

Myanmar Literature Project

မြန်မာစာပေစီမံကိန်း

Hans-Bernd Zöllner (ed.)

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Soe, Socialism
and Chit Hlaing, Memories

Introduction: Robert H. Taylor

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About the Contributors

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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.

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.

Tin Hlaing born in 1941, in Thakutpinle village, Monywa district, comes from a rural background. He studied physics at Mandalay University and from 1972 onwards he did graduate work at the London University where he received his Ph.D. degree. Tin Hlaing taught at several universities in Burma for the past 30 years and became later a Director-General in the Ministry of Science and Technology. Since his 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

Phone Kyaw Myat was born in 1948. He got his degree in medicine from the Institute of Medicine (1) in 1974. He was a civil servant for over 15 years. He is now a general practitioner and translates from Myanmar to English in his leisure hours.

Foreword (Hans-Bernd Zöllner)

To write the foreword to this volume of the Myanmar Literature Project is a special pleasure for quite a few reasons. First of all, the editor was relieved from the duty of writing an introduction to this volume because Robert Taylor assumed this task. His essay not only points out to the immense impact of Soe's "Socialism" for Burma's / Myanmar's 20th century history but also links it to the recollections of U Chit Hlaing, one of Soe's students and a teacher of many leading members of the still ruling Tatmadaw, the most prominent among them being Senior General Than Shwe. The present Number One in Myanmar politics cared for his teacher some years ago when the former instructor at the military's Psy-War Department had to undergo eye surgery.

Secondly, this publication marks a new level of achievement for the whole project. For the first time, a groundbreaking book published by Nagani has been completely translated into English. This opens the way for a study of Burmese intellectual and ideological development by scholars other than the limited number of experts outside Myanmar who can read Burmese. It is, therefore, planned to re-publish a revised edition of this paper as a paperback in order to facilitate its distribution beyond libraries of Southeast Asian studies, and into the departments of political science and other fields which take an interest in Burma.

Hopefully, translations of other original Nagani publications will soon be published in English translation (The Fabian) U Ba Khine's "Political History of Burma" (see vol. 5 of this series) would be a very interesting subject, offering an alternative to Soe's perspective on Burmese history and what followed thereafter. Such an undertaking would depend on the funds available for this project.¹

Finally, the third part of this volume is recommended for reading not just because it provides information about the implementation of socialist ideas by the Ne Win government after 1962. U Chit Hlaing's recollections offer a rare view into the "political department" of the Burmese armed forces, which had started up a long time before the coup in order to analyze and discuss general political and social issues. His assessment that Ne Win was a soldier turned politician, and not the other way round, may be useful in order to reconsider the role of the Burmese (and Myanmar) armed forces in the country's recent history, as may his final remarks that Ne Win was more a 'royalist' than a 'socialist'. Maybe he was a kind of "socialist royalist".

¹ The translation of this paper's content was only made possible through funds donated by the German community in Yangon. – In the meantime, the translation of Ba Khaing's „Political History of Burma“ has been achieved as well.

Unlike the other publications produced by this project, this paper contains no assessments or commentaries on the book which forms its focus. Instead, three articles from the “Nagani News” are included which throw some light on the contemporary discussion of the concept of “socialism”. The points of discussions might be of special interest because they show how closely ideological and economic issues were related to Buddhism.

Hamburg, June 2011 (last update)

I. INTRODUCTION (Robert H. Taylor)

Most readers of this book, probably born after the effective collapse of Communism and Marxism in the final quarter of the 20th century, will be puzzled at the once great popularity of the ideas expressed in it. For the young men and women who formed the Nagani Book Club in Yangon in the 1930s, there was no puzzlement. Rather, there was a belief that some secret, liberating knowledge, denied by their British and British-trained teachers, revealed itself through such books. With the Soviet Union hailed by many as the future of mankind, why would they not think so? Thakin Soe was a key interpreter of that denied knowledge as he effectively translated from English and interpreted message of Marxism for a larger politically-ware audience through the medium of the Burmese language.

Thakin² Soe (1906-1989), who published Socialism, with the assistance of Thakin Than Tun (1911-1968) and other young nationalists including Thakin Aung San (1915-1947) and Thakin Nu (1907-1995), became perhaps the most influential man in Myanmar's 20th century history who never occupied any major position in government or in a powerful political party. Thakin Than Tun was Minister for Agriculture in Dr. Ba Maw's (1893-1977) government during the Japanese period and leader of the once powerful Communist Party of Burma until his assassination by Party colleagues in 1968. Thakin Aung San, more famous as Bogyoke (General) Aung San, was Minister of Defence in Dr. Ba Maw's government and after the war the Vice-Chairman and effective head of government in the last British Governor's cabinet at the time of his assassination in 1947. Thakin Nu, later U Nu, was Minister for Foreign Affairs in Dr. Ba Maw's government and Thakin Aung San's successor before becoming Myanmar's first post-independence Prime Minister. Thakin Soe's nearest claim to have reached the exalted status of his pre-war colleagues was leader of a small faction of the Burmese Communist movement that never had any realistic prospects of achieving power at any time.

Thakin Soe's overarching influence was apparent prior to the Second World War. While Thakin Aung San and Thakin Nu were busy organising student union meetings, student and worker strikes,

²Thakin, literally 'master', was the title assumed by young nationalists who formed the Do Bama Asiayon, or We Burmans Association, in the 1930s. Thakin, the Burmese equivalent the Indian word sahib, had previously been used in addressing Europeans.

anti-government marches and demonstrations attacking the 1936 Government of Burma Act and its political consequences, or defending their fellow students from the retribution of their British professors and lecturers at Rangoon University, Thakin Soe was working at mastering Marxist dialectics and the internal secrets of socialism and communism. Trained as a petroleum chemist, rather than a student of history, political science, and English like Thakin Aung San, Thakin Nu and Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Soe could claim, as he did, to be the genuine articulator of the key to understanding scientifically Myanmar's historical condition in 1938 when *Socialism* was published. Clearly, Thakin Soe was not the only person in 1930s Myanmar wrestling with the meaning of socialism and Marxism, as Thakin Than Tun makes clear in his important introduction. Among the leading politicians and nationalist activists of that period, perhaps only U Saw³ (1908-1948) would take pride in not identifying himself with the political left but pointed Myanmar in the direction of a Japanese model of nationalistically motivated political and economic development.⁴

Ten years after *Socialism* appeared, Myanmar received its independence before dawn on 4 January 1948. By then almost every articulate politician and nationalist in the country claimed to be a socialist, Marxist, or communist. The programmatic differences they pronounced with mere nuances on a theme that endorsed the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism including the nationalisation of industry and the collectivisation of land for the benefit of the workers and peasants. While the governmental form adopted in the 1947 constitution echoed the institutions of British parliamentary democracy, the political inspiration of the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) was that of an Eastern European or Soviet style mass and class party tolerating little dissent within or without its structures. Its main rival, and three months after independence, deadly foe in the civil war that engulfed large parts of the country for the next few years, Thakin Than Tun's Communist Party, denounced the AFPFL for not endorsing one aspect of Marx's teachings, as earlier understood by Thakin Soe and his fellows, the necessity for violent revolution. This dispute with the government was over how to get a new Burma into a new world,

³ U Saw, a non-university graduate who practiced law before becoming the leader of his Galon party in the elected Legislative assembly, first allied himself with, and later assisted the detention of, a number of student and Thakin leaders after he became Premier of Myanmar before the Second World War. For details, see, "Politics in Late Colonial Burma: The Case of U Saw", *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 10, Number 2 (April 1976), pp. 161-194.

⁴ See Galon U Saw, Gyapan Lan Nyunt (Japan Points the Way). Yangon: Thuriya Press, 1936 [?].

not over what it should look like. In that, Thakin Soe's White Flag Communist Party preceded Thakin Than Tun's Red Flag Communists by going into revolt earlier.⁵

In the decade that intervened between the publication of *Socialism* and Myanmar's independence, despite Thakin Soe's unwillingness to join his fellow nationalists in the Japanese-sponsored government and army, he created the possibility for their political survival after the defeat of their 'fascist' sponsors. Due to his Marxist training, and the Comintern line, he understood that an alliance with 'fascist' Japan was a greater evil than cooperating temporarily with the imperialist British in the great world struggle. The majority of his fellow nationalists disagreed. To them, Myanmar's independence, even if gained with the assistance of 'fascists', was the first and perhaps only priority. To Thakin Soe, in the great world struggle then underway, Marxism alone explained the error of their ways and his efforts with Thakin Thein Pe Myint (1914-1978) to cooperate with the British allowed the Japanese-inspired army of Bogyoke Aung San to survive and thrive as an ally of the British after the war.⁶

During the first years of the Second World War, Thakin Aung San, Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Nu, with their pre- and post-war political allies and friends, were helping Dr. Ba Maw exert as much control over the affairs of Myanmar as possible in the face of the Japanese occupation. Thakin Soe was leading a much smaller effort underground to remove the Japanese and move Myanmar's history not only in the direction of national independence, but also socialist revolution. That activity created the opportunity for General Aung San plausibly to lead the Burma National Army as the army of an incipient socialist republic of Myanmar and an ally of the British. The rest,

⁵ Thakin Soe had been expelled from the Communist Party (Red Flag) and formed his own minority White Flag Communist Party prior to independence. It went into immediate, if ineffectual, revolt against the colonial administration. Thakin Than Tun and the majority of the members of the Communist Party of Burma accepted the Browderist line advanced by the Comintern (Communist International) during and immediately after the Second World War. Named after Earl Browder, the leader of the Communist Party of the United States, this line said that Communism could be achieved, not by revolution, but by cooperation with the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom during and after the war against Fascist Germany, Italy and Japan. Thakin Soe abandoned that line earlier than Thakin Than Tun who continued apparently to believe the Communists could cooperate with the government of U Nu until March 1948 when it went underground after arrest warrants were issued for key leaders by the Home Minister. See Robert H. Taylor, "The Burmese Communist Movement and Its Indian Connection: Formation and Factionalism", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Volume XIV, Number 1 (March 1983), pp. 95-108.

⁶ See Robert H. Taylor, *Marxism and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945: Thein Pe Myint's 'Wartime Traveller'*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, Southeast Asia Translation

as the phrase goes, is history. During the period of ‘resistance’ before the British reoccupied Myanmar and the struggle for final independence via political means commenced, Thakin Soe rejoined his pre-war colleagues as one of the key political leaders. One of the seven zones of the resistance established, the Ayeyawardy Delta, came under Thakin Soe’s political leadership. In that, he worked with, and sometimes against, the military leader of that zone. That then relatively unknown individual, previously known as Thakin Shu Maung, became General Ne Win (1911-2002), the man who presided over Myanmar’s 26 year long experience of socialist autarky.

In 1941-42, when Thakin Aung San, and other Myanmar nationalists, felt the best option available to them was an alliance with the ‘fascist’ Japanese despite their previous espousal of Marxism and Communism, Thakin Soe felt he had a superior insight into historical forces and could see a better way for Myanmar. What was it that made the kind of Marxist socialism that Thakin Soe translated into Burmese idiom in the 1930s so powerful, not only in colonial Burma but throughout the entire world at least until the 1950s and Khrushchev’s ‘Secret Speech’ which revealed the horrors of Stalin’s rule for Soviet Russia and its citizens? At the time that Thakin Soe was writing *Socialism*, another historical figure, another intellectual who also never occupied a high political office, was wrestling with the consequences of denying and rejecting the Marxist analysis and Communist Party he had previously accepted unquestioningly as explaining the current history crisis more clearly and perceptively than any other philosophy.

On the other side of the world from Thakin Soe, addressing different historical questions, Whittaker Chambers, an American Communist who later made headlines in 1948 with his testimony exposing a Soviet espionage ring in the highest circles of the United States government, had believed in the same Marxist doctrines that Thakin Soe explains in *Socialism*. Chambers subsequently argued that “. . . a man does not, as a rule, become a Communist because he is attracted to Communism, but because he is driven to despair by the crisis of history through which the world is passing.”⁷ “In the West,” he wrote, “all intellectuals become Communists because they are seeking the answer to one of two problems: the problem of war or the problem of economic crises.”⁸ Given the attraction that Communism had for intellectuals in China, Vietnam, India and other colonised and semi-colonised Asian societies, he might have written, “And in the East, it is the problem of imperialism which joins the problem of economic crises to make men Communists.” In retrospect, Chambers saw an intellectual’s faith in Communism as “an act of despair” and “to the degree that it is an act of

⁷ Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1953, p. 146.

⁸ *Ibid.*

despair, he will desire the party to use him in overcoming that crisis of history which is the root of his despair.”⁹

In Chamber’s view, it was the intellectual power of Marxism to explain the crisis of history faced by modern man that provided Communism its power and political utility. Without actually understanding the details of Marxist doctrines as originally formulated by two 19th century intellectuals observing the consequences of the industrial revolution as it changed irrevocably the lives of millions of men and women in Western Europe and beyond, Marxism became a faith for those seeking a way out of the crises in their and their fellow citizens lives.¹⁰

Certainly, Myanmar’s society was facing a number of crises in the decade in which Thakin Soe wrote *Socialism*. A brief catalogue would include the Hsaya San peasant revolt; the oil field workers strike; anti-Indian, anti-Muslim and anti-Chinese riots and strikes; student and monks demonstrations and deaths at the hands of the colonial authorities; unemployment and underemployment; and foreign economic competition and domination. To young men and women, coming to Yangon from the towns and villages of provincial Myanmar, to study in a foreign language, English, in a foreign-dominated city, with mainly English and Indian professors and lecturers, daily life itself must have seemed a crisis at times. The personal experience of colonialism and the psychological explanation of that sense of alienation and anomie felt by many in the colonial world were explicated powerfully by Marxist doctrines. Not only did Marx provide a historically justified explanation for their position; he also pointed a way out of that situation to a better future, utopia as Thakin Soe writes.

The translator of *Socialism* faced a difficult task. Myanmar and English are not easily compatible languages and making sense in one language can, if literally translated, lead to nonsense in the other. What the translator cannot convey is the creativity in the use of language that Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun displayed in drafting the text. To have seen the *pedathapin*, a sort of

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-7.

¹⁰ “Nor do Marxist dialectics or Marxian economic theories have much to do with the reason why men become and remain Communists. I have met few Communists who were more than fiddlers with the dialectic (the intellectual tool whereby Marxist theoreticians probe and gauge history’s laws of motion). I have met few Communists whom I thought knew more than the bare rudiments of Marxian economics, or care to. But I have never known a Communist who was not acutely aware of the crisis of history whose solution he found in Communism’s practical program, its vision and its faith.” *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

Buddhist version of the cornucopia in the West, as a utopian vision was inspired. To have grasped that *anya-manya* was the closest to the idea of the dialectic that a Myanmar reader might quickly access was equally perceptive.¹¹ That the meanings in the original were changed as a consequence, there can be no doubt. That they gave reality to Marxist's vision to Burmese language readers can also not be doubted.

Socialism was reprinted in Myanmar for many years after its first appearance. Available in bookshops in the 1960s and 1970s, it was widely read in the socialist Burma. Its clear, didactic style, improved if he is to be believed by Thakin Than Tun, then a school teacher himself, made it an accessible text to many who read little or nothing else of the Marxist genre other than the publications of the ruling Myanmar Socialist Lamsin (Programme) Party (MSPP). Thakin Soe, following his erstwhile career as an underground revolutionary and political prisoner, was granted a state pension and national honour in 1980 for his contribution to Myanmar's independence movement, along with others such as U Nu, by MSPP Chairman Ne Win's government. Thakin Soe proudly took a seat on the left of the Party Chairman in the commemorative photograph of the dinner held in honour of the recipients of the *Naing-ngan Goneyei* award.

Two years later, I met Thakin Soe on the Rangoon Arts and Sciences University Campus. He came with a small entourage including his latest wife, dressed, as I recall, in a typical Burmese longyi but, unusually in those days, not wearing the standard Myanmar *panat* (slippers) but plimsolls of a kind rarely seen except in school gymnasiums. He also wore a jaunty beret that sat firmly on his smiling, open, almost boyish, face. When we met, I wanted to discuss history and his role in Myanmar's socialist and nationalist politics including the anti-Fascist resistance and post-independence civil war. He refused to do so, instead concentrating on the future. He presented to me with a manuscript copy of his autobiography in Burmese as well as a lengthy tome, written in English, on the current

¹¹ Dialectic, interaction, correlation, and cause and effect are seen as essentially the same phenomenon, and all of these terms are key philosophical concepts in Theravada Buddhism. See Shwe Zan Aung and Rhys Davids, *Compendium of Philosophy* (a translation from Pali of *Aghidhamma-Sangaha*, translated by Shwe Zan Aung, revised and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids) London: Pali Text Society, 1910, Part VIII, Compendium of Relations, especially Section 7, The System of Correlation.

‘crisis’ in the world economy. It was on the later subject that he dilated for over an hour while consuming copious cups of tea.¹²

The autobiography shed little new light on Thakin Soe as a man or on his political activities. Much of what he wrote was already widely known and he did not delve into explanations of his personal motives or ambitions. Rather, he would write a sentence or two about some well known event, and then provide a lengthy excerpt from Marx’s *Das Kapital* that somehow explained the event described. It taxed my mind to see what that explanation was. Particularly noteworthy was the opening of the text where he described that on the night of his birth, rather like the tales of the birth of most famous figures in Myanmar’s history, a shooting star shot across the sky at the moment of his arrival. Thus, the fortune tellers were assured that a great historic figure had arrived.

The second manuscript, of about one hundred foolscap single space typed pages, he urged me to read and then forward to the Nobel Prize authorities in Sweden along with a letter of commendation that Thakin Soe be granted the Nobel Prize in economics. This document was a lengthy argument, rather in the vein of the 19th century French socialist-anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who saw ‘property as theft’ and rent as the great enemy of economic progress. Using lengthy quotations largely from reasonably current issues of *Newsweek* on issues such as the high rents that occupants of building in Tokyo were forced to pay, he advocated the abolition of property and rent as a way of freeing capital for productive uses. Otherwise, he argued, the only people benefiting from capitalist economics were in fact feudalistic rent seekers. Thakin Soe, who became the patron of a new political party in the year before his death, the Unity and Peace Party, was always seeking a solution to the current crisis.¹³

The four appendices that Thakin Soe and Thakin Than Tun reprinted in *Socialism* are important documents in their own right, as they reveal how in the 1930s Marxist and related ideas influenced young nationalist thought before Thakin Soe wrote *Socialism*. Similar to politically aware persons elsewhere in the 1930s, university students in Myanmar perceived that the world, including their homeland, was likely soon to be drawn into a worldwide conflagration much greater and more

¹² Both these manuscripts were lost in a flood at my residence in 1998. However, I am assured that there are copies of the autobiography still extant in Myanmar.

¹³ One of his last political acts was to write a letter in 1989 to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy, after the establishment of the post-socialist military government, advising her to not antagonise the authorities but learn to work successfully with the army in order not to make the mistakes he had made in his political career. She was placed under house arrest soon after.

destructive of the existing order than the Great (or First World) War had been. The stirring rhetoric of these manifestos explains some of the power that Marxism contained within it to give young men and women faith in their futures.

One of his erstwhile acolytes at the end of the Second World War, but eventual political opponent, U Chit Hlaing, whose notes on his role in the creation of the ideology of the Myanmar Socialist Lansin Party are included in this volume, was an equally remarkable thinker. Now in his 80s and nearly blind, he is delighted to discuss current economic issues and theories as well as to reminisce on the past with his fellow veteran politician and writer Thakin Tin Mya. U Chit Hlaing was not only a disciple of Thakin Soe, but he was one of the few Myanmar intellectuals to have studied Marxism and socialism in the non-English speaking world. Sent by the AFPFL government to study in Paris, he travelled widely in Europe in the mid-1950s collecting ideas and suggestions about the future of socialism. That cumulative knowledge was used as the basis of his eventual drafting the *The Theory of the Correlation of Man and His Environment*,¹⁴ the explanation of the philosophy of the Myanmar Socialist Lansin Party. His adherence to Thakin Soe's ideas, including his use of the Pali phrase *anya-manya*, suggested to some that the Myanmar Socialist Lansin Party was merely a new form of Communism. To avoid that accusation, the Party had to publish a subsequent document denying that was the case.¹⁵

Socialism, and *Socialism*, are now dead letters in Myanmar except in the minds of the oldest living persons. Its legacy lives on in them and also in many of the institutions the current military government inherited. Rather than reading *Socialism* or *The Theory of the Correlation of Man and His Environment*, today's youth are busy perusing books on organisational theory, business success strategies, capitalist economics, and computer programming. The socialist era in Myanmar's history, as in the history of most of the rest of the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union, is over. It would be a mistake to think that it might not return someday when men and women face the

¹⁴ Myanmar Hsoshelit Lansin Pati (Myanmar Socialist Programme Party), *Lu hnit Patwunkyindo ei Anya Manya Thabawtaya* (Law of Interaction of Man and the Environment). Rangoon: Printing and Publishing Corporation, 9th ed., 1973

¹⁵ Pyihtaungsu Myanmar Naingngan Towhlanyei Kaungsi (Union of Burma Revolutionary Council), *Myanmar Hsoshelit Lansin Pati ei Withuitha Latkangamy* (Specific Characteristics of the Burma Socialist Programme Party), Rangoon: Burma Socialist Programme Party, Party Affairs Central Committee, 4 September 1964.

next crisis of history for which they have no answer and for which they need a theory to explain and a method for their liberation from that as yet unforeseen crisis.

