

POLITICAL PARTIES IN MYANMAR (1923-1945)

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ABSTRACT

Myanmar fell under the British in 1885 and was administered as a province of British India in 1886. After ten years of resistance against the British, Myanmar was completely pacified by the British suppression. Myanmar's nationalism remained dormant until 1906, when a group of western educated young men founded Young Men's Buddhist Association (Y.M.B.A). It led the way in fanning the flame of Myanmar nationalism all over the country. In 1920, after the Y.M.B.A had been reorganized as General Council of Burmese Associations (G.C.B.A), the anti- imperialist and nationalist movement emerged into the open. Myanmar patriots began to demand administrative reforms given to India, to be granted to Myanmar. In 1923, when the British Government introduced the Dyarchy system, G.C.B.A split into two factions over the issue of whether or not to accept the Dyarchy system. The pro – Dyarchy political parties worked within the Legislative Council concerning the interest of the people and the anti-Dyarchy political parties outside of the Council agitated to get Home Rule. In 1930, when the Separation or Federation issue from India arose, political parties became divided into Separationist and anti-Separationist parties. In 1937, British Government separated Myanmar from India and introduced the 1935 Constitution popularly known as Ninety-one Department Scheme. At the start of the Ninety-one Department Scheme, a scramble for position and power occurred among political parties. Under these conditions Dobama Asiayone lost faith in 1935 Constitution and tried to wreck it by attacking the government from inside and outside of the legislature. When in 1939, Second World War broke out, Thakins began to unite all political parties and thus Burma Freedom Bloc was

formed. Burma Freedom Bloc attempted legally above the ground and People's Revolutionary Party (P.R.P) used clandestine means to seek foreign aid and to revolt against the British. In 1942, the Burma Independence Army (B.I.A), P.R.P and the whole population of Myanmar successfully drove out the British from Myanmar. Since the Japanese did not keep their promise to grant Independence to Myanmar, B.I.A and all patriotic political parties continued to struggle against the Fascist Japanese. In August 1944, Burma National Army (B.N.A), Communist Party and P.R.P formed Anti-Fascist Organization and, in March 1945, it was reformed into Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (A.F.P.F.L) which prepared the way for armed struggle against the Fascist Japanese. On 27 March 1945, the whole country of Myanmar led by the A.F.P.F.L successfully drove out the Japanese Army from the land of Myanmar.

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