

THE ARAKAN STATE

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The Arakan State.



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U KYAW MIN, M.P., I.C.S. (Retd.), Barrister-at-law.

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In the Chamber of Deputies during the non-confidence motion against the Government last February Session, I made a speech on Arakan Affairs which was stopped in the middle by the Speaker. Moreover, he prohibited the publication of the speech in the newspapers.

Later, I had occasion to have a talk with the Hon'ble U Kyaw Nyein, Deputy Prime Minister, and he remarked to me that he regretted that my speech was unfinished, that every problem deserved to be stated and considered, and he suggested that I write a paper in amplification of my speech.

When I made my speech in the Chamber of Deputies, it had to be short because of the time factor, and the reasons for making certain statements could not be given.

The reasons were however bonafide. But the Hon'ble Bo Khin Maung Gale kept interrupting me saying that my speech tended to create ill-will between the Burmese and the Arakanese. Nothing could have been further from my mind. All I wanted was for the Burmese MPs in particular, and the Burmese people in general to understand how the Arakanese were thinking, and reacting to the present circumstances in Arakan.

Let me insert in parenthesis a personal explanation that I write this in the spirit of an Advocate for his client, namely, the Arakanese people, trying to explain faithfully the workings of the Arakanese mind, so that the problem may be properly understood. Arakan has always been cut off from Burma Proper by impassable mountains. Just as it is not difficult to pick out and identify a Karen or a Shan and distinguish him from a Burmese, similarly it is not difficult to pick out an Arakanese and distinguish him from a Burmese.

Mistaken Belief

Racially it is believed that the Arakanese people are of Aryan stock mixed with the indigenous people who have inhabited Arakan from time immemorial.

The Burmese however view the Arakanese from a different view-

point. The Burmese consider the Arakanese to be the same as the Burmese but living in a localised spot and thus having acquired localised characteristics. The Burmese think that the Burmese and the Arakanese come of the same stock and are practically the same.

The Burmese viewpoint is completely mistaken. But if an Arakanese begins opening his mouth to say that the Arakanese are not the same as the Burmese, the Burmese will shut him up by saying that he is "dividing the blood" and trying to create ill-will between the Burmese and the Arakanese. And so the Arakanese quickly shuts his mouth. The Arakanese considers that it is not worth the trouble and effort to put the Burmese wise. After all, if the Burmese think that the Burmese and the Arakanese are the same, why not let them continue in this mistaken belief?

I myself consider that half the present trouble about Arakan is due to this mistaken belief of the Burmese which no Arakanese has really tried to explain to the Burmese.

Let me repeat again that the Arakanese consider themselves racially to be different from the Burmese, added to which is the historical background of an Arakanese Kingdom and Arakanese Kings for the past at least 3,000 years, and because of the stories handed down for the past 150 years from generation to generation, they resent the conquest of Arakan by Bodawpaya and the removal of the Mahamuni Image to Mandalay, and lastly the depopulation of the country after the Boh Chin Byan Revolt. I mention here about the depopulation of Arakan because of certain references to it that I make later.

One cannot understand the spirit

of the Arakanese without patiently trying to understand this historical background. It is of no value whatever trying to be an ostrich and burying one's face in the ground, trying to get away from these historical facts, and just alleging that any mention of these historical facts is apt to create ill-will between the Arakanese and the Burmese.

So far as the Arakanese are concerned, this historical background forms an integral part of his very being, from the time he wakes up in the morning till he goes to sleep at night. Let me therefore state that it does not help to understand the Arakan problem if this background is absent from the Burmese mind. The Arakanese mind and the Burmese mind cannot meet in understanding if the Arakanese mind perennially and perpetually has the historical background and the Burmese mind has not.

Proud People

The Arakanese are a very proud people. They have had reason to be proud. And to back this pride are certain racial characteristics that conduce to greatness, namely, hard work, integrity, appreciation of and praise for high qualities in another, etc.

