabinet, U Paw Tun, U Ba Than, and U Tharrawaddy Maung Maung. He also brought back Saw Pe Tha to represent the Karens. U Saw was strongly convinced of the need to suppress internal unrest and he did. He carried Dr. Ba Maw's trial through to the final conviction and, when the initial year's sentence expired, did not hesitate to continue the prison terms for both him and the convicted Thakhins.

He hounded down all the Thakhins, whether they were communists or not. Thakhin Aung San earned a warrant of arrest with a five rupee reward attached to it, from June 29, 1940. A year or so in jail was not what he wanted. So he went underground to continue his work. He escaped arrest only by fleeing the country. Under U Saw's ruthless political persecution, overt anti-war propaganda ceased in the press. By October 1941, he had used the Defense of Burma Act to silence all hostile newspapers and to imprison his political enemies like U Ba Pe, U Ba U (Mandalay), U Ba Win (ex-mayor of Rangoon), and U Ba Hlaing (Rangoon Labour Representative in Parliament).

The secret departure of Thakhin Aung San and Thakhin Hla Myaing for China on the 8th of August 1940 is an important episode. They went disguised as Chinese crew-men aboard a Norwegian boat. The purpose of their journey was to make contact with the Chinese Communist and to find out whether they could give any assistance towards the struggle for Burma's independence. Though Thakhin Aung San carried a letter of introduction from Indian Communist Party, he had no clear idea how he was to accomplish this end. Actually, it was a madcap adventure, but on the other hand arrest awaited him if he remained in Burma. As there was no alternative, he did not hesitate to take the risk, although he knew that nothing was certain. Thakhin Aung San and Thakhin Hla Myaing reached Amoy on 24th August and after wandering round helplessly for a few months were contacted by a Major Kanda of the Japanese Military Police in November and then despatched to Haneda in Japan, where the two met Colonel Suzuki (Bo Mo Gyo) and Sugii. Thus began Thakhin Aung San's overt collaboration with the Japanese.

But the Thakhins themselves differed sharply over the Japanese collaboration proposal. Thakhin Thein Pe (Myint), Thakhin Ba Hein and the pro-Communist Thakhins refused to go along with it. Nevertheless, Thakhin Aung San managed to enlist the cooperation of front-line Thakhin leaders like Thakhin Mya, Thakhin Kyaw Nyein,

Thakhin Ba Swe, etc., in forming the pro-Japanese People's Revolutionary Party, during his brief and furtive ten-day secret visit to Burma in February, 1941. Thakhin Ba Sein and Thakhin Tun Ok were prominently pro-Japanese. Thakhin Aung San managed to recruit Thirty Comrades and smuggled them out of Burma in batches by sea. From February to June, eight voyages were undertaken. With the collaboration of Manager U Tun On, of the 1936 students' strike, the Varsity - Cooperative Stores, in Scott Market, Rangoon, became the convenient hiding place and assembly point for the young volunteers. When the day came for them to embark, they would dress as members of the crew of a Japanese vessel, mingle with the real crew, pass through the police barrier at the wharf, and hide in the engine room till it was safe. Sometimes it was only in the engine room that the Ba Sein Thakhins and the Aung San Thakhins discovered each other and found they were launched on the same mission. But for the sake of the nation and country's independence they ignored their differences and quickly became welded together into a force. Most of the training of the Thirty-Comrades took place on Hainan island. The cadre of a Burma Independence Army assembled at Bangkok in late 1941. This army re-entered Burma together with the Japanese in 1942.

In the meantime Premier U Saw still hoped that dominion

status could be attained by negotiation; taking U Tin Tut (Indian Civil Service) as his adviser, he flew to London in October to November, 1941, to ask the British Government for a definite promise of postwar dominion status for Burma. But unfortunately, British official policy toward Burma remained unchanged. From London, U Saw left for the United States. After spending several weeks in the U.S., he was halted at Hawaii on his return trip to Burma by the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. He had to retrace his journey via the U.S. and Europe. The aeroplane carrying him and U Tin Tut touched down at Lisbon on receipt of the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. At Lisbon he was detected communicating with the Japanese Ambassador to Portugal, promising that, if still in power, he would do what he could to help when the Japanese Army invaded Burma. He and U Tin Tut were arrested for treason on January 19, 1942, on his arrival in Egypt. He was detained as a prisoner for 4 years in British Uganda. U Tin Tut was released only after a few months, because there was no evidence of treasonable actions against him and he was re-instated in his rank in I. C. S.

U Saw's arrest did not cause any excitement in Burma. Following his detention the Burma Premiership was assumed by the anglophile Sir Paw Tun, who had become a permanent fixture in every Cabinet. He brought U Htoon Aung Gyaw into his cabinet as finance

minister. The constitution was suspended, and the Governor invoked section 139 of the Government of Burma Act to take over the legislature and executive powers in the emergency. Sir Paw Tun and U Htoon Aung Gyaw along with U Tin Tut became the ranking Burman members of Governor Dorman-Smith 's wartime exiled government at Simla, India. During the Japanese invasion the ministry as a whole remained loyal to the governor.

2. Books

List of titles selected from the Burma Catalogue 1937 - 1941.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1937</u>	U Po Thin	Our Home	1,000	222	12 as	Sagaing
Aug	U Ya	Present reforms and the future	1,000	100	"	"
Sept	Saya Tin	Our duty	2,000	176	Rs. 1	Rangoon
<u>1938</u>	Thein Pe	The biography of	2,000	284	Rs. 2	Nargani
Jan	(Myint)	Saya Lun				Book Club
	P. Monin	Independence	2,000	131	12 as	Rangoon

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1938</u>	U Maung	The future of Burma	1,000	256	Re.1-	Rangoon
March	Maung Khin				4 as	
May	N. B. C.	Nagarni Journal (1st Number)	4,000	36	3 as	N.B.C.
	Mogyo	Jose Rizal	3,050	288	10 as	"
July	U Saw	U Aung Zeya	3,000	279	Re.1- 8 as	Rangoon
	U Ottama	China & Japan	2,000	80	"	"
Aug	Thein Pe (Myint)	Democracy and the French Revolution	3,000	214	10 as	N.B.C.
Sept	"	The Indo-Burman Riot	100,000	24	2pyas	"
	"	"	1,000	"	"	Bassein
Nov	Thakhin	Thakhin Tika	5,000	223	12 as	Rangoon
	Kodaw Hmaing					
	Thakhin Nu	Way out of poverty	4,000	224	10 as	N.B.C.
	A-myo-thar	Thakhins' crisis &	3,000	34	lanna	Rangoon
	Thein Maung	my views				
	Thakhin	An account of exter-	3,000	28	2pyas	"
	Nyi	nal intrigues and internal dissensions of the Thakhins				

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO. OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1938</u> Dec	Kyaw Zin	The struggles of the tenant Cultivators	1,500	27	lanna	Zigon
	Thakhin Tin	An account of the Capitalists	1,000	18	"	Thonze
<u>1939</u> Jan	Tekkatho	Conflict between the Students and the Police	5,000	20	"	Rangoon
Feb	Thakhin Hla Tun	Road to Liberty	3,000	9	2pyas	Pegu
	U Thein	Japan speaks out	2,500	116	8 as	Rangoon
	Thakhin Piya	Yes, we are Burmese	3,000	16	1 pya	"
	Theik-pan Kyaw Htin	Struggle for Freedom	10,000	24	lanna	"
March	Ba Hein	Students' crisis	50,000	55	3 as	N.B.C.
	Mye-nan- Maung	The Mandalay Massacre	1,000	32	lanna	Mandalay
	U Ba Tin (translation)	Secret agent of Japan	5,000	201	10 as	N.B.C.
	2nd Edition	(22-5-39)	2,500	"	"	"
	U Hla	Now we know who killed <u>Bo Aung Gyaw</u>	2,500	26	2pyas	Rangoon
Apr	Hla Shwe	Capitalism	5,000	44	3 as	N.B.C.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1939</u>	Thakhin	Strikes & political	5,000	14	lanna	Rangoon
Apr	Myoma Ohn	opportunists				
	N.B.C.	Lenin	5,000	224	10 as	N.B.C.
	Thakhin Ohn	Personal experiences	3,000	324	"	Rangoon
	Myint	in Jail				
	Daring Na-	Dog-like M.P.s	1,500	31	6pyas	"
	tional Guard					
June	Ba Hein	The world of	3,000	269	8 as	Burma
		Capitalists				Publishing House
	U Win	The Land Alienation	1,000	14	?	Twante
		Act & the Tenancy Act				
	U Tun Hla	I speak for China	5,000	120	8 as	Rangoon
	U Kan Gyi	Burma's population	1,500	160	12 as	"
	& U Ko Lay	problem (Vol I)				
	Shwe-don	Tricolour, yellow	3,000	224	10 as	"
	B. Aung	green and red				
July	Tun Aye	Burma's affairs	3,000	210	"	B.P.H.
	Dr. Thein	Danger to Burmans -	5,000	76	5 as	Rangoon
	Maung	the immigration problem				
	Maung Nu	Land Tenancy Act &	5,000	14	5pyas	Zalun
		rights of cultivators				
	Thakhin Ba	Problems of peasants,	5,000	190	8 as	Rangoon
	Sein	slave of the slave				

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1939</u>	Aw Myo Shu	Problem before the Burmans	6,000	175	8 as	N.B.C.
Aug	Shwe U Daung	All Hitler has done	5,000	266	10 as	"
	U Than Tun	Exposition of Burma politics	3,000	249	8 as	B.P.H.
	Maha Swe	A treatise on politics	2,000	79	4 as	Rangoon
	Dobama	Reports on the Moul	10,000	128	2 as	"
	Asi-ayone	Mein Conference				
	U Kan Gyi	Burma's population	1,500	175	12 as	"
	& U Ko Lay	problem (Vol II)				
	U Hla	Soviet Russia	2,000	174	8 as	"
	Saya Hein	With Michael Collins	1,000	260	"	N.B.C.
Sept	U Ba U	Vestiges of U Pu's Government actions	500	16	-	Rangoon
	Thakhin Kha	The Great War - who is responsible ?	2,850	"	1 anna	"
	Myoma Maung	The Great War	3,000	50	2 as	"
	-	The Land Tenancy Act	1,000	31	4 as	Zigon
	Thakhin Mya	The Tenancy Act with annotations	3,000	216	Re. 1	Rangoon

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1939</u>	U Kyaw Tint	The invisible	5,000	208	10 as	N.B.C.
Oct		soldier				
	Thein Pe (Myint)	Who is wrong? Hitler or Chamberlain?	4,800	93	8 as	Rangoon
	Saya Hein & Khin Myo Chit	Secret agents of the War	2,500	287	"	B.P.H.
	Tha Dun	Black Dragon	3,000	62	3 as	"
	Shwe U Daung	Abraham Lincoln	5,000	198	10 as	N.B.C.
Nov	"	The secrets of the Great War	2,500	176	8 as	B.P.H.
	Thakhin Soe	Socialism	2,000	205	"	Rangoon
	Thakhin Kha	Burma & Japan	3,000	32	2 as	"
	Thu Ta	The World War Memoirs	1,500	112	6 as	"
	Zeya	The story of mankind	5,000	242	Re. 1- 4 as	N.B.C.
	Ba Galay	Fascist aggression	2,500	208	8 as	B.P.H.
Dec	Thakhin Hla Pe	Political map of the world	5,000	180	10 as	N.B.C.
	Thakhin Ba Tin	Black & Tans	3,000	210	8 as	"

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1940</u>	Thein Htaik	Japanese aggres- sion	2,000	88	6 as	B.P.H.
Jan	U Ba Khaing	Germany's internal affairs	3,000	200	8 as	"
	Thakhin Ohn	We, the peasants	1,000	38	3 as	Ka-nyut- kwin
	Thakhin Tun Ok	Announcement No. 1 of Dobama Asi-ayone	3,000	19	2 pyas	Rangoon
	U Tun Pe	The inner history of the Chinese Revolution	5,000	212	10 as	N.B.C.
Feb	Thakhin Soe	The Labourer's World	2,500	168	8 as	B.P.H.
	Thakhin Chit Maung	Britain & the World War	1,500	47	3 as	Rangoon
	U Ba Tin	The Theory & Prac- tice of Socialism (by John Strachey)	5,000	228	10 as	N.B.C.
	Ko Thein	Japan on the losing side	2,000	31	6 pyas	Mandalay
March	Thakhin Hla Pe	War & Socialism	2,500	160	8 as	B.P.H.
	Thakhin Tin Maung	War of Liberation	2,000	"	"	Aung-lan- daw

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PEACE
<u>1940</u>	Thein Pe	Challenge to	2,500	160	8 as	Rangoon
March	(Myint)	Germany				
	U Kyaw Tint	Dr. Marden	2,500	193	12 as	B.P.H.
	Thakhin	Dobama Asi-ayone	1,500	74	4 as	Rangoon
	Ba Sein					
Apr	U Tun Pe	Soviet Democracy & One's experiences	1,000	247	10 as	N.B.C.
	Thakhin	World War & Burma	4,000	31	3 pyas	N.B.C.
	Aung San + 3					
	Mya Daung Nyo	The secret organiza- tions of the world	2,000	208	10 as	"
	U Sein Khant	Burma's road to Freedom	3,000	83	5 as	Rangoon
	Thakhin	Tenancy Ordinance	1,500	64	3 as	"
	Ba Sein	1940				
	2nd Edition	(4-5-40)	1,000	"	"	"
	Thakhin Aye	The present war & Dobama policy	500	18	2 as	Pegu
May	U Kyaw Tint	French Revolution	5,000	324	10 as	N.B.C.
	Thakhin	Socialist Dictator	2,500	144	5 as	B.P.H.
	Tin Maung					
	Thakhin Nu	China	4,000	307	12 as	N.B.C.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1940</u>	Tun Shein	Personal experience	2,000	159	8 as	B.P.H.
May		in India				
	Thakhin Ba Ko	Burmese Uprisings	1,500	144	6 as	ALD
	Tha Dun	The present war	3,000	84	"	Rangoon
July	U Ba Khaing	Inside Asia	4,000	192	10 as	N.B.C.
	Thi-ri Htut	British prisoner of war	1,500	196	8 as	ALD
	Than-dwe Maung	The real leader	2,000	238	"	B.P.H.
Aug	U Than Tun	Broadcast from German Freedom Radio Station	1,500	164	"	ALD
	Thakhin Nu & Thakhin Hla Pe	The Encyclopaedia of Politics	2,000	182	"	B.P.H.
	Dagon Lun	Hitler & his comrade 'Death'	1,500	140	"	Rangoon
	Thakhin Tin Maung	Red Eagle	4,000	224	10 as	N.B.C.
Sept	Tha Dun	Germany	2,000	158	8 as	B.P.H.
	Myo Nyunt	Today's Burma	3,000	60	5 as	N.B.C.

