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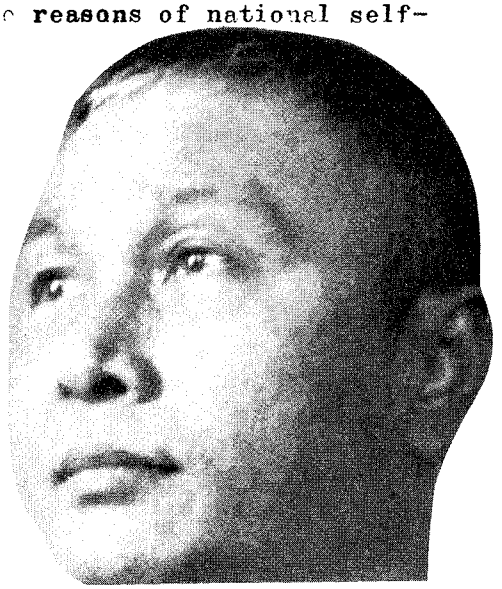
WWU - 8
Neutralism and U Nu

80-A Inya Road,
Rangoon, Burma.
January 31, 1959.

Mr. Walter S. Rogers.
Institute of Current World Affairs.
366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

About a week before I left Washington last Thanksgiving Day, I had a talk with Walter Robertson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Far East and Southeast Asia Affairs. I thought it might be a good idea to see what Robertson, generally acknowledged to be the most conservative member of the Department, had to say about neutralism and non-alignment before I set off to hear how neutral nations explained themselves. Well, I just about bounced onto the thick State Department carpet when Robertson began right off with something like this: If I were U Nu today I'd be a neutral too. Five years ago, I disagreed with him greatly. He equated Russia's territorial ambitions with our own objectives and thought he would take what he could from each. Now I am convinced that U Nu knows the difference between what Russia is after and what we are trying to do and has chosen the neutral path merely for reasons of national self-survival. I have no objection.



Now the last official word on neutrality that I recall was when Secretary of State Dulles told an Iowa State College commencement gathering on June 9, 1956: Neutrality is a polish "which pretends that a nation can best gain safety for itself by being indifferent to the fate of others. This has increasingly become an obsolete conception and, except under very exceptional circumstances, it is an immoral and shortsighted conception." A few days later, the President, at his press conference, was asked if Mr. Dulles had negated some of Mr. Eisenhower's own words earlier that month when he declared: "I cannot see that this (some nations choosing to remain free of military alliances) is always to the disadvantage of such a country as ours." Confronted with the two statements, the President said flatly that he saw no difference "whatever" between Dulles' remarks and his own and that Switzerland was an example of the "exceptional circumstances" for being a neutral with U.S. blessing.

Now to confuse the issue a bit further, when U Nu, as Burma's first Prime Minister, addressed the National Press Club in Washington some five years ago he said Burma was following "an independent course," one of "non-alignment." If we wanted to call that "neutralism," that was our term, not his.

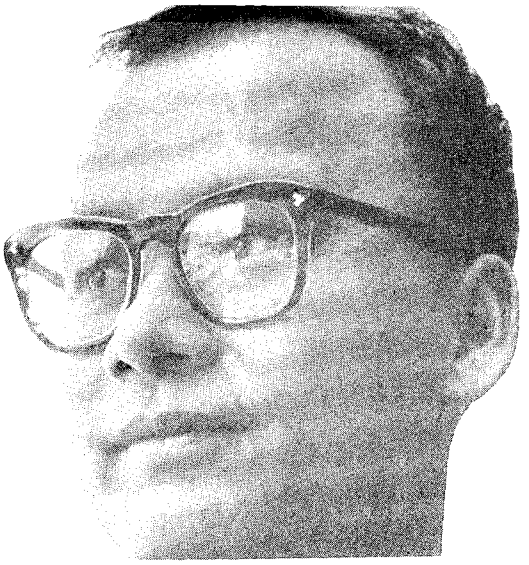
Well here we are in 1959 and Burma unabashedly does declare herself a "neutral nation" these days and the State Department is apparently saying, "Blessing on thee" -- at least for Burma. So I am afraid that if I was expecting a controversial issue in visiting Burma during my 13-month worldwide

study of neutralism and non-alignment, the controversy is long since gone. Col. Ba Than, one of the "Young Colonels" group who is quarterbacking the Ministry of Information during the present military trusteeship here, looked at me in amazement the other day when I walked into his office in the Secretariat and asked to hear about the arguments for neutralism. "Everybody knows those. We don't even discuss the matter anymore. It's taken for granted," he declared. And I must admit I haven't heard anyone dispute this in the 14 days I've spent here interviewing Burmese politicians and educators, up country and down; followers of U Nu, followers of U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein, and followers of the current Prime Minister, Gen. Ne Win.