Robert H. Taylor

Yangon

January 4, 2008

II. MATERIAL ON SOE, *SOCIALISM*

1. Kyaw Hoe: Bibliographical Information (Translation: Gunnar Peters)

Soe, Thakin: *Socialism*. Author: Maung Soe; Yangon, Nagani 1938; 222 p.

In the beginning it is mentioned that the book title has been changed. For this month's edition of the Nagani Selection Series, the draft title of Ko Soe's "Doctrine of the Poor" has been changed to "Socialism". On the first page, under the heading "The Meaning of the Red Flag", it is explained that hammer and sickle symbolize the unity between workers and farmers. The editor of the book, Thakin Than Tun has written a foreword of 14 pages. He explains the changing of the title and the contemporary political parties and political ideologies of Myanmar. He also writes about how some passages had to be cut during the editing. Signed May 24th, 1938.

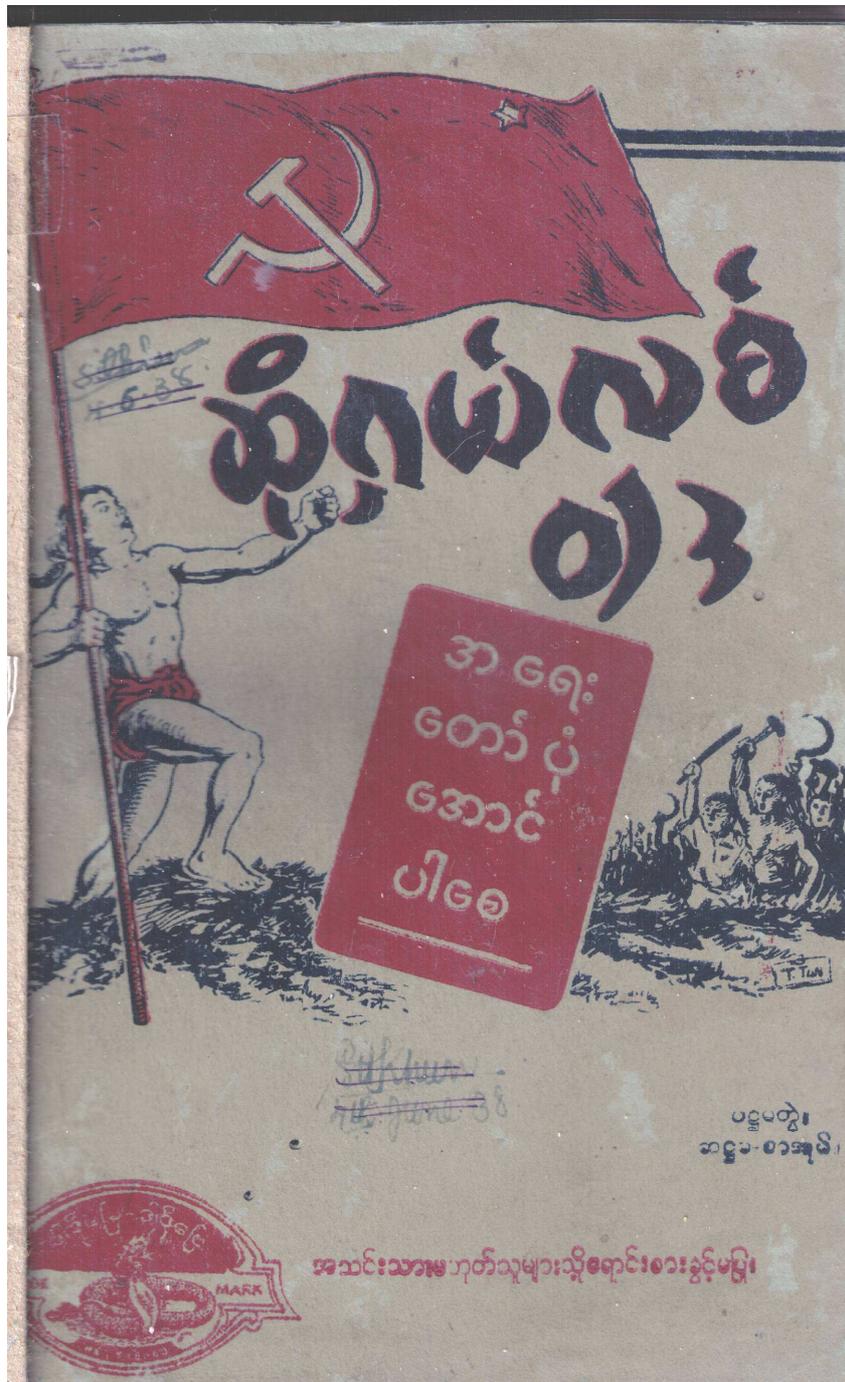
The introduction of 17 pages is written by the author himself, about socialism (communism) and Myanmar independence. Signed and dated Yangon, March 20, 1938.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Socialism is presented as comprehensively as possible (it seems.) He presents the biographies of the creators of socialism out of capitalism, with ideological, economical, ethnic and independence-related aspects. Additionally there are appendices:

- (1) Everybody will fight colonialism;
- (2) We don't want imperialism;
- (3) You are poor[?]/King of the poor – We are all poor;
- (4) The have-nots and the students.

The book comprises the whole world of socialism as completely as possible. As it is said in the foreword by Thakin Than Tun, Thakin Soe writes using analogies with old Burmese scriptures. In the chapter on the teachings of social revolution he explains historical materialism and the scripture Vimuttirasa [The flavour/pleasure/bliss of liberation]. This is printed in bold letters.

From the Nagani Selection.



Reproduction of Title Page

Thakin Soe, Photos¹



ကွန်မြူနစ်ပါတီကို စတင်ထူထောင်ရန် အားထုတ်ခဲ့သူဖြစ်၍
ဖက်ဆစ်ဆန့်ကျင်ရေး တိုက်ပွဲတွင် ဦးဆောင်ခဲ့သူ
သခင်စိုး

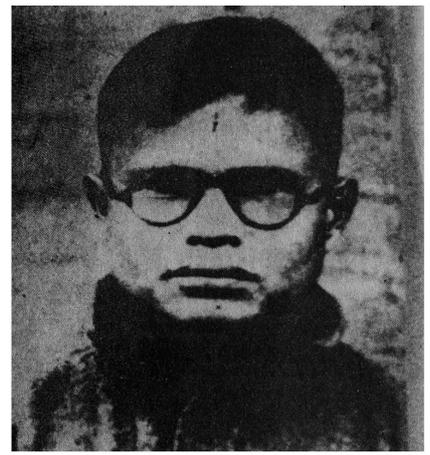
Photo- Thakin Soe



Book Title- The domestic history of in surgency
Vol-5, in 1991. By Yebaw Thit Maung
Page-129
(He was in trial)



Book Title- Brief history of Burma and Military's
part in Burma in 1990. By Yebaw Thit Maung
Vol-2
Page- 161



Book Title- The domestic history of in surgency
Vol-2 in 1991. By Yebaw Thit Maung
Page- 259

¹ The photos come from official publications and depict the Communist leader not in a very favorable way.

2. Translation (Tin Hlaing)

SOCIALISM

(Thakin Soe)

with foreword by Thakin Than Tun

The Significance of the Red Flag

The red flag represents the bloody revolution of the workers, symbolized by the hammer, and the farmers, symbolized by the sickle, to demolish capitalism. Socialism is like the guiding star in the revolution against the capitalists.

Thakin Soe 'Socialism'

Editor Thakin Than Tun's Foreword

Before I mention anything about the author, or the book, I want to write briefly about the title of the book.

Although it has been advertised as '*Sin-ye-tha Wada*' (Proletarianism), it has now been published with the title '*Socialit Wada*' (Socialism)

To explain the change of title, we should analyze the ideologies of various political parties.

In Burmese politics, we find four *Sin-ye-tha Gaings* (poor-folk's parties or proletarian parties): Dr. Ba Maw's *Sin-ye-tha Wunthanu Gaing* (Nationalist Proletartian Party), U Ba Hlaing's Labor Party, Fabian Party and *Doe Bama Asi-ah-yone*.

These parties have given different names to their ideologies. Dr. Ba Maw calls his party's policy *Sin-ye-tha Wada*; U Ba Hlaing *Aloke-thama Wada* (Labor Policy); Fabians' *Fabian Wada* (Fabianism) and *Doe Bama Asi-ah-yone Doe Bama Wada* (We Burmans' Policy).

Although none of the four ideologies is truly socialist, we have known that they derived their policies from socialist literature.

The slogans of U Ba Hlaing and his party, 'For the sake of true Burmese blood', and 'For Buddhist Burmans' seem to be opposed to the spirit of socialism which professes to be applicable regardless of race or nation.

Some Thakins used to say, "No Englishman is ever a good man", or "We must drive out foreigners who behave like devils". They also used to say' "We have conquered Ayodyah and India", which is a paragraph from Do Bama song. All these show that their policies are somehow similar to Nazism.

Then there is Deedoke U Ba Cho who says, "The Burmans are descended from the Sakya race, the true Khastria clan". That is identical to the statement by that brute Hitler, who says, "Germans are descendents of the truly noble Aryan race."

Spoken words apart, let's analyze their actions. U Ba Hlaing's party which demands, "So many percent of Burman workers must be given jobs. Only Burmans to be appointed", "Bama, Bama" has nothing of socialism.

Doe Bama members are far better because they demand fair opportunities for all regardless of Burman or *Kala* background (Indians).

Fabians remind us of English Fabians. They do nothing except writing and publishing to educate people, like Sydney Webb and his wife. The great George Bernard Shaw, rather than effectively working for the working classes, even supported Mussolini when Italy invaded Abyssinia. He said it was an act to civilize barbarians. Now, Hitler is attacking Austria, and suppressing workers, but G.B. Shaw praises Hitler as a hero. In England, the workers have no regard for Fabians.

Burmese Fabians may be a bit better, but they have little extra-parliamentary action for the workers.

Dobama Asiahyone has organized labor and peasant organizations. When someone is arrested, they stand for civil liberties. They oppose section 144 of Penal Code; they protest press censorship.

Dr. Ma Maw's party is working to support the new 11937 constitution; they are colluding with *Kala* (Indian) capitalists and Bama capitalists. They oppress workers, farmers and students. When they do not suppress, they try to weaken them by diverting them from their aims.

Considering the above, we have to choose a Burmese name for Socialism. We have five to choose from:

Alokehamar wada (the policy of workers)

Fabian wada

Doe Bama Wada

Sin ye tha Wada

Bon Wada (Doctrine of common ownership)

Aloketthamar wada only implies only demanding compensation for workers from capitalists; it's like Trade Unionism. It doesn't carry the essential features of socialism: that workers shall dominate the world, that matter controls the *nam* (mind), that environment nurtures man.

When we talk about *Sin-ye-thar ahkyo saung* (volunteers on behalf of poor) we find they are not poor men, but upper class people who appear to feel sympathy for the poor. But this in fact is a sign of capitalism.

In socialist principle no one can give power to the proletariat, but they must themselves work for it. In giving a Burmese name for socialism '*Sin-ye-that ahkyosaung*' should never be used.

Sin-ye-thar wada is quite appropriate. But as the man who coined the word has been acting in ways quite contrary to the socialist ideals, we fear the people will be unable to distinguish true socialism from the one created by the paid followers of capitalist-imperialists.

The activities of *Dobama ah-si-ahyone* are the closest to socialism. There is some reason for using the term '*Dobama wada*'. But, there's a problem; this term is relevant only for Burma. The flag used by Dobama carries three colours, with yellow at the top. Yellow has been identified as representing the Buddhist Sasana, the order of Buddhist monks. In Burma, the poor classes are not all Burmans, nor are they all Buddhists. But, putting Buddhism at the top implies messing up religion with politics. Religion is the business of an individual. As it is at present, Dobama Wada appears to be sorely for Burmans. There must be freedom of worship; in politics there is no discrimination between Buddhists and Christians. So, the name *Dobama wada* for socialism has run into problems.

The majority of people prefer *Bon wada* for socialism. But it implies that every object is owned by every body. It has a narrow meaning. There is domination of matter over mind. It also lacks the concept that history is the battle field between church and government, government and capitalists, and between capitalists and the proletariat.

We cannot select any of the five names given above. Socialism is a word of English origin. In Burma, workers and poor people cannot understand the English word 'socialism'; so we have to rule it out.

I feel that we ought to create a term that Burmans can understand and that also covers the meaning of socialism.

Before we get the suitable translation, we temporarily propose to use *Socialit wada*.

However, as I am of the opinion that *Bon wada* carries the closest meaning, I have no objection to Thakin Soe who uses the two words alternatively. I have not made any editorial correction in this respect.

I urge the readers to suggest a suitable term.

Last year, about the middle of May, a by-election was held in East Hanthawaddy sub-district. Thakin Thein Maung, who is the present Chairman of Dobama ah-si-ahyone, stood for election as local candidate.

As it was school vacation period, and as I have been consistently supporting Dobama, I went to Thongwa to rally for Thakin Thein Maung. A day after the election, I met Ko Soe for the first time, but I never had a chance for good conversation with him.

Then, on April 1, 1937, we went to work to fight against the new administrative system. After working together for days, I got to know Ko Soe closely.

Both of us were desirous of 'propagating socialism.' But we had to wait, because we did not thoroughly understand it ourselves. We had no money; and Ko Soe was unemployed. I had a job, but the pay was poor and I had lots of people to support; I was badly off.

Ko Soe remained unsatisfied. He spent whole days writing.

At the time, Ko Soe was staying in Kyeemyindaing with Thakin Thein Maung as a dependant.

Ko Soe understood socialism much better than I, but as I had studied Burmese language since I was young, I could write Burmese better than Ko Soe.

"If you want to popularize socialism read plenty of Burmese texts", I urged Ko Soe. He went on to tackle great treatises like *Arhara dipini*, *Pandita Vedaniya*, *Vimotti etc.* The he took the vocabulary from such treatises and used them in his writing.

When Ko Nu asked me to edit this book, I had to delete a lot of ancient words.

As Ko Soe had not yet learned to write Burmese properly, there remain many passages which readers may not understand.

I have tried to make the text comprehensible, by editing, rewriting, and adding or deleting where necessary.

Also, to help the readers, I have inserted the following appendices.

We will fight against imperialism

We don't want colonialism

(published by the All Burma Students' Union)

Sin-ye-thar min sin-ye-thar chin (King of modest roots and his poor folk)

The proletariat and students by Ko Ba Hein,

both published in Myo Nyunt magazine.

I have to thank Ko Aung San, President of the All Burma Students' Union, and Ko Ba Hein, for permission to print them in this book.

To explain how national liberty and socialism are related, I have also added the article 'Burma and *Bon wada*' written by Patmagyi in the March 1938 issue of *Kyee-pwar-yay* magazine. I thank editor Ko Hla for his permission to print it.

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Let me continue about the book. Frankly speaking, it is a joint effort by the two of us. As I have said Ko Soe cannot write proper Burmese; so if there is anything to criticize, I accept the responsibility.

x x x x

There are a lot of things to think about this book. I wish the readers seriously contemplate them after carefully reading it. Here are the points to consider:

Is it true that the capitalists torture the proletariat?

Is poverty due to people's kamma?

Is worshipping of water, fire and trees the right way?

Why do three catastrophes come?

Why do people marry?

What is the difference between worship and faith?

What are the similarities and differences between Buddhism and socialism?

Is socialism capable of extinguishing the fires of *loba, dhosa and moha* (greed, anger and ignorance)?

Will greed be wiped out by common ownership of property.

Why do wars break out? Will there be wars in the age of *Padaythar* (i.e. communism)

Which is more powerful, matter or mind?

What is capital? Did it exist originally? Or, did it come into existence when poor people began to be exploited by working?

What is the relation between national liberation and socialism? How can they be correlated?

What is government?

Why did the four castes come into existence?

Why did private ownership come into being?

What is sympathy?

What is the cause of prostitution?

Why did unemployment keep increasing?

Why do Burmans want independence?

Is it correct to hate *Kala* (Indians), Englishmen and Chinamen?

Is socialism an imported commodity? Is it a product of Burmese conditions?

Is the rule of *Sawbwas* (Feudal lords) in Shan States reactionary?

What should be done in case of wars of colonization?

Questions regarding the fairness or legality of theft, or robbery will arise!

Regarding some points, there may be people who may argue that they are immoral and practicing them will condemn one to hell.

However, I request readers to critically examine them. We are ready to explain our point of view, and we are prepared to apologize if we are found to be in error.

x x x x

Those who propagate these ideals have to make sacrifices; they may starve, or be homeless.

Promoters of communism all over the world have been oppressed by government and police; they suffer a lot.

In Germany and Italy, they are murdered. Even in India, advocates of communism and socialism have been murdered by assassins paid by capitalists.

Everywhere, such men used to be accused as heretics. But the people who work to bring prosperity for the masses, to prevent wars, to eliminate disease, to promote education happen to be communists and socialists. Among the so-called religious people, the majority are pretenders.

The Burma government has amended criminal laws to fight against communism. If documents relating communism are found with somebody, he can be jailed for up to two years.

Recently, two students were jailed for communist activities in Allahabad, in the United Province of India.

In India, the communist party has been banned, and communists have to work underground.

In Burma, in the early days of Dobama Ah-si-ahyone, the government suspected it as a communist party. After they realized they were not communists, suppression was discontinued.

In Burma, promoters of communism or socialism will have to confront government repression. Those who like the ideology and promote it must be prepared to face the consequences.

x x x x

As mentioned above, Ko Soe had been homeless; although he had not yet faced government suppression, he had lived in poverty.

When Ko Nu discussed with me to found the Nagani Book Club, we felt as if we had hit a pot of gold. We felt encouraged that we would be able to wage political propaganda to the best of our ability.

At the time of writing this book, Ko Soe has been supported by Ko Nu; he has been living relatively comfortably.

However, when the book is published, Ko Soe will once again become homeless.

It should not be assumed that the author gains something from this book. As he was determined to sacrifice for political propaganda, he does not expect to gain anything out of this work. He would not mind poverty; he would be contented for having done his job.

I wish that the readers of this book will contribute to building a socialist state in Burma.

"Victory for the revolution"

May 24, 1938

Than Tun

Foreword

The social system now prevalent in the world is known as capitalism. In the age of capitalism, there is unrest not only in so-called civilized countries, but also in less developed countries.

The root cause of a restless world is the conflict of interest between individuals, between nations and between factions.

Burma cannot escape from the world revolution; whether good or bad, it will definitely have to go along with other countries. For this reason, the workers and farmers in Burma ought to study carefully the world's problems which are getting more complicated.

These days, political events are not isolated and confined to one country; political events are internationally interrelated. The First World War created the economic depression, the Russian revolution, the Irish freedom movement, the German Republic etc.

Burma cannot remain untouched by world events. The rise of *Wunthanu* (nationalist) movement, the demand for self-government, the students' boycott of 1920 etc. are indications of things to come.

The economic crisis beginning in 1929 is the result of capitalism, which brought hardship everywhere, including Burma, resulting in a rebellion.

Unlike old days, communications have become faster, leading to closer relations between nations. So each and every nation is involved in the affairs of others.

The problem of poverty

The present problem of the world is the poverty of 95 percent of workers and farmers. They starve, they die in war.

Like manure fertilizes the soil, the oppression by men in power over the powerless promotes changes in world history.

The desire for freedom is always seeking ways; the people now see socialism as their way out.

Initially, progress has been not systematic, not practical. As capitalism's behaviour became worse, people came to realize they have to act, on their own, to topple the system.

The Russian revolution has shown that socialism is practicable.

Capitalism not only exploits and creates profits, it also breeds socialism.

Socialism and religion

The more there is poverty, the more popular becomes socialism. About a hundred years ago, social workers in Europe took pride to be called socialists. They were held in high esteem by men of religion.

In Burma too, socialism is becoming popular; even those who hold that 'Burmans are descendents of *Sakya* clan' declare themselves as socialists.

All religions oppose class distinction; instead they favour cooperation between classes. Religions don't encourage amassing private property, they teach love and charity.

Socialism is against private property, it hopes to wipe out private ownership and introduce common ownership.

Where ignorance prevails, poor people cannot expect sympathy from the capitalists. They are greedy. Only revolution can bring liberation.

