

THE SPLIT STORY

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AN ACCOUNT OF
RECENT POLITICAL
UPHEAVAL
IN BURMA

● WITH EMPHASIS
ON **AF/PFL**

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THE SPLIT STORY

The Split Story, an account of the rise and fall of Burma's strongest national Front, the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL), was originally serialized in the *Guardian Daily* in January—February 1959; and it was not intended to be printed in a book form. But owing to popular demand by the *Guardian* readers, who insisted that the serial should be printed in a book form so that this historical account acquires a more permanent nature, the serial has been revised and presented in this book form.

The whole work is an objective study of the post-independent political development in Burma, with special emphasis on the AFPFL in the country; and the account is based mainly on records and on personal observations of the writer after interviews on the subject with a number of leaders from both sides of the two political camps after the split in the AFPFL.

The writer has no favour nor malice towards any organisation or individual in presenting these facts as observed by him.

March 23, 1959.

SEIN WIN,
Chief Editor,
The Guardian.

THE SPLIT STORY

WHY THE STORY ?

MOMENTOUS happenings, which will definitely go down in the history of this country, took place during April and October of 1958. Burma saw more important occurrences during this short period of some seven months than she ever did during the last whole of 10 independent years. Sudden political upheavals shook the very foundations of the State and perturbed the people. Thus everyone is intrigued and anxious to learn why and how these momentous happenings came to pass and whether they happened for good or ill of the country.

Volumes have been told and printed about the causes of the chain of events leading to the collapse of Burma's most consolidated national front—The Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League—and the subsequent change-over of the administration to a non-Parliamentarian Caretaker Government under General Ne Win. But there still remain undisclosed truths cloaked in mystery about the split in the mighty AFPFL and the change-over of administration.

These mysteries should be revealed, purely in the interest of history, and this SPLIT STORY has been prepared with the only objective of recording the history of the eventful days especially in the months of April to October 1958 and its background, and the writer has no favour nor malice towards any individual or organisation in his efforts in presenting the facts to the people as seen by him.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

THE AFPFL split which exploded with far-reaching consequences in April 1958 after its leaders—old comrades who had for over two decades stood side by side in rain and shine—had held the collective reins for the last decade, was neither a strange nor an unexpected phenomenon. It was just a natural thing with the political parties in this country. What blasted the AFPFL ship into pieces in one stroke against the rock of dissensions among the leaders was just the final gust dealing the coup de grace after a series of earlier storms had buffeted it. But it was a premature demise for the AFPFL, especially amidst the repeated affirmations by its leaders that it would last for another 40 years, or even 400 years, and while the goal of the League to turn Burma into a *Pyidawtha* Welfare State (where every citizen will own a pucca building, a motor car and receive a monthly income of K 800) is as yet unaccomplished.

The main cause of the rift that rent asunder the AFPFL was personal feuds as a result of rivalry, jealousies, and distrust among the colleagues who, after long years of power, became intoxicated and succumbed to blind conceit and power corruption.

Before going into the details of the AFPFL split, it will be necessary to take a look at the general background of the main actor, who played vital roles both as hero and villain, in the contemporary history of Burma.

U NU, THE MAN OF DESTINY

FORMER Prime Minister U Nu, earlier known as Thakin Nu, is a man of destiny. He was destined to become a leader either by his own efforts or by accident. According to a Burmese way of expression, he is a man with a 'throne always attached to his bottom' or a man destined to be 'king'.

Since his days as a student leader at the University in the early thirties, U Nu never had to work hard for his way up by way of organisation. He was just made a leader by his younger colleagues largely for his age and personality. He was oldest among his University colleagues, and probably more matured, and was loved by all. It was mainly due to his personality that he always assumed or was made to assume leadership without himself going through the organisational mill.

It was only for a period of some six years, from the occupation of Burma by the Japanese in 1942 up to the time of General Aung San's death in 1947, that U Nu remained as the second line leader among his colleagues.

Soon after he left the University and joined the *Dobama Asiayone*, the *Asiayone* split into two—one led by Thakin Kodaw Hmaing and the other by Thakin Ba Sein. Thakin Mya, Thakin Nu, Thakin Hla Pe (Bo Let Ya) and Aung San belonged to the Hmaing faction while Thakin Tun Ok, Thakin Shu Maung (Gen. Ne Win), Thakin Aung Than (Bo Setkya) were on the Ba Sein faction.

When active arrangements were made by students and *Thakins* to seek foreign assistance to overthrow the British rule, Thakin Nu was already in jail (1939). And it was in Rangoon Central Jail that Thakin Nu met Mr. Boo Kwin Tan, the Agent of the Thai-

Japanese Secret Society of Bangkok, who was sent to Burma to contact the Burmese revolutionary elements. Mr. Boo Kwin Tan was arrested with Thakin Lay Maung in Myitkyina by the British Government and later sent to Rangoon Central Jail.

In those days various political groups tried to contact Japanese sources separately. The student group and Thakin Mya faction of Thakins originally hoped for assistance from the Revolutionary Chinese Army under Mao Tse Tung in China.

At this time, Aung San, General Secretary of the Thakin Party, was wanted by the Police who declared a reward of K 5 for his arrest for Aung San's anti-war speech made in Henzada District. After this reward announcement, Aung San hid in friends' places in Rangoon and finally sneaked out to Amoy on a Chinese boat to seek Communist help. He took away with him Hla Myine, now a Communist; they were stranded in Amoy without being able to contact Mao's Communist group.

The Thakin Ba Sein group established contact with the Japanese Navy, and later Thakin Shu Maung (Ne Win), Thakin Aung Than (Setkya) and Thakin Tun Ok of the faction succeeded in escaping abroad while Thakin Ba Sein himself was arrested at the Thai border in Tenasserim.

U Saw, the last Prime Minister and the pre-war *Myochit* party boss, tried separately for Japanese assistance, while Dr. Ba Maw and Dr. Thein Maung tried their own contacts. It appears that the Japanese Government at that time was studying each group and only at about the close of 1939 it suggested to the Burmese groups to unite into one to deal collectively with the Japanese Government. A Council was then formed with U Hla Min of the Dr. Ba Maw group, Thakin Khin Maung (Kamayut) of the Ba Sein group,

Thakin Mya himself for his Thakin faction, and Hla Maung (Ambassador to Peking) the then President of the All-Burma Students Union as the students' representative.

Coming back to the meeting of Mr. Boo Kwin Tan and U Nu in Rangoon jail, the former suggested to U Nu to arrange for sending out young Burmans abroad for military training and he promised facilities in Thailand. U Nu transmitted the idea to his colleagues outside, and Hla Maung, student leader, and Hla Pe (Bo Let Ya) were sent to Thailand across the border from Tenasserim. They were armed with a letter from Boo Kwin Tan with instruction to show it to any Thai official in Thailand. Hla Maung and Hla Pe went into Thailand with the letter and were taken as far as Bangpur near Bangkok; but were sent back across the border because the political situation in Thailand had then changed and Boo Kwin Tan's contacts were no more in power.

By that time, Thakin Mya and student group got contact with the Japanese Consulate in Rangoon, and the aforesaid Council had also been formed with representatives of all groups. Soon after securing the contact with the Consulate in Rangoon, Aung San and Hla Myine were 'arrested' by the Japanese Military Police in Amoy on the charge of being Chinese Agents and were taken to Tokyo. Of course the 'arrest' was made under instruction to take the Burmese leaders to Tokyo for detail discussion. Aung San was then sent back in a Japanese cargo boat via Bassein with instructions to bring back young Burmans for military training in Japan to form the nucleus of the Burmese Army and so were sent the Thirty Comrades.

The actual deliberations and risky tasks to send the Thirty Comrades to Japan were undertaken by his colleagues while U Nu was still in jail.

THE RESISTANCE

BY the time Burma was occupied by the Japanese Army and the BIA (Burma Independence Army) under the Thirty Comrades in 1942, U Nu had been released from the Mandalay jail. He was not keen to return to politics and preferred to stay outside to take up writing. But he found himself being chased by the Kempetais (Japanese Military Police) for his participation in the Burmese Goodwill Mission to China before the war, and for his book on China. His younger colleagues asked him to return to politics to get himself a cover, and put him in the *Dobama-Sinyetha Asiayone* (the amalgamation of *Thakin Party* and Dr. Ba Maw's *Sinyetha Ahpwe*). U Nu was later made Foreign Minister and then Information Minister, making his position a little above the trouble by the Kempetais.

When active preparations were made to organise the resistance movement against the Japanese militarists, U Nu's residence at No. 1, Kokine Road, was used as the venue of secret meetings. U Nu was a party to the conspiracy, but he did not take active part. He openly told his comrades that he abhorred bloodshed and that he would take on any other duty but killing. He was later given non-killing duty.

Actually the Burmese decided to revolt against the Japanese as early as 1942 when the invading forces reached Moulmein, because the Japanese broke faith with them. Originally, it was agreed between the Thirty Comrades and the Japanese Government that Japan would declare Burma an independent State as soon as the forces reached Moulmein where a provisional Government would be formed with the Burmese leaders to handle the entire internal matters while the Japanese forces were to help the Burmese ally. But the Japanese refused to abide by their

promise to declare Burma an independent State when they reached Moulmein, and no provisional Government was formed. The Burmese leaders lost confidence and doubted the sincerity of their ally, and marked time to overthrow them also.

In late 1944, the resistance movement was formally organised under the name of Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. The Revolution Flag chosen was Red flag with a white star on the right upper corner.

The Japanese forces gradually became suspicious of the Burmese Army then known as the Burma Defence Army (BDA), and, by the beginning of 1945, they concentrated the major portion of the BDA forces in Rangoon and Mingaladon area surrounded by the Japanese Forces. When the target date approached, General Aung San asked permission of the Japanese Commander in Chief to allow the Burmese Forces to fight the enemy paratroopers which then started its airdrops in the Delta. Japanese Commander believed Aung San and permission was granted with deep appreciation of the Burmese eagerness. On March 27, General Aung San assembled the Burmese forces in Rangoon and marched out of the town to fight the 'Enemy'. Aung San was a clever man. Before he set out to fight the 'enemy' on March 27, 1945, he decided to leave some of his comrades in Rangoon with the Japanese, as 'loyal' elements who were to retreat with the Japanese, and to help rescue the unlucky comrades who might fall into the hands of the Japanese.

He chose U Nu and Thakin Mya to remain behind above ground in the Government with the Japanese for this 'rescue' task, and U Nu accompanied the retreating *Adipadi*.

Kyaw Nyein (Socialist), Ye Htut (Communist) and Tin Tun (Communist) were assigned to Pyinmana area

(which later became the Communist stronghold as a result of this resistance movement in the area under two Communist leaders who out-manoeuvred the lone Socialist Kyaw Nyein). Ne Win and Hla Maung were assigned to organise resistance with Thakin Soe (Communist) in the Delta (here also Thakin Soe's influence holds firm in many Delta areas up to now), and Ba Swe was to organise in Rangoon. Ba Swe was soon arrested by the Japanese and U Nu later rescued him.

THE THRONE CHASED U NU

AFTER the reoccupation of Burma, AFPFL was openly established as the sole national united front; and U Nu, determined to quit politics and take up writing, kept away from Rangoon and wrote the book "Burma Under the Japanese" in Wakema, his home town.

Again his younger colleagues wanted him to act as a balancing factor between the three organisations in the League, and he was dragged back into politics, and made the Vice President of AFPFL. Aung San was then the President.

The post-war AFPFL was mainly made up of three major rival groups — the Peoples Volunteer Organisation (PVO) under Aung San; Socialists under Thakin Mya; and Communists under Than Tun.

When the elections for the Constituent Assembly were held in April 1947, U Nu remained aloof. He was still bent on returning to writing. But soon after the election, an elected member from Mergui, U Maung Maung Khin, died in the Adamson disaster. The ship Sir Harvey Adamson foundered in a storm on its way from Rangoon to Mergui. Aung San then insisted on U Nu's becoming a member and pushed him in as candidate for Mergui con-

stituency in the bye-election. He was elected uncontested and made the President of the Constituent Assembly.

On July 19, when a group of fanatics entered the Secretariat and assassinated Aung San, Thakin Mya and others, U Nu, one of the marked victims, escaped to become the President of AFPFL and Prime Minister of Independent Burma. Since then he was the President of AFPFL and the Prime Minister (with the exception of a nine month's lay-off from June 56 to Feb. 57) until the disintegration of the League in April 1958.

Though U Nu, after long years of office, came to love the splendour and authority of President of the AFPFL and the Prime Minister of the country, he did not originally aim to become one. His ambition was to become a play-wright at which art he was not a mean artist.

The past events clearly showed that U Nu was a man of destiny, destined to be exalted and he reached the height as the President of the strongest political party and Prime Minister for 11 long years. He has probably reached the apex and only time can prove where he is next destined to since his descent from national leadership to factional level after the AFPFL split in April 1958.

THE EARLIER SPLITS IN AFPFL

AFTER the war, the AFPFL emerged as the strongest national united front in Burma's political history, and its original objectives were only half accomplished when the Japanese were driven out. Its second and the main goal, the attainment of independence was still to be fought for. Though there were other minor, but older parties, AFPFL was the main

opposition force against the post-war Government, the Governor's Council.

Following various agitations including the general strikes sponsored by the AFPFL in 1946, the new Governor, General Sir Hubert Rance, who replaced the more conservative Dorman Smith, invited the AFPFL to participate in the Governors' Council.

Division of the 'loot' had always been the cause of dissensions among the political parties and AFPFL succumbed to this disease as early as in 1946. The Communist Party, one of the three major components, wanted two seats in the Council (Cabinet) while only one—Thein Pe Myint—was offered the ministerial position. There had been heated arguments between the other members including Aung San, President of AFPFL on one side and Than Tun, General Secretary on the other; finally only Thein Pe Myint was included in the Council as the Communist representative, to the great disappointment of Than Tun. The differences between the Communist Party and the rest of the AFPFL grew deeper and finally the BCP was expelled in November 1946 from the League under the charge that Thakin Than Tun as General Secretary of the AFPFL conspired to dominate the league by putting Communists in all key positions of the AFPFL. The BCP went underground in March 1948. This was the first major rift in the AFPFL, which was then left with only two major groups—the PVOs and the Socialists.

THE SECOND SPLIT

IN July 1948, another major component of the League—the Peoples Volunteer Organisation (PVOs)—broke up into two—the White Band and the Yellow Band—following differences of opinion on Thakin Nu's Plan for Leftist Unity. The split was between pro-Communist PVOs and the rest of the PVOs.