But let me trace the origin of Burma's neutralism, as I've been able to find it. U Nu and others have mentioned a good deal about the influence of Buddhism, which claims 90 per cent of the population, and Gautama's preaching of "The Middle Road." And you also hear that Burma's is a "positive neutralism." Well, U.S. Ambassador Walter McConaughy didn't call this outright bunk, but he made it plain that what is really bothering Burma is the fear of China's "long shadow." And I heard this thesis repeated not only by the British observors, who have been watching Burma for a good many years, but by one of this country's highest appointed officials who, by pledge, I cannot name. It is true that U Nu and the Buddhistic Burmans tend strongly toward pacifism and live-and-let-live. But for an 11-year-old nation, rich in natural resources, poor for not developing them and anxious for all the help it can get, Burma has had to say "no thanks" a good ma ny times in order not to give China any provocation.

China, for her part, has had her smiles and her frowns regarding Burma. The border dispute involving some 20,000 square miles of Burmese territory -- half the Katchin State and the severance of a vital road artery -- still remains unsettled. The British, in their day, had only an oral understanding with China anyway. Shanghai-made maps now label the disputed Burmese territory "China." Two years ago China made a compromise offer which looked acceptable. Then she shelved it. During Burma's long period of civil war, just now ending, China presumably wa s the chief encourager of the "insurgents." There are an estimated 70,000 Chinese in Burma now, mostly in Rangoon, and "infiltrators" reportedly are crossing the border daily. The Communist Party, outlawed, lies underground. It has some above-surface offshoots which use various political labels. Mass student demonstrations at Rangoon University and at the University of Mandalay always seem to occur simultaneously. And the student body elections indicate strong outside financing of the left-wing candidates. The evidence is lacking, but there is strong suspicion that the two Peking financial institutions here in town, The Bank of China and The Bank of Communications, together with the Chinese Communist Embassy, are not ignorant of what's going on. Certainly there is no secret about the unsecured loans the Chinese banks are granting Chinese nationals here in return for such token niceties as flying the Chinese Communist flag on national holidays and sending the kids to local Chinese schools. Chinese merchants in Rangoon then become recipients of great quantities of Chicom export products and their obligation to their benefactor, for becoming distribution agents, grows and grows. The Burmese government has tried to crack down by insisting that the Bank of Burma supervise all such foreign loans to foreign nationals, but apparently that practice still goes on.

And far more serious, although I had a dickens of a time getting Burmese to admit it, is the question of what happens to Burma should China decide to "dump" rice exports at cheap prices in Burma's traditional markets -- Indonesia, India, Ceylon and Pakistan. I saw the beginnings of



GUARDIAN'S DR. MAUNG MAUNG

China's dumping efforts on Hong Kong's textile industry. Malaya and Thailand are already trying to impose protective restrictions. "The Nation," one of Rangoon's four English-language dailies, quoted the Commonwealth Economic Committee the other day saying China's rice crop this year is expected to reach 150 million tons, nearly double the 85.2 million-ton rice crop figure for 1957-1958. And the exportable surplus is estimated at 7 million tons. Burma is blessed with rice. It constitutes 75 per cent of her gross national product. And all the rice is bought up by the State and its sale State-supervised. Yet Dr. Maung Maung, currently Assistant Attorney General and on leave from his post as editor of "The Guardian" (daily newspaper and monthly magazine), told me he is far more afraid of U.S. rice dumping than Chinese. He said the U.S. "deliberately dumped" lowcost grain in Indonesia and The Philippines in 1955 in an attempt to pressure Burma into joining SEATO. U Nu told me the same thing. And Australia's growing rice surplus is also looked on with competitive fear. But here again, unnamed high officials in the Burmese government told me that the real rice threat is from China and that if China carries it out, there is really not much Burma can do. One official thought that Burma might again be forced into the "barter" position of a few years back when she had to agree to accept unwanted, and unusable, goods from Iron Curtain countries in exchange for guarantees that her rice surplus would be bought up. On one of these occasions, Burma was stuck with untold sacks of solidified cement which eventually had to be dumped into the Irrawaddy. True, the Burmese hadn't helped things by leaving the sacks out in the monsoon rains.

