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The Arakanese Student and Youth Movements
Series-11: The Arakan Republic and Decolonization of Burma

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A compass always points to the north. In the same manner, the philosophy of our freedom struggle points towards decolonization of Burma. To my disappointment, my generation failed to grasp the philosophy and never hoisted the banner of decolonization of Burma. My colleagues and I kept emphasizing on the technical matters such as the federal constitution and Bama chauvinism. Similarly, some of my colleagues were frenzy with the cry of independence. We were all wrong. Even after one of our young colleagues brilliantly classified Arakan as a *hidden colony* (Arakanpost, Issue-7, March-2005) we failed to understand the importance of decolonization of Burma. It was only in 2000 that I decisively launched decolonization of Burma (http://www.shwelumaung.org), with the central philosophy that *freedom and democracy to the peoples of Burma will come only when Burma is decolonized.* Please note that I say *the peoples of Burma,* transcending race, origin, and faith. Like my generation, the present democracy activists fail to see the vitality of decolonization of Burma, but remain occupied with the technical

issues. As I firmly stand alone, I will attempt to present our activities and discussions so that the readers can make their own judgement.

I would like to request the readers to recall *Series-9: The People's Republic of Arakan and Her concept Part-I*, subheadings *Political Philosophy* and *Reality of Life in Arakan.* Only decolonization of Burma will help her people realize ***a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before*** as per *Principles of Political Rights (The Social Contract)* by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762). Only then, not only the Rakhaings but also other peoples of Burma will get a chance to improve their life, with freedom.

The defeat of the Rakhaing leftist intellectuals (i.e. Aung Sein Tha, Saw Maung, and Associates) led us into the conventional hall of reanalysis. We needed to re-analyze our strategy and tactics. Our convention center was 1km-long Inya Embankment that ran in parallel with Prome Road, along the White Bridge. This was the place where General Ne Win's right-hand man, General Sein Lwin, crushed the students' protest in 1988 March and June affairs, known as the White Bridge Uprising. In this context, it is recommended to refer back to the BBC radio news by Christopher Gunness (July-August 1988), and Bertil Lintner's *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy*, Review Publishing, Hong Kong, 1989. They gave good account of the 1988 March and June affairs that led to 1988 August nation-wide uprising.

Strategy Reanalyzed. In the evenings, under the beautiful twilight, we walked along the Inya Embankment and discussed the matters in small groups. There were (and I believe there will still be) hundreds of university students, boys, girls, activists, and lovers alike, strolling up and down the Embankment and talking about every worldly concern. Our Rakhaing Network for Federation and Democracy was a very well-disciplined web. We were also a bunch of independent-minded young persons with daring hearts. The most common concepts among us are:

(1) Left or right, I don't care. Independent or Federation, I don't care. I just want to be free.
(2) Leftist ideology is the one to liberate us from colonialism.
(3) Liberal democracy is the one to liberate us from colonialism.
(4) Independence first, Federation second.
(5) A Federation is all we need.

I was among those who believed in liberal democracy or simply liberalism. I studied leftist ideology quite hard and by 1964 abandoned it with the conclusion that *proletarian dictatorship* is nothing better than *military dictatorship*[1]. At that time, we did not know the philosophy of a social welfare state. We did not know anything about the European countries. The most popular country was Yugoslavia. Most Burmese viewed her as an ideal system that Burma should pursue. We considered that the Great Britain was nothing but still a capitalist-imperialist. We know of the parliament and its functions. Nevertheless, we did not know the British political culture that produced a parliamentary system without any written constitution. On the other hand, in the light of our experience with the short-lived U Nu's parliamentary democracy, we agreed that a parliamentary system would be acceptable to us. *None of us had any intention to rebel against the parliamentary system, but all of us had plans to work within it.* Even the communist students rejected joining the armed communist parties. They planned to join the National

United Front led by Widura Thakin Chit Maung (leader of the Democratic Front for National Reconstruction in 1990) and Brig. General Kyaw Zaw. The website, http://www.cpburma.org, of Burmese Communist Party has put up his autobiography in Burmese.

