



*Comrade Thakhin Than Tun, Chairman of the Communist Party of Burma*

# **BURMA**

## **Ablaze**

by:

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THE Burmese people's struggle against colonialism and imperialism began ever since 1824 when the British started their annexation of the country. The struggle assumed various forms, legal and illegal, armed and unarmed; it ranged from modest defence of religion or culture to the anti-fascist armed revolt, from the outdated peasant rebellions to the highest forms of proletarian actions.

VARIOUS classes have taken their turns at the helm of the Burmese revolution but Burmese historical experience itself has amply illustrated the fact that the working class must lead the nation in its fight for freedom. The young working class is also living up to its historical role. Especially after the foundation of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) on August 15, 1939, the working class and its Party ushered in a brilliant stage of the Burmese revolution. It was precisely under the leadership of the CPB that a national united front, the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), was formed and that the first military triumph, the victorious anti-fascist revolt of 1945, was won.

In the post-war years the British colonialists found that they could no longer ignore the Burmese demands for national independence. They were, however, reluctant to come to terms with the Communists in the AFPFL and therefore engineered to oust them from the national united front. Exploiting the vacillation and opportunism of leaders like Major-General Aung San, U Nu, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein and others, the "older" politicians who were known for their collaboration with colonialism infiltrated into the League. The older and the younger bourgeois leaders joined hands to expel the CPB from the AFPFL. As if this were not enough the imperialist die-hards even murdered

Aung San whom they did not fully trust.

Only when the national forces were gravely split did the British colonialists hand over the administrative power to the AFPFL and to U Nu, a demagogic personality. At the same time they took great precautions to keep Burma as a semi-colonial country even after the declaration of her incomplete independence on January 4, 1948.

It must be mentioned at this juncture that, although it came rather recently to Burma, Marxism established firm roots in the land and spread like wild-fire. The word "capitalist" became abusive epithet while "socialism" came to be recognized as a pass-word in Burmese politics. The pre-war struggles against British

colonialism were fought out under the banner of socialism. During the war also all the anti-fascist fighters in the ranks of the AFPFL were taught Marxist ideas. The dominant demand after the war, as it is still now, was for the establishment of a People's Democracy, well set on the road to Socialism.

**T**HUS, when the bourgeois leaders betrayed the revolution, compromised with the colonialists to set up a semi-colonial country under bourgeois dictatorship, much discontent was provoked and political disagreements sharpened to a critical point in 1947-48. Thus, as soon as U Nu's cabinet used force in a bid to smash the vanguard, the Communist Party of Burma, on March 28, 1948, the people retaliated with guns in their hands. The Burmese Civil War has been in progress ever since.

During these 19 years there were times when the revolutionary tide ran high in the country as there were times when the revolution suffered certain setbacks. But the Communists and their allies were able to persist in the armed struggle and to foil all attempts by the bourgeoisie to consolidate their dictatorship. Far from stabilizing their positions the bourgeois leadership hopelessly split up into three factions of U Nu, U Ba Swe and General Ne Win. The last mentioned clique took advantage of the political impotency of the other two and staged a bloodless coup d'etat in 1958. But the brutal methods that the military clique employed in their wholesale suppression of the progressive forces soon won for them the intense hatred and resistance of the people and U Nu, the demagogue, was again restored in 1960. All these shuffles, however, were of no avail and the people's revolution continued in its steady ascent. In 1962, Ne Win staged a second coup d'etat and totally replaced the parliamentary form of bourgeois dictatorship by a military form.

This time the Ne Win clique took great pains to keep up a "socialist" visage. As has been mentioned, socialist ideas dominate in Burma and after World War II no political party of any significance has ever dared to drop the

demand for Socialism. The reactionary Ba Swe group are members of the Asian Socialist International. U Nu's clique preaches a form of "Buddhist Socialism". Other petty-bourgeois parties also flirt with Marxism. Learning from his bitter experiences in 1958-1960, Ne Win now declares his phoney "Burmese Way to Socialism" which is nothing but a political weapon aimed to disrupt the people's struggle for real socialist ideals.