Even on a negotiated basis, Burma's experience with Russian economics has been less than felicitous. Russia has given the name "Gift Hotel" and "Gift Technical Institute" to buildings now underway here, and "Gift Hospital" to one under construction in Taunggyi in the Southern Shan States. But Burma is not only supplying all the labor, but the rice necessary to raise the foreign exchange to compensate for Russian talent and material. In other words, Russia, the contractor, gets the credit and Burma the entire bill. Ironically, Burma's neutrality policy is partly to blame for these "gifts." U Nu accepted the offer from Bulganin and Khruschev during a visit and then was reminded by his Cabinet next morning that this was one of the gifts-with-strings which Burma had been turning down from the West. I gather that Russia isn't too interested in Burma anyway as the Russian technical advisers dispatched to Rangoon and Taunggyi live unto themselves and have not bothered to hide their irritation with the Burmese. And, when a Russian lady and her gentleman decided to bathe au natural in the Taunggyi town reservoir one warm evening, the Burmese did not bother to hide their irritation with the Russians.

But the U.S. reputation is not so untarnished either. I already mentioned the charges of rice dumping in 1955. But far more serious, in fact the most serious international crisis Burma has had in her 11 years of independence, is the "KMT Incident." This involved up to 12,000 of Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang forces which suddenly grouned themselves on Burma's border with China's Yunnan Province in an attempt to make life difficult for the Chicoms. It was pretty well understood that the KMT's arms and food were arriving courtesy of the American CIA. CIA denies this and says it was all caused by Chiang Kai-shek having some loose pocket money at the time and feeling frisky. However, when I checked with former U.S. Ambassador to Burma David McK. Key a

few years back to see if he had really resigned in protest over the CIA action being conducted without his knowledge or approval -- as I had heard -- he said that indeed he had. What's more Burma cut off her aid program with the U.S. in 1952 in a frantic effort to calm the Chicoms. Burma resumed a limited aid program in 1957 ($42.5 million in loans only over a 40-year period) but a good part of the KMT troops are still hovering around the border. Now I learn that they are busy playing bandit, extorting from villages and making good their threats with pillage and violence if the villagers don't pungle up. And a high official of one of the Western bloc embassies here told me it is his opinion that the Formosa-based Dakotas, which are still supplying the KMT, are also still enjoying covert American help, presumably from the same old base in North Thailand.

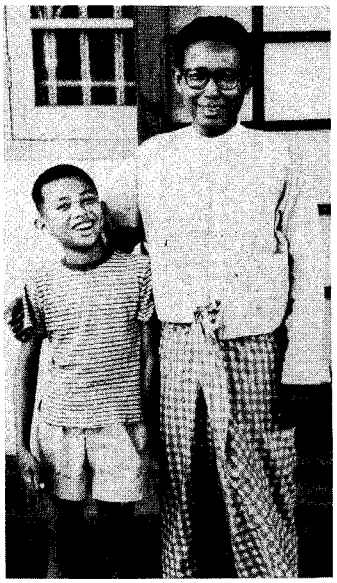
At the end of last November, Burma's new regime under Gen. Ne Win gave 90-day notices to the Government's two privately-hired U.S. economic consultants, Robert Nathan Associates and Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy and Stratton (TAMS), as well as to some 12 Russian technicians and 8 Russian interpreters. "Economy" and "not producing" are the two explanations I have heard. Now there is some talk of the new Government being receptive to American government aid, if it is given in the form of grants. When the U.S. did have a grant program a few years back, Burma's standards of neutrality forbade acceptance.

At the UN, Burma, with her admission in 1948, soon began siding with the so-called neutralistic bloc. However, recent studies show that she has voted as frequently with the U.S. as with such colleagues as India, Indonesia and Ceylon. Burma, incidentally, points to the same impartial voting record as Cambodia: She has been for Red China's admission; and she not only led, but persuaded, her South Asia colleagues to join her in condemning the Russian action in Hungary. Burma's relations with India, incidentally, are paradoxical. Nehru and U Nu get along fine. But the Burmese Indian is the most picked-upon minority here. This stems back to the turn of the century when Britain brought in Indians to run the Burmese Civil Service. With the postwar burst of nationalism, the Burmese Indians are finding more and more signs telling them to go home.

One notable victim, I understand, is James Barrington, the former Burmese Ambassador to the U.S. and UN who now is permanent secretary of the Foreign Office. I am told that Barrington, one of the most popular members of the Washington diplomatic corps in his day, no longer has the free time to see foreign visitors. As an Anglo-Indian without private resources, he does not dare risk his job. I knew I tried for 10 days to reach him, even by telephone, but got the run-around.

Well, now that I have veered from my theme of neutralism, let me say that I couldn't have come to Burma at a more exciting time. But it has nothing to do with neutralism. It concerns U Nu ("Mr. Tender") and the General, Ne Win. At this moment, it certainly looks as if U Nu, the personification of Burma to the world outside, has been out-maneuvered.