During the 17th and 18th century, Arakan was a great naval power, dominating the Bay of Bengal, just as the Portuguese dominated the Arabian Sea. One can read about Arakan of those days in Mr. Maurice Collis' *THE LAND OF THE GREAT IMAGE*. At one time an Arakanese King held sway from Dacca to Martaban. Arakan was a naval power, whereas the Burmese and Talaing Kingdoms were land powers.

However, in the latter half of the 18th century, Arakan fell on bad days with anarchy rampant. Usurpers usurped the throne and after some months or some years were in turn overthrown by other usurpers. About this time the Burmese of Upper Burma managed to throw back the Talaings, and Alaungpaya managed to found the Shwebo Dynasty. In 1785 some relatives of an Arakanese King who had lost his throne appealed to the then Burmese King Bodawpaya to come to their help, but instead the Burmese King came and conquered Arakan.

Tens of thousands of Arakanese were killed whilst tens of thousands ran away to Bengal for protection

under the East India Company. Later came the Arakanese Revolt under Boh Chin Byan. This was followed by the Order of the Burmese King which was quite usual in those days and it was that Arakan should be depopulated. As a consequence all males, from infants to grown-ups, were massacred. Again there was an exodus of tens of thousands of Arakanese to safety under the East India Company.

Then came the First Anglo-Burmese War which was in a way the outcome of the continual clashes between the Arakanese refugees in Bengal and the Burmese Officials. As a result, Arakan and Tenasserim were ceded to Great Britain, and tens of thousands of Arakanese refugees managed to return to their native land.

But the country had been so depopulated by the Burmese that the British had to resort to the giving of Waste Land Grants. There must be some 40 or 50 Waste Land Grants in Akyab District ranging each from 40,000 acres to 1,000 acres. The idea was to transport back the Arakanese who had run away to the Bengal area and to settle them at the expense of the Waste Land Grantee, who in turn was given the grant in perpetuity at land revenue rates not to exceed two-thirds the rate in surrounding areas.

The Town of Akyab was founded by the British and mostly peopled with the Arakanese refugees from Bengal. But tens of thousands did not come back and were happy in Bengal because of special privileges during the British days. But after the Second World War, from 1946 onwards, it is estimated that about 30,000 to 40,000 Arakanese returned to Arakan and Rangoon, but there are probably about 1,00,000 Arakanese still left in East Pakistan.

Then came the Second Anglo-Burmese War and finally the Third. At first, the British ruled Arakan and Tenasserim direct from India, but later, Burma became a Province of India while Arakan became a Division of Burma.

When the British were in Burma, the Arakanese had very little to complain, except generally, that the surplus revenue received from Lower Burma, including Arakan were utilized for the development of the deficit areas like Upper Burma. Because of the qualities of head and heart of the Arakanese, they mostly held the top-jobs in Government Service in Rangoon, whilst the Arakanese people in Arakan generally managed

to prosper in spite of the keen competition from the Indian and the British merchants.

After a hundred years of British rule, memories of the 40 years of Burmese misrule in Arakan began to subside. The British were the paramount power; Britishers were there to see to justice. The Burmese could no longer bully the Arakanese.

Both the Burmese and the Arakanese had to depend on their own efficiency and merit for advancement in life. The British way of life was such that neither the Arakanese nor the Burmese could get an advantage through intrigue or backbiting.

Govt. Services

In recruitment to the Government Services, the British depended mostly on competitive examinations and the Public Service Commission, and thus it was that the Arakanese managed to enter the Government Services, especially the Superior Services, in greater proportion than the population of Arakan warranted.

In addition, in pre-war days the Burmese Officials hated to serve in Arakan, and most Burmese Officials posted to Arakan wriggled out of their transfers, whilst some actually resigned from Government service rather than go to Arakan.

The effect was that 90 per cent of the Gazetted Officers in Arakan were Arakanese, whilst in the non-gazetted services practically all were Arakanese.

