The DoBamar Asiayone\(^1\)  
and the Second Students' Strike\(^2\)  

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Introduction  
During the first three decades of the 20\(^{th}\) century, Myanmar nationalist movement gradually developed under the British colonial rule. In this epoch, the major claims of the nationalist movement were to gain the socio-economic and administrative reforms within the colonial framework. In 1930, a clique of ardent youths who adopted the Thakin\(^3\) appellation initiated the DoBamar Asiayone (DBA). They attempted to stimulate the nationalist sentiment of the Myanmar people at first and then inspire indirectly their desire for independence. The DBA developed gradually during the first half of 1930s and its first conference could be held at Yenangyaung of Magwe district in March 1935. At this conference, some proposals which generally aimed at gaining independence through the constitutional means and the future growth of the DBA were submitted by the DBA leadership to the conference. Among them, a proposal which aimed at organizing the students as a branch of DBA was also included\(^4\).

Seven months after the DBA's first conference, the Second Students' Strike occurred in February 1936 mainly based on the tension between the Yangon University administrators and the student leaders. On this occasion, some Thakin leaders attempted to manipulate the Students' Strike for the aggrandizement of the DBA. In other words, it would be an attempt of Thakin leaders to implement the above mentioned proposal of their first conference. But they could not manipulate the Students' Strike and some of their activities even created the unfriendly atmosphere between some Thakin leaders and the student leaders. As a consequence, the student leaders who would play very important role in the late colonial and post independence politics of Myanmar did not became the Thakin members at least within next two years.

However, the *History of the DoBamar Asiayone* (the official history of the DBA) allegedly said that the DBA greatly influenced on the students' circle and these two elements firmly co-operated during and after the Second Students' Strike\(^5\). In his article *1930年代ビルマ・ナショナリズムにおける社会主義受容の特質 (The acceptance of Socialism by Burmese Nationalists during the 1930s)*, Professor Nemoto who made thorough and valuable accounts on the history of the DBA also said, without references, that the Second Students' Strike which occurred in 1936 made the student
recruits in the DBA increased and also had the great influence on active interchange of the Students' Union (with the DBA). In his authentic work, *A History of Modern Burma*, Professor John F. Cady allegedly described the leaders of the Second Students' Strike as the student-cum-Thakin leaders. Of the Strike's leaders, in fact, only two became Thakins but two years later. None of others joined the Thakin camp. In his valuable study, *The State in Burma*, Dr. Robert H. Taylor stressed the close cooperation between the students' circle and the DBA at the end of 1930s by referring U Maung Maung's *From Sangha to Laity*. Of course, such kind of cooperation between the student activists and the DBA flourished by the end of 1930s. But he failed to mention the unfriendly atmosphere between these two elements in the mid 1930s.

In his valuable work, *The Voice of Young Burma*, a Myanmar scholar U Aye Kyaw made some mis-descriptions of the facts about the immediate causes of the Second Students' Strike though it did not directly concern the relations between the DBA and the students' circle.

This paper is an attempt to reveal the relations between the Thakin camp and the student activists in mid 1930s by using the Myanmar sources such as *The O-Way Magazine*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Sep. 1936) published by the Rangoon University Students' Union, *Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor of Burma*, Vol. XXXI, Ninth Session (Fourth Council) of February - March 1936, 'Bio data of Thakin Nu', Burma List No. 17, dated 1938, compiled by the Burma Police Department, *The Thuriya newspaper* (1936, 1938), 'The 1936 Rangoon University Strike' by Maung Tha Hla, a leader of the Second Students' Strike, in the *New Burma Weekly* (1958) and *Saturday's Son* by U Nu (1975), etc. These documents and memoirs revealed the facts which differed from the above mentioned descriptions of the reliable scholars. Hence this paper would help in reconsidering the relations between the DBA and the students' circle in the mid 1930s especially around the Second Students' Strike.

**The DBA and the student activists**

The Rangoon University Students' Union (RUSU or popularly known as the Union) became active in mid 1930s. In fact the university administrators founded the Union in 1923 with the aim of developing it as a students' welfare organization. Throughout the 1920s, the students who were interested only in the students' social activities run the Union under the close supervision of the university administrators. In 1926, the rich rice trader and mill-owner U Nyo, in compliance with the request of Sir Harcourt Butler, the Lieutenant Governor and the Chancellor of the University as well, contributed Rs. 17,000 to the university to construct the building for the Union. The
construction was begun in 1929 and finished in the next year. Thus the Union had its own building in 1930. Together with the emergence of the Union building, there appeared some discussions of the students' circle that the Union should have a formal constitution and the university administrators also agreed it. As a result, the constitution was drafted by a committee of teachers and senior students in late 1930, and was approved and accepted by the administrative and students' circle in February 1931.