Socialists believe land and manufacturing business must be confiscated from capitalists for the benefit of the people.

Men of various religions accept that the principles of socialism and religion are identical. And Buddhists share this belief. Hinduism is also a form of socialism. The Chinese also insist that Confucianism is socialist. Christians of all colours also hold the same view.

Capitalists are doing their utmost to maintain their system. If words don't work, they send socialists to jail, even hang, or shoot them. They accuse socialists of offense against religion.

The poor have their worries and woes, they cannot be occupied by religion, which is only for the leisurely class. They now see that only socialism can liberate them.

At first, the workers and farmers, indoctrinated by the church, believed that socialists were God-less heretics. So the socialists have to keep away from them. However, the workers and farmers have seen that the church is on the side of the capitalists, working for their status quo. They see that it is prolonging their poverty.

The poor underclass people now realize that the socialists are their true friends.

Socialists versus the stooges of capitalists

There are people who claim to be socialists but try to keep capitalism alive. They are the capitalists' stooges, their slaves. They pretend to be the friends of the poor and have taken leadership of the working class. When the time comes to criticize capitalism, they use to betray. The workers suffer because of these 'leaders-in-disguise'.

In England, the workers had elected Ramsay McDonald as their leader. When he became Prime Minister he betrayed their cause. By cooperating with capitalists, he did much disservice for labor. He died a man cursed by the working class.

Before the War, Mussolini had been a socialist, or by pretending to be so, he came to power. Now, he is a reactionary, repressing the Italian working class and is against the international labor movement; in Spain he supports the capitalists and forces that rebel against a socialist government. He is an acknowledged killer of workers.

So also, Hitler has come to power claiming himself to be a national-socialist. But he has jailed real socialists and killed many.

The weapon against such imitation socialist leaders is the systematic study of socialism.

Good intentions alone are insufficient; if the approach is incorrect, the liberty of the working class will be out of reach. In India, Mahatma Gandhi has been striving for the cause of the poor, and he is trying to unite workers and capitalists. But, unity is impossible because of conflicts of interest. The longer it goes on, the longer will the workers suffer. In every trial of strength between Indian Congress and the British government, it is clearly seen that the working class have to pay, and the capitalists always benefit.

Socialism and liberty

Some people have adopted the slogan, 'Liberty first; liberty second; liberty third'. But is independence the end? In independent countries like England and Ireland, there is unrest because starving workers are demonstrating.

National independence is not the end, it is a means to achieve decent livelihood for the workers; obviously, it is a task for socialists.

The capitalists use to accuse socialists of being 'socialists only before independence'. But it only aims to disunite the people.

Socialists who desire the freedom of all workers also desire the liberty of all nations. They are the vanguard of independence movements. The capitalists throw false accusations at them because they would systematically wage independence struggle.

Who will fight for freedom?

In India and Burma there are roughly three classes of people. In the first category are the feudal lords or *sawbwas*, bureaucrats and businessmen and capitalists. They exploit and they like the status quo. To keep the system going, national capitalists unite with foreign capitalists.

In the second group are the petty landlords and small businessmen who are always at the mercy of big foreign capitalists. Their lives are insecure. They want slight changes which will only improve their situation.

The third group consists of the down trodden, laborers and farmers who earn their living by hard labor. They are poor and powerless. They like to fight against their oppressors.

We have to rule out the first category from the independence struggle. The unity of the second and third is the first step to independence.

There are problems. Who will wield what sort of weapon? What is the best weapon to wipe out the enemy? and other questions have to be tackled.

Analysis of political developments in the past two decades shows that socialism is the best weapon to crush the capitalists.

Workers and farmers who desire political change must unite with the intellectuals and small businessmen. Only by toppling the capitalists can they achieve prosperity.

Leaders of independence movements must rally the workers and farmers to their cause.

It has been quite a long time that thousands of workers have been laid off. They have been asking for better pay and shorter working hours. Farmers are trying to liberate themselves from the domination over them by landlords. It is the duty of socialists to unite workers and farmers.

Two types of independence

There are two kinds of independence for subject nations: the independence of national capitalists and the independence of workers and farmers.

In the first case, foreign capitalists will be driven out and a national government formed to dominate over the country. This will not bring any change for workers and farmers. In the case of independence for workers and farmers, both foreign and national capitalists will be removed and a national socialist government formed.

About 160 years ago, the United States of America got independence from England, but both English and American capitalists have their businesses. American workers and farmers are still not liberated.

About twenty years ago, Ireland got her independence, but workers and farmers who are the majority still remain poor. It is clear that the aim to achieve prosperity for the poor class can succeed only through socialist struggle for independence.

A warning

In this age of workers and farmers, we find that not only politicians, but also other people are trying to deceive them by distorting the meaning of socialism.

Some writers are competing among themselves, without abandoning their outdated attitudes, in misinterpreting socialism.

As it has been only about two years that socialism was introduced in Burma, there are still too few people who understand it. For this reason, there is clearly a need for a book which systematically presents socialism.

With the aim to explain socialism to the Burmese public, I have written this book after learning from people who are informed about socialism. In studying any subject, there is bound to be initial difficulties. But by systematic effort the study will become easier. Problems are encountered in the choice of words and in trying to make accurate presentation.

The present work cannot be assumed to be perfect or to have achieved the ultimate goal. The author has studied western socialist literature to the extent that he possibly can. But there can be errors in the presentation of ideology as well as in translation. The author is prepared to accept with thanks corrections or suggestions from the readers.

Yangon,
March 20, 1938
Maung Soe

Chapter 1

Production in Capitalism and Socialism

(a) Profit motivated production in capitalism

The economic system in England, America, Germany and others is known as capitalism. In this system, the means of production, such as farmlands, mines and factories, railways and airlines etc. are privately owned, by a minority of either individuals or groups.

The workers who put the effort have no right to own them; but they only earn a living by working for the benefit of the owners.

As the capitalists aim to get maximum profit, they only try to produce commodities that will give them the maximum profit. The manufacture goods that have good market demand.¹

For this reason, the capitalists are not concerned with whether a certain good is essential or not, but rather with what commodity will give them profit.²

This is a really reactionary system in which workers and farmers are deprived of their basic requirements. The fault in the system is becoming more and more obvious.

Sometimes, the capitalists make agreements and dump goods. This method enhances the price of goods and increases profit.

While the capitalists are dumping goods they have manufactured, some of the poor folk perish, still incapable of buying them.

As the workers wages are low, they cannot buy enough for their families. This leads to unsold products. When this happens they close down the factories which produce them. The consequence is unemployment

1. In capitalist business, less production brings quick sales and higher prizes and hence more

profit.

Excess production results in poor sales and fall in prices. The reader should think about demand and supply.

2. The capitalists do not manufacture goods that consumers really need, but they do produce luxury goods like alcoholic drinks, perfumes and cosmetics. Workers and farmers who make up about ninety percent of the population cannot afford to buy them. They are starving and homeless. Knowing that people cannot buy, the capitalists close down cotton mills, rice mills, saw-mills etc.

As the workers have to suffer all the evil consequences of the system, as long as it exists, they will not be liberated from their woes.

In the present state, although people say they are civilized and educated, it is a futile statement, merely boasting.

Because the workers are not adequately provided with basic requirements of food and accommodation, evil consequences arise. Crime and prostitution increase, morals decline, patriotism is lost.

It is necessary to wipe out capitalism not only because of poverty and unemployment, but also to avoid the threat of global war.

There are only two alternatives: either the world is destroyed by capitalism, or the workers destroy capitalism and set up a socialist government. Farmers and workers cannot have the world destroyed. They have to choose the second alternative.

(b) Socialism which emphasizes utility

If there is no desire to build a system superior to capitalism, the people will have to persevere with it, despite its ills. Without such desire, criticizing capitalism is futile; it is only ill talk.

About a hundred years ago, 'socialists' have written treatises about building up socialism.

Lenin had made practical use of these methods, and his experiment has succeeded. Socialism is now established in Russia.

Fredrick Engels has said, "Before people study politics, or science, or religion, they will have to find food and clothing and accommodation first." As this is really important, we should look at the socialists' economic system.

In socialism, the object of business is not profit, but to manufacture goods that people really need. So a socialist government will have to plan production based on population statistics.

As production is planned, it is easy to recognize the efficiency of the socialist mode of production.

In such a system, there will be no excess manufactures as in capitalism, and there will be no shortages.

In advanced capitalist countries like England, America and Germany, in spite of modern industries, many workers are unemployed and starving.

Unemployment is increasing every day because of the competition among capitalists. The longer the capitalist system persists, the more will become the unemployed workers. This is evident from the statistics of workers in England and USA.

Once the socialist system is established, workers, who have been laid off under capitalism, will be usefully employed. This is seen in the economic statistics of Russia.

Capitalism cannot provide neither jobs nor food for the workers.

In England there are 3 million jobless, in Germany 5 million and in the USA 10 million. In addition, there are workers who are employed only part-time.

Taking an average of five people per family, it is easy to see the number of jobless workers and their dependents. It is also easy to see how laid off workers contribute to a bad economy.

Everybody is aware of how the economy has improved in Russia under the socialist government following the revolution.

The following facts and figures for Russia will attest the superiority of socialism.

Russia escaped the world-wide economic depression between 1929-33.

In 1929, the Russian GDP amounted to 29 billion rubles (1 ruble equals rupee 1 and 8 annas in Burmese currency); in 1933 it increased to 50 billion.

A 'Wage Fund' has been collected from deductions from the workers pay. It is designated for spending for schools, hospitals, pensions for old-age and disabled persons. That fund which amounted to 13.59 billion rubles in 1929 has increased to 34.2 billion in 1933.

The Russians have an 'Economic Fund' for the maintenance and replacement of old machinery; its amount of 1.81 ruble in 1930 increased to 4.16 billion in 1933.

The working hour of ordinary workers does not exceed 7 hours per day; in industries like mining and coal mines which are hazardous for health the hours are even less.

Agricultural loans are sufficiently granted. The socialist government supports farmers with tens of millions of rubles; and the farmers do not have to pay land revenue.

The capitalists control education in their countries. Informed citizens are a threat to their existence. The capitalists are afraid that educated people will create unrest, so they control the sort of education and information people can get.

It is unlike in Russia where people are free from repression. The government has made laws for compulsory primary education for workers and peasants. So literacy rate has increased from 67 percent in 1930 to 95 percent in 1933. The number of schools has increased from 14 million in 1929 to 26 million in 1933 and to 50 million in 1937. Newspaper circulation has risen from 12 million in 1929 to 36 million in 1933.

In capitalist countries where profit is the main driving force, people praise entrepreneurs who make a fortune at the expense of workers. They idolize people like Henry Ford.

In Russia, manufacturers who produce goods for profit are made criminals.¹

In capitalist countries, those who do not work earn, but those who do work don't. But in Russia, one gets nothing for nothing; one is paid only for work.

Where workers work ceaselessly in capitalist countries, the exploited profits go to the capitalists.

In socialism, any profit must be for the workers.

As long as capitalism exists, millions of people will remain starving.

Chapter 2

The Capitalist Society

We have briefly described manufacturing under capitalism and socialism. In capitalist society, where business is monopolized, distribution of the proceeds is unfair between the workers and the capitalist, this unfairness being always against the workers.

In their relations with the government, the workers are at a great disadvantage. Even though the government is legally constituted, it functions in favour of people in power. And power is only for those who have the means.

Then people in power make laws for their own benefit, while the proletariat has to suffer.

¹ An example may be given to show how attitudes to business, of both young and old, have changed in Russia.

In a mathematics class the teacher asks the following question to student Ivan. Teacher: "Ivan, a man buys ten apples for ten annas. He sells them to another person for twenty annas. What profit does he make?" Ivan: "Three months imprisonment." If this question were asked to students in capitalist countries, they will answer ten annas!

The capitalists prescribe the social conventions the way they like. Right and wrong do not have absolute meanings; they only have conventional sense. In a society dominated by capitalists, truth and the idea of right and wrong is defined depending on the possession of property.

Even marriage is subject to wealth, or poverty. And love carries meaning depending on the person's wealth or poverty.

In such a society, those who have are favoured, but the have-nots are at a disadvantage. This is the result which comes from private wealth. A little more explanation will be given here.

(a) Uneven distribution of wealth in capitalism

The capitalist hires a large number of workers for mass production which is more productive than individual workers working separately. Production is also increased by the use of machinery.

But the mass-produced commodities are owned by a few people, whose wealth increases. At the same time the workers get deeper into poverty. There is a vast difference between the incomes of the capitalists and the workers. It may not be so obvious in terms of money, but in terms of goods it is quite clear.

Suppose a worker earns 30 rupees, and the capitalist 3000, i.e. a hundredfold larger in money terms.

In terms of commodities, when the worker has earned enough to buy one shirt, the capitalist has 100 shirts; or, the worker gets one meal when the capitalist gets 100 meals; or when the capitalist can buy 100 beds, his employee can buy only one.

This can be made clearer. Let's say a bed costs 5 rupees, so 100 beds cost 500 rupees. Let us also suppose that when ten capitalists buy one bed each, there are 90 workers who also do so. This assumption is justified because there are many times more workers. But the income of 10 capitalists will be 400 rupees while that of 90 workers is only 100 rupees. Calculation then shows that the capitalists can buy 80 beds, i.e. 8 beds each; for 90 workers, the money available is slightly more than one rupee, not enough to buy a bed.

There are surplus goods in capitalism because workers cannot buy them although they are essential.

As the workers get poorer, as time goes on, the conflict grows between labor and capital.

Those who additionally suffer

Capitalism brings ills not only for workers, but also it does so for small shop keepers, small businessmen, lawyers, doctors, educated people, even scientists.

The poor folk, farmers and workers who constitute 95 percent of the population, are unable to obtain adequate food and clothing and housing; they are prone to diseases. When they are sick, they cannot go to the doctor and they die untimely. Then the doctors, for lack of patients who can pay, get no decent income. It's a vicious circle in which no one can save anybody.

The greater the economic hardship, the higher becomes the crime rate. Increasing crime in Burma stands to prove the point. But then starving folk, apart from hiring a lawyer, cannot even pay the bus fare to go to the law court. The lawyers then have no sufficient income.

The government and the workers

Judges, biased in favour of landlords and wealthy men, used to give unfair sentences; landlords and wealthy men colluding with judges used to bring case to court. Peasants and workers are sent to jail, they are used to prison life.

Civil and police officers at township and sub-district level treat domestic servants unfairly. When they can no longer tolerate and run away, they are sent to court on grounds of theft.

Because of economic hardships, robbery and theft are increasing day by day. When the police cannot arrest a criminal, an unfortunate chap is taken in as substitute, with a long list of witnesses against him. The judge, assuming a poor man's status as evidence for being a thief, sends him to jail; he has no regard for confirmed evidence.

All men are equal before the law. But when one is involved in a legal case, money for legal costs becomes the most important factor. He who cannot afford the legal cost loses the case; he who can

wins it. Capitalists who can pay legal fees win cases. Workers and capitalists are unequal before the law because they have unequal wealth.

(b)The nature of Government

We have seen an indication that under capitalism, a government becomes a tool in the hands of capitalists.

In real life, laws benefit only those who make laws; but those who obey them suffer. Since the earliest time in history, various forms of government have existed. In the form of government of the Roman type 2000 years ago, slave owners had power over them, like feudal lords. Slaves could be treated the way they liked; they could even kill slaves.

Age of feudalism

After the Roman period, the age of feudalism came to Europe. In this system, the king gives large tracts of lands to his men and also the power to rule over them. They did not have to pay revenue to the king; their obligation is to send armies to fight for him. Feudal lords were absolute rulers in their domains. Some lords were strong enough even to disobey the king. According to legal scholars, men, living under a feudal lord, lived according to his whim. No piece of land belonged to the poor folk and all they produced went to the lord. In addition, in times of crisis they had to fight on his behalf. They were absolutely subject to their lord. And those who knew the law happened to be the feudal lords themselves.

Revolutionary ideas

When the end of feudalism drew near, there came men like Rousseau, revolutionary intellectuals. When a new era was about to come, revolutionary spirit emerged ahead of armed might which would overthrow the old.

Based on revolutionary ideas, people first criticized the existing government, in writing or speech. After some time people came to hate the present system and longed for a new one. The revolution took the form of an armed revolt.

The main pillar that supported the feudal system had been the Christian church. As long as people had faith in Christianity, feudalism would be sustained. So, as the pioneers of the age of capitalism, men like Rousseau attacked the Christian church in their writings.

They propagated the ideals of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.

Three basic principles of capitalism

When the age of capitalism began, workers were not laid off like in the present. As the conflict between labor and capital was not strong enough, people liked the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity.

But as industries became mechanized, workers became poorer and poorer, and the factory owners became richer.

So people came to realize the mistakes about the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. They saw clearly that liberty meant the liberty of the capitalists to treat the workers the way they liked.

Equality means the equality in social relations and in legal matters, only for the well-to-do people. The workers have known that under capitalism, there are two laws, one for the capitalists and another for the poor folk.

And fraternity can exist only among the capitalists. How can it be possible for a smartly dressed capitalist to consider a dirty, filthy and unhealthy fellow like his own brother?

Capitalism and the law

Under capitalism, the capitalists prescribe the laws, and the workers and farmers have to obey them. The benefit of the law is for the wealthy, but the poor suffer for it.

The legally constituted government is just an instrument of repression applied by the capitalists on the workers.

Moral codes are also man-made; they are not absolute principles. They are not correct forever; they change with the change in people's attitudes.

People's opinions are formed based on materials and wealth.

Under capitalism, moral laws are made for the benefit of the capitalists.

When one poor man slaughters another, he gets the death sentence.

Big burglars and robbers

Because of the greed of capitalists, wars broke out and millions died. The killers are not enemy soldiers, but the capitalists who love profits. As the world is dominated by capitalist, there is no government or law to take action against these capitalist criminals. Even the people who killed the largest number got rewarded with titles and high positions.

The capitalists dominate everywhere so that the poor get poorer. If a poor man, unable to bear hunger, steals, he gets flogging or imprisonment. But there is no action against the big burglars, or robbers. They are the capitalists who are stealing and robbing from the whole world. The reason is they happen to be the law keepers.

Fairness of stealing and robbing

Engels has stated that burglary and robbery are a form of protest against capitalism. "War is the trade of robbers, and trade the business of crooks", said Marx.

Suppose a man, in need of food, uses his home as a betting place and collects money from it, he is liable to a fine or imprisonment. But there are big casinos run by capitalists. People bet over boat races, horse races. Then the custodians of capitalism, emperors and princes, viceroys and governors come to grace these occasions. They give cups and medals and money prizes to the winning teams or horses.

The capitalists are dominated by hatred and greed. They cannot bear to see a worker make a voice. They will not allow him even a small share. They grab all profits from the games.

In addition, they have the monopoly over breweries and pubs. When poor men produce liquor, they are arrested, but capitalists build big breweries.

Materials and human life

According to capitalist laws materials are more valuable than human lives. Uncountable numbers of poor people have died to enable the capitalists to do business, to find new resources and to make new colonies. The wealth and property of capitalists in America and England are the products manufactured with the blood of workers.

If a man enters a house with intention to steal, he could be killed according to the capitalist laws. In the case that the owner resists and the burglar goes to the excess of killing him, he is sure to get the sentence of life (on a penitentiary island).

In short, the capitalists are the oppressors of the workers. They use law courts and jails and police stations for their own ends. They have the assistance of governments and police and lawyers to suppress the workers.

(b) Man and morals

Moral norms develop depending on economic and social conditions. When private property is primary, moral codes have to be adapted to it.

Private property is something a man acquires by means of physical or intellectual effort, either directly or indirectly or by the use of force.

The earliest men were honest, they behaved in accordance with the five (Buddhist) precepts. They have no idea like 'mine' or 'his'; because there were no 'I' or 'my', there were no evil deeds.

Gradually greed emerged. Instead of common property, the urge for private ownership developed.

As people became more and more lawless, they had to elect a *Maha Thamada min* (President) to rule over them.

In ancient days, the government was regarded as neutral medium between conflicting parties, and the people acknowledged the power entrusted to it. As wealthy men are in advantageous position, the government got into their hands. Although government evolved out of the people, it gradually strayed away from the people. The people had lost control over it; instead the men in power controlled it.

In the age of capitalism, government is merely an instrument of the capitalists.

Although men were moral at first, they lost the morals when private property and government appeared. However, the men who had the power and managed the administration prescribed that men shall not steal, or rob, or murder. But they themselves were the thieves, or robbers, or murderers.

Because men did not observe morals as before, trade and business became dishonest.

If private property is wiped out, men will again observe morals.

(c) Marriage and economy

Socialists have considered marriage under capitalism as a form of personal prostitution. A prostitute has sex with any person, provided she is paid money. If she has free sex with someone she loves, she is scolded or beaten by the pimp because she has breached discipline.

