

Myanmar Literature Project

မြန်မာစာပေစီမံကိန်း

Hans-Bernd Zöllner (ed.)

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Material on Ba Hein, *The World of Capitalists* and
Hla Shwe, *Capitalism*

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About the Contributors

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Tin Hlaing, born 1941, comes from a rural background, being born in Thakutpinle village, Monywa district. He studied physics in Mandalay University and from 1972 on did graduate work in London University where he got his Ph.D. degree. and did his doctorate there. – Tin Hlaing taught in universities in Burma for 30 years and later became a Director-General in the Ministry of Science and Technology. Since retirement, Tin Hlaing writes books and articles on science, technology, culture, history and education. His translation of Abdul Kalam's book 'Ignited Minds' won the National Literary Award for Translation

Tin Htway was born in 1930 in Monywa. He attended the University of Rangoon from 1947 to 1952 and finished his I.A. and B.A. (English, Burmese Language, Literature, and History) there. From 1967 to 1969 he studied at SOAS in London and obtained a M.Phil (Burmese Language and Literature). From 1969 until his retirement in 1995, he was Lecturer for the Burmese language at the University of Heidelberg. He now lives in a small town near this city.

Kyaw Hoe studied Library Science at Yangon University and obtained his M.A. degree with a work on the Nagani Book Club. He later retired from the library field and became a merchant.

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Georg Noack was born in 1977 in Hannover, Germany. He studied at Hamburg University and Humboldt University Berlin (Southeast-Asian studies, ethnology) specializing himself in Burma studies. He perfected his language skills in Myanmar and in 2005 received his M.A. from the Humboldt University with a thesis on the exposition of gender in Burmese novels. He is now working towards his Ph.D.

Gunnar Peters studied physics and South-Asian studies at Humboldt University in Berlin. There he started to learn the Burmese language by Dr. Uta Gärtner. From 1997-98 he studied Burmese at the University of Foreign Languages in Yangon, Burma. After obtaining his degree in physics, he worked for five years as a Burmese interpreter for the International Committee of the Red Cross in Burma. Later he also worked as Thai interpreter in Southern Thailand. At present he works as a freelance translator and compiles an English-Shan dictionary.

I. INTRODUCTION (Hans-Bernd Zöllner)

Heralding another Book Club

The “World of Capitalists” (Burmese: ဓနုရှင်လောက) was the first book published by Tun Aye’s Myanmar Publishing House¹ after being split off from the Nagani Book Club. According to the “Catalogue of Books”, which was kept by the British administration, it was published in June 1939.² The publisher was referred to as “Ko Tun E, Burma Publishing House, Phayre Street³, Rangoon”, and the printing house was the Burma Cinema Press, a company which printed the first Nagani books before the publishing house established its own printing shop, Nagani Press. The book comprised of 269 pages;⁴ 3,000 copies were printed, and a copy of the book would be sold for eight Annas.⁵

In many ways the book alluded to the difference in character of the new publishing house. First, it was sold at a lower price than Nagani books.⁶ Second, the cover displayed a torch, which was placed on a red background and lifted by the strong arm of a universal worker.⁷ This logo represented a modern international symbol instead of Nagani’s dragon, which, in turn, represented Burmese traditions. In addition, the lettering of the author’s name, Ba Hein, at the lower right edge of the cover, became a distinctive motif for further publications. Most importantly, it was the author himself who personified the dawn of a new era for Burma in a comprehensive way.

To demonstrate Ba Hein’s significance, a closer look at the events which happened in Burma prior the book’s publication, and the author’s involvement in these events, may be helpful.

¹ The name of the house can also be translated as “Myanmar Distribution Agency”. In some cases, the business of publishing and distributing books was carried out by different agencies, sometimes they were done by the same enterprise. The printing was the third part of the whole process (see footnote 5).

² According to the last page of the book, it was finished on May 29, 1939.

³ In the book, the Burmese name of the street (Pansodan) as well as the house numbers 257-261 were given. Sir Arthur Phayre (1812-1885) was in Burma since 1834, and was first Chief Commissioner of British Burma from 1862-67. In 1883, he published the first history of Burma based on Burmese sources. “Pansodan” denoted the street as a place where clothes were dyed.

⁴ Two more pages were added. On the first one, the publisher thanked U Ba Tu, the manager of the printing house, and all the others who collectively helped to produce the book. The second page advertised the next book (“Explanation of Europe”), which was published by Myanmar Publishing House.

⁵ One rupee consisted of 16 Annas.

⁶ By comparison, a Nagani book on Abraham Lincoln, with fewer pages, published in April 1939, was sold for ten Annas.

⁷ See page 10.

Ba Hein and the Alliance of Students, Thakins and Workers

Ba Hein enrolled at Rangoon University in summer 1938. He immediately joined the Students' Union after he had already been actively involved in the 1936 students' strike at his previous school in Mandalay.¹ He worked together with Aung San who, at the time, was President of both, the University of Rangoon and the All Burma Students' Union. Student politics focused on negotiations with the government headed by Dr. Ba Maw, leader of the first Burmese government after the new constitution of 1935, about an amendment to the Rangoon University Act as a consequence of the strike of 1936. These negotiations, however, were overshadowed by a strike by oil-field workers in Upper Burma, which had started in January, 1938 and which was heavily influenced by the activities of the local *Dobama* branch as well as the headquarters of the organisation in Rangoon. The students finally rejected the results of their talks with the government² since they wanted to show their solidarity with the workers' demands, among other political issues.

Partly as a consequence of the students' general involvement in the country's politics, Aung San resigned from his post on October 1, 1938. Together with Nu and other students he became a member of the *Dobama Asiayone*, which stood under the patronage of Thakin Kodaw Hmine alias Saya Lun.³ From now on, they named themselves *Thakin* Aung San and *Thakin* Nu.⁴ On December 3, Ba Hein was elected President as Aung San's successor for both student unions. He became immediately involved in the march of workers from Upper Burma to Rangoon, which had been stopped in Magwe by order of the District Commissioner on December 5. The leaders of the march were arrested.⁵ The *Dobama Asiayone*, having incited the strike, asked the students for support. The students' organisation decided to send Ba Hein and student union's secretary Ba Swe⁶ to Magwe. Together with Thakin Soe and Thakin Htein Win,⁷ who went to Magwe by a different route, they were thought to help the marchers reach Rangoon. After arrival in Magwe, Ba Hein presented an

¹ For some more information on the strike see the forthcoming Volume 4 of this series.

² For a detailed account of the events see Maung Maung (1980), *From Sangha to Leity. Nationalist Movements of Burma 1920-1940*. New Delhi, Manohar: pp.151-158. Disputes like this one, between the British controlled government and nationalistic groups, usually took place on two levels, a factual and a principal one.

³ For details see Volume 2 of this series.

⁴ On the title of *thakin* (English: lord, master) and the *Dobama*-movement until 1938 see Khin Yi (1988), *The Dobama Movement in Burma 1930-1938*. Ithaca, Cornell University.

⁵ The march started on November, 30. Its main goal was to raise public awareness and support for the demands of the workers. For details see Maung Maung 1980: 159-163.

⁶ Ba Swe later became a leader of the Burmese socialist party and the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League (AFPFL), served as minister under the premiership of Nu, and replaced him in 1956 when Nu chose to step down for some time in order to reorganise the AFPFL. The rivalry between him and Kyaw Nyein on one side and Nu, and other leaders of the organisation on the other contributed to the split of the AFPFL in 1958.

⁷ Both of them were instrumental in founding the Nagani Book Club.

emotional speech to the workers, which caused a double breakthrough. Ba Hein and Ba Swe were arrested and these news were widely published in Rangoon. The goal of raising public awareness concerning the march was fully achieved now. The workers continued their march despite the threat of being shot at by the police, who had received order to prevent the students from marching. After the strikers reached Rangoon, in early January, another student strike in support of their plight, and in support of the Burmese peasants, who had also marched towards the capital, spread through Burma.

Ba Hein and Ba Swe were released on February 28, 1939. Shortly afterwards Nagani published a pamphlet of 55 pages, entitled “Students’ Rebellion”, which was written by Ba Hein. According to the “Catalogue of Books”, 50,000 copies were printed and the booklet was sold for three Annas.¹ This publication was a clear sign that Ba Hein could be regarded as a national hero. His person not only combined commitment to the cause of the underprivileged, but also literary ability, and personal charisma. A book written by him on capitalism was not regarded as just an academic exercise by a young student, but as a result of personal experience and commitment. Both dimensions, the personal and the factual, were expressed in the book’s two forewords.

The Godfathers

Two different forewords preceded Ba Hein’s characterisation of capitalism. The forewords were written by the future leaders of the two Burmese Communist Parties, Than Tun (1911-1968) and Soe (1906-1989). Than Tun contributed a personal foreword, whereas Soe introduced the topic of Ba Hein’s book.² Both men were some years older and more experienced than Ba Hein. Both were founding members of Nagani³ and had joined the *Dobama Asiayone* of which Ba Hein was not yet a member. It was Thakin Kodaw Hmine (Saya Lun) who had promoted the joining of the younger activists. Their accession to the organisation further increased already existing tensions between the older and more nationalist-minded leaders, and the younger “internationalists” such as Aung San, Than Tun and Soe. The circulation of “leftist” literature by Nagani had contributed to the conflict, which finally caused the split of the association in October 1938.⁴

¹The book is No.18 in Kyaw Hoe’s bibliography. A copy of the original pamphlet has not yet been obtained but a typed transcript exists and can be ordered from the editor.

²The word နိဒါန်း that heads Soe’s contribution, is the usual term to denote the introduction or foreword to a book, whereas အမှာ carries the connotation of a personal message. The relationship of both terms can best be compared to the word pair “digital” and “analog” as elaborated in communications theory.

³ See the leaflet reproduced in Vol. 1 of this series.

⁴ For details see Maung Maung 1980: 145-151 and Khin Yi 1988: 84-94.

It was another mixture of personal disagreement and ideological differences, which caused Tun Aye to leave Nagani, which was dominated by Nu and his friends. We learn from Than Tun's foreword that he too turned away from Nagani, only one month after the publication of Soe's book "Socialism" (ဆိုရှယ်လစ်ဝါဒ), which came out in June 1938.¹ The publication of Ba Hein's book in Tun Aye's new publishing house, supported by two leading promoters of socialist and communist ideas, can thus be considered an intentional and carefully designed step to announce publicly a new era of pure socialist theory and practice in Burma. Than Tun's foreword provided a detailed insight into how cautiously and conscientiously this venture was reflected both with regard to the persons and the topic involved. This document may help significantly to conceptualize the many attempts to start something "new" in Burma's history in a differentiated manner.

The Message and its Multi-Layered Background

According to Thakin Hla Kun's memories,² Ba Hein's book strongly influenced him in becoming a Communist. These memories signify the intention of Tun Aye and his friends to disseminate a "purer" version of the message to achieve independence than propagated by Nagani and other publishing houses. Together with Than Tun's and Soe's forewords, Thakin Hla Kun's recollection also shows that the new message consisted of a combination of "right thought" adopted from a Western socialist³, "right speech" as demonstrated through Ba Hein's ability to write in a persuasive manner, "right action" as shown by the author's selfless deeds, and "right efforts" of the new publishing enterprise to make this and future books accessible to the public.

These characteristics are borrowed from the "Noble Eightfold Path" propagated by Buddha. The new book club consequently could be interpreted as an attempt to publicize a new secular *dhamma* not (yet) stained by the many aberrations and abuses that Buddha's teaching had suffered in the course of history in Burma and elsewhere. Additionally, that idea of a "pure doctrine", essential in the theory and practice of Buddhism, may have shaped the understanding of the new gospel.

Of course, these and other deliberations need to be elaborated and critically discussed. This volume – as with the rest of this series – is ~~are~~ meant to stimulate contributions of that kind.

¹ For Soe's book, see Vol. 10 of this series.

² See Vol. 1 of this series.

³ Rajini Palme Dutt was the son of an Indian father and a Swedish mother who studied at Oxford. In 1940, he published a book his fatherland (*India Today*). See below under section 7 of this Volume.

About this Volume

The various assessments of Ba Hein's book are presented in a chronological order after three reproductions, which give an idea of how the message of this book and its successor were transmitted visually. The first assessments- is Than Tun's foreword followed by Soe's more factual introduction.

Next comes a short appreciation from Tin Htway's thesis, submitted in 1969, on the emergence of Burmese political writing, and Kyaw Hoe's summary, written in 1974, in his Nagani bibliography. Two book reports written in 2005 and commentaries on them conclude, though not completely, this series of appraisals. Finally, some information about Rajini Palme Dutt, the author of the book that was used by Ba Hein, is presented.

As an appendix, some information is provided regarding booklet on capitalism, published by Nagani about two months before Ba Hein's book and written by another student leader. Hla Shwe was a medical student¹ and Ba Hein's deputy as leader of the students' union in late 1938. Consequently, he was in charge after Ba Hein's arrest in Magwe.² As indicated by the epithet *arnashin* ("dictator") often used to characterise him, he performed his task in a rather powerful and resolute manner. Like Ba Hein, his prominence rested on his movement in the students' involvement in the events of 1938.

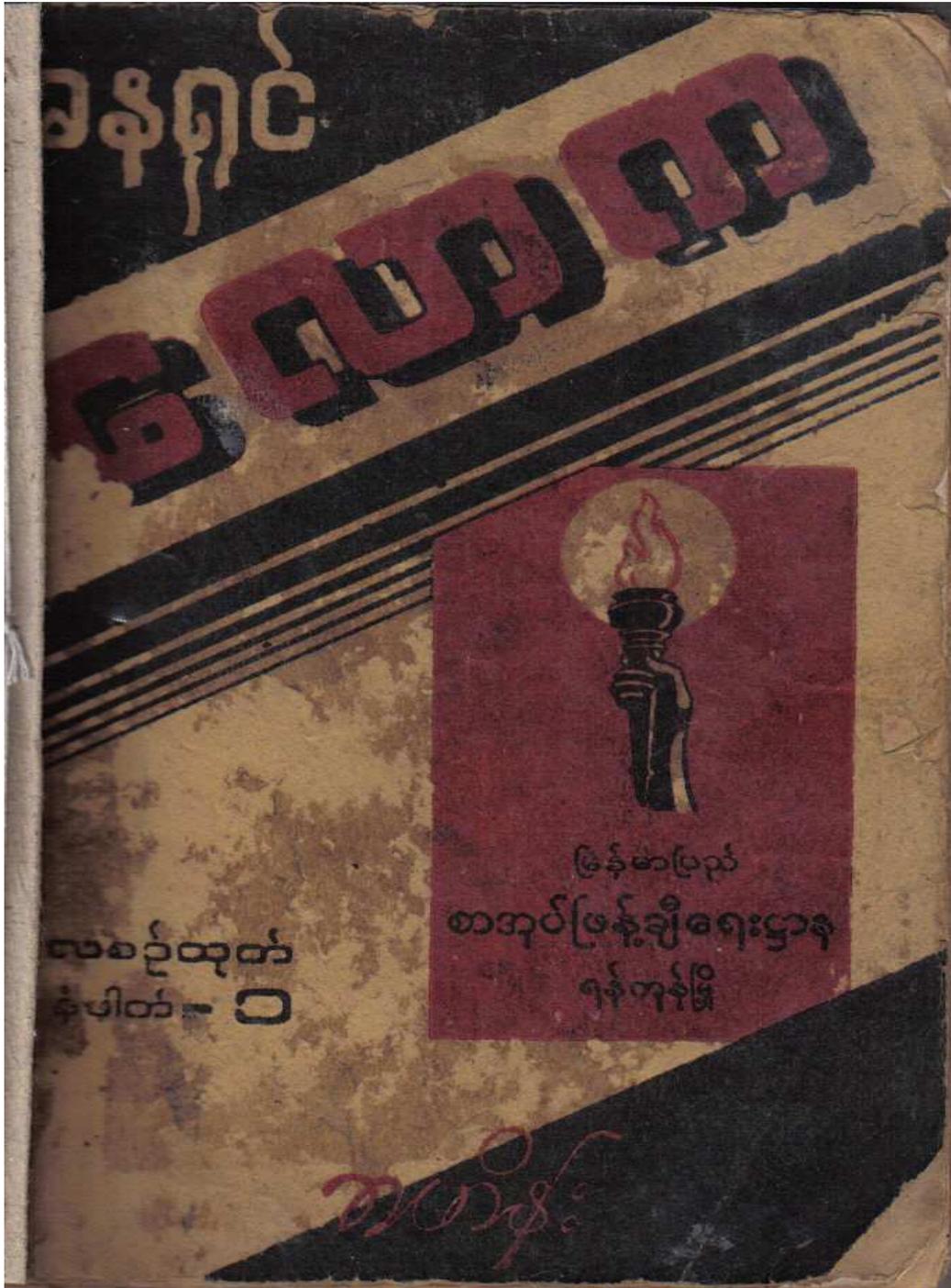
This Working Paper may be helpful to provide some more insight into the assessment of capitalism by the young Burmese revolutionaries.

Hans-Bernd Zöllner

July 2009 (last update)

¹ Later, he wrote a book on the sexual life of married couples (Nagani book no. 39).

² On his role in the events see Khin Yi 1988: 24-31.



Title page



Back page,
introducing the next book, which is
entitled "Europe".

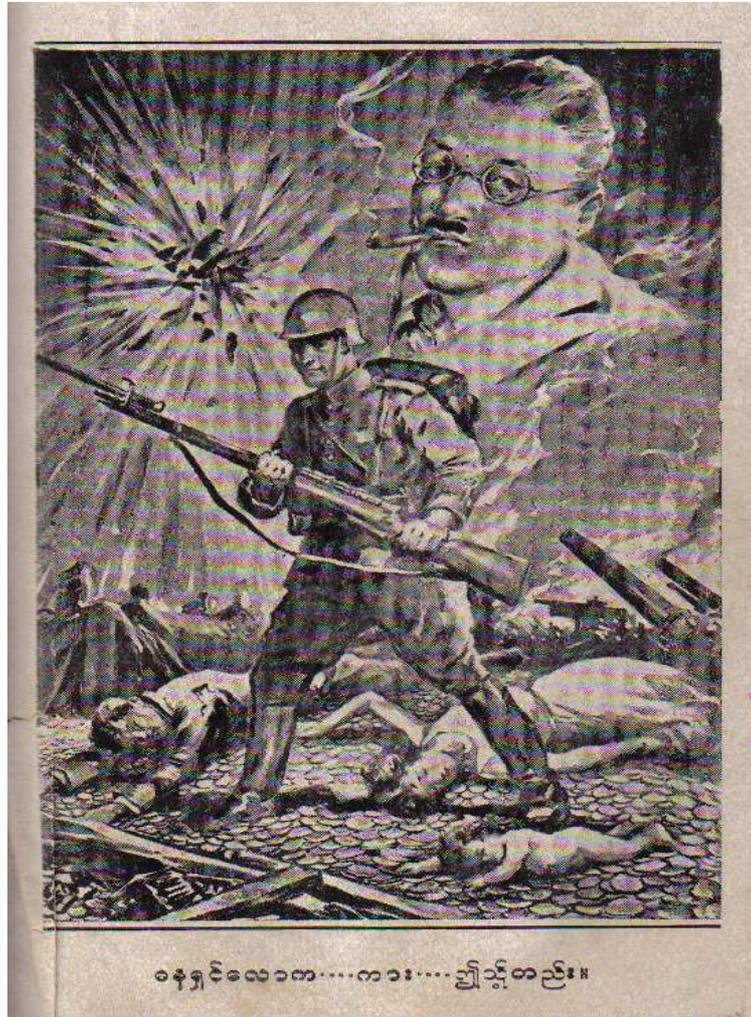


Illustration before the forewords.