YEAR	AUTHOR	TITLE	NO.OF COPIES	PAGES	PRICE	PUBLISHER OR PLACE
<u>1940</u>	U Thein	Problems of the	1,500	159	8 as	ALD
Sept		East				
	Thakhin	Short sketches of	"	158	"	"
	Ba Shwe	some famous patriots				
	Saya Hein	Irish Revolution	3,500	203	10 as	N.B.C.
Oct	Kado	America Today	2,000	16	10pyas	Rangoon
	Thakhin Lay	New Burma	?	241	10 as	ManMalay
Nov	Min Shin	Bo Bo Aung,	2,000	47	3 as	"
	Naung	a Nobody				
Dec	Win Win	Set-kya-min,	1,500	44	4 as	Rangoon
		a Nobody				
	Ba Gyan	My views on Burmese	3,000	214	Re. 1	Bassein
		politics				
	Tun Aung Gyaw	Suez	2,000	104	5 as	N.B.C.
	U Kyaw Tint	The Paris Commune	3,000	224	10 as	"
	Thakhin	Sinn Fein	3,000	207	8 as	B.P.H.
	Hla Baw					
	Htay Myaing	Bo Aung Gyaw	4,000	24	3 as	Rangoon
<u>1941</u>	Tekkatho	Struggle for Freedom	3,000	195	10 as	N.B.C.
Jan	Su Myaing					
Feb	Thakhin Bo	Karl Marx and his	3,000	181	"	"
		creed				
	Myoma Maung	The great world war	2,000	32	2 pyas	Rangoon

Although this period 1937 to 1941 is a short one, it saw the climax of political writing in Burmese literature. It was unsurpassed not only in the quantity of output but also in the variety of subject matter. It covered reflections on the new administration, independence movements, internal political affairs, international politics, events of the World War, political ideologies, autobiographies of national leaders and heroes, and included propaganda on behalf of the poor people, peasants and labourers in the class struggle.

There was not much political writing in 1937, but there appeared one book called Present reforms and the future by U Ya which was a response to the new administration under the Government of Burma Act 1935, which came into effect from April 1st 1937.

1938 was one of the most remarkable years in the modern history of Burma, in terms of political events and political writings on them. The complexity of the political scene gave rise to prolific writing. The most significant event was the appearance of the Nagarni Book Club, which revolutionised attitudes and methods in political writing. From then till the eve of the Japanese invasion the Nagarni Book Club was the major publisher in Burma for political

literature. The Nagarni Book Club's first publication, which appeared in January 1938, was Maung Thein Pe's biography of Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing, under the title of Cha-ra Lwan: atthuppatti . As far as I know this is the first biographical book in Burmese published during the lifetime of the subject. But unfortunately although it has the virtue of being a first-hand account, it suffers from a marked attention to literary style and political motive at the expense of precision and detachment. For example, no dates are given except the date of Saya Lun's birth and the year of his wife's death. It is almost impossible to extract from Maung Thein Pe's book any details of Saya Lun's career, when exactly he started, how long he remained with the Sun, when he joined the Dagon Magazine, when he began to contribute the Khway Tika articles in the Bandoola Journal and so on. The most regrettable omissions concern details of Saya Lun's work. Nowadays, Saya Lun's reputation as a playwright is almost legendary. Although it is said that he wrote more than 80 plays, apart from a handful of some of the more famous plays, like Siridhammasoka jat, Mahosadha jat, Upaka Chawa jat, and Thi-lap jat etc., we have no information about the others. Maung Thein Pe could have filled this gap if he had compiled the book strictly as a biography. Nevertheless, he certainly deserves credit for the effectiveness of his propaganda about Thakhins and Dobama Asi-ayone which was the avowed aim of his book.

The same author's The Indo-Burman Riot presents a much more sympathetic view of the Burmese attitude than ~~it~~ is found in western and official documentation, as the following extract shows.

INDO-BURMAN RIOT

by

Maung Thein Pe

(1)

The Indo-Burman conflict was unavoidable. Sooner or later it had to be faced.

Concerning this matter, Mahatma Gandhi said, "It shows that both parties prove that we have not yet overcome the stage of uncivilized savagery." We can't ignore this matter merely by speaking like this. "It was a sad event and I feel so sorry for what has happened" said the Governor of Burma who showed no initiative in solving the crisis. This sort of helpless remark will do no good. And it wasn't a wise thing to put all the blame on U Shwe Phi on the grounds that this Indo-Burman riot was caused by his booklet. The

most important thing for us ~~is~~ is to find and to analyse systematically and logically the real cause which led to this disastrous event.

Why did it happen ? Why are the people in turmoil ? Why are people attacking and killing each other ? Why they are burning the houses and the mosques and the buildings ? Why ?

Isn't it true that the Burmese do not hate the Indians ?
 Isn't it true that they are always grateful to the Indians because their religion and most of their culture is derived from them ?
 Isn't it true that the Burmese have shown their admiration of the Indians by voting against the issue of separating Burma from India ?

I am pretty sure that the Indians in India are asking each other these questions. I myself, when I was in India, have faced these questions numerous times. Yes, it is true that we got our religion and most of our culture from India. But the India which gave religion and culture to Burma was the India of long ago. It is not the India which exists today. Present-day India has already destroyed her own religion and culture which she gave to Burma a long time ago. This religion and this culture no longer exist in present-day India. At present, Burma and India are far apart. We no longer have common

ground in religion or culture. We cannot be grateful eternally for the culture which we have got from them, a long long time ago. Yes, it is true, we voted for anti-Separation ~~when~~ when the Separation crisis was on us. But, remember, the reason why we voted against Separation was not because we admired the Indians so much, nor because we are so grateful for what we owed them long ago. We thought that if we stayed within the Indian Empire, we would be able to get rid of the British and gain the independence which India is going to achieve in the foreseeable future. We thought we were going to gain some benefit if we stayed together. We voted against Separation out of self-interest. Even so, that was only a temporary measure, of course.

Therefore, it is very important to see clearly in this Indo-Burman problem. Let us have no illusions. We must try to see this logically.

(2)

History has proved that Indians crossed the ocean and came to Burma and settled here a long time ago. But those settlers have proved that they were cultured and civilized citizens. They brought their noble religion for the benefit of Burmans. They brought their

highly developed medical knowledge, architecture, various arts etc. to Burma. Some Indians came to Burma to serve as mercenaries under the Burmese Kings.

But now the situation ~~is~~ is very different. Those who arrive in Burma come here just to destroy the achievements and reputation of their ancestors, the ancient Indian settlers.

When the British attacked and occupied Lower Burma as well as Upper Burma by unlawful force their work was done mainly by the Indian Sepoys. For this reason, we Burmese hate them. Some of these Indian soldiers did not bother to go back to their country. They continued to stay in our country. Not long after the British annexation of Burma, the Suez Canal was opened. This gave English traders a golden opportunity to export rice from Burma which they obtained at the minimum costs. Naturally they were anxious to see a lot of rice grow in Lower Burma. But the peasants had no money to extend their cultivation. English traders did not bother to give direct loans, instead they brought the blood-sucking Chettyar money-lenders from Madras. Since 1830, with the help of English traders, these Chettyars started their money lending-business at extortionate rates of interest. They argued that they could not get enough Burmese labourers or that

Burmese labourers' wages were high, and they imported Indian labourers into Burma. To serve the rigid caste system of the Indians, Indian small traders arrived in Burma to sell bha-yā-kyô¹, tea, coffee, dhotis, loin-cloths, etc.

In this way, these Indians entered Burma as exploiters in every field. They came to our country not to offer their help, not for our benefit. That much is very clear.

The English and the Indian capitalists also imported a huge number of Indian coolies into Burma. They paid very small wages to those poor coolies, but they are making a colossal amount of profit out of the hard labour of the coolies.

In this way the number of Indian immigrants rose rapidly in Burma. Now, there are

Hindus	565,609
Muslims	<u>396,594</u>
Total	962,203 .

There are approximately one million Indians in Burma. As our population is approximately only twelve millions, there is a ratio of 12 Burmans to 1 Indian. It is really alarming.

1. bha-yā-kyô = fritters

The table for the entry and departure of Indians for the past ten years is as follows:-

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>IN</u>	<u>OUT</u>
1928	324,000	278,000
29	370,000	398,000
30	273,000	365,000
31	252,000	285,000
32	240,000	225,000
33	220,000	200,000
34	299,000	185,000
35	216,000	180,000
36	219,000	184,000
37	199,000	159,000

Because of the 1930 Indo-Burman riots, the immigration rate in that period seems to have dropped a little, but you can see that immediately after that it rose steadily. According to the statistics, the rate was increased by 12 % annually.

Moreover, the union of Indian males and females has produced their offspring at the rate of 16 per cent Indians yearly. If these

rates continue, after 50 years in Burma, the ratio of the population will be 8 Burmans to 1 Indian.

At this time, under this present English government, which holds firmly to the capitalist system, there is a huge number of jobless, educated and uneducated. A lot of people are facing hunger in our country. Yet, if the Indian immigration rate continues to rise, Burma, under this capitalist regime will have to face the increasingly severe problem of unemployment. Therefore it is not only our duty to take the necessary action to meet this immigration problem, but it is also the responsibility of the government. Although the facts are undeniable, when the Burmese asked for restriction of the Indian immigration, the Indians in Burma protested and demonstrated up to the highest level - that is to the British Government in London - as if demanding their own legal rights. They also demanded that if there were some restrictions on Indian immigration they must first be approved by the Indian Government. This gained the support of the Indians in India, those who knew nothing about Burma and the prevailing ~~situ~~ situation. The Indian capitalists, realising that they would no longer get cheap Indian labour if the restrictions were imposed, also gave their vociferous support. They claimed that they were ardent Indian nationalists, ready to protect the rights of the Indian.

As for the Indians, they came to Burma solely to make money and to exploit as much as they could. Naturally they were far better than the ~~the~~ unaware Burmese in business matters. Most of the trade and commerce fell into their hands and they controlled almost everything.

Betel-quid shops were owned by the Indians; the bha-yā-kyô were sold by the Indians; textile shops were owned by the Indians; the big bazaars were owned by the Indians; the wholesale trades were run by the Indians; shoe-repairers were Indians; the hosiery-factories were owned and manned by the Indians; sand-soap (sai-chap-prā) was sold ^{also} by the Indians; the luxurious perfumed soap was sold by the Indians; the capitalist money-lenders were Indians; Indians: Indians: Indians - everywhere Indians - nothing but Indians. The darawan were Indians; the High Court Judges were Indians; the compounders (dispensers) were Indians; the Medical Superintendents (doctors) were Indians; jail-warders were Indians; and the Prison Officers were also Indians.

Wherever you go you will find Indians, nothing but Indians.

Indians in Burma sent back colossal sums of money to India. Through the Post Office alone not less than 50 million rupees leave the country yearly.

Only poor Indians used the Post Office. The well-off Indians sent the money back either through banks or took it with them. There are shipping companies, owned by an Indian, Abdul Choudry, such as ' Manakji ' popularly known by its Burmese name of Ma Hnin Zi . Many of the umbrella factories, kitchen-ware (especially aluminium pots and pans) factories, hosiery-factories are also owned by the Indians. Most of the banks are owned and run by the Indians. Twelve to thirteen million rupees worth of Burmese rice exported to India is handled mostly by the Marawari Indian traders. Not only that: these Indians even own the oil-fields as well. Most of the gold and silver trades are run and owned by the Gujarati Indians. I don't think it will be far too wrong to estimate that the Indian capitalists are making a yearly profit of at least 100 million rupees out of our country.

There are many Indian capitalists who are domiciled and live permanently in Burma and yet they never behave or regard themselves as Burmese citizens. They are scattered all over Burma. They make a lot of money and they have a lot of money and they are enjoying the best of everything. This type of Indian is making a yearly profit of not less than 50 million rupees.

There are from 40,000 to 60,000 Indian ' civil servants ' in Burma from the lowest level darawans up to the highest level, the High Court Judges. There are also many on the salaried staff of business firms and companies. I think there are more than 30,000 Indian staff whose earnings are not less than 50 rupees per month.

The majority of the staff in the Burma Railways, Public Works Development Department, the Hospitals and the Medical fields are Indians and we can assume that at least 15,000 posts which carry a salary of more than 50 rupees are in the hands of the Indians. It was justifiable and true to say that more and more educated Burmese are becoming jobless because the majority of the posts which they can hold are occupied and controlled by these Indians.

If we assume that the average cost of living for one Indian is Rs. 7-7 as per month, it will be Rs. 90-0 per year, and Rs. 90 millions for one million Indians. Therefore - (the total expenditure will be)...

Money sent through Post Office	Rs. 50 millions
" " by the poor themselves	Rs. 20 "
" " through banks by the rich people	Rs. 100 "
Burma-domiciled Indians' profit	Rs. 50 "
The cost of living expenses in Burma	<u>Rs. 90 "</u>
Total	Rs. 310 "

From the Burmese point of view, because of these 1 million Indians, Burma has to spend this colossal sum of Rs. 310 millions. In other words, every Burman has to pay more than Rs. 25 per year as Indian Tax.

So a family of five persons has to pay Rs. 125 as Indian Tax and the yearly income of ^{an} average Burmese family (consisting of five members) is only Rs. 240.

There is an obvious imbalance between Burmese income and expenditure and that Indian Tax. It is said that that is the reason why nowadays the peasants' debt is mounting from 500 to 600 million rupees.

Because of this, at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of Burmese agricultural lands have gone into the hands of the blood-sucking money-lender Chettyars. To add to that, another $\frac{1}{4}$ of the lands is already in the hands of Chettyars and other money-lenders as surety. So the peasants were stripped of everything.

The result was that the more the Burmese became helpless and desperate, the more they blamed the Indians and the more their hatred increased.

Because of their economic position, because they were well off, these Indians gained the upper hand and took advantage of the poor helpless Burmese girls. In Burma the ratio of Indian males to females was 7 to 1, and because the proportion of Burmese women was higher than men, inter-marriage between Indian men and Burmese women was natural. I am not complaining about that and it is no use object-ing to it either. But what I can't stand is that these Indians regard this matter frivolously. And these Indians have already arranged that no Burmese Buddhist wife can become a legal wife according to rules and regulations and legal procedures. If a Buddhist girl wants to become a legal wife, she must be converted to Islam, otherwise she is only a mistress. Therefore, Burmese Buddhists proposed to Parliament a new marriage law between Buddhists and non-Buddhists with certain clauses, protecting the Buddhist party. Because of the strong protest of the Indians, this bill is now in deadlock.

The Indians ~~are~~ never consider the interests of the Burmese. They are always seeking their own benefit. They never dream of work-ing together with the Burmese for better or worse; instead they segregate themselves into a privileged minority. On many occasions in national politics as well as in district and urban administration, they make alliances with the Europeans just to oppose the Burmese.

Therefore, it is very funny that some of the Indian leaders and the Indian newspapers lay the blame for the Indo-Burman riot on the Europeans who separated Burma from India by force. It is a great joke. In the economic field, these Indians always suppressed the Burmese. They gave no room for any sort of progress.

One of my friends became the retail agent for ~~the~~ a foreign perfume and toilet goods firm. But a group of Choliya Indians claiming that this line of business was not suitable for Burmese, tried to obstruct him in every way they could. Yes, it is true. Not only that: another friend of mine manufactured some cosmetics and sold his goods by himself. But the Indian traders did all they could to ruin him. At last the poor fellow was forced to allow one Indian as his sole agent for trade and then only could he carry on his business. When the Wunthanu movement reached its height, Burmese home-spun cloth became very popular and the demand for textiles from Madras and Bombay fell badly. To take counter action, the Indians, being the wholesale dealers for cotton raw materials, raised the prices to squeeze out and strangle the Burmese weaving industries. When the government, with the aim of promoting industrial know-how in Burma, proposed to establish a technical institute, it met strong opposition from an Indian capitalist. By these and similar methods these Indians

had a strangle-hold over the Burmese and, albeit without bloodshed, were working for our ruination and destruction, the method propounded by Gandhi.