The pro-Communist faction of PVOs had earlier acted as mediators between the AFPFL and the Communists led by Thakin Than Tun, before the latter went underground. The mediation attempt failed and the Communist went underground on March 28, 1948. The PVOs later proposed a Leftist Unity plan as a means to bring together all leftist elements. Thakin Nu as President of the AFPFL issued a 14-point Leftist Unity Plan on May 25, 1948. The plan provided for the nationalisation of industries in the hands of monopolistic capitalists; the distribution of land to cultivators; state control of foreign trade; restriction of foreign investments to those which would not jeopardise the political, economic and strategic freedom of the country; formulation of industrialisation plan; establishment of foreign relations with USSR and Eastern Democracies and so on. The pro-Communist faction of the PVOs did not agree with U Nu's plan and insisted that cooperation of Red and White Communists (who were already up in arms against the Government) must be sought as primary step for Leftist Unity. The anti-Socialist or pro-Communist White Band faction led by Bo La Yaung went underground to join the Communist rebels in July 1948, while the pro-Socialist Yellow Band under Bohmu Aung remained in the AFPFL, later to be absorbed by the Socialists, the third major component of the League. Bo Po Kun later joined the White Band PVOs in the jungle.

After that the rebel activities in the country became intense, and the situation worsened until the end of 1950.

THE THIRD SPLIT

YET another disintegration awaited the League; this time from within the Socialists, the sole dominating party in the League since the expulsion of the Communists from the AFPFL and the split in the PVOs. The Socialist Party broke up into two—the Red Socialists, and the White Socialists, the former being crypto-Communists.

The split in the Socialist Party began with the open attack launched by Socialist leaders Thakin Hla Kyway, Thakin Lwin and Thakin Chit Maung in the Parliament in 1951 against the AFPFL Government's policy towards the Korean war. The Government supported the UN action on Korea, while the said Socialist leaders who are crypto-Communists disapproved of the Government's action and criticised in the Parliament. They were expelled from the League for attacking the policy of their own party government. They, therefore, founded the Burma Workers and Peasants Party. The BWPP since then emerged as the strongest aboveground opposition party against the AFPFL Government.

Since the split in the Socialist Party, the remnant Socialist faction led by Thakin Tin, Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein became the dominating group in the League. But the rivalry, suspicion, and distrust among the Socialists themselves and between them and the Independents in the League like U Nu brew quietly, but intensely, for the next seven years to come.

RIVALRY & INTRIGUES

THE composition of the AFPFL in 1952 was entirely different from that of 1945. Though the League in the beginning was fully represented both at its Headquarters in Rangoon and at basic organisations in the village and township levels, the situation gradually changed with the passage of time. In 1942, the Headquarters was controlled by Independents led by U Nu and the Socialist group while the organisations both in town (labour) and in the districts (peasants) were entirely in the hands of the Socialists under Thakin Tin, Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein.

Rivalry between these leaders were mysterious and interesting. Socialists were often jealous of keeping an Independent—U Nu—without any party following, as their head, while at the same time they clung to him as a lesser evil to their own Socialist colleagues. For U Nu, an authority on Dale Carnegie, his relations with the Socialist leaders were a model of cleverness and artistry. Any show of unity among the three Socialist leaders was always blasted by U Nu's announcement to quit office and leave the coveted Premiership to the three Socialists to seize upon.

THE FINAL SPLIT

THE fourth and the last split in the AFPFL was actually the split in the Socialist Party, the dominating force in the League, and the Independents like U Nu only served as an accelerating factor to such a breach. The Socialist Party since its election of the Presidium in 1945 with Thakin Mya, U Ko Ko Gyi, U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein and U Hla Maung as members had never been reorganised. After the death of Thakin Mya and subsequent disappearance of

U Ko Ko Gyi and U Hla Maung's joining the diplomatic service in 1948, the Party existed only in name. The EC was occasionally reconstituted but never properly elected. The Socialists had gained control of the AFPFL, and there was no immediate need for the Party to exert as an organisational force. The party first broke up into two when more extreme elements, Lwin, Hla Kyway, and Chit Mg broke away to form the BWPP in 1951. The organisational weakness in the Party was mainly responsible for the later rifts in the party finally leading to the disintegration of the AFPFL.

Since then, the Socialist Party did not practically exist as an organisation but only in the persons of its leaders Ba Swe, Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Tin, the first perpetually remaining as the President of the Socialist EC. As the Party became loosely organized, the Socialists, who earlier advocated for a classless society, became class-conscious and created among themselves two distinct classes: the 'educated' and the 'uneducated'; the former led by Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe, and the latter by Thakin Tin and Thakin Kyaw Tun. This factional feeling arising out of complexes and conceits among the comrades was later aggravated by organisational rivalry in implementation of the development plans and massing party followings.

There had been no formal creation of these groups, but the Socialist leaders instinctively formed two rival factions, the physical appearance of which became clearer and clearer as the friction grew with the passage of time.

The 'educated' group believed in industrialisation while the 'uneducated' group believed that only agriculture should be the mainstay of the country's economy. Consequently, especially after the *Pyidawtha* Conference

of August 1952, leaders of these two factions in their capacities as Ministers ('educated' group holding Ministries of Industry, Mines, Cooperatives, while the other faction was in charge of Agriculture, Land Nationalisation, Democratic Local Administration) nurtured their own pet projects. The former group concentrated in industrialisation, electricity supply and cooperatives, while the latter faction boosted agriculture, land nationalisation and local administration.

Organisationally, Ba Swe of the 'educated' group was in charge of the Trade Unions, closely associated with the industry, and Kyaw Nyein was later in charge of Youth, while Thakin Tha Khin of the same faction dealt with women's organisations. Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun of the "uneducated" group controlled the numerically strongest All Burma Peasants Organisation (ABPO) and Thakin Pan Myaing led the Federation of Trade Organisations (FTO).

This class consciousness based on intellectual disparity was so strong that soon after the AFPFL split, Thakin Kyaw Tun told a reporter that people on his side were uneducated but sincere. Only three men could together make 7th Standard; while the opposite faction had B. As. but were not sincere. Thakin Tin Maung Gyi of the same faction addressing a meeting in Insein about the same time referred to the 'exploitation by the educated of the uneducated class'.

The organisational war which began quietly among the Socialists became more pronounced especially in the districts where the ABPOs tried to dominate the district and township AFPFLs. These organisational conflicts, however, did not yet precipitate into personal feuds among the Socialist leaders in Rangoon; and Swe, Nyein, Tin, Tun and the rest of their second-liners were able to talk to each other—with at least superficial smiles.

Actually, rivalry between Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Tin was greater than that between any of the others; and Ba Swe, though one of the three contenders to the 'throne' of Premiership, was too supine for his ambitions to become the object of fear to the other two contenders. He preferred to play the role of the peace-maker; and he was regarded more or less as a harmless opponent. Organisational rivalries did not entirely estrange Ba Swe's relations with the Tin-Tun group until 1957.

Originally, U Nu was entirely aloof from these factional conflicts within the party, and frequently asserted his pressure to stop it. Though he did not really bother about the growing dissension among the Socialists, he did not want the League to break up into pieces; he attempted to reorganise the AFPFL by trying to purge the undesirable elements; but he failed as real purging would have practically eliminated the League itself.

Organisational conflicts, however, gradually developed into personal wars, starting from the lower echelons. In 1955-56, clashes were reported between Tun Win (Co-operative Minister) of the Nyein faction and Pan Myaing (Democratic Local Administration Minister) of the Tin-Tun side in the course of their official duties.

NU & NYEIN

FOR U Nu, his active involvement in these intra-party factional wars began with his personal clash with Kyaw Nyein.

The first major clash between the two started in 1954 in connection with the sale of 150,000 tons of SAMB rice stock to Daw Nu Yin by the Cabinet Sub-Committee of which Kyaw Nyein was a member. At that time U Nu was in China, and he had also been negotiating with Chinese Government for the sale of the same rice stock. When U Nu came back he accused U Kyaw Nyein of being dishonest in that rice deal for having extended special concessions to the buyer. U Kyaw Nyein regarded the allegations as a deliberate move to discredit him.

Apart from his personal conflict with Kyaw Nyein, a Socialist leader, U Nu was not unmindful of the Socialist menace to his position. He thought Socialists would oust him from the League one day, and either Ba Swe or Kyaw Nyein would replace him as both the President of the AFPFL and the Prime Minister. He often spoke of his doubts about the sincerity of his Socialist colleagues; perhaps he felt insecure without a party following against the formidable Socialist force, provided, of course, the Socialists were united.

He wanted the loyalty and respect of his younger Socialist colleagues, and any show of disregard by them or under-estimation of him by the people was greatly resented by him.

He was very furious when the Ministers did not rise to greet him when he came into the City Hall at the civic reception for Sir Hubert Rance in 1956, while the same Ministers and the entire audience rose to greet Sir Hubert a few minutes later. He later complained of the insolence of his comrades.

He was also furious when the then British Prime Minister Anthony Eden, on the way to the Far East, proposed to stop a few hours at the airport, and

cabled U Nu to meet him at the airport, and also asking U Nu to bring along with him Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein. "Why Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein also," U Nu later resentfully told his comrades, "I am the Prime Minister and the President of the AFPFL."

He was also unhappy when the Chinese Prime Minister Chou En Lai asked the visiting Minister U Raschid in Peking about the actual composition of the AFPFL where "U Nu was the President without a Party following, and where the Socialists under Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein were the dominating group". He took the Chinese Premier's query as an under-estimation of his position in the League.

He did not relish the idea of anyone, especially the international leaders, having any impression that he was just a figure-head in the Socialist-dominated organisation. He wanted all to understand that he, though without a party, controlled the League with absolute authority and that he was not subordinated to the Socialists. As a matter of fact, he did control with absolute authority. Though the Socialists boasted that they could push out U Nu easily, it was not easy for them to make good their boast; they were not really certain of their own strength, they too were divided among themselves.

NINE MONTHS LAY-OFF

IN June 1956, U Nu resigned from Premiership, to reorganise the AFPFL and to give a chance to his younger colleagues to become Prime Minister by turns. He was to reorganise the League in one year and to return to office after the end of one year. U Ba Swe was made Prime Minister, and the posts of Deputy Premiers were created for U Kyaw Nyein,

Thakin Tin and Sao Hkun Hkio. U Nu remained as the President of the AFPFL.

Meanwhile, his friction with Kyaw Nyein grew worse and finally exploded with an exchange of two historical letters. In Kyaw Nyein's letter to U Nu written in June 1956, when U Nu was out of office but was still the President of the AFPFL, Kyaw Nyein accused U Nu of undermining the Socialist unity and conspiring to oust the Socialists from the League substituting them with U Nu's personal stooges. U Nu in his reply stated that it was merely unnecessary fear on the part of Kyaw Nyein, whose honesty in the rice deal of 1954 he again questioned.

At the same time, more clashes between the followers of Kyaw Nyein and those of Thakin Tin were often reported from the districts either in the sharing of seats in the basic AFPFL organisations or in the sharing of official privileges such as agricultural loans.

Up to that time U Nu did not take sides in factional rivalries growing between Kyaw Nyein and Thakin Tin factions, and Kyaw Nyein was just a common foe to him and Thakin Tin.

Ba Swe and some other Socialists also were not active participants to this factional rivalry between the two Socialist leaders.

Thakin Tin however was nearer to U Nu. U Nu's relationship with the Socialists was full of tactics. He cleverly exploited the rivalry between the three Socialist leaders Thakin Tin, Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe, and 'reared' the second-liners of each faction as his disciples, who however did not remain loyal to him permanently. As President of the AFPFL and Prime Minister, his threat to quit the Premiership leaving the coveted office open to three contenders, and offer of

official or organisational positions to second-line leaders of Socialist factions successfully served as the main retarding-factor to Socialist unity. It was not only U Nu's ability to exploit, but it was also the weakness of the Socialists themselves that their party failed to achieve the unity U Nu so dreaded.

THE LAST STRAW

THE last straw was broken in early 1957 when U Nu was away in Ceylon attending the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, and when Ambassador U Hla Maung proposed to the Socialists to keep U Nu as a national figure as President of the AFPFL in the style of Chairman Mao in China.

Early in 1957, a meeting was held at the then Prime Minister U Ba Swe's residence to discuss a certain military matter. U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein, General Ne Win and Ambassador U Hla Maung, who happened to be in Rangoon, were present. After dealing with the main subject of the meeting, U Hla Maung forwarded a proposal to keep U Nu above internal politics and keep him as the national figure in the style of Chairman Mao of China. He believed that U Nu as President of the AFPFL, without involving himself in internal politics, could remain as an influential international figure for a longer period in the interest of the country. All present at the meeting liked the idea. Since other Socialist leader Thakin Tin was hospitalized at the time, they went to see him at the Rangoon General Hospital and U Hla Maung told Thakin Tin of his proposal.

Thakin Tin listened carefully, and was reported to have told them, "Well, if we all explain it to him (Nu), there is no reason why he should not accept the plan". Then the meeting deputed General Ne Win and U Hla Maung to explain the proposal to U Nu on his return from Ceylon.

U NU RESUMES PREMIERSHIP

WHEN U Nu returned, many friends met him at the airport. Thakin Kyaw Tun went up to the plane and transmitted Thakin Tin's message for U Nu to come and see him at the hospital immediately before seeing anyone as an urgent matter was awaiting him. When U Nu arrived at the hospital. Thakin Tin told him that Swe-Nyein had been planning to keep him (Nu) permanently out of office and narrated the deliberations of the meeting in his own way. U Nu was naturally furious; thanked Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun for their timely information. With strong resentment against Swe and Nyein welling up in his breast from the one-sided story of the "ouster" plan, U Nu decided to return to office without waiting to complete the one year lay-off.

Explanations offered later by Hla Maung and Gen. Ne Win were of no avail. U Hla Maung explained that the proposal was made by him, with the best of intentions in the interest of the country and that it was definitely not an ouster plan and further assured him (Nu) that all of them were ready and willing to accept him as Prime Minister any time he chose to return. However, U Nu remained unconvinced and clung to his own conclusions that it was an ouster plan and was engineered by Kyaw Nyein who had previously objected openly to his return to power.

Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun, on the other hand, promised him their unswerving support in the event of Swe-Nyein opposition to U Nu's return to office and they actually made arrangements to organize Parliamentary following in case Parliamentary test of strength became necessary to reinstate U Nu. But U Nu's return was peacefully accepted by U Ba Swe

who stepped down to a Deputy Premiership. A test of strength in the Parliament had not become necessary yet. Thus U Nu resumed Premiership on March 1, 1957.

From this incident, Ba Swe also became a marked foe to U Nu who suspected Ba Swe of collaborating with Kyaw Nyein in the 'conspiracy'; Ba Swe then realised that his political position was also shaky without any active party following. He therefore tried to reorganise the Socialist Party starting from the Tenasserim area, and U Nu became more suspicious of Ba Swe's rivalry against him.

THE THIRD ALL-BURMA AFPFL CONVENTION

WITH this growing mistrust, suspicion and intrigues, the Third All-Burma AFPFL Convention was held in January-February 1958 at the Kaba Aye Hill. However, it was the first one after the Independence.

At the Convention, U Nu wanted to re-install Thakin Kyaw Tun as General-Secretary of the AFPFL while Kyaw Nyein faction wanted to replace Kyaw Tun with U Ba Swe. U Nu was adamant and insisted that Kyaw Tun must be General-Secretary because, he said, he (Nu) was indebted to Kyaw Tun for saving him from being kicked out of the AFPFL by warning him in time of the 'ouster' plan. Later, U Nu referred to this incident as the good turn for which he owed gratitude to Kyaw Tun and Thakin Tin.

