This is the inside story of Arakan told by keen and objective observer. The war laid Arakan open to many disruptive forces, but the AFPFL was able to organize, consolidate and hold power at its end. However, this could not be for long. The disruptive forces were still too many and communists and separationists made capital of the situation. The AFPFL broke up, and “independents”, won their electoral victories. The writer, who has made on-the-spot studies of the situation in Arakan, gives his analysis of —

THE STATE OF ARAKAN

by “ASMI”

The time I touched down at Akyab in 1950 in the wake of the monsoon the town was in the throes of a bye-election. An urban seat in the Constituent Assembly had been vacated by the AFPFL member and the Arakan AFPFL and U Kyaw Min were contesting it, so much so because the seat was important as it was a good occasion to test the popularity of the AFPFL in Arakan as well as to measure the gathering strength of the anti-AFPFL sentiment.

Rise of AFPFL

To the Arakanese by and large U Kyaw Min symbolised the consummation of Arakanese manhood. He had a top-flight education, had gained entrance into the I.C.S. from which he retired as a Commissioner and he had proved himself a successful businessman. He had no platform or programme for the electorate but the fact that he was U Kyaw Min plus reaction against the AFPFL, it was felt, would win the seat for him.

With the prestige acquired by resistance against the Japanese during the war and struggle for independence after British re-occupation, the all Arakan AFPFL led by the monk U Pya Mayantha with a strong element of the P.V.O. had emerged as the sole repository of political wisdom and the only effective political organisation. At the time of the general election the Arakan AFPFL nominated its members to all the seats in Arakan except in the Muslim fringe of Bothuadang and Maungdaw townships. The leaders and the rank and file of the P.V.O. were absorbed into the newly created 1st Battalion of the Union Military Police, charged with the responsibility for the internal security of the Arakan Division. It seemed therefore as if the adherents of the AFPFL had come into power to stay.

Disintegration

By the time U Kyaw Min contested the bye-election the once all-powerful All Arakan A.F.P.F.L. had virtually disintegrated. True the party leaders were entrenched in the administration of the districts as Special Deputy Commissioners; the late Myochit U Kyaw U in Akyab, U Ba Saw (now Minister for Social Welfare) in Kyaukpyu and U Ba Hlaing who had already lost his charge, Sandoway district, to the insurgents. But the armed branch of the party and a large number of AFPFL adherents had dissolved themselves and joined the multi-coloured insurgent: Bo San Tha Gyaw, son-in-law of the Arakanese Minister U Aung Zaw Wai, and a commander of the U.M.P. had seized Sandoway district while the Commandant of the 1st Battalion of the U.M.P., Major Maung Gale and the powerful P.V.O. chief Bo Kha Hla Aung were in occupation of half the Arakan district in Myaungta and Myoheung subdivisions. In the north in Maungdaw subdivision adjacent to the Pakistan border the Muslim populace were in active Mujahid rebellion and its ever creeping menace was like a brooding nightmare to the Arakanese in Akyab district.

Tactical Errors

In this sombre atmosphere of general lawlessness the All Arakan AFPFL put up an innocuous woman candidate, Daw Saw Mra, to fight U Kyaw Min, and began a bellicose and blustering electioneering campaign, the special Deputy Commissioner U Kyaw U urging the electorate to vote for Daw Saw Mra. It was a curious way of fighting an election under unfavourable conditions. It failed to impress the electorate consisting mainly of traders, brokers and milkers in the rice business and the clerks in government offices.

The urgency of the situation warranted a visit to Akyab of the Prime Minister Thakin Nu who in his talk to the electorate outlined the dangers that still beset the Union as a whole and expatiated on reasons for unity and teamwork. He assured the electorate to remain within the fold of the AFPFL and fight for the things they wanted rather than vote for a lone man of flashy brilliance like U Kyaw Min. The electorate, however, were in no mood for reason and took the Prime Minister’s advice amiss as a slight to their intelligence.

The bye-election was a great tribute.
to the personality of U Kyaw Min and a crushing defeat for the All Arakan APPFL whose candidate lost the seat and her deposit of money.