The instances of unjust and illegal oppression by the Indians of the Burmans are numerous. On the issues of the restriction of immigration, mixed marriages, the Tenancy Act, the promotion of industrial expertise, Burmese as a first language in school education etc., etc., the Indians' part was only to protest, obstruct and prevent.

(3)

I hope you can now see that the Indians who are obstructing and working against Burmese interests belong to the capitalist and middle class. They cannot be described as average Indians. But these capitalist and middle class Indians in Burma are trying to involve the poor ordinary Indians in our quarrel. Therefore, it appears that we Burmese have come to hate all Indians without exception.

But actually, I don't think the ordinary poor Indians, who came and lived in Burma are ungrateful. They never attack the Burmese.

They don't treat the Burmese as their enemies. And sometimes they work together with the Burmese for better or for worse. In oil-field strikes such as Yen-an-gyaung and Syriam and in some other strikes, Indian workers and Burmese workers were inseparable. And it is certain that even if the capitalist and middle class Indians try to break their unity, they will not be divided.

So, while the Indians are giving all sorts of trouble, the Burmese are becoming more and more aware; the Age of Prosperity is disappearing and the Age of Austerity begins; the Burmese become poorer and poorer with less and less to comfort them, physically and mentally. They see the approach of poverty, unemployment and hunger in turn. But on the other hand, our young men are awakening. Those who have an education but no job are becoming more and more aware of the real situation. And even the monks are organizing themselves to face the country's predicament.

So, in such conditions and in such an atmosphere it is not surprising that some small incident should spark off an Indo-Burman riot. It is no wonder that the spark gradually become a flame.

As usual, capitalist groups and the capitalist's stooges, the middle class groups, were those to start to attack. U Shwe Phi was

a school teacher who had a lot of free time to think and to exercise his brain. He wanted to relieve his boredom by raising some religious arguments, or contradictions. So he wrote a sarcastic article about Buddhists and Buddhism. Then an Indian capitalist publisher called Mr. Patel published and distributed U Shwe Phi's article in booklet form.

This booklet was read by a Buddhist monk who felt as strongly about religious problems as U Shwe Phi, and this was the beginning of the religious controversy. Unfortunately, this matter was fanned into flames by so-called 'scoop newspapers', and they wrote a lot about U Shwe Phi.

Some accused Dr, Ba Maw and his followers of conspiring and arranging ^{the} protest mass meeting at the Shwe-da-gon Pagoda. Some condemned it as political exploitation. Well, I don't know whether it was true or not. The government cannot be blamed for failing to avoid this riot, but I would like to criticise it strongly for the way it handled the matter once it had started. The Premier and his Cabinet never realised how profound now was the dislike the Burmans felt for the Indians. They never thought, that the religious argument 'the Mawlawi and the Yogi Problem', the popular Burmese caption for the

root of the Indo-Burman riot, would explode in the minds of the Burmese, which were filled with the dislike of Indians. So they had no idea how urgent and important it was. They ordered this booklet to be translated from Burmese into English for the Burmese Ministers to read but not before it had passed through all the usual channels from the C.I.D. upwards to the minister. I think the government made a grave mistake in allowing the delay involved in following the red tape procedure in this matter. Surely, nothing could be worse than this terrible mistake.

(4)

When the riot broke out, the government became restless. They did not know what to do or how to handle the situation properly and wisely. They never noticed how the Burmese hated the Indians because of their cold blooded oppressions. And they had also omitted all consideration of the volatile nature of the Burmese. Instead they thought the riot was fanned by the newspapers and they persecuted the press.

The Indians accused the Burmese of launching a planned and organized attack against them; they were astonished that the attacks

had been sowidespread throughout the country and they could find no reason for it. In fact, apart from the general dislike of the Indians because of their behaviour, there was no organisation of the riot in the country. It is in accordance with the Burmese personality that when one person starts something, others soon join in; when an incident occurs in one place, it soon spreads to others; witness their behaviour during the Festival of Lights, the birthday of U Wisara or strikes, etc. It is important to understand that although the Burmese may lead badly, they follow well. If they find an individual or an organisation with effective leadership, they will suddenly follow in unity. For these reasons, the riot appeared to be planned and organised. People volunteered to patrol their own Burmese quarters during the riots, evidence of their surprising unity; they kept watch over their own streets. Although the Indians were unaware of this aspect of the Burmese nature, there is no excuse for the Burmese Ministers' ignorance of it.

(5)

On the 26th July, there was a protest meeting against U Shwe Phi's booklet at the foot of Shwe-da-gon Pagoda. There were clashes

on that day between the demonstrators and the police. It was quite peaceful on the 27th. On the 28th when some Choliya Indians stabbed a Burmese Buddhist monk, the race riots began. Later, it spread throughout the country. August was peaceful. On the 2nd September, Indians started stoning the buses and on the next day, speared a Burman to death on 24th Street. Then another riot flared up.

The Burmese being more hot-blooded, reckless and impetuous than the Indians can easily turn the tables on their aggressor.

But the Indians, being more financially powerful, can manipulate the situation ~~to~~ to their advantage. Many of the Burmese outside the city, who had had no chance to attack Indians, were shot by the military and civilian police. At the same time as the censure motion against the government was tabled, I heard that the Premier had authorised the district officers to suppress the riots with any methods at their discretion. Many monks were shot; many people were shot dead; some three to four hundred people were imprisoned in mass arrests; they were indiscriminately accused of assault and theft. After the riots were over, despite the request of the leaders for the release of these prisoners, the government refused.

During the riot up to September 9th, 165 people died and there were 818 injured. Of these, 55 deaths and the injuries suffered by 108 people were caused by the military and civilian police. Of the 55 dead, only three were Indians and the rest were Burmese.

The unnecessary piece of cruelty not only increased the hatred of the people against the Indians, but believing that the government was favouring the Indian population, hostility against them increased. In these ugly circumstances, the government remained in power, with the support of the Indian M.P.s. Seeing this, the feeling against the government increased. The hatred of the Indian increased. People became more agitated. Before the riots began, the government should have announced the banning of the booklet, they should have announced that they were unhappy at being kept in power by the Indian and European votes and resigned. Only when a government, unaided by the votes of minority (i.e. foreigner M.P.s) interests, was in power, would the tension relax; the hostility against the government would disappear. Then the new government would be able to stop the riot without the use of force but by persuasion. That government cannot destroy the influence of powerful pressure groups; although it is only the duty of the governor to protect the ~~the~~ interests of minorities M.P.s (because mostly they were selected and appointed directly by

him), the Premier is exceeding his duty unnecessarily in ~~in~~ this respect.

When it has calmed down, an investigation committee can be set up to work effectively. If this committee investigates the riot using my method, then they will be on the right path.

(6)

Indians are also demanding the formation of an investigation committee whose members were not to be from Burma - in other words, they were to be from India. These Indians, motivated only by self-interest, should take a warning. They insisted that the Indian Government should demand reparations on their behalf. They also demanded a separate state for themselves in Burma. Never satisfied, they continued the agitation knowing that the Burmese Government could be manipulated. Now the Indian representatives are asking the help of Muslim League and the Indian Congress Government. It is likely that they will intervene.

We ~~are~~ are not in favour of the present Congress which is controlled by right-wingers.

The Indians in Burma consider the country their colony; they regard it as their own land. Those who, perhaps not encouraging this attitude, yet do nothing to stop it, are the present Congress.

I have heard many times of the policy of the leaders of this Congress; they believe that we should ^{be} grateful because the prosperity of Burma largely depends on the imagination and wealth of the Indian. The British have said exactly this in relation to their presence in India. Indian newspapers voice the same opinions. When I was in Calcutta, I read in a newspaper that the leaders were protesting against the British saying such a thing and yet they themselves did exactly the same; and I also read in another article that the Indian should not say this to the Burmese. While Congress is controlled by leaders such as Gandhi, Desai, Patel, Burma will never hold it in respect. Only when people like Nehru, Dr. Ahmed and others control Congress will the Burmese respect it. Together with Congress, we will fight for independence; together, we will solve Indo-Burman problems. Until the time arrives when the left wing are in power in Congress, the Indian will never understand the Burmese and ~~the~~ we will never understand the Indian.

In November 1938, Saya Lun wrote his famous Thakhin Tika , a master-piece and the last Tika written in the period which this thesis covers. An account of this Tika and an assessment of it will be given later in this ~~xxx~~ chapter.

The publication of the Thakhin Tika coincided with the split in the Thakhin Party, the Dobama Asi-ayone . The tension and bitter hostility between the opposing groups was reflected in the political publications ^{of} the time. Thakhin Nyi wrote a small booklet called An account of external intrigues and internal dissensions of the Thakhins from the vantage point of a member of the innercircle. Indeed, this Thakhin crisis was regarded as a national issue; A-myo-thar Thein Maung, who had no connection with any Thakhin movement contributed a booklet called Thakhins' crisis and my views, which was published at about the same time as the above-mentioned booklet.

Just before the end of the 1938, Kyaw Zin from Zigon and Thakhin Tin from Thonze (both these towns belonged to the Tharazawaddy District, where the Saya San rebellion was rooted) wrote The struggles of the tenant cultivators and An account of the Capitalists respectively. Although Kyaw Zin's contribution was a small one,

dealing directly with the problems of the peasants, it appears to be the first of its kind. Similar publications followed in later years.

The year 1939 began with political writing on the students' affair which was at its height. In January Takkatho Ko Ko Gyi wrote a booklet called The conflict between the Students and the Police on the students' demonstration which took place on December 20th 1938 and led to the death of Ko Aung Gyaw, one of the student martyrs of the nationalist struggle. Ko Ko Gyi's version of that incident must certainly have differed from the 1938 Report of the Rangoon Town Police which said that " the Indian police guarding the grounds were at first watchful and patient, even though onlookers as well as students were hostile". Ko Ko Gyi would probably have revealed that there was a police raid on a nearby newspaper office, the Sun Press, presumably to destroy photographic evidence of the affair. The student incident at Mandalay on February 10, 1939, in which 17 people lost their lives naturally prompted another booklet about students' affairs and incidents. Students' Crisis was contributed by the chief student leader of that time, Ko Ba Hein, a radical progressive leftist, the president of the A.B.S.U. 50,000 copies of this booklet were published by the Nagarni Book Club, ten times more than Ko Ko Gyi's book. Another booklet on student activities was Mye-nan Maung's

The Mandalay Massacre. It must have been a first hand account of the Mandalay incident. We are ignorant of the identity of Mye-nan Maung but to judge by the choice of pseudonym and the title of the book, he must have been born and bred in Mandalay and probably took part in that incident or certainly witnessed that cruel and inhumane massacre.

During this year several books appeared concerned with internal politics and on national issues. Two of the major subjects were the immigration problem and the repercussions of the Government's Land Reform Programme. In the aftermath of the racial riots, especially the Indo-Burman riots of July 1938, the people became increasingly aware of the dangers of racial tensions; the politicians also played their part in drawing more and more attention to that particular problem. As a result of this publicity three books on this subject appeared during 1939. U Kan Gyi (whom I knew intimately as Head-master in my High School days) and U Ko Lay, neither of whom were politicians, gave a closer study of the population problem under the title Burma's Population Problem (Volumes I & II) written with a modern scientific approach. U Tun Aye, one of the founder members of Nagarni Book Club, an ardent progressive leftist, wrote a book called Burma's affairs - a close study of current affairs and politics in which he emphasised population, racial and immigration problems. U Tun Aye was a very close ~~xxxx~~ comrade of Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Than Tun, Thakhin Soe, Ko Ba Hein etc., and he also founded

the Burma Publishing House a sister publishing house of Nagarni Book Club, which served as one of the major publishers for progressive political writing. Dr. Thein Maung, the right hand man of Dr. Ba Maw, dealt with the problem more directly. His book was called Danger to Burmans - the immigration problem. The frustrations encountered in the Burma Government's efforts to introduce a programme of land reform were attributable to administrative deficiencies. Of the four aspects of the problem examined by the Land and Agricultural Committee, namely (1) tenancy, (2) land alienation, (3) agricultural finance, colonization, and land purchase, and (4) the regulation of money-lending, only the first was made into law in time to get a real testing administratively. The Tenancy Act was passed in May, 1939 but the measure proved unworkable. The Land Alienation Act, proposed by Dr. Ba Maw in 1938-39, forbade the transfer of land held by an agriculturalist to a nonagriculturalist. But as ~~the~~ the Act was finally passed only in 1941, it was consequently never put into effect and never tested in the courts. As the majority of the ~~Burmese~~ Burmese population were peasants, the problem was a national one and attracted a great deal of publicity and public interest. U Win of Twante published a pamphlet called simply The Land Alienation Act and the Tenancy Act. ~~XXXX~~ Maung Nu from Zalun wrote at much greater

length in his The Land Tenancy Act and rights of cultivators. But the most notable book on this subject was contributed by Thakhin Mya, the able and respected founder of the Socialist Party and All Burma Peasants Organization, under the title of The Tenancy Act with annotations. Judging by its title the most pathetic and bitter outcry on behalf of the peasants came from Thakhin Ba Sein, under the title Problems of the peasants, slave of the slave. It was published by the Burma Left Book Club. Thakhin Ba Sein later became a conservative right ~~wing~~ wing Thakhin and after the Second World War in 1947-48, he also got the nickname of Jinnah Ba Sein on Burma's independence issue.

One of the most interesting books giving vivid descriptions of police activities and the conditions inside the detention centres, police stations and jails was My personal experiences in Jail - collected and edited by Thakhin Ohn Myint. This book contained contributions by seven Thakhins including Thakhin Than Tun. Its interest lies in the fact that it was not merely a spectator's or hearsay account but it was a description of their own unfortunate personal experiences. Thakhin Ko Ko Lay, who was detained by the police on the 24th December, 1938, was not actually a Thakhin.

He was a reporter, from the Toe-tet-yay Daily. On that particular morning, he was on duty as a reporter as well as being one of the huge crowd who were awaiting the release of the body of Bo Aung Gyaw, the student martyr, who had lost his life at the brutal hands of the police, during the students' demonstration only four days previously. When Ko Ko Lay heard that Thakhin San Tun Hla, General Secretary of Dobama Asi-ayone, Rangoon Circle, had been arrested by the police and taken to the Phayre Street Police Station, he immediately followed them there to get more information about this arrest. In the process he found himself arrested and sent to prison, although he had committed no crime. When he was released from prison on January 7th 1939 he came out a new man - the Thakhin Ko Ko Lay - inspired, ready to do anything for his country's freedom and the cause of social revolution.

Another contributor, Thakhin San Tun Hla, the General Secretary of Dobama Asi-ayone, Rangoon Circle, ^{was} an ardent and radical Thakhin who carried out his duty as a nationalist most recklessly. He ran the risk of unjust restrictions without fear. He was the first of the politicians who was arrested and sentenced to ~~the~~ prison under the Rangoon Emergency Security Act. Moreover, he was the one who objected publicly and vociferously to the Rangoon Emergency

Security Act introduced during the ~~22~~ Indo-Burman riots in 1930. Thakhin Aye Kyi from Zigon was one of the Executive Members of Dobama Asi-ayone Central Committee. He was arrested while he was at his work at the Dobama Asi-ayone headquarters. He was sent to jail and, given no reason, was segregated from his fellow detainee Thakhins and placed in solitary confinement. This was the treatment reserved for the most dangerous criminals in the last few days before they were executed.

Another Thakhin was the late Thakhin Than Tun (died October, 1968), one of the top communist leaders in Burma. At that time, he was one of the most important members of the Central Committee, a member of the Dobama Asi-ayone who devoted all his time and who gave all his efforts and energy to the nationalist cause and the Asi-ayone.

