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**INFORMATION REPORT**

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COUNTRY Burma 25X1A

DATE DISTR. 521  
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SUBJECT Review of Communist Activity in Burma

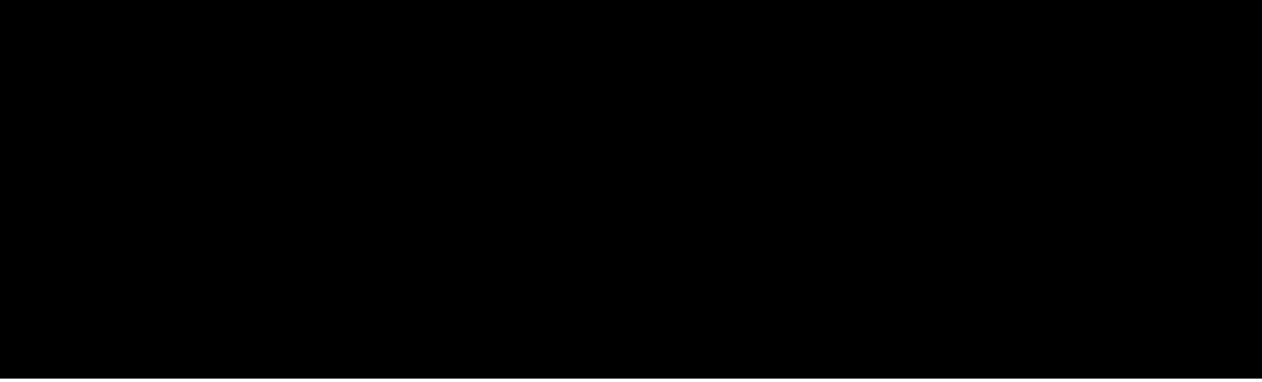
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DATE OF INFO. July - September 1951

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. [REDACTED]



25X1X General.

1. While major re-dispositions of the Communist insurgent forces have been in progress, the past three months have witnessed little change in the general situation and legal political parties have been preoccupied with the election campaign and with mobilizing support in the districts. Analysis of the results published for the first installment of the general elections shows that the two principal leftist opposition parties, the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party and the People's Peace Front, between them secured 23 percent of the votes cast as compared with 41.5 percent given to the AFPFL, including the Burma Socialist Party; the balance was cast in favor of other minor political parties and a number of independent candidates. To date however, it appears that the AFPFL controls about 64 of the 80 odd seats contested.
2. Official statistics reveal that in the year ending 31 August 1951, insurgent sabotage of communications resulted in the destruction of 86 road bridges and 133 rail bridges. Practically all of them were repaired by the Government within a few days and no serious disruption was achieved; in many cases, however, the repairs have been makeshift and temporary in nature, thus resulting in a deterioration in the standard of communications.

Burma Communist Party (BCP) - People's Democratic Front (PDF).

3. The main development during the period under review has been the general move northwards of the BCP and PDF Armed Forces in Central Burma, which appears to have been accompanied to a limited extent by a thinning out of the BCP strength in Lower Burma. This move started at the beginning of July and, by mid-August, what now appears to have been the first phase was nearing completion. At that time the dispositions of the People's Army were as follows:
  - a. The 2 Division, formerly based in the Nyaungbintha-Natogyi area, Myingyan District, was moving north into Yonywa, Shwebo, and Katha Districts.