I have tried to fit the pieces together and was helped particularly by Dr. Maung Maung, the lawyer-editor, and by Dr. William Johnstone, who heads a Johns Hopkins team at Rangoon University and right now is appending a chronology of these recent events to his political history of Burma. I also confirmed parts of the story with those involved, including U Nu and Col. Ba Than.



KYAW NYEIN & NO. 4

Basically, as I gather it, it's a case of U Nu being in office too long -- the first 10 years of his country's independence -- and something similar to the falling out of FDR's popularity by the time his fourth term rolled around. The chief figures in the AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League) have been U Nu, of the older generation (he is now 52) and U Ba Swe and U Kyaw (pronounced "chaw") Nyein, of the younger generation. U Ba Swe , onetime party secretary-general, was made Prime Minister in U Nu's place in 1956 when U Nu decided to step down for a year (actually, he stayed out only 10 months) to revitalize the party. Now U Nu indicates the Swe-Nyein faction wanted to keep him from resuming office; and the Swe-Nyein people say he was planning to start a new party and leave them clutching the old shell. At any event, U Nu did resume office and the party ostensibly closed ranks with Ba Swe going back to his post as Defense and Mining Minister and Kyaw Nyein remaining as one of the four deputy Prime Ministers, as well as being the chief Cabinet supervisor of Burma's economic growth.

Well, last April, U Nu was persuaded to fire his Home Minister, a Swe-Nyein man, and personal rivalries began breaking out in public. Also at this time, the PCP's (People's Comrade Party), which had gone underground as Communists, decided to park their arms in the jungle, surrender and join up with the National United Front (NUF), a group which was more respectable in U Nu's eyes. Last June, there was a split in the 150 votes the AFPFL controlled in the 250-seat lower house of Parliament. The Swe-Nyein faction (which adopted the party label of "Stable" AFPFL, leaving U Nu to introduce the equally incredible party title of "Clean" AFPFL) secured 100 votes. U Nu gained 50, plus another 50 from the Communist-dominated NUF. He found his needed majority by attracting eight more votes from Parliament's various minority factions. But to secure this majority, U Nu had to pay: Amnesty to the Communist insurgents and minor ministerial posts for the minority members. For three months, Burma was pulled every which way by bitter politics. The Civil Service, the mainstay of Government, lost all sense of security because of the high political stakes involved in their every action. Moreover, both the Swe-Nyein faction and the Army became fearful that the Communists would soon be calling all the signals and inviting in the Chicoms to help out poor, strife-ridden Burma. Their fears may have been grossly exaggerated -- certainly U Nu thinks so -- but they had these fears all the same.

By September, U Nu's new Home Minister, Bo Khin Maung Gale, began bringing units of the UMP (Union Military Police) to Rangoon. The Army, represented by some half-dozen "Young Colonels," veterans of the freedom fights against the British, the Japanese and, more recently, the Communist insurgents, sensed a showdown. They disarmed the UMPs as they hit town. U Nu, returning from an up-country trip to Mandalay, summoned Gen. Ne Win, the much-respected Army Chief of Staff, to find out what was up. Ne Win then reportedly sent two of the Colonels to see U Nu and they told him Burma was on the threshold of Civil War. When U Nu asked what he should do, the Colonels are said to have declared that was up to him, he was Prime Minister. U Nu took three days to think it over and then announced his decision: He would take advantage of a clause in the Constitution permitting the handing over of his job. And he asked Parliament to name the non-political Gen. Ne Win to preside over a caretaker government for six months. By then, U Nu said free and fair elections

would be possible and he fully expected Gen. Ne Win to call for them. Well, Gen. Ne Win took over October 28 and the Constitution's six-month limit on a non-member of Parliament serving in the Cabinet expires April 28. Ne Win has summoned Parliament for its regular Spring session February 9 to 14 -- less than two weeks from now -- and then things will come to a head. Ne Win can lay down his mandate without further recommendation; he can recommend the calling of an election; or he can ask that he be allowed to "resign" in accordance with the Constitutional limitation, and then be reappointed to another six-month trusteeship. U Nu, banking on his popular appeal, particularly in the villages, wants an election. The Swe-Nyein faction has declared that they will support Ne Win for a second term if he wants it, take their chances at the polls if there is an election, but, under no circumstances, form a new Cabinet with their new majority (several MP's have walked across the aisle since the June head count) if Ne Win merely steps out. Now because of my language handicap, my interviews have been confined almost wholly to Burmese leaders in education, politics and law. I have had no access to the so-called masses, except the English-speaking driver the Ford Foundation loaned me. And he says he is for U Nu. But from the others I have talked with, I have found the military very popular and people quite anxious that it stay on.