POSITIVE RESULTS

Yet the holding of the bye-election in Arakan was productive of positive results. For one thing, apart from the antics of the Special Deputy Commissioner, the Arakanese people in general were impressed with the fair and free manner in which the Government conducted its first bye-election. The resignation of the Prime Minister produced the resignations of Myochin U Kyaw U, U Ba Saw and U Ba Hlaing from the posts of Special Deputy Commissioner, thus removing politics from the sphere of day to day administration. Career civil servants were immediately posted to the charge of the two districts and as the immediate threat of the Communist and the K.N.D.O. insurrection to the security of the rest of the Union receded regular army troops in sufficient numbers and arms could be sent to Arakan to recapture Sandoway district and other areas lost to the insurgents. The Arakan APPFL rest by personal rivalries and mismanagement, underwent a period of quiet but drastic change and reconstruction on drastic district basis.

WAR'S AFTERMATH

During the last war the allied and the Japanese armies on the run or on the march left scattered a large quantity of arms and ammunition in many parts of Arakan, most of which are difficult of access. The resistance movement was heavily infiltrated with Communist elements within while the northernmost part of Arakan dominantly populated by the Muslims, the British, to reinforce their precarious hold of the area, declared Maungdaw subdivision a Muslim national area and the Muslims were encouraged to take up arms against the Japanese invaders.

After the war the Communists in Arakan, like the Communists in metropolitan Burma, refused to turn in their firearms and in sullen disobedience infiltrated into towns, infested the jungles and roamed about the villages led by the belligerent extremist, the phony U Seinda, inciting the populace to defy local administration by non-payment of revenue. In Maungdaw subdivision efforts at resettlement of the original Arakanese villages, destroyed during the savage communal riots in the first stages of the war, and uprooting the new Chittagonian settlers aroused the resentment of the Muslims who had been promised a national area by the British. The Arakanese Subdivisional Officer was murdered and armed Muslims clashed with government forces on many occasions. Many Muslims had begun to entertain hopes of detaching Maungdaw subdivision from Burma and incorporating it in the Muslim state of Pakistan which had emerged across the border. Thus many months before the APPFL came into power in Burma, Arakan was already in a virtual state of chaos. The administration was paralysed; the Communist campaign of lawlessness and non-payment of revenue halted rehabilitation; roads remained un repaired and steamers, and even country crafts remained stationary at a few safe ports.

(Making Capital)

To the Arakanese of Akyab, district deterioration of administration consequent on the appointment of political Deputy Commissioners and the delay in the rehabilitation of the economy of the division and restoration of communications badly shattered by war were sore grounds for grievances. U Kyaw Min and his followers were not slow in seizing these grievances and representing them to the people as callous neglect of Arakan by the Union Government. Later U Kyaw Min and his group were to develop these grievances into the concept of a separate state for Arakan. The negative idea caught on in towns and villages of Arakan and subsequently turned out to be a good platform winning many seats for U Kyaw Min's group in the general elections to the first parliament of the Union of Burma.
THE STATE OF ARAKAN

By "ASMI"

The disquieting events in Arakan caused much anxiety to Bogoye Aung San and other AFPFL leaders but they could do very little for Arakan at a time when they themselves were wholly engaged in the struggle against British rule. So Arakan was caught between the inadequacy of the British Administration on the one hand and the destructive activities of her youth and political shortsightedness of her leaders on the other.

However, on the morrow of the country-wide strike of government servants when the AFPFL came into power there were hopes of restoring normal conditions in Arakan. The Arakanese in the AFPFL movement and those in the government service could now work together for the pacification and rehabilitation of their homeland.

At the economic conference held at Soromboe Yar, when the AFPFL leaders formulated plans for reconstruction of the country, schemes were included to set aright the lop-sided economy of Arakan by industrialization. U Saw Tun, brilliant chemical engineer and himself an Arakanese conducted aerial and terrestrial surveys of the Sanguin area in the heart of Akyab District preliminary to starting hydro-electric and paper factory projects.

HOSTILITY OF COMMUNISTS.

In the political field Bogoye Aung San made a special tour of Arakan to assist the local AFPFL in settling political issues. His transparent sincerity and unassuming ways endeared Bogoye to the Arakanese common man who received him with acclamation and aspirations.

But even Bogoye Aung San failed to win over the Communists to his cause of attainment of independence and peaceful reconstruction thereafter. In their blind hatred of government of whatever aspiration or composition, U Seinda and other Communist freebooters greeted Bogoye at Myebon with hostile demonstrations and subversive speeches. Thus the Communists by their contumelious attitude and contumacious acts made it abundantly clear to Bogoye that the problem of Arakan was initially and essentially that of suppression of disorder irrespective of who caused it.