Thakhin Thin was the headmaster of a High School in Chauk and particularly interested in Trade Union movements. He was first arrested during the Oil-field Workers' March and sent to prison for six months. He had already been in Magwe Jail, Insein Jail and Rangoon Central Jail - in other words, he had considerable experience of prison-life. Another one was Thakhin Myo Nyunt, a reporter for the Toe-tet-yay Daily. He was arrested while ~~he~~ he was taking

photographs of the demonstration in front of the Pa-zun-daung Police Station, where tear gas bombs were used for the first time in Burma on January 31st 1939. He was detained at the Central Detention Centre, Barr Street, Rangoon.

One of the most interesting among the contributors was Thakhin Hla Maung of Taungoo, who was popularly known as Seven times jailed Thakhin Hla Maung. He was ^{an} extremely stubborn and unyielding person. His accounts of cruelties and tortures which he suffered at the hands of the police and jail officials proves how tough and stubborn he was. The occasion of his first arrest was most unusual, unprecedented in Burma, perhaps in international ~~the~~ legal history. It was popularly known in Burmese as khwe: khon: pron: pran kap mhu - (the case of stamping the dog-head upside down). A postage stamp in Burmese is khon: - which literally means " head ". One day in early 1935, ~~Thakhin~~ Thakhin Hla Maung posted a letter with a stamp, bearing the head of King George V which he placed upside down and in defiance of the government he wrote just under the stamp the remark " I stamped this dog-head upside down ". For this he was arrested, tried and sentenced to six months imprisonment with hard labour on 10th April 1935 at Taungoo.

This book is really very interesting. It covers a number of topics from accounts of Police and Jail officials' cruelty to prison reforms. It also provides information on 1300 (Burmese Era) The year of Revolutions (i.e. 1938 A.D.), the Oil-field Workers and Peasants March, especially, the students' crisis, the political unrest of that time, and the activities of the Dobama Asi-ayone. There are also vivid descriptions of how the writers were arrested, where they were detained, what sorts of treatment they got and whom they met inside the jails. At that time, almost all the progressive nationalists were in jail. They were mainly Thakhins but there were also some other independents - such as Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Than Tun, Thakhin Thein Pe (Myint), Thakhin Hteik Tin Kodaw Gyi (President of Dobama Asi-ayone), Thakhin Thin (Chauk), Thakhin Thin (Tavoy), Thakhin San Tun Hla, Thakhin Ba Tha, Thakhin Than (Wa-ke-ma), Thakhin Aye Kyi, Thakhin Hla Saw, Thakhin Hla Thaung , Thakhin Tun Sein, Thakhin Kalargyi, Thakhin Tin (Bahan), Thakhin Ko Ko Lay, Thakhin ~~Narayan~~ Narayan Singh (Syriam), Thakhin Aung Tauk, and some others. Other notable prisoners were Deedok U Ba Choe, Ko Hla Shwe (President, A.B.S.U.), Ko Ba Hein (President, R.U.S.U.), ~~KmxRt~~ Ko Ba Swe (General Secretary, R.U.S.U.), Ko Soe Maung (also known as Thagaya Nga Soe - later as Myan-ma-a-lin U Soe Maung - by then Executive Council Member of R.U.S.U.) and also a number of Bhikkhus

such as Thakhin U Ācara, U Āloka, U Khemā, U Paṇṭawāṃsa, U Dhammapiya, U Dhammikawāṃsa - etc. This book is a first-hand account of the political scene between 1938-39, which includes information valuable for those who want to compile the history of the Dobama Asi-ayone and the Thakhin Movements, in other words, this book must be one of the books which historians of modern Burma cannot overlook.

During this year, there ~~appeared~~ appeared several books which contained anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, especially anti-Japanese, opinions and some very pro-leftist ideas. ~~Japan speaks out~~ Japan speaks out by U Thein was about the Japanese hopes of conquest and aggression and of how they were going to expand their empire throughout the whole of the East occupying one country after another. U Ba Tin's Secret agent of Japan revealed information about Japanese spy rings, their tactics and their activities. U Ba Galay's Fascist aggressor and Shwe U Daung's All Hitler has done no doubt gave detailed comments on fascist nations' aggressions against other helpless countries. On the Sino-Japanese conflict, the only book that appeared was a pro-Chinese one, I speak for China by U Tun Hla. To judge from these publications, it is fair to say that on the whole, although Burmans cooperated when the Japanese attacked British-Burma in 1941-42, they were definitely not pro-Japanese. Chance and

circumstances dictated plans and policy. Leftist literature came mainly from the Nagarni Book Club and Burma Publishing House - and sometimes from some individual publishers. Among them are included Hla Shwe's Capitalism (Nagarni Book Club), Ba Hein's The World of Capitalists (Burma Publishing House), U Hla's Soviet Russia (Kyee-pwar-yay), Thakhin Soe's Socialism.

Ko Ba Hein's The World of Capitalists was actually an adaptation of R.P. Dutt's Fascism and Social Revolution. It was translated into Burmese and examples are drawn not only from international events used by Dutt but also from Burmese sources. This book contains a strong flavour of pro-Communist ideas. One very interesting aspect of the book is its preface and introduction. The preface ~~xxx~~ of nearly 20 pages was contributed by the late Thakhin Than Tun, the White Flag Communist leader and an introduction of the same length was written by Thakhin Soe, the Red Flag (Trotskyist) Communist leader, one time great comrades and later to become bitter enemies.

In the first chapter of his book Ko Ba Hein describes the emergence and the development of capitalism from the pre-historic age to the present day. He vividly describes the difficulties, the appalling status and the poverty-stricken life of the peasant

and labouring proletariats. He explains how the whole human community was affected by capitalism and the growing problem of unemployment. The second chapter discusses the methods of production and distribution under the capitalistic system. He emphasises especially, how the capitalists maintained the prices of commodities artificially and in their efforts to maintain a steady rate of supply and demand would prefer to destroy their produce in the face of dreadful poverty and need rather than face a glutted market. The undeniable facts and figures and statistics he gives in support of his advocacy were really shocking, especially for the Burmese who had never heard of such appalling things either in their present or in their past. The arguments are so powerful that although the reader would not perhaps turn left or communist overnight, the book must have built a disgust of capitalism.

The growing monopolistic power of the big capitalists can be demonstrated by this example:- (pp.131-132)

The big capitalist, B.O.C. (Burmah Oil Company),
 swallowed the small capitalists Twāñ:-cā:¹. Silawā Oil Company
 sponsored by U Chit Hlaing (G.C.B.A. Nationalist) was swallowed

1. Twāñ:-cā: = local oil-field owner

up by the B.O.C. In the oil-field areas the Indian-owned ~~ind~~ oil companies only survived because they were allowed to snatch the few crumbs that fell from the table of the B.O.C. As for the B.O.C., they knew that these Indians, who were also foreigner exploiters like themselves, would ~~ne~~ never constitute any serious threat to them and ~~who~~ therefore could be ignored. If it were otherwise, the Indian oil ^mcopanies would certainly have been destroyed.

Approximately between 1910 and 1928, there arose bitter rivalry in Moulmein area between Talaing (Mon) richman U Nar Ok's Steamer Ferries and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's Steamer Ferries. When U Nar Ok's company charged four ~~an~~ annas for a journey whose distance was worth about four annas - the Irrawaddy reduced their fare to three annas. When U Nar Ok made a further reduction to two annas, the Irrawaddy slashed theirs again by one anna. At which U Nar Ok decided not to charge at all for the fare. In reply the Irrawaddy, not only allowed the passengers to travel free of charge, but made a present of a scarf to each using their steamer. ~~En~~ In the long run, poor U Nar Ok who had only a limited capital found himself unable to compete with the Irrawaddy Company which held multi-

million investments in Scotland. He was forced to admit defeat and the Irrawaddy established its monopoly.

In the next chapters, Ko Ba Hein first of all explains the meaning of Imperialism, describes the series of battles and wars of the imperialists. After a discussion of the causes of imperialism, its defects and horrors, he continues on the subject of Fascism. He defines fascism, describes the growth of it in Italy and Germany and concludes by putting forward some very progressive ideas on how to combat it and urges his readers to work towards a proletarian revolution.

Ko Ba Hein was a student leader without equal in his time and later one of the best young Thakhins of progressive ideas, promises and hopes. In addition, he was a brilliant scholar and writer. He passed his High School Final Examination with distinction in three subjects out of five, English, Burmese and History. In other words, he mastered not only Burmese but also English, which was a rare phenomenon among the Burmese. He also stood first in the whole of Burma Intermediate (Arts) Examination, with distinction in Pali. With these scholastic qualities he brilliantly transformed R.P.Dutt's

Fascism and Social Revolution into the Burmese The World of of Capitalists. His Burmese was exceptionally good. His literary style was traditional but without unnecessary rhymes and verbose elaborations. His sentences are simple, (sometimes lengthy) but effective, forceful and very well constructed. The style and the content had an immediate appeal for his reader. His choice of words proved that he really mastered the languages. He used typical Burmese expressions like na-phā:-krui: tap khuin:-khrañ: (p. 59) (drive a cow with a ring through its nose) i.e. (the Capitalist) can manipulate cunningly and easily whom he chooses; mrwe-saññ (p. 129) phā:-kui mruī-sa-kai.-sui. (like the snake swallowing a frog) i.e. (the Capitalist) can destroy and absorb everyone in his path without any difficulty; lak-khup-thai-mha re kai.-sui. (p. 141) (like water in one's cupped hands) i.e. he is all powerful; [tô-lhan-re:-krī:-mhā] re-tim nac-swā:-ra-le-saññ (p. 205) i.e. [the Social Revolution] drowned in shallow water; pyā:-raññ-nhañ. wam:-khya-saññ (p. 94) (a laxative with a honey taste) i.e. to conceal a bitter truth with a sweet lie; wā-da-mhā re-phrac-swā:-le-saññ (p. 165) (the policy has melted into liquid) i.e. the leaders of the Social Revolution have vitiated it. Yet he also used directly translated phrases like pan:-khyī-cha-rā-kui myak-lum:

kan:-ce-pri: ka-byā-cha-rā-kui nā:-pañ:-ce-saññ (p. 73) - they put out the eyes of the artist and deafened the poet; kū:-cak-tat-so ro-gā-pui: kai.-sui. (p. 101) - spreading like the germs of an infectious disease; ta-ne. bun:-chañ pok-kwai-maññ (p. 167) - one day it will explode; tañ-khā: ma-rhi dhā: ma-rhi caññ:-myañ: (p. 171) - open door policy, etc. etc. Although these were direct translations of expressions from other tongues, because of his masterly touch, they sounded authentically Burmese unlike some of the so-called progressive Burmese writers' translated words or phrases. For example, even after the war Dagon Taya literally translated loan words such as krak-mri: pā-tī (cocktail party); wat-lac-ca-lac lam:-ma-kri: (naked street); chañ-cway tai-nan: (ivory castle); pañ-ma-re-ci: (main stream); rhwe-'ui-roñ (old gold colour) which were quite alien to the average Burmese; only a handful of people who understand English would get the right meaning.

Moreover, Ko Ba Hein's book contains quite a number of phrases and coined words whose origin is difficult to trace for average persons because they sound so Burmese. For example - lu-yañ-khet (p. 58) (age of civilization); lū-a-tan:-a-ca: khwai-khrā:-mhu (p. 60) - (class distinction); tim-mrup-chai mre-puiñ-rhañ-ca-nac (p. 73) - (declining feudalism); a-rañ:-rhañ-ca-nac-e' a-prac-a-nā-a-chā-myā: (p. 71) - (the defects of capitalism); lū.-a-phwai.-a-caññ:-kri:-e'

a-chī-a-nhac sã-ra-o-jā-myā: (p. 71) - (the essence of human society); se-maṇ:-ta-man-myā: (p. 85) - (deadly weapons); a-pui-sum: a-pyô-sum: paccaññ-myā: (p. 106) - (luxury goods); chī-khyak-caṇ (p. 127) - (oil refinery); lak-rhi mā nuiṇ-naṁ-myā: nhaṇ.lak-mai. nuiṇ-naṁ-myā: (p. 161) - (haves and have-nots) - etc. etc.

Looked at as a whole, Ko Ba Hein's book must be judged a success. The literary style is one of the best; simple, clear, precise. His presentation is forceful and he is an excellent advocate of his aims and objects. Generally speaking post-war Burmese views and attitudes were greatly influenced by the ideas formulated and brilliantly presented by him. This is one of the great reasons in my view why the Burmese during their independence struggles and after they gained their independence did not lean towards the West like Thailand, Burma's neighbour with whom she had much in common. There are many reasons why Burmans loathe capitalism, imperialism and fascism but one of the reasons is no doubt the influence of Ko Ba Hein, especially through his book. If he had met his death at such an early age (he died on December 20th 1946, not yet 30 years old) I am sure political trends in Burma would not be the same. His personality, his ability and his integrity were rare attributes among Burmese leaders and politicians.

Another book which advocated leftist ideas was Socialism compiled and written by Thakhin Soe. It was published in November, 1939, at a time when most of the progressive young Thakhins were launching their attacks against Capitalism and Imperialist overlords, and advocating left wing ideas and socialist reforms. There appeared one book in support of them. It was called Soviet Russia written by Kyee-pwar-yay U Hla (now known as Ludu U Hla), a staunch member of the left wing movement. He published that book through his own publication house Kyee-pwar-yay Taik, Mandalay. U Hla, one of the well known leaders of World Peace Congress (Burma), has been one of the most loyal left wing writers since he first embraced the idea up to the present day (1968). This book Soviet Russia was a discussion of the development of Russia under Communism and the Communist leadership.

While some ardent young progressive leftist writers were advocating radical opinions and praising communist countries, some writers pre-occupied with the dangers of Fascism were also contributing anti-fascist propaganda. U Thein translated Japan speaks out into Burmese early in 1939, and U Ba Tin also translated Secret agent of Japan almost immediately after. Shwe U Daung, one of the literary

giants in Burma, contributed All Hitler has done and U Ba Galay, a leading journalist of the ~~him~~ time wrote Fascist Aggression towards the end of 1939.

The outbreak of war in Europe prompted Burmese writers to make their contribution on the subject. Thakhin Kha wrote The Great War - who is responsible ? and Myoma Maung wrote The Great War. Thein Pe (Myint) asked the question, Who is wrong ? Hitler or Chamberlain ?. Saya Hein and Khin Myo Chit revealed The secret agents of the War and also Shwe U Daung uncovered The secrets of the Great War while Thu Ta recorded The World War Memoirs. To keep abreast of the swift changes ~~mtf~~ of current international politics, Thakhin Hla Pe contributed his Political Map of the World for the Burmese.

During 1940 more than 40 political books were published according to the Burma Catalogue. Their subjects reflect the great events and issues of the days: they include the great war, political ideologies, the revolutions, great leaders, internal affairs, peasants' problems, workers' problems - and the splits among the Thakhin Party.

Concerning the great war, Thakhin Chit Maung (the outstanding Communist M.P. Thakhin Chit Maung of the post-war period) wrote Britain

and the World War, Thakhin Hla Pe wrote War and Socialism. Thakhin Aye contributed the ideas of his party under the title of The present war and Dobama policy. Tha Dun described The present war but most important of all Thakhin Aung San with 3 others contributed Wmiz World War and Burma. To give a clearer picture of this work, here is an extract from Thakhin Aung San's article:-

WORLD WAR AND BURMA

by

THAKHIN AUNG SAN

As soon as this war broke out the English, French and Germans all declared their war aims. Indeed, this was just a formality to get support from other powerful countries. If we disregard these published aims and if we really examine the roots of war, the only possible cause of it is to be found in capitalism. In this world, if we shut our eyes to the existence of capitalism - that is, the blood-sucking attitude of one person to another, one class to another - one country to another, there will always be wars one after another.