According to the constitution, the important executive members such as President and Secretary had to be elected by the students' votes. At the election for the academic year 1931-32 (from mid-June to late-March), Ko Tun Sein and Ko Ba Sein (later Thakin Ba Sein) were elected as the President and Secretary respectively. Thus the politically strong-minded youths could penetrate the Union leadership for the first time. But there found no evidence that they could politicize the Union in those days. In the academic years 1932-33 and 1933-34, the Union was headed again by the students who interested only in the students' social activities. At the next academic year (1934-35), the dissident youths, viz. Ko Thein Pe (later Thakin Thein Pe or Thein Pe Myint), Ko Kyaw Nyein (later Deputy Prime Minister after independence), Ko Aung San (later Thakin Aung San) and Ko Thi Han (later Minister for Foreign Affairs after independence) contested the Union election against the formal type student candidates. The former two were elected as the executive members and they attempted to get more room for the activists in the Union. When the Vice President, Ko Kyaw Tun resigned at the midterm as he got a post in the civil service, Thein Pe and Kyaw Nyein nominated Ko Nu (later Thakin Nu) for the vacancy and the latter was elected without contest. Soon after he became the VP, Ko Nu asked the Council of National Education (CNE) to allow him to make a speech at the National Day celebration of 1934 sponsored by the CNE and the latter conceded him. Thus he became the first Union leader who made a speech at the National Day celebration.

In the next academic year (1935-36), Ko Nu was elected as the President together with the like-minded youths namely M.A. Raschid (Vice President). Ko Ohn (Treasurer), Ko Thi Han (Secretary), Ko Aung San (Editor of the O-Way Magazine), Ko Tun On (Librarian), Ko Ba Set (Sports), Ko Tun Tin (Social) and Ko Tha Hla (Inter-university Affairs). On 19th July 1935, the new President Ko Nu took the oath of office before the overflow student audience at the Union Hall. He swore that may he vomit blood till death if he betrayed the students' causes. It made the audience frightened and the press reported that such kind of oath was made by none of his predecessors. Such kind of gesture made Ko Nu famous.

During his early days of presidency, "a Thakin" told Ko Nu that U Ottama had taken bribes
from some elder nationalists who later known as the Nga-bwint-hsain (Five Parties Alliance) for propagating on their behalf. The Thakin urged him to denounce U Ottama publicly and the former said that he also would be doing the same. The Thakin’s urging could arouse Ko Nu’s emotion against U Ottama. At the National Day celebration held outside the Union Hall on 19th November 1935, Ko Nu, inter alia, “levelled all kinds of accusations against the Reverend U Ottama and condemned him out of hand as a traitor” while addressing his presidential speech to the audience including townsfolk, students and reporters. The students including his colleagues and the press promptly denounced him for making such kind of accusation to a national hero. Concerning this event, Ko Nu later recalled that above mentioned Thakin failed to censure U Ottama though he appeared at the Fytche Square (now Bandoola Square near Sule Pagoda) rally at the same day.

On this occasion, it should be noted that the above mentioned event happened three months after U Ottama’s denunciation of the Thakin camp. Hence it can be assumed that the famous Ko Nu was utilized by a Thakin in retaliating U Ottama who made contemptuous remarks about the Thakins.

The Second Students’ Strike of 1936

The second students’ strike stemmed from the tension between the high-handedness of the university administrators and the defiant attitude of the Union’s new leadership. During the academic year 1934-35, at least three students were expelled or reprimanded as they committed allegedly impolite behaviours such as not adding “sir” when answering the roll call of the British professor. The VP of the Union for that academic year, Ko Nu and colleagues rejected such high-handedness of the administrators and it made the latters, especially the Principal D. J. Sloss angry. Thus there began tension between the Principal and the defiant leaders of the Union.

During the next academic year, the new President Ko Nu showed more defiant attitude to the university authorities. At the Men’s Final Debate held on 31st January 1936, he made a presidential speech before the audience including the honorable guests such as the members of the Cabinet, of the Legislative Council, judges of the High Court, barristers and other prominent citizens. On this occasion, he denounced the high-handed manners of the university administrators including the practice of salute to the faculty members by the students.

A few days later or in early February, the O-Way magazine edited by Ko Aung San was published for the academic year 1935-36. It was included an extract from a letter to the editor entitled “The Hell-Hound at Large” by Yama-Min. It referred to the activities of an undesirable person and described as follows:
"Escaped from Awizi (Hell) a devil in the form of a black dog.

Had been, during its brief span on earth a base object of universal odium and execration, sentenced to eternal damnation for churlishness, treachery, ruffianism, pettifogging, etc. A pimping knave with avuncular pretensions to some cheap wiggling wenches from a well-known hostel, he was also a hectic popularity hunter, shamming interest in sports, concerts and other extra-curricular student activities. His only distinguishing marks were buboes and ulcers due to errant whoring.

Will finder please kick him back to hell.”

After reading it, some students said that the person mentioned by the letter would be an imaginary person; representative of many such in the world. But the other believed that it referred to a particular person who really exists within the university compound. In fact most of them believed that the character in the above description aimed at bursar U Tin, a pet of the Principal. But the writer of this letter, Nyo Mya alias Yama-Min, said after 3 years that it did not aim at anyone in person but just intended to counteract the authoritarian manners of the imperialists (it meant university administrators) and Myanmar who associated them.