Basically, marriage is an institution where by a man and a woman can live together, bound together by mutual love. They are partners. In a capitalist society, love alone does not make the marriage. Marriage is determined by social class and wealth. A girl, or a boy simply cannot freely choose her or his partner.

Marriage of the capitalists

Wealthy people prevent their sons or daughters marrying the poor; they allow in-laws of the same social class. Many a boy or girl has run into trouble for the love of a rich man's daughter or son. Because of constraints, boys and girls from capitalist families have little choice for their partners. Just imagine the cases of matrimonial conflict that are decided by law courts, simply because rich

parents do not approve their offspring marrying someone from the lower class. Their sons and daughters are forced to accept make-up marriages, regardless of love.

These observations make it evident that marriage in capitalism differs from national scale prostitution in name only. It follows from serious contemplation that the two are the same.

For this reason, socialists contend that under capitalism, genuine marriage ceases to exist; there is only public prostitution and private prostitution.

The *Sakka* clan

There is a convention which prohibits marriage between a brother and sister. When the interests of wealth and property intervene, this rule is breached.

When a poor boy marries his own sister, it is deemed a grave mistake, a dog-like behaviour. The union is despised. But the royals approve of such marriages. They do arrange them. The '*Sakka*' clan took pride for their royal inter-marriages. They said they were a pure race. But the royal inter-marriages were not aimed solely to preserve racial purity, but also to keep the throne in the hands of the family.

Indeed, the discrimination between royalty and commoners began to appear because of the system of personal property and private ownership.

In literature, we read about the founding of the *Kappilavattu* kingdom, in which brother married his sister and took the throne. Their purpose was simply to keep the kingdom their monopoly.

The European royalty follow the same practice to preserve their kingdoms. Edward VIII had to abdicate because he married the woman he loves.

In a society where class distinction prevails, love does not play an important role in marriage, but wealth and property do.

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Chapter 3

Capitalism and colonial wars

(a) The origin of capitalism

At the earliest time of man's existence, all lands were common property. When this age ended, private ownership emerged and men began to be split into classes.

During the Greek and Roman times, distinction was made between slave and master. During the feudal age, when feudal lords had more power than kings, there was the division between royalty and aristocracy on the one hand and serfs and slaves and commoners on the other. Then the age of capitalism replaced feudalism.

These changes arose not because of men's will; they occurred because of the changes in the mode of men's livelihood.

When feudal lords ruled over their domains, men lived mainly on agriculture. Essential goods then were home produced.

Instruments and implements were invented to aid production. In place of the hand loom, textile mills came. These changes were the seeds of capitalism.

Change followed change; then the feudal age changed into the age of capitalism. But people were unaware of the changes which took place continuously and imperceptibly. After some time, looking at an age that had gone by, they realized the change.

The main cause for the change from feudalism to capitalism was 'profit'. There was no profit in making domestic products for family use. When they came to know that by selling surplus goods they made profits, people began to produce more. Competition arose to give way to capitalism worldwide.

And attitudes changed accordingly, followed by changed social relations. This in turn leads to new ideas. There is a vast difference in outlook between a Burman a hundred years ago and his present day counterpart.

In feudal times, men produced goods at home; but under capitalism, they work together. This was indeed the precursor for the socialist age. Cooperative production is a sign of socialism.

The agent of change from feudalism to capitalism has been the profit motive.

Today, there is worldwide conflict between workers and capitalists. This is a sign of the impending age of socialism.

(b)The emergence of colonialism out of capitalism

In the age of feudal lords, petty bourgeoisie were not to trade freely. When the methods of production changed, they expected to get more profits and demanded greater freedom of trade.

They knew that traders and workers were oppressed by the feudal lords and they knew they belonged to a different class. They wanted to impose a revolutionary change. They also realized that they had to unite with workers and farmers.

Thus the petty bourgeoisie in alliance with the intellectuals made 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' their slogan. And freedom they did obtain. The businesses of the petty bourgeoisie grew bigger; they became big traders. They developed into capitalists.

Because of the use of machinery, production increased and new markets were needed to sell them. They also required raw materials. They had search for new lands and colonies.

The people who worked for the capitalists roamed the globe for missionary work and for business. When they found new lands, they sent navies and armies to colonize them.

When capitalists invaded a country, they imposed repressive governments. They produced raw materials which they took away for their factories. In this way, capitalism thrived.

But, discovering new lands and invading them constitute colonialism. Thus it is evident that capitalism bred colonialism. This really is a system in which a foreign race oppresses another race and exploits from them. Here, the colonialists are the few capitalists.

Workers all over the world have become poorer and poorer because of colonialism, while a foreign minority increased its wealth. There were two contributing factors to this wealth.

1. Because of industrialization, more goods were produced in a shorter time. They could export the surplus goods to the colonies.
2. They could employ cheap indigenous labor to produce raw materials in the colonies, and import them to their country.

Back in the imperialist country, the workers used the raw materials to turn them into finished goods. In this way, the imperialists employ workers everywhere, irrespective of race.

Since imperialism emerged, developed nations controlled underdeveloped nations. In other words, the Europeans have made yellow, brown and black races their subjects.

The European imperialist powers vied among themselves in all regions of the world to get colonies. Sometimes they shared lands by agreement. Although they had common intentions to dominate colonial countries, they disagreed in sharing them. As they came into conflict, wars broke out.

(c) Imperialist wars

The World War of 1914 was a war between colonial powers which arose from their disagreement about sharing colonial lands.

A review of the causes of the First World War shows that it was waged to decide the fate of the underdeveloped Asians and Africans i.e. to decide whether they would be ruled by Britain and her allies or by Germany and her allies. It was a war to decide who owns the colonies.

During the war, the resources, men, money and materials from the subject nations were used to support the British imperialists. In fact it was an act in which one laid down his hand where the axe fell.

Now, the people everywhere are scared that another world war would break out; they are kept in suspense, waiting.

The real cause of such ruinous wars is the greed of the capitalists.

During a short interval of peace, the workers and farmers have to work hard and ceaselessly. Despite their hard work, they are not adequately provided with food and clothing. And when war comes it will be the workers and farmers who die.

Whether in time of peace or war, the capitalists reside in their mansions in luxury. And in time of war, they made profits from manufacturing war supplies. It is the duty of all workers and farmers to prevent wars from which the capitalists benefit while the poor people suffer.

Apart from Soviet Russia, all countries are dominated by capitalist-imperialists, either directly or indirectly.

The principle of 'winner takes all' applies in all colonial countries. Like beasts of prey, they are waiting to strike one another.

Being happy in slaughtering and robbing, the capitalists-imperialists survive by killing the poor subject people.

Japan, a great power, bullies Korea, a weak state. Fascist Italy invaded pathetic Abyssinia. Germany, like a hungry tiger will provoke France, a lean tiger; but France will not yield.

Poland, wicked like a fox, is creating problems from its land, so that Germany attacks Russia.

British capitalists, having colonized India and Burma, are exploiting from the natives. Italy and Japan, also capitalist, are not as rich; but they envy the British.

China, before it awoke, had been the playground of capitalist-imperialists of all races. The Chinese had been down-trodden. Now China has awakened. Students, workers and farmers are now active against the foreigners. But we have to wait and see whether they will successfully resist all foreigners.

When it comes to killing or torturing the workers and farmers, there is no difference between the capitalist races; Japan and Germany, English and French unite in this task. Are Germany and Italy conspiring at this moment to bring down the legally constituted government in Spain?

At present the demand for peace is widespread, but those who are disrupting peace are capitalist-imperialists.

Now, the question may be asked: in case war erupts because of the greed of the capitalists, what are the workers supposed to do? Our answer is:

1. Don't take part in the war.
2. As soon as war between the capitalists begins,
 - (a) rebel against the government if you are in a capitalist country,
 - (b) if you are in a colonial subject, like India and Burma, fight for your independence.

Remarks: For more information about the development of colonialism from capitalism, read Appendix 1. Appendix 2 is about the capitalist wars.

Chapter 4

The Decaying Capitalism

(a) Man and nature

There are three catastrophes: epidemic disease, famine and mass murder. Unrecorded numbers of people have died because of them. To avert these disasters, people have prayed to God, and also

resorted to various forms of worship, the worship of water, or fire, or trees. This is because people felt they are helpless, and that there is an Almighty.

But the natural disasters are not God's punishment; they are just natural events. Earth, water, air and fire, the elements are more powerful than man.

However, the study of science has given man the power to control nature to some extent.

Since before the time of Buddha, intelligent men have studied nature, and they have discovered some ways and means to control nature. Knowledge is passed from generation to generation, and the search is still going on.

Although it cannot be said that man can completely control nature, science has been put to use to a reasonable extent. Man has used fire (thermal power) in airplanes, railways, ships and motor cars.

Wind power and hydro-power have also been made use of. Floods or draughts can destroy farms and streams; but irrigation controls the damage. The use of chemical fertilizers increases the yield of crops.

Lightening kills man; but electricity is now tamed and used in electric motors, for lighting and to move tramcars.

Now, they are employing unheard of forces of nature as weapons. Have you not heard about poison gas used in the First World War?

These examples show that man has overcome nature to some extent. It should be understood that the invisible 'Almighty' that man worships is not the real 'Almighty'. In fact the Almighty is 'Nature' with its laws. Indeed, the worship of invisible God or gods is *deitthi*, a wrong faith. One should only rely on oneself if he wishes to survive the torment of natural forces.

(b)The three catastrophes versus capitalism

Although man has partially conquered nature, the scourge of three catastrophes remains; in fact they are getting worse. Man cannot overcome them because of the menace of capitalism. It is not because of natural disasters, nor for the fault of man; it is the defects of capitalism that is responsible.

Great strides have been made in medicine, chemistry, life sciences etc. There are many doctors; but there are the rich and the poor. Diseases attack the poor; they are deprived of the benefits of modern developments. Epidemic diseases like plague, or small pox can be prevented, but only for the well off people. The poor folk die of unreasonable causes. The catastrophe of disease is a by-product of the capitalist system.

The capitalists go to war because of greed. They disagree over the share of pastures, but for that the poor folk die. Modern technology is used in war. The result is the global catastrophe of mass man-slaughter.

Agriculture has been modernized and chemical fertilizers are used; crop yields have increased many-fold.

In manufacturing, with the use of machinery, steam engines and electric power, production has increased many times. In this age of affluence, 95 percent of the people have no adequate food, or clothing, or accommodation.

The present day world is beset with famine not without reason. All manufacturing systems are owned by the capitalists; they produce only goods which yield profit. They know people need the commodities, but cannot buy them. They will not give them for free. They just don't produce anything that will not bring profit. "Let people die, but we must protect our interests" is their way of thought.

When they have surplus goods, they shut down the factories; workers are laid off. Some of them starve to death. The capitalists dump goods rather than sell at cheap price, their aim being to seek larger profits by selling scarce goods at higher prices.

In the United States, cotton is burnt or dumped at sea.² In England wheat is out on fire; the German farmers feed their swine with maize.

The evils of the capitalist system are evident.

As long as capitalism exists, there will be famine, war and epidemic diseases. And unemployment will be widespread. People's hardship will only grow day by day.

To escape from these catastrophes, it is necessary to uproot the capitalist system and dismantle it completely.

(c) Private property, the bedrock of capitalism

In revolting against capitalism, it will be seen that private property is its stronghold. During the period of feudal lords, there were laws concerning private property. Ownership then was different from now. In those days each family produced its own requirements, with its own hands. When there was surplus, they hoarded it for the future. Because they produced it themselves, they owned it. The concept 'this is my property' at that time did not menace other people.

Then capitalism replaced feudalism. The concept of personal property changed.

Today, commodities are produced not just for family, nor for regional nor national consumption. They are distributed world wide. Goods from the east are used in the west. This is an age of globalization.

² About 5 years ago, President Roosevelt of the US introduced a system to improve the economy. In his scheme, cotton farmers are allowed to work only a certain percentage of the farm lands. This is to prevent the cotton price from falling due to excess production. For one acre of uncultivated land, the government gives the farmer five dollars in compensation. The government spends 50 million dollars for this plan; but it earns it back by keeping the price of cotton high. This is an alternative to destroying the cotton produced. But the workers suffer for it because they cannot afford to buy cotton goods.

Goods are not manufactured by individuals; they are mass produced in assembly lines, each worker doing a part of the process. It is distribution of labor. We can give an example from the textile industry.

A cotton farmer does not grow other crops; he specializes in cotton. Another worker converts cotton to yarn. Yet another produces textile from yarn; and from textile to clothing is another step. When distribution of labor is employed, each worker cannot claim to be the individual manufacturer. Thousands of workers are employed, yet they are all wage earners.

Manufacturing is a collective effort, so the workers are entitled to equally share the profits.

Having realized this concept, the workers claim for common ownership of the industry in which they put in their common effort. The capitalists cannot bear to accept this claim, nor to allow it to continue. They oppress the workers more than before. But this oppression will lead to their destruction.

Because the workers have the majority, their movements cannot be crushed. It is natural that an old era gives way to the new. Capitalism has done damage to human well being. The time has come for it to give way to socialism.

Although man has partially conquered over nature, he is unable to suppress greed. Only by removing capitalism, the root cause, the hardship of the workers will be overcome.

Revolution against capitalists must be carried out by all races and in all nations.

Like the Roman Empire and feudalism which are now extinct, capitalism too is doomed.

Frequent unrest in many countries and economic depressions, unemployment and colonial wars are symptoms which indicate that capitalism is nearing its end. The socialist giant will send capitalism to its grave. It is a great duty of farmers and workers the world over to hasten the demise of capitalism.

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Chapter 5

The Science of Revolution

No scientific discipline ever comes into existence automatically; it is a product of intelligent contemplation followed by experimental work. Only theory supported by practical work is established as science.

Alchemists have tried to turn base metals into gold. Then alchemy developed into chemistry. From astrologers we get the science of astronomy.

From the hard thinkers who tried to find ways to liberate workers, we get socialist ideas. It is the science that can be applied to build a socialist state.

Marx and Engels have analyzed history and deduced principles and come up with the science of revolution. By studying the past, they predicted how the future would come. They have introduced revolutionary ideas.

Karl Marx spent his life in poverty, devoting himself to find scientific principles of socialist revolution. His health had been poor, he died before his two children were grown up; his wife died young because of the stress of having to support and manage her family.

Marx's 'Capital'¹, a product of sacrifice and hard work, is a socialist classic. It is a treatise studied by all socialists. Marx has stated, "To devote myself to this work, I have sacrificed my well-being, my family life and everything."

The set of ideas contained in the writings of Karl Marx and his colleague Frederick Engels is now known as revolutionary socialism, or Marxism.

According to this ideology capitalism will end, to be followed by socialism. It shows the methods of revolution against capitalism and also to build socialist society. It is not an abstract idea. Because historical forces are at work, the age of socialism is a certainty.

Karl Marx built his scientific socialism based on three principles:

1. Materialist conception of history, the idea that history follows the changes in material environment.
2. The law of motion of capitalism (sic)
3. Dialectical materialism

Marx wrote four volumes of Capital. Vols. 1, 2 and 3 have been translated into English. Vo. 4 is still in German. In Burma only volume 1 is available. It should be a handbook for all young Burmans who can read English.

(a) Materialist conception of history, or materialist history

Karl Marx's materialist conception of history is a radical idea that is absolutely different from conventional historians and philosophers.

Karl Marx's opponents, however, contend that man is the primary factor in the changes in history. They hold that ideas are important; that history changes because ideas change.

According to materialism, man is motivated by the desire to live. Education, religion and morals have developed as functions of livelihood. The environmental factors control man's mind; it is not the mind which changes the material environment.

In the present situation, Asians have to acknowledge that Europeans, who are economically more developed, are educationally superior to them. Because the economy developed, education and culture also improved to some extent.

An example can be given about how matter affects the mind.

When man lives in an ancient environment, we find that he holds ancient ideas.

When old stories and events are presented in theatre or cinema, the actors behave accordingly.

Mind is dependent on the physical body. Production of goods, which is based upon materials, is similar to the soil. Man's knowledge and ideas are similar to the branches of trees. History is like the tree trunk. When the basic material, the soil, is fertile, the trunk and branches develop together. Similarly, when materialist production thrives, man's intellect and knowledge also develops. This is borne by historical facts.

In all respects the mind is dependent on the body; the mind cannot function without the brain. Like the shadow and its image, man's intelligence and his knowledge are the reflections from events of past history.

But, although materialists hold that matter is primary, they do not entirely ignore the mental part. They are mutually interdependent. Matter resembles the parents where as the mind resembles the offspring. The parents look after their children and educate them; in turn when they grow up the sons and daughters look after the parents. Because of industrialization, man has increased his knowledge, and this knowledge in turn contributes to increased production.

When we cut down the leaves and branches of a tree, it stops growing. Likewise, if we do not put more knowledge and ingenuity into a thriving industry, it will stop developing. In history, we read about races which have become extinct because they were indulgent in pleasures and luxuries and not hard work. A comparison of Japanese, Siamese and Japanese histories can illustrate this point.

People have to adapt themselves to existing economic conditions in working for their livelihood, and in doing so they have to confront the forces of nature. There are easy times as well as hard ones, but they encourage invention and ingenuity.

It is not wrong to say that man uses his knowledge and shapes history. But it is important not to forget that this knowledge is derived from past history. By changing history, and the environment, man changes himself. Therefore we say that history changes in response to the interactions between the material aspect of economy and human knowledge, the mental part.

The whole historical process is a vicious circle.

When the economy of the Romans who employed slave labor inevitably crumbled, an agriculture-based feudal system arose. In this system, manufacturing techniques gradually improved resulting in the declining role of agriculture. So the feudal system, based on agriculture had to go. In its place came capitalism. But the capitalist economy employs large numbers of workers who work together. Therefore, inevitably it also must die out. In this way history goes round, but it is materialist history.

We will give another example to show that matter is more fundamental than mind. The six senses, vision, taste, smell, touch, hearing and intellect are all dependent on the human body, a collection of matter. The body is continuously sustained by nourishment with matter, food, water etc. When the body becomes sick, the mental faculty, the six senses also become abnormal.

A fresh environment keeps the body healthy; a healthy body carries a healthy mind, a vigorous intellect. This is the teaching of the Buddha seen in the *Vimotti ratha*. This shows that matter is the absolute basis of mind.

There are two components of manufacturing:

1. Farms and land, factories and raw materials, and machinery which are all inanimate machinery.
2. Humans, educated and uneducated, who are living things.

Manufactured goods are for human consumption; and it is man who actually produces them. Because the inanimate component doesn't make effort, it is really not productive, or creative.

The second factor most important for human survival is the skill in manufacturing.

The fundamental cause of historical change

There are two powerful forces which bring about historical change:

1. Changes in the mode of production, or the economic system
2. The conflict between one class and another,³

Production and manufacturing has improved due to many factors: development of machinery, discovery of resources and raw materials, new markets, discovery of new lands, developments in industry and trade etc. Inevitably, the environment and man's attitudes and ideas change.

During the period of capitalism, the economic distribution and laws favor the capitalists and contribute to their increasing prosperity. However, they do not change in accordance with time, so they have become an obstacle in human progress. So, the capitalist economy has become a hindrance.

When the economic system, the basic structure changes, sooner or later, the government has to change accordingly.

An outdated administrative system is an obstacle for economic and industrial development. The inanimate capitalist government comes into conflict with the developing industry. Because the capitalists rigidly control the industry, the workers are subjected to extreme poverty. To wipe out their hunger and poor living conditions, manufacturing industries have to be expanded. To do this the workers have to remove the capitalists first. To dismantle the capitalist system and its laws they must revolt against and remove the source, the capitalists themselves.

The egg shell has its origin in the hen's womb; it protects the chicken embryo. But when the chicken is fully developed, the shell has to be broken; otherwise the chicken will not survive. In a similar manner the capitalist system which has ushered the change has now arrived at the stage of its destruction. At present it is hindering society's progress.

³

See Appendix 3 where human conflict and historical change is described.

Like the analogy of chicken and egg shell, society will be destroyed unless the capitalist system, the social shell, breaks. The unrest of workers world wide is an indication that the shell is about to crumble.

Will the world's workers and farmers remain silent with feet and hands bound? Or will they crush the bonds and liberate themselves?

According to materialist history, the conflict between the old establishment and the new, or the conflict between the capitalists and workers is beyond the comprehension of the layman; even specialists with unusual mental faculties become aware only after the events have taken place for some time. We can cite an example here. Suppose we look straight at the sun; when we see it, it is no longer at the place we saw it. Light from the sun takes eight minutes to reach us.⁴ We can only see the events on the sun eight minutes later.

Likewise Karl Marx noticed the conflicts between labor and capital only some time after they have started taking place. It was only 100 years after capitalism was established in England that Marx began to see the signs of internal and external conflict. This observation also supports the correctness of materialist history.