If we analyse the present wars, Japan is fighting China on behalf of Japanese Capitalists. They don't want to see Western exploiters like the English, American and French Capitalists in China: they want to monopolise the whole country themselves. That is why they attacked China. The war between Germany and the English and French is also attributable to the same cause. But the Civil war in Finland was a different matter. It is a war of capitalists against proletarians. Well, those wars are inevitable as long as we tolerate the terrible existence of capitalism whose main aim is only exploitation and profit with whatever means, however unjustifiable. It is not to be wondered at.

We don't want war. We don't want one person oppressing another, one class oppressing another, one country oppressing another. We don't want big nations oppressing small ones, or strong ones strangling the weaker ones. We want nothing of this kind. That is why we don't want the imperialism which enslaved all our people and overpowered our country. We want to destroy it and we are determined to do so. We have our reasons for wanting to crush imperialism. We don't hate foreigners, we don't hate other races - by ³ means. The reason we oppose imperialism is that we can't accept injustice

and we will never accept it. We hate to see any war - it can produce no benefit for mankind. The reasons of the present wars and conflicts throughout the world are rooted in imperialistic ideas and policies. Therefore as far as these present wars are concerned, the very first duty of all Burmese citizens is to join with other world wide forces and crush capitalist-imperialism down to its roots. To this, I need add no more.

In this present war - for the benefit of Burma, it is very important to realize that Burmese political parties have a great responsibility now. To that end the Dobama Asi-ayone took great care and paid great attention. The Dobama Asi-ayone gave full co-operation in establishing freedom and achieving national unity. Not long ago, the Dobama Asi-ayone held their All Burma Executive Committee meeting in Mandalay and a resolution was passed as follows:-

WORLD AFFAIRS AND BURMESE AFFAIRS

After listening to the report on the political situation by the Central Executive Committee, this All Burma Executive Committee meeting has agreed to announce this as their policy for World Affairs and Burmese Affairs.

(A) World Affairs

- (1) The British and French Governments have declared as their reason for their part in this present war against Nazi Germany that they are protecting the Free World, Democracy, and are preventing the maltreatment of small countries by big ones.

- (a) Poland's ex-government was a feudalism-capitalism-fascist government. It enjoyed no popular support from the people. That explains the ease with which Germany occupied parts of Poland. When the Proletarian [what he means is ' Socialist '] Soviet Army marched into Poland the villagers and peasants from that area gave them a hearty welcome.
- (b) Burma and India have demanded their independence in alignment with the published war aims of the

British Government which has not yet bothered to send a reply.

- (c) The French Government persist in their cant about freedom and democracy, yet they have declared the French Communist Party illegal and tried to crush it. Moreover, there is no sign that France will allow her colonies their ~~and~~ independence.
- (d) What is actually taking place in Finland is a civil war. Soldiers from the Soviet Union, champions of World Peace and World Freedom who always help with words and deeds, are fighting hand to hand with the People's Finnish Government.

For all the reasons given above we believe and declare that this present great war is not for the sake of the independence of small nations nor for the world's freedom. It is only the evil result of imperialism.

(2) As for the Soviet Union -

- (a) As soon as she achieved power, that is as soon as she became Socialist in 1917, she granted independence to all her colonies including Finland.

- (b) In the cause of World Freedom for instance in China, Spain, etc., she has given her help and she is still helping.
- (c) She has signed a non-aggression pact with ^{the} German government, with whom she ~~had~~ had a similar treaty since the end of World War I up to 1934, just to preserve her present strength, after she had made fruitless efforts for 5/6 months negotiating with British and French governments for World Peace against Hitler and the Nazi regime.
- (d) She has already signed peace treaties with her neighbouring countries without taking undue advantage of their relative weakness.
- (e) She has granted freedom to the peasants of the area occupied by her in Poland, of which she had to take charge immediately and control because it was deserted by the Polish Government.
- (f) To protect Finland's independence, she has signed a mutual-aid pact with the People's Finnish Government.....

for reasons such as those given above, we recognize the

Soviet Union as a ' blazing light ' (champion) of Proletarians and of lovers of the World's Freedom not only in the present war but also in previous wars.

(3) World affairs and Burma's affairs are inseparable. In world affairs we proclaimed our policies and attitudes:-

- (a) We do not like and we will not accept any political ideology which will oppress and exploit at the price of another country's freedom.
- (b) Until our country regains her independence, we are not going to consider ' war support ' for any other country.
- (c) For mutual benefit we will maintain our friendship as far as we can with any country, especially our neighbours and the countries from the East.
- (d) In every war many people die or become slaves; ordinary folk pay more taxes; and because of the profiteers people suffer and life becomes more difficult. Therefore, we must try to end this present war, which is only the result of imperialism, as soon as possible - and proletarians from all over the world and all the

colonies under foreign rule must seize the initiative and strive to this end with all their might.

(B) Burma's Affairs

(1) Having declared our policy in World Affairs, the following is our policy in Burma's Affairs.

(a) We must do all we can to crush imperialism, which made our country, Burma, a slave. We must do our best to destroy the new administration (under the Government of Burma Act, 1935), the fortress of British imperialistic machinery, and must try to create our own Burmese Government according to the wishes of our people.

(b) We are unhesitatingly ready to co-operate with any other political parties or associations who believe and accept the above points and for the sake of our country we will do all we can to achieve political unity in Burma.

(2) The previous special meeting of All Burma Executive Committee

has laid down the above policies and has passed a resolution that the Central Executive Committee should be empowered to fulfil the terms of these policies. Thus, we declare that we endorse our support of the 3 basic policy points of Burma Freedom Bloc (a united political front, which consists of Sin-ye-thar Party, Ngar-bwint-saing Party, and Dobama Asi-ayone). As the Burma Freedom Bloc is gaining some support from the nation, it is very obvious that our people are impatient for their freedom and unity.

With the aim of strengthening the policies and activities of the Burma Freedom Bloc

- (a) It is necessary to do all we can to arouse the political consciousness of our people and make them realize the real value of freedom.
- (b) It is necessary to breed new ardent leaders who will lead these people.
- (c) It is also necessary to have financial support and resources for our independence movements.....

This All Burma Executive Committee meeting has decided
 * to recruit more and more Dobama Asi-ayone members; to
 organize and establish Bama Letyone Tat¹ and to give vigorous
 training; to organize classes and lectures to further political
 knowledge; to organize (nation-wide) seminars and meetings;
 to collect more party funds; to propagate our aims and objects
 not only in Burma but also abroad. In this way, we can show
 the extent of our initiative and genuine willingness and
 co-operation with the Freedom Bloc.

This is the time for the Burmese Independence Movement
 to transfer from the theoretical stage into the practical stage.
 Actions or deeds alone are not important. One must know the
 right time and the right place for these actions to have maximum
 effect. Basically, we are not questioning the importance of
 man and his efforts, but action at the right time and the right
 place will give quicker results and more considerable achieve-
 ments. In the Burmese Independence Movement we have already
 achieved the second and third points - that is, right time and
 right place. The only thing we need now is our efforts. Then
 how shall we achieve this effort ?

1. Bama Letyone Tat = a kind of private army sponsored by the
Dobama Asi-ayone

- (1) First as Burma wants Freedom, she has now demanded it. This fact must be well publicised not only within Burma but all over the world. And our organization must be as effective as possible.
- (2) While we are propagating our ends, for the sake of our country's independence we must try to achieve political unity in our country regardless of parties, policies and personalities. When we say 'political unity' we do not mean merely the unity of leaders. To be able to stand against ~~the~~ imperialism we need all our people - workers, students, women, business-men, office-workers, peasants, tenant-farmers, field labourers, Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen and all our minority races - to be united. That is, the unity of the entire nation. At present, in our Dobama Asi-ayone, apart from so-called educated and some wealthy people, like doctors, lawyers, business-men etc., our organization has already had some effect and we have already achieved a degree of unity. The reason why we organized the Freedom Bloc was to gain co-operation in the national freedom movement.

- (3) While we are propagating, while we are seeking political unity - we must not overlook the importance of the present existing problems of peasants (the most important problem in Burma), workers, etc.
- (4) After we have finished our preliminaries and when we are prepared we will choose one method which has been proved to be the best and most suitable in the world's independence movements and will fight systematically stage by stage for our freedom.

If we lay our plans like this and if we pursue them accordingly, it is most likely that we shall see an Independent Burma in the very near future. Even if we can't get independence at least we will get a much better administrative system than the present one. When Burma gets a better administrative system - there is no doubt that we will get better leadership and the standard of political awareness will also rise in response. Best of all, we will gain valuable experience. Then it will be much easier for us to take the next steps in our fight for freedom.

So what we must do from now on and what we must give our special attention to is.....

- (1) With the help of students or using student power, we must give propaganda lectures about our aims and objects, throwing light on major subjects like independence, the abolition of the (present) Arms and Ammunition Act and giving a true picture of world events. We must establish voluntary fighting forces like Bama Letyone Tat. We must seek to increase the membership of Dobama Asi-ayone. We must get in touch with foreign countries such as China, India, United Kingdom, etc., either personally or through letters, to publicize our ends. We must publish books and pamphlets about Burma. To achieve the entire nation's support, we must arrange All Burma Political (Unity) Meetings; National Weeks; Resistance Day against the present administrative system (or The Government of Burma Act, 1935); and during the National Week we must collect anti-imperialism and Freedom for Burma signatures to show our strength.
- (2) As the trend of present-day politics is not as it was in olden-days (it is no longer a gentlemen's affair), we must always remind the people and instigate them

to be alert always; to encourage nationalistic ideas, to forget partisan spirit; to achieve comradeship among workers, peasants, students, among all classes of people; to achieve genuine unity among all Burmans regardless of whether they are Shan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, etc. ; most important of all is to let all the native people in Burma know, without distinction or discrimination, that ' Freedom ' is for them and not to let them forget that their freedom is their duty.

- (3) We must do all these things and at the same time, we must not neglect other problems of our peasants, workers, students, and in connection with these problems we must always seize our opportunity to talk about independence, the evils of new administration, etc. These problems may perhaps appear small, but these are preliminaries for the major issue (Revolution) and the solution to people's social problems, economic problems and political problems depends mainly on our country's freedom. We must try ~~to~~ to ensure that these facts are clearly known to all individuals. We must seek more membership (for Dobama Asi-ayone). We must organize more Bama Letyone Tat and we must collect ' Independence Funds '.

- (4) At the forthcoming Dobama Asi-ayone Convention, we shall present our forthcoming activities and future plans for our independence movements.

For example, we must draw a political plan to fight this anti-imperialism revolution, which must be acceptable to all people, regardless of class and category. We must do our best to produce many young leaders who will lead this revolution. We ~~must~~ must lay down the necessary rules and regulations about how we are ~~gum~~ going to collect, preserve and spend our ' Independence Funds '.

' Independence ' is not a thing which you can easily achieve by proposing a motion in Parliament. A Parliamentary Motion is only good for publicity and propaganda. It needs action. We will only achieve it by action. We will get nowhere by lying around sleeping. It is no good trying solo leadership. It is no good buying votes - or chasing the offices. It is no use shouting slogans all the time. We must work with all our might. We must work painstakingly. We must do our best whatever the cost may be. We must sacrifice ourselves. Then only we will meet our ends. Then only we will get what we want - that is, our victory crown - Independence. Imperialism - Capitalism -

whatever it may be - has also its ups-and-downs - this is the law of nature - impermanence is one of the Four Noble Truths.

Nothing and nobody can escape it. Capitalism has to create workers. Imperialism has to create an educated class to use as the tools in their bureaucratic machinery for their conquered colonies. But these workers and educated people, when they achieve some enlightenment, revolt against their creators and the system. The imperialists have to build railways systems, highway roads and better communications in our country so that they can transport their goods and commodities with less cost to make more profit. But on the other hand, these roads and better communication systems have served for us as a mainstream for our national unity. In this way capitalist-imperialism has played its part in our society with mixed results - with one hand it carries a flaming torch and with the other a bucket of water. They have done something good for us, as well as exploiting us as much as they could and they have oppressed us inhumanly. Because of these irregularities, there is no cause to be surprised that the present situation in Burma has reached its height in tensions and troubles. Therefore, our duty as members of human society is to study the pros and cons of imperialism seriously and be prepared to take the necessary action when the time comes.

While we are preparing for our independence movement we must be careful not to let disunity create classes or races among us. So beware of the imperialist masters' tactics to split us. Don't use unnecessary haste. Don't give up hope before we have actually started. Our victory is sure, of that there is no doubt. We have still a lot of good time - and this is our opportunity to do our best for our country's independence. Well, dear comrades, let us not waste our time and let us do all we can with all our means and might.

OUR REVOLUTION SHALL SUCCEED.

Sd. Thakhin Aung San.

While the flames of war were spreading rapidly throughout Europe, Asia was soon engaged in her own conflagration. China had to cope not ~~ma~~ only with a civil war between the Kuomintang and the Communists but she also had to withstand a Japanese invasion. Burma felt the inevitable repercussions of this on account of the common boundaries she shared with China and because the allied countries were using the 'Burma Road' as a highway supply route to aid the

Chinese against Japanese aggression. This war was a matter of immediate concern for the politicians and the ordinary people of Burma and public interest is reflected in several books published on the subject at this time.

U Tun Pe of the Sun Daily wrote a book called The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution published by the Nagarni Book Club. He later became Minister of Information during the AFPFL regime - but resigned his post on the celebration of the Sixth Buddhist Synod (1954-56), as the result of differences between himself and Thakhin Nu, the Prime Minister. Till the present time (1968) U Tun Pe remains the only person in Burmese political history who gave up his office on an issue of policy. Again from the Nagarni Book Club publication, there appeared Inside Asia written by U Ba Khaing. U Thein also contributed a book called Eastern Problems which was published by Aung-lan-daw Press, Rangoon. The most interesting of these books was China, by Thakhin Nu published by Nagarni Book Club as a special issue. It was a personal account of his own experience as a member of the Burmese Goodwill Mission to China in December 1939.

The book Ganda-layit (classical Burmese name for China) indicated that Thakhin Nu was familiar not only with Sun Yat-Sen's

San Min Chu I (Three People's Principles) but also with the opinions of the rising Chinese Communists. Although he was definitely pro-Chinese, it is rather difficult to estimate whether he took the side of Chiang Kai-Shek or of Mao Tse-Tung, because his group good-will trip was to Chiang Kai-Shek's China - and there was very little chance for him to see the then Communist China. In his book he mentioned that he had ~~xxx~~ only met three Communists (unnamed) in Chungking. But there is no doubt of his feeling against the Japanese, frequently referring to them as 'Imperialist Japanese'. Here is his own remarkable description of bombing raids on Chungking, May the 3rd and 4th of 1939. (pp. 33-41)

Japanese bombers come and attack the City of Chungking mainly on moonlit nights or at mid-day when the sky is clear. The citizens have to dig long trenches under the mountains as air-raid shelters to protect their lives. In one air-raid shelter there is room for 100 to 150 people.

As soon as the Japanese bombers leave their stations, Chinese espionage agents send a warning by wireless to the Chinese authorities. Then, as soon as the message is received

an air-raid siren is sounded in the appropriate areas. When the people heard the first siren, they understood that they had to gather their valuables, and go to the air-raid shelters to take protection.