Translation:

The World of Capitalists just..... like this.

II. FOREWORD and INTRODUCTION

1. Than Tun, Foreword

Translation: Thakin Hla Kun¹

It is several days now since this preface was wanted to be written. When somebody wanted me to do a certain job, the first question that comes to knock my brain is if I want to do that job or not. The job that I do not want to do tend to be finished in no time. The job that is wanted to be done with real goodwill tend to be delayed postponing day, after day.

As a matter of fact, this is not due to laziness nor the pressure of work. The earnest benevolence of the wish to make that job as best as possible makes me at a loss for choosing where and how to start.

On the day Ko Ba Hein told me to write the preface for his book I collected an exercise book and made a careful preparation. His text file I set before me. Every time I tried to edit it, I saw the big heading "The Six Thousand Year Journey". I felt tired in my chest.

I felt confusion in my head and at a loss for thoughts as to how I must edit it and how I must write a preface for the book that began with the "six thousand year journey".

He asked me for it every time he met me and I had to tell him often the date to give it to him. The publishers also came to ask me make hurry. Ko Ba Hein seemed to have become disheartened. He did not appear any more.

One night Ko Ba Hein came to me with Ko Hla (the president of the student union at Thanlyin). We went to China Town for a bite of 'Khaukswe' (noodles). On return, at my door, I asked him, 'what kind of preface do you want? is it about you or about the book?' He replied "It's about the book I want. If you don't want to write, leave it". He said with a wheedling tone.

I remarked "you are like a naughty child". Then he bolted.

I have five or six young men of my age who are the same naughty, although I am still just past 20 years. I am fond of them, have personal attachment. This personal attachment is a kind of heresy. It is not the objectivity practiced by Thakins. I am still immature man nor a mature Thakin yet. So I cannot see objectively. So Ko Ba Hein is one person among some I have personal attachment. When Ko Ba Hein has said with a sulking mien, I could not refuse, or postpone. So, I decided to

write with a mind to work on it as best as I could.

The information that Ko Ba Hein and Co. are writing books came to us before the HQ of Dobama Asiayone moved to the Shwedagon platform. I felt glad for them with the thought that it is quite good to use the free hours there reading and writing. I searched for the books they needed and duly sent to them.

I heard Thakin Soe also is working on a book. He has now joined hands with Ko Ba Hein. The writing of B.H now is sure to have 'an air of bookishness'.

These are my opinions before I have seen the book.

When Thakin Soe came out from the prison, he brought two files. One is his book and the other is Ko Ba Hein's.

The handwritings are almost identical. The bindings and packings are also the same. Yes, what I thought is correct.

The things that came to my eyes as soon as I turned the pages were the footnotes and the fill-in words or phrases that were wedged into narrow lines and the tiny words for those missed out.

The third significance is the newly-coined strange Burmese words. When Thakin Soe wrote the book on Socialism, he made all English terms joined with Pali words and invented strange terminology. As for Ko Ba Hein, he accepted those words and then added his own new coinage. May be, this seems to be the result of the faith in Socialist concept which holds that man developed step by step in the manner of coming up the spiral stairs!

The fourth significant thing is the way the book was written and the way chapters were decided. These followed the sample of what the top communist leaders of England made.

Especially, Ko Ba Hein's book is quite like the book entitled "Fascism and Social Revolution" by R.P.Dutt.

Ko Ba Hein's book cannot be said to be a translation of that book, which was written five years ago. During these long years, the world situation has changed quite much. At the time when that book was written, communists had been sticking fast to the concept of strongly suppressing other political camps. Social-Democracy was the biggest enemy for the communists at that time.

Social-Democratism held the theory that political power must be gained gradually while serving the interests of the poor as much as possible. Communists do not agree to that theory. They were

¹ On Thakin Hla Kun see Vol. 1 of this series.

putting out the call to start rebellion (time is up for that) because the world has sunk deeper and deeper into poverty. Communists then believed in an extreme act to press down Social Democracy alleging the latter as soft and slow and because of that workers' victory for winning power has been delayed. At that time Communists even encouraged Fascism. Their reasoning was workers would not be able to stand the harsh oppression by Fascism which is a sure thing. As a result workers will rise up with arms against Fascism. Just for a quick insurrection to develop, Communists gave encouragement to Fascism.

But they were mistaken. After Hitlerite Fascism gained power in 1934 in Germany, workers and poor people were subjected to strong suppression with arms. This extreme action destroyed the strength of the workers and the rising momentum of revolution declined.

In 1935 the seventh congress of the Communist International was held. That congress analyzed the developing world situation and the strength of Communist Parties in various countries. On the basis of that analysis that congress adopted a resolution to the effect that communists are to become united with all political forces which stand for freedom, civilization, progress and peace, to fight Fascism and war.

The book (by R.P. Dutt) which was written at the time the policy followed by the Communist Parties all over the world has not been changed is no longer compatible with the world that has already changed. Although the facts contained in that book might be good to be used, it is not good to accept all the conclusions made therein. No good advantage can be seen from translating that kind of book.

However, Ko Ba Hein has used many of the facts from that book as they are very useful. He chose those facts where they are needed and wrote his book to agree with the changing times.

To look at the "Six Thousand year long journey" with the human eyes is quite long. But when looked at that journey with the eyes of intellect, or the historical eyes, that journey is quite short. It can be thought as just a little more than nothing.

That journey can be seen as man's movement upward on a spiral stairway to the present-day stage of progress and civilization: from the days of early man who climb trees and live in dens, battling with beasts of prey or (to use the modern word, the age of living underground and flying up the sky): from the era of plenty when man fed from natural growth of edible corn and fruits: from the slave age when priests, brahmins and royals dominate: from feudalism where landlords and aristocrats were in dominance: from the age of capitalism when capital reigns to exploit the poor

people for profit. In this way we can find the upward stages of man's development.

Those who wish to understand Socialism and those who wish to study the present - day world, must try to know first the early man's progress up to the present stage.

History's forward march does not stop with this. Capitalism extends its influence within the bounds of a country at first. For its greed for profit it expands its influence to other countries. Thus Capitalism develops into Imperialism because of its greed for profit.

In this process Capitalism does not remain content even after it had already cut up the world between rivals into areas of its exploitation. So it turned against one another developing into imperialist wars for redistribution of territories for exploitation. The 1914-18 World War was the first volume of the series of imperialist wars.

At the end of that war the whole world lost its breath. Then mobilization of strength for another bout was made. Show of strength through whacking with open palm on the arm, kicking with legs, and striking with palm was the sign. But there was not actual entanglement yet. Only the rivals had suffered small physical pain at this stage.

Afterwards, the actual imperialist war started with the threats made by Hitler, Mussolini and others, by Japan's invasion against China, by the Italian aggression against Abyssinia and Albania leading to their occupation and the overthrow of the popular Spanish Republican Government by the Francoite fascist rebel forces.

However, this war at that stage had not grown as a global conflagration as yet, which awaited a little measure of time.

The reasons underlying the growth of imperialism out of capitalism and the growth of fascism within the bounds of imperialism are not the poor morality of those people called capitalists. They represent the outcome of the historical processes that have undergone natural change.

The significant feature of capitalism is: collective work coupled with division of labour in the production of commodities. Capitalist age at its early stage encouraged research and that had greatly increased the productivity of the means of production and of labour.

England saw the twenty-seven times increase of productivity some one hundred years ago over that of one hundred and seventy years ago. As for today the increase registered a further hundred times than that of the past hundred years. If reckoned on a global scale the increase is some six hundred times more than it was one hundred years or so ago.

This kind of increase in productivity of labour and of means of production should give wealth to mankind. But the means of production belong to a minority of men and the profits from such a production were enjoyed by that minority.

Therefore, productivity of means of production and the prevailing system of ownership and profit distribution has come into conflict with each other.

The whole system is based on the desire for profit. So, there developed a restriction over the productivity of means of production. Redundancy of work force came to pass. Unemployed number increased. Wages were cut. Research work suffered from controls.

In earlier times Parliamentary Democracy was being used by Capitalism pretending that it had good intentions for the poor. Now, that pretension has been thrown over-board. No more ostentation! It had lost its temper. So, no more use for Parliamentary Democracy. Open suppression was order of the day! Dictatorship was created. Parallel with that, promulgations were made to force use of goods produced in own country by domestic capitalist industries, exhorting patriotism. The original motto of capitalism "free trade" has been rejected, Monopoly reigned supreme. The problems that arose from greed no longer can be solved in an ordinary way. Only war can settle them.

Fascism arrived in Italy and Germany in this manner, Roosevelt's economic New Deal in America was, in the last analysis, a tendency of fascism.

Therefore, there remain only two paths for the mankind to follow.

One path is the path to fascism, the system of going backward in time by using suppression of progress, restriction of productive capacity of means of production, destruction of man and property, restriction of world trade and exchange, ban on research and at last, war waged between nations.

Another path leads to communism which has the aims of using the means of production to benefit the whole mankind by using all properties belonging to man-kind to be enjoyed by all people, of rooting out the entire condition of poverty and diseases, to let research work and educational activities advance without any kind of impediments and to bring full benefits to human life.

Which path will the mankind take?

The world has come to resemble a sick man on death-bed.

Time is at hand to wage social revolution. Make speedy preparations for the revolution!

These are the summary of the book Ba Hein has written.

It is the task of those readers who have read and studied this book to work for the best benefit of Burma using the most suitable forms.

For the writer of a book, only a pen and an ink pot are needed to make that book. Generally such a writer is not one who practically work for the cause of what he wrote. He just incites other utopians. Ko Ba Hein is not such a writer. Those who make social revolution in the world of present time are: (a) Russian Communist Republic, (b) workers in the capitalist countries and (c) poor people living in the subject countries under imperialist capitalist countries. Those who are engaged in social revolution in Burma which is a subject country are: workers, peasants and students. The man who is working for the cause of the students must be considered a participant in the world revolution. There is no more need to accuse that such a person is one who just only write but not work for the cause.

The name Ko Ba Hein is very widely known. I heard that he came to Yangon when the first Students' Congress was held. I have not seen him at that time as I was in Pegu. When the second students' congress was held in Mandalay I met Thakin San Shwe [Editor of the "Our Upper Arm", a newspaper published in Sittwe, the capital of Arakan State] before I set out for Mandalay. When he came back from there, he remarked "Those who are carrying the students' congress are really young boys. There is no one to help them. The boy Ba Hein is also quite a young man".²

When I get to Mandalay, I found the Chairman of the Reception Committee - a short and diminutive young man. In the three days or so in Mandalay I did not mix with him much.

He requested for an article to be published in the first issue of "Young Pioneers Magazine" (Myonyunt Magazine) from me. I complied. But I still wore a grave face.

In 1937, Ba Hein took the rostrum to speak a bout the National Day in the Sule Pagoda Garden [Now Maha Bandoola Garden: Translator] at the celebration of that day. He spoke on behalf of students. After that speech, people began to give him the appellation of 'socialist'. He became quite close with me. He used to accept my advice generally. I also value his advice. He has absolute trust

²Thakin San Shwe was father of Dr. Thein, former wife of Martin Blöcher, Hamburg. Thakin San Shwe died in Germany while on a visit to his daughter around 1976. [Thakin Hla Kun]

in me and I also trust him.

Actually this seems to be a fanatical personal attachment. In this world of swift changes it is not good to hold absolute trust in anybody. This is quite clear when I wrote an article in the third issue of the above-mentioned magazine blaming a task they had already decided to undertake. For Ko Ba Hein it was not a matter to blame me back because of personal attachment, whether I hold a correct view or a wrong one.

When the students called off their strike (in early 1939) there have been several kinds of criticism in the country against their step. Our Dobama Asiayone, however, did quite much to dispel public low opinion against the students and to point out the students' correct role in the struggle for the country's freedom struggle. Because of such correct approach of ours the disenchantment with or grudge towards the students lessened gradually.

Every time the Thakin's (Dobama Asiayone's) conferences or congresses were held I made a point of inviting Ko Ba Hein to attend those. He could not make it to Tharrawaddy District Congress. To that of Mawlamyine also he could not come. But he was present at the congress in Myaungmya. But he could not attend the Henzada congress despite my invitation.

However, I learned that he got the blame for attending a series of Thakin conferences without addressing himself to the student matters. As a matter of fact he did not fail the student affairs although the blame had come.

I admit that I worked for close relation between Thakins and Ko Ba Hein. And the Thakins had quite a good liking for him as they believe in his sincerity and industriousness. Especially Thakin Thein Maung, Thakin San Tun Hla and Thakin Ba Yingyee are fond of him.

In building friendship with the Thakins I do not have the intention to convert Ko Ba Hein. As the Thakins are working closely with majority of the population, I wish Ko Ba Hein also become close with that majority. Through that closeness, I wish students also become close likewise.

As a matter of fact, I do not wish Ko Ba Hein to become a Thakin as yet. At one time, he asked me if he should leave school. I replied it was not good to do so. He retorted then do I hold so much low opinion of him?

Actually, low opinion does not concern here. To be a Thakin is not an easy thing. It is one you lose your whole life.

Thakins work harder than others. Have to sacrifice more. Whether others work or not, he has the responsibility to work. He must have utmost patience. He is in contact with diverse people and

diverse minds, Thakins who want to lead the masses of people must assess the spirit of the majority and work on the basis of that assessment.

Being faced with every kind of impediments and difficulties like one besieged by enemy, a Thakin must be more aggressive and also must have a voice louder than others. He needs these at least. No surrender anywhere and no giving in.

A Thakin cannot have enjoyment together with other people. He cannot have slept while other people have slept. He cannot take food while others were enjoying their meals. He must possess every kind of perseverance in work.

He must have the ability to bear the Press vituperations and attacks by opposition as well as their pressing down. He also must make his own counter attacks. When a Thakin has become seasoned he became recalcitrant.

He has to do things he does not agree with. He has to undertake jobs he likes also only when luck comes in his way. He must live with person he does not have any fondness. He might not have the chance to live with someone he likes. There is no personal sentiment among the Thakins. They have one they know well as a person and he is Thakin Kodaw Hmaing.

One Thakin who became known as a respected person recently is Thakin Mya, a member of parliament elected from Tharrawaddy South constituency. For others, the country knows only as Thakins, members of a body, not specifically who is who.

In sum, if one joins the Asiayone (Organization), individuality became submerged. The spirit of I or me must disappear. No good to have fame. No good to act without regard to opinion of others. To say the conclusion, becoming Thakin Mya amounts to loss of enjoyment of normal privileges of life, it looked at with ordinary eyes.

I have no wish as yet for Ko Ba Hein to engage in such politics, so rough and so withered as this, which would force him lose the normal human life's privileges, although that will provide him with a loud voice and big appellation. He is still youthful in looks, physique and age!

Ko Ba Hein said he would use the title Thakin before his name in writing this book. I do not know if he does so or not.

But for me, I cannot recognize him as a Thakin yet. He is like a child who has grown before my eyes. I do not recognize everybody even though he or she has taken the title 'Thakin'. Only when he or she meets the qualities I have earlier mentioned, will earn my recognition as a 'Thakin'.

When I wrote the preface for Thakin Soe's book "Socialism" some points therein did harm upon Ko Tun Aye (who was the Nagani's original publisher). After that book came out he parted ways from Nagani due to reasons apart from that harm. Then after a month or so, I, too, came away from Nagani.

In the meantime I lived with Thakin Soe. At the time when this book (Ba Hein's book) was being written we four persons — Thakin Soe, Ko Ba Hein, Ko Tun Aye and myself have come together again.

When the book came out I had to separate from Soe for unavoidable reasons. And I heard that Ko Ba Hein is going to make a new life also. I don't know what change will come to Ko Tun Aye's life.

And I also don't know if I write a preface, misfortune accompanies. To write a preface is a thing hanging heavy on my mind. I pray that no misfortune descend upon the head of Ko Tun Aye, the publisher. Let it come to whomever else and in whatever form, but not to him.

Ko Ba Hein once said to one person: "Before I went to prison I was under his sway. I was in away his hand and his feet. But when I came out from prison I became free from his influence now". This remark referred to me.

However, I did not notice if I influenced him politically or intellectually or spiritually. Whatever it is. I came to take note that Ko Ba Hein has grown a free mind.

When he wanted me to edit his book I did not want to do. If I edit, I think I would re-write all or I would dip the whole thing in a red-ink pot. May be it is one kind of wanting to forcefully influence on other person.

Respecting Ko Ba Hein's spirit, I do not correct his ideas or the words he used. Only I did advise to make appropriate correction where such action is necessary in a large measure.

It is not important whether Ko Ba Hein has turned against my influence or not and whether he has become free or not.

I shall always feel highly pleased that a naughty child has come of age by writing this book freely and on his own.

Thakin Than Tun

Dated: the third of the waning moon of the month of Kason, the year 1301 BE. (Friday, 5th of May, 1939 AD)

Translator's Remarks on the Preface

The Preface to Ko Ba Hein's book "The World of Capitalism", written by Thakin Than Tun is a rare fine piece of work that gives you an insight into the mutual relations that existed between Thakin Than Tun, Ba Hein, U Tun Aye and Soe. It also focuses on the thoughts for dissemination of Socialist ideology during the late thirties. Also, Thakin Than Tun presented a vivid portrayal of the Thakins and their exemplary conduct as staunch and righteous fighters for the freedom of their country. Thakin Than Tun's writing in the Preface also clearly opened his mind replete with warmth, comradeship and compassion with regard to relation with BH.

2. Soe, Introduction

(Translation: Tin Hlaing)

Except for Soviet Russia, which constitutes about one sixth of the world's area, the dominant economic system of the countries is capitalism. In some countries, people have given different names for their systems, but basically they are not different from capitalism. Fascism, colonialism, capitalist-dominated colonialism, bank-capitalism etc. have been used depending on time and place, but they are essentially capitalist in nature.

Today's problems effecting people in all regions have arisen from the basic socio-economic system, capitalism; they are directly related to it. It has brought evil consequences for 95 percent of the global population: wretched poverty, persistent famine, rising crime, short life expectancy, illiteracy, sexual mis-behavior of more than half the women, robbery and burglary, rebellions, revolutions, and wars.

To understand the unrest and turbulent events occurring in many parts of the world, good understanding of the nature of capitalism is necessary. I strongly believe that Ko Ba Hein's work fulfills this need.

In this book he has described the origin of capitalism, the changes, and also logical reasoning. The exposition is so clear that even strangers in the field can well understand the system.

I would like to make more comments on this book.

Since the age of *Padethapin* (variety tree, the euphemism for natural affluence) was gone, greed, anger, and lawlessness have taken turns to wreck human society. But they could not persist indefinitely; they have been buried under waves of human civilization. Looking back to 12,000 to 6,000 years, when civilization started, we see gradual improvements have taken place, resulting in the growth of civilization.