One political realist at the British Embassy told me he thought the Army could not afford to "make a mockery" of the Constitution by merely resigning and seeking reappointment. But he did think the Army would play quarterback to the next Administration , and the vote would probably go against U Nu and for the Swe-Nyein faction. For one thing, the Army, although it has remained miraculously out of politics and even today gives no outward indication of favoritism, is generally supposed to be annoyed with U Nu because of his softness on internal Communism. And, continuing, this logic, the Swe-Nyein group has made no secret of its admiration for the Army and its work (at least at this politically-advantageous time). U Nu didn't help things out in a recent speech when he used the term "fascist" loosely, presumably aimed at the Swe-Nyein group. But the Swe-Nyein group cleverly turned it right back on him by declaring, of course, he was criticizing the Army.

By all odds, the most unexpected interview I have had in Burma has been with U Ko Lay, Vice Chancellor of the University of Mandalay and considered by many to be his country's leading educator. Ko Lay, Cambridge-educated, a man in his early forties who recently returned from educational look-sees in both Moscow and Peking, started right off by declaring he is "sore at U Nu for interfering in my attempts to crack down on the college Communists." He estimated that there are about 30 to 40 among the University of Mandalay's studentbody of 3000; and about 100 among Rangoon University's 10,000. He said he, as Vice Chancellor, was all for a showdown: "Close up for a year, if necessary." But he said U Nu stopped him and his faculty from taking any action: "He was afraid the students would rise up against the Government and embarrass it."

MANDALAY'S U KO LAY

Then Ko Lay pulled his shocker: "I have absolute faith in the Army. They love democracy as much as we do. No one among the Army people is ambitious as far as I know. And from an economic

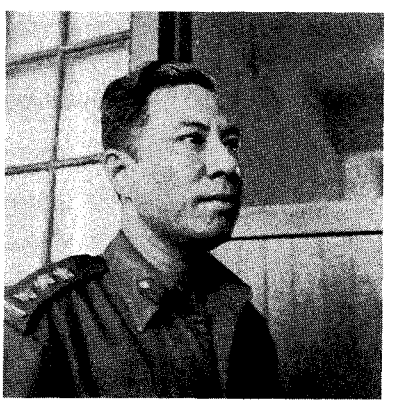
point of view, the best brains and resources are there, certainly a good amount of our graduates. Their selection method is very thorough. Their training is very thorough. That is why they get things done. They have replaced the old Indian Civil Service, which attracted the best talent after the British introduced it into Burma. And their patriotism has been well tested. They fought against the British. They fought against the Japanese. And they fought against the Communists. We cannot be too eager to have a democratic form of government all the time, everywhere, when we have Communism. We definitely cherish democracy, but the people are not ready for that. As we educate to democracy, there is infiltration from the Communist side and if we give in they get a great advantage over us. But I am afraid the Western press might feel we are under some sort of a military dictatorship. We are not. The majority of us here want Gen. Ne Win to continue until we sort out this student infiltration by the Communists. The present Administration is very sympathetic with our views. They put behind bars one of our medical students and a few from Rangoon University. The student Communists are very fearful now. And although the Swe-Nyein faction may not be as bad as U Nu, they are not so good either. That is why I am not for an election now."

Although he expressed complete frustration at attempting to discipline student Communists in their attempt to run students and faculty, Vice Chancellor U Ko Lay indicated solittle headway on the academic side. For instance, he said he was able to slip George Orwell's "Animal Farm" into the curriculum because the Communists didn't realize what it wa s: "They are not intellectually equipped."

Ko Lay's remarks reminded me of an interview I had had with Nong Kimny, Cambodian Ambassador to the U.S.,before I left Washington. Referring to the military regimes which had recently taken over in three South Asia countries, Burma, Thailand and Pakistan, the Ambassador said that the thing which disturbed him most was the "Well,done, old chaps" reaction from many people in the West. Nong Kimny said that if the veteran democracies are so quick to forsake their heritage for expediency, how can the new nations be expected to put up a strong fight for representative government.

Here is a sampling of some other views I gained during interviews with the people who speak for Modern Burma:

COLONEL BA THAN. At 45, he is the oldest member of the "Young Colonels," a group of 20 Army veterans who have rallied behind Gen. Ne Win in his new Government. Two of the Colonels are personal advisers to the Prime Minister and serve on Burma's National Security Council; six are full-time "adviser-expediters" for civilian departments; two, including Col. Ba Than, advise partitime. Ba Than says his day runs from 8 a.m. until 2 a.m. First he expedites for the Ministry of Information, then he attends to his regular duties as head of Defense Services and Psychological Warfare. The Colonel was educated at Rangoon University, trained by the British and, before the war, served as a British officer in Burma. During the war, he was a staff officerfor Gen. Aung San, Modern Burma's martyred founding father. He said the Army's "concern" for the country's welfare, particularly its fear that the Communists would take over, began with the AFPFL split last June. For what happened after that, he pretty much confirmed the account I already have given you. Now he says he