The final result was that there were only a handful of Burmese ever in Arakan, and the Burmese Officials that did stay more than a few months were of the more congenial kind. The Arakanese in Arakan had forgotten what the Burmese even looked like and what were their racial characteristics, etc.

The problem of the Arakanese was the Chittagonian problem, not the Burmese. The Chittagonians, however, came to Arakan as servants and labourers and as such they were wanted in Arakan. They never were really a serious problem for they kept their place as servants and labourers and in the mofussil, where they came as peasants, there was enough room for them because of the lack of Arakanese farmers. The relations were always cordial. The first clash between them was with the advent of the Japanese in early 1942. But that is a story apart.

But how is Arakan being administered since the AFPFL came into power? Arakan is in fact being run by AFPFL Burmese Ministers from Rangoon. And who is the Commissioner? A non-Arakanese. Who are the three Deputy Commissioners in Arakan? All non-Arakanese. Who are the three DSPs in Arakan? All non-Arakanese. Who are the Judicial Officers, the SDOs, the Deputy Superintendents of Police, the Civil Surgeons, the Education Officers, the Forest Officers? Practically all are non-Arakanese. In fact, over 90 per cent of the Gazetted Posts in Arakan are filled by non-Arakanese. Please compare it to the time when once in the Akyab District under British Rule, the DC, the DSP and the Sessions Judge were all Arakanese.

But that does not end the catalogue of non-Arakanese. Quite a few of the non-gazetted staff, like Township Officers, SIPs, subordinates in every other department are non-Arakanese.

The Burmese Officers now posted to Arakan have come mostly on promotion but, once they reach Arakan, all they are thinking of is how to get back to their native land. And most of the work they do is merely to obey the behests of the AFPFL in every way.

Now, is it not fair to ask whether it was by accident or whether it was by design of the AFPFL Government that practically all the senior and many of the Junior Government Servants in every department in Arakan are non-Arakanese?

And then how about the Army and Navy and the UMP? Those who are in Arakan are non-Arakanese.

AFPFL Imperialism

Can therefore anyone deny that Arakan is being governed as a colony of Burma? Can anyone deny that Arakan is a patent example of AFPFL imperialism?

And what do they think of the attitude of the Burmese personnel in Arakan? They swagger about as if they belong to a Superior race. In Akyab, the young Burmese Officers have a Club or Group of their own to which the Arakanese are not admitted.

And how about the armed forces in Arakan, who as I have indicated before, are mostly Burmese? Actually they just act in Arakan as they act in Burma proper. They want everyone to remember, and they themselves cannot forget, that they are risking their very lives

against the insurgents and that they are the saviours of the country. They are paramount.

If there is any minor fight between some stray personnel of the armed forces and the civilians, the armed forces bring up reinforcements armed to the teeth and proceed to hammer and even to shoot up the civilians indiscriminately.

And there are so many instances that have inflamed public opinion where, for example, a few insurgents shoot at some passing armed forces and the latter then enter the nearest village and kill defenceless women, children and aged men at point blank range.

This is all very well in Burma proper, but what is the reaction in Arakan? The Arakanese consider that this kind of thing has happened because the soldiery are Burmese. The emphasis is on the fact that they are Burmese. The Arakanese feel that if the soldiery had been Arakanese, such incidents would never happen and certainly that such cowardly and bullying tactics would never have been used. Actually such incidents are happening daily in Burma proper, but the Arakanese do not know it. Resentment is born, and resentment is against the Burmese race and not against the soldiery as such.

And the stories of the depopulation of 150 years ago are repeated from mouth to mouth, how the Burmese are a cruel people, etc., and the smouldering past hate against the Burmese is slowly reignited and resuscitated. And this is reinforced by the tactless attitude of the gazetted and non-gazetted Burmese personnel in the Civilian Government Services who are thinking only of how the AFPFL will win at the elections by hook or by crook. One thing they do not understand, or may be they forget, is the basic nature of the Arakanese people in general, that they hate anything unfair, that they hate anything underhand.