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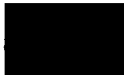
- b. The 1 Division, formerly in the Pyimmana-Lewe area, was moving into the Nyaungbintha-Natogyi area.
  - c. The 3 Division, formerly in Toungoo and Pegu Districts, was moving into the Pyimmana-Lewe area.
  - d. The 4 Division, which is still very weak, was in the Northern Shan States.
4. The estimated strengths of these formations are 1 Division 4,500, 2 Division 1,000, 3 Division 800, 4 Division 300. Thus the effect of these moves was to produce a heavy concentration of the People's Army immediately south and southwest of Mandalay. The main concentration is still in that area, but it now seems that the northward move is continuing. A combined BCP-Communist Party (Burma) (CP(B)) force about 800 strong was reported in the Bhamo-Mongmit area at the end of August and a further group of 300 BCP insurgents was reported early in September to be moving from Shwebo District towards Mongmit. At the same time a similar group was reported to be moving eastwards from Kyaukse District. Reports in late July indicated the existence of a BCP Sub-Headquarters near Momeik which is additional to the BCP Headquarters for Hsipaw State reported in April, and a Sub-Headquarters of the PDF has been reported to exist in the Kodaung Hills area northeast of Mongmit.
5. It seems clear that the BCP is determined to establish control over areas reaching right up to the Chinese border. A current report suggests that the BCP intends to move in some strength into Mongmit and North Hsenwi States and Bhamo District, but the Burmese authorities believe that they will attempt to maintain a corridor leading down to the east of Mandalay into Meiktila and Yamethin Districts. It is probable, however, that their primary objective is to establish a firm hold over the thinly populated areas in the Northern Shan States creating a stronghold which, if complete collaboration of other insurgent groups - in particular the CP(B) and the People's Volunteer Organization (PVO) - can be achieved, could be extended to include Katha and Shwebo Districts where the influence of those insurgent groups is considerable.
6. Reports have suggested that the main insurgent offensive in Northern Burma is to be opened at the end of the rains, that is at about the end of October, and allege that this is to be coordinated with operations across the border from China by NAW SENG, the Kachin renegade, and his "13 Burma Communist Battalion" which has been in Yunnan undergoing training with the Chinese Communists for the past year. The primary objective of this latter group would almost certainly be the Kachin territories of Bhamo and Myitkyina Districts, thus threatening the creation of a Communist area of influence, supported by China, comprising the whole of Northeast Burma. Thakin THAN TUN, leader of the BCP, is reported to have stated his intention to capture the whole of Northern Burma by the end of 1952.

BCP Relations with Other Insurgent Groups.

7. It now seems probable that the report<sup>1</sup> of a Kawthulay broadcast announcing the decision of the Karens to throw in their lot with the BCP was unfounded, for reliable sources have indicated that the question of the degree to which the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) will collaborate with the BCP is still under active consideration, certainly among the Karens in the Delta areas. The BCP nonetheless appears to have been making headway, and the establishment of a joint BCP-KNDO command in the Toungoo area has been reported. It is also reported that Saw OHN PE, the Karen leader in Tenasserim Division, who had previously avoided any entanglement with the BCP, has been replaced by one BA SOE who is pursuing a policy of more active collaboration, and this has resulted in an intensification of Karen and BCP insurgent activity in the Tenasserim area.

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8. In the Delta areas, collaboration in military operations against the Government continues, but, although there are pro-Communist elements among the Karen leaders, the decision has still to be taken to collaborate whole-heartedly with the Communists; and if the Government can make an acceptable offer of a Karen autonomous state - the ultimate objective of the Karens - that decision may never be made, but in the meantime it appears that the influence of pro-Communist elements among the Karens is increasing. In response to a recent unofficial Government approach by Mahn WIN MAUNG, Minister of Transport and Communications, on the question of peace terms, Brigadier KYAW SEIN, political adviser to the Kawthulay Delta Command, refused to discuss the question unless the following terms were accepted:
- a. An immediate Government announcement of its readiness to implement proposals for a separate Kawthulay State.
  - b. Discussion of peace terms should take place in Karen-dominated territory.
  - c. The Government should take steps forthwith to replace the present bureaucratic administrative machinery with a democratic system.
  - d. The Government should take immediate steps to effect agrarian reform.
9. KYAW SEIN, although having no Party affiliations, is an ardent student of Communism and it is possible that these conditions, in particular "c" and "d", were formulated by him alone. To what extent they represent the views of the Delta Command, or perhaps have been inspired by the BCP, is not yet established.
10. At the end of June a conference took place of district and regional leaders of the "Revolutionary People's Volunteer Organization", that is the group of PVOs who did not break with the PDF when the main split occurred in March 1950. This group is led by Bo NYUNT MAUNG, who was appointed to the Central Organization Committee of the PDF in February 1951. The conference called for the establishment of a single Communist Party in Burma and approved a proposal to merge the Revolutionary PVO with the BCP before the end of 1951. This is the first positive reaction to Thakin THAN TUN's call for the creation of a single Communist Party in Burma which he made in his speech at the Upper Burma PDF Conference on 17 March 1951. The group of PVOs involved, however, is relatively small and BCP attempts to come to terms with the main body of PVOs still in insurrection against the Government, who call themselves the "People's Comrades Party", have so far had no success.
11. Discussions have been held between leaders of the Upper Burma BCP and PDF and TUN SEIN and SEIN HLA, who are the principal officials of the CP(B) in Upper Burma. These were designed to secure the full participation in the PDF of the CP(B), but the BCP could achieve no more than an agreement in principle that a PDF of all revolutionary forces should be formed. The CP(B) delegates maintained that the present rules and regulations of the PDF required amendment and expansion before this could be achieved. It is also known that they are not prepared to recognize the dominant position of the BCP in the PDF and in the People's Army; it is on this point that CP(B)-BCP negotiations for closer collaboration are always likely to fail.
12. Leaders of the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party (BWPP) are alleged to have held a meeting in Rangoon at the beginning of July in which it was agreed that collaboration with the BCP was desirable but that in order to safeguard their constitutional position such collaboration should be kept secret. A decision was reportedly taken that they should seek a meeting with the BCP to discuss how such collaboration could be effected.