Since there was no compromise, the Convention faced a serious division for the election of the General-Secretary. Ba Swe then intervened. He asked Kyaw Tun to promise to step down after 45 days if he (Kyaw Tun) wanted to become General-Secretary at

the Convention. Kyaw Tun then signed a declaration stating that he would abide by the decision of U Ba Swe, the Socialist Party President, in the interest of the Party agreeing to quit the General-Secretaryship after 45 days if Ba Swe demanded it of him. A temporary truce was then called and the Convention went on without anything untoward happening. Kyaw Tun was elected the General-Secretary—a return from U Nu for the good turn that Kyaw Tun had done him.

IGUANA & THE DAH

ABOUT this time, the crime index in Rangoon and Insein areas shot up alarmingly. There were murders and kidnappings in the City and Insein areas almost daily and the Press sharply criticised the Government for failure to stem such a tidal wave of crime. Neither life nor property was safe even in the heart of Rangoon, so much law and order had deteriorated.

U Nu then called a meeting of the National Security Council of which he was the President and ordered the arrest of all criminal suspects irrespective of their political affiliations. In order that no political pressure could interfere, the Army representative in the Council was given the task of arresting the suspects with the assistance of the Police. And, to the Home Ministry under Thakin Tha Khin fell the responsibility to prepare the list of suspects. Thakin Tha Khin, a lieutenant of Kyaw Nyein, by virtue of his office as Home Minister was Chairman of the Security Committee to which was charged the implementing of Security Council decisions.

When the mass arrests of suspects were made about the close of March, only about half a dozen of Kyaw Nyein's men were among the detainees while

over 200 of Kyaw Tun's people including ABPO leaders and even an MP were among those arrested. Greatly perturbed by the turn of events, Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun protested to U Nu to the extent of expressing their doubts of U Nu's sincerity towards them.

U Nu was in a fix. He had definitely lost the support of Kyaw Nyein who had become his opponent; Ba Swe could no more be counted upon as a friend. Now, the Tin-Tun faction which he trusted as his saviours threatened to turn hostile towards him. Could he afford to lose the only leg he has to stand on? It was the vital question U Nu had to answer for himself.

U Nu decided to side with the Tin-Tun faction at any cost. He assured Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun of his sincerity and support and reaffirmed his promise to side with them in case of a split! U Nu later justified his decision with the Burmese saying, "Not only fail to get the iguana but lose the dah as well". He had already lost iguana; he dreaded to lose the dah as well!

PARTING OF THE WAYS

ON April 25, presumably after consulting the matter with Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun, U Nu recalled by cable Home Minister Thakin Tha Khin en route to New Delhi on a Trade Mission from half way. On the following day he took over the Home Ministry from Thakin Tha Khin. After the National Planning Commission meeting on April 25 afternoon, U Nu 'discussed' with U Ba Swe about his intention to recall Thakin Tha Khin from Calcutta in the presence of both Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun as if he was seeking the approval of all three. U Kyaw Nyein was

away at the time in Arakan. U Ba Swe later learned to his chagrin that the 'discussion' by the Prime Minister that afternoon took place only after the recall cable had been sent that morning to Tha Khin.

U Nu, in his broadcast speech on April 29, stated that he took over the Home Ministry from Thakin Tha Khin because the circumstances prevailing demanded that Home Ministry should be directly under his (Nu's) control.

On April 27, U Kyaw Nyein hurried back from Arakan, and interviewed U Nu the same night in company with Tha Khin, Tun Win and Chit Maung. It was then that U Nu sprung upon Kyaw Nyein his decision to part ways with them. U Nu had earlier on April 23 told Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun of his decision to split the AFPFL into two factions in a peaceful way and side with their (Tin-Tun) faction.

U Nu told U Kyaw Nyein and his colleagues on April 27 night that it was no longer possible to string along together and that it would be best to part peacefully. He also declared that he had sided with Thakin Tin and Kyaw Tun group. He emphasized the need to refrain from recriminations on the principle of "Fewer the words, lesser the enmity" so that the parting of the ways would be peaceful. He laid down a 7-point formula by which the peaceful separation was to be made.

The seven points of the separation were: that the separation was brought about by infeasibility to pull on together and not to be interpreted as the ousting of a less powerful group by the more powerful one; that the assets of the AFPFL were to be divided equitably between the two factions; that the Supreme Council of the AFPFL (scheduled earlier to be held on May 28) was to decide which faction should

in herit the title of the AFPFL; that the Ministers on the opposing faction were not to be sacked by the Prime Minister until August session of the Parliament; that the faction which became the Government was not to persecute the other; that no Government servant was to be persecuted for political reasons; and that social relations between the opposing camps were to continue despite political differences.

As a matter of fact U Nu had already told U Ba Swe of his decision to part ways two days ahead of his meeting with Kyaw Nyein group when he 'discussed' with the latter his intention to recall Tha Khin en-route to New Delhi heading a Trade Mission; Ba Swe then asked Nu to reconsider the matter and postpone the split at least until the 1960 elections.

In the initial stages of the split, Ba Swe was not a partisan to either of the feuding parties; he was against splitting the League and stood for its stability. He condemned those who wanted to break up the League and declared that he would work with anyone ready to strive for the stability of the AFPFL.

Later, Ba Swe joined up with the Kyaw Nyein faction. However, Kyaw Nyein said that it was he who joined Ba Swe and not Ba Swe who joined his faction. The reason for the step, Kyaw Nyein said, was that he agreed with Ba Swe's stand for the stability of the AFPFL and thus he joined up with Ba Swe. Consequently Swe and Nyein formed the Stable AFPFL but the League's HQ was in possession by the Nu-Tin faction as the President (U Nu), the General-Secretary (Thakin Kyaw Tun) and the Treasurer (U Tin) were all in one group in opposition to Swe-Nyein. The Nu-Tin formed the Clean AFPFL implying that their AFPFL was without any dirty ones in it. Swe-Nyein set up their HQ initially at the

TUC(B) headquarters and later shifted it to U Ba Swe's house.

On May 3, the last meeting of the undivided AFPFL EC was held and formally decided upon the parting of the ways. A 4-man Committee of Nu, Tin, Swe, and Nyein was formed at this meeting to work out for a peaceful separation and for the equitable division of the assets of the AFPFL. In addition, the 4-men Committee was charged to draw up a Charter of Peace and Democracy, as suggested by U Nu.

Two days later on May 5, the last meeting of the Cabinet of the undivided AFPFL Government decided to summon a special emergency session of the Chamber of Deputies on June 5 for Parliamentary test of strength between the two factions.

THE LINE-UP

THE two factions abandoned themselves to mud-slinging at each other in the period between the time they decided finally to part ways and the time the special emergency session of the Parliament met for the test of strength between the two factions. In the course of the charges and counter charges running the gamut from corruption to nepotism, favouritism and lust for power to licentiousness, adultery, kidnapping and murder, the reciprocal recriminations injured the character of the leaders of both factions, deservedly or otherwise. Though some of the charges did not stick none of the AFPFL stalwarts survived the mutual character massacre with whole skins.

With the special emergency session of the Parliament in the offing, both factions began to recruit supporters to their ranks. For the first time in the history of the AFPFL Parliament, the common MP

became somebody of worth. The line-up of the 30-member Cabinet was evenly balanced with 15 on each side. On U Nu's side were Thakin Tin (DPM Social Service), U Tin (Trade Development), Thakin Kyaw Tun (Agri. & Forest), Bo Min Gaung (Transport), Thakin Pan Myaing (Democratic Admin.), Thakin Tin Maung (Housing), U Aung Pa (Marines), U Ba Saw (Religious Affairs), U Raschid (Mines), Sama Duwa Sinwa Nawng (National Solidarity), Sao Htun Aye (Immigration), Sao Hkun Hkio (DPM Foreign & Shan) Sao Wunna (Kayah) and U Zahre Lian (Chin).

On U Ba Swe's side were U Kyaw Nyein (DPM Natl. Economy), Dr. Saw Hla Tun (Karen), U Zan Hta Sin (Kachin), Bo Khin Maung Gale (Finance), Thakin Tha Khin (Home), U Khin Maung Lat (Judicial), U Shein Htang (Rehabilitation), U Tun Win (Cooperative), U Tin Nyunt (Labour), Thakin Chit Maung (Information), Thakin San Myint (Land Nationalisation) Bo Khin Maung (Industry) U Tun Tin (Education), and Dr. Sein Ban (Health).

Out of the 32 Parliamentary Secretaries, 22 lined up with Swe-Nyein and the rest 10 with Nu-Tin.

The factional strength was equally divided in the 20-member AFPFL EC including the 5 co-opted members also. U Nu, Thakin Tin, Thakin Kyaw Tun, U Tin, Henzada U Mya, Thakin Pan Myaing, Bo Min Gaung, U Aung Pa, U Ba Saw and Thakin Tin Maung on one side and U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein Thakin Tha Khin, U Khin Maung Lat, Bo Khin Maung Gale, U Tin Nyunt, Daw Sein Pu, U Tun Win, Thakin Chit Maung and Thakin San Myint, on the other.

MUTUAL MUD-SLINGING

HARKING back to the period between the time the split was decided upon, and the time the factional contest took place in the Paliament in June, it was to everybody's surprise to what depths politicians could descend to in a melee to grab power despite their gentlemen's agreement on "Fewer the words, lesser the enmity". U Nu tried to impress the country of his sincerity to part peacefully. He even thought up a 7-point formula to govern the separation. But neither faction seemed to have been restrained by any agreement or formula. Each started making stark revelations of the other's misdeeds which he had kept silent on in the past. In the process of the reciprocal recriminations indulged in with a vengeance, popularly believed saintly characters were revealed as sanctimonious cads, and patriots as murderers, kidnappers, seducers, and perfidious rouges, bewildering the mass of the people.

On May 7, two days after the last Cabinet meeting of the united AFPFL Government, U Ba Swe, in his address from the President's chair at the inaugural session of the TUC(B) Supreme Council meeting at the City Hall, branded U Nu as power maniac who broke up the AFPFL for his own ends and to further his inordinate ambitions. He stated that despite the Socialists' 'loyalty' to him (Nu), U Nu mistrusted the Socialists. In spite of it, U Ba Swe said he had remained loyal to U Nu till the last moment adding, "We have always regarded him as our mentor approaching him for advice and counsel whenever differences and misunderstandings arose among us (Socialists). This he (Nu) exploited by setting us one against the other." U Ba Swe then illustrated the situation by likening U Nu to a referee in a foot-ball match who,

unable to contain himself, took sides and started shooting at the goal.

A few hours after U Ba Swe denounced U Nu's political chicanery, U Nu countered with a vehement challenge at a Press conference daring the two Swe-Nyein leaders to submit themselves along with him and Thakin Tin to a Public Enquiry Commission to probe into their personal conduct and political integrity instead of levelling baseless charges. And, regarding the split, U Nu stated that his attempts to patch up the bitter differences between Thakin Tin and U Kyaw Nyein not only did not succeed but even resulted in his being misunderstood and suspected of favouring one of the other. When the Press asked the reason for his siding with Thakin Tin in the final split, U Nu replied it was for the sake of unity!

The attack on each other by the opposing leaders let loose a barrage from the rank and file from both sides. The calumnies gathered more venom as each day passed and as it got further away from the City and the towns resulting in sporadic out-breaks of violence in the rural areas.

Though U Nu gave some three days in which to answer when he threw out the challenge, Swe-Nyein replied the very next day with a counter-challenge going one better than U Nu saying the whole lot of leaders of their faction besides the two of them was also ready for the Probe Commission; and challenged U Nu to get the leaders of his faction also to submit likewise. The question was hedged and the matter fizzled out like a damp cracker.

At the same time the two factions were also manoeuvring for better advantage of one over the other for the test of strength. Swe-Nyein calculated

that with the AFPFL Supreme Council represented heavily by the ABPO they would stand a better chance of defeating the Nu-Tin in the Parliament. Thus they had from the outset worked to bring the crucial test into the Parliament. However, they later felt uneasy about their chances because, although they were certain of commanding a majority among the AFPFL MPs, the NUF with 45 solid votes declared its support for Nu-Tin. Moreover, they also realised that the faction in power commanded considerable advantage over the one outside. Swe Nyein thought up another move.

On May 14, Swe-Nyein wrote to U Nu saying that it would be fair only if he resigned his office and stand for re-election as Prime Minister at the emergency session of the Parliament scheduled on June 5. Then both factions would be on a level with each other and neither could have any grounds for complaint that the other had used its position unfairly to its advantage. It would be in keeping with the best tenets of democracy, Swe-Nyein contended. U Nu's reply evaded a direct answer of yes or no; it called the other's attention to his generosity and his democratic action in keeping the opposition members still in his Cabinet and requiring them to resign only on the day previous to the sitting of the emergency session of the Parliament. Having failed to move U Nu from his coign of vantage, Swe-Nyein made another proposal. This time they suggested that since the mandate was from the AFPFL MPs it should be sought afresh from them. U Nu would not budge.

While these manoeuvres for positional advantage were going on, the reciprocal recriminations between the two factions became more embittered and venomous. The people spent troubled days in anxious suspense fearing an out-break of an epidemic of violence

all over the country. The fear of the people was shared by the presiding monks of the monasteries in Rangoon. Thus on May 20, the *Sayadaws* got the representatives of the brawling factions to sign a pact of 'Non-Violence' and an undertaking to cease hurling vile charges at each other. The factions also undertook to fight democratically using just and fair means only and that the victor would not victimize the vanquished.

PARTITION OF AFPFL

THE AFPFL split created two major problems: inheritance of assets and title of AFPFL, and the choice of arena for the final showdown between the two brawling factions.

In the 7-point formula laid down by U Nu for a peaceful separation, assets were to be equitably divided between the two factions, while the inheritance of the title of the League was to be decided upon by the Supreme Council, earlier scheduled to take place on May 28. The AFPFL, at the time of split, had about K 5 lakhs as its funds.

As regards inheritance of the title, U Nu was not interested at all. His attempt to clean up the League by purging the undesirables had earlier failed, as a strict purge would practically eliminate the League itself. Since then U Nu was very bitter about the composition of the League both at the headquarters and in the districts, often referring to the League as a decaying dog carcass and declaring that he could no more keep hugging the rotting carcass. With the actual split, he wanted to quit the League and leave the decaying carcass on the hands of Swe-Nyein faction. But his colleagues—Thakin Tin and Thakin Kyaw Tun—were against his plan to quit the AFPFL, pointing out that

the League was still an influential vote-catching force. They strongly protested leaving behind such a potential with the opposition. U Nu yielded ground to his colleagues and dropped his idea of quitting the League.

The Nu-Tin faction was in a vantage position. All the important positions: President, General Secretary, and the Treasurer (U Nu, Kyaw Tun, and U Tin respectively) belonged to the Nu-Tin faction; and these officials began to attend the office very regularly after the split, automatically shutting out the EC members of the Swe-Nyein faction from the League. Nu-Tin was therefore in physical possession of the League, while Swe-Nyein established their headquarters at the TUC(B) and later at U Ba Swe's residence.