Needless to say, these consecutively appeared behaviours of defiance of the Union circle would incite the anger of the university authorities. In mid February, Mr. Sloss demanded explanation from Ko Nu for his inflammatory speech but the latter gave no explanation. Sloss also called for Aung San to reveal who the Yama-Min is. Aung San offered his apology but refused to identify the Yama-Min according to the journalistic etiquette.

On 21st February 1936, Ko Nu received the expulsion order from the Principal. However he kept it to himself alone, not wishing to cause trouble to anyone. But the news of his expulsion leaked out of the Principal’s office. As a result, the Union executive members met on 23rd February and decided to hold a student mass meeting on 25th to consider the situation. On 24th February, the executive members met again as it was strongly rumoured that Aung San was also going to be expelled from the university. They resolved unanimously not to appear for their examination in March 1936 in sympathy with Ko Nu and Aung San as they assumed that the Principal deliberately made such gestures to belittle the prestige of the Union. They also decided the decision was to be kept as a secret for a while and to be announced at the student mass meeting of the next day.

On 25th February, the Thuriya revealed the news of the expulsion of Ko Nu and it incensed the students. About 800 students attended at the mass meeting held at the Union Hall in the evening of the same day. They decided emotionally to stick with the executive members when Mr.
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Raschid, VP of the Union, disclosed their decision mentioned above. Thus the Second Students’ Strike began on 25th February 1936 even though the executive members did not make any proper preparations.

By seeing above events, it can be said that the confrontation between the authoritarian manners of the university administrators and the defiant attitude of the Union leadership would be the remote cause of the strike. The expulsion of the President and the impending expulsion of the Editor of the Union’s Magazine would be the immediate causes. Based on these remote and immediate causes, the Second Students’ Strike occurred as a spontaneous reaction of the students. On this occasion, the students’ prompt and spontaneous decision to go on strike would be a proof that not only the Union leaders but also the mass of students had resented the authoritarian manners of the university administrators.

As soon as the meeting ended, the student audience (about 800 strong including nearly forty girls) moved to Shwedagon with buses and encamped there. At the mass meeting of the strikers held at the Shwedagon platform on 26th February evening, the Boycotters’ Council including the Union executive, the twenty-four representatives from hostels (two per hostel) was formed. Ko Thein Pe, Ko Kyaw Nyein, Ko Nyo Mya and Ko Aye Cho were also co-opted onto the council. Ko Nu, M.A. Raschid and Ko Aung San were elected respectively as President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Boycotters’ Council. Ko Tha Hla, one of the Union executive later said that the Boycotters’ Council was composed entirely of students; outsiders were excluded in order to avoid the interference of the politicians. The council urgently drafted ten demands to be presented to the university administrators. The demands were as follows:

1. to amend the University Act of 1920,
2. to allow private students to sit for the University examinations,
3. to reduce tuition, hostel and examination fees,
4. to rescind the decision of the Governing Body of the University not to receive student representatives in it and to recognize the Union’s right to represent students’ grievances,
5. if the expulsion order of Ko Aung San was confirmed, to withdraw it and allow him to sit for the examination,
6. to withdraw the power of expulsion from the Principal and vest it only in the University Governing Body,
7. the Government and the University to promise not to abolish the Mandalay Intermediate College,
8. to allow students to inspect their examination answer sheets on payment of a fee,
9. to postpone the examinations for one month after the end of the strike in order to allow time for students to study, and
10. to promise not to punish strikers by direct or indirect means.

These demands were approved by the mass meeting of the strikers on 28th February. The demands were printed in the same day and distributed on 29th February. Of these demands, the first one was just the resurrection of the major demand of the first students' strike of 1920. Of the rest, some demands (No. 2-3, 5, 7-8) would be the attempts to champion the students' interests. Some (No. 4, 6) would be the indications that the students (perhaps the students' leaders) wanted elbow room for them in the administrative circle of the University. The last two (9 and 10) would reveal the emotion of strikers that they did not want to face any punishment and failure after the strike.

In short, it can be said that the Second Students' Strike would be an attempt to champion the students' interests against the authoritarian manners of the University administrators and to get more room for the students in administering the University. Simultaneously it can be seen that the demands of the strike did not go far beyond the student interests.

As soon as the strike began, the sympathizers did not hesitate to support the strikers. Deedok U Ba Cho, U Ba Khine, the Bar-at-Law U Kyaw Myint and Dr. Kyaw Nyein (a medical doctor) formed the Watch and Ward Committee on 26th February to provide the strike camp with foods, medicines and medical treatment. The townsfolk also contributed to the strike funds. The strike spread to Mandalay Intermediate College on 27th February and the Mandalay townsfolk also did not fail to support the strikers. In the meantime, the native press highlighted the strike's news and eulogized the strikers as self-sacrificing heroes. On 1st March, the university administrators announced that the impending examinations are suspended and the new schedule for exams would be declared soon.