When the Japanese planes come nearer the towns or the areas, there comes the second siren. This siren means that except for the soldiers and the firemen everybody in the city must enter the shelters. The Japanese bombers leave either when they have accomplished their missions or when they have been driven out by the Chinese fighter-planes. Then there comes the third siren, the 'all clear'.

So in China every citizen clearly understands that the first air-raid siren means 'be prepared', the second siren 'take shelter' and the third and final siren means 'all clear'.

It was May the 3rd 1939. According to the Burmese Lunar calendar it was the day of the Full Moon of Ka-son, the Wesak Day. As Wesak Day was Buddha's Birthday, it was the holiest day for all Buddhists. On that particularly holy day,

Buddhists observe their Sīla¹, practise their Bhāwanā², and spread their Mettā³ to gain merit. These meritorious deeds are normally strictly observed by most Buddhists on that particular day.

BUT THE JAPANESE, SO-CALLED BUDDHISTS, HAVE CHOSEN THIS DAY TO BOMB, TO KILL THE PEOPLE.

On that day, the bombers arrived in the city, an hour or so after the second air-raid siren. So, when they dropped their bombs most of the citizens of Chungking had already taken shelter. As a result there were very few casualties, only some buildings including banks, factories and shops were damaged. Some were destroyed by a direct hit, but most of them were damaged or burnt down by incendiary bombs.

On the next day, May the 4th, that is, one day after the Full Moon Day of Ka-son, the citizens of Chungking, feeling that the Japanese bombers would not attack on two consecutive days went about their normal duties, saw to their business etc.

-
- | | | | |
|----|----------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | <u>Sīla</u> | = | morality |
| 2. | <u>Bhāwanā</u> | = | meditation |
| 3. | <u>Mettā</u> | = | loving-kindness, universal love or all-embracing kindness |

But the citizens of Chungking were unaware that the Japanese bomber crews would never be satisfied until they had devastated them totally and were trying rigorously and cunningly to seize their chance to bomb the city again. Therefore on that day at about 2 p.m. they were surprised to hear the first air-raid siren. About half an hour later, they heard the second siren and as usual they took shelter.

But - the time was 3.30 p.m. - there was no sign of bombers, not one. At four o'clock there was still no sign. Time passed - 6 p.m. : there was no sign of a single Japanese bomber. Then the people who had been in the shelter for such long hours became restless inside the uncomfortable trenches. Some reckless individuals came out of the shelters to stretch themselves - and quite a number of people followed their example. Nothing happened for quite a long while. Then more people came out of their shelters to ease themselves. Again nothing happened for quite a while. Then the foolhardy ones not content with getting some air, wanted to ~~mm~~ stretch their legs as well. They began to stroll in the streets. Some said, " Oh, these Japanese bombers - they could not afford to come and bomb us for the second day running " - and returned to their homes.

Those who felt the same way also went back to their homes. In this way more and more people left their shelters and left their protection.

But if only they knew that the Japanese bombers, the envoys of the King of Death, were suspended hiding among the clouds, waiting for the time to kill them - by burning them alive - with their terrible weapons the incendiary bombs, how frightened would they be ?

When almost all the people were out of their shelters and gathering on the roads, then the envoys of the King of Death, the Japanese, came out of their hiding place, from among the thick clouds, as swiftly as they could in jubilant mood. Those in charge of the warning system in panic saw the people strolling in the streets. The siren was sounded once more to warn them that the bombers were on their way. But for the people - this was the third siren and for them, the ' all clear ' siren. So everybody thought there was no more danger and those who hadn't taken unnecessary risks before came out of their shelters and went to their homes. Then only the Japanese shamelessly dropped their 72 bombers' full load of bombs

with all their might to kill innocent people. Alas! many died, thousands and thousands - numerous - countless - unthinkable. It was a disaster.

Of that day's bombing, there stands out one particular event as the most pathetic of all. Within the precincts of the City of Chungking, there was one separate area for the diplomats - the diplomatic quarter. This quarter was separated from the surrounding locality by a high concrete wall. The quarter adjacent to the diplomatic quarter was a poor Chinese area.

On that day, while the Japanese were dropping their bombs, people from this poor area, a mixed crowd of more than 300 Chinese adults and children, were looking at the sky and the bombers quite unperturbed because they believed that the Japanese would not bomb the diplomatic quarter. While they were gazing at the sky, the Japanese dropped the incendiary bombs right behind the innocent crowd. As the bombs were incendiary - highly inflammable - the fire was no ordinary fire. As soon as it exploded the fire or the flame reached near them. It was almost impossible to escape. There was only one way to save themselves. That was to climb that high concrete wall of the diplomatic quarter which stood majestically before them. Some members of the German Embassy kindly dropped down some ropes

to help them climb the wall to save themselves. But only 4 or 5 people managed to escape in this way. The rest, more than 300 of them, found no way out and burnt to death alive helplessly. Oh! it was the most horrible and unrivalled scene of tragedy. Among the victims, the most pathetic were the dead bodies of a mother and child. The child was trying to cling to the mother, while the mother was trying to seek escape for herself first. Oh! this scene exactly portrayed one of the most notable Burmese proverbs - kuiy ma-khyi a-mi sô lai sâ: tô khai (when in agony a mother will even deny being related to her son).

The death toll on that day, according to the Government list, was well over 20,000 people. Among them many women, children and old people were included. Although the fire-brigades and the fire-fighters did their best with the most modern methods at their command, the fire caused by the Japanese bombs did not die down for over three long days. Soldiers, with the help of some surviving civilians dug a big ditch for the mass burial of those whose lives had been destroyed inhumanely by the Japanese and even after three days continuous burying their work was still unfinished. There were cases of people who

became insane or lost their senses after witnessing the shocking deaths of their brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, etc. The scene was most appalling and unbearable. Even after three days of that bombing many people were still wandering around senselessly, not knowing where they were going or what they were doing. The shock had almost deprived them of their humanity.

When we arrived at Chungking, we saw only a few ruined buildings as the remaining scars of the Japanese bombing. Only a very few. Almost everything had been rebuilt by the Chinese. Not only that, the people including women and children showed no sign of fear now. They seemed very brave and fully understood that it was their duty to crush the Imperialist Japanese aggressor once and for all - and they are making their very best efforts to fulfil their duty.

I was sitting in the car and looking at the ruined buildings and listening to the accounts of that day's bombing raids. While I was listening, it occurred to me that ' I too bear a certain responsibility for all these disastrous events - for this death toll and these ruined buildings. We buy

Japanese goods - and out of the profits they get from us, these Japanese made bombs and they attacked the Chinese with these bombs. So, on the day we have cause to quarrel with them - we will suffer the same way as the Chinese ' - and I feel full of regret and repentance.

U Nu was always highly critical of the Japanese. In the last chapter of the book, Chapter 21, he clearly mentioned that after World War I, the Japanese, instead of combining the strength which they possessed and the favourable opinion the Asians had of them and providing the leadership for the liberation of Asia from the European overlords, they followed in the same footsteps of the Western imperialists and totally destroyed the favourable opinion of their fellow Asians.

In his book, he vividly described the life and the achievements of almost all the prominent Chinese figures including Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Chiang Kai-Shek, Mao Tse Tung, Lin Piao, Wan Chin Wei, Dr. Kun, Chu Te, etc. and also the history of the Kuomintang Party and the Chinese Communist Party. In one instance he described

a Chinese propaganda play of that time - Eternally live China - all four acts in detail with an account of the history of Chinese plays.

There is one very remarkable description in Chapter 12 of his book concerning Chinese Communists' guerrilla warfare against the comparatively well-armed modern Japanese army, which I am sure gave some encouragement to reckless young nationalists in their cause.

Thakhin Nu tries to deal with various subjects in his book. This shows his interest not only in current Burmese political affairs, but also in wider educational, social matters - etc. For example, in Chapter 6, he gives a detailed description of Chinese universities and the war-time system of Chinese education. And in the same chapter, he discusses with Daw Mya Sein, the only woman delegate in the mission, the size of Burmese women's breasts. He had evidently noticed that the Chinese girl students were better endowed in this respect. He did not want to see Burmese women with flat chests, because they were the mothers-to-be of future generations and future national heroes.

Like most of the Thakhins of that day, he too never missed

an opportunity to complain about imperialism. The following extract from page 97 of his book is one of several examples.

Oh! Imperialism - imperialism... You are a great evil and dreadful dangerous demon. Whenever your spirit approaches somebody - who ever the person may be, however good and virtuous in the past - they lose their genuine personality and qualities and they become devil-like.

Oh! bestial demon - you don't hesitate to kill. You have no compunction to eat alive - you have no mercy, not even for innocent children - no scruples to steal or grab or rob.

Oh! dreadful devil - because of you, universal disaster like epidemic diseases, hunger and starvation, the deaths of millions of people - are like shadows in human society. Wherever you go these disasters follow in your wake.

Oh! YOU... You are disgusting, appalling devil demon. There are no words for you. Just one word. E V I L ...

He writes vividly and forcefully. His Burmese is not remarkably striking. He uses simple and straight-forward sentences with no rhymes and no verbose elaborations. But his style suffers

from the defect of mixing colloquial and literary forms, which makes for a jerky effect. For example:

- (1) bhay-sū-bhay-wā-hū-rwe.-kā: koñ:-cwā ma-mhat-mi-luik
- (2) prā-prā-sa-lai lup-kra-e'
- (3) sa-ma-ta-kri:-mhā ... cha-tô-kri:-myā:-kui
phū:-twe.-ra-sa-lui
- (4) ta-khā-tum:-ka ñña-cā tha-man:-cā: lā-ran-a-twak
- (5) ta-khā-tum:-ka a-me-ri-kan sa-tañ:-cā-cha-rā-ta-ū:-saññ
- (6) nay-khyai.-kui a-se-a-lai mun:-tī:-so kyon:-sā:-myā:
- (7) a-prañ:-a-than lakya-guin:-sā: phrac-pri:
- (8) rhi-cu-mai.-cu-ka-le:-myā: a-lu-kham-ra-so

etc.

Despite these reservations on the literary side, his book enjoyed considerable success as political propaganda.

While war was spreading throughout both East and West, the young left wing orientated Thakhins were spreading their propaganda and preaching their ideology in the publications of their own Nagarni Book Club. Early in 1940 they published a book which could be described as the foundation from which the modern Burmese Way to Socialism developed: this book was a Burmese translation by U Ba Tin of John Strachey's The Theory and Practice of Socialism. Among Nagarni Book Club's other publications some notable works were U Tun Pe's Soviet Democracy and one's experience; U Kyaw Tint's The French Revolution; Saya Hein's The Irish Revolution.

These Thakhins also made use of Burma Publishing House to spread their ideas. This was owned U Tun Aye, one of the original founder members of the Nagarni Book Club and a close friend of many of the staunch young Thakhins like Thakhin Aung San, Thakhin Nu, Thakhin Soe, Thakhin Hla Pe, Thakhin ~~Shan~~ Than Tun, etc. Among the publications of the Burma Publishing House in 1940 there were included Thakhin Hla Pe and Thakhin Nu's joint compilation The Encyclopaedia of Politics; Thakhin Hla Pe's War and Socialism; Thakhin Tin Maung's Socialist Dictator (Stalin); and most important of all Thakhin Hla Baw's Sinn Fein. The Sinn Fein movement was much admired by these young Thakhins. It was an Irish society, founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith, aiming at political independence

and revival of Irish culture and language. It could be described as an extreme Irish nationalist party. The fruitful result of this movement in 1921 - the Irish Free State - was an object of great admiration to the radical Thakhins and average Burmese alike. And I suggest that the whole idea of the Thakhin movement was derived from this Sinn Fein movement. Even if it is not a case of wholesale adoption, certainly the name 'Dobama' (We Burmese) must be a carbon-copy of 'Sinn Fein' (Irish for We Ourselves).

Apart from the ideological books, there were several books published dealing with the problems of peasants and workers. Among them were Thakhin Ohn's We, the peasants ; Thakhin Ba Sein (at that time one of the members of Agriculture Finance Committee, appointed by the Governor) published Tenancy Ordinance Act, 1940 ; and Thakhin Soe The Labourer's World.

The period which this thesis covers ends in 1941. The Burma Catalogue, my main source of information on publications, ends in the first quarter of that year, so the books mentioned below were published in that part of the year only.

During the first quarter of 1941, the number of political books published was surprisingly low. The cause could lie in the confusions of the international situation and the internal political

situation. Or perhaps the politicians, especially the young radical Thakhins, were too busy with other work in the political field to write about it. Even the Burma Publishing House, which had established itself as one of the major publishing houses for political works since it began in 1938, published nothing at all during that period. Of all the small output in first quarter 1941, the only notable publications came from the Nagarni Book Club. These were Tekkatho Su Myaing's (later Headmaster U Su Myaing, M.P. for Nat-mauk constituency) Struggle for Freedom and Thakhin Bo's Karl Marx and his creed.

3. Saya Lun's writings

As I have already mentioned, in November 1938, he wrote his famous Thakhin Tika, a master-piece and the last Tika written in the period which this thesis covers. This Tika was his first major contribution since he adopted the name Thakhin Kodaw Hmaing in 1934. He renounced the famous pseudonym Mr. Maung Hmaing, which he had used proudly from 1911 to 1934.

To judge from Saya Lun's works he seemed not to have recovered his hopes for the country since the day the Dyarchy System

Administration was introduced in Burma. Hopelessness and despair are apparent throughout his work: first, the problem of the two political cliques - the 21 party and the G.C.B.A. - neither of them effective. Then the separation and anti-separation issue - the 1930's economic crisis - the Saya San rebellion - the racial riots, one after another. Saya Lun's despair is clearly seen in his Tika. Almost immediately after these problems, there appeared Dobama Policy and the Thakhins as a new troupe to play a new tune for Burmese independence. Progressive educated young men sponsored this new troupe and they played their new tune and they sang the new song. Saya Lun, who had already lost patience with all political groups (that is, G.C.B.A. etc.), recovered his enthusiasm at the emergence of the young Thakhins and he himself took an important part in their association. Previously, despite his obvious political gifts, he had remained only as a supporting spectator. But this time it was different: he himself took part. He joined the Thakhin party and presided at the first convention of All Burma Dobama Asi-ayone in 1934 at Yenan-gyaung. This is the first time in his life that he actually took part in active politics and committed himself to any party.

Throughout the various stages of the Burmese Independence

movements, Saya Lun had fulfilled his duty with his effective pen from the very beginning to the end. About 1916, the politicians of the day were an elderly group of gentlemen called the Tu-Tha-Thin, who were no more than the Governor's stooges. In opposition, there appeared the young Y.M.B.A. in the cause of liberal reform. The Y.M.B.A. group wanted Home Rule - within the British Empire, and that message reached the Burmese, especially the educated middle-class people. This was the beginning of political awareness in Burma on a national scale. At this stage, Saya Lun had fulfilled his duty to support the Home Rule movement with his pen. In 1923, when the Dyarchy System Administration was introduced, the Y.M.B.A. - later transformed into G.C.B.A. - split and the tide of nationalism and political awareness turned. Almost everything that had been achieved before seemed to have been in vain. Then, roundabout 1930, the young radical Thakhins and the Dobama Asi-ayone appeared. The young progressive Thakhins had the same aim as the young Y.M.B.A.s. They were revolting against the ideas of the now conservative Y.M.B.A.s > G.C.B.A.s. These Thakhins were much more progressive, radical and hard working than the reformers of the previous generation. They spread their message to the entire nation - not forgetting the remotest places in the country and also the poorest areas -

to the farms, to the workshops, to the docks, to the cheroot factories, etc.