Influence of hero worship

There are some people who believe that heroes make history. Julius Caesar, Asoka, Napoleon are given as examples. This is a belief born of hero worship. In fact an individual does not, or cannot change history.⁵

⁴ The distance between the earth and sun is 93 million miles. Light travels 186,000 miles in one second.

⁵ Hero worship does not conform to Buddha's teaching. The Buddha has taught monk *Waggl* thus: There is absolutely no benefit in worshipping my body. Stop it, and try to find the *Dhamma*. He who sees the *Dhamma* is the one who has seen me. For this reason, first, one ought to associate himself with wise men; second, he must hear the *Dhamma* from the wise men, third he must contemplate hard to analyze and understand the *Dhamma*; fourth, he must bear the *Dhamma* in mind and practice it. Similarly, the workers should listen to their leaders, and treat their doctrines according to the four modes of practice.

Leaders like Hitler, Mussolini, Napoleon, Karl Marx and Lenin etc. were the products of their age. In other words a politico-economic system creates its own leaders. Had the above named leaders not come up the world stage, others similar to them would definitely have appeared. Hitler and Mussolini who are great capitalists made German and Italian patriotism their weapon to oppress the working class. Similarly, Marx and Lenin, who came from upper class families identified themselves with the workers. They were patriots who did not betray the cause of the poor, uncorrupt, but strongly anti-capitalist and revolutionary.

A guava tree doesn't grow out of a mango nut. In the same manner, socialists cannot gain power in a country dominated by capitalists. Like the plaque germ which thrives on other bacteria, in Germany and Italy, Nazis and Fascists are using various methods to suppress the socialists (or) communists. They put to fire all communist literature. Communists are sent to jail or killed. Hitler and Mussolini are concerned that the intellectuals who read revolutionary literature will cause political unrest. So they try to keep the youth fully occupied. They deceive the youth with slogans such as "The prosperity of our German race mainly depends upon the health of our youth. Let the youth be health and sports enthusiasts". Thus they are diverted from the goal of the workers and farmers. Haven't they in fact driven further and further away from their aim? In an age where ninety percent of the people cannot escape from poverty, how can the poor folk play games and sports and build up their health?

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Chapter 6

The Science of Revolution

Karl Marx studied the works of capitalist economists and he synthesized their ideas with the concepts of history, philosophy and science. Using this synthesis, he analyzed the nature of capitalism and deduced conclusions about its future.

In his classic work, *Capital*, he gives a critique of capitalism. From his studies, Marx discovered three fundamental aspects of capitalism: 1. Capital, 2. Value, and 3. Surplus value.

We discuss about capital first.

1. Capital

According to Marxism, capital is of two types. (a) fixed capital and (b) floating capital,

(a) Fixed capital

Fixed capital has constant value. The capitalists invest in machinery, factories and raw materials. The value spent for them does not change. When the products are sold later, this value is added to the price of goods.

Suppose a worker in a furniture factory earns a daily wage of one rupee per day, and he finishes one chair daily. Also suppose that the price of raw materials, wear and tear of machinery etc. comes to 8 annas. We find that the total cost of the chair is Rs 1-8 annas. If it is sold at Rs. 2, then the profit is 8 annas per chair, the net profit for the capitalist. This is from only one chair. Such profit accumulates. It is exploited profit which is reinvested.

In this way capital produces profit, and profit adds to capital. The capitalist prospers increasing. It is evident that his wealth is derived from the workers.

(b) Floating capital

Marx calls the wages for labor the floating capital.

In manufacturing, machinery by itself does nothing; it is labor which produces goods. The labor converts the raw materials into finished goods, which have added value. This added value is entirely due to the workers, so they are entitled to take the profit. The cost of making the useful goods that is the workers pay should be called floating capital.

Actually, natural resources and plants and crops have no intrinsic value. Value comes in only when labor is added to them.

Coal in the ground, which has absolutely no value, is a good illustration. When coal is mined it assumes a certain value. When it is brought up, its value increases. So also, a teak tree in the forest

which has no value gets added value when it becomes timber. "From the economic point of view, goods are synonymous with labor", says Karl Marx.

To sum up, the workers, the source of labor, own all the wealth in the world.

2. Value

An object which has value has three characteristics:

1. It satisfies human wants
2. It is manufactured by human labor
3. It is exchangeable with other goods or money according to accepted standards.

Such an object has two qualities: (a) its utility value and (b) its market value.

An object has market value when it has the ability to satisfy some human desire. It has market value if it is disposable in the market, either by bartering, or by selling it in terms of money.

Thus a commodity which has no utility value cannot have market value. Just imagine the reduced value of a used commodity, and another whose usefulness has expired and has absolutely no value, because no one will buy it.

It is capitalism which produces goods, endowed with utility value and market value, and by marketing them makes the profit.

We can compare two different objects, for example a chair and a table. They are both useful objects, with different uses. but with different market values, say Rupee 5 for the chair and Rupee 10 for the table. The table is twice as expensive as the chair, a fact which reflects the amount of labor used in making them.

Profit

To make exchange of commodities (barter) convenient their values are assessed. But in the market, currency is used. After the introduction of currency, people began to use it as capital. But capital becomes just the accumulation of profit.

At first, people just exchanged goods. Then they became obsessed with saving capital, i.e. profit, rather than obtaining the goods.

But, simply buying and selling is not a great method to earn profit. True, goods are marketed at a profit, but part of it goes to the first seller. This is the very reason why small businessmen, like shop keepers and hawkers are not well off.

Or some small businessmen sometimes get the chance to buy cheap and sell them when prices are higher; they hit the jackpot. But there are times too, when they face falling prices for their goods. Then they face disaster.

The whole capitalist system is like a gambling table. The total amount of money around the table does not increase; but it is always taken away as revenue by the casino owner. By luck, a gambler may win once in a while; but in the long run all gamblers are losers.

As good or bad luck is the determining factor in gambling, so also it is in the matter of trade. In gambling clever chaps usually win. In business also, clever chaps make profits mostly. But the country's economy doesn't improve. So, the capitalist business is like the quick hands pick-pocketing from clumsy folks.

In Marx's way of thinking, we should consider the whole national economy, rather than individuals.

The power of work

In order to obtain profit, the capitalists purchase a strange commodity from the market- the source of labor which has the wonderful capacity to produce profit. The moneyed capitalist buys labor and employs it in his manufacturing business. Labor is a live object, and there is nothing apart from it which can generate wealth.

In fixing the price of a commodity, the costs of materials and input of labor must be included. If an object requires one man-day to produce it and another requires two man-days, then the second object should be twice as expensive as the first. Similarly, the value of labor should be based upon the value of the object it produced.

The laborer sells his labor to support his family; the capitalist buy buying one man-day of labor then becomes entitled to employing him an unlimited period of time for that day.

As an example, we suppose that a worker works twelve hours a day. From six hours of his effort, he produces new commodity for which he is paid his daily wage. Then the proceeds from the remaining six hours of his effort go to the capitalist and becomes the net profit.

The development of capitalism

There are two factors which promote capitalism:

1. The existence of a group of people who have saved some capital, and the existence of advanced technology.
2. The availability of workers on whom the capitalists have absolute control.

Lenin calls this type of workers 'free labor' for the reason that they are free to sell their effort to the capitalists, without any constraints. They are also free because they have nothing to do with the possession of factories, machinery, lands etc.

To get maximum profit, the capitalists are cautious and systematic in putting the workers to work, such as by giving long working hours. And they increasingly use such methods.

The workers may obtain some relief only if they can

1. lessen working hours, and
2. increase wages.

In fact these are the means at their disposal.

The capitalist method of solving problems

To solve the problem of competition among themselves and the conflicts between labor and capital, they employ the minimum number of workers and at the same time use advanced machinery. The introduction of modern machinery then makes the workers redundant.

When a certain capitalist is capable of inventing a process of mass production, he can sell his products at reduced prices. Others who cannot compete with him are annihilated, and workers employed by them lose their jobs. In this way the number of capitalists keeps decreasing all the time, and those who survive become wealthier. On the other hand, the poor working class keeps increasing and they become hungrier than ever.

The big capitalists, those capitalists who own monopolies and imperialists united themselves to wipe out small capitalists.

But the seeds of poison plant are already sown inside the capitalist system. The more the system develops, the greater will its economic problems become, No solution will alleviate them. One of the intrinsic problems is that no production is possible without hiring workers.

Capitalism and government

In all previous ages, the upper classes made use of government to maintain their position above the lower classes. The capitalists do the same thing. They keep government in their pocket.

Capitalists' property

The true meaning of private property is something someone has produced out of his labor and kept in reserve for his own future use. Such private property is legitimate. The economic system in ancient days has been of this nature. But since about 800 years ago, it has gradually changed; private property has become the capitalists' property.

The capitalists' property is due to no effort of their own; it is the product of workers' labor, something they have exploited.

During the age of feudalism, traders and businessmen totally transformed the system by bullying the craftsmen. After the capitalist system has replaced the feudal system, the traders and

businessmen have become capitalists. The craftsmen and slaves and those belonging to the lower class become the workers. But the capitalists can make no further progress. That no economic development is possible is borne by the fact that finished goods have to be dumped. (Editor's remark: This point has been mentioned before.) The capitalist system has passed its peak.

The inevitable path

The capitalists are putting a brake on development. They do not discuss or agree about the use of technologies. When a new invention is made, they keep it secret; they bribe inventors; they dump large amounts of finished goods.

But the pressure inside a boiler can be controlled only if the temperature is less than 100 degree; when the temperature is extremely high, the pressure builds up and the boiler will eventually explode. Likewise the pressure exerted by the capitalists over the workers will inevitably lead to a social explosion.

The time has come for capitalism to expire. As there is the inescapable natural law known as *Sankhara*, it has to obey the command of the lord of death, and the time is approaching. The burglars, robbers and murderers will be looted or murdered.

Capitalism has been able to replace the outdated system of craftsmanship with technological innovations. But it is pushing society backwards.

The present day workers, descendents of the oppressed classes in the age of landlords, are now poised to take revenge against the capitalists. They are preparing to fight to regain the rights and legacies of their ancestors.

The coming of socialism

Here we will give a brief explanation about the socialist economic system. In the socialist age, all the people in the country have the right to own the means of production, factories and lands; they are national property. Everyone has to take part in production, contributing equal amount of labor, and he is entitled to a fair share of the produce, in proportion to his abilities. There will be no more exploitation.

Family in the socialist age

Some people mistakenly believe that when the socialist age arrives, women will become common property. Actually, this is true under capitalism; prostitution is widespread because of economic hardships. Countless young women are at the mercy of the wealthy people. Is it not true to say that under the present situation women are the "common property of the wealthy class." Their liberation will come only with socialism.

In the socialist age, there will be equality for all people. There is no sex discrimination; and the exploitation of class by class, and women by men will disappear. Because men and women have equal economic advantage, there will be no more prostitution; and polygamy will become extinct. Certainly marriage and family life will no longer be dependent upon economic status.

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Chapter 7

The Science of Revolution

(a) Dialectical materialism

The essence of materialism is this. The sun, the stars, the earth and all the living and non-living matter on it, human ideas and concepts and opinions being subject to the law of *samkhara*, are all changing and evolving. It is an ongoing continuous process. They are not ordinary processes, in the sense that, they arise out of the conflicts of opposites.

In the natural universe there is nothing, matter or mind, that remains fixed and unchanged. There is the single truth, the law of *samkhara*, which is synonymous with dialectical materialism, which is unchanging and stands as a *paramatta* concept. Are we objective to say that all things and ideas are continually changing except this *paramatta vada* called dialectical materialism? Because it says everything must change, in case this ideology changes, it only proves the correctness of the "ideology of dialectical materialism"; the concept stands stronger.

Dialectical Materialism versus the *Vimotti ratha* treatise

Cause and effect are not unrelated. Because they are related, causes and effects, like *avijja* and *samhara* (ignorance and changing nature), are bound together as one, a united entity, i.e. the idea of monism. (1) In this unity, cause and effect are not separate; we cannot say that this is the cause and that is the effect. (2) Cause and effect have no mutual agreement as to who will take the role of cause and who the effect. There is no motivation, no synchronization, no effort, no worry, to separate them. When the cause ceases, the effect also ceases. They are inseparably linked; but they are always interacting. (3) This continuous cyclic process is the characteristic of *rupa-nama* (matter and mind). Apart from this *Patissa samupadda*, i.e. the law of cause and effect, there is nothing real in nature. Creatures or self, living or non-living objects are not absolute realities. Even the three *lawkas* (domains), i.e. the realms of creatures, men and gods, are in fact composed of matter and mind. So they are part of the *Patissa samupadda*. As this principle is all inclusive, there is no such thing as a Creator. Everything arises spontaneously out of nature, and according to the law of cause and effect. This is the only law. (4) To all *yogis* (ascetics) who contemplate, these four truths will become evident. This is the outline of the treatise *Vimotti ratha*.

We find that "the ideology of dialectical materialism" and "the concepts in *Vimotti ratha*" are clearly mutually supportive.

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the proponents of dialectical materialism contend that their doctrine is based upon the three elements of *Patissa samupadda*, namely:

1. *Mula* (thesis)
2. *Pati-pakkha* (Anti-thesis)
3. *Samuha* (Synthesis)

The interactions among the three elements are responsible for all the events in the universe, involving the celestial objects, man's intellect and ideas, history of mankind etc.

As soon as a thesis is made, either materially or mentally, its anti-thesis appears instantaneously. The thesis constitutes the cause, and the anti-thesis the effect, the two interacting continuously. As soon as the two causal factors, *Avijja* and *Tanha* (ignorance and greed or desire) arise, the

consequent *Samkhara* follows immediately, and it in turn gives rise to *Vinnanam* and the whole vicious cycle of *Patissa samupadda*, in which each factor constitutes the cause for the next factor.

Thesis produces anti-thesis; then anti-thesis leads to synthesis, its own annihilator.

Capitalism and anti-thesis

The development of capitalism, a thesis, is followed by its anti-thesis, which opposes and destroys it. The anti-thesis, the working class, is the poisonous element inside the capitalist system. It will certainly bring about the extinction of the host. As capitalists and workers interact as opposites, trial of strengths take place, but eventually it is the latter who wins the final victory. Then comes the age of socialism (the present status in Russia), in which the workers have economic and political power over the remnant capitalists. As they proceed to practice socialism, in time class distinction ceases to exist. This is the age of communism, or mature socialism. As the power of the workers is removed, it represents a manifestation of synthesis of workers and capitalists. This means that an infinitely stable system is impossible as the three elements, thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis keep interacting and competing all the time.

Another aspect of transformation

There is another aspect of the above transformation, i.e. according to the following laws:

1. The law of transformation of quantity to quality
2. The law of the interpenetration of opposites
3. The law of negation of negation-

The embryo stage

Man's life begins with the union of opposites, the male sperm and female ovum, constituting the fetus, an atomic level entity. It grows into an embryo, developing the thirty two components of the human body, until the baby is born. Serious attention shows that all the above laws are obeyed in the process.

1. There is change from quantity to quality; first the physical part grows to be followed by the development of mental qualities. The baby is a living entity, quite different from the embryo.

2. There is the unity of opposites, male and female components of the fetus.
3. There is also negation. The fetus is negated by the baby (the fetus disappears as the baby grows), which again is negated by its growth into manhood. It is self-negation.

As soon as the fetus is formed, the causes of its decay come into play. However, organization, which opposes the decay, is stronger in the early stages. Thus growth is possible. The transformation of the baby into a boy, and boy into man takes place, involving both physical and mental changes.

From birth to youthful stage, organization exceeds decay; but as man grows older, the competition is reversed; decay dominates over organization. Thus even old age finally ends in death.

Similar transformations are seen in the development of capitalism from feudalism, and further into socialism. The few traders, or businessmen, the ancestors of capitalists, negated the feudal lords. They grow to become capitalists. Now comes the time for the capitalists to be negated by the workers, the descendants of the lower class in feudal times. The capitalists are going to be overpowered by the workers.

The basic characteristics are not lost

The conflict of opposites does not necessarily annihilate their basic characteristics. Only the decaying components are removed. The remnants, rather than continue as such, merge with their opposites, to organize a new system. In Russia, most of the capitalists have been wiped out in the struggle of opposites, and those remaining have joined the workers. The synthetic product is socialism in Russia.

Mango as example

We will give an example from botany. The mango sprout develops out of the seed; it grows producing leaves and branches. Then it bears the mango fruit. The whole process is cyclic, in which the intrinsic characteristics of mango is preserved at all stages.

Likewise, the historical process is cyclic. From the remote beginning with the age of *Padetha-pin* (tree of variety and abundance), we have passed through the reign of *Thamada* (the elected President), followed by the age of feudal lords and capitalism and socialism and communism. In every stage, there is the element of progress.

The spiral process

Although we have said history moves in a cyclic process, it does not mean that it will come back exactly to the starting point. The repetition is not exact, but always at a higher level. This means the process is spiral, rather than circular. In the botanical example, we started with a mango and come back to mangoes. But they are not identical. The product mangoes are both quantitatively and qualitatively different from the seed mango. All living things, plants and trees and animals and men change through the process of evolution. Although the developments are imperceptible, after a long enough period they become recognizable. Thus there will be remarkable difference between the mango a hundred years ago and its offspring today. So also we see the difference between the men a century ago and their modern descendents, even though they are of the same racial stock. In short, nature, including living things and man, undergoes the dialectical process of change, and development. It is climbing the spiral stair case.

***Padetha-pin* age and communism**

In history, we have started with the *Padetha-pin*, which is replaced by *Thamada*. When one cycle is complete we have communism. But this is not identical with *Padetha-pin*; it is at a higher level, qualitatively. In the age of *Padetha-pin*, men were not greedy, nor angry, nor ignorant. So they did not quarrel; but they observed the five basic moral precepts. But they were always at risk from the danger of beasts or natural forces. In the coming age of communism, as man will have mastered science and technology, they will be free from economic worries. It will be a utopia.

Just waiting, with necks stretched out, will not bring change

Some people tend to have rigid ideas. They think the spiral process of dialectical materialism will take place regardless whether effort is applied or not. They believe the age of communism will arrive automatically. They are like the believer in *kamma*, who is lazy.

There are three requisites for success: good *kamma* (i.e previous effort), *nyanna* (intelligence) and *viriyā* (hard work). But each element alone is not sufficient to achieve success in any undertaking.

A gardener gives tender care to his plants. He conditions the soil, feeds manure, and waters the plants. These plants thrive. But those left to themselves wither away.

Analogous to the gardener is the socialist leader. Without a good leader, people will not understand the principles of freedom. Without this understanding, the whole of humanity will be in the hands of imperialist-capitalists; it will be doomed.

For this reason, to achieve universal progress, it is most important to crush the imperialist-capitalists.

Survival of the fittest

The capitalist economy is accomplished by people in the society. The technologies developed are useful assets. But, because of the nature of private ownership, the benefits can be enjoyed only by a few people. The majority remain in want and poverty. These are adverse effects. Thus the beneficial and ill effects of capitalism, representing opposites, bring about the conflict between the capitalists and workers. This is a struggle that will be a significant record in history.

We can see here that the workers' struggle against the capitalists is meant to eradicate all factors that are obstacles to human progress.

In the socialist era, the workers do not disappear; only their troubles do. So also factories and machinery, raw materials and land do not disappear. But minority ownership will be erased and substituted by common ownership by the working people. Certainly, the new economic system will emerge for the benefit of mankind.

Nature and change

All phenomena in nature proceed according to the laws of dialectical materialism. Take water for example: it freezes at 0 C, and is a liquid between 0 C and 100C. Above 100 C it exists as steam. These are physical changes. We can understand these changes in the light of dialectical materialism.

1. There is the fire which heats the water from below. The thermal energy raises its temperature until it reaches 100 C. Then it boils into steam.
2. There is the unity of opposites, water and heat. The cool nature of water is opposed by the heat of fire. The two combine to produce a new state – steam.
3. The law of negation is seen in ice being negated by water, then water by steam.

Revolution and boiling water

Citing the boiling water as an example, Frederick Engels explains that violence is unavoidable in social change. All social changes in history involve death and bloodshed. These are seen in the wars that brought the Roman empire to its end and introduced the feudal age, the wars that started from France in 1789 which ended feudalism and brought capitalism, and the Russian revolutionary war of 1917 which is now spreading all over the globe. These are horrible wars which cause death and bloodshed and misery before our eyes.

The antagonism between different classes and resulting violence is the cause for a revolutionary change. Socialism cannot automatically bring benefits to the poor; socialist theory requires that the workers arise to liberate themselves.

According to Marxism, there is no peaceful way for workers to overcome the capitalists. Only violence can demolish them. Revolution is like childbirth; the mother inevitably suffers labor pain. So also in revolution, people have to suffer. With a competent midwife, the mother's pain can be relieved. Likewise, competent revolutionary leaders can reduce death and bloodshed.

The importance of opportunity

Often times it happens that because the midwife was incompetent, the baby died. So also, revolutions used to fail because of poor leaders. Around 1920, there arose workers revolts in Germany and Italy; but the leaders were ineffective and the rebels were defeated. Hitler and Mussolini, the stooges of the capitalists came to power.

