

Note by Network Myanmar

In a despatch to London in May 1957, British Ambassador Richard Allen reported that during a recent session of the Burmese Parliament, a redoubtable Member of Parliament, U Kyaw Min, barrister and former member of the Indian Civil Service, had presented in strong terms during a speech made on the 15th March 1957 the grievances and aspirations of Rakhine politicians and the local population. He noted in his despatch: "The intemperance of U Kyaw Min's speech caused an uproar and the Speaker directed that it should not be published". However, the Ambassador obtained a copy and the speech soon became public knowledge. This is why the attached copy of the speech is marked "Confidential".

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CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. Speaker, Sir,

In this Non-Confidence Motion I shall confine myself to Arakan Affairs.

The Arakan National United Organisation (ANUO) representing a great majority of the people of Arakan, have no confidence whatever in the Government. Prime Minister U Nu has categorically stated that there will be no change in the policy or activities of the Government from that headed by U Ba Swe. We have also had experience of an AFPFL Government headed by U Nu before, and Arakan is sick and tired of these AFPFL Governments.

I could talk for hours about the sins of commission and omission of the AFPFL Governments in Arakan since the AFPFL came into power in Burma in October 1946, but owing to the lack of time I shall confine myself to only three points, firstly, the way Arakan is being administered since the British went away, secondly, the attitude of the Government towards the demand of the Arakanese for an Arakan State and thirdly, the way the General Elections have been conducted in Arakan.

But what I wish to say today will never be understood in its proper perspective unless I can spend a few minutes on the historical background of Arakan. First and foremost let it be understood that Arakan was always a separate Kingdom, separate from the Talaings or the Burmese. We have a history, complete with chronological dates and the names of our Kings and the number of years they reigned, for fully 3,000 years.

During the 17th and 18th century Arakan was a great naval power, dominating the Bay of Bengal, just as Portuguese Goa dominated the Arabian Sea. One can read about Arakan in those days in Mr. Maurice Collis's "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 or Talaing kingdoms were not naval powers.

However, in the latter half of the 18th century Arakan fell on bad days with anarchy having full vent. Usurpers usurped the throne and after some months or some years were in turn overthrown by other usurpers. It was about this time that the Burmese of Upper Burma managed to throw back the Talaings and thus was founded the Shwebo Dynasty. Some relatives of the Arakanese kings who had lost their throne appealed to Bodawpaya, the then Burmese King, 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

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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 Arakanese males, including male children, 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 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. Arakan had been under the Burmese for forty years. The British ruled Arakan and Tenasserim from India.

Then came the second Anglo-Burmese War and finally the third. Burma became a Province of India, whilst Arakan became a Division of Burma.

When the British were in Burma, the Arakanese had very little to complain except generally that the surplus revenues received from Lower Burma, including Arakan, were utilised 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, and the Arakanese people generally managed to prosper in spite of the keen competition from the Indians and the British merchants.

And let me now come to the first of my charges against the AFPFL Government, namely, the way Arakan is being administered since the AFPFL came into power. Arakan in fact is 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 the British, the DC, the DSP and Sessions Judge were all Arakanese.

But that does not end the catalogue of non-Arakanese in Arakan. Quite a few of the non-gazetted staff, like Township Officers, SIPs, PSOs and in every other department are non-Arakanese. Yet under the British it can generally be said that 90 per cent of the gazetted posts and 95 per cent of the non-gazetted posts were filled by Arakanese.

It is common knowledge that in pre-war days Burmese officials hated to serve in Arakan and most Burmese officials transferred to Arakan wriggled out of their transfers whilst some actually resigned from Government service than go to Arakan.

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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 an accident or whether it is 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 the navy and the UMP? Those who are in Arakan are mostly non-Arakanese.

In face of all this, can any Arakanese have any confidence in an AFPFL Government? Can anyone deny that Arakan is being governed as a Colony of Burma? Can anyone deny that Arakan is a patent example of Burmese imperialism?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I now come to the Second Charge regarding the demand for an Arakan State. Now what has been the attitude of the Arakanese all along under the British? 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 quote also from a manifesto, of which I have now been given a copy, of U Tun Aung, MLC, Principal, National High School, 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."

We now come to the period after the Second World War. Members to the Constituent Assembly returned from Arakan were all AFPFL. The Arakanese rejoiced at 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 Rakhin 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. 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, Bogyoke Aung San was assassinated in July 1947.

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. Sec. 91 of the new Constitution was studied, but no one seemed to know what regional autonomy really 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 would 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 realised 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 an 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 Sir Ba U 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 last Thursday. 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 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 even appoint the Sir Ba U Commission? As the result of the appointment of this commission, Arakan has now been whipped up into a

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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 points 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 know what it means to be a State. The powers of a State are enumerated in the Constitution. The State will have its own State Services, it will have its own Affairs Council, its own Ministers and under them its own Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners and DSPs. No more will they be nominees of the Government of Rangoon. Law and Order, the administration of Justice, Education, Health, Communications, agricultural loans etc, will be state subjects. That is good enough. These are the nation - building subjects. Better to have an Arakan State than being run as at present from Rangoon by persons who have scarcely heard of Arakan.

U Nu said on Thursday that States weakened a country. I do not know whether U Nu was talking with his tongue in his cheek. The inauguration of States in a Union is called federation, 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.

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The Sir Ba U Commission was appointed in October 1948 to look into the political aspirations of the Karens, Arakanese and Mons. On Thursday U Hla Tun Phyu read out two extracts from U Nu's speech to the members of the Commission on the 30th October 1948. The speech is No. 22 entitled "Satisfaction of all Nationals" and is reproduced at page 156 of U Nu's Collected Speeches: "Towards Peace and Democracy".