When man first appeared on earth, he had been exposed to the risk of attacks by various enemies. First he had to conquer over beasts; then the natural forces. To match the fast speed of animals and birds, man invented the bow and arrow. The sharp teeth and claws of wild animals were overcome by means of devices, and strategies, such as traps. Moreover man had tamed elephants, horses, bulls and buffaloes, dogs and cats, and put them to domestic use. When clothing became scarce with the disappearance of natural affluence, agriculture became the solution. With diminishing soil fertility, the methods became more refined; by means of the plough, the lower soil layer was turned up to take the place of depleted one; also manure from excrement of animals found use to enhance

fertility. To cope with irregular weather, they used irrigation.

For man, when he didn't know how to make use of nature, rivers, oceans and seas were barriers; but when he knew it, they have become routes for easy communication. Now he can build ships that can travel across a vast ocean in a few days.

And man has tamed and put to use both wind and water. Just imagine the wind mill and water turbine to see the evidence.

There is also steam power harnessed by man; the steam engine is used to move heavy objects, a task he is not strong enough to do. Big steam engines in steam ships and locomotives have huge horsepower.

Electricity, also a natural phenomenon, has also been harnessed. It drives tram cars, produces heat in stoves, turns fans, drives machines, and acts to bring about chemical changes. In addition there is telecommunication made possible by electricity. In case we lose the knowledge of electricity, the world would be thrown back into darkness, all communication would stop, and all machinery would stand still.

Man has done more than this. Nature is secretive, stingy; she has hidden gold, silver and gem stones, coal and metals inside the earth. But man has discovered, and mined them. One can think about how useful these materials are.

Now man has overcome time and space. In old days, mountains and forests were barriers, hard to pass through; and when he did pass through it took him years to reach large distances. Airplanes and railways have made travel easy and fast; long distance travel is now possible in a short time.

“When socialism that can liberate man is established, greater improvements will come; what it now takes twenty years to improve will be done in a day,” says Karl Marx, the philosopher pioneer of socialism.

It is a wonder that today man is using the phenomenon in space known as ether waves for wireless communication; news are now flashed around the world within one second.

There is medical science to relieve pain and heal diseases; and chemistry, physics and zoology, the basic sciences are supporting medical science. As the basic sciences progress, it can be hoped that more diseases will be wiped out or cured in time.

In Russia where they are beginning to fight against all forms of repression, according to the chief medical officer, the coming generation can have a life expectancy of 150 years.

But in spite of great achievements in many areas, why is it that 95 percent of the world's population cannot yet escape from misery?

To answer this question, we have to point out one unconquered force, the economic force. Look at the situation of the world today. Although man ought to be controlling the economic force, at present the opposite is happening; it is man who is subjected to the economic force. The people are patiently living with an economic system that is bringing them more poverty every day. In other words, the capitalists, who form only a tiny minority, have taken control of economic and political power for selfish purposes; and they have taken charge of man's destiny.

If the people want to get out of the miseries they are in today, they have only to get rid of the bad system that causes it. In old days when men faced famine, it was because of their incapacity to overcome the natural forces. Because of bad weather, crops didn't grow well; because crops didn't grow well people got food shortages; then famine tortured them.

Today's famines are due to the outdated and rotten capitalist system; although it's time it disappears, it still persists. It is for the workers of all nations, regardless of race, to unite to demolish the bad system. Today, colonialism and Fascism are even threatening to destroy human culture and its development. For this reason, colonialism and Fascism must be wiped out not only to ease people's lives, but also to prevent the extinction of the human race.

There are only two routes for the workers, peasants and the proletariat of the world to choose. Will they allow colonialism and Fascism to continue to dominate the world and destroy civilization? Or will they destroy these bad systems and promote civilization?

The day of socialism's victory will mark a new epoch, the death of the old era. This has been declared by Karl Marx to encourage the workers and peasants.

At a time when millions of people are hard pressed with lack of adequate clothing, food and shelter, the capitalists are destroying large amounts of goods; and they have done it sorely to get gains for themselves. The imperialists quarrel over sharing of territories; they bring millions of poor folk into war and mass slaughter. They have managed business, social relations and politics in order to reap profits from all areas; yet they take no responsibility for education and health of the people. In other words, colonialism and human welfare are counter to each other.

Actually imperialism or colonialism is the same as monopoly capitalism. Monopoly capitalism not only brings poverty and hardship for workers and peasants, it also erodes the status of petty national bourgeoisie, and also clerks and merchants, brokers and lawyers, and make them worse off day after day. As the imperialists monopolize, everything and everywhere, as they are motivated by greed, the small national bourgeoisie is denied its opportunity to do business. In Burma, we have seen native oil well owners facing more and more difficulties because the capitalist's petroleum

companies have monopolized the business, haven't we?

The Irrawaddy (Ayeyarwaddy) Flotilla Company is doing river transport business everywhere; as its business thrives, the native owned small ship companies have been destroyed. Isn't it?

The businesses of Burman (Myanmar) owned rice mills and saw mills have suffered as a result of the monopoly by the White men's corporate body known as the Bullinger pool. Haven't they?

We are witnessing the decline in the lives of clerks, shop owners, brokers, lawyers, as the monopoly capitalism becomes stronger and stronger. We have definitely seen it, haven't we?

Therefore, if the monopoly capitalism would last long, except for those few capitalists, the vast majority would only be reduced to extreme poverty one day. Thus the duty has come for all people to fight against the menacing imperialism.

Not only does capitalism destroy the good marriages and families, it also produced prostitution world-wide. Ko Ba Hein has written in coming chapters that the world's total employment is about 50 million. This number does not contain the landless peasants, whose number may be as high as 500 million. Thus, the total number of people being homeless or in very poor economic situation, amounts to 550 million. They cannot make decent marriages and raise families. A similar number of women of marriage age cannot find suitable partners. How can they maintain a woman's decency for long when their countries are crumbling and in bad economic shape? They have to become the sexual prey of capitalists and their attendants; for the sake of living, the women are forced into indecent status.

On the basis of the above reckoning, we believe that definitely there are at least 550 million women who are professional prostitutes. As long as the tyranny of imperialism and Fascism remain in existence, it will be impossible to wipe out this deplorable state of affairs. Thus it is the duty not only for men to fight against imperialism; women also have this duty. A time will come when imperialism and Fascism are removed, root and branches; then will come the revival of the institution of the noble family.

Today, it has become evident more and more everyday that the products of the efforts of the masses are enjoyed by a few. In Germany with a population of 67 million, only about 150 people have monopolized the country. In the British Empire with population 500 million, the monopolists who control the whole economic system are 24 capitalist bankers, with Norman Montagu, a leading figure among them.

We should look at the present condition of Burma (Myanmar). None of the major industries, metals, petroleum, timber and rice, are in the hands of native Burmans who form the majority. They

are all controlled by a handful of foreign capitalists.

The agricultural sector is not different either. There are 20 million acres of farm land in the country; but half of that is owned by only about 5000 landlords, the rest belonging to 12 million. On average, each landlord owns about 2000 acres, where as the average farmer has only about 0.8 acre of his own to work. There is not the slightest chance to improve the present situation because of colonialism. As there is the possibility that conditions can worsen day by day, there is the ever growing urgency for workers and peasants to wipe out imperialism from the roots.

In just over one year previously, we have seen nation-wide strikes by workers and peasants. That was an indication that colonialism has created negative consequences for the native Myanmar people; it is totally against their wishes.

Burmese workers and peasants will have to oppose imperialism in three ways to begin with. The fight can emerge only when there is the spirit of anti-colonialism among the masses.

The first task is to propagate doctrines which give the methods for anti-colonial struggle. The second is to form workers' and peasants' organizations along the principles laid down by these doctrines. They organizations will fight for their rights and grievances.

In the first task the workers and peasants will have to develop the intellectual and moral strengths. The second is to put knowledge to practice. This means that in the second task the workers and peasants have to collectively produce their mental and physical abilities. Only by that effort it will be possible to remove the menacing political system.

When the united strength of million of workers and peasants, the poor masses, get into action, in full ignition, it will be the time when the military police, behind their guns and bayonets, will become scared, and will hide for safety. Remember that that will be day when colonialism crumbles.

In the coming chapters the readers will find that Ko Ba Hein has discussed in detail on the broad ideas and facts, including anti-colonialism, its evil consequences, and why the poor masses have to fight against it. As the struggle against colonialism in Burma is becoming urgent, my belief is that Ko Ba Hein's book, 'The Capitalist Society', will be a great asset for all Myanmar men and women who want to get involved in the endeavor; it will be useful as a reference, a copy of which one should keep handy.

The Burmese people have been thrown into economic hardship, becoming like fish in a drying pond, since the colonialists have ruled the country. Diseases are widespread; mortality is already too high

*¹

; and, as the economy has declined, crime rate is rising. This has led to nation-wide unrest, and the country is filled with smoke from the strikes. For economic reasons the Burmese women have lost their feminine decency. In the face of such serious conditions it is impossible for us to be only depressed and stay idle. The mother of a good son has to bear the burden of pregnancy and its attendant discomforts before the good son is born. In our country we are going to produce a good government, analogous to a good son; the mother country then has to bear the discomforts, in fact it is already suffering. But we should understand that these are symptoms of the good time to come, and that is definite.

In Burma, movements to challenge colonialism have ready taken place.

Lenin, the leader of the international proletariat, has said that in revolutionary times it takes only one month to give the masses political education, which in time of peace would take one year. Isn't Ko Be Hein saying the truth when he has stated that the 'December revolution' has politically awakened the proletarian leaders?

Revolutions are like incandescent flames. An incandescent flame can temper steel; it will erode poor stuff. Likewise, revolution trains men of courage, enhances their physical and mental qualities, to make them leaders. Revolutions can wipe out political opportunists.

This is a time of nation building. In other words it's time for sacrifice. When people dug ponds to provide clean water for future generations, they used to sacrifice men beneath the embankment. In the same manner the political forces of the present have to make sacrifices in order that future generations will progress. Only with the spirit of sacrifice on the part of the anti-colonial revolutionaries, each and every one of them, will Burma rise up from the trodden status under colonialism.

However, we have seen encouraging signs. We have found numerous patriots who have sacrificed for the sake of the revolution – U Wisara, Bo Aung Kyaw, Bo Ba Po, the martyrs of Mandalay have given their lives to sustain the revolution.

On the other hand the colonialists have resorted to arms and aggression, and unfair means to crush the revolution. But such methods have only encouraged the revolution. Haven't we seen that

¹ The world's rate of population growth is 10 percent in twenty years; in Burma it is only 5 percent. If the foreign population is disregarded, it will be even less.

since the time our leading men have laid down their lives, the captains as well as followers of the national cause have been ever increasing?

U Wisara, Bo Aung Kyaw, Bo Ba Po, the martyrs of Mandalay have done their part. It is for us, who are still living, to strive to sustain the revolution, to strive continuously to bring it to successful completion.

As the Burmese revolutionary force, full of daring, is marching toward victory, we declare our most intense desire:

Success for the revolution!

Success for the revolution!

Success for the revolution!

Thakin Soe

III. MATERIAL ON BA HEIN: *WORLD OF CAPITALISTS*

1. U Tin Htway on Ko Ba Hein's *World of Capitalists*¹

Ko Ba Hein's The World of Capitalists was actually an adaptation of R.P. Dutt's Fascism and Social Revolution. It was translated into Burmese and examples are drawn not only from international events used by Dutt but also from Burmese sources. This book contains a strong flavour of pro-Communist ideas. One very interesting aspect of the book is its preface and introduction. The preface of nearly 20 pages was contributed by the late Thakhin Than Tun, the White Flag Communist leader and an introduction of the same length was written by Thakhin Soe, the Red Flag (Trotskyist) Communist leader, one time great comrades and later to become bitter enemies.

In the first chapter of his book Ko Ba Hein describes the emergence and the development of capitalism from the pre-historic age to the present day. He vividly describes the difficulties, the appalling status and the poverty-stricken life of the peasant and labouring proletariats. He explains how the whole human community was affected by capitalism and the growing problem of unemployment. The second chapter discusses the methods of production and distribution under the capitalistic system. He emphasises especially, how the capitalists maintained the prices of commodities artificially and in their efforts to maintain a steady rate of supply and demand would prefer to destroy their produce in the face of dreadful poverty and need rather than facts a glutted market. The undeniable facts and figures and statistics he gives in support of his advocacy were really shocking, especially for the Burmese who had never heard of such appalling things either in their present or in their past. The arguments are so powerful that although the reader would not perhaps turn left or communist overnight, the book must have built a disgust of capitalism.

The growing monopolistic power of the big capitalists can be demonstrated by these examples - (pp.:131-132)

The big capitalist, B.O.C. (Burma Oil Company), swallowed the small capitalists Twan:-ca:². Silawa Oil Company sponsored by U Chit Hlaing (G.C.B.A. Nationalist) was swallowed by the B.O.C In the oil-fields areas the Indian-owned oil companies only survived because they were allowed to snatch the few crumbs that fell from the table of the B.O.C As for the B.O.C , they knew that those Indians, who were also foreigner exploiters like themselves, would never constitute any serious threat to them and therefore could be ignored. If it were

¹U Tin Htway, *The Emergence and Development of Political Writing in Burmese Literature, 1914-1942, with Special Reference to U Lun*. M. Phil Thesis, London, SOAS, 1969: 259-265. - The Burmese quotations had to be omitted because they could not correctly be transmitted due to the poor quality of the copy and the special transliteration used by the author. They are indicated by [...]. The page numbers given obviously refer to a reprint of the book and do not refer to the original.

² Twan:-ca: -local oil-field owner [Tin Htway's footnote].

otherwise, the Indian oil companies would certainly have been destroyed.

Approximately between 1910 and 1928, there arose bitter rivalry in Moulmein area between Talaing Mon) richman U Nar Ok's Steamer Ferries and the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's Steamer Ferries. When U Nar Ok's company charged four annas for a journey whose distance was worth about four annas – the Irrawaddy reduced their fare to three annas. When U Nar Ok made a further reduction to two annas, the Irrawaddy slashed theirs again by one anna. At which U Nar Ok decided not to charge at all for the fare. In reply the Irrawaddy, not only allowed the passengers to travel free of charge, but made a present of a scarf to each using their steamer. In the long run, poor U Nar Ok who had only a limited capital found himself unable to compete with the Irrawaddy Company which held multi-million investments in Scotland. He was forced to admit defeat and the Irrawaddy established its monopoly.

In the next chapters, Ko Ba Hein first of all explains the meaning of Imperialism, describes the series of battles and wars of the Imperialists. After a discussion of the causes of imperialism, its defects and horrors, he continues on the subject of Fascism. He defines fascism, describes the growth of it in Italy and Germany and concludes by putting forward some very progressive ideas on how to combat it and urges his readers to work towards a proletariat revolution.

Ko Ba Hein was a student leader without equal in his time and later one of the best young Thakhins of progressive ideas, promise and hopes. In addition, he was a brilliant scholar and writer. He passed his high School Final Examination with distinction in three subjects out of five, English, Burmese and History. In other words, he mastered not only Burmese but also English, which was a rare phenomenon among the Burmese. He also stood first in the whole of Burma Intermediate (Arts) Examination, with distinction in Pali. With these scholastic qualities he brilliantly transformed R.P. Dutt's Fascism and Social Revolution into the Burmese “The World of Capitalists”. His Burmese was exceptionally good. His literary style was traditional but without rhymes and verbose elaborations. His sentences are simple, (sometimes lengthy) but effective, forceful and very well constructed. The style and the content had an immediate appeal for his reader. His choice of words proved that he really mastered the languages. He used typical Burmese expressions like [...] (p. 50) (drive a cow with a ring through its nose) i.e. (the Capitalist) can manipulate cunningly and easily whom he chooses; [...] (p. 129) (like the snake swallowing a frog) i.e. (the Capitalist) can destroy and absorb everyone in his path without any difficulty; [...] (p. 141) (like water in one's cupped hands) i.e. he is all powerful; [...] (p. 205) i.e.[the Social Revolution] drowned in shallow water; [...] (p. 94) (a- laxative with a honey taste) i.e. to conceal a bitter truth with a sweet lie; [...] (p. 165) (the policy has molted into liquid) i.e. the leaders of the Social Revolution have vitiated it. Yet he also used directly translated phrases like [...] (p. 73): - they put out the eyes of the artist and deafened the poet; [...] p. 101: spreading like the germs of an infections

disease; p.107: one day it will explode; [...] p. 171: open door policy, etc. etc. Although these were direct translations of expressions from other tongues, because of his masterly touch, they sounded authentically Burmese unlike some of the so-called progressive Burmese writers' translated words or phrases. For example, even after the war Dagon Taya literally translated loan words such as [...] (cocktail party); [...] (naked street); [...] (ivory castle); [...] (main stream); [...] (old gold colour) which were quite alien to the average Burmese; only a handful of people who understand English would get the right meaning.

Moreover, Ko Ba Hein's book contains quite a number of phrases and coined words whose origin is difficult to trace for average persons because they sound so Burmese. For example - [...] (era of civilization); - [...] (class distinction) - [...] - (declining feudalism); [...] (the defects of capitalism); - [...] (the essence of human society); - [...] (deadly weapons); - [...] (luxury goods); [...] (oil refinery) - [...] (haves and have-nots) - etc. etc.

Looked at as a whole, Ko Ba Hein's book must be judged a success. The literary style is one of the best; simple, clear, precise, his presentation is forceful and he is an excellent advocate of his aims and objects. Generally speaking post-war Burmese views and attitudes were greatly influenced by the ideas formulated and brilliantly presented by him. This is one of the great reasons in my view why the Burmese during their independence struggles and after they gained their independence did not lean towards the West like Thailand, Burma's neighbor with whom she had much in common. There are many reasons why Burmese loathe capitalism, imperialism and fascism but one of the reasons is no doubt the influence of Ko Ba Hein's, especially through his book. If he had met his death at such an early age (he died on December 20th 1946, not yet 30 years old) I am sure political trends in Burma would not be the same. His personality, his ability and his integrity bore rare attributes among Burmese leaders and politicians.

1. Kyaw Hoe, Bibliographical Information

Translated from his Nagani-Bibliography pp. 100-103 by Frankie Tun

Ba Hein * Thakhin * Capitalist World • Yangon : Myanmar Pyi Book Publishing. 1939

This book has been composed of the following chapters:

Foreword from Thakin Than Tun (2) Thakin Soe's Introduction (3) Capitalist World (4) Capitalism, Colonialism, Fascism (5) Capitalism (6) Colonialism (7) Fascism (8) Conclusion. And under these chapters, sub- chapters such as a, b etc. were written again.

The title "Capitalist World" is given. In Thakin Than Tun's foreword is explained how the book came about, Thakin Ba Hein and his love for communication were also written about. He also wrote that there is a book which is similar to this book namely "Fascism and Social Revolution", written by R. D.¹ Dutt, a Communist Leader from England but this book could not be said to be a translation.

Since in his preface, too, he wrote that the name of Ko Ba Hein is quite famous, this foreword is partly a biography of Ba Hein and his works and very helpful for those people who would like to study Thakhin Ba Hein's life.

In this foreword, he also mentioned that when he wrote the preface for the book of Thakin Soe's "Socialism" some of which he wrote affected Ko Tun Aye (Nagani's original publisher). After that book was published Tun Aye had parted from Nagani and a month later he [Than Tun] too left Nagani. During that period he and Thakin Soe were living at the same place.