Under such supportive circumstances, the strike spread rapidly nation-wide. During the first ten days of March, forty-five schools including government, missionary and national high schools from twenty-six major towns namely Mandalay, Meikhtila, Monywa, Shwebo, Myingyan, Pakokku, Minbu, Pyawbwe, Insein, Bago, Nyaunglebin, Thonze, Minhla, Paungde, Letpadan, Kyobingaouk, Pyay, Taungoo, Mawlamyaing, Mudon, Myaungmya, Pyapon, Pathein, Kyaiklat, Hinthada and Taunggyi went on sympathy strikes. Almost simultaneously, the schoolboys from the Cushing, St. John, Methodist and Government High School of Yangon as well as from the Teachers' Training College also joined the strike.

In those days, some members of the Legislative Council who did not hold the office utilized the
strike as a political weapon. Among them, Galon U Saw was the most active in utilizing the strike to denounce Dr. Ba Maw, the then Minister of Education. U Saw tried to keep in touch with the Shwedagon strike camp constantly on one hand. On the other he censured Dr. Ba Maw not only in the Legislative Council but also in the University Senate which both of them served as members, as the responsible person for the Students' Strike. He praised the strikers, the university students and the schoolboys alike, as heroes. It might be the attempt of aspirant U Saw to politicize the strike for his own political interest.

But the student leadership was cautious not to politicize the strike. On 5th March, Ko Aye Cho, a member of the Boycotters' Council, ridiculed Dr. Ba Maw as "Dr. Ba Shaw" (Dr. Worthless) while making a speech at the mass meeting of the strikers held at Shwedagon. Soon the Boycotters' Council issued an explanation signed by its Secretary Ko Aung San, that such kind of ridicule was not the opinion of the whole council but just the view of Ko Aye Cho alone. It continued that the Boycotters' Council assumed ‘the strike did not concern with politics’ and thus it did not intend to attack or slander any politician or political party. Thus the students' leadership revealed their tendency to maintain the strike as the students' affair alone and not to involve in the power struggles and personal conflicts of the outside political arena.

On 11th March, the Boycotters' Council let the strikers to go back to their homes under the pledge that they must come back to the strike camp when the council summons. But the council members left at the Shwedagon camp to conduct the respective duties for the strike. Some important leaders, viz. Ko Nu, Mr. Raschid and Ko Ohn toured Thonze, Letpadan, Minhla, Zigon, Gyobingauk, Paungde, Pyay, Myaungmya, Pathein, Hinthada, Mandalay, Sagaing, Yenangyaung, etc, to justify the strikers' demands and to encourage the sympathy strikes at the districts. During their tour, Ko Nu denounced the University Act of 1920 and the present education system as the system which would make the servitude prolonged. He eulogized the schoolboys who went on sympathy strike and exhorted the people to support earnestly the strike in order to get better education for their children. At Letpadan, Ko Nu denounced the local police who disturbed the strike and encouraged the townsfolk and strikers not to fear such disturbance because the strike did not concern politics. Of the other two, Mr. Raschid's speeches were found in the press though Ko Ohn's speeches were not found. During the tour, Mr. Raschid said that he would tell nothing about politics as he was just a student, and he would concentrate on the students' cause only. Hence it can be said that while Ko Nu was stressing the nationalist cause through the education channel, other leaders emphasized the strike not to pass through the boundary of the students' cause.
On 12th March, the University Council appointed a committee headed by pro-chancellor U Set to hear the grievances and testimony of the students as well as the faculty members. During the committee’s hearing made in March and April, the students including the leadership stressed their grievances concerning the high-handedness of Mr. Sloss and bursar U Tin. Finally the committee made Mr. Sloss and U Tin retired prematurely and elected the Professor U Pe Maung Tin as the new Principal. This alteration welcomed by the strikers and the tension between the administrators and the students also decreased. At the end of April, the committee submitted its report favouring the strikers’ demands to the Governor. Soon the Governor appointed a committee chaired by Justice Sir Mya Bu to review the University Act of 1920. Meanwhile, the authorities promised to concede much of the students’ demands after some negotiations between them and the student leaders.

On 8th and 9th May, an All Burma Students’ Conference under the chairmanship of Ko Nu was held at the Jubilee Hall. The University boycotters, student representatives from the districts which affected by the strike, and many observers attended the conference enthusiastically. At the conference, the students formed the All Burma Students’ Union (ABSU) with Mr. Raschid as its President and also decided to form the students’ unions in schools all over the country. On 10th May, the ABSU decided to call off the strike and on the next day, 11th May, the Second Students’ Strike was called off.

In short, the Second Students’ Strike drew the public attention and spread rapidly nation-wide mainly based on the eulogizing and encouraging of the press and some elder nationalists. Perhaps some elder elites attempted to utilize the strike for their own political interests. But the student leaders were cautious not to exceed the boundary of the student causes. Finally they ceased their fight after gaining some concessions by the authorities. Hence it can be said that the strike was just a fight of students for their own causes.