The speech is so important that I may be permitted to read a few more paragraphs:

"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 none other than the conviction by each national group that it is receiving fair and just treatment in the hands of others.

More 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.

This test will enable us to show whether we are capable of making the whole country flow with milk or honey or with blood."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, after that in 1951, the Karens were given a State in spite of the fact that they satisfied only one of the conditions of Bogyoke Aung San's formula.

Some AFPFL Ministers have been talking a lot about "dividing the blood" and inciting hatred between the Burmese and Arakanese. Firstly, let me explain that as far as I know of the Arakanese they have always maintained that they are a different people from the Burmese. The only thing is common between the two peoples is the Buddhist Religion and the religious culture derived from Buddhism. Let us not forget that other countries like Siam and Ceylon also have the Buddhist Religion.

Arakan has always been cut off from Burma proper by impassable mountains. Racially it is believed that the Arakanese are of Aryan Stock, some say of Sakyan Stock, mixed with the indigenous people who have inhabited Arkan from time immemorial. In my opinion, the resemblance between the Burmese and the Arakanese can be compared to the resemblance between the British and Germans.

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 expressing, especially for those who are not very educated, is not the same as the Burmese. Therefore let's not talk too much about "dividing the blood".

As for the charge about inciting hatred between the Burmese and the Arakanese, 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's these Burmese personnel themselves who are the cause of all the trouble and yet glibly want to accuse some of the Arakanese leaders.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said before, 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 last year when Minister Bo Khin Maung Gale told us in Parliament 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. The occasion was the Bill moved by U Ba Myaing for an Arakan State.

The Arakan National United Organisation knew full well that 95 per cent of the voters of Akyab District leaving out Maungdaw and Buthidaung, 90 per cent of the voters of Kyaukpyu District and 85 per cent of the voters in Sandoway District were in favour of an Arakan State. But it was yet to realise that all the unfair tactics possible would be used by the AFPFL in every election.

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 house tops 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 election rolls were tampered with in that all those whom the AFPFL knew would definitely vote for the ANUO were left out. In my own Constituency, 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.

Thirdly, whenever they were 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
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the world of voting in half the constituency, saying the other half was under the insurgents.

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

After repeated postponements, sometimes for five or six occasions for no rhyme or reason except that the AFPFL would surely lose, some of the elections were finally held. The two dirtiest elections were in Kyauktaw and Ramree. In Kyauktaw, the Security Forces were used to the fullest extent to intimidate the voters to vote for the AFPFL or to prevent the voters from coming to vote for the ANUO, in addition to treating the voters. In Ramree 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.

For all these illegal actions of the AFPFL in connection with the elections, the Arakanese people have completely lost confidence in the Government.

It would seem that in view of the illegal actions of the AFPFL they would have won all the elections. No, the Arakanese people overcame all these illegal actions and came in their thousands in face of all danger to vote for an Arakan State, to vote for the ANUO. The ANUO have already got over twice the votes of the AFPFL and when all the elections are over, will have secured more than twice the number of AFPFL MPs.

Talking about postponements of elections, let me mention the latest postponement. It is in respect of the Upper House election for East Akyab, consisting of the combined Lower House constituencies of Kyauktaw Pauktaw, Myohaung and Minbya. The elections for the Lower House have all been held: in Myohaung in April 1956 and the remaining three in January and February 1957. It is quite sure that the AFPFL will lose and the ANUO will win.

So what has the AFPFL done? The election was fixed for March 19th. The candidate who lives in Rangoon, hearing rumours that the AFPFL were moving the Security Council to get the elections postponed for another three months, cabled the Deputy Commissioner. His reply was "Not likely but will confirm later". Yet a few days later the election was postponed by three months to June 1957. Can any Arakanese have any confidence in a Government that allows this kind of tampering with Parliamentary elections?

I think it was about a year ago that the Government secretly prepared a list of all Arakanese in Government service throughout Burma, including Arakan. The task was so huge that it became an open secret and Arakanese
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Government servants were speculating on the reason. The Government however later explained that it was in pursuance of a question in Parliament. What I wish to say is that any enquiries or lists made in pursuance of a question in Parliament cannot be a secret matter, yet on this occasion the enquiries were secret. The Arakanese in general, and the Arakanese Government servants in particular, are alarmed about these secret activities of Government. Is there any wonder therefore that the Arakanese have no confidence in this Government?

The complete lack of statesmanship of the AFPFL leaders is most regrettable. U Ba Myaing, BA BL, the Grand Old Man of Arakan has had the greatest restraining influence on the political ferment of Arakan. If there was any spark of statesmanship in the AFPFL, U Ba Myaing should have been returned uncontested to lead the political destiny of Arakan as he had done during the life of the old Parliament. For this lack of statesmanship and for using dirty tactics at U Ba Myaing's election, the Government should be censured.

What is now happening in Arakan? I have mentioned the political ferment caused by the actions of the AFPFL Government. But the people of Arakan are very frustrated. 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 a Sovereign Independent State. In assessing this, please always try and remember the historical background of Arakan.

Which reminds me of the 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 war, Burma would be given Home Rule within the British Commonwealth. In the meantime Britain would rehabilitate Burma to the best of her ability. As in the case of the Phillipines 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 2½ years of the cessation of hostilities.

Let me therefore appeal to the AFPFL Government to exercise statesmanship and grant a State to Arakan.

For all their sins of commission and omission of the Government in Arakan, the ANUO wholeheartedly support Dr. E Maung's non-confidence motion in the Government.