On the return of Bogoye from Arakan orders for the arrest of U Seinda and Communist leaders were issued and Burma Army units sent to Arakan to assist the civil police in maintenance of public order. The communist leaders were detained, agitators ferreted out from places of habitation and unlawful assemblies were dispersed with force. Ironically it fell to the lot of an English Superintendent of police at Kyaukpyu district to arrest and jail U Seinda. The energetic and judicious employment of police action removed the main source of unrest and once again semblance of peace appeared in Arakan. By the time the country gained independence the conditions in Arakan had almost returned to normal except in the far North where the Muslims had taken up
arms and denied government authority.

ALL ARAKANESE

By January, 1943, various departments of the Union Government in Arakan including the civil police were manned wholly by the Arakanese except the army units made up of metropolitan Burma and the Commission of Reconstruction of Arakan which was filled by an eminent journalist who had resigned from the subordinate civil service in 1940. The APFPL leaders and the Arakanese Minister in the cabinet now felt that the time had come for the Arakanese to shoulder full responsibility in military matters as well. The Officer cadre and other ranks of the Union Military Police were quickly thrown open, evidently without due care and attention in the matter of proper vetting of personnel to the members of the resistance movement and later entrants to the P.V.O. which contained disruptive elements and Communist sympathizers. The Burma Army units were withdrawn as the formations of newly recruited Military Police took over the task of defence.

The triangle relations between the Commissioner of Reconstruction, the Civil Administration and the Military proved difficult and discordant due to absence of co-ordination in common spheres of authority and action. The Commissioner of Reconstruction had no means of implementing his schemes. In the event he was profuse in advice which lacked specific performance. In the end he felt himself redundant and resigned in frustration.

IMPAISE IN ADMINISTRATION

There was complete lack of sympathy but abundance of suspicion in the dealings of the Arakanese officers of the Civil Administration with the Akyab Commanders of the UMP and vice versa. The Akyab-educated civil officers hitherto used only to dealings with small units of Indian or Chin soldiers had no experience with provincial lads educated in the hard school of national politics and now turned professional soldiers. The spirit of accommodation born of mental adjustment on both sides was no necessary in Arakan. In the meantime both sides worked at slow and tardy rhythm; impasse in cross purposes purposes was soon reached. It was the more tragic for the Arakanese that the Akyab failed to work for the common purpose of maintaining public order and matters worse, in metropolitan Burma the Communist Party was then rising in general rebellion and the insurrection began to impinge on the affairs in Arakan. In Maungdaw Subdivision the state of anarchy in administration contributed to the spread of Mujahid rising.

The Union Government watched the crumbling situation in Arakan with grave concern. At the same time the Government were constrained to act on the advice of the Arakanese Minister in the cabinet and probably it was felt that the problem should be basically susceptible of local solution with the least interference from outside of Arakan. The all Arakan APFPL became insistent that to achieve harmony is the administration of Arakan and to co-ordinate measures against mounting forces of rebellion it was necessary to appoint politicians at the head of the administration.

ERA OF SPECIAL ADMINISTRATORS

Therefore the Arakanese Minister for Minorities became Special Commissioner for Arakan while Myochit U Kyaw U, U Ba Saw and U Ba Hlaing became Special Deputy Commissioners of Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway respectively in Gwa township of Sandoway district and a Special Township Officer was appointed. The former heads of the district administration belonging to the civil service were relegated to the secondary and advisory posts of Additional Deputy Commissioners. Before long demoted Arakanese officers chose to go on retirement or transfer and the Government had to send out relatively junior non-Arakanese civil servants who could be counted on to serve under the new set-up loyally.

The era of the Special Administrators was the era of well meaning and sometimes shortsighted efforts subverted by internal betrayal or carried out to excess by over zealous partisans.

In the early stages the Special Administrators set themselves to the task of recruitment of Special Police Reserve from among their young followers. The functions and areas of the new force overlapped to a certain extent with those of the regular Civil Police and the U.M.P.; this had the regrettable effect of causing demoralization among the police personnel and resentment among the U.M.P.

With the appearance of the new force, detention of individuals without trial under section 5 of the Public Order Preservation Act (commonly known as POPA) became frequent and numerous. A great many cases of arrest and imprisonment were doubtless necessary and justifiable in the conditions then prevailing but isolated cases of arrests of persons belonging to the educated or articulate class of the Arakanese savoured of vindictiveness or revenge. By the security measures the new administration in Arakan district acquired for itself a bad odour.

The special administration also sought to regulate trade and adjust movement of goods by executive orders and these orders in many instances had the effect of hampering trade or restricting the flow of goods. In the result the powerful class of rural and urban traders, brokers and rice millers in Akyab was alienated from the administration.