Since he also mentioned that while writing the book he, Thakin Soe, Ko Ba Hein and Ko Tun Aye, all four of them met again, we can observe from this foreword how the Nagani group divided on and off. The date of this foreword is the Burmese Calendar date of 1301- Kasone, 3rd day of the Waning Moon.

In Thakin Soe's introduction, he mentioned how Capitalism came about from the time of the beginning of the world. That introduction included an overall account of the development of humanity and history. Thakin Soe in his introduction also mentioned at length about the materialism

of Karl Marx, about the socialists and the communists.

From that he continued writing about the English colonialists that Burma had been experienced and called upon the Burmese workers and farmers to be active [against them].

Thakin Ba Hein began his book from the human history of “6000 years traveling”. After writing about Capitalism and the production machines’ abilities, he explained vividly the development from the Capitalist to the Colonist way of doing things that finally sucked the blood of the small countries such as China and Burma.

He went on writing that due to Capitalism most people were like thirsty cast always while riding on the raft in the sea, and how people became jobless.

From Capitalism to Colonialism, then to Fascism. Instead of producing things the people really need, it is explained how they produced other things that can be surely sold and how they destroyed the products that could not be sold.

After reading his book, the reader is made felt hurt and hates Capitalism. - In Germany, just before the Fascism took over, of all the Universities, Engineering Colleges and Medical Colleges, there were 8000 graduates and only 1000 got the job. Engineer graduates had to work in other jobs because they could not get the engineer jobs. From 1931-32, of all the 22,000 graduates of the teachers’ colleges, only 990 got a teachers' job. In 1932, as many as 54,000 graduates had been jobless.

When Hitler came into power, all these jobless valuable people joined the Brown-Shirts soldiers, a job which was exploited people somehow, because they did it just for the food and the living. Many of the vocabularies used were explained in footnotes and so it was very modernized and useful.

It was a famous book of Thakin Ba Hein and a very good book. It was republished again in 1963.

¹Here Kyaw Hoe mistyped the second initial. Correct is a P. for Palme.

3. U Aung Min Naing: Book Review on *The Capitalist World*

(Translation: Georg Noack)

The book "The Capitalist world" was published by *Naga-ni* Book Club in the pre-war period. The origins of capitalism, the evils and cruelty of capitalism, the capitalist doctrine of profit orientation and how capitalism turns into fascism are explained thoroughly in the book as well as the events all over the world and the situation in Myanmar. The author is "Ba Hein".

Biography of the Author

Ba Hein was born in 1917 AD (The tenth waxing day of Waso, 1279 M.E.) to his father U Hmin and his mother Daw Oo at Hantharwady Kain Par village, Inwa Township. He was the sixth of seven sons. He studied at *Thetkya Thiha* monastery, Yun-dan ward, Mandalay and at Mandalay intermediate college. He went to Yangon University in 1938 and became the chairman of the students union of that university. During his student life became a member of the *Do-Bamar Asi-Ayone* (We-Bamar Association) and named himself "Thakin Ba Hein".

When on 12th of December, 1938 the oil workers on their march to Yangon got stopped at Magwe, he went there together with other young leaders and gave a speech. They wanted to call attention to the situation on the oil fields and ask for the right of the workers. Because he stirred up the audience with the slogan "Wherever a British horse-shoe treads, a blaze of fire must be sparked off" he was arrested by the imperialist British government under paragraph 144. Because of this issue the third students' strike began.

He left the university in 1939 and together with Thakin Soe, Thakin Aung San and Mr. Goshal to secretly set up a communist party. In 1941 he became president of the *Do-Bamar Asi-Ayone*. He opposed the proposals of taking aid from Japan for Burma's freedom by *Bamar-Htwet-Yat Gaing* (Freedom Bloc). He hated fascism very much. He took responsibility as a political organizer in the Pegu Yoma during the Anti-Japanese revolution. He married Daw Khin Gyi, was hospitalized with malaria at St. Peters' hospital and passed away on 20th of November 1946 after hearing the news that the communist party was expelled from AFPFL. He was buried at *Ya Haing* cemetery, Mandalay.

Summary of the Book of *The Capitalist World*

Civilization exists since 6,000 years. At the beginning of mankind, there were no separate places. People did joint ploughing, joint agriculture and joint hunting and were still in the darkness of a

barbarian age. Just as the peoples and empires of Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome had once expanded forcefully and wielded great power they have now vanished again.

Human civilization developed gradually. Like the environment had shaped man, man shaped the environment. In the barbarian ages, earth, water, sky and clouds frightened man. But in the civilized age his knowledge improved and he could master them. What barred the way to further development of civilization was class division.

Because the ability to produce goods was very limited before science flourished, man could not invent a system in which all people enjoyed equal opportunities. The fruits of civilization were tasted by a ruling minority while the ruled majority had just too much to die. The people bearing the duties of civilization kept revolting and the rulers continued holding them down.

Although it can be said that human civilization made remarkable progress with the invention of steam engines about 1800 AD in England, countless people were left without work. Capitalism, replacing feudalism between AD 1400-1700, paved its way with blood from the throats of innumerable men. The foundations of capitalism were concentration of capital in the hands of few capitalists, separation of social classes, setting up of factories, competition among the capitalists and the introduction of the wage system.

“To develop modern machines is the task of capitalism. In order to reach this end, it has to divide men into capitalists and proletariat” said Marxism.

Capitalism taught the workers discipline and solidarity and increased the production of goods through machines. The guilds were abolished and replaced by industrial manufactures.

Around 1900 machines had spread all over the world and the capitalist era had arrived.

In order to continue, the capitalist system had to close down unprofitable factories and many workers from the factories were dismissed. People of the capitalist world ended up in homelessness. In a hundred years from 1835 the means of production improved by a hundred times in England and by six hundred times in the world. But the situation of people worldwide was incredibly bad, facing mass unemployment and famines. This was because, while the capitalist system placed its priority on profit, its redistribution system did not develop as fast as the production technology.

Because of the developments in production technology, not only goods produced in the factories, but also agricultural production and the production of raw materials changed.

Between 1900 and 1928 agricultural produce increased by 104% in Austria, by 174% in Argentina, by 330% in Canada could make due to the introduction of tractors. Although between 1913 and 1928 the global agricultural production increased by 147%, the world population

increased only by 11.6% at the same time.

It was said that in collectivist Soviet Russia the cultivation of wheat in Siberia would yield four times more than normal through the use of modern technology. Through the application of highly developed natural sciences the whole world became place worth living. But, because of capitalism, the people of the world, instead of being able to eat as much as they wanted and live under worthy conditions, had to live as if they were thirsty while sailing a boat. [*i.e. being surrounded by water but unable to reach it* - G.N.].

Capitalism fostered contraception. It demanded a reduction of the rate of population growth because of the scarcity of food. The world food production was increasing by 25% but the population rate only by 10% between 1913 and 1928.

The capitalist countries occupied the colonial countries, giving high population density and insufficient food resources as the reason for having to invade others. Japan invaded Chinese owned Manchuria in 1931 giving over-population as a reason, seducing the proletariat and sending them into the battle-fields. The real reason was, that Japanese capitalism was about develop from petty capitalism to large scale monopoly capitalism.

If population density was a cause for expansionism, India and the island of Java would long have been super imperialist countries. Because of the profit oriented capitalist system, worldwide recessions, unemployment, and the falling live standards developed.

Monopoly capitalism's work was the destruction of goods for human use and of production capacity. More production would have caused the prices to fall. If the prices fell, one there was no profit. In order to avoid falling prices and get maximum profit, one had to destroy part of the produce. Burning bags of coffee or throwing tons of agricultural produce into the sea while the majority suffers from famine made the world tremble.

America introduced agricultural loans for those who destroyed their crops in 1933. To reduce the production of milk 5,000 cows were killed every week in Denmark. The British government promulgated a law limiting the production of hard coal. Capitalism increased famine, caused the people to live as if they were thirsty while sailing, destroyed lives and burned resources necessary for survival of the people.

When technology advanced, the productive capacity had increased much, and the profits became few around 1900, the capitalists proclaimed that the machines were devouring humanity. With this slogan the capitalists used to buy and destroy every newly invented machine. The reason was that with the development of new machines the older ones, once bought with high investments, would

have become outdated.

The owner of a glass factory in Germany for example, bought and destroyed all the glass founding machines invented by Owen of America.

There were two paths then for man to choose. The first path was that of capitalism full of calamities, dangers and suffering for man, a path that would uproot human civilization and push it back to the barbarian ages. The second path was that of Communism, without class division, without hunger and poverty, without diseases, that would advance human civilization and transform it into an earthly paradise [*lokanibbāna* – G.N.].

Most young men were unemployed under the monopoly capitalism. Big factories could produce goods as much as needed in very short time. The technology to extract raw materials from the earth existed. Workers to process these raw materials were available. But if the produce became too abundant, the prices would drop and the capitalists couldn't get profits.

So they shut down their factories, destroyed the raw materials and the processed goods and while the workers became unemployed. Capitalism created plenty of unemployment and drowned the workers in poverty.

Engels, the great teacher of communism, said that when the many destitute workers became useless and superfluous to the capitalist system they would have to choose between famine and rebellion. Those who most feared the workers' rebellion were the capitalists. Because of the workers' efforts the communist system in Russia came into existence. Because the capitalists of other countries feared that their workers would follow the Soviet example they employed various soft and hard strategies to oppress them.

In Germany and Italy they used the iron fist of fascism hid by the velvet gloves of democracy to openly oppress the workers by force. In America and England the unemployed were given government jobs to 'placate them with sweets'.

The capitalist governments could not build factories for the unemployed workers because the competition of consumer goods produced in government factories and goods from the capitalists' factories in the same market would cause losses to the capitalists. Then the capitalists' factories would have to close down and dismiss their workers. No capitalist government can bring about the destruction of capitalism. The capitalists used to make workers work longer, reduce wages or dismiss workers in order to get maximum profits whenever the prices of commodities dropped.

The former prime minister of Britain, Mr. Baldwin complained about not knowing what to do about the unemployment problem. This complaint is the complaint of capitalism as such.

When the capitalist system could not solve the problem of unemployment by ordinary means, it created the world war in order to eliminate the unemployed it had no use for and perceived as superfluous. The conflicts between the capitalists and the means of production, between the capitalists and the workers became bigger and bigger. Capitalism would soon collapse and a time when the capitalists, now exploiting the poor until they are starving and destitute, would themselves get exploited was about to come.

Karl Marx said in his “Critique of the Capitalist Economy” that there existed a correlation between social relations of the production system and the means of production. [G.N.]

At that time social system was capitalism. In England, France, Germany and other places where capitalism first evolved, it did so because handcrafting tools disappeared and were replaced by rapidly developing machines. At the time when capitalism developed in the West, countries like India, Myanmar or China in the eastern part of the world were still dominated by feudalism.

Now, however capitalism ruled the whole world. Myanmar became completely subjected to British monopoly capitalism in 1886.

The domination and exploitation of one social class by another is the foundation of capitalism. Under capitalism, the main economic undertakings and factories usually belonged to a small minority of only a handful of capitalists. The capitalists only sought after profits. When there were no profits to get, they used to close down their factories. The capitalists decided to produce or not to produce goods only on the basis of profit. Instead of producing food, drink and clothing needed by the masses, they sought after profits by producing cosmetics and children’s toys only a minority from the capitalist middle class could buy.

A major mistake of capitalism is not using all available productive capacity. If it did, the supply of goods would become abundant and while the prices drop the profits would decrease. During the time of flourishing trade in the USA in 1929 only 81% of the productive capacity was actually used. Now, in a period of weak trade, only 10-19% percent of the productive capacity are used and more that 14 million people are unemployed and without sufficient food.

Although several millions of strong workers want to work, there is no work for them and they remain without food, clothing or a place to live. The people’s poverty in the capitalist countries is mainly caused by the fact that instead of basic commodities like foodstuffs or clothing luxury goods and cosmetics are produced seeking easy profits. If, instead of seeking only for profits, basic commodities had been produced as much as needed, the lives of the people of the world would have changed.

The distribution of goods under capitalism was not direct to every house [*sic!* G.N.], but everybody should buy commodities according to his income. Therefore to understand the distribution of goods under capitalism one has to know the distribution of income. There were two kinds of income under capitalism: The first kind was wages the workers received according to their qualification. The second was the profit for the owners of factories. Like the landowner earning from his lands the concessionaire of an oil well received the profits from his oil-well.

The income of the capitalists was profit from selling the goods produced by their factories.

But some capitalists could not receive hundred percent of the profits. A landlord owning many acres divided and leased his land to tenant farmers. The profits had to be shared between the landlord and the tenant. The tenant only received very little while the landlord took most of the profit.

In the capitalist countries there were big differences between the incomes of capitalists and those of workers. Where a worker received one Kyat, a capitalist could earn between Ks. 4,000 and Ks. 40,000.

However different their earnings, one could think the purchasing power was the same. Thousand people receiving one Kyat each and one person receiving thousand Kyat do not differ in purchasing power. But on the other hand, one person could not use one thousand pieces of the same type of goods. However rich he was, he could not use one thousand pairs of shoes. The purchasing power (money) under capitalism is therefore distributed at an uneven ratio. The poor could not buy enough to satisfy their basic needs. And the rich did not buy items he had no use for. And then there would be surplus goods in the market. Capitalism defined surplus goods not as goods exceeding those needed by the people for every day use but as goods that, though needed, could not be bought. Instead, they closed down their factories, the workers became unemployed. So the distribution of goods in capitalism was for the people as if they were thirsty while sailing.

The capitalists used their money to buy machines that would increase their income. A person, who had Kyats 400 instead of buying 80 beds for five Kyats each, would build a furniture factory. This came to be the principle of capitalism.

For the capitalist's means of production, factories and profits were mutually supporting each other. Means of production caused profits; profits made possible the acquisition of more new means of production. This was called the increase of the capitalists' capital. According to capitalism the aim of production was profit. Instead of aiming at sufficient availability of cheap goods for everybody capitalism has the sole objective of making profit. With these profits the capitalist could

own more and more factories and means of production.

Due to new technologies, the new means of production had increased productive capacity. Therefore, work that had to be done by hundred workers with old machines could be completed by 50 workers with new machines. When he needed fifty workers less, the capitalist gained more profits.

When over seven hundred oil wells in Yenanchaung were equipped with electric pumps in 1923, over 20,000 workers became unemployed. The British Oil Company (BOC) had hired over 40,000 workers fifteen years ago but now only about 16,000 workers were employed. Therefore about 30,000 became unemployed. At Thanlyin refinery 8,500 were employed in 1928, but only 4,300 remained in 1938. On 1930-12-31 there were 9,209 workers at British Oil Company (BOC) Yenanchaung but on 1938-12-31 only 5,686 were left. One can see the more the means of production developed, the more profits the capitalists got, the more workers became unemployed. Capitalism could not cure the hunger and unemployment of the workers.

Within the capitalist system, large scale capitalists devoured petty capitalists. The large scale capitalists could produce huge amounts of goods and sell them at cheap prices but the petty capitalists producing only on a small scale could not sell them cheap. So over time they became indebted and had to surrender their companies to the large scale capitalists. The Thilawar refinery founded by U Chit Hlaing in Myanmar was devoured by the BOC large scale capitalists. When operating his steamships in competition with the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, Mawlamyine born capitalist U Nar Auk, who had only little investment capital, had to surrender his ships to the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company that had more investment capital. Because of the capitalist system Myanmar peasants also had to abandon their land to the landlords and make their living as tenants or as factory workers for wages in the cities.

The large scale capitalists sided with each other and founded trust pool syndicates to manipulate and exploit the economy as they liked. In the countries producing a lot of hard coal for example, the coal magnates joined each other to erect a monopoly on hard coal. When all coal enterprises were controlled by their association, they could manipulate the whole industry as they liked.

In the period when these syndicates came into being, capitalism was called monopoly capitalism. After 1900 the competition of individual capitalists was replaced by the competition of capitalist syndicates and the system of monopoly capitalism evolved.

Under monopoly capitalism the income of the working classes became smaller and their abilities to consume decreased. So the surplus goods had to be exported to the countries where capitalism

did not flourish. Therefore the pre-capitalist, not yet modern countries became markets for the goods of the capitalists. Out of the competition for markets between the capitalists imperialism developed.

Lenin, the communist leader of Soviet Russia said, monopoly capitalism was identical with imperialism.

For better circulation of money in monopoly capitalism the banks came into existence. Banks are institutions where the capitalists borrowed capital when needed and deposited their surplus moneys. For reasons of profit the banks gave a little interest on the deposit money and took much interest on the loans. If one deposited hundred Kyats for example, one would receive five Kyats interest per year. But if one took a loan of hundred Kyats, one would have to pay six or seven Kyats interest per year. The banks accepted deposits not only from capitalists, but also from middle class people like clerks and small landowners to stimulate money circulation in capitalism. So the banks made the hard-earned money of the middle class available to the capitalists.

The banks bought many shares and controlled companies. The big companies placed their people inside the banks' management. Like this, they ensured that their deposits did not vanish and that they received credits whenever needed.

Just like the large scale capitalists had devoured the petty capitalists the large banks devoured small banks and a system of large banks evolved. Because of this system the large banks could control the economic production of a country.

This scene could be seen in the colonial states. The banking system and trade worked together. Under imperialism, the colonies suffered from the manipulations of large banks. Banking and international trade joined hands. Therefore, like imperialism was identical with monopoly capitalism, monopoly capitalism was identical with the banking system.

In England there was no state owned Bank. There was only the Bank of England owned by the capitalist syndicates issuing paper money in cooperation with the ministry of finance. Most important for economic development in England was the Bank of England's loans system. Apart from granting loans, the board of directors also habitually manipulated the whole capitalist economy. When in 1932 the Royal Mail Steam Packet and the Elder Dempster Shipping companies went bankrupt, the Bank of England re-established those companies in 1935. When the capitalists' exploiting enterprises failed and collapsed, the banks took over and exploited the poor. The Bank of England controlled the economy not only all over England, but in the whole British Empire.

The high prices of consumer goods and foodstuffs, unemployment etc. were disastrous for the

poor, but 'gold and silver' to the capitalists.

Therefore it became important to start a revolution against the origins of the proletariats suffering, the capitalists and their stooges, the capitalist governments.

Capitalism did not develop simultaneously all over the world. Capitalism appeared in England first and spread out faster from there than from other countries. In 1900 British capitalism was strong enough to export its goods to other countries. Goods with the unrivalled label "Made in England" flooded the markets of all Asia, Africa, and America.

Germany, France and Japan followed making big steps to catch up with British capitalism. If British capitalism had needed a hundred years to develop into monopoly capitalism, in Germany and France it took only fifty years and in Japan it would take just about 25 years.

The countries gradually developing monopoly capitalism invariably also came to practice imperialism. Because capitalism needed to export surplus goods to not yet developed countries, the capitalist countries had to practice imperialism and acquire colonies.

While changing from a system of free competition between individual capitalists to monopoly capitalism, the capitalist countries occupied backward countries to use them as their markets.

Not only did the countries of monopoly capitalism get profits from selling their surplus goods to the colonies but they also extracted raw materials at very cheap prices from them.

The more raw materials they possessed, the more powerful got the capitalist empires.

The British Empire possessed 25 kinds of important raw materials, Germany 8 kinds, Italy 12 kinds and Japan possessed 15 kinds of important raw materials.