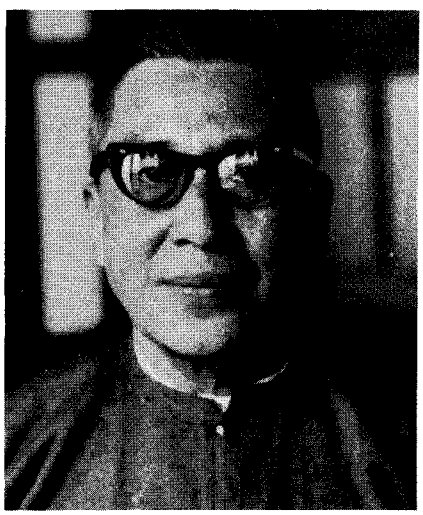
hears that the Army is quite "popular" and that there is a desire that it stay on. Will it? He couldn't say; that would be up to Parliament. What will Gen. Ne Win recommend? He wouldn't guess on that either. And Col. Ba Than is the only member of the current Administration even remotely available to the press (his was the last interview I had here, and I had tried for an appointment ever since arriving). The one thing which seemed to bother the Colonel was my reference to Burma's "military government." He said it was no such thing, merely a military "caretakership" which is assisting the regular civil service to do its work better and more quickly. How has the Army managed to remain free of political taint for 18 years, particularly now, and also retain the respect of so much of the population? The Colonel referred to the military's daily oath and Gen. Ne Win's Executive Order: "We remain loyal, not to any political party, but to the Constitution."

THE HON. U NU. I saw the former Prime Minister twice. Once when he attended a farewell dinner for a Ford Foundation adviser to his pet Burma Translation Society (a vernacular publishing house); the second time in a 45-minute interview at his "Clean" AFPFL headquarters in Rangoon. The first time, U Nu, wearing his famed flop-eared Burmese gaung-baung, shook hands as he entered the dinner party, looked pensive and said nothing for almost the entire evening, and then shook hands and left. On the second occasion, U Nu, for me at least, came alive. With the gaung-baung off, he looks entirely different (See page 1). Graying hair, a very round face, mirthful eyes (well, not in my picture), an Oxford accent (locally acquired) and attentive to questions. On neutralism: "When I visited the States in 1954, I was advised to ask President Eisenhower to stop dumping surplus rice in Burmese markets. I refused because the dumping was the U.S.'s business. I would refuse to caution China now, were I in power, because it is China's business, not Burma's. But I don't think China will dump rice on our markets anyway. She is a rice-deficit country and hasn't enough rice for her own people. And I don't think she will move to offend a friendly country. If we ceased to be neutral, then she might. I have no sympathy for the Communists, but in dealing with small countries, such as ours, the Communists very rarely offend those of us who hold to a neutral position." On Communism: "Even as a united AFPFL, we said we were not against Communists, but against their undercover attempts to overthrow the Constitutional authority. And even though I took in the NUF (the Communist-dominated National United Front), I was never dependent upon them, and they knew that I always had the power to dissolve Parliament in my hands. They supported me because, compared to the Stable, I was in their eyes a lesser evil." I then decided to provoke U Nu a little and told him that in my interviews I had gathered the impression that he would come out on the losing end of any election. What did he intend to do if he was defeated? "The important thing is for free and fair elections to maintain democracy, not whether or not I am defeated. If I am defeated, I will form a loyal opposition. If I win, I will form a Government. These are the only roles I can play."

U OHN. Here is the "mystic," some say the "eminence grise" behind U Nu today. U Ohn, also a member of the famous Rangoon University Class of 1937, not only seems to delight in being known as a "good Buddhist," he seems to rub it in with each sentence. He served as Ambassador to Britain in 1948-49, Ambassador to the UN and, from 1951-57, Ambassador to the USSR. I got to see U Nu only by first being given a screening interview by U Ohn who, during these out-of-office days, serves as his aide de camp. And even during my session with U Nu, U Ohn sat right beside him,

taking down notes and interrupting with such challenges as: "Who told you U Nu would be defeated? You have been seeing the wrong people." And U Ohn ducked the Chinese rice dumping possibility completely by declaring the only "dumping" he knew about was in Malaya, and that was supposed to be Russian tin. Then he declared: "We can take sides very easily, but it is more difficult being a neutral with responsibilities. You mustn't look for followers. You must have faith in your own system. It would be good if you could show how to run the world and avoid the wars of the big nations during the last 400 years. And it would be good if you could do it with no bombastic showing off. I prefer 'fencemanship' to 'brinkmanship,' Washington's Farewell Address and Lincoln's Gettysburg speech to jeans and rock'nroll." Then U Ohn threw a hooked one: "You can't help your alignment, it's your responsibility. And the USSR can't help hers; you isolated her."