When Saya Lun saw these achievements he saw new hope for the future of Burma. He had seen, since the beginning of the independence struggles, the gradual development of political awareness among the people. He concluded that in these conditions sooner or later, Burma was bound to win her freedom. In the introduction of his Thakhin Tika, Saya Lun, full of promises, composed a poem as a good omen for the future as follows:-

" Now, our Lord Buddha's Era is nearly halfway through,

And ~~far~~ as for us Burmese,

Nobody can oppress us, nobody can overrule us.

We can be really proud of ourselves

and our Star will be as bright as ever" ...

that is how I foresee our future

because of all your (Thakhins) achievements.

Yes, I, Master of you all, who came down from Upper Burma,
thought

That our Lord Buddha's sasana is going to have

another bright chapter in your time.

1937, the year Saya Lun wrote his Thakhin Tika, was an eventful year for the Thakhins. Their movement became more active. The leaders split. New blood came in in the shape of some Rangoon University students. For Saya Lun, it was a mixed blessing. He was concerned that the leaders had split but encouraged by the participation of the new young educated progressive students from Rangoon University.

When Saya Lun became a member of the Thakhin Party, he had to tour around the country, to give lectures on current politics and to propagate his party's ends. Wherever Dobama's message reached, he saw a new world for the peasants as well as for the workers. But unfortunately the cost of this success was very high. The young Thakhins faced great opposition from the government; they paid with detentions, with jail sentences, with deportations etc. and various acts of self-sacrifice. The situation grew worse, especially after April 1st 1937, when Burma became separated from India. Saya Lun had witnessed the injustices and persecutions of the government, but he didn't seem to despair. He wanted to put on record the sufferings of the Thakhins and he wanted to encourage them to be patient and stand firm against all opposition, to be true to their principles until they reached their ultimate goal. If only they could stand firmly

behind the Dobama policies, the storms of opposition would die and they would overcome one day. And on that day, Burma and the entire nation would be free from the wretched colonial overlords. In this Prayer to Pon-nya-yin Pagoda le:-khyui:-kri: he wrote as follows:-

The so-called leaders of the imperialist stooges,

who want to exercise their undeserved powers,

That is, the coalition government authorities,

They treated us like criminals,

like petty thieves, like robbers.

This happened not only once, not only twice,

but frequently now here, now there, all the time.

So, in our country, Burma, the land of historically
civilized people,

The Dobama Thakhins have to face all these ridiculous charges
and unfair treatment - and all sorts of obstructions.

(My dear fellow Thakhins) Let them do whatever they can.

It is just nothing. Do stand firmly, with patience and
perseverance.

Let the opposition say to us, ' Go to hell ',

Never mind. They will stop when they get tired.
We just don't care.

Saya Lun also wanted to put on record his criticism of the behaviour of the coalition government, which he substantiated. He inserted a passage from the November 13th 1937 issue of the Sun Daily in his Tika. It reads as follows:-

U PAW TUN REVEALS COALITION SECRETS

He said they had to go and fetch some M.P.s from the brothels to get enough votes to be able to form the coalition government and also said that the M.P.s are demanding a very high price for their votes.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

U Paw Tun, Minister for Home Affairs, and his wife arrived at In-ma Village, The-gon Township on the 10th November...

U Paw Tun gave a speech as follows:-

" Our present administration is not like the previous one. This is the Wunthanu Government, which was elected by the people, as you all know. To be able to form a government in the Legislative Council, it must be supported by at least 75 members. After the election the status of the parties was as follows:
Our Hlaing- Myat-Paw Party..... 14 candidates elected

<u>Dr. Ba Maw's Party</u>	16	candidates	elected
<u>Thakhin Party</u>	3	"	"
<u>Fabian Party</u>	1	"	"
<u>Ngar-bwint-saing Party</u>	42	"	"

As the Ngar-bwint-saing party ~~was~~ won the majority, the Governor had to ask them to form the government, and appointed two ministers from ~~that~~ party. Then I and Dr. Ba Maw began to think of alliances and planned to form a coalition government. To do this we needed more than another 40 votes. So to get the support of about 77 M.P.s we had to approach the Indian M.P.s and promise them what they ask for. Even then, I was so busy and I felt so worried because they were demanding a very, very high price for their votes. We only landed some of the leaders of the other parties by offering them Ministerial posts. At last we got 77 supporting votes. Then we wrote to the Governor and we proposed a motion of censure in the Legislative Council which we won and now the Ngar-bwint-saing Government is out.

Even then, we had to ask the Indian M.P.s ~~for~~ for an emergency meeting at 1.a.m. and get their signatures of support.

When we, the coalition group, managed to form a government, the Governor appointed two of us, myself and Dr. Ba

Maw, as Ministers. Before ~~we~~ we had a chance to do anything, the Ngar-bwint-saing proposed a motion of censure in the Legislative Council. Then the M.P.s raised the price of their votes - Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 3,000 for one supporting vote. The demand was high and they became popular: every party tried to ~~xxx~~ approach them for their votes. They were all sending round their cars to fetch them to vote. So my difficulties in getting their support proved greater than I had thought possible. To buy their votes I had to search for these M.P.s all over the place. I had to collect some M.P.s from the brothels, some at the Chinese gambling clubs. I had to tell these sex maniac M.P.s to "leave your brothels and prostitutes for a while. This is very urgent and the situation is very critical. Don't worry about your prostitutes. I will find better ones for you later on". So to cut the story short, when the votes were counted, we got 56 and we won. Just before Dr. Ba Maw left for England, as we were still very unsure of our strength, Dr. Ba Maw and I persuaded Dr. Thein Maung, one of the front-line leaders of the opposition Ngar-bwint-saing party, to break away from his party and to join us by the offering of a Ministerial post. So, when Dr. Thein Maung and Meiktila U Ba Yin together with their 10 follower M.P.s

accepted our offer we asked one of our men U Tharrawaddy Maung Maung to resign his post whether he like it or not and we offered the Ministry of Commerce to Dr. Thein Maung. Then only were we sure of our strength. "

And U Paw Tun continued by explaining how they reduced the Capitation Tax, and how he himself had tried to release the rebel ~~men~~ prisoners and so on.

Saya Lun discussed the Thakhin party, its policies and its movements in his Tika with his famous diciples the fictional characters, A Yee Sein, Ke-tha, Me-dha etc. through the Yogi Sayagyi . His efforts were probably more effective than all the Thakhins' political lectures throughout the country.

The difficulties which the Thakhin Party encountered require some explanation. Although the party had not been declared illegal, they suffered not only at the hands of the government but also from the other rival parties. Although they did their best to ensure that their message was heard in the remotest corners of the country, they were not as effective as they would have liked. Whatever they did, whether it was to hold a meeting or give a lecture they had to have permission from the authorities. Even if they got

the green light from the authorities, if the area was an opposition stronghold they were molested by them. Meetings were obstructed by incessant sounding of motor car horns, driving full speed near a crowd or into it, sporadic stone throwing into the audience or by the beating of empty drums ~~or~~ or tins or buckets in the traditional manner of frightening away evil spirits.

For these reasons attendance at the Thakhin meetings was always very low; people were frightened of the authorities or of being involved in violence. But the number of people who heard the speeches far exceeded the number of people who were physically present at the meetings; many listened from a safe distance. Here, my own personal experience might be relevant to illustrate this.

I can still remember many of the important events of the time like the 1936 Students' strike, Student Martyr Bo Aung Gyaw's funeral, etc., which had either a direct or indirect effect on my young life. Whenever the weather was fine and the sky clear, my brothers and neighbouring friends and I were allowed to play in the streets, either before or after our study hours. But whenever there was a Thakhin party's political meeting in our area we were not allowed to leave the home. Even if the meeting was not very close to us but in the same quarter, we had to remain indoors. My parents

were anxious to avoid any unpleasantness and they listened to the Thakhins' political message from the quiet of our own house. If they could not hear from the house, they used to listen in the home of friends who lived nearer the meeting place. But they never joined the audience. Thus, it can be concluded that those who heard the Thakhins were far more numerous than those who were brave enough to attend the meeting. Nevertheless, these meetings were never as effective as they might have been.

The same principle applies to Saya Lun's messages through Yogi Saya Hmaing. His books could be read without interference peacefully at home. Although there might only be one copy of a book it is certain that copy will have passed through many hands and been read many times. In this respect, one might say that Saya Lun's books probably reached a wider audience and were more effective than the speeches of the Thakhins.

The essence of the Thakhin Tika was its exposition of the Dobama Policy. Saya Lun explained it as follows:-

DOBAMA POLICY

The Dobama Policy comprises the aims and objects and ideas of the Dobama Asi-ayone.

- (1) Dobama means not only all Burmese but also all those who live in Burma regardless of race and status. We wish to achieve national unity and equality above all things.
- (2) Thakhin describes those who are fighting for fundamental human rights and those who are trying to uplift the living standards of all peoples. Therefore, whoever strives for the implementation of basic human rights and works to improve the quality of life of all without regard to race, colour, class or status is a Thakhin. We want one class, one society in the world. At present, we Burmese, both politically or economically are extremely backward and we occupy the position of slaves. Our standard of living is hopelessly low - we have not yet achieved the basic standards of a human society. The Dobama Asi-ayone is fighting to achieve a decent standard of living for all Burmese. When we achieve this there will be no more class distinctions, there will be only one class in society - all Thakhins (Masters). So all members of the Dobama Asi-ayone must think, must work, must behave like Thakhins, because, after all, you are all Thakhins.
- (3) The Dobama Asi-ayone is a Party which represents the majority of Burmese workers, the poor people and peasants etc.

So from the very beginning Dobama Asi-ayone is totally different from other political parties. In this rapidly changing modern human society there exist some International Organizations which represent the interests of the poor people and proletariat. They do their best to uplift the status of these poor people. Our Dobama Asi-ayone is a similar organization but one which represents the entire nation.

- (4) We believe that as long as the Capitalist system exists which overrules the demands of justice in the interest of the upper classes, the well-to-do people, the investors, the millionaire capitalists and the businessmen, there will always be class differences - haves and have-nots, the rich and the poor, the upper class and the lower class, the exploiters and the exploited. We won't tolerate this sort of ~~im~~ inequality.

- (5) There is no doubt that the greater the wealth in the hands of the minority - that is, the wealthy and the exploiters - the greater the suffering for the majority of the people - that is, the penniless, the lower class people.

- (6) We want freedom not only for Burma, but for all the colonised countries. We want no government which represents

only a handful of rich capitalists; no dictatorship administration set-up on capitalist lines. We want to establish a new country with a new government which will give us liberty, equality and fraternity as soon as possible.

- (7) There will be no prosperity for Burma, for the world or human society until the masses - that is, the lower class people, peasants, workers, proletarians - govern themselves. Therefore, the basic principles of the Dobama Asi-ayone are:

- (a) The masses such as workers, farmers, peasants, etc. must take a leading part in the national life.
- (b) We must found a government led by masses before we are able to achieve real equality in human society, that is, before we are able to destroy the class system.
- (c) There must be equal chances for everybody to enjoy the natural resources of the country. To achieve this we must first destroy the system by which exorbitant profits can be made out of capital, and we must not allow any huge money resources to remain unused because unless there is free circulation of money the masses will suffer.
- (d) To destroy the system of class distinction there must no longer be any upper class and lower class, no rich and

poor, only one class.

- (c) To destroy Capitalism, the system which allows a minority of rich people to exploit and make exorbitant profit through investments. It is the root of Imperialism which creates wars past, present and to come. And then to found a Utopia, the land of real equality for everybody regardless of colour, class, and race - where there will be no hunger, no victimisation, no segregation, etc.

- (8) At present our country and we Burmese are suffering all sorts of troubles and difficulties as a result of this wretched Imperialism - the robot slave of Capitalism, aimed at colonising poor, innocent, defenceless countries all over the world. Most unfortunately, we Burmese are confronted by Imperialism. We can only suffer by it. Therefore, we must destroy it completely. To destroy this Imperialism, we Burmese, all of us, must do our best immediately in all respects politically, economically, etc. For the sake of Burmese Independence our Dobama Asi-ayone has laid down four fundamental policies:

- (a) Burma is our country.
- (b) Burmese is our race.
- (c) Burmese Literature is our literature.
- (d) Burmese Language is our language.

- (9) Trying to ~~mk~~ achieve self-rule (within the Empire) only is not real Independence. We can only establish real Self-government (or People's government) when the country has achieved full independence. Otherwise no. When we say ' Self-government ' we do not mean a monarchy as in olden days. We mean a People's ~~g~~ Government which must really represent the masses.
- (10) To destroy Colonialism and Imperialism, to achieve full Independence and to found a People's Government, we must really work hard. We are not going to achieve any of these ends by doing nothing. Imperialism will not die easily. There is no doubt about that. A People's government can only be established when the masses are really united. So to achieve all these things we must work hard.
- (11) To achieve our (Dobama Asi-ayone's) ~~mmk~~ aims and objects, as we are bound to face all sorts of difficulties and obstructions, we must be very strong and determined and persevere and at the end we shall overcome and WE MUST WIN. Therefore, the most important slogan of the Dobama Asi-ayone is " Run out to meet forthcoming troubles ".
- (12) We (Dobama Asi-ayone) undertake:
- (1) To stand in all elections whenever the time, place and circumstances are favourable.

- (2) To hold public (political) meetings as often as possible and to pass resolutions (in favour of our ends).
 - (3) To stop all normal duties while demanding investigation of our grievances.
 - (4) To arrange demonstrations and marches systematically while demanding a settlement of our grievances.
- (13) Party members ~~of~~ of Dobama Asi-ayone from all over Burma - such as villagers, countrymen, poor people, working class people, peasants, farmers, etc., ~~all~~ all must become aware of the fundamental facts about Burma politically, socially, economically etc., and try to achieve national unity. If and when they achieve this National Unity, then only will the dreams of the Thakhins come true.
- (14) To put our theories into practice, we believe that we must have two committees. One for policy (and guidance) and the other as the executive of these policies.
- (15) We strongly believe that while carrying out activities sanctioned by the Dobama Asi-ayone, we must commit no violence, break no law. We believe in non-violent activity within the law.

In describing the aims of the Dobama-Thakhins, Saya Lun does not forget to mention the weapon which proved to be most important and effective in arousing Nationalism and stimulating the Independence movements, the Dobama song.

DOBAMA SONG

From Abhirāja , the founder of Tagaung

we Burmese are of the Sakya Clan.

Our pride and power never fade.

We fought Thailand and India as well and we conquered.

Yes, it was We Burmese.

Although we were the true diamond pinnacle

Now, as the old proverb says we are as brittle as fire-wood.

Well, this is partly the law of nature.

We are most unlucky to suffer.

Nevertheless - let us examine the root of our suffering.

Burma is OURS - OUR LAND.

Our traditions must never perish

We must place our blood, our race on record in history.

Throughout the world,

we Burmese have held our place of distinction,

And is it in our time that our traditional pride must fade ?

Dear Burmese, ARE WE NOT BURMESE ?

Yes, we Burmese - WE BURMESE.

we Burmese - WE BURMESE.

True, we are Burmese, WE ARE BURMESE.

All together, be united.

Be brave like real men, we Burmese

We are working for the sake of posterity,

What we are doing ~~in~~ is not for our self-interest.