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There has been no independent confirmation of this meeting nor has there been any report of any subsequent discussions between BWPP and BCP leaders but there have been several indications to suggest that the parties are coming closer together. A May Day manifesto issued by the BCP's underground All Burma Trades Union Congress (ABTUC) claimed that workers of the BWPP's Burma Trade Union Congress had joined hands with those of the underground ABTUC in Government-held areas with a view to forming united opposition to the Government and American imperialism in Burma. In early June a BWPP spokesman at a village meeting in Shwebo District claimed that the Government would be overthrown as soon as his party had merged with the BCP, CP(B), and PVO. Towards the end of June, propaganda issued in Shwebo District in the name of the BCP's All Burma Peasants Union, coincided with serious peasant unrest in the area inspired by the BWPP, in the course of which a number of BWPP supporters were reported to have gone underground and collaborated with the BCP.

BCP Links with China.

13. Interrogation of surrendered personnel provides grounds for suspecting that earlier reports of Thakin THAN TUN's journey to Peiping and discussions with MAO Tse-tung in September-October 1950 may have been unfounded, but there is an increasing volume of evidence to indicate frequent and high level liaison between the BCP and the China Communist Party. A report that Thakin THAN TUN attended a conference in Nanning in February 1951 cannot be confirmed from local sources, but there has been a report of a BCP Politbureau directive, probably issued in early July, which inter alia instructed Party branches to disseminate the news that Thakin THAN TUN had recently concluded discussions with Chinese Communist representatives on the subject of the implementation of the BCP's "Victory Within Two Years" program. There is nothing to indicate where or when these discussions took place, but the tone of Thakin THAN TUN's speech at the Upper Burma PDF Conference on 17 March, suggests extensive liaison before that date. Alternatively, it is possible that these discussions could have taken place at the time of a reported visit of ten Chinese Communists to Burma during April 1951.
14. The discussions with the Soviet Military group were said to have resulted in an agreement of which the main points were:
  - a. That the BCP should not abandon its bases in the Pegu Yomas and Arakan Mountains (see Paragraph 5).
  - b. The BCP should undertake to establish a Sovietized regime to which Soviet Russia would extend aid (cf. the known BCP objective of securing an area in Upper Burma and declaring the establishment of a People's Democratic Government).
  - c. The establishment of a supply line between Burma and Democratic Republic of Vietnam territory in Indochina.
  - d. The establishment of a "Support Burma People's Liberation Committee" to take charge of aid to the Burmese Communists.

Although these three independent reports tend to hang together, there is so far no further confirmation on these developments.

15. Further information believed reliable has become available concerning parties of Burmese Communists who have gone to Yunnan for training, and refers to four such parties totalling about 110 as having crossed into Yunnan between November 1950 and the end of July 1951. The last of these was a party of about 60 strong which was led into China at the end of July by a Chinese who had come from Yunnan.

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Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party.

16. The accent in BWPP activity during the period under review has been on organizational work in the districts to secure further support for the party in preparation for the next round of the elections, while at its headquarters in Rangoon classes have been run for training in organizational methods and political indoctrination. A class staged in July was for whole-time workers in Rangoon and this was followed in August by a further class at which attendance was made compulsory for the secretaries of all district branches and other district party leaders.
17. In Shwebo, where in one constituency in the first installment of the general elections the BWPP candidate polled over 8,000 votes out of a total of about 21,000, the party has inspired serious unrest among the peasants in protest against the methods adopted by the Land Tenancy Boards in administering the Government Land Reform Program. The Boards, it was claimed, were controlled by the Burma Socialist Party who were exclusively favoring those peasants who gave their support to the Burma Socialist Party's All Burma Peasants' Organization. This unrest started in June and continued throughout July with almost daily demonstrations and frequent incidents of forcible ploughing, and there are reports that a number of local BWPP supporters went underground and joined hands with the BCP insurgents in the area. Government counter-measures involved the arrest of nearly 300 peasants and a raid on the BWPP's branch office.