U KYAW NYEIN. Here is half the namesake of U Nu's Swe-Nyein opposition and the man who first defied U Nu in a secret exchange of letters as far back as 1956. While U Ba Swe is known for his organizational talents, ideology and personal popularity, U Kyaw Nyein is considered the economic specialist and master political strategist of the "Stable" AFPFL. He served as deputy Prime Minister and chief of economic problems under U Nu and is looked upon by the intelligensia (and I suspect our Embassy) as the strong man of the new Burma -- should the Swe-Nyein faction be elected. Kyaw Nyein is younger than the old guard (just reaching 40), given to nervous twitches, but highly articulate. I interviewed him at his new Rangoon home (where soldiers guard the gates) and photographed him with his nine-year-old son, No. 4 of seven children (See Page 5). I quickly was made aware of his concern for pushing Burma ahead economically, and fast: "If a country is economically very backward, it will create the condition for enslavement, such as happened to our neighbors, Nepal and Tibet." But Kyaw Nyein was consistent with his countrymen in defending Burma's neutrality: "Only by being neutral do we succeed in wetting down the fears of either bloc. And for economic development we need peace and help from both sides." And he expressed disappointment that Gen. Ne Win had given walking papers to the U.S. and USSR economic consultants. He agreed that maybe the period of TAMS' contribution had passed. But he thought the Robert Nathan group's contribution was still going strong. As for Burma defending herself against any economic dumping -- be it U.S. or Red China -- Kyaw Nyein thought the solution lies in diversifying from rice to cotton, sugar cane and textile production: "Less income from rice, but also less expensive for imports." And he had a surprising comment about the Mikoyan visit, just concluded: "Personally, I'm a democrat and anti-Communist. But I visited Russia last year and saw everyone from Khruschev on down. I came away convinced that they are afraid of atomic war and want to do everything to prevent it. Now when they send their No. 2 man, Mikoyan, to the U.S. what happens? He swallows his pride and comes as the special guest of the USSR Ambassador. He is not even given the courtesy of a State visit."

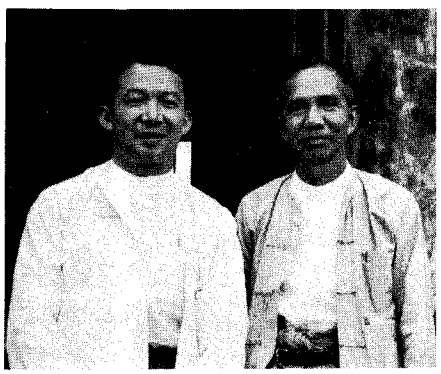


CHIEF JUSTICE U MYINT THEIN. Burma's first Ambassador to China under Chiang and China under Mao, His Honor has the charm and wisdom of a man who has been around. His first love is law and now that he is in his late fifties he is glad to be out of the diplomatic corps and back with the codes. Recently he also served as legal adviser to the Shan States in arranging for the transfer of power from the "Sawbwas" (equivalent to India's old

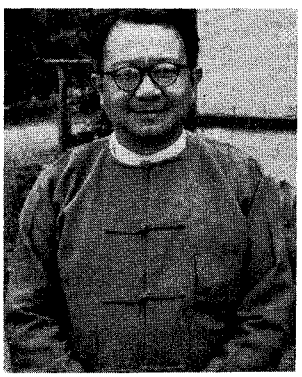
Rajahs and Maharajas) to the popularly-elected government. His Honor was exceedingly candid during my interview, but stipulated that there be no quoting.

U THAN MANG. He is editor of "The Sun" of Mandalay and, for his 35 years, has had quite a history. After graduating from Rangoon University where he was a student leader, Than Mang visited Czechoslavakia in 1947, came back a member of the Communist underground and only got religion again in 1955. Now he writes articles using his personal experience to point out that the Communists are really not one bit interested in Burma's national aspirations. He feels once the Commies get in power they would invite in Red China for help and then Burma would become another Hungary. Than Mang says the Army is the one institution the people can rely on in their crisis, looks to the Swe-Nyein group to take over when things calm down and thinks U Nu will gradually retire from politics.