Nothing but Revolution. Although we were factious with the different shades of philosophy and ideology, we all agreed that armed rebellion is the only solution and that we should continue to explore every possibility to strongly establish a revolutionary force. With this consensus, we learned the experience of Aung Sein Tha-Saw Maung faction and Ako Maung Saw Pru came up with the proposal of joining Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung. He reported us that Bo Gri had an outside source that could help us build a nucleus of a revolutionary army. We considered this a major factor because we, poverty-ridden and resourceless, need such a help. Above all, we attached great respect and qualifications to Bo Gri (please see Series-3, Arakanpost, Issue-4, May 2004). The decision was made that two or three of us should go and joined Bo Gri. The meeting that was attended by 35 members approved Ako Maung Saw Pru and I to represent them and gave us extraordinary and plenipotentiary powers to carry out the programs in the way we saw fit. The political frame set for us was that (1) we must keep our door open to all shades of philosophy and ideology, and that (2) we must gain full control of Rakhaingpray and only a Rakhaingpray-wide representatives should decide to declare independence or go for a federation of Burma. As long as, we contained ourselves within this two-dimensional frame we were empowered to do the things in the way we saw fit. Bo Gri's Arakan National United Organization and its philosophy neatly fit in our program.

Revolution Reassessed. Before we made the decision by open votes, we asked the following questions. *(Note: The names mentioned below are the fictitious ones in the interest of the security of the persons concerned).*

(1). "Is there any way that we could avoid the armed conflict? There was a silence quite for a while. Then, A.T. broke the silence, "I do not like the violence. I also do not see any other way that we can work for our rights. I may join the BSPP, but I will have to be a 'yes-man' to the military officers who regulate and interpret the constitution. We are discriminated on the basis of our history. Our demand for equal rights is construed as secessionism. I know armed struggle is a very difficult job for us; I mean for our Rakhaing nation as a whole. The question is: "Shall we submit to the racist oppression and live a colonial life, or shall we fight for equal rights and freedom?"

I could hear the crickets singing around us. We were conferencing on the lawn in front of the Rangoon University Convocation Hall. It was around 8 O'Clock in the evening, and as usual the campus was alive and throbbing. If the people see us they would simply consider that we are having a lousy party. We had good supply of plain tea and Burmese traditional *Buthikyaw* (fried young bottle gourd, *Lagenaria siceraria*) that we bought from open-air stall at the Inya Embankment.

We came to university to study, pursue a professional career, start a private business, or become elected members of the parliament. Most of us were admitted to university in the days of parliamentary democracy. All of us were good students with bright future in the area of the chosen specialization. We were there to decide our future. If our choice were the revolution, it would mean the end of our professional career.

"It is very hard. The Bama are behaving in the same way as they did in the days of the feudal kings", Soe Htun Aung reasoned. "Now, they seized the power, abolished the parliament where we were working to strengthen the Union and democracy. Is this military rule any different from feudal warlordism or absolute monarchy? No. The worst part is that the Bama people shut down the democratic forum and they are dictating us at gunpoint. I see no venue where we can express our views or put up our demand freely. Our options are whether we shall become obedient servants or revolt against it".

"The Bama military took over state power to crush our federation movement", Khaing Htun Oo came into the discussion. "Most Bama people welcome the move. Only a fistful of communists opposes it. *This Union of Burma was **not** founded by Bogyoke Aung San alone or by the Bama people themselves. The Union was founded by all peoples of this country including we, the Rakhaings. Our grandparents and our parents are the founding members of the Union. As their descendants we are also the founding members of the Union. This is our Union. The Bama has no right to monopolize it under their racial rule.* Now, we reach the age and are ready to continue the job of our founding parents. It means we are ready to carry on the task of building a democratic republic on equal footing with the Bama and with every other national people of Burma. For example, we could have made a very powerful voice in 1964 parliamentary election if the military did not seize the power. We could have modified the unitary constitution of the Burma into a more liberal federal system by means of the parliamentary democracy. Then, all of a sudden, our mouths were shut up by the Bama military rule. It appears that the Bama people do not understand democratic voices. That is why, I determine that a bloody language of revolution would make them understand".

It was a very powerful message of Khaing Htun Oo. He continued, "Let Ako Maung Saw Pru and Ako Shwe Lu Maung make the first contact. It is not right for us just to sit down and keep talking".

Cool breeze of the evening kept us afresh. The crowd in the campus had become thin as it approached 10 O'Colock.

"We all do **not** want to live in this country as a subordinate nation or a second class citizen. On the other hand, Ako Maung Saw Pru and Ako Shwe Lu Maung must understand that they are taking great risk. Revolution is a totally unknown area to us. They can dream of a rosy outcome. They may also face a disaster. If they are ready to embrace such uncertain venture I would say it is worthwhile to test the soil", Thein Htun Tha put up a note of caution.