MISTAKES IN STRATEGY

Much later in 1949 when the abortive strike of the ministerial servants and policemen in protest against the emergency cut of salaries occurred, the ferocity with which the Special Deputy Commissioner of Akyab suppressed the strike and sacked the personnel involved earned him and the organization he represented the hatred of the government servant class as a whole.
Immersed as they were in the affairs of day-to-day administration, the special administrators failed in the politically essential task of effective organization of working class movement in urban areas and peasant movement in rural regions. The special administrators and the AFPFL in Arakan thereby gradually lost the means of retaining their popularity because the town workers and peasants fell under the influence of communalist-minded class of merchants, paddy brokers and landowners. This cardinal mistake in political strategy cost the AFPFL the loss of decisive votes in almost the whole of Akyab district and partly in Kyaukpyu and Sandoway.

Soon after the special administrators took office they were confronted with an unusual and delicate situation. Their comrades in the U.M.P. had become restless, irked by the rigour of discipline in military life. The U.M.P. commanders fell prey to their erstwhile comrade-in-arms the PVOs and the Communists who promised autonomy and Communist paradise in Arakan. They were dazzled by the ease with which the mutinous 1st Battalion of the Burma Rifles took over the district town of ThayeMyo, which was the training ground of the Arakan UMP, and bagged the entire government treasury.

The UMP and PVO leaders approached their new civil colleagues to sell them the idea of taking over Arakan Division and setting up a government of their own. The new administrators, loyal to the Union, were aghast at the enormity of the treasonable proposal but they were powerless to oppose it outright. The special administrators resorted to the strategem of holding interminable conferences with the would-be rebels where the details of the projected government were thrashed out, while fashioning an armed force of their own.

Land of The Free
By John Loeb
New York.

An American janitor was arguing in a saloon with another man here.

The janitor was praising the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team, the other man liked the New York Yankees team better.

Then the janitor stopped arguing long enough to tell a Polish immigrant:

"Ya see, that's what America is like: a free country! He's for the Yankees. I'm for the Dodgers—we both got the right to disagree—we got free speech here!"

Sorry, the janitor was dead serious.

The janitor might have added that Americans, having no big labour or socialist party, also have the "right" to elect members of either the capitalist Democratic Party or the capitalist Republican Party—and it makes little difference whichever reactionary party wins the electoral "ballgame."

And while Americans have the right to "disagree" on the merits of rival baseball teams, any disagreement with the American capitalist government gets a person branded as a vicious socialist or Communist, in these days of the witch hunt.

When Left-wingers are not sent to prison on trumped-up charges, they lose their jobs. Employers are following the lead of the American government in refusing to hire Left-wingers.

The American government's witch hunt is one reason most American democratic socialists oppose the American government camp as well as Stalinism—and support the THIRD CAMP of world labour.

Incidentally, socialists here think THIRD CAMP a better term than "third force"—because the latter term is often used to describe a Centre coalition against "extremes" on a purely national scale. But THIRD CAMP means all workers and colonial peoples throughout the world who oppose the Kremlin and Wall Street war camps.
THE STATE OF ARAKAN

by

"ASMI"

YEARS OF SUSPENSE

Those were the days of suspense and confusion, with the fate of Arakan hanging in the balance. The U.M.P. leaders moved the military stores to Myohoung, the old capital of Arakanese Kings, and concentrated their men in Sandoway district. The Special Administrators strove desperately to retrieve whatever firearms they could lay their hands on and rally the elements of the U.M.P. and the P.V.O. that still remained loyal. At last the U.M.P. and P.V.O. leaders grew suspicious and weary of negotiations and resolved on direct action. They seized Myohoung and Sandoway, came out in open rebellion and called upon the administrators to do likewise.

The Special Administrators answered the challenge by withdrawing the loyal partisans from vulnerable places and turning the Akyab and Kyaukpyu islands into bastions of defence. The Kyaukpyu defences fell into rebel hands for a time but prompt police and naval action repaired the situation there. A full scale fratricidal fight was on with the Arakanese loyal to the Union standing with their backs against the wall, risking their lives in warding off the rebels who sought to overwhelm them. Arakan Division was truncated but it is to the great credit of the Special Administrators alone like U Ba Saw and Myochit U Kyaw U that they saved Arakan from the measureless disaster of total separation from the rest of the Union of Burma.