Premature birth can be fatal. So also, untimely revolution, without favorable economic and political conditions, will be a failure.

If the pregnant mother were healthy, even if she was deficient in other respects, she would be capable of giving birth to a healthy baby. Similarly, if the workers in a nation are adequately informed about revolutionary principles, the revolution can easily succeed.

The French revolution of 1871 did not have a good midwife; the pregnancy was immature; and the mother unhealthy. It was like childbirth on a cart on a bumpy road. But the child did come out, clinging to life. The proletarian government was born and survived for two months. At the time capitalism had not come of age, and the workers were not too poor yet. And they were not united. Also, there were no leaders who were intelligent and capable. The revolution was defeated after two months of apparent success.

Lenin learned a lot from the French revolution. The Russian revolution of 1917 did have a good leader, and the time was ripe. All the requisites for a successful revolution were present. It was like giving birth to a healthy baby. The capitalism in Russia then was to some extent mature; Lenin was a wise leader of men. Thus the Russian overcame all opposition and obstacles.

Marx ideology is not merely for theoretical interest; it is for practical use. Philosophers have written much about human society and its interpretations. But the important point is for men to be able to change society in the desired direction.

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Chapter 8

The transition from capitalism to communism

History has seen many changes. We are now on the threshold of another change.

Socialism is the product of the conflict of interests between capitalists and workers. In the early phase, it has been a sentimental ideal. A lot has been written about the building the socialist age. Over three hundred years ago, Sir Thomas Moore wrote a book titled *Utopia*.

Various ideas and ideologies have emerged since then. But work on systematic socialism was produced by Karl Marx and Engels.

Then based on Marxism, people began to organize the workers and initiated their struggle. Socialist parties were formed. Believers in socialism always support the workers in their struggle against the capitalists.

In 1917, Marx's followers in Russia, socialists, also known as Bolsheviks successfully revolted against the capitalists, landlords, royalty and aristocrats, and the clergy. Then they established a socialist state.

Since then, the world has become more restless. The revolts of farmers and workers have arisen in many countries; there were independence movements in colonial countries. There are also unemployment problems.

Now, as the economic situation is worse, unrest has grown.

As a consequence of revolutions throughout the world, people in Burma have become more enlightened; they are agitated; they have staged strikes; and many of them have lost their jobs.

But, revolution, simply because of unbearable economic circumstances, but without correct aims cannot be effective. It will only amount to rebellion, not a revolution. Even if they have victory, the situation will not change. The Tharawaddy rebellion (led by Saya San) is a good example to cite here.

A revolution should meet the following requirements:

1. A very bad national economic situation
2. An informed working class, aware of the revolutionary principles, and convinced about the need for evolution.

Both conditions should be met. It is important to wait for the system to crumble. During this time revolutionary ideology must be propagated.

In Burma, the present situation is not yet unbearable. But to be ready when the moment arrives it is important for revolutionary propaganda to be launched now.

It is important for the masses to be informed about the revolution; only a few selected people will not do it.

(a) Conditions for the disintegration of a capitalist government

Socialists used to believe that "Government is an instrument of oppression against the powerless." And, "Where there is government, there is no freedom. No government means absolute freedom."

If this is true, there are questions to be asked. Will there be no government after the revolution? Can we do without government? Will the people become lawless? These are questions to be asked.

The socialists' first desire is to take down the capitalist government, and to set up a socialist government in its place. The responsibilities of such a government will be:

1. To fight and clear up the remaining capitalists and their allies.
2. To establish a socialist state.

The socialists believe that after the capitalists have been completely wiped out, there will be no need for government. Because there will be no more conflict between the workers and capitalists, there is no need for government.

We may elaborate on this point. Apart from Russia, all governments elsewhere are known as capitalist governments. Even in such countries as England and France, where there is majority rule, the government is capitalist.

Elections do not reflect the will of the people. They are dominated by the capitalists. Democratic governments under capitalist system only serve to facilitate unbridled oppression of the workers by the capitalists. They are governments empowered to suppress people.

In today's terminology, what is called democracy is only an instrument employed by a small group of people against the majority. It is a "minority democracy", or "capitalist democracy."

The current dictatorships in Germany and Italy are openly oppressive systems. The English and French systems are milder; they coax the subject before torture.

Farmers and workers should demolish the capitalist establishment and set up a 'majority government' or 'socialist democracy government', to look after their benefits.

Socialist democracy government and capitalist democracy government are different concepts. In the capitalist type, the army and police are the instruments for oppressing the masses. To build a socialist democracy, the workers, being the majority, must take control of the army and police who are the minority. By doing so, the residual capitalists will be eliminated.

In this way, a democratic government will change from being an instrument of the capitalists to one of the working people.

Just as the workers and people were not free under capitalist governments, the capitalist minority will not be free under a socialist government.

However, there is difference in nature between the techniques used by capitalists to control the workers and those used by the socialist government against the capitalists.

In today's world, in all capitalist countries the clash between workers and capitalists is intensifying daily. As the conflict becomes intense, the capitalists gather arms and ammunition. This only shows that the government is merely an instrument.

The situation will be different under socialism. The oppression over the capitalist is the oppression on the oppressors, in order to eliminate oppression. We have emphasized that oppression of man by man, or class by class can produce class conflicts. Now, under socialist democracy, as all oppressions will cease, all kinds of conflicts will also cease. When class oppression disappears, there will be no need for the instrument of oppression, i.e. government. Some time after the socialist government has settled, there will be no more disagreements. A classless society will arrive then.

(a) Dictatorship of the Proletariat, or the First Phase of Communism

The period after the socialist government is installed and the ancestry of capitalists and their dishonest wealth is destroyed is known as the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', or the 'First Phase of Communism'.

Even Westerners think that under a socialist government, people will equally share wealth. This is absolutely wrong because people have different physical and intellectual capabilities, and also families have different numbers of people. Giving equal shares to differently qualified persons is a bit unfair; it is like asking a child to run a race with an adult.

Under capitalism, workers' income does not match their work. The socialist government is put in place to correct this wrong. Because of the absence of exploitation, workers will enjoy the full share of their products. Each worker works according to his capability, and earns according to his effort.

(b) Classless Society, or Communism

The nature of the socialist government shortens its life. Because of this nature, the socialist government will soon disappear, but not until the capitalist descendents are completely wiped out. When the government gradually disappears, we have mature stage of socialism, or communism.

In such period, men being endowed with physical and intellectual attributes will have correct understanding about their jobs; they will be dutiful and hardworking. There will be no jealousy among them. Production will become more efficient.

Because of the absence of capitalist constraints, science and technology will make great breakthroughs, and will contribute to people's prosperity. The national wealth will accumulate. There will be no bureaucracy at work; officers will not be overbearing. Rather, officers and workers will become comrades. Workers will be free from dissatisfaction; they have no grievance and nothing to worry.

Our descendents, born in the age of communism, will not have heard about government. They will have to study history if they want to know what a government is.

Men living under communism, or the age of *Padetha-pin*, will have high moral standards and high ideals, just like the Brahma.

However, one cannot comprehend communism by sticking to the conventional way of thinking. He must have studied the process of history and the true nature of mind and matter.

In the very beginning, there has been no government; it was the era of *Padetha-pin*. When the system of private property came, so did the government, along with the various classes of rulers. We have had the Brahmins and priests, aristocrats and capitalists who handled government in succession.

The power of the proletariat will arrive soon

A classless society, without government is bound to come; back to the *Padethapin* era again.

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Chapter 9

Nationalism, Communism and Independence Struggle

We have a number of questions to ask: How is socialism related to Burma's independence? Do we have to fight the Burmese capitalists as well? Don't they also like independence? Will it amount to alienating the Burmese capitalists, perhaps disuniting them?

There should be no wavering about such questions, if one really understands the basic principles of socialism. Nationalism, the basic force behind the independence struggle is actually a capitalist entity. Capitalism has arisen out of nationalism. Here we will outline the history of nationalism.

In the days of feudalism, feudal lords split the country into dominions and established their rule; the King at the center had no power.

Petty bourgeoisie, small traders, wanted to be wealthy; they preferred open economy. But they had to suffer the monopoly of the land lords; they wanted to revolt and take political power.

They knew that inventing a centralized form of government would topple the feudal lords. They thought it was only proper for the central government to have power. They realized the necessity of uniting the petty bourgeoisie in various feudal domains. Thus, the concepts of nation and national emerged. They used nationalism as a weapon against the feudal lords.

Since then the capitalists have used nationalism as their weapon. When they suppressed the people, they say it was for the sake of the nation. They use the same argument when the workers' pay is reduced, or when they impose longer working hours, or when they fight wars.

When national capitalists want to fight against foreign capitalists they employ nationalism as weapon.

Nazism

In Germany, Hitler, the great captain of robbers, has invented a 'crude form of nationalism' known as Nazism. He has driven out Jews from Germany, where they were the greatest capitalists and the German capitalists their junior counterparts. To demolish the overwhelming competition of the Jews, the German capitalists provoked Hitler to use the weapon of nationalism. They have misused nationalism and misled the workers. The workers have come to hate the Jews, instead of the capitalists.

In one stroke, the German capitalists hit in two places.

In India and Burma, people boycott British goods, in support of their independence movement. This benefited only the native capitalists. The workers died in the stream of bullets.

Communism and biology

In biology, the great scientist Charles Darwin has discovered that racial differences, such as Chinese, Indian, English, are due to the result of evolution, depending on the environment of geography, weather etc. Genetically, all races come from the same 'primary cell'. Thus racial superiority is a mistaken belief, which informed people do not share.

All capitalists, irrespective of race, are oppressive on the workers. For this reason, people should not pay attention to racial differences, but they should look to unite men from the same economic background. In other words, workers of all countries should unite.

For this reason, Karl Marx, the pioneer socialist, has put forward the slogan, "Workers of all countries, unite."

At a time, when the rule of one class over another ceases, then the rule over one race by another will also cease. It will then be the end of all social unfairness.

Genuine and bogus independence

We have known that nationalism is the outcome from the intention of one race to dominate over another. So, there is no reason for workers to cherish this ideal. "As long as workers remain in the chains of slavery, mankind will not be freed from slavery." For this reason, we should aim our independence to be the independence of workers, rather than of capitalists, big and small.

In capitalist countries, England, Germany, Italy and Japan, nationalism is an ideology manipulated by a handful of capitalists who aim to promote their interests. That nationalism is used to help the capitalist minority to bully the majority, the workers, at home and abroad.

For this reason, workers should be obsessed only with the mission to establish a classless society, i.e. utopia on earth, or communist society.

The first step in this mission is for the laborers, manual workers, to grab all state power from the capitalists, and launch the journey toward their goal.

Nationalism in Burma

In present day Burma, nationalism is on the rise. The victory of workers, i.e. socialist construction is still remote. From the nationalist point of view, we find in the present Burma Legislative Assembly, almost all members are Burmans; all political ranks from the Prime Minister down are held by Burmans. Does this mean that Burmese nationalism has succeeded? In fact, poor Burmans,

farmers and workers have no way to influence the proceedings of that system. This is the first reason why we say nationalism is a failure.

Since the time Burma was annexed by the British, we see two activities in general:

1. As nationalists, people stood for election to the legislature. Once elected, they maneuvered to obtain political posts. They became prosperous men.
2. Due to the work of patriotic men, domestic goods have been promoted. The benefit for this has gone to the native petty bourgeoisie; and the number in this category has increased.

What are the benefits enjoyed by the workers out of these activities?

The second aim of Burmese nationalism has been only to look forward to the departure of a trivial number of White men, numbering about ten thousand; those Burmese patriots are contending to rush into the vacant positions left behind by the departing Englishmen. When this moment comes, all administrative powers will fall into the hands of these patriots. Then it will be the end of this nationalist mission..

For the thirteen million nine hundred and ninety thousand people out of the population of fourteen million, there will be no benefit to come from such independence, because they cannot free themselves from poverty and working class status.

In European countries there are stooges of the capitalists who feign to be sympathizers of the workers. But they allow the capitalists to squeeze profits out of the toil and sweat of the workers; then they take their share from them.

It is time the workers abandon nationalism which has not done anything good for them.

Lenin, the world's communist leader used to teach that, apart from socialism, there is nothing which can save the world from chaos and catastrophe.

An English labor leader has also said that farmers should be the lords of farm lands; who produce crops should be the first to eat; construction workers should be the first occupants of buildings.

When we urge workers to abandon nationalism, but to adopt internationalism, we mean to show them the correct principles.

But, leaving aside nationalism doesn't necessarily imply giving up the independence struggle. We mean to say that, as subjugation of one nation by another is a feature of capitalism, the independence struggle should employ socialism, the most powerful against capitalism.

Communism and independence

The socialists are the vanguard of independence movements, because they like to see all nations free.

The following extract shows how independence is related to socialism.

"Some people used to say, "Socialism is good; but it is too early for Burma. And socialism is an obstacle in Burma's struggle for independence."

As one aspect of socialism is to oppose the domination of the capitalists, superficially it would seem to be divisive among the pro-independence forces.

In fact, independence struggle is linked to socialism. Capitalism is the enemy of socialism; and colonialism, the subjugation of one nation by another, exists because of capitalism.

Burma has fallen under colonialism not because the English people wanted to dominate it; it is because the English capitalists wanted uninhibited rights to exploit the country's resources – oil fields and forests. But the whole English do not enjoy the exploits from Burma, only a handful of capitalists do. Residual benefits are taken up by salaried little Englishmen who come here, Indian capitalists and small Burmese capitalists.

Serious contemplation shows clearly that profit is motive of the capitalists, rather than the desire of one race to dominate over another, that has made Burma a subject country.

The capitalists have dominated the whole world for the same reason. Because of the people world wide live in poverty; unemployment is widespread; wars are raging.

Only socialism, which will abolish capitalism is capable of eliminating these three catastrophic evils. Cut the tree close to the root; the branches become firewood. When socialism demolishes capitalism, the country will be liberated; peace will reign.

But no one can predict how long it will take. Certainly it will take some time.

There are two aims in the activities of socialists:

1. To erase capitalism, once and for all, in a politically independent nation.
2. To cooperate with all freedom lovers in the fight for freedom of countries still under colonialism, and after liberation, to establish socialism.

The main strength of the socialists is the mass of homeless, wretched working class. Behind them are the peasants with their bull and buffaloes and ploughshares. In their work, the socialists rely on the workers and peasants.

Apart from workers and peasants, the people who desire freedom consist of the following classes.

1. Burmese petty bourgeoisie
2. Small Burmese traders
3. Lawyers and advocates and intellectuals.

Workers and peasants want freedom because they want enough food, and adequate clothing and accommodation and peaceful lives.

The Burmese capitalists want freedom for another reason. It is because the English and Indian capitalists are their more powerful competitors, their enemies. They believe they will gain greater profits when the country is free. They look forward to driving around in motor cars.

The lawyers and the educated class cannot become capitalists. But in a free country, they can become members of parliament, powerful men, or men of prominence.

In short, various people are shouting for freedom for their own specific interests.

Although they have different aims, they cooperate because they want the same thing. Before independence, they can fight together; but they may split after that. For the same reason, the Burmese socialists want to unite, and are ready to unite with all classes – capitalists, lawyers, and important Burmans. But there is the saying that one shouldn't trust anyone apart from oneself. So the socialists do not have any trust in other people except workers and peasants.

The facts are clear when we review Burmese political history.

Politics in Burma began with capitalists, lawyers and advocates in leading roles. They demanded more Burmans to be given official positions; they demanded more privileges for Burmese businessmen. Their political activities were not motivated by sympathy for the poor folk, but by their own interests.

Burmese capitalists have prospered to some extent; and there are members of legislature with shirt buttons studded with diamonds. There are ordinary traders who can now call themselves rich man. But there are innumerable of people who have abandoned politics because it involves a small unit of virtue, but a thousand-fold evil.

Frankly speaking, among them, those who continue to clamour for independence, do so because they have not 'eaten their share'. For this reason, we say that Burmese capitalists and lawyers and advocates are not trustworthy.

But the workers and peasant are worthy of complete trust. They have taken part in the struggle before. They are taking part now, and they will continue to do so in future.

But the fight for freedom is not an easy undertaking. Don't mind that it's just a toy, the main thing is to kill the rat. Although socialists dislike capitalists, they will cooperate with them if they love freedom.

Socialists are not selfish. They want the country to be independent. They want the prosperity of workers and peasants. There can be no others who desire freedom as strongly as the socialists.

[From 'Burma and socialism', an article written by *Patmagyi* (Big Drum) in *Kyee Pwar Yay* Magazine, March, 1938.]

Chapter 10

Biographies of Revolutionary Pioneers

(a) Karl Marx

He was born in 1818, in Trier, Prussia and died in 1883. His father, a Jew, was a lawyer. He was baptized in 1824. The Marx family was well off and sociable, but they were not keen on revolution.

After finishing secondary school, Marx went to Bonn University. Then he continued to study law in Berlin University. There he also intensively studied history and philosophy, to which he devoted his spare time. In 1841, he obtained the Doctor of Philosophy degree. That same year, he wrote a book, in verse, on Epicur's Philosophy. It is a doctrine which assumes that luxurious life of culture is an ideal for man. At the time Marx was influenced by Hegelian idealism.

Materialism

At the time, in Berlin, Hegel's disciples were developing new ideologies: Dialectical Materialism, Atheism, Theories of Revolution etc. These men were known as Left Hegelians. Broadly speaking, they were believers in violent social revolution. Marx became a member of this leftist group.

After finishing his degree in Berlin, Marx went to Bonn, wishing to become a professor. But in 1832, the anti-revolutionary government removed Ludwig Feuerbach, a materialist, from his position as chancellor of university; then in 1836, he was dismissed from his professor's post. Again

in 1842, assistant professor Bruno Bauer was barred from teaching. Thus Marx had to give up his ambition to become a professor.

In those days Hegel's leftist ideology was becoming increasingly popular.

In 1836, Ludwig Feuerbach published his works on materialism, which criticized the concept of God. There was at that time a progressive capitalist who shared some of the Hegelian leftist ideologies. He published an anti-government newspaper, the *Rheinische Zeitung*. It started publication on January 1, 1842. Marx and Bruno Bauer were asked to contribute articles.

Life as a journalist

In October, Marx became the chief editor of that newspaper. He moved from Bonn to Cologne.

With Marx as chief editor, the newspaper became well known for its revolutionary articles. The government closed it two, three times. Eventually, in 1843, it closed down the paper permanently. Marx was forced to quit his editor's job. After his departure, the paper resumed publication after March 1843.

While working as an editor, Marx realized that he lacked knowledge of economics. He started studying economics.

In 1843, Karl married, Jennie von Westfalen, his childhood friend, to whom he had been engaged since student days. She came from an orthodox aristocratic family; one of her brothers became a Secretary in the Prussian government from 1850 to 1858.

In the winter of 1843, Marx planned to publish a magazine abroad, devoted to social revolution. He went to Paris accompanied by Arnold Ruge, a friend. He was a member of the left Hegelian group, and had been imprisoned for political activities. But they had differences. As there were problems publishing a magazine underground in Germany, he published a magazine called the *German-French Almanac*. In it he ruthlessly criticized reform ideologies.

Meeting with Engels

In 1844, Frederick Engels came to Paris. He and Marx were to work as life-time comrades, going through thick and thin. They were men destined to change the world.

In those days, the anti-government ideology of Proudhon was in vogue.

There was unrest prevailing in Paris. Marx and Engels took part in revolutionary activities, and became important figures. In 1847, the Prussian government accused Marx for being a revolutionary criminal and demanded his expulsion from Paris. He moved to Brussels, Belgium.

The Communist Manifesto

In 1847, Marx, intending to launch covert propaganda, joined the International League of Socialists and attended its meeting in London. He collaborated with Engels on the Communist Manifesto⁶, which was presented to the conference. Approved by the Conference, it was published in 1848.

In this paper, Marx and Engels showed their sharp observations of social problems as resulting from economic origin, and the dialectical nature of the problem. They analyzed world history, and showed that it is only a record of class struggles. They urged the workers to relentlessly struggle for the Utopian system called Communist Society.

When the revolution of 1848 broke out, Karl Marx was again exiled from Belgium. He took refuge in Paris. But, due to the revolution in March, he had to leave Paris again for Cologne, Germany. From 1848 June to March 1849 he worked as chief editor of the New Rhineland Gazette. His revolutionary theory became popular during this period.

Exile from Germany

In 1849, the German government sued Marx in court; he was not convicted, but within a few days of acquittal, he was sent into exile again.

⁶ This work has been published by Nagani Press, with explanations. [Editor's remark: Up to now, no translation of the Manifesto could be found.]

Although he was permitted to reside in Paris, following a mass demonstration against the government there on June 13, 1849, Marx was exiled again. He went to London where he died.