The capitalist empires that possessed valuable raw materials were called "Haves", and the capitalist countries possessing no or little raw materials were called "Have-Nots". The "Have-Nots" prepared to wage war against the "Haves" because they wanted their raw materials. Because in case of war they were certain incur losses the "Haves" sought ways of avoiding war through peaceful distribution of raw materials.

Before the outbreak of the First World War England sought to placate Germany by offering that it would hand over Turkish areas under British control to Germany. However, the strategy was not successful and the First World War broke out. The imperialists argued that the countries they invaded needed to get civilized. But the fascists together with the conservatives gave race ideology as a reason. The German dictator Hitler declared that unless the world was governed by white people, it would be ruined. Other capitalist countries gave overpopulation in their countries as a reason for having to invade others. One true reason they gave was that they had to make colonies to

acquire raw materials. The final reason they gave for having to invade other countries didn't have anything to do with the economy: The desire for fame and ostentation.

Whatever reasons they gave, the main reason was the profit they could get from the colonies.

The capitalist countries received the following four benefits from their colonies:

1. The opportunity to flood multiple markets with their goods
2. The opportunity to get new monopolies on raw material
3. The opportunity to transfer surplus capital investments
4. The opportunity exploit cheap workers from the colonies

These four factors were mutually related and dependant on two factors:

- The colonies had to be subjected to imperialist rule.
- To maintain the colonial administration troops had to be placed in the colonies.

The imperialist, capitalist countries extracted raw materials from the colonies at low costs and sold their produce to the colonies for high prices.

The colonised had to look at this unfair exchange without being able to do anything about it because of the swords placed over their heads by the colonial regime.

The "Have-Not" countries Germany, Italy, Japan desired colonies not only for the sake of extracting raw materials from them but for all mentioned benefits. Though the "Have" countries proclaimed that the "Have-Nots" could freely buy raw materials from them, they couldn't buy them at the original price. If for example Germany wanted to buy rice from Myanmar, they had to buy from the Bullinger Pool that had already added margins as much as it wanted to the price. In other words, the Bullinger Pool bought rice from the poor Myanmar peasants at the cheapest prices and sold it to Germany at the highest prices. In this competition between the countries of monopoly capitalism the possession of as many colonies as possible became a very important factor.

Because every country reaching the stage of monopoly capitalism could not exist without acquiring colonies, imperialism developed step by step.

The war might have been avoided by sharing the colonies among the capitalist countries but because of the following two reasons the situation turned bad:

1. The needs of the countries of monopoly capitalism increased rapidly.
2. The chances to fulfil these needs decreased fast.

These two factors made war between the capitalist countries unavoidable.

In the year 1800 only in England and France the situation was such that expansion became unavoidable and they invaded and occupied smaller countries. But then also America, Germany,

Italy and Japan became big capitalist countries that needed to expand. Though England and France had colonized many countries already there was need for more colonies to sell surplus goods to. And Germany, Italy and Japan also needed colonies to sell their surplus goods.

Now all of South America was occupied by the American capitalists [*sic!* G.N.] and apart from China the whole of Asia was dominated by the British, the French and the Dutch. Japan had occupied Manchukuo and was making strong efforts to colonize China.

In these times the only way to get new colonies was to fight other capitalist countries and conquer their colonies. The occupied colonies also did not keep their heads lowered anymore and came to rebel. The battle for independence in India, Burma and Egypt intensified.

Whenever a capitalist country reached the stage of monopoly capitalism it had to expand. Whenever a country expanded there would be war. Therefore it was the duty of all workers and peasants to fight and destroy monopoly capitalism and rebel to terminate the dangers of expansionism.

We had to bring an end to the era when the working people go hungry while the capitalists are rich and found a new era when only those can eat who work and the employers and capitalists go hungry. A revolution had to be started to get from the capitalist era to the communist era.

The workers became politically alert and were ready turn down capitalism that would destroy the human world and to set up communist era. The Russian workers and peasants led one sixth of the world into the communist era. Now fascism appeared to reanimate the decaying capitalist system and oppress the workers.

Fascism was based on human duties and the successful development of humanity. It did not believe in eternal peace on earth or that peace would be of any use. It believed that the strength of an empire was the youth of a nation [*sic!* G.N.]. Fascism was taught as an ideology separate and different from capitalism. But it was fascism that prolonged the lifespan of decaying capitalism. As under capitalism class division had appeared one needs to now the different political views of the various classes. The middle class depended on the capitalists to make a living and could not make independent politics. When capitalism flourished, the middle class sided with the capitalists, but when the capitalists suffered recessions, the middle class would change sides and join the poor. Karl Marx taught that when the workers were to make revolution against the capitalists, they would have to ensure the middle classes' support.

But fascism and monopoly capitalism were the great enemies of the middle class. The benefits of the capitalist system were in the hands of a few and most people suffered from capitalist

exploitation. Fascism pretended to blame and fight capitalism in favour of the middle class and the workers. The view that Fascism wanted to take over power in order to destroy capitalism could not be sustained. In fact the capitalists were content to hand over power to fascism (the fascist parties) that ensured the continuity of capitalism.

Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany were made dictators. Their parties had lost the elections and were just nonentities while the two leaders were the heads of the respective party. Monopoly capitalism controlled fascism. The strings of Fascism were pulled by monopoly capitalism. Germany was one of the leading capitalist countries while Italy was only among the secondary ranking countries. But Fascism appeared earlier in Italy than in Germany.

After the great world war the Italian workers believed in the doctrine of communism. The Italian socialist party had strongly objected to the country's entry into the war, so the workers had come to rely on it and it became very strong. In the parliamentary elections of November 1919 the socialist party it won 156 out of 508 seats while Mussolini's fascist party didn't win a single seat. The confederation of labour which was connected to the socialist party had two million members and its leader was Turati. Turati was soft-minded and weak. Although the workers, wishing to start the revolution tried to remove Turati they were not successful due to an intervention by another leader named Serrati. At the workers congress in January 1921 in Livorno the confederation of labour split up into three factions. At that time the communist workers founded the Italian communist party and tried to engage in communist revolution by joining Serrati. But as Serrati allied himself with Turati they failed. During time when the labour confederation was divided, the leader of the fascist party Mussolini seized power.

Mussolini was an opportunist politician. He had founded the fascist party in March 1915. He did not win a single seat in the 1919 elections and started to mobilize the people with slogans demanding the fields for the farmers and the factories for the workless. When the workers became strong enough to destroy the capitalist system in 1920 the capitalists supported the fascist party with a lot of money to secure themselves the fascists' protection. The army gave training courses to the members of the fascists' party. Between January and May 1921 the fascists destroyed 243 labour unions and killed 243 communists.

Under Italian fascism the workers had no right to strike for their rights and grievances. The import of socialist and communist literature was prohibited. The communist party in Italy could not work openly any more. Thus, Italian capitalism disappeared and fascism had come to power.

The rise of the fascist system in Germany in 1933 was caused by the personal attachments and

weaknesses of the workers' leaders. After the First World War, the labour unions and the soldiers' councils became powerful and displaced the government. The social democrats asked the workers' leader Liebknecht and other members of the independent social democrats [*USPD – G.N.*] to form a cabinet. Liebknecht refused because he knew that the social democrats were agents of capitalism but the leaders of the independent social democrats calling for union formed a coalition government. The social democratic government appointed capitalists as ministers in important ministries, killed the brave workers' leaders Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and oppressed the workers [*sic! G.N.*]. Thereafter they formed the Weimar Republic, promulgated laws to oppress the workers and declared martial law. That government lasted 14 years from 1918-1932.

In 1933, the national socialist party (Nazi party) led by Hitler came to power. The party declared the 25 objectives in order to get the workers organized easily. Some workers sympathizing with the social democrats joined the Nazi party. The communist party, leading the most workers, tried to join hands with the social democrat party, but did not succeed. Many fierce workers' strikes broke out led by the communist party. Therefore the Nazi party and the social democrats became weak and the communist party grew strong.

The capitalists, knowing that the rising workers movement was about to destroy the capitalist system and handed over power to the Nazi Party to protect capitalism. On 30th of January 1933 Hitler became dictator.

On May 2, the Nazis abolished all labour unions in Germany and killed the workers' leaders. The communist party had to move secretly. The suffering people had to bear under monopoly capitalism became worse under fascism.

Fascism allowed the capitalists to do as they liked with the workers and pay wages that were just too much to die. So the workers had to suffer famines and experience hell on earth [*lokaniraya*]. Fascism restricted people's freedom and engaged in imperialist war of aggression. Now fascism swamped the whole world. Besides Germany and Italy also Austria, Rumania, Poland, Finland, Hungary, Portugal and other countries were dominated by fascism. In Spain, General Franco fought the proletarian government and helped to erect fascism. In England, America, France and Japan capitalism was about to collapse and heading towards fascism. The workers riots in Africa, South America, India and Burma in the British empire were forcefully suppressed and the leaders imprisoned. To support capitalism in America President Roosevelt invented the "New Deal" economic policy which was very similar to fascism.

Japan allied with the fascist countries Italy and Germany. The prime minister Konore [Prince

Konoe Fumimaro – G.N.] of Japan said "Let us cooperate with Germany and Italy to set up a new world." Saying "Let us destroy the world with fascism" would have been more accurate.

Fascism, getting worse and worse, had to be countered by entering the revolution.

Capitalism took democracy as a stepping stone on its way to fascism. It pretended to be democratic and oppressed couldn't trust democracy. What gave birth to fascism was nothing else but democracy. The workers had to lead the whole proletariat, exploited by capitalism, and fight fascism. If the workers were strong enough, the vacillating middle class would side with them.

For the uprising to succeed strong, disciplined leaders to lead on the revolutionary path were needed. Leaders that would not give in when the capitalists tried to soothe them and that wouldn't fear when the capitalists tried to frighten them. The goal of the revolution was clear: To wipe out capitalism.

Critique

The book "The Capitalist World" [Dana-Shin Loka] is the masterpiece of Thakin Ba Hein. The reader of this book can see the attitude of a leftwing political leader who strongly believed in communism towards the capitalist world. The book explains the concepts, assumptions and theories of communism that made the worldwide field of politics tremble in fear and terror. The lifespan of 6,000 years of human civilization is explained and the development of feudalism, capitalism, monopoly capitalism, imperialism and fascism as a sequence of interlinked stages is shown.

Socialism (Communism) as practiced in Soviet Russia is also introduced.

The objective of the book is to overthrow the capitalist world, terminate proletariat-exploiting-capitalism, alert the people and motivate them to turn the world into a communist system in which the means of production were owned by the poor.

In 1886, the whole of Myanmar had come under the rule of the British imperialists. The book appeared during the 1930's when the patriotic forces were calling for rebellion and to drive the imperialists out of the country. The book should awaken revolutionary spirit in the in the poor working classes' hearts by demonstrating the evils of imperialism. The oil fields strike, the students' strike, the peasants' and the workers' strikes as united patriotic forces became strong and made the British imperialists frightened. So one could say that this book played no small role in the Myanmar independence movement.

Thakin Ba Hein himself hated capitalism and believed in communism. Therefore he could

explain capitalism by writing about the events in Myanmar and the world.

Explaining how imperialism comes along with capitalism, he wrote extensively about the territorial expansion of England, France, America, Germany, Portugal etc.

In the present situation where market economy is introduced [in Myanmar], the book is not suitable. But one can see that it was suitable in the pre-war situation, when it was written. Beginning with conflicts between employers and employees and arriving at aptly explaining about anti-imperialist and anti-fascist struggle, the book was a driving force for the Myanmar people strongly fostering the patriotic spirit. Although it is not relevant in regard to the present political, economic and social situation, its importance as an eye-opener for the country of Myanmar and the Myanmar people under pre-war colonialism must be acknowledged.

3.1. Short Commentary by Philip Schunke

Book: “The Capitalist World” by Ko Ba Hein

Book report by: U Aung Min Naing

General remarks and recommendations

With his book report on Mr. Ba Hein’s “The Capitalist World” U Aung Min Naing offers a comprehensive summary on the authors work and life as well as a thorough description of the work at hand.

The reviewer furthermore includes all elements asked for by the “Short Information on the Making of a Book Report”:

- Biographical information
- Summary
- A personal assessment by the reviewer including
- A description of the special aim and intended impact of the book

Albeit all these sections exist, critical elements in them are missing and the presentation is sometimes misleading. The introduction to the review should include the publishing date. This information can only be found at the very end (Line 442) but would facilitate the understanding of crucial parts of the author’s argument – especially with regards to the wars mentioned.

Although the reviewer mentions the presence of references on Myanmar in Ba Hein’s work, except for in the biographical information and in the critique Myanmar is not mentioned in the summary. What does the reviewer refer to?

As a general rule the reviewer should clarify what is his and what is the authors’ opinion or theory. The summary is especially indistinct with this regard. Using phrases like “In the author’s opinion...” or Ba Hein argues that...” would ease clarifying the distinction as would the use of quotation marks at especially strong sections.

In the “Critique” the reviewer states the aim of the book. It “should awaken revolutionary spirit...”. This seems reasonable from the description. But he goes on to describe the book as not having “played no small role in the Myanmar independence movement”. But the argument in favour of this

conclusion is a bit fuzzy. Several strikes are listed, but it is not being made clear on how these strikes link to the publication of Ba Hein's book.

The "Critique" closes by stating the "suitability" of the book as an "eye-opener" for the people of Myanmar in the pre-war period and the "unsuitability" of it now that market economy is introduced. I fail trying to follow this argument. Or in other words: I miss the assessment of the authors line of reasoning and the argument in favour of (or against) the adequateness or appropriateness of his theoretical analysis for the non-industrialized pre-first-world-war Myanmar. Or: How was it "suitable"? Who's eyes where opened for what?

In my opinion the reviewer focuses too much on the individual steps of the authors argument. I'd find it extraordinarily interesting to instead (or: in addition) expand the section describing the impact and role the publication had on the political developments in Myanmar (from the reviewers point of view). A more thorough description on where and when and under which circumstances the author decided to embark in the endeavour to write the book would also be much welcomed.

PS:

I don't understand the following argumentation:

In lines 205-207 it is said that "one can see the more the means of production developed, the more profits the capitalists got...". This sounds reasonable. But earlier, in lines 96-99, the argument is put forward, that "...the capitalists used to buy and destroy every newly invented machine..." because "...the older ones, once bought with high investments, would have become outdated." Now this – not being an economist – sounds like a inconsistency.

4. Zaw Naing: Book Report on *The Capitalistic World (Danashin loka)*

(Translation: Georg Noack)

Biography of the Author

Ba Hein was an important political actor in the Myanmar independence movement. It seems as if hardly anything is known about the time and place of his birth. Also, as a list of his publications only “*Danashin loka*” (The Capitalist World) and “*Bone wada*” (Communism, [Pali *Bhum(i)wada*]) can be studied and recorded. He wrote the book “*Danashin loka*” in 1929 [sic! Palme Dutt’s “Fascism and Social Revolution” on which “*Danashin loka*” is based first appeared 1934! G.N.], the book “*Bone wada*” later on. He entered the political movement in Mandalay. He arrived in Yangon to attend the first all Myanmar university students’ conference. When the second students’ conference was held in Mandalay, he headed the hosting committee. On National Day 1299 M.E. (1937 C.E.) he held a speech in the Sule Park [now called Mahabandula Garden in English use, G.N.] as a representative of the students association. He also participated actively in the students strike.

In the second volume of “*Ashay-ka naywun htwet thi pamar*” (“As sure as the sun rises in the east”) Thein Pe Myint writes: “Though he was from upper Myanmar, Ko Ba Hein’s skin was not dull and dry. He was of fair, pale complexion. His face was not just smooth and handsome, but pleasantly sweet. Whenever he smiled, between his red lips sparkling white teeth gleamed.”

He was arrested for his leading role in the oil workers’ strike and his political speeches [literally “political dhamma preaching”]. While he was imprisoned in Insein, he wrote the book “*Danashin loka*”. At that time the student’s leader Ko Aung Kyaw fell during the demonstrations before the ministerial offices. Later the university students union changed to the *Do Bamar Asi-Ayone* (We-Bamar Association) and became politically active. This much is all that is known about Ba Hein’s biography.

Summary of Content

Ba Hein wrote the book “*Danashin loka*” ten years after the First World War and before the Second World War. At the time of writing the author was imprisoned for his political activities in Insein. He describes the current situation of the whole world and, criticizing the situation faced by the Myanmar people at present, aims at motivating people to enter the battle for independence.

Writing the book “*Danashin loka*” Ba Hein studied the views of scholars of the west and makes reference to literature on politics and economy published in the west and the whole world.

In the table of content seven chapters are differentiated. The first chapter is the foreword written by Thakhin Than Htun. One should to note that in those days it was customary practice in the publication of books to list the foreword as a separate chapter.

The second chapter is the introduction. Even though it is called introduction, it was not written by the author himself, but by Thakhin Soe. It is explained somewhere in the book that while the author was imprisoned together with Thakhin Soe and that, while they were working on a separate book each, they discussed with each other what they wrote. That is why it is no wonder that Thakhin Soe wrote the introduction to Ba Heins book. However, compared with the common practice in the publication of books now it appears strange that the introduction of a book should not be written by it author.

Further, the table of contents contains the chapters three, “The Capitalist World”, four, “Capitalism”, five, “Imperialism”, six, “Fascism” and seven, “Epilogue”. Within each chapter different topics are marked again by smaller subtitles. The chapters three to six are the actual text of the book and explain step by step about each system and its developments. In the seventh chapter, the epilogue, the difficulties, fatigue and sufferings faced while writing the book are described. While the comrades-in-arms where entering the battle outside, the author was in prison and wishing to use every opportunity to try and support them he decided to write, discussing it with Thakhin Soe. Therefore the epilogue is not a conclusion or summary of the book, but the story of how it came into being.

Foreword

In the Foreword Thakhin Than Htun describes, how fond he is of Ba Hein, how pleased he was hearing about Thakhin Soe’s and Ko Ba Hein’s writing activities in prison and explains about Ko Ba Hein’s spirit. Thereafter he writes that he was asked to write the foreword. He explains briefly about the unusual translations of English terms into Myanmar language. He mentions that Ba Hein based his book on “Social Revolution” by the communist leader R.P.Dutt Fascian [*sic!!!* “Fascism and Social Revolution” by R.P.Dutt, G.N.] and excerpted as he thought appropriate.

The book explains briefly how humans developed from the “era of plenty” to the feudal ages, the era of landowners, the capitalist era focussing on wealth and exploiting the poor etc., developing step by step and becoming civilized. In the capitalist era when capitalism was within a country, it

developed to imperialism because of its search for more and more profits. Just because of imperialism, the First World War (1914-1918) happened. After the war the system was still in force, preparing for another great war by various means. This was just because of the meanness of capitalism.

A special aspect of the capitalist system was putting together of work processes and the division of labour. [sic! G.N.]. This caused the increase of productive capacity. But when it was no longer in the interest of the capitalists, they came to destroy machinery and limit production. Therefore an era changing revolution became necessary in the world and there was a need to participate in it. It is explained, that Ko Ba Hein did not only participate in this revolution through his writings, but joined it actively in person.