We seek nothing for ourselves.

Be brave like real Burmese

Burma is for US, We Burmese.

So behave like the Thakhins.

Yes, we are Thakhins, we are Burmese.

On this earth under this sky

We Burmese are as brave as yaks,

and we always keep our spirits high.

CHORUS:- Until this very earth crumbles

We shall remain BURMESE.

This is our country, this is our land,

Yes, THIS IS OUR COUNTRY.

This is our country, this is our land,

Yes , THIS IS OUR COUNTRY.

This is our country, this is our land,

Yes, THIS IS OUR COUNTRY.

This is our country, this is our land,

Yes, THIS IS OUR COUNTRY.

OUR BURMA, OUR BURMA, OUR LAND

Each and every native **MUST** realize that **THIS IS OUR LAND,**

Yes, this is our duty

And, WE BURMESE do love each other.

VERSE:- Do your best for the sake of the nation

We Burmese - yes - We Burmese

As the rising sun always appears in the East

Sooner or later our time must come.

There is ~~no~~ no doubt.

We Burmese - yes - we Burmese.

Burma, throughout the country, every inch,

IS OUR HOME - OUR LAND,

Let this be written in your heart.

Yes, THIS IS OUR BURMA, OURS.

Then only we can become WE BURMESE.

CHORUS:- Until this very earth crumbles,

We shall remain BURMESE.

.....

.....

,.....

And, We BURMESE, do love each other.

This song is really powerful. The lyrics are simple and beautiful with deep and forceful meaning in every word: and the tune is a rousing one with tremendous strength and force. For sheer effectiveness, no other Burmese song can compare with this one. A tribute is due to the composer of both the lyrics and music to this song, the late Thakhin Tin (Formerly Y.M.B. Saya Tin). This incomparable Dobama song became the National Anthem of Independent Burma, ~~in~~ during World War II. The present Burmese National Anthem is also derived from this song. As the tune is very simple and catchy, the song became extremely popular throughout Burma soon after it appeared. So, when the Independence Preparation Committee set out to find a National Anthem for the newly Independent Burma, they chose

this one with slight alterations in wording but left the tune untouched. This song was the greatest achievement of Thakhin Tin, one of the leading composers^s of Burma.

Saya Lun also gives detailed histories and translations of other universally famous national anthems. These include India's Bande Mataram (Hail to thee, Mother), Britain's God Save the King, France's La Marseillaise, Japanese National Anthem. He also included some of the current marching songs to encourage the younger generation to take their share in the nationalist cause and the fight for freedom.

Here is one example, the Bama Letyone Tat Marching Song.

Our Burma is a land of courageous people

Very brave, fearless and daring people.

What they have done and what they have dared is remarkable
throughout history.

Yes, dear members of Bama Letyone Tat,

All of you are the real descendants of HEROES.

So, until your bones break and crumble

Fight, for the sake of our Country, our Land.

Let's turn the OLD AGE upside down.

Let's found a NEW PROGRESSIVE AGE.

This is our duty and we are burning to achieve our FREEDOM.

Be united, dear comrades, let's march together happily.

Left - Right * Left * Right.

The country Burma is our country

The land of Burma is our land.

Let us love each other and protect our nation.

Left - Right - Left - Right.

This is the time for Burma (and for us Burmese)

To heighten our pride in our nation

Yes, this is the time for us Burmese, to lose our factional feeli

Saya Lun did not forget to mention the songs of other rival groups, such as M.A. U Maung Gyi's Ye Tat (Voluntary Force) marching songs, etc. This shows to some degree Saya Lun's tolerance in politics. Loving his country and his people as he did, all he wanted was independence and he welcomed the work of any movement regardless of party and background to achieve this end. He was a true national He thought for the nation. He looked forward for the nation. He wrote for the nation and he did all he could for the nation. He had no rival in his dedication.

U Maung Gyi's 'Ye Tat' Marching Song No. 1.

Dear courageous hero comrades let's take our part,
Until the end of our days

with all our strength (we must fight)

Yes, using our own physical strength

We Burmese - We courageous Burmese (fight)

Since a long time ago, it is clearly recorded in history

We have conquered many other cities, many other lands.

With our own Generals, with our own might and means

Fearlessly, daringly, courageously we have marched (in the
past

Yes, it is our Victory. The Victorious Army singing
Victory Songs.

Let our national pride and national courage grow.

Our Burma is our land. We Burmese are born soldiers.

We possess our country

It is our duty, we Burmese soldiers

We must possess our own country.

Oh men - Burmese men

For a real man even the furthest star in the sky
is within his reach. That is sure.

(Oh courageous hero Burmese)³

Let's found our own ^{new} country, now.

After the setback of the split between the Thakhin laeders (Thakhin Ba Sein and Thakhin Lay Maung), Saya Lun was very pleased to learn that the movement had won new members from among the Students of Rangoon University. He saw great prospects ahead. He wanted to encourage the students and wrote in his In praise of Rangoon University Students' Union and its Magazine Daung-O-Way (The Peacock) le:-khyui:-krī: . Here is an extract:

As for me, my life was rather sad.

It was during the time that the star of Burma was fading.

(My parents sent me) to Upper Burma for my education.

Yes, at that time I was very young.

Staying with a Bhikkhū who was my maternal Uncle, at Mandalay.

I have witnessed the removal of the sun and the moon (King & Queen
[by the foreigners])

From the Grand Monastery, the throne of the sāsana,

the Mya-daung Kyaung-taik, where I was studying.

(Though I was young) I wished I could have done something.

[In my imagination] Now Mandalay had collapsed,

With what longing and sorrow I saw our Kingdom,

I could not describe it.

Yes, I felt as if I could go to Pa-khan (and recruit an army)
And revolt against the foreign rule.

Only then did I know how I loved my Kingdom.

Before I could calm myself down,

Oh! yes, I lost my senses, I became mad.

[Many years have passed]

Now I am in Sagaing valley,

Again, as in the dream of my younger days

I cross to the West of the river (Irrawaddy)

Visiting every corner of the Sagaing valley,
and recruiting (for a rebellion).

Those were my day-dreams of the past,

Now, while I, Ko Yin Hmaing,

practising alchemy (to achieve magic power for the sake
of our country)

Together with my young ardent Thakhins "Thein Maung" & "Ba Sein"

who give everything for the sake of nation, language and
religion

Thinking and waiting for the right time,

to win the land of victory for Burma,

(Yes, while waiting for our chance,)

Just before sunset (before the darkest hours for Burma)

here comes from the slope of mountain (i.e. Rangoon
University - the land of high hope)

The Golden Peacock - (the Students' Magazine - the new hope
for Burma)

The Editor is Maung Nyo Mya

Who is destined to become my closest disciple throughout samsarā

President of the R.U.S.U. is Maung Ba Gyan

Who will demand and fight with zest and zeal for Burma at any cost

There is another one, whom you will have to see

in future Burmese history,

Maung (Shwe) Nu, the pious one, who is always reciting Buddha's
teachings while he is patiently waiting for the chance of
victory for Burma.

Not only that, there is another one, the young Thein Pe of
Tet-phone-gyi (novel) fame.

I choose all these youngsters (to lead our independence movements
without any hesitations.

Well, my disciples, fight and seize all opportunities,

I, your famous Pandit (great teacher), the great wise Yogi,

From the jungle, am thinking and assessing our chances in this
world

Yes, now it is our time. Astronomically it is the Period of Kallidasa

The brightest Period for us and it is the time,

To turn (Burma) into the golden age like the past.

My dear pupils, it is your duty, to achieve your independence
which must come from your Thakhsin University.

1. samsarā = round of rebirth

Right from the very beginning the young Thakhins ~~mag~~ had felt frustration and loathing for this society and their environment. They cared nothing for anybody or anything, only for the cause. They were careless of their appearance and were labelled by the opposition as young hooligans and a bunch of young misfits rather than freedom fighters, social reformers. The Dobama Asi-ayone was criticised as a most disorderly and irresponsible organisation. Saya Lun wanted to protect them from bad publicity which he felt was totally false. So in his Thakhin Tika, he gave special priority to this question by letting the readers know that the student Thakhins were not scruffy hooligans but earnest well educated young men. Immediately after the above le:-khyui:-kri: he described some of the achievements of the student Thakhins as follows. ~~Maung~~ Maung Thein Tin, whose pen-name was Nyo Mya, was a B.A. Hons. final year student, reading English language and literature. He was the very first person to be awarded a state scholarship for journalism to study in Britain, and he was the editor of O-way Magazine for two consecutive years. Maung Aung Sam, a graduate who left his B.L. classes, and was giving his full services as joint secretary of the Dobama Asi-ayone was previously president of R.U.S.U. Maung Hla Shwe who held the vice-presidency in R.U.S.U. was a senior student in Medical College.

Maung Ba Hein from Mandalay was general secretary of R.U.S.U. Maung Kyaw Nyein, B.A., was one of the tutors in the English Department. Maung Tun Tin, Maung Su Myaing, Maung Hla Myint, Maung Ba Swe and others were all senior students in Rangoon University. In other words, Saya Lun is making his counter-attacks against the efforts of the old English-educated revisionist gentlemen - the politicians - to smear the reputations of the young Thakhins. He assured them that the young Thakhins were well educated, possibly better than these scoundrels.

When he mentioned the young Thakhins, it seemed that Thakhin Aung San (the late Bogyoke Aung San) was his favourite. Thakhin Aung San was an honest hard worker and very sincere, and straight-forward. He was a single-minded man, who sacrificed his prospects and future, even his life, for the sake of his country. And he noticed that Thakhin Aung San was a grandson of U Min Yaung, Mayor of Myo-lu-lin, who became very famous as Shwe-la-yaung one of the handful of rebel leaders who fought against the British when they finally annexed Upper Burma. U Min Yaung was captured by the British at Lay-sin-tain Village, fighting against terrible odds, and was beheaded. So in the freedom fight, he thought, Burma needed a lot of young men like

Thakhin Aung San, whose forefathers had also done their share in the fight for freedom. To give more incentive to the young Thakhins and encouragement to the public, he composed a poem in praise of U Min Yaung, grandfather of Thakhin Aung San:-

The serenity of Myo-lu-lin was tremendous and unmatched.

I wish I could describe it,

For you all (Ke-tha and others) to visualise it and
be overwhelmed by it.

U Min Yaung, the Mayor, with the title Shwe-la-yaung

Was very powerful, like the blazing Sun.

He recruited his followers and fought (against the British)

But it wasn't the right time.

According to nature,

there are favourable times and unfavourable times.

This was the waning time for the Burmese,

So, it was not a surprise that we lost. It was our luck.

When Mandakay collapsed

The time and the stars were against the Burmese.

People became very disunited - they even fought each other -

And they could no longer see clearly who was their real enemy

They even attacked their own regiments,
Worst of all were some of the lieutenants,
Who, wanting to seek their personal safety,
Deserted from Myin-ma-ni Post (while they were fighting)
And ran away helter-skelter in all directions.

So, the leader (U Min Yaung) was helpless
And he was caught by the enemy.

At last in Lay-sin-taing Village,
He who fought against the English,
he who was also famous as Lord of Taungdwin
Was beheaded, before he had realised his dreams.

Well, my dear disciples

In my opinion the Thakhin Tika is the best Tika of Saya Lun's works covered in this thesis. The technique with which he used the propaganda about the Thakhins, the Dobama Asi-ayone and their movements was brilliant. He attacked other parties not

viciously and destructively but humourously, in ridicule and satire which was to prove much more effective. As usual he included in the Thakhin Tika, a number of te:-thap, saṃ-khyui, lwam:-khyāṇ:, dun:-khyāṇ:, caññ-tô-saṃ, etc. and his eight fine le:-khyui:-krī:. There are included a lot of references to other famous literary works, such as Janakka pyui., Sū-jā pyui., Kui:-khan: pyui., Praññ-cuṃ mō-kwan:, Puṃ-ton-nuiṃ mō-kwan:, Pu-lip-cā: e:-khyāṇ: etc. He also described some of the Burmese code-writings, Nā:-pre-tak-sak, Nhac-lwan:-taṇ, Suwanṇa-lip etc. with lengthy explanations, and discussed the origin of the words a-rhaṇ and sa-khan (Thakhin). Most important of all he explained the origin of the word Ba-mā and the origins of the Burmese people.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to trace and comment on the emergence and development of political writings in Burmese literature from the beginning to the early part of 1941.

On analysing Burmese political writing we find that there is nothing new in its ideology. The French Revolution, Marxism, The Irish Independence Movement all played their part in the political melting pot of Burmese independence. Secondly, most of the writing was in the form of criticism of the government and the establishment of propaganda for the independence movement. Among the writers, there were few, apart, perhaps, from Saya Lun, Thein Pe (Myint), and Thakhin Nu, who could claim to be established political commentators. But even these few had at the most two or three books to their credit and all political writing prior to the Thakhins, that is 1930, was remarkable only for its gentleness, good breeding and ineffectiveness. Perhaps what it lacked in punch, it made up for in stylish Burmese but in terms of effect, it was negligible. It was only after 1930 with the emergence of the Thakhins that political writing approached

anything like the character of political writing as we know it now. With the Thakhins, the political press became aggressive, ruthless, iconoclastic; not caring for the well balanced sentence or the flowery phrase. They were concerned only with the effective delivery of a short, sharp message.

Saya Lun is first of all, the pioneer in this field of political writing and has contributed more than anyone else in terms of output. Most important of all, he was the most effective of the propagandists of the time. This was largely due to his literary style which formed a link between the rigid traditional verse writings and the bold direct prose of the 1930's. Had he not lived and worked at that time, the history of Burma would have read rather differently. His political commentaries, the early Tikas, the Daung Tika, Myauk Tika and Khway Tika were especially important.

Roughly speaking, upto 19th century factual prose literature in Burmese existed only on the subjects of law, medicine, astrology and history which were reserved for a small number of professional scholars. Knowledge of other literatures were transmitted by the traditional rote learning method and expressed in a rather complex verse form which limited the number of people who shared in it.

A large proportion of the people took no active part in literature as writers or readers but the only form of writing which they were familiar with and had great respect for was flowery, greatly embellished verse form.

The introduction of the printing press led to a wider reading public who enjoyed not only verse-plays but the beginning of a new prose writing in the shape of novels. Nevertheless, the traditional liking for verse writing persisted. In this situation, it would have been almost impossible to present to a public used only to verse literature serious factual works on politics written in a plain prose style. Added to the literary strangeness of such a style there was also the difficulty that the Burmese reading public was to a large extent politically uninformed and uninvolved. Saya Lun's great gift lay in the fact that by presenting essentially serious political writings in a form which was already familiar and popular among readers whether they were politically inclined or not, he managed to interest them in his message. If it had not been for Saya Lun's gentle introduction of the Burmese people into political awareness, the works of the Thakhins, after the 1930's, would have been unacceptable. Saya Lun bridged the gap between the politically

apathetic condition of Burma and the turmoil of a country in the throes of an independence struggle. In literary terms, he could also be said to have bridged the gap between elaborate formal stylisation and the terse, forthright and aggressive prose literature of the Thakhin period.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the development and conditions of Burma after independence were due largely to the works and influence of the Thakhins. Equally the Thakhins would have lost a considerable degree of effectiveness had Saya Lun not begun their work for them in his way. Thus, ^{he} has his influence in post-war Burmese life and conditions.

Because of the unique position that he occupies in Burmese history, I have given special consideration to Saya Lun in this account of the emergence and development of political writing in Burmese literature.

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