
APPENDIX

Radio Address by Colonel Naywin (7-5-45), to the People of Burma

Comrades and Countrymen,

You have known by now with what aims the Burmese Army has come into existence and of what stuff it is made. Its one and only aim is to fight for Burmese freedom and it is to that aim that practically the whole of Burmese Youth have dedicated their lives. You have also seen that it is a united front put up by all the indigenous races that call themselves Burmese. Thus it is that the Burmese Army which is composed of the Burmese, Shans, Kachins and Karens has been looked upon by all as not only the hope of the country but also as its very life and soul. For it is this Burmese Army which has, in the name of the People's Freedom Army, declared war on the Fascist Japanese and is actively engaged in fighting them on the Burmese front. Bitterly have they fought for the liberation of their soil from Fascist clutches and as bitterly with they continue the fight till that menace is completely eradicated. And it is our purpose here no less our duty to tell the people in as clear and simple words as possible the reason for the step we have taken. We wish every single Burmese to understand that in taking this historic step, the Burmese army is neither guided by sheer irresponsibility of youth, as their enemy has been inclined to attribute, nor is it a meaningless, opportunist movement some of the people have tried to make out. Members of the Burmese Army will certainly not let their blood and sweat flow so freely nor let their wives and children

suffer mortal agonies at the hands of the Japanese Military Police nor let the Burmese villages go up in flames without having a firm conviction in the righteousness of their action.

We were not unawares of what terror and ravages Japanese Fascism has wrought in China. At the same time, we as realists believed that without the help of a foreign power, in those days, we could not successfully struggle against the British and achieve our independence. It happened that in view of the international situation prevailing then, Japan was and could be only foreign ally we could look up to. Secret negotiations went on and the Burmese Revolutionary Group demanded from accredited representatives of the Japanese Government solemn pledges of independence for Burma. That pledge was given by the Japan and this fact, briefly and simply, accounted for the cooperation which the Burmese young men extended to the Japanese Forces during the first phase of the war. Later, on January 21, 1942, just after the fall of Hongkong, the Japanese Premier General Tojo confirmed this pledge in his statement made in the Imperial Diet.

As regards the Philippines, if the peoples of those islands will hereafter understand the real intentions of Nippon and offer to co-operate with us as one of the partners for the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, Nippon will gladly enable them to enjoy the honour of independence. As for Burma what Nippon contemplates is not different from that relating to the Philippines.

To those who are as freedom-loving as the Burmese are, such an expression of definite promise could not but receive their wishful credence especially when it was found, to all appearances, to be more satisfactory that the British statement that the Atlantic Charter shall not be applicable to India and Burma. We reasoned to ourselves also that since Japan would never be able to occupy India without being able to rally the active support of the Indians, by granting Independence to Burma and thus prove that she has no territorial ambitions, political expediency and circumstances would compel her to redeem her Independence pledge to Burma as well as to the Philippines and other East Asiatic countries. Hence our decision to making our alliance with Japan and fighting side by side with her against the British in 1942.

Our first regrets came with the fall of Moulmein. Doubts began to awaken in Burmese minds when the Japanese for the first time broke their promise of declaring Burmese independence and handing over the administration of the town to the Burmese themselves as soon as Moulmein

fell into their hands. Since that time began discussions among the Burmese regarding the questionable character of Japan's promises. Their regret and resentment was certainly not improved as time went on and greater contact with the Japanese more and more unmasked their aggressive nature in all manner of dealings. It was fortunately in good time that we found out our mistake and we had been able to send a section of our youth leaders to foreign countries to seek foreign aid.

Disillusionment came a second time when, the occupation of the whole of Burma having been completed, the Burmese Independence Army (As it was then called) gathered together at Mandalay. What was the disappointment and fury in the hearts of these young patriots when "Burmese Independence Army" was converted into the Burma Defence Army"! It was no consolation to know that the Burmese Army had then reached a considerable strength. They forthwith planned to turn the B. I. A., not into B. D. A. as the Japanese desired but into a Burma Revolutionary Army as their whole souls desired, but three big factors prevented their plans from ripening into action. The first is that Premier Tojo of the Japanese Government happened to have just declared his government's intention to recognise Burmese Independence in his Diet Speech, the second is that the Burmese troops were then yet lacking in training and experience, and the third is that the Japanese Fascists were then at the height of their military power. Leading members of the Burmese Army had therefore decided to bide their time and allow discretion to form the better part of their valour.