Introduction

The introduction is written by Thakhin Soe. Thakhin Soe writes that apart from Soviet Russia all countries are overwhelmed by capitalism. Whatever it is called in the different countries, the basic principle is nothing else but capitalism. The banking system, the system of monopoly capitalism, the imperialist system all developed out of original capitalism. 95% of the world's population is poor, wretched and starving. Covered up with crime. Robbers and dacoits, rioting and the horrible views of war are seen everywhere. It is necessary to understand capitalism, the foundation of this approaching apocalyptic catastrophe. The book "*Danashin loka*" can satisfy this need, writes Thakhin Soe. In the book "*Danashin loka*" he explains about the beginnings of capitalism, its changing forms of appearance, and its end in detail.

Therefore the book points at the fact that man has to decide whether to accept fascism and destroy human civilization or to overcome and destroy the system and provide for the advancement of civilization. In present day Myanmar the capitalists have monopolized mineral resources, oil, teakwood, and rice. There are 20 million acres of rice land. Half of it, 10 millions are owned by just about 5000 landowners. The other half is owned by a population of 12 million people. Therefore a landowner will own 2000 acres on the average, but a farmer will just own 0,8 acres on the average. Because of this capitalist, imperialist system there is no way to better the lives of the poor. Everything is only getting worse and worse. Only if imperialism is fought and destroyed things would become pleasant. In order to destroy imperialism one needs to understand the basic principles of capitalism. Thakhin Soe states that Ko Ba Hein's book "*Danashin loka*" therefore supports the battle against and the destruction of imperialism. I think that Thakhin Soe's

introduction functions as a guide to the book by Ba Hein.

The Capitalist World

The first chapter “The Capitalist World” is divided into five parts under the subtitles “A Six thousand years journey”, “Capitalism and productive forces”, “Thirsty while sailing”, “Conservative Capitalism”, and “The problem of unemployment”.

“A six thousand years journey” means the development on earth from the Stone Age to the civilized age; the present has lasted six thousand years. Within these six thousand years the empires and peoples of Egypt, Persia, Greece, and Rome evolved powerfully. Slowly human civilization developed. But that what curbed or destroyed the development of civilization was developing along with it: Class division. The ruled had to take on the duties of civilization while the ruling minority enjoyed the benefits. Therefore Karl Marx said that the history of men in the past was nothing but class struggle. Around the year 1400 capitalism evolved out of feudalism. Between 1800 and 1900 capitalism made the productive forces increase enormously. After 1900 it had covered a part of the world with machines for industrial production. At that time it could no longer control the productive force of its machines. The capitalists started to curb further development of the machines in order to secure their existence. The closing down and the destruction of factories made many people unemployed. If the development of machines would spread all over the world all people of the world would be able to live comfortably in peace and fullness by working just one hour per week on Sunday. But, capitalism didn’t allow such a thing. It curbed the enhancement of human living.

The capitalist countries claimed not to have sufficient food for their large populations and developed the system of imperialism. In 1931 Japan invaded Chinese Manchuria, claiming to do so because of overpopulation within Japan but hiding the real reasons. These slogans were the incentives for the poor in Japan, who were to fight and die in the capitalists’ battle. In fact the invasion happened because Japanese petty capitalism was about to develop into large scale monopoly capitalism.

In capitalism, if due to an increase in productive force the output of goods becomes plenty, the prices fall. If the price falls, there is no more profit to be gained. Therefore some readily produced goods are destroyed. While in a part of the world millions of people suffer from hunger and poverty the capitalists burn and destroy foodstuffs and clothing. This system is also supported systematically by the capitalist governments.

In America, right in front 12 millions of unemployed people without sufficient food agricultural

products produced in excess by machines is destroyed. Denmark is famous for its production of milk, butter and cheese. In 1937, the Danish government killed more than 5,000 cows within one week only to reduce the production of milk. In England the Labour Party government issued a law to limit the production of hard coal. 1931 the international conference of copper producers decided to reduce the production of copper by 26 %. In Brazil the Coffee producing capitalists destroyed 12 million bags of coffee in 1931.

1933 the American government gave rewards for the destruction of already planted cotton 11 million acres of 40 million acres cotton fields were destroyed. So capitalism put the food for humans into the fire chamber. Soon capitalism sends humans to war and prepared to put them in the fire chamber too.

So capitalism is conservative. Because of production machinery the capitalists' profits are reduced. Fearing that their machines would no longer be up to date, they bought new ones and destroyed them wherever they appeared. 1933 in Hitler-ruled Germany a law was issued to prohibit the use of new machines for the production of cigarettes and provide for the continuous use of old ones.

Therefore there were two ways to choose for mankind. The first was destroying the machines and live in the society of the conservative capitalists. The second way was to proceed the communist system, using the machines for the development of higher living standards, civilization and freedom.

Under monopoly capitalism, the unemployment problem became terribly big. There were many workers in the factories processing goods out of raw materials. When the capitalists didn't get profits and closed the factories the workers became unemployed. Therefore it is the workers' historical duty to bury capitalism. The workers and peasants of Soviet Russia have founded it anew using the communist system. Other capitalist countries have come to worry that their workers might start the revolution. So they oppress their workers by various means. Germany and Italy suppress them with fascism. When they couldn't handle the unemployment problem by other means, the capitalist countries sent the unemployed workers it had no use for as superfluous men right into the world war.

Capitalism

The chapter "Capitalism" is divided three separate parts under the titles "The consumer goods industry", "The distribution of consumer goods", and "The changing forms of capitalism".

The author (Ba Hein) defines capitalism as nothing else but the profitable exploitation of one class

by another. In the capitalist system the necessities of human life, agricultural land, mines and factories, roads, means of transport and communication such as railroad, cars, and airplanes, the banks and savings are owned by a minority of capitalists. In the production of goods in their factories the capitalists do not make the benefit of the people a priority but only their own profits. They produced only goods that could easily be sold and provided many profits. Such goods were not the foodstuffs really needed by many people, but goods only the wealthy could buy. In case they happened to produce foodstuffs that were not needed by the wealthy and could not be afforded by the poor they destroyed those goods as superfluous excess production. That was the weakness of capitalist production.

Another mistake of capitalist production was not to use the whole available productive capacity. In Soviet Russia, newly founded according to the communist system, the production of consumer goods increased from 69% to 230% in 1929 while in America it declined from 95% to 58%, in England from 99% to 89%, in Germany from 86% to 66%.

On the other hand, let us have a look at the distribution of goods according to capitalism. The reason to produce goods is that they are to be used. But as the poor do not have the money they cannot buy consumer goods. And as also those who have the money only buy as much as they need, the goods become superfluous. Superfluous not because they were not needed, but because they could not be afforded. The capitalists destroyed superfluous goods instead of giving them to the poor. Together with destroying goods, the capitalists didn't produce new goods and closed down the factories. At that time the workers from the factories became unemployed.

In order to continue to exist the capitalists had to devour not only the poor workers, but also petty capitalists. On the long term petty capitalists could not compete with large scale capitalists in the production of goods. They had to give up. At last the machines got all into the hands of the large scale capitalists. This is called monopoly capitalism. Within monopoly capitalism, the capitalists conducting similar businesses formed groups to manipulate the whole economic sector. When in a country the capitalists had held several separate hard coal enterprises, under monopoly capitalism they founded an association of hard coal entrepreneurs. Then they monopolised the production and trade of hard coal. If more or less coal was produced, if the price of coal rose or fell was all in the hands of this association now.

After the year 1900 the old capitalist system wherein single capitalists competed with each other was overcome and replaced by the system of monopoly capitalism wherein the capitalist associations competed with each other. Under monopoly capitalism the number of capitalists

became small while the number of poor became larger and larger. The income of the capitalists and the income of the poor differed more and more. One day or another the productive capacity of the machines became too good and the capitalist associations did no longer get good prices and no longer found customers. At that time the capitalists sold their goods to countries that had not yet developed a capitalist system. So the countries that were not yet developed and up to date became the market of the capitalists. When the capitalist countries competed within these markets, they tried to subjugate these countries under their control. Capitalism changed into imperialism. Therefore Lenin, the leader of the Russian Revolution said that imperialism is monopoly capitalism.

Imperialism

In the world capitalism, monopoly capitalism, the banking system and imperialism changed into various forms. But they appeared not at the same time in every country. England was the place where capitalism first evolved, and it was the only country to send and sell goods to other countries already before 1900. [*sic!* G.N.] . Therefore in the early imperialist era there was almost nobody to compete with the English capitalists and they could easily subject other countries. Later other countries like Germany, France and Japan developed to an equal level with England. After the capitalist countries had step by step developed monopoly capitalism they inevitably came to use imperialism. The true reason for having to invade other countries was the need to sell superfluous goods. In order to sell processed goods and get raw materials at cheap prices they invaded and subjected other countries. At that time there evolved big wars between the capitalist countries that possessed raw materials and those that did not. Before the war in 1914, England had planned to give some of the colonies under its control to Germany in order to avoid war. But this plan didn't succeed and the First World War evolved.

When the capitalist countries invaded other countries they argued that they had to civilize them. Another argument given for the invasions was that there was overpopulation in their home country. Whoever argued whatsoever, the injuries of imperialism in practice were to be suffered by the natives of the enslaved countries. The capitalist countries possessing colonies enjoyed the following advantages:

- (1) the opportunity to swamp new markets with their goods
- (2) Monopolies on raw materials
- (3) Opportunities to invest excess capital
- (4) Cheap workforce from the colonial countries.

The enjoyment of these advantages, the subjugation and colonial administration lasted, because of troops stationed in the subjugated country. The great imperialist Sir William Joynson-Hicks said “We have conquered India by sword, now we also have to rule it with the sword.” The worst disease following imperialism was the battles of war. Earlier when there were no empires, colonies could be invaded and subjugated without competition. But now when the monopoly capitalist countries all practiced imperialism wars came to happen.

Also the colonies were no longer easy to conquer. The people came to defend their countries with their lives. In India, Egypt and Myanmar the battles for independence became fierce. When Japan invaded China didn't have to fight only England, America, France and others but also met fierce resistance by the natives. The imperialist wars were led to world war. In these times the people of the world should start the great revolution changing from the capitalist into the communist era, Ba Hein demanded.

Fascism

In order to eliminate the revolution went to found the system of fascism. While the capitalist countries England, France and America were still preparing for fascism, Germany and Italy had already fully embraced fascism. Fascism was intended to perpetuate capitalism that was about to break down. The author demonstrates that, as there were several classes under capitalism, he who wanted to revolt against capitalism and found a communist society has to know about the political views and attitudes of various classes. The middle class had to depend on the capitalists as well as on the poor for its existence. Sometimes it associated with the capitalists, sometimes with the poor. Under monopoly capitalism, while the capitalists became richer and richer, the middle classes became poorer and poorer.

When fascism was about to take over in Germany only 1000 out of 8000 graduates got a job. Graduated engineers had to do ordinary work. Of 2200 teachers certified in the year 1931-32 only 990 got employed. Of the graduates of 1932 45,000 became unemployed. They were the ones gathered by Hitler to form the brown shirt force.

When the capitalists provided leaders to the middle class and the workers unfaithful to the working class, fascism came into being. Fascism seduced the middle class and the treacherous workers and used them as the truncheons of capitalism. In short, the author accuses fascism to be a system where the capitalists pay for the middle class and the treacherous workers to crush the workers unions and their matured revolutionary spirit.

Italian Fascism

In Italy fascism appeared earlier than in Germany. At the end of the world war the veterans, workers, and peasants went on strike all over Italy. They went on strike because of the economic catastrophe at the end of the war. When the strike gained momentum, it changed from an economic strike into a political one. When the social democrats leading the strike joined hands with the capitalists, the capitalists cleared away the social democrats and founded fascism. The Italian Revolution also fell victim. Ba Hein argues that in Myanmar people who want the revolution should draw a lesson from the disastrous end of the Italian matter.

German Fascism

After the war the workers and soldiers revolution evolved and succeeded in deposing the German government that had killed many Germans in the war. But when the capitalists installed Hitler as a dictator in 1933 they showed the force of fascism. Fascism arranged with force for the capitalists that they could order the workers around as they wished and pay them just too much to die. The author writes that fascism is now not only in Germany and Italy but gradually overwhelming the whole world. Therefore he raises alarm and demands everybody to join the revolution it is now time to start in order to repulse and crush fascism.

Critique

Thakhin Ba Hein's book "*Danashin loka*" belongs to the category of political literature. It instigates the various classes of the workers, peasants, students and politicians to participate in the battle for independence by shedding a light on the situation in Myanmar in comparison with the state of things all over the world. It is therefore that Thakhin Soe wrote in the introduction that the book "*Danashin loka*" would be of great help to everybody participating in the era changing revolution.

The author had entered the battle for independence himself at the best of his ability. It was also due to his political engagement, that he was imprisoned. And it was just there in jail that he wrote the book "*Danashin loka*" to support the political movement. When he was writing the book Myanmar was still enslaved under English [*sic!* G.N.] imperialism. It was also the time of exhaustion after the war when almost every country entered the battles for freedom from capitalism and imperialism. In the book the poverty and famine, suffering and exploitation in Myanmar and all over the world are described as being the work of capitalism. It is shown that capitalism did not appear over night but arose in the course of history.

The “ages of plenty” (“Padeitha tree era”) the age of slavery, the age of landowners and the evolvment of the capitalist era are described in detail. That the suffering experienced by present day humans is the work of capitalism is explained listing many facts, references and proofs. It is written that capitalism now was changing into even worse monopoly capitalism, that imperialism was the method of monopoly capitalism and that the problem following as an annex to imperialism was wars. This is to say that Ba Hein was a brave thinker and wrote bravely.

The workers, peasants and poor of all countries woke up and when their views became broader they joined the revolution and tried to erect communism. At that time monopoly capitalism was about to collapse and created fascism as a truncheon to fight the revolutionary forces. Therefore the main aim of the book is to provide a clear understanding of these various systems and political knowledge and conscience to everybody participating in the revolution and the erection of communism.

It is explained that in soviet Russia the national leaders headed by Lenin crushed the terribly cruel capitalist system with the forces of the workers, peasants, the poor and the people and that other oppressed countries should follow the Russian example, destroy capitalism and erect communism.

The writer was an aroused activist for the countries independence. He committed himself to independence first participating in the students strike and later as a member of the *Do Bamar asi-ayone*. Capitalism is clearly shown as the accused perpetrator responsible for all suffering currently experienced. In the first chapter the origins of the capitalist world now covering the earth are explained thoroughly. The merit of capitalism overcoming various other systems was the fast advancement of production machinery. The fault of the capitalist world, however, was that its benefits were only to be enjoyed by the capitalist minority and not by the poor or by the workers. If the benefits of new production machinery were to be enjoyed by all equally the capitalist world would be a place one wants to live in. This is the communist teaching Ba Hein principally wants to show.

In the capitalist world the capitalists destroyed the superfluous goods produced by the productive forces instead of distributing them to the poor. Also they hindered the development of new machines. Ba Hein also exhorts the reader that it is the duty of man to destroy the conservative capitalist system which destroys human society. This chapter hints at the evident nature of the capitalist world.

In the second part of points out the advancement of the disease of capitalism to a worse stage. The separate capitalists joined each other. The capitalists advanced and advanced in the very bad form

of monopoly capitalism all over the world. It is explained that it spread to every country on its search for new markets.

The third part describes imperialism as a problem in the annex of monopoly capitalism. Giving the need to civilize or overpopulation and other reasons they invaded other countries. But Ba Hein doesn't see it like this. In his view the invasions were because of the desire for profits, wanting to sell processed goods at high prices and get cheap raw materials. Seen from the perspective of the ruled colonies, this view is to be fully supported. That is to say Ba Hein had a clear inside knowledge of the nature of imperialism. His argument "nobody can know the meanness of imperialism as well as the natives of the enslaved countries" is very sustainable.

In the chapter "Fascism" capitalism's deceitfulness is uncovered. When the workers and poor could no longer stand the oppression in the end, when the people of the subjugated countries developed broader views and knowledge, they would overthrow the capitalist system. At that time the successful erection of communism in soviet Russia became an example for the downtrodden of all countries. In order to annihilate the revolution and continue to exist capitalism put up fascism. Ba Hein also hints at the mildness in the beginnings of fascism. At the beginning fascism had to oppress the poor and the workers. When the oppression became unbearably harsh and the protest increased it [fascism] announced that the great revolution would now succeed. But German and Italian fascism were even worse than was thought. The oppression became so strong that the revolutionary forces broke apart and became extinct.

It has already been mentioned that the time of writing "*Danashin loka*" was around 1930. At that time Japanese fascism was only in its beginnings. It had not yet arrived in Myanmar. At that time the true politician Ba Hein saw, knew and thought about the hostility of fascism in advance. But in the chaos and speed of worldwide war our country had to make the bitter experience of the fascist demons cruelty. The word "Only if the thoughts are clear the writing will be" has once been noted. Criticizing the writing style of the book "*Danashin loka*", the writer has to say that the thoughts and views presented are very clear. As the member of an oppressed nation one will suffer and hate capitalism. As a politician struggling for independence one will want to overthrow and crush capitalism. This principle is pointed at in his writings. Concerning the book's aim it is capable of showing clearly understandable what capitalism is, where it comes from, where it is heading for and so on. It can show bad system's effects listing paragraph by paragraph numbers and facts in detail. One can not say that these listings and numbers were superfluous. They were inserted with the intention to make everything more clear and obvious.

It can be observed that some subjects are explained again and again. This should be regarded as an attempt to make text more profound. At the end of each chapter he demands to overthrow capitalism with the workers', peasants' and the poor's forces and erect communism. It is as if this demand was not only directed to the Myanmar people, but to the poor in the whole world. It is also evident that politicians like Ba Hein were oriented towards the example of the communist republic of Soviet Russia.

In brief, in those days the book "*Danashin loka*" provided Myanmar citizens with political views and knowledge. It was certainly supporting those struggling for the countries independence. We ought to believe that the book "*Danashin loka*" is a part of the history of the independence movement in Myanmar.

Present Significance

In the present the world has left the 20th century behind. Almost a century has passed since Ba Hein wrote his book "*Danashin loka*". Time has passed and various systems have changed. The world is now called a global village, the IT age or global age. There are no more master countries. No slave countries are left. It is also long since Myanmar has long become an independent country [alternative translation: "free country"; transl.]. But how are the writings and thoughts of Ko Ba Hein's "*Danashin loka*" reflected in the present world? A point worth considering.

The objective of the book "*Danashin loka*" was the disappearance of the bad systems coming together with capitalism and the foundation of a communist republican political system with equal opportunities for all. It aimed at the elimination of differences between rich and poor in the world, peace and the development of human civilisation.

Has capitalism and the capitalist world really disappeared? We will have to think clearly. Do people really live in peace under the leadership of the United Nations? A point to think about. How long could the communist republic in soviet Russia, the model country of Ba Hein's time last? Why did it break down? A good question. Can it be denied that in today's peaceful world interfering into the internal affair of other countries by political or military means is not a new imperialism that has given itself the name "democracy"? Whoever reads the book "*Danashin loka*" might well compare the era when it was written with our times. He might become aware of similar issues, forms and concepts. Writing this critique I happen to think that if only Ba Hein was still alive today, he would write a book titled "The New Capitalist World after the 20th Century".

4.1. Tinya Wollweber: Commentary on Zaw Naing's Report on *Danashin Loka*

The comprehensive outline of the review provided by Zaw Naing cannot conceal the overall sympathy of the reviewer for Ba Hein and his work. While the biographical part tries to fill the gap that exists with regards to the information on the author who is believed to play at least a significant role in the intellectual history of Myanmar, the reviewer rolls into one with the original author throughout the remainder of the text.