DANGER SHY

It is significant and symptomatic that U Kyaw Min and his group took no part whatsoever in the momentous struggle, preferring to live out the crucial days in safety behind doors in Akyab or in relative security of Rangoon. Only when peace of a sort was restored were they to come out to public gaze with prescriptions for a separate state for Arakan as panacea for all the ills the Arakanese had recently gone through, conveniently ignoring or forgetting the fact that the identical ills were brought about by those who tried to foist a separate government on Arakan.

A DIFFERENT DRAMA

While the Special Administrators and the Arakanese loyal to the Union were holding out in Akyab and Kyaukpyu, a different drama was being played out in Maungdaw Subdivision in the North where the 5th Burma Rifles with local civilian support broke the backbone of the first Mujahid rebellion and swept the scattered rebels to the hills and jungles. As the Mujahid trouble is independent of affiliation or connection with insurrection in the rest of Arakan, it will be convenient to set down here the events that took place in Maungdaw Subdivision.

Maungdaw Subdivision comprises two townships: Maungdaw township with 526 square miles in area and 124 village tracts and Butthedaw township with 790 square miles and 84 village tracts. The disturbing feature which caused communal difficulties and economic disequilibrium in this slice of Arakan is the predominance of Muslim population of foreign descent. In the 1931 census the British listed 51,252 avowed Indian Muslims and 38,816 Arakanese in Butthedaw township and 79,272 Indian Muslims and 27,361 Arakanese in Maungdaw township. By the end of World War II the Arakanese population in the area had well nigh disappeared while the Muslim population had trebled, and all claiming to be Burma nationals.

THE MUSLIMS

The Muslim leaders claim that the Muslim population are indigenous "Rowangyas" descended from Arab settlers who took service under the Arakanese kings but there is little ethnological or historical evidence to support it. The apparent fact is that a greater number of Muslims than the Muslim leaders would concede belong to the annual influx of cheap Chittagonian labour brought in by the Arakanese landowners and traders to help till the soil, harvest the paddy crop, transport and convey in the paddy trade, and permitted by the British administration to settle down in Arakan. In the course of years, with the rapid growth of Muslim population and consequently with its immense pressure on the land which the Arakanese cultivators steadily lost to the more industrious Muslims, the complacent Arakanese attitude towards the Muslims as a source of cheap and compliant manual labour changed into that of hostility as winning competitors in the economic and racial field. On their side the Muslim settlers had developed a strong sense of grievance against the Arakanese whom they call "Maghs", a historical appellation which the Arakanese had earned in their turbulent history by their predatory habit of raiding the coast of Bengal and enslaving the Muslims. The Muslim considered that the Arakanese in government service and in private walks of life were in censect out to humiliate them and evict them from their hard-won land. In consequence there obtained a situation pregnant with communal enmity which only needed an outside event to touch off an all-out open fight.

THE TOUCH OFF

The outbreak of World War II supplied the required event. When the Japanese invasion of Burma spread to Arakan the scanty British forces stationed there were easily routed and the British administration folded up. Before the Arakanese leaders could gain control of the situation the lawless bands, wearing the garb of patriotic revolt, filled the vacuum and prayed on the unarmed populace. Naturally, the worst sufferers were
the Muslim cultivators and leaders living in the predominantly Muslim areas. The Muslim refugees escaping to Maungdaw Subdivision with increasing size of the Muslim population. With firearms procured from the Birming Indian police, the Muslims of Maungdaw turned en masse to the Arakanese minority in their midst. The Arakanese population disappeared in a matter of days in mass killings or movement to the Bengal province of India. When the Japanese army reached Maungdaw on the right bank of the Maungdaw river, they found the Muslims in armed control of Maungdaw Subdivision.

The British forces rallied on the opposite bank of the river and set themselves to win the Muslims in Maungdaw area as the first necessary step in putting a firm base in North Arakan.

LURE OF BRITISH GOLD

Military proclamations over the signature of Lt-Col D.C.P. Phillips appeared declaring the Maungdaw Subdivision a Muslim national area and Muslim officers and emissaries were sent to work among the Muslims temporarily under the Japanese occupation. The most active among them was one Mrs. Shikol of the Indian Civil Service who envisaged incorporating Maungdaw Subdivision in the Muslim province of Bengal and he engaged with a zealous spirit to that end.