Some of the Burmese Ministers, prompted by some of the Arakanese Quislings who profess to love the Burmese so much and who have got themselves into positions of petty kings of Arakan, keep levelling the charge against some of the Arakanese leaders about "dividing the blood" and inciting hatred between the Burmese and the Arakanese. As far as "dividing the blood" is concerned, I have already mentioned

earlier that the Burmese and the Arakanese are not the same. Many of the racial characteristics are different.

Language

As for the sameness of the language which is one of the arguments put by some of the Burmese Ministers to show that the Burmese and the Arakanese are the same, superficially it may be believed that the two languages are the same, but every Arakanese knows that it is not so. The Arakanese way of expression especially for those who are not very educated, is not the same as the Burmese. Therefore let us not talk too much about "dividing the blood".

And for inciting hatred and creating animosity between the Arakanese and the Burmese, let me tell you the answer. It is due to all the thousands of Burmese personnel who have been stationed in Arakan since 1948 to the present day, swaggering about as if they belonged to a superior race, believing that might is right and depending on the gun to settle all disputes. Do not be misled; it is these Burmese personnel themselves who are the cause of all the trouble.

I now come to the present demand for an Arakan State. Arakan wants a State within the Union of Burma, like the Shan State or the Kachin State or the Karen State. I personally consider that the AFPFL false propaganda to the ignorant Arakanese and Burmese people that the Arakan National United Organisation is advocating an independent sovereign state is unfair and unwarranted.

During the British days, there was law and order in the land with intermittent doses of political reforms. As I have said before, there were no Burmese personnel ruling the Arakanese in Arakan, though, of course, Arakan, as part of Burma, was being ruled from Rangoon. Here again, the Arakanese were to the fore in Rangoon, and since the separation of Burma from India, there were always two prominent Arakanese as Ministers in all the successive Rangoon Cabinets.

But even before that, the Arakanese mind was not sleeping as to what might happen after the British left Burma. At the Second Round Table Conference in London, the Arakanese representatives raised the question with the British leaders about keeping Arakan apart from Burma proper, but received no reply.

Let me also quote from the

manifesto of U TUN AUNG, MLC, Principal of the National High School, Akyab, issued some time before the Second World War.

"If only Arakan is separately administered and not from Rangoon as at present, there can be advantage to Arakan in the future. Arakan should remain joined to Burma, but there can be no advantage to Arakan if Arakan submits to administration from Rangoon as at present and not separately."

Now we come to the period after the Second World War. All the Members of the Constituent Assembly returned from Arakan were AFPFL. The Arakanese rejoiced in the idea of Independence for Burma.

The Arakanese Members raised with Bogyoke Aung San the granting of an Arakan State, like the Shan State and the Kachin State, but was told not to complicate matters at that juncture but that the matter would be raised after Independence.

Bogyoke Aung San's formula for the granting of an autonomous State was well known. I personally got it from U Aung Than, elder brother of Bogyoke Aung San. I have since come to understand that this was the formula followed in Soviet Russia. Bogyoke Aung San said that any nationality would be given a state that fulfilled four conditions :-

1. It must have its own historical background.
2. It must have its own natural boundaries.
3. It must be an economic entity.
4. It must have its own culture, language and customs.

The Arakanese knew that Arakan conformed to Bogyoke Aung San's formula and decided to bide their time. The Arakan State would surely come. Unfortunately for Arakan, Bogyoke Aung San was assassinated in July 1947.

Regional Autonomy

After the attainment of Independence, the question of a State for Arakan was pursued. There was however one rival idea to that of an Arakan State, namely, a Minister for Arakan. Section 91 of the new Constitution was studied, but no one seemed to know what "regional autonomy" meant. I wish to confess here that though I studied Political Science during my College days in England I had never heard of regional autonomy, and never understood what

regional autonomy meant till I went to Moscow in 1952.