Then came the declaration of Burmese Independence which we all found out presently, was just a declaration. As soon as the Burmese found that the independence which they proclaimed to the world was poles apart from the independence which they have aspired for and looked forward to and that instead of enjoying the rights of real sovereignty their territory was mutilated, their economy ruthlessly exploited and their civil liberties completely cast aside, their plans and decisions to overthrow Japanese Fascism began to take concrete shape. They made up their minds neither to rest nor pause till they have redressed the wrong they have, with the best of intentions, made to the country, and then felt equal to the many dangers that would await them, their families and their associates, should the Japanese Military Police but get an inkling of their extremely hazardous plan. Nothing but their inherent love of freedom gave them the courage to brave the inhuman tortures of the Japanese military police as they crossed the borders between Burma and foreign countries, organised revolutionary parties in all parts of the country, secretly circulated guerrilla pamphlets, giving practical training wherever possible and doing the while all they can

to impeded the progress of the Japanese war effort. This huge subversive movement having completed, they attempted four times to effect a general rising and all the times their plans aborted.

This time, which is the fifth time in the history of the Burmese Army, we have successfully carried out our plans. I will not give you a rough outline of the Burmese Army's activities, to give you an idea of the loyalty and death-defying spirit of our comrades as well as to give due recognition to the admirable co-operation that we have received from our own people, the gallant villagers and towns-people alike.

- (a) We have been able to successfully negotiate with the Japanese Military Authorities to send our troops to various districts, to which they have been assigned, despite the fact that the entire Burmese Army has all along been stationed in Rangoon.
- (b) We have been able to procure sufficient arms and ammunitions from the Japanese Army within the space of a few days from the date on which the revolution is to break out.
- (c) We have been able to combine our troops with revolutionary parties in Prome, Allanmyo, Pyinmana, Toungoo, Pegu, Mandalay and other Delta towns and thereby obtain perfect coordination.
- (d) We have been able to send our men to India to seek outside military assistance and supply of arms.
- (e) We have been able to contact the Allies successfully.
- (f) We have been able to combat the Japanese in Upper Burma and Arakan and defeat them thoroughly.
- (g) We have been able to give training to villagers of various districts in guerrilla forms of warfare, and by the time the revolution is started have already organised straight-shooting guerrilla fighters all over the country.

All these, you will agree with me, are not such as can be achieved overnight, especially when there was a horde of Japanese Military Police and their secret agents and unscrupulous informants. All this certainly an uncommon feat which any nation in the world would feel proud of, for the Burmese have demonstrated to the world that Japan who is a rival power among the World Powers and is the most ruthless of all Fascist Powers has at last reaped bitter defeat at the hands of the Burmese.

Even the Allied Nations have admitted that for sheer grit and guerrilla fighting technique, it is difficult for any other nations to surpass Japan.

And Burmese today have beaten the Japanese in their own game, as is much evident in the operations in the delta districts of Pyapon, Maubin, Bassein, Insein, etc., and in Mandalay, Toungoo, Pyinmana and other places where the Burmese successfully drove them out and redeemed the Burmese towns from their hands. It was against the Burmese Army that has to forestall the Japanese plans of subjecting the city of Rangoon to a scorched-earth demolition and occupy the city before they can carry out their plans. The most effective part of the Burmese Army's activities is the complete breakdown of transportation and communications of the Japanese Army in Burma. The typically Burmese techniques of guerrilla fighting is sure to find a place in the pages of the world's military science.

I think I have made it clear enough that the Burmese Army is not only the hope of the country but its very life soul that is neither irresponsibility of youth that lay behind their historic step nor a meaningless opportunist movement as I have earlier pointed out. Hence to the people of Burma who have for four hapless years been exposed to the most gruelling form of hardship, danger and disease, I wish to give this solemn pledge. That for the freedom of every small state that even like ourselves are in mortal dread of the Fascist menace, we are firmly resolved to drive back the Japanese Fascism to its native home and to give our lives to achieve our objective of Burmese freedom. With this pledge on my lips I urge you, comrades and countrymen to give us yet more of our willing co-operation and help, for before you all, ever loyal and true, we stand in readiness to fight for our cherished freedom, our one objective and our very life.

In *From Fascist Bondage to New Democracy: The New Burma in the New World*. Appendix 2 B., pp. 28-38.