As regards the formation of the Government, the Cabinet meeting on May 5 decided to hold an emergency session of the Parliament on June 5 to test the parliamentary strength of the brawling factions. Parliament was chosen as the arena for the showdown at the instance of the Swe-Nyein faction.

As the June session of the Parliament drew nearer, Swe-Nyein faction, which had proposed for it, felt uncertain of its victory in the Parliament especially after the NUF's decision to support Nu-Tin faction with its 45 solid votes whilst the response from some of the minority groups to it was also not quite favourable as expected.

The organization for factional following within the AFPFL became brisk as the day of judgment drew nearer. Swe-Nyein faction was ahead of their rival in the intra-AFPFL organizations. They have more following among the AFPFL MPs. By the middle of May they were also certain of a majority in

the AFPFL Supreme Council which they earlier dreaded owing to high ABPO representation in it.

Consequently, they made new moves asking U Nu to call the meeting of the AFPFL Supreme Council and to also call a meeting of AFPFL MPs who had given them the mandate. Since Swe-Nyein faction was stronger in the AFPFL, they naturally wanted the matters settled within the party.

U Nu replied that the Supreme Council meeting would be held only after the Parliament session. On June 9, Swe-Nyein's no-confidence motion in the Parliament was thrown out by a slim margin of 8 with the voting at 127 to 119.

One problem, the test of strength, was therefore over by June 9. But the question of the partition of the AFPFL remained to be settled.

Though U Nu had earlier promised to convene the AFPFL Supreme Council after the Parliament session, he made no move to redeem his promise. So on June 13 Swe-Nyein Councillors signed a memo asking Nu to convene the Supreme Council meeting. Getting no results, on June 15 Swe-Nyein faction held its own Supreme Council meeting with 140 out of 260 members attending it. The Swe-Nyein sponsored Supreme Council meeting then dissolved the originally constituted AFPFL EC and formed an interim EC with Mahn Mya Sein replacing U Nu as President. The meeting also decided to hold the All-Burma Supreme Council meeting on June 22. Invitations were extended to all 260 members including the Nu-Tin councillors.

The Supreme Council meeting on June 22 was attended by 140 Swe-Nyein Councillors while the Nu-Tin members boycotted the show. The meeting expelled U Nu & Co from the AFPFL on 13 charges. Among the 13 charges were that U Nu & Co had

plotted the split of the AFPFL and that they had slandered the reputation of the League by calling it, the decaying dog carcass. The Supreme Council also elected new EC with U Ba Swe as President and Thakin Tha Khin as General-Secretary.

On July 1, Thakin Tha Khin in his capacity as the new General-Secretary of the AFPFL demanded the Nu-Tin faction to surrender the League premises, funds and seals and emblems to the 'rightful' owners of the League.

On the following day, U Ba Swe, in the name of the President of the Socialist Party, expelled Thakin Kyaw Tun and Thakin Pan Myaing from the Socialist Party and withdrew from them the leadership of the ABPO and FTO.

These demands, requests and expulsions carried only moral effect. The AFPFL headquarters remained under the physical possession of the Nu-Tin faction, and the ABPO and the FTO were under Kyaw Tun and Pan Myaing respectively.

Nu Tin faction not only ignored the Swe-Nyein demands, it expelled Ba Swe & Co from the AFPFL under the charge of violating the Constitution of the AFPFL. Nu-Tin said that Swe-Nyein sponsored Supreme Council was illegal and that its decisions, meaningless.

Consequently, both factions claiming to be the rightful heirs to the original AFPFL, were not themselves certain of their positions and called themselves, the one, as the Stable and the other, the Clean AFPFL as distinct from the original AFPFL. The settlement of the inheritance and the division of the assets therefore remained unchanged practically up to now when both factions are out of power.

MASSING OF PARLIAMENTARY FOLLOWING

SINCE the decision of the last Cabinet meeting on May 5 to convene the emergency session of the Chamber of Deputies for a test of strength between the rival factions, leaders of both groups began massing Parliamentary following vigorously.

Swe-Nyein were able to muster a majority among the AFPFL members of the Parliament, while the Nu-Tin received the solid support of the Opposition group—the National United Front—with 45 votes. The minority votes, thus, appeared to be the deciding factor under the circumstances. Consequently, both factions concentrated their efforts to woo the support of the minority Parliament Members, also splitting their unity as they had done with the AFPFL. The minority unity was smashed by the AFPFL split and by the subsequent contest in the Parliament. All the State MPs became divided, each group turning bitterly hostile to the other which supported the rival faction. Even the Chin group, reputed to be indivisible, finally broke up squarely and evenly.

Among the 25 Deputies from the Shan States, 16 declared their support to the Nu-Tin faction while the remaining 9 threw in their lot with the Swe-Nyein group. Seven Kachin State Deputies were divided 4:3 in Swe-Nyein's favour, while 6 Chin Deputies were equally divided 3:3 for each faction. Among the 7 Karen State members, 5 supported the Swe-Nyein and 2, Nu-Tin. Only in the Kayah State, where there were only two members who are closely related, there was no division, and both went over to the Nu-Tin side.

The division among the minority MPs raised as much dust among them as the split among the AFPFL MPs. The 'mud' they slung at each other were no less

vicious than the worst their 'big brothers' of the AFPFL complimented each other with. Some were alleged as opium smugglers, some, as gold smugglers. By the time they had done with each other, many a character had become bedraggled.

Another uncommitted group was the 6-member Opposition faction known as the Arakan National United Organisation (ANUO), which championed the cause of Arakan Autonomy.

Both factions wooed for their support, and the ANUO demanded the creation of an autonomous Arakan State as the price for their support in the Parliament. Swe-Nyein faction was not prepared to accept the terms in toto, but promised to help create a Council in the style of the Chin Affairs Council. Nu-Tin however accepted the terms with one condition that the people of Arakan must be genuinely in favour of the creation of an autonomous Arakan State. Nu-Tin promise was more favourable and ANUO pledged to side with the Nu-Tin faction at the last and critical stage.

A few weeks before this promise was given by Nu-Tin to the ANUO, U Nu had declared publicly at the Mon Conference at Moulmein that he would no more consider any demands for autonomous States.

All means were used to mass Parliamentary following. Ministerial positions were promised, money was lavishly used to buy up the MPs, autonomous States were bargained, and 'special' concessions such as formation of racial battalions in the army, and removal of immigration and custom checkings in smuggling areas, were promised. In short both factions tried to sell the country to serve their purposes; and only the price differed, one selling at a cheaper bargain than the other.

Those MPs who sat on the fence were the most favoured persons and their monetary worth rose with the show of greater reluctance to commit their allegiance. It appeared then that no conviction and unready allegiance became the main qualification for either office or monetary rewards.

MPs in the districts were immediately summoned to Rangoon. All MPs received two cables, one from each faction. They were met with sugar-coated faces at the jetties, railway stations, and air-port by the factional leaders who in the past, treated them with scant respect. On not a few occasions there were scrambles at the terminal between the two factional *Shwegyos* (political touts) for the 'possession' of incoming MPs from the districts. Those days, MPs were the most favoured and costly guests in Rangoon. To ensure the support of the declared supporters, many district MPs and many minority MPs were 'kept' in safe places, their communication with the outside world entirely cut off. Everything was found for them in the house where they were kept, but they were practically 'political prisoners'.

There was even an attempt to kidnap an MP !

The factional scramble for support in the Parliament brought about a volte-face in the policy of the Government regarding the rights and privileges of MPs. At the previous session of the Parliament, out of three imprisoned MPs, two who were NUFs applied for permission to attend Parliament, and were refused by the Government. However, for the historic session of the Parliament where the Government was to face a no-confidence motion, a changed policy of the Government allowed all the three prisoner MPs to attend the Parliament and exercise their right. They all voted for the Government at the division.

About six MPs were abroad at the time of the split, and all were cabled back to take part in the Parliamentary tussle. Bohmu Aung and Mahadevi of Yawnghwe, the Speaker and Member of the Chamber of Deputies respectively, were away in Soviet Union with the Parliamentary mission to Russia and China.

They were informed of the split whilst in Moscow and were summoned back to Rangoon. Bohmu Aung made a long-distance telephone call to Peking and had the incident confirmed by Ambassador U Hla Maung.

As Speaker of the House and an elder among the colleagues in the Government, Bohmu Aung was respected by many, and his support would mean a following of a considerable number of MPs on whom he wielded personal influence.

He cut short his tour of China and made his return journey for home.

Bo Hla Kyaing of the Swe-Nyein faction immediately flew to Hongkong to woo him on the way. But Nu-Tins had cabled ahead to Bohmu Aung to support them whilst he was still in China !

When he arrived back in Rangoon he was met by two Deputy Premiers—Thakin Tin and U Ba Swe—from rival factions, and matters that developed during his absence from Rangoon were explained to him from factional view-points. Each naturally put the blame on the other for the split. Bohmu Aung was unconvinced by either of the view-points, and he blamed both factions for the split.

ATTEMPT FOR RAPPROCHEMENT

Nobody wanted the split. It was not because they loved the AFPFL whose leaders had grown insufferably arrogant with the years of power; it was because they feared that the consequences of the split would have disastrous effect upon the country. Thus it was that many wanted the brawling factions reconciled with each other even if the reconciliation called for purging some of the more undesirable elements from both factions.

Ambassador U Hla Maung, at the time accredited to the Chinese Peoples' Republic, and the then Attorney General, Dr. Ba Han, separately attempted to patch up the split. Both of them were away at the time of the split: U Hla Maung was away at his post in Peking and Dr. Ba Han, in Geneva attending an International Conference. By the time Dr. Ba Han got back from Geneva and Ambassador U Hla Maung came over on summons for 'consultations' regarding Sino-Burmese border in late May, enough bad blood had been created between the two factions through reciprocal recriminations that a rapprochement between the two seemed almost beyond possibility. So much discredit had been heaped by one faction upon the other that they shut themselves out from associating with the other again even if they wanted to, without bringing discredit upon itself.

U Hla Maung was an old comrade of the leaders of both factions and he had been recalled before for consultations by his comrades on previous occasions when there were 'crises' in the AFPFL. Soon after the split, he was recalled by Ba Swe; but he pleaded illness and did not return. Then, later U Nu cabled him back for 'consultation' regarding the Sino-Burmese

border issue and U Hla Maung had to leave Peking for Burma.

As soon as he arrived back in Rangoon "U Hla Maung went immediately and saw U Nu. He broached the subject of the split and sounded the Prime Minister on the possibility of patching up the breach—at least temporarily till the General Elections in 1960. The rebels were coming in en masse and the end of the long drawn out insurrection was in sight; the Sino-Burmese border issue was almost settled. The disintegration of the AFPFL would surely cause a setback to both the problems. Why not wait a little longer and see to the solution of these major national problems? Could not the leaders sink their personal differences for a while in the interest of the country, especially as there was no ideological differences between the two factions? He requested U Nu to try his best for a rapprochement but U Nu only replied, "The situation is too far gone now; you have come back one month too late."

The Swe-Nyein leaders were also not amenable to U Hla Maung's suggestion. They listened to him only half-heartedly. Passions were running high at the time and were being kept fanned by vile accusations against each other unneeding their pledge of "Fewer the words, lesser the enmity". U Kyaw Nyein also said that the situation had gone too far for anything to be usefully done. Moreover, any concession for a rapprochement at the juncture, in U Kyaw Nyein's opinion, would amount to submission or defeat! The match-making Ambassador was repulsed by both the factions and fell under a cloud of suspicion from both sides that he was acting the go-between at the behest of the other faction because that faction was certain of its defeat. The two factions have irrevocably made up

their minds to pursue their fight to the bitter end and heap humiliation on the opponent.

Dr. Ba Han had been away in Geneva leading a Burmese Delegation to an International Conference on the Law of the Sea. On his return, he went to U Nu and similarly requested the Prime Minister as U Hla Maung had done before him. The two did independently of each other on their initiative and conviction. However, U Nu suspected U Hla Maung of 'inspiring' Dr. Ba Han, so similar were the reasons the two advanced for a rapprochement.

Passions and emotions were running so high at the time that neither faction was in a responsive frame of mind to reason or appeals. Such was their bitter animosity against each other that they even misunderstood the motive of the intermediaries. Neither side was willing for a rapprochement—it was the annihilation of the other camp that they were fervently working for, heedless of the consequences to the country!

With the return of Bohmu Aung hope for a rapprochement was revived. Bohmu Aung had cut short his tour of China and arrived back on May 28. At the 'Big-Four' meeting (Nu, Swe, Nyein and Tin) at U Nu's residence on May 31 to discuss the partition of the AFPFL, where U Hla Maung was also present, Bohmu Aung urged the leaders of both factions to exercise tolerance in the larger interest of the country and to co-exist within the League like the two factions of Bevan and Attlee in the British Labour Party. He pointed out to the opposing leaders that co-existence was the only way which would save the country from dire consequences. He was listened to in silence but absolutely no response came forth from anyone. Both factions were obdurate and seemed determined to do their damndest, come what may either to them or to

the country rather than sink their pride and meet each other half way.

It is a strange thought to dwell on that though Burma was one of the principal sponsors of the Bandung Conference with its famous ideals of co-existence, etc. embodied in the Five Principles and was bold enough to embark upon a match-making mission in international politics extolling the Chinese to the Americans in Washington, and Americans to the Chinese in Peking could not herself practise at home what she preached about abroad. Perhaps, the differences between Nu-Tin and Swe-Nyein were of far more deeper than those between Eisenhower and Chou En Lai.

That is how the rapprochement attempts were made and last Bohmu Aung, the Speaker, who at the beginning tried what U Hla Maung and Dr Ba Han failed, later himself took to partisanship and joined the Nu-Tin faction to become Deputy Premier in Nu-Tin Government.

TENSE ATMOSPHERE

AS the day for the show-down drew nearer, the leaders of both factions became busier with counting 'heads' of the supporting ranks; but the man-in-the-street lived in a state of mounting suspense and fear. Rumours that Swe-Nyeins would go underground if defeated or that the Nu-Tins were prepared for an armed rebellion in case they were voted out of office, floated about gaining more dreadful details as they passed from whisper to whisper. Some of the rumours were said to have been deliberately broadcast by one faction to discredit the other. These rumours struck fear in the hearts of the people despite open declarations by both factions that they would never resort to force to wrest power from the other. Thus, as the

date—June 5— drew nearer for the decisive showdown between the two factions, people became more jittery.

Some politicians did prepare for an armed rebellion in case they suffered defeat in the Parliament. These politicians have been so long in power that they had long lost the memory of their beginnings; they had come to think of their present power and panoply as their divine right; they would stay in power by any means. One Minority Minister prepared to revolt from his hometown; a battalion of his armed forces was on the qui vive. The Army came to know of it but it could not take the precaution of disarming the battalion as it did not rise up in rebellion yet and, moreover, the disposition of the force was ordered by a Minister ! But the Army made ready to quell the rebellion the instant it broke out. Fortunately, there was no necessity for it, because the faction to which the Minister belonged won in the Parliament.