"I am ready to take the risk", I replied. Ako Maung Saw Pru did the same. Then the residing chairperson called for the votes for or against the revolution. Everyone said, "Ay". He again called for the votes for or against the two-men delegation made up of Ako Maung Saw Pru and I with extraordinary and plenipotentiary powers. The conference gave a unanimous yes to the motion.

Journey to Freedom. Accordingly, Ako Maung Saw Pru (B.Com), and I found ourselves standing in front of Bo Gri at his outpost, west of Ramchaung Headquarter, in September 1966. The scout, Ako Aung Tha Hla, met us at Dhannyawadi Maha Mrat Muni Temple[2] at 6:30 am, right on the time that had been set. Ako Maung Saw Pru knew him as he had met him when he arranged our journey. Before we came to Maha Mrat Muni, in the city in the west bank of Kissapanadi, we met our patron, who advised us to

discuss every issues diligently with due wisdom with a view of reaching reasonable decision. Maha Mrat Muni is in the east bank of Kissapanadi.

We performed the rites of pilgrimage, paid homage to Buddha. There were more than twenty pilgrims there and we had to act like the pilgrims. We toured the Temple. The Temple premise was a perfect square in design, with free-to-all entrance from four directions - east, west, north, and south, a symbol of Buddhist liberalism that was practiced by Buddha himself. It was surround by the brick walls, 3-feet high, with a gate at the center of each side. Lily ponds were there as mentioned in Anguttra Nikaya (AN III.38: Sukhamala Sutta — Refinement). At the center of the square, Maha Mrat Muni (replica) sits facing the east. The Temple is an example of typical Buddhist architect that has roots in the Nalanda Vihara (BCE 5th Century to 12th Century CE), a tradition of two thousand six hundred years. It is glorious and nostalgic. There exists no such refinement in the Prison of Mandalay where our original Maha Mrat Muni Rakhaing Buddha is being held as the captive inside an iron cage by the Bama colonialists for 221 years. Please see Arakanpost Issue-8 (May) and 9 (July) 2005.

It took about five minutes to walk from the Temple to the gate at the campus wall. The scout led us out of the Temple through the eastern gate. We started walking along a footpath across a paddy field. To the east we can see the Rakhaing Roma ranges standing stall in grace, beautifying the eastern horizon. The breezy white clouds ran about the Rakhaing Roma as if the ballet dancers were entertaining the handsome prince, under the bright morning blue sky.

"It is beautiful", I said.

"We are now walking in the land of ancient Dhannyawadi", the scout told us. What a feeling to hear the name of Dhannyawadi! How sweet it was? How grand it was to walk on her land again? We were there on our journey to liberate her, to bring her back freedom and liberty. We were elated with happiness and high spirit raced through our blood. On May 20, 2004, Narinjara News (Arakanpost Issue-4) reported that the city walls of ancient Arakanese City Dhannyawai unearthed, beneath the ground where we walked. O' glory be to thee who fight for freedom.

After about forty-five minutes, we entered to a wooded area. In about another thirty minutes we started climbing up a small hill, then a mountain, and then another mountain. Avoiding the regular footpath, the scout took us through shortcut that only a trained guerrilla knew. It was just a jungle. I could not figure out where the east or the west was. Teak and other hardwood tropical trees towered around us. It was shady and cool. We crossed two mountain streams, climbed up a bit more and all of a sudden we found ourselves in a small settlement with four bamboo cottages under the trees, along a mountain slope. The trees were such that I could hardly see the sky. Only the isolated sunbeams that penetrated down to the ground through the leaves told me that it was still daytime.

There were about fifteen persons, some of them taking their morning meal. It was almost eleven O' Clock. The scout told us, "Here we are. Take a short rest and take your food. Bo Gri will talk to you after that". We laid down our shoulder bag and looked around figuring out who could be Bo Gri, because we had never seen him before. It was not hard to figure it out. A leader always stands out in personality. As we fixed our eyes on him he finished his meal and recited his famous prayer.

"By the grace of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sanga, I have eaten food. But it was the villagers who supplied me the food. Do you hear me, all of you? We eat the food given by the villagers and we thank Buddha, not them. That is the irony of our life".

The scout told us that it was his regular practice to say these words after each meal. Bo Gri washed his plate and looking at us he said, "Let the new comrades take their food and bring them to my hut". I watched the tall and agile figure as he walked to his hut.