It should be clear that as a fugitive, Marx's life would have been very miserable. His family shared the miseries. Had he not found a good friend in Engels, who supported him, he would not have written his major work, *Das Kapital*.

Marx also had to oppose the 'socialism of petty bourgeoisie,' often using harsh words. Then he was involved in a fight against his opponent Karl Voss; because of Marx's attack, Voss was forced to confess his relations with Napoleon III.

The homeless Marx

Marx distanced himself from other homeless revolutionaries. He devoted himself to studying economics, and he wrote papers which added to his materialist theory. His work *Das Kapital* was a great success which influenced many people.

During the political unrest in the sixties, Marx unavoidably took up politics again. In September, 1864, he took a leading role to form the International Workers Union, in London. Marx wrote its declarations and programmes. He helped in the organization of workers' unions in many countries, and reported their activities.

Paris Commune

In 1871, revolution broke out in Paris which established the Paris Commune. But the revolution failed eventually. The international labor movement almost became extinct in Europe. Marx's work on the Paris Revolution shows the depth of his practical knowledge of active politics and revolutionary theory.

After the conference of the International Workers' Union in the Hague, in 1872, its headquarters was moved to the United States; Marx became its leader.

Although the first workers' international crumbled, very active labor organizations arose throughout the world. From then on, communism became a uniting ideology of the international labor movement.

After forty years of continuous hard work, Marx's health failed. He was unable to finish *Das Kapital*. On December 1, 1881, Marx's wife died after years of poverty. Marx died on March 14, 1883.

Frederick Engels

Engels was born on November 20, 1820, in Berlin. He died in London on August 5, 1895. While living in London, he was a cotton mill owner, and he liberally supported Marx. Without Engels' support, Marx couldn't have written the great treatise, *Das Kapital*. He was well-read not only in socialist literature, but also in the sciences. At the age of 24, he wrote a book on 'The status of English Workers in 1844'.

A special qualification of Engels was his great knowledge of military science. Engels loathed hero-worship; he wrote his will, asking his ashes to be scattered at sea. His relatives and friends honoured his will.

For forty years, Marx and Engels collaborated as comrades and friends. But they never had political difference; they stood united against all opposition.

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Appendix One

Let us fight Against Colonialism

(Declaration of All Burma Students' Union, on the occasion of the Anti-colonial Day, dated the 8th waning day of *Tazaungmon*, 1299 Burmese era)

Fifty two years ago, on the eighth day of the waning moon of *Tazaungmon* (November), our country, Burma, had fallen under colonialism, the cause of all human misery, unemployment and wars. For this reason, we have marked this as the 'Anti-Colonial Day'.

Comrades, we celebrate this day, not because we cherish an age that has gone by, nor because of our personal affection. We celebrate it objectively to remember our fate to fall under colonialism.

The Beginning of Capitalism

Comrades, we will briefly outline here the evils of capitalism; how it causes human miseries, unemployment and wars.

Capitalism started about two hundred years ago, in England and France, by accumulating and investing capital to manufacture goods.

The capital investment in their manufacturing industries came from looting in Africa and countries like India, where their sailors and soldiers went; gold and silver they had robbed have been used to build textile factories and steel mills.

In this way great nations like England and France have become wealthy at the expense of the exploited countries like India and Africa.

Comrades, the owners of those enterprises are only a small minority of the population in those countries. As they manufacture goods only for profit, they are expensive; the poor folk, even though they belong to the same race, cannot afford to buy these goods.

The consumable goods they produce have to be exported. But, in the importing nations, these foreign goods cause the destruction of home industries.

For example, home industries in Burma have been destroyed because textiles were imported from England. As no new industries are created to replace the lost ones, Burmese workers become unemployed for six months each year. Isn't this a fact? Haven't we seen the rising crime rates because of massive unemployment?

Poverty

Comrades, workers in capitalist countries are paid low wages. They are poor; their lives are miserable. And the poor people in colonial countries are dependent upon others; they cannot make ends meet. They live in want and hunger.

Colonialism

Comrades, to enable them to export unlimited goods, the capitalists need countries under their feet; to obtain markets, they use force to make subject nations.

This is not all they have done. To save costs and earn more profit, they invest in the colonies and build manufacturing industries. This export of investment has produced dangerously high unemployment in the capitalist countries also. The workers in subject nations earn low wages, barely enough for their food.

Comrades, capitalist nations which own large number of subject countries are wealthy; those which don't remain poor. This causes friction among the rich and poor capitalist countries, which often leads to war.

The World War of 1914 was a war among capitalist nations, resulting from unfair sharing of colonial exploits.

At present, they have split the world into pieces and kept them under their feet; England rules 27 percent of the world's total area, France 9 percent, the Dutch 2 percent, America 7 percent, Belgium 2 percent, Portugal 2 percent respectively.

After the 1914 war, Germany had to surrender her territories to the conquerors. Italy gained nothing for her war efforts. Those who have had no benefits from the war, and losers alike are feeling unhappy; they are making noisy claims for fair shares for them.

While they make noisy claims, Japan has annexed Manchuria, and Italy Abyssinia, while Germany continues to demands to restore her lost territories.

Comrades, the dissatisfied powers, Germany, Italy and Japan, are rampaging to claim what they call their rights; but England, France and others are looking with folded arms. Why? Because their attitude is indifference; as long as their interest is breached, its none of their business.

Comrades, when Italy invaded Abyssinia, England not only remained indifferent, it encouraged the aggressor. England did threaten to take some action against Italy's aggression in Abyssinia; but when Italy handed over the Mossul oil fields in northern Persia, it became silent. It approved Italy's annexation of Abyssinia.

In Spain, the army, landlords and capitalists united themselves in rebellion against the socialist government of the people. Italy, Germany and capitalists countries openly aided the rebellion. Britain gave indirect assistance.

Now, Japan has invaded parts of China. While the British government does not voice any open objection, the British banks are finding ways to punish Japan.

Preparations for war

The imperialists have disregarded the lives of the people; they are engaged only in splitting the world among themselves.

Comrades, even as they are occupied in this pursuit, they are producing more weapons; the tension among them is evident. The world is heading for yet another global war.

In 1925, the total world expenditure for defense amounted to 700 million pounds sterling; in 1934 it rose to 1 000 million, and in 1935, 2 000 million. We can see the war effort of the capitalist nations from the doubling of defense expenditure in one year.

Comrades, the above facts show clearly how colonialism causes untold misery for the people, unemployment and eventually war.

Actually, colonialism is not one nation ruling over another, nor is it the rule of one race by another; it is the government of British capitalists and bankers over the subject peoples.

This is a universal trend; although Britain, France and America have divided the world for their own possessions, the governments are not by their citizens; they are governments run by capitalists and bankers.

The continued existence of colonialism

Comrades, having discussed the nature of colonialism, let us now see how it continues its existence.

To sustain their power, the colonialists divide their subjects and rule over them. In Palestine they divide Jews and Arabs, in India, Hindus and Muslims; in Burma occasional racial riots between Burmans and Indians is due to the provocation of the followers of colonial masters.

Comrades, colonialism does not divide only the exploited classes. They employ poor education system to produce poor mental attitudes. Boy Scout movement, free distribution of photographs of the King and royalty, talks about the venerable Union Jack, songs, Empire Day celebrations, King's birth day events etc. are the means to make the subject people submissive, and keep the colonial system alive.

Comrades, honorary titles and decorations and certificates are also used to support the system.

Government by force

Comrades, although they employ such clever techniques to maintain the imperialist rule, they cannot solve the problems of poverty and unemployment. These are signs that the system is decaying.

Now, the situation has become worse. Clever methods no longer work. They have to use force to sustain the government.

They have employed spies and reporters to check the activists who enlighten the workers. There are countless numbers of them employed to make false reports and accusations.

As they can no longer provide peace of mind for the people, the government and the capitalists mutually admire and support each other.

Law and reason are not used as in old days; instead they now use police baton and bayonet and prison.

When extreme poverty forces people into the streets to demonstrate, they fire upon the masses. Just look at the Tharawaddy rebellion.

Arrest and imprisonment are the rules of the day. Twenty thousand Bengali young men, our brothers, are now in prison, without any reason.

Alarming amendments of the criminal law and the press law have been made. They are dreadful laws, harsh enough to threaten any one from opening his mouth.

These are the means by which the colonial system maintains its repression.

Our resolve

Comrades, colonialism is the cause of poverty, famine, unemployment and war. It brings about catastrophes involving the deaths of millions.

Those of us who desire happiness and decent lives for the people and fairness will fight this evil colonialism. We will rebel; we will demolish and put to end colonialism.

Only after colonialism has been wiped out, will thrive freedom and peace, education and decency and fairness.

Comrades, on this Anti-colonial Day, the eighth waning day of the month of *Tazaungmon*, as people who desire human happiness, let us resolve to struggle to crush colonialism. Let us dedicate ourselves to this anti-colonial endeavor.

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Appendix Two

We Don't Want Colonialism

**Declaration issued by the anti-war All Burma Union of Students,
dated November 11, 1937**

Comrades, November 11 is the Armistice Day. But this day does not bring spirit of peace; instead it praises war.

The colonialists, who claimed themselves to be against war, are now preparing for another war. Armistice or peace are words which deceive ignorant people.

On this day, the colonialists pay tribute to war. Let us denounce this activity. Let us declare that we don't want war; let us make peace our slogan.

Just and unjust war

Comrades, when we say we don't want war, we mean war for colonial expansion.

To highlight our dislike for war, we will explain the nature of war and its history.

Looking at world history, we see all wars are bloody and frightening. But some wars have been against unfairness and oppression; their aims were to improve the lot of mankind.

Since the great revolution of 1789, world history has entered a new phase. Between 1789 and 1871, countless wars have been fought. In these wars, usually, unjust government over large masses of people by a handful of autocrats is annihilated. These are just wars.

However, since 1871 until today, the wars that have been fought are all unjust. The reason is wars make millions subject people, and countries colonies under the feet of foreign rulers.

Between 1866 and 1914, six powers, England, Russia, France, Germany, Japan and America together have added 9 million square miles to their territories. Over 500 million people have been made colonial subjects.

These large areas have been conquered by force; the people in these lands have been ruthlessly suppressed. They have been exploited in innumerable ways.

Then came the clash of these great powers, leading to world war in 1914.

The World War

Both England and France declared that they had to fight the war because they wanted to liberate subject nations. This is pure lie. They fought to keep their territories intact in their possession. Germans, too, fought to keep some countries under their feet.

In this imperialist-capitalist war, capitalists who manufacture weapons and bankers who provide war loans make huge profits. But, to enable them to enjoy benefits, it is definitely known that 10 million soldiers died; another 3 million is believed to have perished. Among the non-combatants, 13 million have died; almost 20 million wounded, and 3 million made prisoners-of-war. Almost 9 million children have been orphaned, and 5 million widowed. About 10 million refugees have been in hiding. This shows the great misery the war has brought. The total dead and wounded, amounting

to almost 46 millions, is a figure three times Burma's population. With better and more numerous weapons, the damage that will be caused by a modern war is unimaginable.

The Cause of World War

Actually, there were three causes of the World War.

First, the great powers wanted to share the colonial countries, and to exploit, as they please, over the subject peoples.

Second, many countries wanted to suppress the minority races in them. In Russia, Austria etc. the major races keep rigid rules, by force, over the minor races.

Third, in all countries, governments in power desired to vanquish the proletarian workers who are opposing the dominant capitalists.

In brief, the War has been fought for the benefit of the capitalists.

The Post-war period

After the war ended, the capitalists divided the world among themselves. Germany had to yield her territories to the conquerors; Italy did not gain anything. The defeated nations gained nothing. Since the end of the war, they have repeatedly faced internal unrest.

In the meantime, Japan annexed Manchuria and invaded northern China. Italy has made Abyssinia her colony.

Germany is also claiming to get back her former colonies.

If the present trend were to continue, colonial powers will clash over the sharing of territories. That should lead to another war. We cannot say when it will break out. It may be today, or tomorrow, perhaps. They are building up armed strength, and getting prepared for war.

Comrades, if our fellow countrymen choose to fight in imperialist war, it will only lengthen our subject status. It will prolong the unjust oppression of the capitalists over the poor mass of people.

Our policy

Comrades, people who want national independence and the liberation of workers should not take part in imperialist wars. Instead, they should exploit the troubles faced by imperial powers to their advantage.

For that very reason, students all over the world are protesting war, aren't they? They are declaring that they will not fight in this war, aren't they?

In 1936, the International Student Congress in Brussels, Belgium, passed a resolution protesting war; that students will not take part in it.

Also in 1936, the Union of English students declared their policy against war; that students will not fight if war comes.

Our Union, the All Burma Students' Union, has held its second conference in Mandalay in 1937. This conference has resolved to protest war, and students not to take part in war.

Comrades, on November 11, the colonialists will demonstrate their support for war; simultaneously with their activity, we will again declare our objection. We will speak out again against war.

Our duty

Comrades, as long as there is oppression and exploitation of race by race, nation by nation, class by class, it is impossible to remove war. War will disappear only when the culture of 'the mighty takes away everything' is erased.

Therefore, we who love progress and justice, intensely hate this 'might is right' culture. We shall adopt the policy to oppose it. We shall fight against it.

In Spain, a government representing the interests of workers and farmers had come to power. Capitalists and landlords joined with the army to rebel against this government. On the side of the government rallied the workers and farmers. The students, who are their allies, (and they are our friends), rallied to their cause. The government and rebels are locked in combat, marked by reversals.

Chinese territory has being taken, piece by piece, by Japan. The Chinese are waging an all out struggle to defend their independence. Our friends, the Chinese students, are defending their country, regardless of their life and property.

Comrades, on November 11, when the imperialists demonstrate their support for war, we will denounce it. We will declare that we oppose war.

At the same time that we denounce war, we will pray for the liberty of the Spanish government and people. We will also pray for the victory of the Chinese people.

Let us demonstrate our desire. Let us show our strength.

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Appendix Three

Government of the People, Government of Workers

**(Excerpt from the article by Thupannaka, in Myo Nyunt magazine,
September, 1937)**

When the world began, in their morals, men were just like the Brahmas. They were free from the fires of *loba, dosa and moha* (greed, anger and ignorance). There was the *Padetha pin* (the tree of variety), from which they could pluck food and everything they needed. That was an age known as *Padetha pin khit*.

Then came untruthful and malicious men; with them came the end of *Padetha pin khit*, when they ate fragrant rice (*Tha-lay san*) which was nobody's private property, but available for all.

But men became more and more unjust; they were dominated by more greed, anger and ignorance. Then, the strong bullied the weak; they practiced *ahdhamma* (disregard of morals and ethics and truth), rather than *dhamma* (morals and ethics and truth).

Lack of morals and ethics among men led to the election of *Maha Thamada* (Great President) who was asked to administer law and justice.

This is how government came into being, according to sacred texts.

Since then, there came into being four classes of men:

1. Brahmins (priests and professors and educated people)
2. Khastrias (king, royalty, aristocrat, officers and soldiers)
3. Vaistha (wealthy men, businessmen and traders)
4. Sudra (poor folk, manual workers, farmers etc.)

The Brahmins are teachers, influential over the ruling class and others. Apart from guiding and teaching people, they don't have any job, except to study and think. They earn their living by imparting love and compassion and knowledge.

The Khastria are members of government and various officers and their descendents; they got paid from revenue.

The Vaisthas are businessmen and traders; they buy and sell and live on profits.

The Sudras, the working class have to buy their essential commodities from Vaisthas, giving them profits; they have also to pay revenues for the government; and they also have to contribute for the welfare of the Brahmins.

Since the time of *Maha Thamada*, the Great President, to about 600 years ago, the Brahmins constitute the most influential and revered class.

In Burmese history, King Ahnawratha removed the authority of the *Ari* priests (bogus monks), and established the power of king and royalty and ministers and generals. Also in European history, Henry the Eighth revoked the authority of the church and priests.

From those periods, the power of the Brahmins, the priestly class, dwindled. To retain power as much as possible, they compromised with the ruling elite, and put themselves above the people.

The Vaisthas and Sudras remained at the bottom and were down trodden. They sought means to liberate themselves. Their opposition to the governing class gradually gathered strength. From the revolution of 1789, the merchants and traders had taken a leading role. They joined hands to topple the ruling, and educated elite form the position of power and influence.

Since then, wealthy men, businessmen and traders have become the most influential and powerful class.

It is true, they have obtained power and influence by taking advice from their teachers, the Brahmins. But when the construction of the pagoda is complete, the scaffold must be dismantled. They did the same with the Brahmins. Regarding the poor folk, the workers and farmers, they wanted to keep them under their heels. The remnants of the ruling class found it convenient to ally with the rich men.

Now, only two classes remain: the wealthy class; and the working people i.e. workers and farmers.

The situation is quite similar to the tale of five hundred burglars, from the Buddhist literature, which fought among themselves. Now the two classes are at daggers drawn. Both sides are contending for the control of society.

Government is only an instrument of the class in power, to oppress the powerless class. This being so, the well-to-do class is out there to suppress the rising working class using government.

A careful analysis of history will show that since the time of *Maha Thamada*, there have been continuous power struggles for power: the educated priestly class versus the royalty and the ruling elite; royalty and ruling elite versus the wealthy men and businessmen; the wealthy men and businessmen versus the working class.

At present, the world is in the hands of the capitalists i.e. wealthy men and businessmen.

As the trend of history indicates, the next to rise to power will inevitably be the working class.

When the power of the ruling class comes to a conclusion, history will surely revert to a classless society – i.e. back to the age of *Padetha pin* (the tree of variety).

It is the duty of all workers and farmers to bring in the government of the working class.

The liberation of the working class can be achieved only by themselves. Therefore, it is the duty of all workers and farmers to uproot the system and crush the power of the capitalists.

Since 1879, when the capitalists have come to power, the workers and farmers have been gathering strength to oppose them.

In 1848, they revolted in France; but the revolution failed.

In 1871, the workers seized Paris; they formed the Paris Commune, the workers government. It lasted 72 days, after which the tide turned. The workers had to give up.

In 1906, the Russian workers rebelled against the government, and set up a government; but it also failed.

Yet another revolution occurred in Russia in 1917. This time the workers established a successful government.

Since then the workers all over the world have awakened. But a socialist government has been established only in Russia. The people in other countries still have to uproot and overturn the capitalist system. They are now gathering strength.

In parts of China, a socialist government is in power; in Spain civil war is continuing between the workers and farmers on one side and the capitalists on the other. There are signs in Mexico and France for socialists to gain power. Like a rising tide, Socialism is gaining strength in England, Norway, Sweden, Belgium, India and others. The struggle is going on, with bloodshed, to bring down the government in Germany, Italy, Austria and Japan.

These are clear indications of the coming age of socialism.

In Burma also, we see the same signs. Workers' strikes are occurring in the Kamayut region (a suburb of Rangoon), where there are many factories. Elsewhere in the country, workers such as trishaw men, cigar rollers, and bus drivers are taking industrial action.

These are not ordinary events; they are signs, seen in Burma, for the arrival of the age of global socialism.

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Appendix Four

Workers and Students

These days, the words nationalism and patriotism are lightly used; ninety nine percent of people are using them without serious interpretation. What is this nationalism they are talking about? Is it the cause of all Burmans? Or, is it for the wealthy class, rich men and land owners? Or, is it meant for the poverty stricken, starving class of workers and farmers? We have to think about this issue.

Colonialism

About two hundred years ago, industrial revolution took place in Western countries. The capitalists built factories and workshops to mass produce goods. They produce 20-25 times faster than manual

production. There was intense competition among the capitalists. Sales did not match production. There was need to find new markets for their excess manufactures, and also to obtain raw materials.

The governments in these countries, dominated by capitalists invaded other countries; they made them colonies to export their products and to obtain raw materials.

For the same reasons, the English government made India and Burma their colony.

Now, the English capitalists are in Burma. They are exploiting our invaluable resources – forests, oil wells and ruby mines. They have monopolized these businesses and government is controlled by them.

Unrest of petty national bourgeoisie

The petty bourgeoisie in India and Burma then became envious of the foreign capitalists; they wanted to influence the government. Being denied the opportunity, they are now demanding 'their rights'.

Today, we hear the slogans: "For the sake of our nation, religion and Buddha's teaching"; "Burma for Burmans". They claim "the right of Burmans to occupy all ranks of the administration, from *Sai-ein-gaung* (head of ten families), right up to Governorship." These slogans are widespread. Calling themselves *Wunthanu*, patriotic nationalists, the petty national bourgeoisie are now taking part in opposing the foreign capitalists.

The Political awakening

This is how political activities started. The small national capitalists have demanded their role in government, and to appoint nationals in official posts. The demands are loud. In 1919, YMBA, the national organization sent a delegation, known as Pe-Pu-Shein, to England, to see Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. But, the aim of this delegation was not to represent the Burmese working class. Its business was to demand 'dyarchy', the form of government in which the petty national bourgeoisie could function.