The DBA and the Strike
During the strike, Thakin Ba Sein who represented the DBA, came the strike camp several times to see the members of ‘Inner Council’. He persuaded the latter to place the conduct of the strike in the hands of the DBA. But the student leaders did not accept the offer as they believed they were competent enough to manage their own affairs. They replied Ba Sein that they would appreciate very much if the Thakins could serve on the Watch and Ward Committee. Thus another Thakin leader, Lay Maung served as a committee member during the strike. After the strike, the students described their gratitude to some committee members, viz. U Ba Cho, U Ba
Khine, U Kyaw Myint, etc. for supporting the strike heartily. But they did not mention the names of Lay Maung or other Thakins. Hence it can be assumed that the students did not give credit Lay Maung's contribution to the committee or perhaps Lay Maung did not labour for the strike as a committee member.

Moreover the criticism of some Thakins to the students' circle appeared during and after the strike. During the strike, the former denounced some student leaders especially Mr. Raschid and Ko Ohn, for allegedly negotiating with the authorities. These Thakins also criticized the students' circle for electing an Indian Muslim (Mr. Raschid) as the president of the ABSU. On this occasion, Thakin Ba Tin, a staunch Thakin at that time, later said that some Thakin leaders attempted to organize the students as a branch of the DBA by supporting the Second Students' Strike. The Yenangyaung DBA also sponsored a public meeting to support the strike when Mr. Raschid and Ko Ohn came to Yenangyaung to justify the strike. However, Ba Tin continued, there soon occurred differences of opinions between Thakin Ba Sein and student leaders concerning the electing of Mr. Raschid as the president of ABSU, and it created the unfriendly atmosphere between the DBA and students' circle.

When the Boycotters' Council decided to call off the strike at its meeting on 10th May, Thakin Ba Sein who attended the meeting as an observer, strongly denounced the student leaders for making such decision. On this occasion, Ko Nu sternly objected Ba Sein not to interfere in the students' affairs. Moreover Nu challenged Ba Sein to face each other as rivals in the political arena some day. Causing on this quarrel, soon they confronted and nearly fought each other at least two times, one time at the house of Deedok U Ba Cho and another time at the Shwedagon Pagoda. However, their confrontation finally died down because of the reconciliation of Thakin Kodaw Hmaing.

Hence it can be said that the DBA or some Thakin leaders attempted to manipulate the students' circle during the strike. Perhaps the refusal of the latter to the offer of Ba Sein made some Thakin leaders resented. Later criticism of some Thakins on the students' circle might stem from such resentment. Under such circumstances, it would be difficult to say that there had the friendly relations and co-operations between the DBA and the students during and after the strike. On this occasion, it should be noted that one of the proposals of Thakin leaders at the Yenangyaung conference was to organize the students. Hence it can be assumed that the attempts of some Thakin leaders to manipulate the students' circle during the strike would be an effort to implement the above proposal but failed.

After the strike, Ko Nu did not go back to the university and entered the political arena in late
1936. In September, Ko Nu, U Ba Cho and U Ba Khine formed the Fabian League which claimed to endeavour for gaining independence. Two years later or in mid 1938, U Ba Cho said that their clique firstly attempted to co-operate with the DBA in 1936 because both had the similar aim for the country: to gain independence. However, he revealed that some Thakin leaders rejected to co-operate and thus they formed the Fabian League of their own. Moreover U Ba Cho continued that their party tried again to co-operate with the DBA in 1937 as Thakin Kodaw Haming wished to do so. But some leading Thakins bitterly rejected their offer because they (U Ba Cho and colleagues) did not adopt the Thakin appellation. On this occasion, U Ba Cho said, the news leaked out of the Thakin camp that some Thakins intrigued against ‘Thabei-hmauk Gaun-hsaun Ko Nu’ (leader of the [Second Students'] Strike, Ko Nu) not to become a Thakin member. Because they thought there was a potential for Ko Nu to become the President of the DBA soon after he joined the Thakin camp mainly based on his fame and popularity, and they (some Thakin leaders) did not want such possibility.

Moreover, on 16th June 1938, Thakin Than issued a press statement which described the defects of Thakin Ba Sein while internal dissensions were occurring within DBA in mid 1938. In this statement, Than allegedly said that Ba Sein did not want the brilliant persons as the Thakin members because he actually wanted the followers, not colleagues. Because of such attitude of Ba Sein towards the brilliant ones, the student leaders namely Ko Nu, Ko Thi Han, etc, stayed away from the DBA (in 1936 - 37).

Based on the descriptions of U Ba Cho and Thakin Than, it can be assumed that some leading Thakins had unfriendly attitude towards the famous and brilliant student leaders in those days. A supportive description for such assumption was also found. Thakin Thein Pe (Thein Pe Myint) wrote, based on the view of the “Thakin Thadinza” (Thakin newspaper) that Ba Sein and colleagues especially the half-educated ones had the undesirable attitude towards the graduated youths to become the Thakin members lest the latter would manipulate the DBA.