World Peace Congress (Burma) (WPC(B)).

18. In parallel with organizational activity on behalf of the party, BWPP leaders, who are also leading officials of the WPC(B), have been setting up district branches of the WPC(B). Seven such branches have been established since the beginning of June in Akyab, Wakema, Pegu, Henzada, Letradan, Saraing, and Shwebo. Frequent mass meetings have been staged to pass resolutions supporting the proposal for a Five Power Peace Pact and signature campaigns have been instituted both in the districts and in Rangoon. Surprisingly little publicity, however, has been given to the results of this signature campaign, apart from one isolated announcement that over 21,000 signatures were collected within two days in Rangoon in early August.
19. Four leaders of the WPC(B), including its President Thakin LWIN, are expected to attend a meeting of the World Peace Council in Vienna from 1 to 5 November.

Burma Trades Union Congress (BTUC).

20. On 25 July the BTUC announced that the World Federation of Trades Unions had unanimously accepted the BTUC's application for affiliation, but the BTUC appears to be having some difficulty in collecting the money with which to pay its affiliation fee. Delegates were to have been sent to a meeting of the Trades Union International of Land, Sea, and Air Workers in Vienna in mid-July but were unable to travel because of a lack of funds. It is possible that this same factor will prevent the implementation of a current proposal to send delegates to a meeting of the General Council of the WFTU in Berlin in November. Thakin LU AYE, Vice President of the BTUC, and Yebaw MYO NYUNT, Assistant Secretary, have been nominated to attend this meeting.
21. Agitation by the BTUC among minor labor unions in Rangoon has continued during the period but still gives no evidence of any particular success and an attempt to stage a strike in the oilfields in which unemployed laborers were used to picket the installations and were represented as a strike of oilfield labor, fizzled out after Government counter-action and the arrest of five of the strike leaders. This strike was an attempt to stir up agitation for the nationalization of the Burmah Oil Company and seems to have been inspired by developments in Iran, to whose Prime Minister the BTUC sent a message of good wishes in May.

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People's Peace Front (PPF).

22. Such results as are available of the first installment of the elections show that while winning only six seats out of about 70, PPF candidates polled about 13.5 percent of the total votes cast as compared with about 9.5 percent cast in favor of BWPP candidates. Tetpongyi THEIN PE MYINT, one-time member of the BCP Politbureau, has become increasingly prominent in the affairs of this group, which appears to be moving further to the left.
23. The PPF's declared policy calls for the release of political prisoners, the withdrawal of repressive legislation, the granting of an unconditional amnesty to the insurgents, and the formation of a coalition government of all political parties including the insurgents. It also supports the policy of the World Peace Congress and calls for all possible measures to prevent Burma being involved in a third world war. In support of the first two aims, the PPF has formed a "Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights". U AUNG THAN, President of the PPF, is also president of this Committee, whose officials include prominent BWPP personalities, Ko HLA WIN, President of the newly formed All Burma Student Federation, and representatives of other opposition political parties. Agitation by this Committee has already secured the release of Ko THAN, President of the former All Burma Students Union which went underground to join the BCP in March 1949. Ko THAN played a prominent part in the General Strike which was staged at that time and had been in prison ever since.

Sino-Burmese Friendship Association.

24. In mid-July, at the inspiration of Tetpongyi THEIN PE MYINT, a Sino-Burmese Friendship Association was formed, whose principal officials, apart from THEIN PE MYINT, are mainly drawn from the ranks of the BWPP. This organization is a revival of the Soviet-Chinese-Burmese Friendship Society which was formed in mid-1950 by THEIN PE MYINT in collaboration with TAN Kiet-hock of the China Democratic League (Burma), but succeeded in attracting little attention or support. The new Association is having rather more success, not least because of a degree of recognition from China.
25. The WPC(B) and the Sino-Burmese Friendship Association received an invitation at the beginning of September to send a delegation to the anniversary celebrations in Peiping on 1 October. A delegation has been nominated and consists of Thakin KODAW HMAING (Patron of the People's Peace Front), U TUN MYINT (Secretary of the People's Peace Front and official of the WPC(B)), Daw KHIN HLA (Committee member of the People's Peace Front), Thakin BA U (Vice-President of the Burma Chinese Friendship Association), Thakin LWIN (President of the BWPP, the BTUC, and the WPC(B)), Dagon TAYA (former President of the Burma Writers' Association and reported to be a secret member of the BCP) and Maung HLA WIN (President of the newly-formed All Burma Students Federation). The delegation left Rangoon by air on 25 September.