Some thought that regional autonomy entailed a Minister for Arakan and that it might be better than having a State. In many ways, it would be correct. A Minister for Arakan would be a Super-Commissioner, dealing with every subject, with every matter, pertaining to Arakan. With Cabinet rank, he could make demands from his colleagues, say for an extra school from the Education Minister or an extra hospital from the Health Minister. He would be a little King of Arakan.

But others realized that any success he had would depend on his personality—a person with a strong personality could get two schools where an average person could get only one, but a person with a weak personality would get none.

Others favoured an Arakan State, where things did not depend on the personality of a Minister.

There was some agitation for an Arakan State. So also was there agitation for a Karen State and a Mon State. Things came to a head with the appointment of the Sir Ba U Commission in October 1948. I mention this date specially to prove the lie to the late false AFPFL propaganda that the idea of an Arakan State was born within the brain of U Kyaw Min. For at the time of the constitution of the Sir Ba U Commission, I was still a Government servant without any interest or training in politics. The memorandum of U Shwe Baw, MA, BL, a member of the Commission, clearly shows that the Arakan Freedom League demanded a State.

At this stage may I comment on what Premier U Nu said in the Chamber of Deputies on the Thursday before the Non-Confidence Motion. Replying to U Hla Tun Phyu, U Nu remarked that States were given to the Shans and Kachins and the Kayahs against the will of the AFPFL, that the AFPFL favoured a Unitary State, that having constituent States weakened the Union, and that the AFPFL did not want to grant Arakan a State, not because they hated the Arakanese but because they did not want to create any more States.

If this be so, why did the AFPFL Government ever appoint the Sir Ba U Commission? As a result of the appointment of this Commission, Arakan has now been whipped up

into a ferment. The Arakanese people have nearly gone mad over the idea of getting a State. One must look at it also from the historical and nationalistic point of view; an Arakan State means the running of Arakan by Arakanese, namely, by persons who know the mentality and conditions of the Arakanese people.

The Arakanese people now understand what it is to be a State. The powers of a State are enumerated in the Constitution of the Union of Burma. The State will have its own State Services and its own State Public Service Commission. It will have an Arakan Affairs Council and its own State Ministers, and under them there will be its own Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners and DSPs. No more will these officers be the nominees of the Govt. of Rangoon. This alone, in my mind, should be a sufficient reason for the Arakanese wanting an Arakan State.

Law and Order, the Administration of Justice, the Police, Education, Health, Communications, Agricultural loans, etc., will be State subjects. That is good enough. These are the nation-building subjects. The face of Arakan and the Arakanese could be changed in a generation if Arakan were made a State.

Take, for example, the matter of teaching English in Schools. At present English can be taught in State Schools only from the 5th Standard. If Arakan were a State we could pass an order that English will be taught from the 1st Standard or even from the Kindergarten. We could also arrange that English be taught in Arakan by people who know English well.

In a nutshell, it is better in every way to have an Arakan State than for Arakan to be run as at present from Rangoon by persons who know scarcely anything about Arakan or who have scarcely heard of Arakan.

Federalism

In the debate on the Thursday before the Non-Confidence Motion, U Nu said that having constituent States weakened a country. I do not know whether U Nu was talking with his tongue in his cheek. Having a Union means having Constituent States and this is called Federalism, and our Constitution in Section 1 says that Burma shall be called "The Union of Burma".

It is well known that Federalism is a device for bringing together and

satisfying the different peoples of a country. Federalism is the strength of the United States of America where they have 48 States. Federalism is also the strength of the USSR where they have 16 States plus, for the less advanced peoples, some Regional Autonomy Areas and a few National Areas.

The majority of Governments in the world are Federal Governments. The greatest example of Federalism is Switzerland, a country not bigger than Arakan. There are three different races in Switzerland, speaking French, German and Italian, yet by having Federalism in Switzerland, every race is satisfied. Federalism is well known to strengthen a country, and not weaken it as U Nu wishes to argue.