By seeing such descriptions, it can be assumed that the Thakin leadership in the mid 1930s, namely Ba Sein and his immediate colleagues, might want the comparatively younger generation students as their followers but not the equal colleagues or the potential leaders of the DBA. There found no student recruits in those years while Ba Sein dominated the DBA. Of the leadership of 1936 strike, Ko Nu and Aung San joined the DBA in September 1938. In other words, they joined the Thakin camp after the Ba Sein group’s influence decreased in the DBA. Except them, none of the 1936 Strike’s leaders joined the Thakin camp. Mr. Raschid, second in command or the de facto boss of the strike, never become a Thakin member. Ko Ohn, another important leader of the strike
also did not join the Thakin camp and accepted a government scholarship for the rural reformation in September 1936\(^7\). Similarly, Nyo Mya *alias* Yama-Min who created an immediate cause of the strike also never became a Thakin and accepted a government scholarship for journalism in 1938\(^8\).

Another important leader of 1936 strike, Ko Kyaw Nyein who took charge of the security for the Shwedagon strike camp, was also never joined the Thakin camp\(^2\). Other Union executive or the core of the Boycotters’ Council namely Ko Thi Han, Ko Tun On, Ko Ba Set, Ko Tun Tin and Ko Tha Hla also never became the Thakin members. It is impossible to find out whether the participants of the 1936 Strike joined the DBA or not in those years because of the lack of documents. According to the Myanmar characteristic, however, the followers generally tended to follow the footsteps of the leaders who had the great personal charisma like Ko Nu, Aung San, etc. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the student circle did not join generally the Thakin camp during the years 1936-37.

**Conclusion**

The RUSU developed as a students’ welfare organization throughout 1920s under the close supervision of the university administrators. Its leadership circle was penetrated by a few activists for the first time in early 1930s but they could not change the original stance of the Union. In mid 1930s its leadership was totally occupied by the student activists and the new leadership defied the authoritarian manners of the university administrators. It led to the confrontations between the students’ circle and the administrators and as a result, the Second Students’ Strike broke out in early 1936. Thus the RUSU which was nurtured by the university administrators defied its erstwhile mentors. Henceforth the Union did not go back to its original stance and acted as a defiant organization during ensuing years.

The demands of the strikers mainly intended to protect and promote the students’ causes. The strike gained the popular support and spread rapidly nation-wide. On this occasion, some of the elder elite and the Thakins attempted to exploit or manipulate the strike for their own political interests. But the student leaders showed that they were competent enough to manage their affairs and did not allow the politicians to exploit their movement. Finally they ceased their fight after gaining some concessions by the authorities. Just before the strike was called off, they could convene the All Burma Students’ Conference and form the All Burma Students' Union. It was the establishment of the nation-wide students’ network for the first time and since then the students’ circle became the potential political entity of the country. Most importantly, the strike gave birth to the dependable leaders, viz. Ko Nu, Aung San, Kyaw Nyein, etc, who would play very important
role in the late colonial and post independence politics of Myanmar.

For the DBA, some Thakin leaders attempted to manipulate the strike with the aim of organizing the students as a branch of the DBA, but failed. Moreover the unsympathetic attitude of a few Thakin leaders towards the potential student leaders made the latter's joining to the Thakin camp impossible in those years. In short, it can be said that though the Second Students' Strike had its own significance, the DBA could not exploit the strike for its development.

Notes
1. *DoBamar* means Our Burmans or Our Myanmar people and *Asiayone* means Association. Thus the DoBamar Asiayone means the Our Brumans Association or Our Myanmar people Association. On this occasion, the Burmans or Myanmar people mean all nationalities live in Myanmar including the indigenous minorities, such as Shan, Mon, Karen, Kachin, etc.
3. *Thakin* means Master or Lord. In monarchical Myanmar, this term was used in addressing the members of royal court and high ranking officials by the commoners. After Myanmar was occupied by the British, the new rulers made the natives to call them as Thakin (Master or Lord) or Thakingyi (Great Master or Great Lord).
6. 根本 敬, '1930年代ビルマ・ナショナリズムにおける社会主義受容の特質' (*The Acceptance of Socialism by Burmese Nationalists during the 1930s*), 東南アジア研究 27巻 4号 1990年3月, 京都大学 東南アジア研究センターページ442.

11. Though little is known of his early life, Ko Tun Sein served as the part-time tutor for mathematics at the Yangon University in 1928-30. He helped the Thakins to perform the DoBamar Song at the Thaton Hall on 19th July 1930. Soon he quit the tutorship and joined the law classes. See DBAT I, p. 134. See also Myint Swe, Dr., ‘Yangon Tekathou Thamega i Pahtama-zone Oukahta Ko Tun Sein’ (The first and foremost president of the RUSU, Ko Tun Sein), *O-Way i Shweyatu-thabin Letyweizin*, (Yangon: O-Way, 1971), pp. 75, 79.