All Burma Students' Federation (ABSF).

26. In mid-August, a students conference at which an All Burma Students' Federation was formed, was staged in Rangoon under the combined auspices of pro-BCP and pro-BWPP student groups. This represented the culmination of the efforts of both groups since the beginning of the year to establish an overt all Burma Students organization, as a revival of the former All Burma Students Union (pro-BCP) which went underground in March 1949. Under the Presidency of Maung HLA WIN, who was an official of the former All Burma Students' Union, the officers of the ABSF include five pro-BWPP students, 3 pro-BCP students, and 2 pro-CP(B) students. This signifies a further advance on the collaboration among Communist student groups which had been evident in the National Festival Committee, formed in connection with the Berlin World Youth Festival. Official sources believe that the ABSF's influence is likely to be strong in schools in Rangoon and in the districts.

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27. Failure greeted all attempts, however, to incorporate the Rangoon University Students' Union (RUSU) in the new organization. The RUSU is controlled by a group of students which believes in a non-political policy free of party attachments for student organizations and refused to participate in the ABSF because of its political bias. The influence of this group, who call themselves the Pure Students League, is still paramount in Rangoon University; they have secured 100 percent success in the September elections for officers for the year 1951-52.

Burmese delegates to the Berlin World Youth Peace Festival.

28. At the instance of the Burma National Festival Committee, 23 students submitted applications for passports to travel to Berlin. Only two applicants were granted passports, but, despite an energetic campaign for funds to finance the delegation, the proceeds were disappointing and, in the event, neither of them traveled. Such funds as were available were given to Thakin LAY MAUNG of the World Peace Congress (Burma) who, because of delay in documentation, was unable to leave Rangoon until 11 August, by which time the conference was half over. Further difficulties over visas both in Rome and the U.K. prevented him from reaching Berlin in time to play any significant part.
29. Two other delegates from Burma who attended the conference without difficulty were Maung CHIT HLAING and Bo THEIN HLAING, representatives of the Burma Socialist Party, who were unofficially sponsored by the Government for a "political study tour" of Europe. Since the Festival, a joint declaration has been issued in the name of the "Burmese delegation" fully supporting the resolutions adopted in Berlin. It purports to be jointly signed by Thakin LAY MAUNG, Bo THEIN HLAING, Maung CHIT HLAING, Ko TUN SHEIN and Ko KIN WIN. Ko TUN SHEIN is the accredited representative of the underground All Burma Students' Union and the BGP, who has been in Prague for the past two years, and Ko KIN WIN is a student who has been studying in Switzerland since 1949.
30. On 5 August, to coincide with the commencement of the Festival in Berlin, a meeting was staged in Rangoon by the National Festival Committee which was attended by a number of prominent personalities, including Thakin LWIN of the BWPP, and U AUNG THAN of the PPF. Resolutions were adopted supporting the main points propounded by the Festival in Berlin.

Local Chinese Activities.

31. The open friction between the pro-KMT and pro-Communist elements in the Chinese community in Burma which reached serious proportions in May and June 1951 has been less apparent during the period under review, probably because of the firm action taken by the Burmese authorities in June. Both groups have continued their respective efforts to increase their influence by recruiting for the various organizations under their control. The only incident of note was the departure for China on 11 September 1951 of a Burma Chinese Trade Goodwill Mission composed of 22 local Chinese. This party comprised a cross-section of that part of the local Chinese community which supports the China Democratic League (Burma) and included officials from most of its leading organizations. The visit was sponsored by the Chinese Embassy and the arrangements were made mainly by the Burma China Chamber of Commerce.
32. Close liaison between local pro-Communist Chinese organizations and the Chinese Embassy continues. At the beginning of September the Chinese Embassy was reported to have made arrangements whereby all applications for Chinese Republican passports were referred to the relevant local class or trade organization for security screening. Two local organizations

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are known to have registered themselves with the Chinese Embassy for official recognition by the Peiping Government and it seems possible that this practice may become general.

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