Just as it is true that asking for a new State without rhyme or reason is bad, U Nu and his Cabinet should know that in cases where conditions for the formation of a new State are fulfilled, the refusal to form such a new State can adversely affect the unity of Burma. This is a matter which those who take a long view and have the prosperity of the Union of Burma at heart should carefully remember.

Regarding Bogyoke Aung San's formula, it cannot be denied that Arakan conforms to all the four conditions, namely, it has its own historical background, it has its own natural boundaries, it is an economic entity and has its own culture, language and customs. Whoever is denying Arakan a State is just trying to weaken the strength of, and break up, the Union of Burma.

When the Sir Ba U Commission was inaugurated in October 1948, U Nu made a speech entitled "Satisfaction of all Nationals" which is reported at page 156 of "Towards Peace and Democracy" by Thakin Nu. The speech is so important that I am reproducing it here in full:

"Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission, — If I am asked to make a single remark today at this hour, in this room, I would make this request, "Please explore the means and ways of satisfying, without hindrance, all the legitimate aspirations of Mon, Karen and Arakanese nationals.

"I am not saying this rashly; I have ample reasons for it. Let us first turn over the pages of World History by way of clarification and we will see that the history of the world has one dominating factor

towering above all others. This is no other than the fact that the countries in which people are united become World powers, whereas the countries in which the people are disunited have receded to the background in the World's line-up.

"I do not deny that manpower and sound economy are essential prerequisites to make a country a first class power. But I would like to remind the members that however strong a country may be in respect of manpower and economy, it can never become a world power if it is bereft of national unity.

"If it was true that manpower and national economy were the only factors to turn a country into a world power, India would then be in a better position than Great Britain, and China more favourable than Japan for supremacy. India is endowed with greater manpower and vaster national resources than Great Britain. China likewise, is more favoured in these respects than Japan. For all these advantages, India, far from attaining world supremacy, had fallen low under Great Britain, because she did not possess a solid national unity as Great Britain did.

"We see similar instance in China. She enjoys far greater man-power and vaster national resources than Japan, but lack of national solidarity had made her a vassal of Japan for a considerable length of time.

"It is, therefore, up to all of us: Shans, Chins, Kachins, Karens, Karennis, Mons, Burmans and other indigenous races of the Union of Burma, to benefit by these great lessons of history which should serve as beacon lights in our endeavour, in all possible ways to establish national unity. To revert to our Burmese history, it will be observed that national unity had been achieved only thrice so far: in the reigns of Anawrahta, Bayinnaung and Alaungpaya. But the unity thus achieved had not been built up on firm foundations, but on personal considerations. On the demise of that particular personage, on whom the whole fabric was built, the tansitory unity crumbled like a house of cards.

"In our task of building up this national solidarity which is the life blood of the Union of Burma, this great lesson of Burmese history should serve as a constant reminder.

"What then is the firm foundation on which the national unity should be built? To put it in a nut-

shell, the firm foundation is no other than the satisfaction of all nationals. So long as this satisfaction exists, even the King of Devas cannot break up this national unity. If there is no satisfaction, we need not take the trouble of going up to the imperialists, the exploiters and the enemies of the Union to find the accused for the disruption of national solidarity, but this lack of satisfaction itself will be the accused No.1 for the disruption of our national unity.

"Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission, please allow me to explain a little on what I mean by this satisfaction. To put it briefly, satisfaction is no other than the conviction by each national group that it is receiving fair and just treatment in the hands of others.

"Mere lip service cannot give satisfaction; it must be implemented by deeds. It seems to me that the principal task of this Commission is no other than the exploration of means by which we can show our goodwill to our fraternal communities like Mons, Karens and Arakanese not merely by words but by deeds.

"To be candid, the statesmanship of our national leaders is now being put to a severe test at present, more than in any other period of history. We all must give the answer to the world whether we are really fit for independence or merely fit for servitude. We all will have to show to the world whether we are capable of uniting all the indigenous peoples of the Union and giving them full human rights and enabling them to live a full life or we merely the disruptors of the Union who plunge the country back into servitude.