The "nationalization" activities of the military clique primarily serve this purpose. Some "nationalization" of domestic enterprises are simply steps by which the bourgeois group in power destroys the other groups for its own benefit. "Nationalization" of foreign property is also made with detailed provisions to safeguard the interests of the owners not only in future perspectives but also at the present stage. There is no wonder that with all this hullabaloo going on about "Burmese socialism", neither imperialist gunboats nor colonialist paratroopers had attacked the Ne Win regime as has been the practice elsewhere. The military government strictly avoids the mass line in all its "socialization" moves: after all, what is nationalized by order of the military dictator can also be denationalized by its order. The agrarian arrangements are also provisional: the government only suspends the payment of rents but refuses to expropriate the land from the landowners and distribute it among the tillers of the soil. It is Ne Win's desire, first of all, to crush or at least weaken the revolutionary forces with the aid of these progressive-sounding activities and later to revise all these measures to pursue an openly reactionary road.

**F**ROM the very beginning the military government failed to hide its true features from the people. They witnessed the infamous massacre of students on July 7, 1962, they know of the arrests, tortures and murders of many progressive elements, they are victims of the barbarous policies of destruction carried out in the countryside. There are too many crimes committed by the Ne Win clique, too many proofs of their reactionary nature. Due to their ruthless exploitation of the

people and to the rapacious policies of wanton plunder practised at all levels by their henchmen, the economic situation of the country has also declined to unknown depths. One of the outstanding phenomena can be seen in the present catastrophic shortage of rice that has brought famine, never known before, to Burma. With the rising discontent of the people, the revolutionary forces have also strengthened their ranks to deal the Ne Win government heavy blows militarily as well as politically.

Comparatively speaking, Ne Win has had better successes in donning the mask of active neutralism in foreign affairs. But this has been falling off as the U.S. aggression of Vietnam intensified and the struggles of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America gathered momentum. During the recent Israeli aggression of the Arab countries also his commitments to, and ties with, the imperialist bloc were further revealed.

Now, faced with a growing economic crisis and also military and political defeats at home, the Ne Win clique can no longer wear its mask of neutrality. In order to woo more economic, military and political aid from the imperialist camp led by the U.S. and the modern revisionists headed by the Soviet leaders, it has openly staged the recent anti-China and anti-Chinese campaign throughout the country. But this plot only served to expose the reactionary nature of the military government even further.

The Ne Win clique will fail in its manoeuvres to stop the tide of the Burmese revolution. In spite of all measures taken by the ruling class the people have been carrying on a glorious armed struggle for the last two decades. It is also an outstanding characteristic of the Burmese Civil War that all the national minorities are also up in revolt, guns in their hands, against the government. In May 1959, the National Democratic Unity Front, that includes the Communist Party of Burma, the Karen National Unity Party, the New Mon State Party, the Kayah National Progress Party and the Chin Leadership, was established. It can also be hoped that, in the not too

distant future, the Shan and the Kachin revolutionaries will join hands with the NDUF in the fight against the common enemy.

In the recent years, the operation zones of the revolutionaries have increased considerably, effecting 31 districts or 67% of the country's total area. Since 1965 the people's forces have been attacking and temporarily seizing small- and medium-sized towns: the recent victories like those at the towns of Gyobingauk (13.5.67) and Pyapon (28.5.67) are typical examples. The Communist Party of Burma issued a call in 1964 to annihilate the enemy in squads and this became a reality since 1965. The revolutionary forces are now even wiping out the enemy at platoon strength. One of the recent battles, for instance, near Paukhaung (11.7.67), where our forces killed ten enemy soldiers

including one captain, wounded thirteen others and seized a large amount of arms and ammunition, is also an example. Incidentally, the Paukhaung battle is supposed to be one of the many punishments inflicted on the enemy for his crime of engaging in anti-Chinese atrocities.

In future we may count with the military government following a more overt reactionary line, depending even more than ever before on U.S. imperialists and the Soviet revisionists. As long as it was able to feign leftist tendencies some sections of the people held certain illusions towards it, but now, thoroughly exposed internally as well as abroad, no American military aid nor Soviet political intrigues can save the Ne Win clique. The people are bound to triumph because their cause is just and because they are led by

the Communist Party of Burma which is loyal to Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought. They have also the National Democratic Unity Front that is growing in prestige day after day. The Burmese people enjoy the support of the great Chinese people, 700 million strong, and they are winning the sympathy of all the progressive peoples the world over.

The Burmese people have traversed the arduous path of revolutionary struggle for many long years. During the last 19 years also they have accumulated much experience. It is they who will sweep the imperialists, the revisionists and the domestic reactionaries away from their country. It is they who will build a completely independent, peaceful, united and prosperous People's Democracy in their land.

People's war in Vietnam  
Burma by Mg Mg Htay