June 5 arrived in Rangoon with majority of the shops closed and many private schools shut. Again on June 9 when the Parliament met to vote on the no-confidence motion, even tenser atmosphere prevailed over the city. Most schools closed for the day including some state schools; those that remained opened had hardly any attendance. People confined themselves to their homes fearing an outbreak of violence. The city was practically deserted except around the Secretariat in which compound the Parliament is situated. Around it were drawn heavy armed guards comprising the Army, Navy, Air Force and Police. Magistrates were also on stand-by to give orders to shoot in case trouble broke out. Fire-engines, ambulances, armoured cars, and the Police in their wireless cars stood by on the alert.

Fifteen Ministers of the 30-member Cabinet, who belonged to the Swe-Nyein faction were retained in the post-split U Nu's Cabinet in accordance with the 7-point peaceful separation formula which provided for keeping opposition members in the Cabinet until one day ahead of the no-confidence motion. Important portfolios such as the Home and Judicial were earlier removed from the Swe-Nyein members. On June 4, one day ahead of the no-confidence motion, all the 15 Swe-Nyein Ministers resigned.

On the first day of the Parliament session—June 5—it was 'amusing' to see the two rival factions come to the Parliament wearing broad smiles and greeting and cracking jokes with each other. Seeing them thus, nobody would have imagined that not many hours ago these self-same people had been hurling abuses at each other through pamphlets, posters, radio and what not and that not many hours after they would be at it again tearing each other's characters into shreds! The Parliament convened at 11 o'clock in the morning. Then, U Ba Swe, the Opposition Leader, rising to a thundering applause, (of course from his benches only) sought the Speaker's permission to table a no-confidence motion against the Nu-Tin Government. The Speaker allowed and fixed June 9 for the tabling and voting. June 5 passed off peacefully and people breathed a sigh of relief...for that day.

THE DIVISION

BOTH factions had already announced their respective strengths by the beginning of June. Nu-Tin claimed 127 whilst Swe-Nyein had 119 on their roll out of the 248-member House. But Swe-Nyein expected at least six Shan MPs to defect to them at the time of the division from the Nu-Tin Camp. Nu-Tin, on the other hand, counted on a bigger majority when

the division comes with some defection from the other side.

The Parliament resumed its fateful sitting on June 9 as fixed for the debate on no-confidence motion and the voting.

One of the earliest arrival in the Chamber was U Nu himself, wearing a yellow *gaungbaung* and a confident smile. His colleagues also wore yellow *gaungbaungs*. The 45 NUF members wore their sky-blue (peace colour!) *gaungbaungs*, while the Swe-Nyein members wore pinkish *gaunghaungs*.

U Ba Swe arrived just before the session began and was greeted by applause from his friends. When Dr. E Maung arrived NUF applauded. The day,—the day of judgment—thus began with smiles and hand-clappings.

The Speaker Bohmu Aung then arrived, and the day's business began.

U Ba Swe moved his no-confidence motion and Bo Khin Maung Gale seconded. Amongst the supporters were U Kyaw Nyein, U Zan Hta Sin, Thakin San Myint, and U Khin Maung Lat, the Swe-Nyein stalwarts.

The motion was opposed by U Po Hmone (Shan), U Ba Nyein (NUF), Duwa Zau Rip (Kachin), Thakin Tin, and U Nu. U Ba Swe replied.

Then the bells rang, and the Speaker announced the voting procedure. Those for the motion were to rise and go into the 'Aye' lobby first; and only after the door of the 'Aye' lobby was closed, those against the motion were to go into the 'Nay' lobby.

There were anxious moments. All eyes turned around the Shan group when the Speaker asked those

for the motion to go inside the 'Aye' lobby. Because they expected some Shan MPs who had earlier declared for Nu-Tin to defect and follow Mahadevi of Yawnghwe who sided with Swe-Nyein. But only nine including Mahadevi—as earlier announced—rose and went into the 'Aye' lobby. There was no defection. When the Speaker asked those against the motion to go inside the 'Nay' lobby, U Nu led the Nu-Tin supporters to the 'Nay' lobby.

The result came through at last, 119 for the motion, and 127 against, a thin majority of 8 for the Nu-Tin. The Speaker announced the defeat of the motion, and there was applause. The session was prorogued. U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein went over and congratulated U Nu, Thakin Tin and others. Their ways had parted peacefully. Nothing untoward happened either in the Parliament or outside.

The following was the break down figure of support of the various groups at the division on no-confidence motion. Out of 248 members, 246 voted. The Speaker abstained, and another member U Ba U of Maubin was deemed resigned from the House. He had earlier sent in his resignation though he tried to withdraw it later.

	Nu-Tin	Swe-Nyein
AFPFL members (Burma proper)	51	97
National United Front (NUF)	44	1
ANUO (Arakanese)	6	0
Shans	16	9
Kachins	3	4
Chins	3	3
Kayahs	2	0
Karens	2	5
	<hr/> 127	<hr/> 119

THE REIGN OF NU-TIN

THE five months reign of Nu-Tin faction from June 9 to October 28 wrote a remarkable chapter of appeasement and concessions to rebels unprecedented in the history of any country. The multicoloured rebels who were on their last legs and suing for peace and leniency just before the two factions broke up the AFPFL, stiffened their attitude and changed their appeals to demands. They were tipped off to change their tone and stand by their allies, the crypto-Communists aboveground, on whose support Nu-Tin's survival depended.

On the otherhand, U Nu, apart from sincerely wishing to see the end of the long drawn out insurrection of a decade, seemed to have been motivated by his ambition to go down in history as **THE PEACE-MAKER**. Thus he was prepared to sacrifice other considerations and costs to the country to attain his ambition. It would have been a distinctive feather in his personal cap! Politically it would have immense vote-catching value, unequalled by anything that Swe-Nyein could possibly achieve.

However, U Nu's ambition eluded him when it was almost within his grasp. With the show of weakness on the part of the Government, the Communist rebels abruptly changed their party line from that of eager acceptance of U Nu's already lenient peace terms to haughtily demands for parleys and legalisation of their guerrillas.

They demanded that their men 'seasoned' in the struggle for the 'liberation of the people' for the last ten years must be absorbed in the armed forces of the country!

The reign of the "Clean" AFPFL was remarkable for one other aspect too: it was an object lesson in to what depths of recourses politicians can stoop to in their struggle to maintain themselves in power despite their glib professions, oft repeated, of democratic principle. Abuse of power, persecution of opponents and even of neutrals, evasions and infringements of the Constitutional provisions, were only some of the more serious charges levelled against the regime.

Although Nu-Tin regime is counted from June 9 to October 28, it actually began with the AFPFL split in early May. Though the opposing faction was tolerated in the Government, all the important portfolios belonging to the opposition were withdrawn and the rest vitiated by instructions to the Secretaries to the Ministries by the Prime Minister not to carry out any important decisions without his prior sanction. After its meeting on May 5, the Cabinet was never called again! The Prime Minister assumed absolute control of the administration. The magnanimity in tolerating the opposition faction in the Government became a ridiculous farce. The 15 Swe-Nyein Ministers constituting half the Cabinet were just unwelcome poor relations.

THE CARD

ABOUT the middle of May, when an high official called upon the Prime Minister in the course of his duties, U Nu enquired of him how things were going on in the services after the split. He was said to have replied that the unsettled condition was affecting the work as those in position were chary of making decisions not being sure of when and what changes will take place. To this the Prime Minister was reported to have replied assuring the official that no "changes" would take place for quite a considerable

time and told him to go ahead with the projects and the plans and that his (Nu's) side would remain in power for quite a long time to come.

This incident happened well two weeks ahead of the emergency session of the Parliament which was to decide the fate of the two brawling factions. Even as early as that, U Nu was certain of his remaining in power ! What had given him such confidence?

The Constitution provided the answer for U Nu's confidence in his future whatever the outcome of the showdown in the Parliament well two weeks ahead. The Section 57 of the Constitution lays down that the President *MAY* refuse to dissolve the Parliament on the advice of the Prime Minister who has ceased to retain the support of a majority in the Chamber. The President *MAY* and not *SHALL*. In the event of defeat U Nu would advise the President to dissolve the Parliament and remain in power at the head of the Caretaker Government. This was the card—the trump—up his sleeve.

At about this hour, the Swe-Nyein faction sensing that U Nu was contemplating some stratagem of this sort to retain himself in power should he be defeated in the Parliament, tried to extract from him the promise that he would not dissolve the Parliament if he were defeated in the Parliamentary contest. Astute politician that he is, U Nu would not commit himself, hedging the issue with the mere statement that his actions would be within the framework of the Constitution. Nothing more could be had out of him. The Press too tried to fathom his mind over this moot point of dissolving the Parliament when a Prime Minister no more retained the confidence of the House. The Press too fared no better than the Swe-Nyein. U Nu gave the same kind of answer at the Press conferences as that was given to the Swe-Nyein.

Thus, what would U Nu do if he were defeated in the House—would he dissolve the Parliament or descend gracefully and make way for the Opposition?—became the burning question of the hour which engaged the mind of the majority of the people. Taking up the issue purely on academic ground, *The Guardian*, an English language daily, sought and stimulated public opinion on the moot question of the hour. Many leading lawyers came forth with the opinion that despite the letter of the provision, it would be highly undemocratic in spirit and would also create an immensely dangerous precedent if the House were dissolved by a Prime Minister who had ceased to retain the support of a majority in the Chamber.

However, the decision of the Parliament on June 9 fortunately did not require the Section 57 to be translated into practice; the House rejected the no-confidence motion. What would have happened otherwise has ever since then remained in the realm of speculation. There was however an allegation that the Prime Minister was armed with a Presidential Order for the dissolution of the Parliament to be put into effect the moment he was defeated. This Order was taken out of his pocket by the Prime Minister, it was said, in mistake for the one proroguing the Parliament at the end of the session which installed the "Clean" AFPFL as the Government of the country.

APPOINTMENT OF STATE MINISTERS

FOLLOWING the resignation on June 4 of 15 Sweenyein Ministers, including Dr. Saw Hla Tun, Minister for Karen State, and U Zan Hta Sin, Minister for Kachin State, Prime Minister U Nu appointed two new State Ministers, Saw Lu Lu for Karen State and Duwa Zau Rip for the Kachin State. The

appointments were made without consulting the respective State Councils though the Constitution required the Prime Minister to nominate a State Minister *in consultation with* the State Council concerned.

Swe-Nyein faction took advantage of this irregularity and branded U Nu as violater of the Constitution, treating it as a scrap of paper, Swe-Nyein alleged. U Nu later replied that the appointment of State Ministers had to be made hurriedly without consulting the Councils due to administrative expediency, since he did not want the two States in question without Heads after the resignation of Dr. Saw Hla Tun and U Zan Hta Sin. He stated that the appointments were just provisional and that the Ministers would resign when the meeting of the State Councils could be called. U Nu stated that though the Constitution required him to consult the State Councils for the appointment of State Ministers, it did not however bind him to the Council's choice and that to accept or not the Council's choice as Head of State was left to the Prime Minister's decision.

U Nu however promised to refer the question to the Supreme Court for opinion as to the constitutionality or otherwise of appointing State Ministers without consulting the State Councils concerned. The matter was actually referred to the Supreme Court with another controversial matter, the resignation of Maubin MP U Ba U.

U Ba U, in a state of desperation during the split, posted his resignation on May 19; on May 21 he changed his mind, declared his support for Swe-Nyein and sent another letter by bearer, withdrawing the resignation sent earlier by post. The letter of withdrawal reached the Parliament office two hours ahead of the

letter of resignation which came by mail. Both the letters were submitted to the President who declared U Ba U's seat vacant. There were allegations that the resignation was accepted just because U Ba U declared his support for Swe-Nyein and that acceptance of the letter of resignation which arrived later than the letter cancelling it was unconstitutional.

While these cases were being referred to the Supreme Court, the new Heads of Karen and Kachin States called the State Councils and resigned on July 3, one day ahead of the Council meetings, while the reference cases were fixed for hearing on July 7.

In both the Karen and Kachin Councils, Swe-Nyein commanded majority. In the Kachin Council, 10 out of 19 members were Swe-Nyein adherents, while the Karen State Council was divided into 12: 10 in Swe-Nyein's favour. If U Nu were to accept the decision of the majority in the Councils, he would get only Swe-Nyein State Ministers in his Cabinet.

On July 4, when the Karen State Council met at U Nu's residence, U Nu attended the Council meeting warning the councillors to choose a person whom he (Nu) could accept as colleague in the Cabinet. It was the first time the Prime Minister attended a State Council meeting, and his attendance was alleged by the opposition as an attempt to influence the councillors.

In the agenda of the Council meetings on July 4 was included the nomination of candidates for appointment as State Heads to be submitted to the Prime Minister. While the majority in both the Councils were commanded by the Swe-Nyein faction, Chairmen of both the Councils belonged to the Nu-Tin bloc. The Swe-Nyein opposition in the State Councils pointed out that the Council should nominate only one candidate for submission to PM for Head of State,

and that submission of two names as candidates to PM to make his own choice was not democratic.

Two names, that of Duwa Zau Rip and U Dein Ratan were submitted as two candidates for Kachin Head of State, while Karen Council proposed Saw Lu Lu (Nu-Tin) and U A. Soe Myint (Swe-Nyein) as candidates for Karen Head of State. U Nu later accepted Saw Lu Lu and Zau Rip as ministers and appointed them.

On July 4 meeting, opposition member Bo Hla Kyaing moved a no-confidence motion against the Nu-Tin Chairman of Kachin State Council and July 10 was fixed for debate and discussion.

On July 9, when the Kachin State Council met again and ended in a near riot, the Chairman prorogued the session instead of postponing it to the next day for the no-confidence motion as fixed earlier. Because any contest by vote will mean defeat of Nu-Tin in the Council.

Thus the Heads of the States were 'elected' by the Councils against the will of the majority, and nominated by the Prime Minister as his cabinet colleagues.

On July 28, the Supreme Court Bench comprising the Chief Justice of the Union U Myint Thein, Justice U Chan Htoon and Justice U Bo Gyi, tendered their opinion on two referendum cases: the resignation of Maubin MP U Ba U, and the appointment of two State Ministers.

The Bench was of the opinion that the Constitutional provision for consultation with the State Council was only directory and not mandatory, and therefore the Prime Minister did not act in contraven-

tion of the Constitution in nominating State Ministers without consulting the Councils concerned.

In the case of the resignation of U Ba U, the Bench was of the opinion that the resignation came into effect from the time the resignation letter was posted, irrespective of its time of arrival at the destination. The Supreme Court bench, therefore, upheld the Government's action in this case also.

THE BUDGET SESSION THAT NEVER CAME

THE Nu-Tin faction won the Parliamentary contest on June 9 with a slender majority of 8 votes. After the first flush of the victory, it soon dawned upon them that a bigger challenge awaited them at the Budget Session of the Parliament normally held in mid-August. With the slim majority and uncertain loyalty, U Nu was fully aware of his precarious position. The question that confronted him then was, should he face the Budget Session fighting through every demand with a series of contests or should he dissolve the Parliament, and pass the Budget by Ordinance.