"This test will enable us to show whether we are capable of making the whole country flow with milk and honey or with blood. My only wish is that our leaders will stand the test well and show to the world that we are fit for independence. It is my fervent hope that our leaders will be capable of achieving national unity as a result of which seventeen million people comprising Shans, Chins, Kachins, Karens, Karennis, Mons and Burmese will live a full life. Let me conclude by expressing my fond hope that our leaders may be capable of raining our country with milk and honey instead of with blood."

In regard to Arakan, the Sir Ba U Commission came to Akyab once in

July 1950. And that was all. When it submitted a report a few months later, it recommended a State for the Karens inspite of the fact that they satisfied only one of the four conditions of Bogyoke Aung San's formula, but regarding Arakan, the Commission said it had not had the opportunity to study the problem and recommended that a small Committee be appointed to go into the question.

Because of the Sir Ba U Commission and the grant of a State to the Karens, the Arakanese people have come to fever pitch about an Arakan State. And the flame was fanned in February 1956 on the occasion of the moving in Parliament of the Arakan State Bill by U Ba Myaing when Minister Bo Khin Maung Gale told us to try and secure at the General Election a quarter of the seats in Parliament with the grant of an Arakan State as the main platform.

Boastful Challenge

The Arakan National United Organisation knew full well that 95 per cent of the voters in Akyab District leaving out Buthidaung and Maungdaw, 90 per cent of the voters of Kyaukpyu District and 85 per cent of the voters of the Sandoway District were in favour of an Arakan State. It could not therefore understand this boastful challenge of Bo Khin Maung Gale. It was to realize only later.

It was all very well for U Nu to say publicly in Rangoon that there would be free and fair elections and that they would all be held simultaneously at the end of April 1956. I still cannot say whether U Nu shouted this aloud from the housetops with his tongue in his cheek. Or was he so ignorant of all the preparations that were being made by the AFPFL to win in every constituency? In spite of the AFPFL being so hated all over Burma the final predictions were that the AFPFL would win all except about 15. In Arakan, the non-Arakanese Government Servants got into their stride to win the elections for the AFPFL.

First of all, the Electoral rolls were tampered with in that lots of voters whom the AFPFL knew would definitely vote for the ANUO were left out. In my own constituency about 5,000 Buddhist voters in one area were left out.

Secondly were the use of the armed forces, the UMP and the Pyusawhtis to intimidate voters to vote for the AFPFL and to prevent voters from voting for the ANUO.

Thirdly, wherever it was quite sure that the AFPFL would lose, the

elections were postponed.

In two of the constituencies, one in Kyaukpyu and one in Sandoway District, there was the action unparalleled in the world of voting in half the constituency, saying that the other half was under the insurgents.

Then in Sandoway, no sooner had U Lwin, then MP, filed his nomination papers than he was falsely arrested as implicated in a murder case. After the voting was over, he was released from jail.

After repeated postponements, some for 5 or 6 occasions for no rhyme or reason except that the AFPFL would surely lose, some of the elections were finally held between January and June 1957.

It would seem that in view of the illegal and corrupt actions of the AFPFL, they would have won all the elections. No, the Arakanese people overcame all the illegal tactics and came in their thousands in face of all danger to vote for an Arakan State, to vote for the ANUO.

There are now three Election Petitions pending trial, for the Taungup, Kyauktaw and Ramree constituencies.

In Taungup, some of the allegations are that there was treating of voters, the complete prevention of voters of a whole area from coming to Taungup to vote by the seizure of all transport by the UMP, and the intimidation in other localities against voting for the ANUO.

In Kyauktaw, some of the allegations are that there was treating of voters and the use to the fullest extent of the Security Forces to intimidate the voters to vote for the AFPFL or to prevent the voters from coming to vote for the ANUO.