Lured by British gold and British promises the Maungdaw Muslims expected the British cause, contributed their rings reserves of manpower in the formation of "V Force" and labour corps and in auxiliary war activities. By the time war came to an end the Muslims were in possession of knowledge of military combat and of military trained in many jungle battle fields which the British were unable to duplicate. Among Muslim leaders and countries reluctant to return to turbulent peace-time labor banded themselves together and practised

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were brought in and the Muslims who had occupied the Arakanese-owned land made to go away. With the recent British promise of a national area still fresh in their minds, the Muslims were incensed at their eviction from the Arakanese-owned land and obstructed the work of the civil authorities in every way. The returning Arakanese villagers were harassed beyond endurance by economic boycott on the part of the Muslims such as denial of drinking water and food supplies, and by criminal intimidation. Above all, the Muslims began to move about openly with illicit firearms and at times came into conflict with the civil police.

PROPERTIES OF "HOLY WAR"

The communal and village life of the Maungdaw Muslims centers around discourses of their *moulvis* by religious preachers and singing of the wailing minarets. As the resentment against the civil government grew on the score of land question, the *moulvis* began preaching jihad or holy war against the Hindu Arakanese by forming bands of mujahids (crusaders). The mujahids improvised songs of Arakanese oppression and the glory of revolt. Such a singer was Zafar who moved from village to village uniting the Muslim youth with his crudely composed songs of fiery words to rise in rebellion against the government personified by Arakanese officers. Before the year 1948 was out a huge crowd of young Muslims under Shukoor took up arms and collected together with their wandering band at a place below Timug Bazaar on the Kalapanzi river. When the civil authorities sent a patrol boat with armed police personnel the river the Muslims resisted the passage of the boat. There was a heavy exchange of fire, the police suffered casualties and the patrol boat had to turn back. The Mujahid rising was on.

5TH BURMA RIFLES

The rising spread to four corners of Maungdaw Subdivision. The responsible and more moderate Muslim leaders failed in their efforts to restrain their restive followers. The Muslims overran UMP and police outposts and surged forward to the townships headquarters of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, driving before them the newly settled Arakanese villagers fleeing to the towns for terror. The small garrisons of the 5th Burmese Rifles in Maungdaw and Buthidaung met the massed Mujahid onslaught, held their ground, and when reinforcements and naval assistance reached them, threw back the attacking Muslims in a series of fierce gun-battles. The 5th Burmese Rifles wrote for themselves a brilliant page of military history when they raised the seige of the towns lasting over two months and in one big sweep rolled back the defeated Mujahids right up to the Pakistan frontier.

It is unfortunate for Arakan that before the 5th Burmese Rifles were done with mopping up the remnants of mujahids, they were hastily recalled from Maungdaw area to
Insein, to fight the KNDOs then knocking at the gates of Rangoon.

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

The hastily recruited Arakanese Territorial Force who took the place of the 5th Burifs were not equal to the task of putting down the Mujahids or pacifying the Muslim population. In fact the Arakanese units by their gross misbehaviour in their dealings with the Muslim populace gave a fresh lease of life to the moribund Mujahid movement and delivered a powerful propaganda weapon into the hands of those Muslims outside the country who were bent on removal of the authority of the Union Government from Maungdaw area. The Arakanese Force were accused of murders, rapes and banditry in Maungdaw area and those Muslim leaders who had kept themselves away from the Mujahids now came forward with a demand for the formation of a separate administrative district of Maungdaw directly supervised by the Union government.

ORGANISED CRIME

Afforded respite by the departure of the 5th Burifs the Mujahids regrouped themselves in the extreme North and South of Maungdaw Subdivision. While the newly arrived Arakanese force remained ineffectual by their inexperience and their hostile attitude towards the Muslim population as a whole, the Mujahids had achieved cohesion by the elimination of the educated elements from their leadership and the emergence of ruthless and criminal types of leaders. Led by the convicted pirate Abul Kasim and his relatives the Mujahids embarked upon a career of wholesale murder, rape and extortion directed against the Arakanese and Muslims alike. The educated cranks and religious fanatics were cynically relegated to the role of explaining away Kasim’s excesses and writing propaganda tracts on the justification of the Mujahid rising as a bulwark against Communism! The Arakanese units retaliated by indiscriminate and savage reprisals with the result that the situation in this corner of Arakan first became untenable.

TIMELY VISIT

The situation was saved by the timely visit of Prime Minister U Nu to Maungdaw in 1949. Bringing with him the Pakistani Ambassador, the Prime Minister made an on-the-spot study of the difficult situation. There followed a complete shake up of the administrative and security arrangements in the Subdivision: non-partisan civil officers and tested units of the Burma Army were sent into the area to build up a cordon sanitaire.

The 3rd Burma Regiment in 1951 and the 5th and 22nd Burma Regiments in late 1952 launched major offensive against the Mujahids who lost their stronghold first in the South and later in the...