Bo Gri. After the meal we met Bo Gri who was all by himself in his hut. He was puffing his hand-made cigar with famous Kalandan tobacco. He asked us to make ourselves comfortable and asked the scout to leave. We were three there.

Bo Gri, "On behalf of the revolution, I would like to warmly welcome you. I got the message Maung Saw Pru sent me through our city-man. In principle, we are on the same platform. Please talk freely whatever you want to say or want to know".

Ako Maung Saw Pru, "I come to join you because we believe that we would be able to work with you to reach a new era in the Rakhaing revolution. We would like to participate actively in planning and policy-making. Our priority is to build a strong revolutionary body that will boast a formidable guerrilla force. We want to know your plans and programs towards this goal".

Bo Gri, "Comrade, I shall tell you the business of this revolution and where we stand at the moment".

With this opening phrase, he took us to a fascinating time-travelling from 1941 through 1960, encompassing the WWII and the Triangular Alliance of the People's Voluntary Organization (PVO), White Flag Burma Communist Party (BCP), and Red Flag Communist Party of Burma (CPB). After about one hour of educational narration he concluded, "You see, revolution is very troublesome and problematic. Our Rakhaingpray revolution is ridden with failures and factionalism. I welcome new leaders and new ideas. Your thoughts and views are most welcomed. Feel free to express it".

Maung Saw Pru, "Shwe Lu Maung, say something".

I, "First, I want to learn what is going on here. I want to learn the Party's Constitution and its strategy and tactics. Only after that I would like to discuss the matter".

Bo Gri, "At present, I do not have a written party's constitution. That will be your job to do. My strategy is an open strategy that allows adopting or adapting every feasible tactics to strengthen the unity in the revolution and launching guerrilla warfare. I shall keep both political and military leadership in my hand until we gain the control of major cities in Rakhaingpray".

I, "leadership is not a question. You shall be our leader. We are here to assist you in building the party and its infrastructure. The goal is liberation of our Rakhaingpray and put her on equal footing with the Bama and other national groups in structuring a new nation".

Maung Saw Pru, "Major issue would be an independent Rakhaingpray or a Rakhaing Republic with a federation".

Bo Gri, "As I told you earlier, my generation wanted a Rakhaing Republic within a federation of the Mranmar nations. This was what I agreed to with Aung San's AFPFL, and also with the Triangular Alliance in the 1949-revolution. In 1947, U Nu's Constitution betrayed Aung San's Constitution that espouses a federal union. It was then

that my men and I went for the revolution. In 1950, the Triangular Alliance also failed to honor our demand for a Rakhaing Republic. My options were to work separately or remain as their follower. Naturally, I was forced to stand on the Rakhaing platform independently, departing the Bama revolutionary forces. Now, this is my stand: First of all, our Rakhaingpray must be in Rakhaing's hand and Rakhaing's rule. Any discussions or negotiations with the Bama or other Mranmar nations must come later. However, I am ready to enter into a pack of alliance with any revolutionary forces on equal terms".

Rakhaing's rule. The policy that Rakhaingpray must be in Rakhaing's hand and under Rakhaing's rule before any negotiation with Bama and other national groups is the national consensus. This is the result of the facts that (1) the Bama rule is oppressive, (2) no educational, economic, social or cultural development takes place under the Bama's rule, (3) Bama destroys our national heritage and archaeological sites, (4) Bama rule us as if we were their salves. Therefore we readily agreed with Bogri and went on discussing the guidelines of strategy and tactics that we ought to specify in the party constitution.

The First Day of Freedom. Around three O' Clock in the afternoon, the meeting was concluded and we were introduced to Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw, Major Oo Saw Maung (Commanding Officer), Major Saw Htun Oo (Second Commanding Officer), Camp Leader Lieutenant Aung Phru Hla, Rebawgri Khaing Tha Aung (Bren Gun Man) and other comrades. We went down to the mountain creek for bath. It took us about half an hour to climb down the mountain to reach there and forty-five minutes to climb up back to the camp. I was full of sweat again. It did not make any sense. Naturally, we took bath only once or twice a week. In general we just wiped the body with a wet towel each day. You may call it our daily bath. At four O' Clock the dinner was served. Inside that tropical jungle four O' Clock in the afternoon was as dark as six O' Clock in the city, in the month of September. By eight O' Clock, most of us were already in bed, except for the sentries who changed the duty every four hours, day and night. To my surprise, I found that Bo Gri slept very light or very little. He kept inspecting the sentries frequently throughout the night, an admirable military discipline.