The NUF on which the Government's victory much depended was against the dissolution of the Parliament. Naturally so, because with the Parliament and factional contests looming large in it, the Government would be tied to its apron strings. With this hold on the Government, what concessions are there that could not be wrung out of it for the insurgents! Moreover, the AFPFL factional strife had changed it, with the Government's dependence on it, from political out-cast into respectability, from one of nonentity in the Parliament to that of a pivotal factor in it.

In this predicament with an almost certain defeat in the Budget Session staring him in the face and the

NUF like the Old Man of the Sea on his shoulders that the politician in U Nu showed up in excelsis. He kept the NUF dangling and on tenterhook with frequent declarations that the Government was ineffectual with only a marginal majority. The dissolution of the Parliament would deprive the NUF of its newly acquired importance and, moreover, there were the plums of office; already one of their leaders, Dr. E. Maung, had become the Judicial Minister. But U Nu, at the same time, would not commit himself on the subject of the dissolution either at the Press Conferences or elsewhere. He only kept repeating that with his slim majority it would be extremely difficult to get anything done.

On the other hand, in spite of his obvious weakness, he would not dissolve the Parliament even though it would have released him from the clutches of the NUF. He kept the Parliament and also a number of ministerial posts open as tempting baits for some of the 'big fishes' on the other side. U Nu expected that some of the Swe-Nyein would defect, and there were quite a few with whom he could very well pull along because of their amenability. Swe-Nyein ranks held fast. But, the Speaker, Bohmu Aung, gave up his neutral position and sided with U Nu as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Defence. It was natural for U Nu to have expected some defections in the light of the politicians' past in the country.

Unlike facing a no-confidence motion, the Government would have to fight every inch of the ground, so to say, in a Budget Session: every allocation would have to be fought out and won and there were many, and there was also the Appropriation Bill, lastly. Defeat on any one would mean the fall of the Government. The NUF could not contemplate such a thing coming to pass. With the fall of Nu-Tin, it was more than

probable that the NUF would revert to its former political nonentity.

And, there were the spoils of office. This prospect had even begun to undermine the unity of the NUF over who and who should get what and who else, the others. In the meantime, rumours of early dissolution of Parliament and passing of the Budget by Presidential Ordinance started to gain currency. The NUF then, to cut the ground under U Nu in the matter of dissolving the Parliament, made a strange move: it proposed a *Compromise Budget* for 1958-59 which was to immunize the Government during the Budget Session. This *Compromise Budget* was to be first approved outside of the Parliament by the three factions, the Nu-Tin, the NUF and the Swe-Nyein. The NUF sounded the Swe-Nyein over it.

Swe-Nyein turned down the proposal and reaffirmed their policy to fight the Nu-Tin within the democratic arena whenever opportunity for so doing arises. This 'put the lid' on the NUF's plan, as the saying is, to batten on Nu-Tin's fortune.

Then a spate of rumours and speculations began to flood the country as to what U Nu was going to do about the Budget Session. Amidst these U Nu made his surprise announcement on July 28 that the Budget Session had been summoned for August 28; the Nationalities would meet on September 15.

Many observers were incredulous and surprised, some concluded that it was a psychological warfare launched by U Nu to bolster the morale of his followers. U Nu also meant, added other observers, to fox his opponents by this unexpected strategic move. Some surmised that U Nu had strengthened his position by secret promises of support.

The summoning of the Parliament brought up to the surface another question besides that of the Budget—the election of the new Speaker of the House to the vacancy caused by the resignation of the former Speaker, Bohmu Aung, to take up the post of Deputy Premier in Nu-Tin Cabinet. This election would be the first tussle between the two factions.

Perhaps U Nu was really confident that he would get through the Budget Session. The step might make some of the Swe-Nyein decide to toe the line and augment his majority. That would ensure the safe passage of the Bill even though there were ominous rumblings in the NUF portending a split. Ideological differences had begun to affect the discrete composition of the Front with the fall of the common foe, the AFPFL.

Amidst these speculations and uncertainties, U Nu sprung another surprise on August 19, with the Budget Sessions in the offing scheduled on August 28. He called in the Press that morning and announced that the scheduled Budget Session had been cancelled. His reason was to defer the General Elections to a later date to enable the surrendered personnel who were then coming in in considerable numbers to participate in the elections. With this, the much speculated question of whether there was going to be a Budget Session or not, got disposed of by U Nu.

BUDGET BY ORDINANCE

The dramatic cancellation of the scheduled Budget session of the Parliament, like the dramatic call for the same earlier, not only surprised all, it attracted prompt reaction from the Opposition. Swe-Nyein accused U Nu of cowardice and misuse of authority in cancelling the already called Budget session. U Nu

was blamed for 'misuse of the Parliamentary institution to suit his political expediency, setting an extremely dangerous example and destroying the Parliamentary democracy in the country'.

U Nu kept mum, and called in Swe-Nyein leaders (U Ba Swe, U Kyaw Nyein and U Tun Tin went) on August 22 to tell them that he would pass the budget by Presidential Ordinance.

Swe-Nyein leaders strongly objected to the proposed passage of Budget by Ordinance. They asked U Nu to recall budget session for normal passage of the Budget Bill, to maintain Parliamentary democracy. U Nu was however adamant. He said he had decided to pass the Budget by Ordinance and dissolve the Parliament soon after that for holding of a fresh general elections.

Section 110(1) said, "If at any time when both Chambers of Parliament are *not in session*, the President is satisfied that *circumstances exist which render it necessary for him to take immediate action*, he may promulgate such Ordinances as the circumstances appear to him to require. An Ordinance promulgated under this section shall have the same force and effect as an Act of the Parliament assented to by the President." (italics are mine)

Both in the case of promulgation of an Ordinance and the dissolution of the Parliament on the advice of a Prime Minister who has ceased to retain the majority support of the Chamber, the President has the last say. The President can exercise his powers either in favour or against the Government in these matters.

The attitude of the President towards the two rival factions was clear. He was more friendly with

the Nu-Tin leaders than with those of the Swe-Nyein faction. The President's Private Secretary told this writer at the time of the split, that Union President's preference to the Nu-Tin leaders was greatly influenced by the saying. "Love Begets Love", and he narrated series of frictions that took place between the President and the Swe-Nyein leaders when they were still in power in the undivided AFPFL. Dr. E. Maung, Judicial Minister of the Nu-Tin Cabinet was reported to have told the President during those critical days that they (Nu-Tin Government) were fortunate to have a friendly President in the time of crisis.

According to the Constitution, to pass a Presidential Ordinance, there must be an emergency rendering the immediate holding of the Parliament session impossible.

There existed no emergency to render it necessary for President to take immediate action, and convening of the Parliament session was not impossible, it has even been called, and CANCELLED deliberately to resort to passage of the Budget by an Ordinance.

The proposed dissolution of the Parliament under Section 57 of the Constitution in the event of U Nu failing to get the majority in the Parliament, cancellation of the scheduled Budget session, and the proposed passing of the Budget by a Presidential Ordinance were perhaps the gravest blunders Nu-Tin had had to resort to for political survival.

On August 27, some 40 members of Parliament from the Swe-Nyein faction addressed a memorandum to Prime Minister U Nu asking him to recall the Budget Session of the Parliament. Referring to Section 125 (1) of the Constitution, the Swe-Nyein MPs pointed out that presentation of the Budget to the Parliament was compulsory and that cancellation of the Budget Session

for passage of the Budget through the Ordinance would amount to violating the Constitution and destroying the Parliamentary democracy. U Nu however did not bother.

On September 10, Dr. E Maung, Judicial Minister, came out with another startling interpretation of the Union Constitution. He was talking to the Press in connection with the allegations that presentation of Budget to the Parliament was compulsory under Section 125.

Referring to Section 86(2) of the Constitution Dr. E Maung stated that presentation of the Budget to the Parliament was not only non-compulsory, it was not in accordance with the Constitutional provisions to pass a budget before the budget year commences. The Government had erred in the last 10 years in passing the Budget in September, instead of passing it within the financial year commencing October 1, Dr. E Maung stated. He based his argument on Section 86(2), which says,

"Save in so far as may be provided by specific enactment in each case, the legislation required to give effect to the financial resolutions of each year shall be enacted within that year."

According to Dr. E Maung's interpretation, passing of the Budget during the usual Budget Session in August-September was an illegality and that Budget must be passed only within the financial year Oct. 1 to September 30, not later nor earlier. But it was not mentioned clearly if the Parliament will accept a Government which spent the people's money as it wished and asked for approval of the House only about the expiry of the financial year when no objection would be of any use. Though it was not the same Constitution, the Budget in pre-war years were also passed in February-March session of the Parlia-

ment for the financial year commencing April 1, every year.

On September 22, just on the eve of another crisis, the Nu-Tin Government decided to dissolve the Parliament on September 29, pass the Budget by Ordinance on September 30, and hold fresh elections in November. The Parliament was to be dissolved to justify the condition that no session of Parliament existed for normal passage of the Budget Bill, and to render it necessary for President to take immediate action and promulgate the Budget Ordinance.

But the proposed dissolution of Parliament never took place, neither the proposed fresh general elections were held in November, because four days later U Nu realised that conditions in the districts did not guarantee the holding of a free and fair election and decided to hand over the administration to the Caretaker Government to lead which he proposed General Ne Win.

POLITICAL PERSECUTIONS

POLITICAL persecution is never good. It is always an endless affair. If the faction in power started the 'game', reprisal will always follow when the 'persecuted' returns to power. U Nu foresaw this danger and took the trouble of including this point—avoidance of discrimination and persecution—in his 7-point formula for a peaceful separation at the time of AFPFL split in April. But even international agreements were made and broken for political convenience; Burmese leaders also could not resist this dirty element of politics.

Soon after the formal installation of the Nu-Tin Government, following the Parliamentary victory on June 9, Nu-Tin faction started the ball rolling. Swe-Nyein Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Private

Secretaries were ordered to vacate their official residences within a short notice, while sufficient time had to be given even to Government servants in similar circumstances. Telephones were removed from many of the Swe-Nyein homes. It looked so petty and childish, like children who, on a slight squabble, asked back the toy given away earlier. In politics people can grow younger.

Politicians earlier placed on Government Boards, Councils and Committees as political rewards during the undivided AFPFL regime, were screened, and Swe-Nyein sympathisers among them were removed to be replaced by the Nu-Tin politicians.

Information Minister ordered all Government libraries throughout the country to stop subscribing to the *Mandaing Daily* (Vernacular Morninger) because that Paper, one time official organ of the AFPFL, happened to be under the control of Swe-Nyein leaders at the time of the split. When the AFPFL was one, the Paper enjoyed the official patronage. It was the Bible for all organisations, both political and official. After the split, it became 'banned' literature.

Persecutions were complained of in the States also where State leaders were divided into two factions, Swe-Nyein and the Nu-Tin, the adherents of the latter faction being in power. In the States where opposition (Swe-Nyein) had the majority in the State Councils, which appoint the State Government Ministers, Nu-Tin Heads of States removed portfolios from the Swe-Nyein State Government Ministers. In the Kachin State not only all the three Swe-Nyein supporting Ministers were deprived of their portfolios, the State Government Secretary, a senior Civil Service man was removed from his position for having provided an official transport to a State Minister, who had been deprived of his portfolio by the Nu-Tin Head of State.

Persecution was not confined to the politicians alone. It was liberally applied to all walks of life, including the state officers and staff. Officers suspected of Swe-Nyein sympathy were either transferred to a remote place, removed from important position to a less important one, or even suspended from work without sufficient grounds.

The most dangerous discrimination and persecution were done among the labour unions with disastrous results, leading to bloodshed and deaths even.

After the split, the Trade Union Congress (Burma), of which U Ba Swe was the President, remained with the Swe-Nyein faction; while the All-Burma Peasants Organisation with Thakin Tin as its President was Nu-Tin's.

The Nu-Tin stalwarts, Bo Min Gaung and U Thwin, both former EC Members of the TUC(B), immediately set up a rival labour organisation under the name, Union Labour Organisation (ULO), and tried to undermine the TUC(B) strength by favouring the ULO with official patronage. Two major organisations, the dock workers and the Railway workers, became the main victims of this tug-of-war for labour following. Incidentally, Bo Min Gaung, President of the ULO, was also the Home and Transport Minister.

TROUBLE AT RAILYARD AND WATER-FRONT

THE Rangoon Port Workers Cooperative Society (Union), the strongest labour organisation at the wharves, has been affiliated to the TUC(B), the labour arm of the undivided AFPFL; and the RPWCS was given the monopoly by the AFPFL Government as

early as 1951 to undertake the handling business of rice and rice products of the SAMB, the sole exporter of Burma rice. This labour organisation, affiliated to the TUC(B) became the Swe-Nyein union after the split.

The ULO, led by Transport Minister Bo Min Gaung, organised a rival foreshore labour union with some splinter members of the RPWCS and many outsiders. On August 10, the ULO foreshore Union demanded monopoly in handling business at Botataung jetty where internal riverine transportation was heaviest.

On August 25, the ULO foreshore Union 'boycotted' the SAMB rice loading being undertaken by the rival RPWCS, and picketted the work of the RPWCS, who were still the official agents of the SAMB for handling of SAMB rice and rice products.

On August 28, the Government withdrew the handling agency from the RPWCS, and gave away the same job to the newcomer the, ULO. The ULO therefore became the official handling agents of the SAMB, and the RPWCS became the opposition union. The role of RPWCS changed from that of the 'picketted' to the 'picketter', and they picketted the work of the ULO union.

Serious clashes broke out between the rival unions at the water-front necessitating posting of heavy armed guards at the wharves, and the SAMB rice loading for shipment abroad was greatly affected.

Similar trouble broke out at the Insein Railway where 16 workers, including Union leaders were suspended from work for demonstrating against the authorities. Originally, the All-Burma Railways Workers Federation, of which Insein Railway Union

was a member, was affiliated to the TUC(B). But the Federation later declared its allegiance to the ULO led by the Minister in charge of the Railways. Transport Minister Bo Min Gaung, as leader of the ULO, was not quite sure of the loyalty of the Railway Federation which declared support for his organization. In his attempt to reorganise the Railway Union at the Insein Railyard, with a view to making the Railway Unions really ULO adherents, clashes broke out between the organising officials and the workers. Sixteen workers who staged a demonstration were suspended from work and many of them were later dismissed from their jobs.

Suspension of workers, including the Union leaders increased the tempo of labour unrest, and the President of ULO, in his capacity as Home Minister took a drastic step to still the unrest. He arrested U Kyaw Sein, President of Insein Union and Vice-President of the All-Burma Railway Workers Federation. Instead of calming the situation, the arrest stirred up a hornet's nest.

Meanwhile clashes at the water-front grew worse culminating into bloodshed and loss of lives, and the situation was barely under control. The labour unrest of the Railways workers Federation, the largest Union, which had been steaming up was at the verge of explosion.