For most parts quotations are missing and the lack of subjunctive form make it hard to believe that the reviewer is just summarising the opinion and views of Ba Hein. Even though this is understood, they are presented as if they originate from the reviewer, detached from the original author. Several sections go without any mentioning of Ba Hein, let alone any references.

The critique, though representing the reviewer's viewpoint, should be written with a certain degree of distance between the writer and the discussed subject. In this case the distance gets blurred and it appears that the reviewer has entirely absorbed the writers viewpoint, taking over the propaganda language ("crushed the terribly cruel capitalist system" p.53) which may be appropriate for Ba Hein pursuing to spread the communist idea but appear misplaced in a review that is supposed to shed a critical light on the writing seventy years after. The original text was written in the early twentieth century where the ideology of communism had the appeal of being the only political model to confront imperialism and to liberate the colonised countries. This was not only the case in Myanmar but also in Africa (many newly created African states adopt a kind of Stalinist/socialist regimes, Vietnam and parts of Latin America. Despite of the appeals that communism/socialism had at that time, the sympathy for this political model was not a matter of choice but rather the lack of it. Bereft of traditional structures (the colonial powers removed the traditional elites) the choice was either to adopt capitalism or communism. As the former was in fact the system of the colonial rulers the only choice was the latter. Ba Hein has done a remarkable work in giving the Burmese people access to the idea of communism and providing its historical background. It is difficult to criticise a written work which has been created in a different time from now as it needs to consider the socio-political settings of that particular time. Zaw Naing correctly acknowledges the "Danashin Loka" as part of the (intellectual) history of the independence movement in the early 20th century Myanmar (or Burma at that time). With regards to the present significance the political stance of reviewer becomes obvious. Very critical about the western world and what is generally believed to be democratic, the reviewer draws parallels between the old

imperialism and the intrusion into internal matters by the western nations. Although it does not seem to be far-fetched, it would be too simplistic to solely oppose the west on one side and Myanmar on the other side. We now live in a world of sophisticated linkage of interests both on national and international level.

Even the military rulers of Myanmar embrace capitalism looking for foreign investors and foreign currencies to flow in. China is a close-by foreign power having obvious interest in the country. But in the light of the widespread poverty in Myanmar and the contrasting wealth of the military government one would question who actually the imperialistic power in the country is, seeking to exploit the resources without fair distribution.

If Ba Hein is really a writer for the people I believe that the shift of paradigms would not have passed by on him.

January 2007

IV. SOME MATERIAL FROM THE INTERNET ON RAJINI PALME DUTT

1. Vijay Singh, Record of the Discussions of Rajani Palme Dutt with M.K. Gandhi, Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru (4th, 8th and 9th April, 1946)¹

Introduction

The British Communist Rajani Palme Dutt is rightly remembered in this country for his book 'India Today' which is still unsurpassed as a Marxist introduction to modern Indian history finding its match and complement only in the awesome volume by A. M. Dyakov, 'India in the Period During and After the Second World War 1939-1949', Moscow, 1952 (in Russian). Born in Cambridge where his father was a doctor in a working class area, from early childhood R.P. Dutt came into contact with many of the legendary figures of the Indian independence movement who visited this university town. A founding member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and an expert on Indian questions he was a stalwart supporter of Indian independence and made important interventions in the communist movement in this country, notably in convincing the CPI in 1946 to modify its approach to the Pakistan question. Despite his family links with India the British authorities did not grant him permission to visit the subcontinent until the time of the visit of the British Cabinet Mission in 1946. At that time he was Vice-Chairman of the Communist Party of Great Britain. While in India R.P. Dutt functioned as a correspondent of *The Daily Worker* and conducted interviews with the leadership of the Congress Party.

The interviews with the Congress leaders on the eve of political independence and partition indicate the political concern of R.P. Dutt to smoothen the way of co-operation internationally between the Communist movement, the democratic camp and the national movement, and, as a corollary of this to explore the possibilities of building broader links between the Congress Party and the Communist Party of India, on lines analogous to the relations in Britain between the Communist Party of Great Britain and the ruling Labour Party in the post-war period, in order to facilitate a broad programme of national reconstruction.

This task was not an easy one because of the collisions of the two parties in the 1940s on the 'August revolution' of 1942 which was seen by the CPI as an event which assisted the very real threat of the Japanese fascist invasion of India at a conjuncture when the international democratic

¹<http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv11n2/duttintro.htm> (June 3, 2006).

forces were exerting every nerve to defeat Nazism and Fascism; and, the differences of the two on the stand to be adopted on the demand for Pakistan by the Muslim League. These differences widened as the Congress established an 'enquiry' into the CPI line at the All-India Congress Committee meeting in September 1945 and took the decision to bar members of the CPI from holding positions of responsibility in the Congress. Differences were marked on the refusal of the Congress Party to reach an agreement with the Muslim League which contributed to the weakening of the anti-colonial struggle against the British and the failure to create a united Indian state on the basis of a voluntary union. The interviews reveal these frictions between the CPI and the Congress: on Congress-League unity in addition to the tensions which arose from the militant role of the CPI in the revolt of the naval ratings in 1946. Sardar Patel posed these questions in the sharpest fashion. The Congress Party did not join the international coalition against fascism on the ground that India had not been granted independence by British imperialism. In contrast, the CPI in the period 1942-44 considered that India despite her continued colonial status had to take part in the struggle against fascism along with the United Nations. The CPI called for the release of the Congress leaders and fought for the establishment of a provisional national government which would have enormously bolstered the mobilisation of the people of the country against the Japanese army which was standing at the doorstep of India (and, further, assist the fight of the Chinese people against the Japanese occupation which was led by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China). The Indian National Army which was headed by Subhas Chandra Bose and which had the backing of Japanese fascism was regarded as functioning as the adjunct of Japan. The CPI took a leading role in the fight against Japanese imperialism and opposed the 'August revolution' of 1942 which was correctly perceived as weakening the national and international front for democracy and against fascism. The Congress Party in 1942 denied responsibility for the August events while sections of the Congress Socialist Party and the pro-Bose Forward Bloc whipped up national-chauvinist passions against the CPI.⁽¹⁾

On the tactical line of the CPI regarding the revolt of August 1942, Patel, despite Nehru's inflammatory charges in June 1945 that the CPI had placed itself on the 'other side' in not leading the 1942 'struggle' and despite also the Congress measures against the CPI in September 1945, argued that the Congress leadership, after their release from jail, had determined to forge an understanding with the CPI forgetting the differences over this issue, but found that co-operation became difficult as the CPI continued to defend its tactical stand. Patel charged the CPI with denouncing Congressmen to the British and reaching an understanding with the colonial regime but

without in any way considering it incumbent upon himself to substantiate his allegations. The position of Gandhi was considerably milder on this, recognising that there were reasonable grounds for the line of policy of the CPI in 1942. He did not allude to the allegations of collaboration of the CPI with the Home Member Maxwell. Nehru's discussions suggest that he did not wish to repeat his vitriolic assault on the democratic positions of the CPI of 1942-44 in his discussions. R.P. Dutt found that Nehru did not attempt to counter his sharp critique of the tactical line of the Congress Party in 1942 and, astonishingly in view of his stand of the previous year, 'appeared at heart to be in considerable agreement' with his exposition. Nehru, nevertheless, was not amenable to repudiating the charges of CPI collaboration with the colonial authorities levelled by Sardar Patel despite the absence of any credible evidence on this, asserting only that they were widely believed by members of the Congress Party and the Congress Socialist Party. In this instance for Nehru in the political life of the country questions of belief held sway over matters of fact.

In the years prior to 1947 the CPI had forthrightly distanced itself from the multiplicity of constructions of 'nationalism' rooted in chauvinism, religion and communalism which were being advocated by the parties of imperialism, the local bourgeoisie and landlordism. The CPI substantiated the multinational character of the subcontinent on the basis of Marxist theory. It opposed the twin concepts of the 'Hindu nation' put forward by the Hindu Mahasabha and that of the 'Indian nation' constructed by the Congress Party, both of which corresponded to the interests of the pro-imperialist big Gujarati-Marwari bourgeoisie desirous of inheriting the large multinational British Indian colonial market and state. Likewise the CPI did not embrace the schema of the 'Muslim nation' supported by the Muslim League which obscured the reality of the existence of several nations in the project of the formation of a semi-colonial Pakistan market and state which was being advocated by the smaller minority strata of the Gujarati bourgeoisie, the landlords of the United Provinces allied to imperialism (and, later, by sections of the nascent bourgeoisie and the *jotedars* of Bengal who were in a position to mobilise the majority of the peasantry behind themselves under communal slogans). The reactionary 'two-nation' theory had been originally formulated by the pioneers of Hindu communal-fascism such as Savarkar. It was espoused in a big way by the Muslim League after the big Gujarati-Marwari bourgeoisie and the Congress Party under the leadership of Sardar Patel and Nehru refused to provide clear constitutional safeguards for the bourgeoisie and landlords of the largest minority community. It may be recalled that the Muslim League and the Congress Party had accepted the Cabinet Mission plan of 1946 which called for a unified federal India which would have weak central powers.

The CPI considered that India was a multinational country and, as is apparent from the party's memorandum to the Cabinet Mission in 1946, argued that a free, voluntary, democratic Indian Union required to be constructed anchored on the unfettered right of each nation to self-determination. According to this each nation in India through its own constituent assembly would decide its own future as to whether it would join the Indian Union, form a separate sovereign state or join another Indian union. The CPI opposed an arbitrary partition imposed by the British while recognising that the genuine concerns of the Muslim League had to be seriously addressed in view of the mass support that the League enjoyed and in the interests of a wider Indian unity. The communists fought for a policy of unity between the Congress Party and the Muslim League to counter the attempts of the British to stall independence and to divide India. The CPI failed to persuade the Congress to accept all the implications of a free India being a family of sovereign states. Gandhi came close to a democratic position for as was pointed out by P.C. Joshi in 1944 he recognised that in the areas of Muslim majority they should have the fullest right to constitute themselves into a separate state, he further supported the call for the closest co-operation between the Congress and the Muslim League on common issues.⁽²⁾ The principled and consistent democratic stands of the CPI, despite a number of flaws, failed before the adamant positions of the big Gujarati-Marwari bourgeoisie and the leadership of the Congress Party which preferred to exercise strong centralised industrial and political monopoly control in a divided India rather than to come to a compromise with those sections of the minority bourgeoisie and landlords and the Muslim League which were legitimately desirous of protecting their own economic, political and administrative interests in a united Indian state. These were the circumstances which persuaded the Indian big bourgeoisie to withdraw from supporting a unified India as envisaged by the Cabinet Mission plan and enabled Mountbatten, on behalf of British imperialism, to serially win over Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi for his partition project.⁽⁴⁾ The cracks between various fractions of the Indian bourgeoisie widened with the last budget before 1947. The Liaquat Ali budget, based on the Congress Party manifesto, proposed that industry and business pay income tax on illicit war profits and suggested the establishment of a commission to ferret out and recover unpaid taxes on their black money struck at the very roots of big Gujarati-Marwari capital. The budget provoked the big Indian bourgeoisie led by G. D. Birla to exert enormous pressure on the Congress Party and Nehru and to successfully bring them to heel before the transfer of power.

It is interesting to note that during these interviews the leadership of the Congress did not care to contest the fundamental understanding of the CPI on the national question. Gandhi, Patel and Nehru

did, however, assail the CPI for allegedly supporting the six province demand of the Muslim League (which implied the inclusion of Assam in Pakistan), an appraisal which was rejected by R.P. Dutt on the factual basis of the CPI documents. Similarly, the Congress leaders did not express opposition to the CPI proposals for Congress-League unity but protested against any electoral co-operation between the CPI and the Muslim League. Despite the cordial relations of the Congress Party and sections of the landlords, as with the big Gujarati-Marwari bourgeoisie, Nehru objected to the 'electoral understandings' of the CPI with 'landed interests' in the United Provinces and the North-West Frontier Province. The views of Nehru and Patel on the questions pertaining to partition, autonomy and secession which were elicited by R.P. Dutt at press conferences and interviews were published in the British and Indian press at the time and are of considerable interest in illumining the stands of the Congress Party on the brink of partition and the transfer of power.

A third impediment to amicable Congress-CPI relations to which Sardar Patel refers was the alleged use of violence by the CPI. Patel cited the example of the recent strike of the Bombay naval ratings in which he had sought to persuade the Communists and the Socialists not to call for an *hartal* as this would result in police firing and fatal casualties but to trust in his appeals to the British authorities to resolve the matters. As R.P. Dutt well understood, in assailing the CPI Patel did not care to mention that the real reason that the communists and socialists had declared for the strike in Bombay in solidarity with the naval ratings was to forestall the attempt of the British authorities to sink the twenty 'mutinous' ships which would have led to an even greater loss of life than actually occurred. Sardar Patel it was apparent was more concerned to uphold the authority of the Congress Party as the leading national organisation *vis-à-vis* the Communists and the Socialists than seeking a democratic and non-sanguinary resolution of the naval ratings strike.

The interviews reveal interesting details of the political mindset of the leaders of the Congress Party: Gandhi's stereotyped views on the political collisions in the Soviet Union, his philosophical anarchist views on the state wherein he demarcated himself from a state under Congress Party rule and Patel's narrow conservative constitutional approach to politics, emerge in a transparent form. Dutt had a greater empathy and rapport with Nehru in his discussions on international affairs in the run-up to the Second World War when Britain endeavoured to embroil Germany and the Soviet Union in mutually destructive strife, the possibilities presented by the Cripps mission. He also had the realistic understanding that while Nehru expressed – in words – preference for the Soviet-led democratic camp over the US imperialist *bloc* the Indian leader had only a tepid sympathy for the USSR.

The fundamental hiatus between the Communist Party and the Congress Party in the years prior to 1947 on a number of questions reflected the fact that in framing its policies the former took into account the requirement of strengthening international democracy and the world-wide anti-fascist front in the period of people's war while the latter adopted a local narrow-nationalist stand. This in turn was a reflex of the differing class basis of the two parties. The CPI as a working class party could not support any policy which would weaken the Soviet Union, the only state where the working class held power, just as it could not betray the struggles of the peoples of China, Vietnam and Indonesia who were conducting resistance movements against the occupation of Japanese fascism. The Gujarati-Marwari bourgeoisie, the landlords and the Congress Party had other priorities in the Second World War. The CPI, further, was interested in democratic solutions to the national question and the Pakistan question in the interests of a wider unity of the peoples in the subcontinent and so perforce was compelled to oppose the divisive policies of imperialism, the local bourgeoisie, the Congress Party and the Muslim League which were the driving forces for partition and the consequent formation of two antagonistic semi-colonial states both of which were and are prison-houses for the oppressed nations within their frontiers.

Notes:

¹.See: 'Indian Communists and the Congress', *World News and Views*, November 17th 1945, Volume 25, No. 45, p.: 362.

².Cited in: Ben Bradley, 'Gandhi-Jinnah Discussions', *ibid.*, 21st October 1944, Vol. 24, No. 43, p.: 339.

³. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 'India Wins Freedom', Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1972, pp.: 157-8.

⁴.*Ibid.*, pp.: 164-169.

2. Paul Flowers, What R. Palme Dutt stood for¹

Juan Rafael Fajardo wrote: Can anyone tell me anything about Dutt's politics?

Indeed I can. Rajani Palme Dutt was born in 1896 and died in 1974. He was of Indian and Swedish parents. He was a brilliant student, and was suspended from Oxford for opposing the First World War. He was also a neat cartoonist as well. Championing the October Revolution, he was in the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain from an early date. He married Salme Murrik, a Comintern operative.

Although he favourably reviewed Trotsky's "Where is Britain Going?" in 1925, he rapidly became an intellectual hack for whatever the Soviet regime's current line happened to be, providing sophisticated justifications of each twist and turn of Moscow policies in *Labour Monthly*, which, despite not being an official CPGB magazine, he edited.

Dutt was wheeled out each time Moscow wanted a new line implemented. So he came to the fore when the Third Period was implemented in 1928-29, dealing with those in the leadership whose enthusiasm for the ultra-left lurch was somewhat lacking. The same thing happened in 1939, where he almost single-handedly swung the CPGB leaders into opposing the Second World War as an imperialist conflict.

And so on, and so on. By the late 1960s, however, with Euro-communism starting to rise, and certain party leaders seeing what way the wind was blowing, Dutt fell out of favour. A long-term fan of Stalin, he never really accepted de-Stalinisation, and opposed the CPGB's leaders criticisms of the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968.

Dutt undoubtedly had a brilliant mind, but, without being a careerist, wasted his intellect in the service of Stalinism. What made him run, I don't know.

There is a none-too-good biography of Dutt -- John Callaghan, *Rajani Palme Dutt: A Study in British Stalinism*, London, 1993.²

¹ <http://www.marxmail.org/archives/november98/dutt.htm>

² Publisher: Lawrence & Wishart. 304 pages.

3. Jim Higgins, R.P. Dutt: Stalin's British mouthpiece (February 1975)¹

“He was the working class in action, with all the shackles and fetters fallen: he was the spirit of the future age living and acting today. And therefore, workers of the world do honour and will do honour to all that is most real and most imperishable in themselves and their own future.”

Thus Rajani Palme Dutt in his final paragraph to an obituary of Lenin published in April, 1924. It would be pleasant to say something, less grandiloquent perhaps, of like of Palme Dutt himself, now that he too is dead, if only because it is customary and well mannered. Unfortunately that is not possible. In his 60-odd years in the movement Dutt provides an object lesson in the politics of Stalinism and the abuse of great talent, in the service of those politics.

Born in 1889, he took a first class honours degree at Oxford but a promising academic career was blasted when he was sent down for opposition to the 1914-18 war. In 1919 he was made international secretary of the Labour Research Department, a post where he contracted his life long love of all things Russian. A foundation member of the Communist Party, he almost certainly owed his advancement to his Russian connection. Despite his comparative youth and lack of following in the party he became in 1921, editor of the theoretical magazine *Labour Monthly*. The following year he was appointed chairman of the party commission on organisation. Together with Harry Pollitt and Hubert Inkpin he was charged with the task of implementing the organisational theses of the Comintern. After six months of almost continuous session Dutt drafted the report that was accepted without dissent by a special party conference. In many ways the report went a long way to overcome the loose federalism of the party's geographical branches. Functional work groups, with effective command structures and reporting were established. Nevertheless, the report had a strong “Russian” flavour, in content if not in style. Not all the recommendations were implemented and even so subsequent party congresses were much exercised, mitigating the rigours of the “Dutt-Pollitt” report.

In the streamlined “bolshevised” party that came out of the re-organisation, all three signatories reaped the reward of their work. Inkpin was elected chairman of the Central Control Commission Dutt and Pollitt were elected to the party executive. Thus started the long and close association between Dutt and Pollitt. Palme Dutt, the cool intellectual with a facility for theoretical exposition, with friends in the Kremlin and Pollitt the talented mass agitator and organiser.

¹ <http://listserv.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/cd/cd1/Library/archive/higgins/1975/02/dutt.htm>; From *International Socialism* (1st series), February 1975.