I remained awake at that first night in the jungle, with excitement and great feeling that I was in the liberated area.

Aung San Constitution. It is necessary to mention the Aung San Constitution here so that the world may know who betrays the Union Spirit and federal Union of Burma that was prescribed by the our founding parents, including Bogyoke Aung San. As described above our founding parents, of whom Bo Gri was a leader, agreed with Bogyoke Aung San and formed Anti-Fascist and People's Freedom League to establish a federal union, uniting all Myamnar nations inside British Burma. Aung San Constitution is the living witness in this issue.

"Bogyoke Aung San was the prime minister of the provisional AFPFL government of Burma under the Governor Sir Hubert Elvin Rance. The Panglong Agreement led to adoption of a federal constitution, which I call Aung San Constitution contrasting it with U Nu's Union Constitution. Below I present the first chapter of Aung San Constitution. Dr. Maung Maung documented that "the draft was drawn up by a 111-member committee of AFPFL Convention which met on May 20, 1947, and approved on May 23 when the Convention was dissolved". Please note that Aung San Constitution creates a Federal Union of Burma whereas U Nu Constitution makes the Union of Burma a unitary state with absolute sovereign power vested at Rangoon alone. Under Aung San

Constitution the Union States have their own legislatures and governments, in which the residual power rests." This is a quote from my recent book *The Price of Silence: Muslim-Buddhist War of Bangladesh and Myanmar - A Social Darwinist's Analysis*, DewDrop Arts & Technology, Missouri, USA, 2005, Chapter 4.3, http://www.shwelumaung.org.

I would like to draw attention of the global community to the fact that Aung San Constitution prescribed a federal Union of Burma. The full text of Aung San Constitution can be read in *Burma's Constitution* by Maung Maung, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1961, Appendix IV. Now let us see the federal structure of Aung San Constitution.

Chapter 1

THE BURMA UNION AND ITS UNITS

1. Burma should be Proclaimed as an 'Independent Sovereign Republic.'

2. The said Independent Sovereign Republic of Burma shall comprise: -

A. Such territories that were heretofore within the British Burma known as: -

(i) Ministerial Burma,
(ii) Homalin Sub-Division,
(iii) Sinkaling Khamti,
(iv) Thaungdut,
(v) Somra Tract,
(vi) Naga Hills,
(vii) Salween District,
(viii) Kanpetlet Sub-Division, and
(ix) Arakan Hill Tracts.

B. The Federated Shan States (including Kokang and Mongpai).

C. Karenni States.

D. Kachin Hills, and

E. Chin Hills District (excluding Kanpetlet Sub-Division)-

3. The said Independent Sovereign Republic of Burma should be known as the 'Union of Burma.'

1. The status of a *Union State* should be accorded to a people who have: -

(i) a defined geographical area with a character of its own;
(ii) unity of language, different from the Burmese;
(iii) unity of culture;
(iv) community of historical traditions;
(v) community of economic interests; a measure of economic self- sufficiency;
(vi) a fairly large population;
(vii) the desire to maintain its distinct identity as a separate Unit.

(2) The status of an 'Autonomous State' should be accorded to a people who more or less possess the above-mentioned characteristics but lack in economic self-sufficiency.

(3) The status of *a 'National* Area' should be accorded to a people who are lacking in all the above-mentioned characteristics except more or less a distinct language, a territory on which it is concentrated in appreciable numbers and the desire to maintain its distinct identity.

(4) The rights of *National Minority* should be guaranteed to a group of persons who -

(i) differ from the Burmese in race, language, culture and historical traditions, and (ii) form at least one-tenth of the total population of Burma or of any Unit.

4. The jurisdiction of the Union, as represented by its highest organs of state authority and organs of Government, covers the following subjects: -

(1) Constitutional Affairs.
(2) Foreign Affairs.
(3) Defence.
(4) Foreign Trade.
(5) Federal Finance.
(6) National Planning.
(7) Security.
(8) Transport and Communications.
(9) Federal Education.
(10) Federal Health.

5. All power and authority of the Sovereign Independent Republic of Burma, its constituent parts and organs of Government, are derived from the people.

The Chapter 1: The Burma Union And Its Units of Aung San Constitution ends here.