When U Nu returned from the Upper Burma organisational tour on Sept 22, he was very unhappy about the labour situation arising out of factional discrimination and ordered the release of Railways Workers Federation leader U Kyaw Sein on Sept 25, and the handling agency of the SAMB was returned to the RPWCS the same day. U Nu tried his best to undo the wrongs done by his colleagues.

SPLIT & COMMUNIST MENACE

WHEN the ruling party broke up miserably, the Communists were happy. It was a victory for the Communists. Both the AFPFL and the Army have been warding off Communism, fighting the Communist insurgents tooth and nail. Despite official banning of the Communist Party, Communists still exist above ground under various guises. Their organisations operate under various names, and the Communist insurrection still remained in smaller bands. The joint efforts earlier both politically and militarily succeeded in curbing the spread of Communist expansion, and also in reducing them from a formidable rebel organisation to disintegrated bands of marauding bandits. In fact the rebel forces including the Communists have been diminishing swiftly with mass surrenders and the internal peace seemed to be within sight.

At this moment, the main anti-Communist front—AFPFL—broke up into two hostile camps. The AFPFL split was the biggest victory for the Communists since their insurrection 11 years ago. It was an automatic victory without bloodshed, and the split paved the way for the Communist ascension to power.

Both the AFPFL politicians and the Army hate Communism. The only difference between the politicians and the Army in their attitude towards Communism and Communists is, the politicians, at least some, can co-exist with the Communists for their political expediency even if such an unholy alliance would eventually mean their own destruction but the soldiers cannot, rightly or wrongly, associate with their sworn enemy. They know that once the Communists come into power, they will be the first victims, and the Army will go to pieces. Their fear of Communists was more of physical necessity than of ideology. It

was for their survival; they were afraid of Communist retaliation and subsequent disintegration of the Armed forces.

As soon as the split occurred, the Army brass met in Rangoon to discuss the situation and possible Communist menace. They however thought then that the situation, though grave, was not so serious as to open up the way for the Communist, to come into power. The NUF was still an onlooker, and did not yet declare its support for any of the factions.

On May 10 the NUF with its 45 votes in the 47-member Chamber of Deputies declared its support for Nu-Tin faction. The NUF stated that Swe-Nyein were the comprador bourgeois, who exist to serve the cause of the capitulo-imperialists. The Nu-Tin were the nationalist bourgeois and therefore the lesser evils. They decided to support Nu-Tin just because they wanted to prevent staunch anti-Communist Swe-Nyein group from coming into power. At the same time they did not have a good opinion of the Nu-Tin. One of their leaders then told this writer that both were evils and must be eliminated in due course.

The NUF support to Nu-Tin faction and the subsequent concessions to the Communists by Nu-Tin government greatly alarmed the Army. They became more anxious about the possible Communist menace.

ARMY & POLITICS

AS in any country with a weak Government and a strong Army, politicians always look upon the Army as a potential force either as a friend or a foe. If a political faction feels that it has failed to win over the sympathy of the Army it naturally suspects the Army to be in favour of the other faction.

In Burma individual personality plays an immense role in shaping the destiny of the nation. After long years of association with the same Prime Minister and the same Defence Minister, the leaders of the armed forces developed considerable attachment to U Nu and U Ba Swe, and less to U Kyaw Nyein and other AFPFL leaders who have had fewer relations with them.

It appeared that until the time of the political split, the Army had faith and respect for U Nu, and the Army leaders definitely thought that U Nu was a greater man than Ba Swe. But their respect for U Nu gradually waned with the development of factional wars, where U Nu's side resorted to persecutions, infringement of constitutional provisions, and extension of excessive concessions to the Communists.

Incidentally, there were also more senior Army officers who were related to leaders of Swe-Nyein faction, than those related to the Nu-Tins. This blood relationship however did not make the Army pro-Swe-Nyein and anti-Nu-Tin. They were quite used to fighting their own kith and kin during the insurrections when brothers fight against each other as Army and rebels.

On June 23, at the Mingaladon CO's Conference held in the midst of the political crisis, C-in-C General Ne Win reaffirmed the neutral role of the Armed Forces which has complete faith in democracy and which is dedicated to stand by the Constitution. He pointed out that despite sentiments and attachments developed during the years of national struggle when the politicians and the Army leaders were one, friendship and sentiments could not sway the armed forces away from their duties and the mission.

SUSPICIONS

MUTUAL suspicion, which gradually grew with time, between the Army and the Party in power (Nu-Tin), was the main cause of friction between the two, leading to preparations by both sides. The situation then resembled the international politics where world powers justify their armaments as precautionary measures for defence.

Army suspicion of Nu-Tin grew with the support of the crypto-Communist NUF to the latter in the Parliament, and subsequent concessions extended by the Nu-Tin Government to please the Communist ally.

Since the division in the Parliament, the NUF had been constantly exerting pressure on the Government to hold a peace parley with the Communist rebels for early realisation of peace. Thakin Than Tun also sent feelers demanding face to face negotiations for "amicable settlement" of internal peace.

PEACE AT ANY PRICE

U NU realised that with a slim majority of eight votes he could not do anything worthwhile as a government, especially when he had always to rely on the support of the NUF. U Nu wanted to hold a fresh election by which he was convinced his party would be returned with a greater majority. Peace was necessary, not only for the possible holding of a free and fair election, but also for his election campaign. U Nu wanted to be the 'Peace Maker', and he was determined to bring peace at any price. He was engrossed in the pursuit of peace, and would not bother about the price. People wanted peace. Whoever could bring peace would be worshipped as the national hero, and the "Bringer of Peace". U Nu would not bother about the

price of peace, and people would not bother what the consequences would be.

On June 24, U Nu announced his decision to enact an Indemnity Act which would provide total amnesty, and also the holding of a National Convention where all parties including the Opposition and even the Communists were to sign the Charter of Democracy. He stated that he would wait for the Commies to come in for participation in the National Convention.

Everything sounded big and impressive — total Amnesty, National Convention, and the Charter of Democracy—.

Even the NUF were impressed. They at once invited their jungle comrades to return to the legal fold saying that prevailing conditions were conducive to transformation of the 'armed struggle' to the 'mass struggle'.

On August 1, Nu-Tin Government announced the Indemnity Order, indemnifying all crimes committed in course of insurrection up to the mid-night of July 31, 1958.

The Government also announced the legalisation of the illegal parties on return to the legal fold.

But the Communist in the jungle were cleverer. The holding of a fresh general election was imminent. The Government was not strong. If they returned to the legal fold and contested in the general elections to be held within a few months, the people would still remember them as "blasters of bridges," "collectors of taxes" in the villages. They were prepared to come back as heroes of peace, and wanted some time to

reorganise for the election, But not that early. They therefore changed their plan.

Though they had earlier climbed down from the demand for a face to face negotiation with the Government to, lately, face to face negotiation with the Thakin Kodaw Hmaing's Peace Committee, the Communists now demanded not only the parley with the Government, but wanted their rebel bands to be absorbed in the Government's Armed Forces.

Communists knew for certain that no Government with any self-respect would concede to these demands, and insistence on such a ground would certainly mean a break down in the talks or proposals. They did it purposely because they realised that it would be more advantageous for them to remain behind in the jungle to help their above ground proteges in the election. They were certain that the Communist group in the next Parliament would be the deciding force for the formation of the Government. When their proteges came into power or could pull strings in the Government they could then come in honourably, and there would be a 'hero's welcome' for them. It would not matter much to stay in the jungle for one more year after getting used to it for the last eleven.

WRONG STEP

SUSPICION was not one-sided. While the armed forces leaders suspected Nu-Tin of conceding too much to the rebels, paving the way for Communists to come into power, the Nu-Tin leaders thought the armed forces leaders were pro Swe-Nyein and that they would help the Swe-Nyein faction in the forthcoming elections. There have been a few instances of

individual Army Officers helping the Swe-Nyein organization in the districts.

Instead of taking action against those few officers who took sides in factional war, thereby alienate these erring officers from politics, Nu-Tin leaders took an uncalled for step. They planned to discredit the entire Army, breed followers in it, weaken its unity and command, and finally subjugate the Army to the command of the politicians !

The armed forces are subordinate to the Government and a strong Government [always controlled the armed forces ably and efficiently. Perhaps, Nu-Tin judged at the time that it was easier to weaken the strong Army than to strengthen their weak Government.

Soon after their formal ascension to power on June 9, Nu-Tin made Bohmu Aung, the Speaker of the House of Deputies, the Defence Minister. Bohmu Aung, like Bo Min Gaung and General Ne Win, was a member of the Thirty Comrades who formed the nucleus of the Burmese armed forces to fight the British. Thus, Nu-Tin thought Bohmu Aung would be able to wield considerable influence over the armed forces personnel. But, Bohmu Aung had been away from active service since the war and his influence was more felt in the Parliament than in the military field.

Other armed forces, the Police, the UMP, and even the *Pyusawhtis* (the Village Guards) are under the Home Ministry. Only the Army, Navy and the Air Force are under the Ministry of Defence. Another class of people which Nu-Tin suspected of Swe-Nyein bias was the Civil Servants.

Thus, Nu-Tin suspicion was against all important organizations in the Government: the Army, Navy, Air Force, UMP, Police, Civil Servants, and even the

Pyusawhtis which were then in process of being transformed into Special Police Reserves. The Nu-Tin Government could not possibly suspend all these forces on suspicion of Swe-Nyein bias. So it tried to remove the suspected Swe-Nyein sympathisers from important positions and replace them with their trusted personnel in the UMP, the Police and the Civil Service; and it also tried to discredit the Army, Navy and the Air Force before they too could be tackled likewise.

The Nu-Tin Government took its steps cautiously and gradually. It tackled the Civil Servants and the Police first. Suspected Swe-Nyein sympathisers were transferred or replaced with those who merited its trust. The Police and the Civil Servants obeyed. There was no noticeable reaction adverse to the Government's action and the Nu-Tin were quite happy over their work. They tried similar method with the UMP. They intended to reshuffle down to the rank of non-Gazetted grades in the UMP and began with the top. There was no serious reaction. Nu-Tin leaders became more confident of their plan and highly pleased with themselves for the success of their plan.

The next was to be the Army. Nu-Tin knew it would not be as easy to apply the same tactics to the Army. It must first be disgraced and 'exposed' of its involvement in factional politics. This was done insiduously. Starting with whispering campaign they then attacked the Army through their factional press and through pro-Communist political organizations and only later, when they deemed safe enough, they tackled the matter themselves openly.

THE FLARE - UP

ON August 31, 1958, the All-Burma Nu-Tin AFPFL convention was held in the Prime Minister's compound. On the second day of the conference on September 1, the district delegates reported tales of Civil and Military Officers acting biasly for the Opposition Swe-Nyein faction and demanded the transfer of Army Officers naming many. The delegate from Hanthawaddy declared the Army as Public Enemy Number One, followed by Swe-Nyein inclined Civil Servants. The insurgents who had been up in arms against the Government for the last ten years ranked only a poor third in number as Public Enemy. The delegates even challenged U Nu's ability to tackle the 'menacing' situation.

The weak Government and their unscrupulous politicians became bold. They have handled the Police, the Civil Servants and the UMPs 'successfully'. Now they have begun tackling the Army.

This public denunciation of the Army as Number One Enemy of the people, in whose defence the Army sacrificed life and limb, hurt the Army leaders at the Headquarters and more bitterly in the districts who were grappling with the insurgents.

Of the three day session, two days were devoted to 'reports' from the district delegates — flagrantly running down the Army. U Nu spoke at the closing session on September 2, accusing the Swe-Nyein faction of being responsible for all the sins of the AFPFL.

REACTION

ON September 3, some Army leaders went to U Nu and complained to him of the gross allegations made by his faction against the Army running its reputation down and thus aggravating the relations between the Army and the politicians especially in the districts. They asked the Government's permission for the defamed army officers to take legal action against their defamers in individual capacity. U Nu denied any knowledge of allegations spoken of. He said he came to know of it only that day when some friends pointed out the news reports concerned. He said he was displeased over the matter. He neither knew nor heard any abuse or allegations against the Army blared through the loud-speakers in his compound, about 50 yards from his room. He, however, promised the Army leaders that he would undo the wrongs his faction had done.

At this meeting where the Army leaders showed signs of mistrust in his administration, U Nu made a big offer. He proposed formation of a 6-man Inner Circle with three Army Bosses and three from his faction to take a joint hand at the helm of the State. It was an astounding offer—an unofficial Coalition Government with the Army! But the Army leaders declined the offer on the spot and left him.

The following day, before he left on his Upper Burma organizational tour, U Nu left a tape recorded speech to be broadcast from the BBS the same evening. U Nu in his speech stated that the allegations against the Army by the Nu-Tin Convention had been made owing to the ignorance of the Nu-Tin leaders of the role of the Army. He said in his broadcast speech that the Army was the saviour of the country: it saved the country from the clutches of the insurgents when

it was only two-finger breadth from the edge of the abyss and it fought and drove out the Chiang Kai-Shek intruders; that the Army was a benefactor of the people and his AFPFL must defend the honour and prestige of the Army which had excelled itself in courage, perseverance and sacrifice, U Nu said. Perhaps, U Nu thought this 'honey' would be enough recompense for the damage done to the Army. But the Nu-Tin action had stirred up a hornet's nest making more District Army Officers become increasingly suspicious of Nu-Tin Government's demarche in collaborating with the NUF, predominant with crypto-Communists. The relations between the Army, and the Nu-Tin politicians, especially in the districts, turned from bad to worse.

MOVES AND COUNTER-MOVES

NU-Tin leaders realized that discrediting the Army through propaganda alone was not enough to subjugate it to their control. So, they tried their best to breed followers among the Army leaders. It appeared that except for a few junior officers, all the senior staff were immovable from their neutral attitude. Feelers were also made in the Navy and the Air Force but were of no avail.

Meanwhile, arrangements were made "unofficially" to collect two and a half battalions of trusted UMP units at Mandalay and sneak them into Rangoon by batches to complete the operation by the first week of October at the latest.

The Prime Minister himself was reported to have proposed for the transfer of a Minority UMP Battalion to Rangoon for "security" reasons. The proposal was opposed by the Army on grounds of tactical and operational considerations.

But many hand-picked *Pyusawhtis* of Nu-Tin leaders had already been brought in into Rangoon to meet any emergency. Some of the trusted Forest Guards, who were under Agriculture Minister Thakin Kyaw Tun, were alerted. The Rehabilitation Brigade and the PCPs were also prepared for any emergency.

According to the Nu-Tin plan, all these armed forces—two and a half battalions of UMPs, handpicked *Pyusawhtis* and some Forest Guards—they had brought in into Rangoon were to be at the ready. The Parliament was to be dissolved at the end of September and the Budget passed by Presidential Ordinance the following day. Then the Government would reshuffle the Army Command. Important leaders were to be sent out to the districts dislodging them from their commands. Some even said the plan included assassination of the more hard-headed among the Army leaders and many political rivals.