DR. MAUNG MAUNG. Also 35, he is considered one of the brightest hopes of modern Burma (See picture Page 3). He has a law degree from LondonUniversity and, in addition to his Rangoon practice, began and published the Guardian daily newspaper and monthly magazine, considered the two best English-language publications in the country. Currently he is on leave from these jobs to help out the caretaker government as Assistant Attorney General. Both the Universities of Rangoon and Mandalay are beckoning him to head up their law schools. But before he does that, he is intent on a trip to the U.S. to do further legal research. What about the regime of Gen. Ne Win? Dr. Maung Maung says that the Civil Service, completely demoralized by the political chaos, now is finally able to go about its work: "They don't have to obey political bosses." He thinks the military caretakership has avoided "civil war."

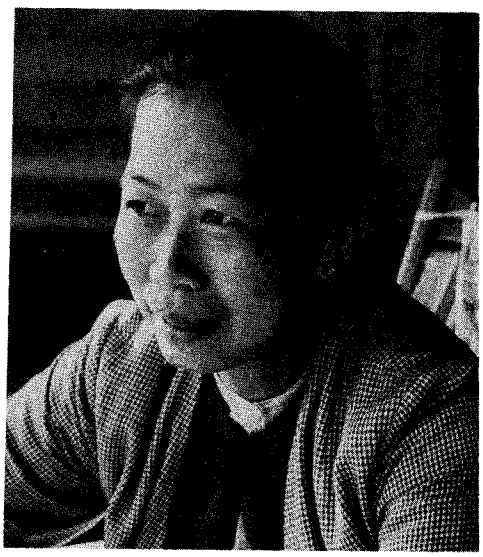


DRS. HLA MYINT AND HLA BU. Hla Myint (left) is Gen. Ne Win's personal choice to put some discipline and academic standards into Rangoon University. He has just been brought back as Rector after having settled down at Oxford as a respected Don and taken out British citizenship. Now 38, Hla Myint also has served as economic adviser to the UN and as an economic adviser to the Government of Burma under U Nu. He took up his new post right after my arrival and succeeded in quelling the ready-and-waiting student demonstrators with a no-nonsense talk -- in Burmese. Hla Bu has just retired as the university's longtime philosophy professor. Now he is executive director of the local Fulbright foundation and he also heads up the Burma Christian Council.



SAO HKUN HKIO. "Sao stands for "Sawbwa " and Sao Hkun Hkio is one of the 36 of these local Shan States princes who within the next few weeks will formally cede their life-and-death authority over their subjects. In return, they will receive cash settlements on their traditional income, 25 per cent of their suzerainity's revenue. Until U Nu's fall from power, Sao Hkun Hkio had been both Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs -- Burma's equivalent of Secretary of State -- and head of the Shan States government. Gen. Ne Win has

now ushered him out of both jobs and replaced him, in his Shan post, with another Sawbwa who, though less experienced, is also less politcally committed. Sao Hkun Hkio, however, still holds on to his position as president of the Hill People's Congress and is, in fact, his area's principle force in reconciling the Shan States with the people down South whom the Shans deferentially call "Burmese." When I interviewed him at his home in Taunggyi, Sao Hkun Hkio said: "The only difference in neutrality between the present Government and U Nu's is internal. Gen. Ne Win is more anti-Communist." But, not unexpectedly, he is optimistic for his "Clean" AFPFL's chances in the future: "The people are becoming more and more against militarism."



DAW --- ---. I never did get this lady's full name, but I liked her face. Until Sao Hkun Hkio and his Sawbwa Council abolished her job, she was head of mass adult education for the Shan States. For eight years, she had supervised a team of 36 "organizers" who moved into the villages and taught public health, economics and reading and writing -- in that sequence. "The people we reach are now too old to care much about being literate," she explained. "But health and how to make ends meet they are eager for." Now that she is out of a job, this lady is rejoining her husband in Rangoon, where he is helping out Gen. Ne Win in the Ministry of Defense. Will she continue with her original calling? "Well, I'm a social worker and if somebody offers me a job I don't think they will have to persuade me too much."

U TUN WIN. Also a member of the revolutionary Class of 1937 at Rangoon University, Tun Win has been a friend and associate of U Nu's for 30 years and, until his political demise, served as U Nu's Minister of Information. Now Tun Win has switched to the Swe-Nyein faction. He asked me to lunch at the Union Club on Rangoon's Royal Lake, once so posh a British hangout that no Burmese could enter. After lunch, Tun Win, hearing that I had an appointment to see U Nu, looked reflectively and then declared: "Please do me a favor. Tell him I still love him but I cannot join him because he is too unpredictable. And explain to U Nu that I cannot go to him and tell him this myself because people today confuse personal and political relations."

Well, this Washington reporter played courier between the two former Burmese Cabinet members and U Nu just sat back and looked amused.

Cordially,

Warren

Warren W. Unna

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