Chapter 7
THE UNION STATE

1. The Union State shall have its own constitution in conformity with the constitution of the Union and its own specific characteristics and features.

2. It is suggested that the Head of the Union State may be called the GOVERNOR who should be elected by the State Legislature.

3. In the Union State the legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to matters coming within the classes of subjects next hereinafter enumerated: -

(1) Constitutional Affairs: -

(i) The amendment from time to time of the Constitution of the Union State subject to this Constitution;

(ii) The conduct of elections to the Union State Legislature and other local bodies;

(iii) The establishment and tenure of Union State officers and the appointment and payment of State officers.

(2) Finance: -

(i) Direct taxation within the Union State, other than federal taxes and revenue, in order to the raising of a revenue, for Union State purposes;

(ii) Land Revenue;

(iii) Minor minerals as defined in Chapter VIII of the Shan States Manual;

(iv) Timber other than exportable timber;

(v) Taxes on luxuries and entertainments;

(vi) Sale tax;

(vii) Taxes on professions, trade, callings and employment;

(viii) Excise duties on alcoholic liquors and narcotic drugs;

(ix) Shop, saloon, tavern, auctioneer and other licenses in order to the raising of a revenue for State, local or Municipal purposes.

(3) Economic Affairs: -

(i)Agriculture and Veterinary;

(ii) Fisheries within the State,

(iii) Regulation of land tenures;

(iv) Internal trade and commerce;

(v) Water Supplies and Irrigations;

(vi) Unemployment and Relief of the poor.

(4) Security: -

(i) Police Administration:

(ii) Administration of justice by Courts subordinate to High Court:

(iii) The imposition of punishment by fine, penalty or imprisonment for enforcing any law of the Union State made in relation to any matter coming within any of the classes of subjects enumerated in this section.

(5) Communications: -

Local works and undertakings within the State other than Railways, subject to the power of the Union Assembly to declare any work a national work and to provide for its construction and by arrangement with the State legislature or otherwise.

(6) Education: -

(i) Education, other than higher education;

(ii) Management and control of all educational institutions;

(iii) Non-federal libraries, museums and other institutions;

(iv) Theatres, dramatic performances and cinemas.

(7) Health: -

(i) Public health and sanitation;

(ii) The establishment, maintenance and management of hospitals, asylums and dispensaries.

(8) Local Government: -

(i) Municipalities and other local bodies;

(ii) Charities and charitable institutions.

The Chapter 7: The Union State of Aung San Constitution ends here. For full text please see *Burma's Constitution* by Maung Maung, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1961, Appendix IV. He mentioned that the text was from *The Burmese Review*, May 26, 1947. The chapter numbers are assigned by me for the sake of easy reference. Please note the jurisdiction the federal Union Government. The word 'federal' is clearly mentioned and prescribed there, e.g. Federal Finance, Federal Education, and Federal health. Please also note that the Constitution clearly pointed out the residual powers of a Union State, which was to be headed by an elected Governor.

Betrayal. Aung San and his cabinet were assassinated on the 19th of July 1947. Ministers Henzada Thakin Mya, Deedok U Ba Choe, U Razak, U Ba Win, Mahn Ba Khaing, and Mongpawn Saophalong fell along with Aung San. Ministers U Ba Gyan and U Aung Zan Wai survived. But they were pushed out of the newly formed cabinet when U Nu took over the provisional government under the direction of the Governor Sir

Hubert Elvin Rance, and with the consent of the AFPFL Executive Council. The Constituent Assembly was supposed to adopt Aung San Constitution. However, in his demise, the Constituent Assembly trashed Aung San Constitution to write and adopt a new one in September 1947. I call this U Nu Constitution. You can also read the U Nu Constitution in the above cited Dr. Maung Maung's book. U Nu Constitution abandoned the federal union and promoted a unitary system, in which the Bama people held the power as the ruling race. It also trashed the Union State that was prescribed in Aung San Constitution, but gave the federating nations semi-autonomy with cultural rights. It was on this ground that Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung, who was a WWII veteran, Japanese Resistant Veteran, and a top AFPFL leader rebelled against U Nu and his rule from the very beginning.