In Ramree, some of the allegations are that all the Polling Booths were kept in the town and the UMP kept firing from 4 a.m. to 5 p.m. in order to prevent the voters from voting for U Ba Myaing.

In the Myebon Constituency, the election was held in two halves, one in April 1956 and the other in April 1957. The ANUO candidate, the reigning MP, U Ba Pru, was leading in the April 1956 voting. When it came to April 1957, when voting was to be in the An Township, the AFPFL put in the Pyusawhtis who prevented U Ba Pru and every one of his workers from entering the area. U Ba Pru protested in every direction but in vain. It was in this connection that U Hla Tun Phyu and myself went to interview Deputy Prime Minister U Kyaw Nyein. But everything was fruitless, and U Ba Pru was so disgusted that he issued a manifesto saying he was dis-

gusted that he was withdrawing from the election.

In respect of Sandoway South Election, U Lwin had been released a year earlier after the voting in the first half had finished. But when voting in the Gwa Township in the second half was eventually to be held in April 1957 after repeated adjournments, what the authorities did was to place all the Polling Booths in Sandoway Town at a distance of about 60 to 80 miles from where the voters resided. U Lwin protested but in vain, and he also finally withdrew from the contest after writing to the newspapers in protest.

Fed Up

The Arakanese are absolutely fed up with the way the AFPFL Government has conducted the Elections. There was a terrible hue and cry in Burma Proper about the way the Elections had been rigged at the General Election of 1951, but the Government did not have the Security Forces and other means to rig them in Arakan in 1951, and thus were returned to Parliament a large number of Arakanese MPs who defeated the AFPFL candidates. The Arakanese MPs who were returned in opposition to the AFPFL formed the Independent Arakanese Parliamentary Group. It was later that the Arakan National United Organisation was born.

It is however very significant that the same dirty tactics as were used in Burma Proper to win the elections in 1951 were used in Arakan in 1956 and 1957. It is the same old shameless technique of using intimidation and duress on the poor ignorant Arakanese of the rural areas. If the AFPFL cannot be checked in the use of these techniques, it is quite clear that they will be in power in Burma and Arakan for the next 100 years.

It is quite clear therefore that in the demand for an Arakan State and the possible consequent Plebiscite in Arakan, the Arakanese people can never agree to having voting with the Security Forces rampant in Arakan. In fact, nothing can now satisfy them except voting under the auspices of an Independent Agency.

The AFPFL aver that the Arakanese do not want an Arakan State. The ANUO avers that the Arakanese do. This can only be decided by a free and fair Plebiscite. Is the AFPFL afraid to have voting under the auspices of an Independent Agency, say, the United Nations? Nothing short of an Independent Agency will satisfy the Arakanese leaders. Or else

the AFPFL, the past masters of every trick to win an election, will surely win.

Lastly, let us consider some political trends in Arakan. I have mentioned the political ferment caused by the actions of the AFPFL Government. But the people of Arakan are very frustrated, and frustration is always a bad thing. The ANUO stands solidly for an Arakan State within the Union of Burma, but there are already certain elements, both underground and above ground, who are thinking in terms of, and openly advocating, a Sovereign Independent State. In assessing this, please always try and remember the historical background of Arakan.

This reminds me of the previous attitude of the British Government in regard to Burma. Sir Winston Churchill was earnestly urged on many occasions during the War to declare to the people of Burma that after a definite period of years, say 7 or 5 or 3 years, after the termination of the War, Burma would be given Home Rule within the British Commonwealth and that in the meantime Britain would rehabilitate Burma to the best of her ability. As in the case of the Philippines where America made such a declaration, Burma might have been satisfied, to get Home Rule, say 3 years after the War. But what happened? Sir Winston Churchill refused to make the declaration. And the final result? Burma left the Commonwealth within 2 1/2 years of cessation of hostilities.

Let met therefore appeal to the AFPFL Government to exercise statesmanship and grant a state to Arakan immediately.



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