14. Ko Thein Pe, son of U Ba and Daw Myint, was born in Budalin of Monywa sub-division on 14th July 1914. He matriculated at the Buddhist High School of Monywa. He joined the Mandalay Intermediate College (1932) and the Yangon University (1933). He got the B.A. in 1935 and joined the DBA in the same year. See *Who’s Who in Burma*, p. 114. See also Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein* (First published 1961, repr. Yangon: Saroak-zay, 1999), pp. 20-1.

15. Ko Kyaw Nyein, son of U Poe Toke, lawyer and Daw Thon, was born in Pyinmana of Yamethin district on 8th March 1915. He matriculated in 1932 and joined the Mandalay Intermediate College. He and Ko Thein Pe were active in protesting against the decision of the Governing Body of the Yangon University to abolish the Mandalay Intermediate College. Then he joined the Yangon University in 1933 and got the B.A. (Hons.) in 1937. See *Who’s Who in Burma*, p. 120. See also Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, pp. 20-2.
16. Ko Aung San, son of U Pha and Daw Su, was born in Natmauk of Magwe district on 13th February 1915. He matriculated at the National High School of Yenangyaung in 1932 and joined the Yangon University. See the ‘Bio data of Thakin Aung San’, Burma List No. 5, dated 1st January 1941, compiled by the Burma Police Department, p. 2.

17. Ko Thi Han, son of U Poe Lein and Daw Tin, was born in Paungde of Pyay district in September 1912. He matriculated in 1929 and continued his education up to B. Sc. senior at Yangon University (1929-36). He became an associate of student activists, viz. Ko Nu, Aung San, Thein Pe, Kyaw Nyein, Ko Ohn, etc. in mid 1930s. See ‘Who’s Who in Burma’, The Guardian Magazine Vol. VI, No. 5 (May, 1959), p. 34.

18. Ko Nu, son of U San Tun and Daw Saw Khin, was born in Wakema of Myaungmya district on 25th May 1907. He matriculated at the Myoma National High School of Yangon and got the B. A. from the Yangon University in 1929. He returned to the university in 1930 to read law but did not finish the course. He returned again to the university in 1934 to read law. See Who’s Who in Burma, p. 117. See also Nu, U, Saturday’s Son. Trans. by Law Yone, edited by Kyaw Win (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 61.

19. The National Day celebration (to commemorate the First Students’ Strike of 1920) was held annually since 1922 and it was mainly sponsored by the CNE. See BSPP, the National Day, pp. 409-12.


21. M. A. Raschid, son of M. A. Sakur and Ahmadi Begum, was born in Allahabad of the United Provinces of India on 1st November 1912. He matriculated at the Randeria High School of Yangon and got the B.Sc. from the Yangon University. Then he continued his education at the university for B.L. in the academic year 1935-36. See Who’s Who in Burma, p. 136.

22. Ko Ohn, son of U Thant and Daw Sun May, was born in Taungoo on 14th April 1913. He matriculated at the Missionary School of Taungoo and got the B.A. from the Yangon University in 1934. Then he continued his study at the University to read law. See Myanmar Swezounkyan Hnichou 1982 (Myanmar Encyclopedia Yearbook 1982) (Yangon: Sarpy Beikman, 1982), p. 320.

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See also Nyo Mya, ‘Kyundaw Ngayekhwei Hsaunghba yeizinga’ (While I was writing the essay ‘The Hell Hound at large’), O-Way Letyweizin, pp. 88-9.

24. Maung Maung. From Sallgha to Laty, pp. 130, 265, f. n. 29.


26. Nu, Saturday’s Son, p. 76-7. But Ko Nu did not describe the name of “the Thakin” in his book.


28. In 1916, the Literary and Debating Society was formed at the Yangon College with the Principal as its ex-officio president. Its basic aims were to widen the students’ knowledge, reinforce their confidence in public speaking, etc. Since its inception, the society sponsored the Men and Women debates almost annually. Based on the encouragement both of the faculty members and the students, debating became one of the most exiting students’ activities at the university. When the Union was formed in 1923, the debates were sponsored by the Union since then. See Aye Kyaw, The Voice of Young Burma, pp. 53-4.


(b) Nu, Saturday’s Son, p. 78.


31. Tha Hla, Maung, ‘The 1936 Rangoon University Strike’ Part VI, New Burma Weekly, dated 2nd August 1958, p. 13, extract from the O-Way magazine issued in February 1936. The O-Way Magazine which was included the letter entitled “The Hell-Hound at large” was published only 500 copies. See Nyo Mya, ‘Ngayekhwei’, O-Way Letyweizin, p. 92. It is difficult to find this issue because of its few circulations. In this paper, therefore, the above mentioned letter was extracted from Maung Tha Hla’s article.

32. ‘The University and Schools Strike’, O-Way magazine, p. 2.

33. U Tin was born on 3rd February 1906 in Myan-aung of Hinthada district. He graduated from the Yangon University and University of London, and joined the I.C.S. in 1929 but resigned soon. Then he served as the bursar of the Yangon University. See Who’s Who in Burma, p. 182.