It is clear that U Nu, U Kyaw Nyein, U Ba Swe, and all Bama leaders betrayed Aung San. General Ne Win took betrayal further ahead to abolish U Nu Constitution and install the Bama military dictatorship under the disguise of Burmese Way to Socialism. It was then that the Union of Burma became the Socialist Republic of Union of Burma. Senior General Saw Maung, the ruler of the second generation military dictatorship, asserted that it is the Union of Myanmar, and revived Myanmar Colonialism. I have described Myanmar Colonialism in my previous articles in Arakanpost. For further information the reader is recommended to read Decolonize Burma Today and my recent book *The Price of Silence: Muslim-Buddhist War of Bangladesh and Myanmar - A Social Darwinist's Analysis*, DewDrop Arts & Technology, Missouri, USA, 2005, Chapter 4.3, at http://www.shwelumaung.org.

Federalism and Colonialism. It should be clear that we are working in the framework of Aung San Constitution that was adopted by the representatives, Aung San among them, of our founding parents as described above. The principle of the federalism is the Union Spirit that brought about the 1947-Panlaung Agreement (Union Treaty). *I would like to tell the world that our federation movement is not secessionism. Please stop calling us secessionists.* Please recognize our federating rights. Please give us due support for our struggle.

Burma is now under the rule of the third generation of military dictatorship. It is wrong for the international media to state that the Burmese military seized the power sixteen years ago, in 1988. In fact, it seized the power in 1962, under the leadership of General Ne Win. Following the footsteps of General Ne Win, the present military regime is conducting a national convention to draft a new constitution, which is so secretive that we hardly know what is going. Based upon the limited information we have, it is reasonable to conclude that the new constitution features a pseudo-federation, which will be safeguarded by the Tatmadaw or Armed Forces. The most significant characteristic of the new draft constitution is that twenty five percent of the People's Assembly in both Union and Autonomous State's legislature will be assigned to the military commanders. The role of the Tatmadaw is presented as below at the www.myanmar.com as of May 14, 2006.

*At the plenary session of the National Convention held on 16 January 1993, he (*National Convention Convening Work Committee Chairman U Aung Toe) *explained that the basic principles for the Role of Tatmadaw:*
(a) the Tatmadaw is strong, modern and must be the sole existing Tatmadaw.

(b) the Tatmadaw has the right to independently administer all affairs concerning the forces.
(c) the Defence Services Commander-in-Chief is the Supreme Commander of all armed forces.
(d) the Tatmadaw has the right to administer for participation of the entire people in the State security and defence.
(e) the Tatmadaw is mainly responsible for safeguarding non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty;
(f) the Tatmadaw is mainly responsible for safeguarding the State Constitution, should be adopted.
The Work Committee Chairman added that if there is a state, there must be an institution to defend it. And the institution is none other than the armed forces "the Tatmadaw'. As the Tatmadaw's duty is the national defence, the security and perpetuation of the state can be guaranteed only if the Tatmadaw is strong.
We have already witnessed the Tatmadaw's role in ensuring Our Three Main National Causes throughout Myanmar history, with the national aim of serving the interest of the nation and the people to the most possible degree. The Tatmadaw has been discharging the national duty for the safety of the lives and property of the people, and for the nation to stand tall with dignity in the world perpetually as a peaceful and prosperous state. The Tatmadaw must be strong to carry out the task dutifully.
We thoroughly assessed his clarifications, comparing with prevailing conditions of our nation and the principles of some nations.
The Tatmadaw was conceived with the aim of throwing the yoke of slavery. The Work Committee Chairman presented 14 points for the Role of the Tatmadaw that should be adopted as detailed basic principles.
We find that these 14 points are appropriate, and so they should be adopted as detailed basic principles.

The above constitutional laws give unlimited power to the Tatmadaw, without check and balance. It is a form of constitutional military rule, strengthening the Myanmar colonialism. **Beginning with General Ne Win, the Tatmadaw has charged federalism as secessionism. On the other and, we charge the Tatmadaw with monopolizing of state power and reviving of Myanmar Colonialism. Until and unless this fundamental philosophy is discussed in detail and resolved there will be no peace in Burma.**

Notes.

1. I spent a great deal time trying to understand *dialectical materialism* and *Captial.* In my understanding, the philosophy presented in these books favors pluralism and market economy. I cannot understand why Marx, Engels, and their followers opt for a proletarian dictatorship. It may just be that I just don't under the philosophy at all. Before 1962, all kinds of books are easily available in Burma. The small book *Dialectical Materialism* was a bible for me in my early university days. It was a publication of Soviet Communist Party.

2. This is the original home of *The Prisoner of Mandalay* (Arakanpost, Issue-9, July-2005).