As a member of the executive and editor of Labour Monthly Dutt occupied the role of leading theoretician as populariser and apologist for the line of the Comintern in whatever direction it happened to be moving. Labour Monthly in the early years was required reading for anyone with a theoretical turn of mind and a desire to see theory turned into practice. At one time or another almost every 'left' wrote for the magazine, and in the process exposed themselves more effectively than volumes of Marxist critique. At no time, however, did Labour Monthly stray far from the line of Palme Dutt's Russian mentors. Not a single zig of Comintern policy, not yet a zag or even both at the same time failed to find support in the *Notes of the Month* modestly signed "RPD". The Anglo-Russian Committee, policy towards the TUC "lefts", the so-called "third period" policy of "class against class" and the "popular front", all were joyfully taken on board and extolled as the latest revealed truth. Even so if the Notes were long, complex and seemed more an exercise in squaring the circle than dialectics they were interesting if only to try and see how the trick was done.

As a fluent Russian speaker Dutt was well placed as a link with and interpreter of the directives emanating from Moscow. That this was not always appreciated by less loftily connected comrades is evident from the words of Ernie Cant (London District Secretary): "... once again Comrade Dutt intervenes at the last minute in a party discussion, crossing the t's and dotting the i's and giving pontifical blessing to Comrade Pollitt. But Comrade Dutt has not only been divorced from the masses he has been divorced from the actual life of the party for a considerable period – he knows only resolutions, theses, ballot results and newspaper clippings." But as every Catholic knows and perhaps Ernie cant had forgotten, the "pontiff" gets his authority from God. RPD's deity was in Moscow and smiling on his protégé.

Interestingly enough the dispute that occasioned Cant's outburst occurred in 1929. It concerned the lack of fervour with which the British CP leadership were introducing the "third period" policy. Dutt, Page Arnot and J.T. Murphy led the "ultra left" opposition of Comintern loyalists. So acrimonious did the dispute become that it finally had to be sorted out in Moscow. There the majority of the leadership was transformed into a minority. Harry Pollitt who changed sides just in time was made party secretary, the dissident ex-leadership being dumped.

Always a prolific writer, Dutt was in his element justifying the unjustifiable during the whole of the "third period". If party membership declined, and it did, the party was stronger, because purer. If fascism succeeded in Germany, all to the good because: "After Hitler, us". In this last context Dutt spent some time preparing a book proving the objectively fascist nature of social democracy,

only to find that when the volume was published the “third period” had evaporated into the gaseous vapours of the “popular front”. The prospect of such a failure of vision must disturb the sleep of all votaries of capricious gods.

But the lurch from ultra-left idiocy of “social fascism” to the social pacifism of the “popular front” was a contradiction easily encompassed in Dutt’s own special dialectic.

Together with D.N. Pritt he was an enthusiastic apologist for the Moscow frame-up trials. Russian communists he had known, some as friends, disappeared in the horror of the great purge, not a word, not a whisper escaped Dutt’s lips or his pen to indicate anything but peace and socialist construction were going on in Russia under the avuncular beneficence of Joe Stalin.

The fruitful partnership with Harry Pollitt was interrupted in 1939. Harry with a logicity that years of training had failed to completely overcome had decided, at the outbreak of hostilities, that the war being against fascists must be, an anti-fascist war and so proclaimed it. He had, however, neglected the fact that the Stalin-Ribbentrop pact had been signed. Germany and Russia had a non-aggression pact. Palme Dutt, more versed in the signals, characterised the war as “imperialist”. Pollitt was removed from the secretaryship and returned to boiler making, while Dutt took over his job, a situation that lasted until Russia entered the war when its character was immediately transformed into an anti-fascist crusade.

To chronicle each twist and turn of Palme Dutt’s devotion to the line from Moscow would be repetitive and tedious. Suffice to say his last big service to the Russian comrades was in 1956 when he stumped the country, attempting to calm the fears of party members distressed by Khrushchev’s revelations at the 20th Party Congress and the Russian crushing of the Hungarian revolution. Palme Dutt’s discourse in justification of Stalin, was known as the “spots on the sun” speech. The sun, according to Dutt, is the source of energy, life, growth and was an all round good thing to have; nevertheless, there are spots on the sun: so it was with Stalin. The argument, for once, did not go down well with the comrades. Over 7,000 left the party and the monolith cracked in a way that defied restoration.

Dutt went on of course; he still edited Labour Monthly and wrote his increasingly tedious *Notes of the Month*. But it was not the same. Russians with H bombs and Sputniks have less need of foreign communist parties. The central links weakened, the party virtually rudderless, discipline almost non-existent, Palme Dutt’s last days must have been sad indeed. He surfaced briefly in 1969 to attack the party leadership for not supporting the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia at the party congress that year. It was a last very faint hurrah.

Intellectually Palme Dutt had all the equipment for penetrating analysis and a dedication worthy of better causes. He lived through and did his small part in assisting the degeneration of official Communism into the grotesque caricature that it is today.

It is appropriate to conclude by quoting again from RPD's obituary of Lenin, words that were strikingly prophetic and that he would have done well to have taken to heart.

“Hideous things will be proclaimed and advocated in the name of Leninism. All the traitors to socialist principles will endeavor to hide themselves behind the man who was bigger than formulas. The audacious compromises of an indomitable fighter will be made the excuse for the dirty compacts of petty bargainers and timid self-seekers.” How very true.

V. APPENDIX 1: Material on Hla Shwe, *Capitalism*

1. Kyaw Hoe, Bibliographical Information

Translated from Kyaw Hoe's Nagani bibliography pp.39-40 by Gunnar Peters

20) **Hla Shwe, Dr.: Capitalism.** Author: Hla Shwe; Yangon, Nagani 1939; 44 p.

Published by Nagani Book Club on April 1st, 1939 with 5000 copies; price 3 Annas.

A book written by student leader Ko Hla Shwe, a small booklet of less than 50 pages, describing the living conditions of the rich and the poor, the extent of the exploitation by the capitalists and the suffering of the workers. It compares the socialist and the capitalist ideologies, explains the capitalist western countries. Nagani, which can vividly describe the cruelty of capitalism, shows that Myanmar independence will not be a revolution of the rich, but that after gaining independence it will lead to the possibility of building a socialist country. This little book is a socialist propaganda text.

2. Htet Htet Aung: Review of “Dhanashinwada” (The Capitalism) by Hla Shwe

(Translation: Master Group Yangon)

The book entitled “Dhanashinwada” (The Capitalism) was published by Nagani Publishing House. The date of printing was not mentioned in the original book. However, it can be estimated that it was brought out during 1939, just before the outbreak of Second World War. The author had not only studied leftist literature, but also was a leading politician who had actively taken part in the independence struggle.

In the book, the author approaches and presents ideas and ways of thinking of capitalism from the historical point of view. Under the British colonialists, Myanmar was exploited in all quarters. The gap in living standard between the employer and the employees, the inequality of rights between the landlord and the farmers, stringencies suffered by the public in food, clothing and shelter, the accumulation of more and more wealth by the wealthy persons and rampant unemployment are the characteristics of capitalism. The author compiled the book with intent to make these facts known. Thus, he has mentioned his aim in unequivocal terms as follows:

“I have compiled this small work to highlight the factors - how the capitalists established their government, when the capitalists emerged, how they exploited the impoverished and why secular peace and welfare did not flourish in every country where capitalists existed.”

Accordingly, this book provides Myanmar nationals of the colonial era with insight into the root cause of the emergence of capitalism, characteristics of capitalism, the events of the poor general public getting poorer and poorer and the political chaos that persisted up to the time of the world wars.

In compiling the book, the author has sketched changes in Myanmar political scene in the colonial era. These changes indicated a tendency towards a change into communal system (communism), stemming from the revolt of poor workers belonging to various classes. Of the three kinds of transformation into the communal system, namely—ideological revolution, political revolution and technical revolution, the general uprising of all workers in Myanmar, as the author points out, bore the nature of the ideological revolution. He has informed the readers of the essence of Myanmar’s independence, which does not mean a mere change into the formation of a Brown government, in place of the White government, and instead, it is aimed at constructing a secular

communal state, emancipated from all troubles and miseries such as unemployment, infliction of diseases, starvation, loss of lives and scarcity of property.

Brief Biography of the Author

Hla Shwe, who compiled this book, was a student leader, who bore himself, as other resistance-fighters did, as a master (Thakin) in defiance of the British colonialists, and assumed the honorific “Thakin” before his name. He also acted as the Chairman of the All-Burma Student Union as well as the Universities Student Union. He was popular as “Arnarshin Hla Shwe” (Arnarshin means one who wields power) as he could win the public trust by giving seditious speeches. He obtained a bachelor’s degree in medicine from the Institute of Medicine in 1939. He served duties as a specialist surgeon at Yangon General Hospital. He died in 1949 in a plane crash at the Arabian Gulf on his way to the University of Minnesota, the United States, to pursue further studies in surgery. The book “Zanee maun hnan yar thet pan” (Life-long Happiness for the Married Couple), written by Dr. Hla Shwe, is a significant book on medical education.

A Summary of “Dhanashinwada”

The capitalist system began with the engagement of workers at extremely low wages, exploitation of the peasants and rural populace, and monopolization of all economic enterprises, benefitting from human labour. In countries where capitalists ruled, shipping companies, rail transport and banking services, timber mills, oil and mineral businesses, etc, which played the essential role in the economy, were owned by the minority capitalists. The majority impoverished people had to rely on the capitalist businesses, and were contented with the wages they paid. Subsequent to the emergence of markets where goods were traded, capitalist businesses grew further. Capitalists and landlords came to possess factories and wide stretches of farmlands. They took advantage in every possible way the labour of workers and peasants who worked at their factories and on their farmlands. The destiny of thousands of workers and peasants fell in the hand of capitalists. Poor workers and peasants, without any capital, had to rely on their labour and perseverance, struggling just above subsistence.

As the capitalists earned money, basing on the labour of the poor classes, their businesses grew larger and larger as the number of persons who had to sell their labour increased. Thus, Stalin mentioned, “In capitalist countries, human labour has become a commodity for sale.” Lenin, too, said, “Wage earners sell their labour for the benefit of the capitalists. On selling thus, they had to

work more time by the hour every day to be able to get profits for their subsistence. (Of the 10 working hours, “4 hours” was for the workers and the remaining “6 hours” was for the employer.) Thus, the capitalists accumulated more money from the extra working hours.” In this way, an image of a conflict appeared between the minority capitalists and the majority workers.

With the monetary profits thus gained, the capitalists extended their businesses. Part of their profits was spent for the military, the police and the administrative bodies so as to perpetuate the capitalist government. They did not encourage the poor people for their progress in wealth and status. Over time, it came to the stage of the test of strength between socialism (communism) and the ideology that favoured the capitalist government.

The capitalists, too, were competing one another. Big merchants sold their goods at reduced prices so that small merchants would not rear their heads. Factories and farmlands of small capitalists fell into the hands of big capitalists. When there were no rivals, big capitalists hiked the prices a gain. As the poor workers had to buy expensive commodities, they suffered more hardships in their living.

The capitalists entered into serious competitions. They were enlightened that mass production was possible by using machines and equipment. They devised various kinds of machinery and equipment competitively. They came to use machines in the production of goods. With the machines replacing human, the labour of workers became a surplus. Then, the capitalists dismissed surplus workers, and the number of jobless persons had increased, and again, more products were turned out by the competitive use of machines. However, demand fell owing to the increase in persons suffering from hardships. On the other hand, the capitalists were reluctant to bring down the prices, and eventually, propped up the capitalist system by destroying the goods.

By their incessant attempts of self-seeking, money in circulation fell into the hands of the capitalists. The majority poor persons ran short of money. The time then was said to be “a terrible, stringent era.” Such eras of stringency and hardship occurred once in every seven, eight, ten or 12 years because of the accumulation of money in the capitalists’ hands. For instance, the world in history experienced economic depression in 1826, 1836, 1847, 1866, 1873, 1890, 1900, 1907, 1914, 1921 and 1929. Capitalism continued to exist due to the following factors: The Japanese were attacking China, coveting its natural resources; the Germans occupied Rheilin region and Austria; and the Spanish capitalists, assisted by their counterparts of Germany and Italy, revolted against the Spanish government which was weak in means and money. Hence, economic depressions caused the proletariat to become poorer and poorer. All these events aroused to great extent the will of the

impoverished class to rise up against the capitalists.

There also appeared a custom of joining forces among capitalists. They established companies and came to control goods. The rise and fall of prices was manipulated by companies. Over half of the money in circulation was in the hands of these companies. In America in 1900, capitalist companies owned 54 percent of the glass industry, 50 percent of the textile industry, 60 percent of the paper industry, 62 percent of the food industry and 84 percent of the iron industry. The American Standard Oil and British Royal Dutch Shell owned more than half of the fisheries industry of all countries except Russia. Companies which monopolized one single product came to look for colonies with the aims—to engage workers at cheap wages; to procure raw materials; and to extend markets. So Lenin remarked that competitive establishment of companies by capitalists bred colonialism.

Thus, rivalries in trade led to the emergence of large companies in partnership and in the same way, competitions among banks caused mergers of banks. As the companies relying on these banks increased in number, the banks came to govern the economy of the respective country and moved further up to the stage of dominating the new regions. The expansion of areas could be attributed to the financial strength of the banks.

There were few conflicts among capitalist countries up to 1900, though they exported goods to other countries and sought areas where raw materials were available. Following this period, intense competition came about among England, Germany and France. Restrictions were imposed by law on trade between one country and another. The capitalists showed great interest in colonizing countries where there were fewer capitalists, virgin land was rich, wages were low and the economy was underdeveloped. They invested large amounts of money in these countries, opening work stations, and built up armed forces to defend their businesses. They formed air forces with the pretext of protecting imports and exports. Finally, they seized the entire country.

However, the workers in masses in the entire world had come united in factories and workshops. They had already set up the consolidated workers' mass, after revealing their feelings and sufferings. The spirit had been strengthened to combat capitalism. The proletariat had to assume the leadership role in establishing communism. It was not an easy matter for the middle class, small merchants and farmers who owned land to bear resolute mind in revolution because they tended to align to the powerful side lest their wealth might be destroyed. Hence, the strength of workers played the pivotal role in establishing communist system. As the poor workers who accounted for five sixths of the world population had been united, the great strike of the poor would soon come

about with the collapse of capitalist governments.

Review

The book “Dhanashinwada”, compiled by Hla Shwe, came out in consonance with the Myanmar situation in the colonial era. It was a time when people were resorting to all means and ideas to liberate themselves from the colonial rule. It was also a propaganda publication, exhorting Myanmar independence fighting forces to orient towards the communist path. He explicitly mentioned that the people should not be contented only with the Brown government coming to power after toppling the White government, and instead must strive to set up a communist system which formed the political revolution. To accomplish his aims, the author enlightened the readers to the facts — the events leading to the emergence of capitalism, disadvantages of capitalism, exploitation over workers and peasants in capitalist countries, economic depressions caused by capitalism, and efforts to be made to combat capitalism by the communist system which encouraged the affair of the poor people’s coming to power. In expressing these facts, the author has referred to the statements made by the world-famous communist leaders.

The book “Dhanashin” coincided with the contemporary political situation in Myanmar. The author opened the eyes of Myanmar people to the characteristics of the British, residents of a capitalist country. The economic system being practised then was of the type of the British capitalist system. Thus, the book incited the Myanmar to revolt against the British, after comprehending the disadvantages of capitalism and the way the capitalists exploited the people.

Though the book does not serve as one suited to the present era, it should be recognized as an instrument that could effectively point out the setbacks of a system.

VI. APPENDICES 2

Appendix 1

SHORT INFORMATION on the MAKING of the BOOK REPORTS

CHOSEN BOOKS from the bibliography will be provided on a lending basis by the manager [or for people in Myanmar through the Myanmar Book Centre in Yangon (55 Baho Road; telephone 221-271, 212-409)].

TWO REPORTS on each book by different persons are accepted.

LENGTH: 8,000 to 12,000 words (plus special space, if desired);

LANGUAGE of PUBLICATION: English; manuscripts in Myanmar language will be translated;

CRITERIA (must not slavishly be observed):

1. Biographical information about the author/translator, and other contributors;
2. Information about the non-Myanmar sources used in the book; (if the book is a translation, the original English version will be provided, too, if possible;)
3. Summary of the book's contents;
4. Information about the special aim and intended impact of the book at the time of publication;
5. How are foreign terms and concepts translated or transformed into the Myanmar language and the Myanmar context? (May be omitted!)
6. Personal assessment by the reviewer of the book, its impact on later times and its meaning for today

DEADLINE of DELIVERY of the REPORT: December 31, 2005 (the deadline can be extended);

DELIVERY of the REPORTS DRAFTED: Directly to the manager of the project by email or through the Myanmar Book Centre.

COMMENTS and EDITING: The reports will be commented upon by another person. The reviewer may react on the comments and answer the questions as he or she likes. The responsibility for the final editing of the reports is with the project manager.

REWARD: As a financial reward, each reviewer will receive 50 US \$ at the time of submitting the book report and 30 US \$ after the final editing.

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS like recollections of elder people, who remember the impact of Nagani on their life, and essays on subjects related to the club (Nagani Song, Nagani Magazine, the role of literature in disseminating knowledge in Myanmar, etc.) are very much appreciated.

Appendix 2

INFORMATION about COMMENTARIES on BOOK REPORTS

1. The commentaries asked for shall serve two aims

First (and most important): To start a dialogue on Myanmar's intellectual and literary heritage between interested people inside and outside of Myanmar.

Second (and important, too): To check the clarity of the report with regard to the intended publication.

Therefore, the commentator should be interested in Burma affairs and in the general topic of the respective book, but must not know anything about its specific content.

2. Length of each commentary: Must not exceed the space of this paper.
3. Some hints that may be useful to observe in writing a commentary:

Are there any questions that are brought up by reading the report?

If yes, what kind of questions do arise?

Are the criteria listed in the “Short information on the making of book reports” (see attachment) met by the book report?

What information on the book report do I find interesting/exciting or unnecessary/redundant?

Is there anything that I would recommend to the author of the report?

Delivery of the commentary: It would be appreciated if the commentaries could be sent by email to the above mentioned email address. If the author of the report chooses to react on the commentary, the commentator will be informed.

Affairs to come: All participants will be informed about the development of the publishing process of the reports and are invited to participate in future deliberations and activities. - Questions and recommendations are very much appreciated.

MYANMAR LITERATURE PROJECT



Starting with an investigation into the NAGANI BOOK CLUB

The project's
Working Papers
are published by
the **Department of Southeast Asian Studies of Passau University**

Already Published:

No. 10:1, An Introduction into the Nagani Book Club

No. 10:2, Thein Pe, *Saya Lun* and *Member of Parliament*

Forthcoming:

No 10:4, Thein Pe, *Student Boycotters* (Two Volumes)

No. 10:5, Ba Khaing, *Political History of Burma*

Some Nagani Books
were scanned and are available on CD.

For details contact
habezett@t-online.de

All Working Papers published until now are available
at
<http://www.zoellner-online.org/mlp.htm>
and at the Online Burma Library
<http://www.burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=2083>

INVITATION

Readers are invited to participate in the project by

- writing **comments and criticisms** on the contents of this and other volumes of this series;
- contributing **essays** on Burmese/Myanmar literature as a medium between the international world and Burmese society;
- providing **material** that sheds more light on the Nagani Book Club, its context and impact on Burmese intellectual and literary life;
- offering **assistance** as translators and commentators of book reports.

For contributions and questions, please contact:

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