34. Nyo Mya, son of U Tha Zan, lawyer and Daw An, was born in Amyint town of Monywa subdivision on 16th April 1916. He matriculated in 1932 and joined the Yangon University in 1933. He got the B.A. (Hons) in 1939. See Myanmar Swezounkyan Hnichou 1986 (Myanmar
35. Nyo Mya, 'Ngayekhwei', *O-Way Letyweizin*, p. 93. In his valuable work, The Voice of Young Burma, a Myanmar scholar U Aye Kyaw mis-described Ko Aung San as the author of "The Hell-Hound at large". He also wrote that this description "implicitly criticized Principal Sloss" by referring the O-Way Magazine Vol. VI, No. 1 (Sep. 1936). See Aye Kyaw, *The Voice of Young Burma*, p. 68. In fact, the O-Way magazine which he referred did not identify the author of "The Hell-Hound at large" and the one who was criticized by this letter.

36. 'The University and Schools Strike', *O-Way magazine*, p. 2.


39. In the academic year 1935-36, there were 1,393 students (1,230 male students plus 163 female students) at the Yangon University. See Aye Kyaw, *The Voice of Young Burma*, p. 70.

40. 'The University and Schools Strike', *O-Way magazine*, p. 3.

41. During the colonial days, the Yangon University was the only university in Myanmar. Hence the university had to provide the hostels for the students who came from all over the country.

42. Tha Hla, '1936 Strike' III, *New Burma Weekly*, dated 5th July 1958, p. 13. Among the members of the Boycotters' Council, however, Ko Thein Pe was not a student at that time and already joined the DBA previous year. But it should be noted that he was a staunch follower of Ko Nu at that time. See Thein Pe Myint, *Kyaw Nyein*, p. 150.

43. (a) 'Rangoon University Boycotters' Demands', *O-Way magazine*, app. III.

(b) 'The University and Schools Strike', *O-Way magazine*, p. 6. Two more demands relating to the re-admission of school strikers without penalty and all those who pass the High School Final Examination be declared eligible for matriculation in the Yangon University were added after schoolboys had gone on sympathy strikes. See *Ibid.*, p. 6.

44. It meant that the students who failed in any University examination to be allowed to sit for the supplementary exam without being required to attend the classes. See 'Statement submitted by the Rangoon University Boycotters', *O-Way magazine*, app. I. On this occasion, however, the meaning of the "private students" was not clear.

45. (a) *Thuriya*, dated 2, 4, 3, 1936.

(b) Tha Hla, '1936 Strike' III, p. 12.


50. Though Ko Nu was the leader of the strike in the public scene, the real leader of strike was Mr. Raschid who was closely associated by Ko Ohn. Hence Mr. Raschid was termed by Tha Hla, one executive member of the Union, as “*the de facto boss*” of the strike. See Thein Pe Myint’s foreword in his *Thabei-hmauk Kyaungtha* (Boycotted student) (First published 1938, repr. Yangon: Bagan, 1967), pp. 16–7. See also Tha Hla, ‘1936 Strike’ IV, *New Burma Weekly*, dated 19th July 1958, p. 13.


53. *Ibid*.

54. (a) *Ibid*, dated 18, 21, 22, 23. 3. 1936 & 8, 10. 4. 1936.

(b) Maung Maung, *From Sangha to Laity*, pp. 134, 267, f. n. 50.


56. As soon as the Boycotters’ Council was formed, a smaller council called the ‘*Inner Council*’ which would hold the supreme authority concerning the strike, was created out of the mother body. It consisted of nine executive members of RUSU and a few others. See Tha Hla, ‘1936 Strike’ III, p. 13.

57. *Ibid*.


61. Other local DBAs might support the strike but the document concerning it was not found. *Thuriya* newspaper reported that the townsfolk of Pyay and Letpadan disliked the attempts of local Thakins to involve in the sympathy strike of their respective towns. See *Thuriya*, dated 10 & 16. 3. 1936.


63. ‘Bio data of Thakin Nu’, Burma List No. 17, dated 1938, compiled by the Burma Police Department, p. 382.

64. *Thuriya*, dated 2. 9. 1936.
65. Ibid. dated 18.6.1938.

66. Thakin Than was a close associate of Thakin Ba Sein in 1936–37. He was arrested together with Ba Sein on 28th June 1936 for making allegedly seditious speeches and imprisoned together with the latter. See Thuriya, dated 29.6.1936 & 12.11.1936.


68. The Thakin Thadinza was published firstly on 1st March 1939 as the official organ of the Ba Sein-Tun Ok faction after the split of the DBA. Its editor was Thakin Nyi and publisher was Thakin Tun Ok. See Htin Gyi (Tekathou), Myanmar Naingan Thadinza-myar Ahnyun Pahtama-twe (Index of the newspapers in Myanmar, Vol. 1) (Yangon: Sarpay Baikman, 1992), p. 282.


72. However Professor Cady mis-described Ko Nu, Aung San and Kyaw Nyein as Thakin-cum-student leaders during the Second Students' Strike. See Cady, Modern Burma, pp. 379, 382.