In case of any 'revolt' or 'resistance' by the Army to the Nu-Tin action, the armed forces already collected by them in Rangoon would be used for suppressing the resistance. Nu-Tin also expected defections from the Army when the actual showdown came.

The Army Intelligence was aware of these plans; some Army Officers themselves, who Nu-Tin thought to be their men, revealed the arrangements and plan of the Nu-Tin faction to the Army Command.

The Army then made counter-moves in precautionary measures preparing itself for the worst. All the forces were alerted. Northern Command was reinforced to enable it to look after the border should outside trouble crop up with the internal flare-up. Special precautions were taken in districts reputed to be strong-holds of the Nu-Tin leaders.

Meanwhile UMP movements were detected. Many units moved out of their positions without the knowledge of the Area Commanders, who were Army Colonels and Brigadiers. In many places the vacuums created by the secret withdrawals of UMPs attracted insurgents to raid the areas. The Army came to know of the secret UMP movements partly through these insurgent raids.

The Inspector-General of Police who was in charge of the UMPs was also not aware of these 'unofficial' movements of the UMPs, because these movements were made under the verbal orders of an higher authority.

THE FINAL MOVE AND COUNTER-CHECK

BY September 22, the Army clamped down security measures, preventing all movement of armed forces personnel. Road-blocks were put up on strategic roads leading to the City. Several units of UMPs were disarmed at the Htaukkyant Gate, 20 miles of Rangoon, and turned back to their former stations because they could not produce any movement order.

An exception was a Unit from Taungdwingyi which came down armed with a movement order detailing it on patrol duty. Army Security, however, thought the Taungdwingyi UMP jurisdiction should not be so wide as to include in it the City of Rangoon, 280 miles away, and so deprived the Unit of its arms and movement order after issuing it with a fresh movement order to right-about turn for Taungdwingyi.

But not less than five hundred UMP personnel had got into Rangoon already by then. They sneaked, in earlier by rail and by bus in mufti. They needed not to bring their arms. Sufficient quantity of arms could be

drawn from the UMP Armoury in Rangoon. UMP was directly under the Home Minister.

Some 42 wireless sets had earlier been unofficially distributed to various 'stations' for use when the time comes. And, there were still large forces of well-armed *Pyusawhtis* in the Nu-Tin strong-holds.

There were about 5000 in Tharrawaddy, 3000 in Insein and 2500 in Prome districts which Nu-Tin earmarked as their potentials in case additional men and arms were needed.

By the morning of September 23, all strategic positions in Rangoon and Insein areas were under close guard of the Army Security Units. All Police and UMP Armouries in the town were under guard by the Army; Navy looked after the security along the River, while the Airport was taken charge of by the Air Force. All road junctions and terminals were sealed off and traffic strictly searched. The Helicopter bought from Japan by Sao Wunna was removed from the UBA hangar to the BAF's. Force 106 entered Insein, one of the biggest Nu-Tin strong-holds, and took charge of its security. Night checks were stringently imposed searching everyone thoroughly.

The atmosphere was very tense and everything was cloaked with mystery. Official reason was for security. But no one knew exactly against what these security measures were being taken. The air was filled with rumours all making for uneasy mind.

In fact the situation became critical with the mounting security measures taken by both the Army and the Nu-Tin. The party in power had by that time 400 armed men encamped in the Windermere Ministerial compound. The men consisted of UMPs, few Forest Guards and men of the Kayah UMP in addition to a number of handpicked *Pyusawhtis* brought specially from the districts.

U NU RETURNS

U Nu arrived back from his Upper Burma tour amidst this explosive situation. His boat coming up the Twante Canal on September 22 was met by a heavy Naval escort. Arriving in Rangoon at about 2 p.m. on that day, he held a Cabinet meeting that very afternoon, a few hours later. U Nu's intention had been to observe the eight precepts and go into religious meditation for some time on his return. And, it was rumoured that Nu-Tin leaders had planned to send U Nu away should an open clash arise between them and the Army. For this purpose, a UBA plane was kept at stand-by to fly U Nu across the Bay to India.

A COUP ?

AT that meeting of the Cabinet Bo Min Gaung and Bohmu Aung told U Nu that the Army was staging a *coup d'etat* that night. Worried, U Nu sent the two Ministers to see General Ne Win but the General could not be contacted 'being away at a party'.

The next day the Ministers saw General Ne Win who told them that he was not aware of any of such plan, and promised them that he would send some one to U Nu to explain the situation.

The same evening Colonel Maung Maung went and saw U Nu and explained the situation. He told U Nu that there had been serious intrigues and as the result, the Colonel said, strong suspicion and fear had arisen between the Army and the party in power. The Colonel also told U Nu that his (Nu's) leaders were planning to assassinate the Army leaders. Pointing out that the situation was almost out of control, Colonel Maung Maung said the Army for its part was prepared to defend themselves against the Nu-Tin attack and the

subsequent Communist interference. The Colonel's frank report of the situation made U Nu more worried.

On the following day, September 24, both Colonel Aung Gyi (who returned from a tour that very day) and Colonel Maung Maung again reported to U Nu of the near-exploding situation and promised to U Nu that they would try their best to control it. But they pointed out to U Nu that though they would not definitely strike first they would not tolerate any blow at them.

Bewildered, U Nu asked the Colonels to take over the administration, and proclaim martial law. But the Colonels told him that they were not after a military coup d'état, and that they were not in favour of proclaiming martial law.

U Nu then asked the two Colonels to let him know if the situation were to get out of hand and on his part he promised to 'discuss' the matter with his men.

Colonels were also reported to have told the Prime Minister that armed forces personnel, who are charged to defend the Union and its Constitution, were not at all happy about the flagrant violation of the Constitution by the Party in power to suit its political ends. They were reported to have suggested to U Nu that calling of the Parliament session for normal passage of the Budget Bill might serve as a measure to ease the political tension in addition to their military efforts to prevent any outbreak of violence.

This was perhaps the most critical period in U Nu's life. On his decision hinged the fate of the country. He realized only too well that the proposed General Elections could not possibly be held in November under the

circumstances obtaining. He also realized that if the situation were allowed to deteriorate further, disastrous consequences would ensue with blood flowing in streams. He therefore decided to hand over the administration to General Ne Win to head a Caretaker Government which would be charged with the tasks of restoring law and order and holding a free and fair elections.

On September 25 U Nu had heated discussions with his stalwarts. He pointed out to them the folly and futility of matching their arms strength with that of the Army's. Moreover, it would be a sure political suicide. The method he now proposed would leave them a good chance of staging a come-back when the situation subsided. His younger colleagues were not easily convinced but they finally agreed to acquiesce in his plan. One of these younger colleagues told later to a friend of his that they had sacrificed their opportunity for the sake of the people and that they were in a position to win through!

THE TWO LETTERS

Having prevailed upon his colleagues to come round to his view point, U Nu invited the Army leaders to come to his residence on September 26 morning at 10 o'clock for the signing of the formal exchange of letters between him and General Ne Win transferring the administration of the country to the latter.

U Nu drafted both the letters, his one and General Ne Win's reply !

When on the morning of September 26 Brigadier Tin Pe, Colonel Aung Gyi and Colonel Maung Maung arrived at his place in answer to his invitation, U Nu showed them his drafts. With a few amendments made to it, the letter to be signed by General Ne Win was taken to the General for signature.

The following are the two letters:

**PRIME MINISTER OF THE
UNION OF BURMA**

Dated the 26th September 1958

Dear General Ne Win,

(1) The Central Committee of the CLEAN AFPFL particularly wishes you to form a new government with you yourself as the Prime Minister, and to make necessary arrangements for holding a just and fair General Election before the end of April 1959.



(2) If you can accept the Prime Ministership in accordance with this wish, I would like to make the following arrangements.

- (a) I shall advise the President of the Union, in accordance with Section 57 of the Constitution, to summon the Chamber of Deputies and the Chamber of Nationalities on Tuesday the 28th of October 1958.
- (b) I will resign from the Prime Ministership on the day of the first sitting of the Chamber of Deputies.

(c) After thus resigning from the Prime Ministership, I will propose that you, General Ne Win, be elected by the Chamber of Deputies as Prime Minister.

(3) It will not be necessary to include members of the CLEAN AFPFL in the Government formed by you.

(4) To ensure that the General Election held by you will be a free, just and fair General Election, it is requested that particular care be exercised to prevent government servants and armed forces encroaching or interfering in the political field, apart from the due discharge of their duties.

(5) I believe that the armed forces are generally well disciplined forces. But, during my recent tour of the country, I received in quite a number of places very sad complaints of acts of oppression, atrocious cruelty and murder, committed by some members of armed forces. These complaints were made to me by the victims themselves, who showed me their wounds, and stated their sufferings with tears in their eyes. I would request the Government formed by you to give prior and particular attention to the suppression of such wrongful acts of violence.

(6) It is also requested that prior and particular attention be given by the government formed by you to the suppression of such crimes as rape, robbery, dacoity, kidnapping, and murder.

(7) As you yourself are well aware that all the citizens of the Union are yearning for internal peace, with as much ardent longing as human beings in the

beginning of the world prayed for the sun and the moon, I need not enlarge on this point. Therefore I would particularly like to request the government formed by you to secure to the fullest extent this glorious prize of internal peace.

(8) In foreign relations also, I would like to urge the government formed by you to continue and maintain the policy of strict and straight-forward neutrality.

May you be endowed with physical and mental well-being.

(Sd). U NU

Prime Minister

* * * *

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
(LAND) FORCES

Dated the 26th September, 1958.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

(1) I feel hesitant in undertaking such a great responsibility as requested. However, since I have a high



regard for your sincere wishes, I shall put forth my utmost endeavour in undertaking the task of guiding the country, if you think it necessary and essential for me to do so. As, however, I have had no experience in carrying out the great task of administering the country, as I had never had any intention of doing so, and as I had never entertained any idea that I would have to do so, I believe that any short-comings on my part in sincerely dis-

charging this great task would be viewed with indulgence, and I would like to ask for such indulgence.

(2) I give my promise that, if the Chamber of Deputies elect me as Prime Minister, I would endeavour to the fullest of my ability to make all necessary arrangements for holding a free and fair General Election before the end of April 1959.

(3) I give my promise that, if I am to form the government, I will not include in it any representatives from the political organisations in the main part of the country, apart from suitable representatives from the States and the Special Chin Division.

(4) You are already aware that I myself abhor encroachment and interference in the political field by government servants and armed forces. Therefore, I give my promise that I will keep careful watch and ward against such encroachment and interference.

(5) As I myself have often learnt of wrongful acts of violence on the part of some members of the armed forces, I have been made very unhappy. Therefore, I give my promise that prior and particular attention will be given to the suppression of such misdeeds.

(6) I give my promise that priority will be given to the task of suppressing crimes as far as possible.

(7) I am firmly convinced that the stability, progress and prosperity of the Union is greatly dependent on the existence of internal peace. Therefore, I give my promise that I will put forth my utmost endeavour to secure internal peace.

(8) As the policy of strict and straight forward neutrality in foreign relations is a policy which can serve the interests of our Union of Burma as well as

those of world peace, I give my promise that the government which I am to lead will never and by no means deviate from such a policy of neutrality.

(Sd.) General Ne Win

* * * *

In the evening (Sept. 26) U Nu made public his arrangement to transfer the administration to a Caretaker government to be headed by General Ne Win who would be constitutionally installed as PM by the Parliament on October 28. The Caretaker Government would take on the tasks of restoring law and order and holding a free and fair elections within the six-month period of its life.

HOW CAME THE CHANGEOVER

There were rumours at the time that the changeover was effected by what was really a coup d'etat and that U Nu's decision was forced on him at the point of the gun. But the real thing was not so dramatic or exciting as all that the rumours made it out to be. Neither did U Nu hand over the administration willingly out of his 'loathing' for power, nor was he made to do it at the point of the Army gun. The real cause that led U Nu to decide what he did was simple and prosaic. It was the prevailing circumstances of the moment which led U Nu to decide to step down in favour of a third party, but not for the rival faction. Causes leading to creation of this tense and explosive situation have been mentioned earlier. His decision was the outcome of a sane and sober thinking. His wise and correct appraisal of the circumstances obtaining in the country constrained him to make the decision he did.

Had personal vanity warped his judgement as it did during the time of the AFPFL crisis, a dark chapter in the history of the country would have been written. As it was, none could have made a wiser decision.

He drafted both the letters making the historic changeover. He, statesman-like, included in the letters the tasks of the Caretaker Government.

U Nu had made many mistakes in his time through impetuosity and unrestrained exercise of power. His reputation plumbed the depths during the period of the AFPFL crisis. But his inspired decision at this vital moment retrieved the lost ground his reputation had suffered then.

The Changeover was not a *coup d'etat* nor had the Army any plan or desire to stage one. The Army was undoubtedly ready and fully prepared to strike back if it was struck. The Army did not even have any plan as to what it would do after the battle is won, in case they were struck and they had to strike back.

The Nu-Tin faction planned to subjugate the Army which they thought would stand in their way; and the Army prepared to defend against Nu-Tin action which, if unchecked, would not only cause disintegration of the armed forces, but it would consequently lead to ascension of Communists to power to turn the country into an Eastern Satellite. The situation was serious and explosive. Any mishandling of the delicate situation would only end disastrously. It was U Nu's wise and timely decision which cut the burning fuse before it reached the bomb.

People may wonder whether U Nu was not aware of all these moves by his faction and why he did not

stop it at the embryo stage instead of waiting to abort it at the full term?

In the writer's opinion, U Nu was not entirely ignorant of such preparations, but neither did he seem to know the plan in detail nor did he bother to know it and weigh the possible consequences of such a plan. U Nu had even denied any knowledge of public condemnation of the Army blared through the loud speakers about 50 yards from his room by the Nu-Tin Convention held in his compound.

The past incidents indicated that U Nu wanted to be the cleanest and the purest of all politicians, and he would not bother if his colleagues were just the opposite.

U Nu made the gravest mistake in his political career when he decided to take sides in the AFPFL split and assume factional leadership. The political trend in the country might have been different if U Nu had had enough self-confidence and expelled the warring leaders—Thakin Tin and U Kyaw Nyein from the AFPFL. In such an event U Ba Swe's attitude might be different and he might have supported U Nu's move to clean up the League.

His decision now to make over the administration to General Ne Win at the most critical juncture had not only saved his faction but also the country from a blood bath and unimaginable consequences.

The emergency session of the Chamber of Deputies was called to meet on October 28, when Prime Minister U Nu resigned from Premiership, and proposed General Ne Win as new Prime Minister to lead a Caretaker Government. The House unanimously elected the General as new Prime Minister and General Ne Win immediately formed his non-Parliamentarian Cabinet of 14 members including five (MP) Ministers representing the States.

For the first time in the history of Burma, a non-Parliamentarian Prime Minister was elected to lead a Caretaker Government; and this unusual incident was the direct result of the SPLIT in the ruling party—AFPFL— leaders of which, after long years of power intoxication, found it necessary to break up the League and divide it into two hostile camps.

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