Now, these loud demands have been granted. Many Burmese nationals are now officers in administrative posts; "From *Sai-ein-gaung* to Governorship" has materialized, as one Burman did occupy the post of Governor. The wealthy, or landed Burmese elite, the prestige conscious class, can now become members of legislative assembly, and voice their case.

For this reason, politics in Burma today is simply petty bourgeoisie reaction, which has grown out of grievance against the foreign capitalists. This does not imply that they have not done anything for the working class. But, what little they do is not based on really good intentions. Someone feeding the pigs with dried cooked rice does so not because he loves the pigs. It is his intention to increase the yield of pork. In the same way, the petty bourgeoisie approach the people simply to get their votes.

The well-to-do class, with their families and servants, mansions and cars, who can afford leisure, will never undermine the power of government. We cannot rely on them to bring down the colonial government.

The British government knows the necessity to please them. They have made laws and rules to enhance their benefits. For this reason, the Burmese petty bourgeoisie adhere to the government, like a thirsty man does with a pot of cold drinking water.

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3 Nagani News, Socialism and Burma (editorial)¹

Translation: Phone Kywe Myat

This month's issue is a treatise 'Socialism' by a honorary secretary of our book club, Ko Soe.

We printed this book with the intention of spreading socialism or communism or what many have called the “common ownership system” in Burma.

We are convinced that only socialism could save the proletariat of the world from poverty, unemployment, war, prevalence of diseases etc. We believe that only socialism could make the people live at the acceptable standard.

Because I have mentioned the subject on a global scale, some people might disapprove and say that I have been biting more than I could chew. But we are not overlooking the affairs of Burma. We know that the independence of Burma is our immediate task. We just meant that the establishment of a new world order was the main objective.

We are of the opinion that we would make good progress if we fought under the socialist system for the independence of Burma. By socialism is meant that:

- (1)The workers and peasants should have organizations to join and become powerful.
- (2)Students and youths should organize and be active in the organizations.
- (3)We should refrain from taking part in the war waged by capitalists and expansionists and revolt against the capitalist and expansionist governments when they are in distress.
- (4)We should, by no means, have anything to do with the administration/ management of the government of the expansionist British.

To state it briefly, we believe that Burma would be free of poverty, unemployment, major epidemics etc. only when we, with the strength of the masses/majority, demolish the British expansionist system.

In the past, the words, race, language and religious teaching, had been popular. Actually, the words were misleading for the people.

¹ Vol 1. 3, p. 7-8.

When you say Bamar, do you mean the Bamar who is poor or the Bamar who is rich; it could be immoderate. If you say it's a Bamar racial affair, the question, ' Do you mean the affair of the Bamar poor?' could crop up.

In the past, working on the moral principles of racism only benefited the upper class.

The fight for independence met with difficulties.

The time has arrived for the change of the system. It's time to see to it that the masses get food to eat/it's time to work for the welfare of the masses.

Working on the affairs of the majority as the main aim rather than for the minority is close to socialism.

Since socialism has now come into vogue, some proclaim themselves to be socialists.

As far as we have studied socialism, this is not a doctrine that one could easily embrace. We know that attitudes and all the other things need to be changed.

You cannot hate people of other races. You cannot hope for a pretender to appear. You cannot expect every Bamar to become rich. We cannot claim to be superior races and say incoherently that foreigners are demons that should be driven out. We should look forward to a new era and work.

It is important that those who are going to work need to be thoroughly familiar with the doctrine.

It would be retrogressing if one were to misuse socialism because of its popularity without understanding the doctrine.

May you be able to study in detail the treatise on socialism in this month's issue and take part in the fight for the independence of Burma.

4 Nagani News, Socialism¹

Translation: Phone Kywe Myat

June Let Yway Zin

Author: Honourary secretary of the Nagani book club, Ko Soe

Critique by: Honorary secretary

2 kyats for non-members 10 annas for Nagani book club members

I don't like the treatise to be given the title 'Socialism'. Because of the intention of bringing prosperity to the poor (the proletariat) some called it the 'doctrine for the poor'; without private ownership and everything owned by the community it was called the 'common ownership system'; but these definitions do not give the full meaning of socialism. The author has yet to see a term in Burmese that would give the full meaning of socialism.

Socialism is the extract and sum of the various disciplines like the philosophy/teachings of Buddhism, economics, botany, Physics, zoology, history etc. One could not possibly understand it by a cursory study of the subject.

Socialism is based on the following three principles:

(a) In this world, is the mind the most important thing, or is the physical thing or material the most important? Philosophers have long disputed the matter since time long past. Socialists give the verdict that material matters most.

(b) A man did a task in 6 hours. Another also did it in 6 hours. If the two worked together they would have done more work than if they had worked separately; the extra work so done only benefited the capitalist.

The profit was the result of the exploitation. The accumulation of these profits became the capital.

The capital was exploited from the poor/proletariat; it had not been there before.

(c) The history of the world was not changed by the mind. History had changed because man wanted to live like man or because man liked life. History was the battleground where the Sangha/ Church fought against the king, the king against the wealthy, or the wealthy against the poor.

¹ Vol 1.3, pp. 25-27

If you understood the above three principles, you would have had an inkling of the meaning of socialism.

The book is full of new ideas never before mentioned in Burma and so there are bound to be many contentious issues.

He wrote with clarity, the ways of wars, the definition of racialism, how the capitalist system led to the expansionist system etc.

The capitalists are great thieves. So, it must be taken that it would not be wrong if the poor were to rob.

Those working for the independence of the country are working vigorously with little funding. I have come to think of robbing the capitalists so that these people could have more money at their disposal.

Socialists say that the capitalist government is an instrument to ill-treat the poor. If that was so, things related to the government are of benefit to the capitalists, the bankers. The printing of notes and the minting of coins benefit the capitalists.

As only the capitalists are benefiting from it, would it not be good for the poor to print notes and mint coins? I have come to think of this_ since what the capitalists are doing is fair, would it not be fair for the poor to do so even if it was illegal? I also recalled Thakin Ba Thaung making some coins worth one-eighth of a rupee.

The capitalist are murderers. They had workers work more and shortened their lives. There were countless deaths from starvation caused by the capitalist system. Millions of poor people were killed in the wars. So would the poor go to hell if they were to kill, one after another, the capitalists who exploited them?

Many believe that people in Burma are poor because of their Karma. It was clearly written that the people were poor, diseases prevalent, wars waged etc. because of the capitalists and not because of the Karma.

The fight for the independence of Burma was quite succinctly written. It mentioned the nationalist group of Dr Ba Maw, the labour party of U Ba Hlaing, the Fabian group and the Doh Bamar Asiayone.

The four groups were known to have taken the basic principles from socialistic writings, although it was not declared so.

The words and actions of U Ba Hlaing that show the dogmatic hatred towards Indians; how some Thakins' voicing that demonic foreigners should be driven out; that the Bamars are of a superior race as stated by Deedoke U Ba Cho; you will know that these are a long way off from socialism if you read the book.

Dr Ba Maw's group is farthest from socialism. Socialists never do anything that would enable capitalism to endure and exist. They would stab the drowning dog with a bamboo pole. Dr Ba Maw is trying to break up the force of those fighting the expansionist system.

Those who believe in socialism work to form organizations of workers, farmers, students and the youth.

They work with efficiency in their affairs. They are at the front to make sacrifices.

Far from forming organizations for workers, farmers, students and the youth, Dr Ba Maw has been working to disintegrate the power of those organizations. It is apparent if you look at how he dealt with the affair of the oilfield workers, the amendment of the University act and the affair of the educated and unemployed. Instead of invigorating the forces that would demolish the expansionist system, he was embracing the new administration and massing forces that would enable the expansionist system to continue its existence.

The Doh Bamar Asiayone comes nearest to the socialist party. It is prominent in forming organizations for workers and farmers; among other things, it is acting effectively in students affairs. It may not be up to one's liking and in order as yet, but because of this book and socialism has spread, one must assume, there would be a socialist party.

Although there is room for improvement in the way the book was written, I believe people will be arguing about religious and political matters mentioned in this book.

5 Nagani News, 11 Points for Discussion¹

Translation: Phone Kyaw Myat

Discussion on Socialism

This is the first revelation about socialism and there are points to ponder and to discuss. As we have been urging you time and again, we would like you to form small groups to discuss. We have given an outline:

- (1) Are the English governing Burma? Or is it the expansionist system? What is the difference between the English and the expansionist system?
 - (2) Is it good for (of benefit to) us to hate the Chinese and the Indians? Or do we hate all the Chinese and the Indians? Or do we hate the wealthy Chinese and the wealthy Burmese?
 - (3) Are people poor because of their karma? And do they get wealthy because of karma, too? Is it true that they got their material wealth by exploiting the poor?
 - (4) Are members of religious order trying to make the people contented with their poor lives? Are they trying to prolong the expansionist system, the capitalist system?
 - (5) Would you call Burma a feudal society? Or is it a capitalist era? Are there not remnants of a feudal era in the Shan state and the hill regions? Would reformists neglect those regions?
- Isn't it time for those who want independence of Burma and make the poor wealthy, to exhort the people to wipe out the system of Sawbwas (chieftains) in Shan state?
- (6) If the capitalists are murderers, would the poor suffer in hell if they were to annihilate those who had exploited them?
 - (7) The government is an organization that the capitalists use to suppress the poor. The government issues banknotes and coins and the capitalists benefit from it. Would it be proper if the poor make banknotes and coins as they wish to? Was it just of Thakin Ba Thaung to make coins worth one eighths of a rupee?
 - (8) Capitalists are great thieves. Would the poor suffer in hell if they steal the property from the capitalists? Is it legal or not, in some countries, to steal and rob to carry out the country's affairs?
 - (9) Is the nam/soul important?

¹ Vol I.3, pp. 8-9.

Or is the matter/ material important?

If you want to change/ reform a person, would moralizing alone be enough?

Or do we have to change the environment?

(10) According to the ideology of world history, monks, Brahmins and those of the Bramana caste came after the era of plenty. When the royalty was predominant, they associated with them; when the capitalists became predominant, they associated with them. Now they are encouraging those who are suppressing the poor.

Are the above points correct or not? If correct, what would those who want to change the times/era do?

(11) According to the socialist ideology, how should the tasks been carried out for the independence of Burma?

Rangoon

III. U CHIT HLAING, A SHORT NOTE ON MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAMME PARTY (Unrevised Version)

This record has been written for the benefit of interested persons and research workers. It consists of three parts: part 1 describes my employment as a civilian officer in the Directorate of Psychological War, under the Ministry of Defense of the Union Government of Burma; part 2 deals with the Revolutionary Government; and part 3 is my retrospection.

(1)

From August 1956 to January 31, 1971, I was employed as Research Officer (Civilian Officer) in the Directorate of Psy-War, and also in the Psy-War battalion also under the same directorate. On February 1, 1971 I took a specially granted retirement.

On August, 1, three of us, U Saw Oo, writer and journalist, Bo Thein Hlaing (Order of Independence Grade 1) Member of the Chamber of Nationalities, representing Paunde township, and I, the author of this note, reported to Captain Tin Soe of the Office of General Staff, under the Defenses Services Chief of Staff. We filled up our curriculum vitas in the forms he provided.

With effect from that date, we were appointed Officers on Special Duty in the Directorate of Psychological War under the office of the Chief of Staff, Ministry of Defense. Colonel Aung Gyi, who later became the Vice-Chief of Staff (Army), met us personally to give us the appointment orders. We were given the jobs because General Ne Win wanted our services.

The three of us were placed directly under the charge of Lt. Colonel Ba Than, the Head of Military Archives. He was also the Director of the newly created Education and Psychological Warfare Department. It had its offices in the Military Archives building, with Major San Myint as head of office and Captains San Lwin and Pe Kyi working for him.

Assignment of duties for each of us came from Lt Col Ba Than, who reported directly to Colonels (Brigadiers later) Aung Gyi and Maung Maung; the latter was Director of Training at the time. Both

of them had worked closely with General Aung San and General Ne Win during the independence struggle; and they were both experienced as political as well as military leaders.

Duties assigned to each of us were:

U Saw Oo to work on Psychological War and Propaganda, doing research, writing and giving lectures;

Bo Thein Hlaing to work on the economy and related matters, also to research, to write and to give lectures;

I was assigned the study of political science, in particular to study and analyze Marxism and Soviet communism, including the study to find out if it was appropriate to apply them to the Myanmar scenario.

It was Brig. Aung Gyi himself who entrusted that duty to me. To my credit, I had a record of having studied, since around 1940, literature on nationalism, books promoting nationalism, leftist literature published by Nagani Book Club, publications by the Communist Party (Burma) led by Thakin Soe; and during occasional travels abroad, I had read political works including Marxist literature as well as non-Marxist socialist literature. Also, after the Anti-Fascist Revolution, I had developed friendship with Bo Aung Gyi who was Deputy General Secretary of Burma Socialist Party. Those were the reasons which led Bo Aung Gyi to assign me the task.

Each of us studied our respective subjects, took notes and prepared lectures. Courses on Psy-War were expected to begin during 1957, and we made slow but steady progress. And there was no need to hurry. During that time Captains San Lwin and Pe Kyi visited USA to study Psy-War activities of the US Army.

At the same time we were also following, with partial interest, the political developments in the country. The situation then appeared to be politically stable, but it seemed activities of parties and their competition for power was pushing the country toward some form of landmark political change.

Contending for political power, on the one hand, were the underground parties of various colours, and the Anti-Fascist Freedom People's League (AFPFL, or Fa-sa-pa-la), on the other.

Opposition parties, still within the law, were critical of, and attacking every action of the government. For reasons of personal attachment as well as political affinity, and as in duty bound, only the Tatmadaw (the Defense Forces) was defending the government. Sharing common convictions, the Tatmadaw and AFPFL stood united.

During the independence struggle, the leaders of AFPFL had participated selflessly, and their political ideals were to some extent aligned with socialism. Generally, the leaders of the Tatmadaw also shared their preference for the aims and objectives of socialism. As for the activities of the communist parties and leftist parties which sympathize with them, the AFPFL government and the Tatmadaw were united in their opposition to them.

In accordance with the principles laid down by the Tatmadaw leaders, the Psy-War department adopted the slogans: to defend the Union constitution; to oppose the policies of all rebellious organizations; the Tatmadaw to win the love and confidence of the people. To accomplish these, preparations were made to launch Psy-War training courses.

We had to submit course materials to Major San Myint who reproduced them in the form of booklets, ready for distribution.

On December 1, 1957, training course number one for officers opened at the training hall of Southern Command Head Quarters at Mingaladon Cantonment. In the opening speech, outlining the aims of the course, General Ne Win said, "The Tatmadaw should study political science, but should strictly stay away from political parties; that the Tatmadaw should stand to safeguard the constitution etc" (That speech should be available in the Military Archives.)

Altogether thirty officers, Lieutenants and Captains, attended the course. They had been selected by the Military Secretary, San Yu, now deceased, Colonel at the time, who later became General, and then the second President of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Since course number one, the Psy-War training courses continued without break until the end of 1959 (throughout the period of the care-taker government, of which General Ne Win was Prime Minister). Among the trainees were both military and civilian officers.

Instructors who regularly conducted the training were members of Psy-War office. Among the external staff were U Pe Aung, Director of the World Buddhist University, Maung Htin (U Htin Fatt), journalist and author and Saya Yan Naing Sein, author/stage-director of counter-propaganda one-act plays.

Material covered in the courses consisted of propaganda principles, economic principles, basic elements of Psy-War, practical aspects and political science.

My role in the training courses was to lecture on a short account of political theories, followed by a critical analysis of Marxism and Leninism. The aim was to counter the civil war aims of the communist parties and to oppose the various forms of dictatorships.

I did not teach anything against the principles of socialist economy; nor was there any reason for me to oppose it.

Outside the Tatmadaw, the political situation was unstable. The pro-communist leftist parties were vehemently opposing the AFPFL government. The military activities of the rebel communist parties had begun to lose momentum; the Tatmadaw was gaining success in its offensive campaigns.

Just then, the AFPFL, the party in power, was becoming unstable. After the second parliamentary elections held in the last week of April, 1956, disagreements occurred in its leadership. It wasn't due to disagreements over matters of principle, but rather due to personal suspicions and misunderstandings, leading to cliques centered around persons.

On January 29, 1958, the AFPFL convened its general conference. And disunity arose at that conference; that year, on April 27, the AFPFL split into two factions.

One faction, "the Clean AFPFL, or Thant-shin Fa-sa-pa-la", was headed by Prime Minister U Nu and Minister Thakin Tin; the other faction, "the Stable AFPFL, or Tee-myaе" was led by Ministers U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein. The newspapers dubbed them Nu-Tin clique or clean-clique and Swe-Nyein or Tee-Myae clique. The cause of the AFPFL split had nothing to do with the opposition parties. It was only due to the misunderstandings, personal rivalries and personal cliques

among the leaders of the party in power; and in part it also seemed to be due to their political immaturity. It seemed the fate of the AFPFL had begun its downturn and headed for disaster.

During this critical period, the leadership of the Tatmadaw was able to maintain their composure. They may have had their personal sympathies, but the Tatmadaw, as disciplined unit, observed its neutrality in the AFPFL split and continued to perform its duty.

On July 4 that year, when the House of Representatives (parliament) met, Ministers who were members of the Stable Faction resigned from the government.

On July 5, new Ministers from the Clean Faction took the oath of office.

On July 9, members of parliament from the Stable Faction moved a no-confidence motion against the government. The MPs voted to decide the motion.

Voting for the government were 127 members and 119 against.

By a margin of 8 votes Prime Minister U Nu survived the no-confidence motion. News circulated in the media that U Nu was far from being jubilant for his victory.

U Nu seemed to have desired a big victory so that he could confidently proceed with his policies. But his government lasted only 3 months and 17 days.

Charges and counter-charges, actions and counter-actions and government instability led to an uncertain future.

For these reasons, on September 26, 1958, Prime Minister U Nu wrote a letter to General Ne Win, asking him to take control of the situation and to form a care-taker government dedicated to holding free and fair elections.

After consulting with the leaders of the Tatmadaw, General Ne Win accepted U Nu's proposal.

On September 28, at the meeting of the House of Representatives, proposal was made that General Ne Win formed a care-taker government and that he be appointed Prime Minister. The House accepted the proposal.

General Ne Win formed a care-taker government with a non-political cabinet consisting of nine Ministers chosen from the senior ranks of civilian officers and also retaining the already formally appointed State Ministers, including the Minister for Chin Affairs.

From September 1958 to April 3, 1960, the care-taker government ruled the country, paying special attention to peace and security and the rule of law, creating conditions for a general election, demarcation of China-Burma boundary, and regular functioning of government machinery.

The China-Burma Border Agreement was successfully negotiated and signed on January 28, 1960.

During the care-taker administration, the Psy-War Department and the Psy-War central battalion continued training courses on the policies of the government in order to keep the officers, both military and civilian informed about developments and programs.

The lectures were aimed in particular to advise them to keep away from political parties, and to abide by the service regulations. They were told that when the election comes, they will be free to vote according to their own choice.

A conference of military commanders was held on February 6, 1960, prior to the general elections. A paper entitled "State Policy and Our Tatmadaw" was endorsed by the conference. I wrote that paper after being asked to write it by Brigadier Aung Gyi. It was submitted to General Ne Win before circulation. It was only after the General had read and edited it that the paper was presented to the commanders' conference for endorsement.

The main theme of the paper was the declaration that the Tatmadaw would defend the state policy based on three documents: (1) the declaration of independence, January 4, 1948, (2) speech by Sao Shwe Thaik, the first President of the Union at the opening of the first parliament, (3) the constitution of the Union approved by the Constituent Assembly. In his speech, General Ne Win

stressed the point that apart from loyalty to the principles contained in these three documents, the officers are to avoid involvement in the affairs of political parties.

U Saw Oo and I were allowed to attend the conference as officers of the Psy-War department; by then U Saw Oo had become the commandant of the Psy-War production battalion, a rank equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel. Our director Lt. Col Ba Than had also been promoted to Colonel. I was chief research officer at the central Psy-War battalion based at Mingaladon, my rank being equivalent to Major.

Activities of political parties became more intense as the general election approached. In his speech, the General reminded the delegates that the Tatmadaw must keep clear of political parties; that it must be perfectly neutral; that at the elections everyone has the right to vote freely and according to his own choice; that care must be taken to avoid behaviour that would tarnish the honour of the Tatmadaw. The speech was tape recorded and copies of it were distributed to all units of the defense services.

The care-taker government held the third parliamentary general elections on February 6, 1960.

The candidates of the Clean AFPFL led by U Nu collected most of the votes; the Stable AFPFL was utterly defeated.

On April 4, the Pyi-thu Hluttaw (parliament) elected U Nu as Prime Minister and authorized him to form a new government.

U Nu reorganized the Clean AFPFL, giving it the new name Pyidaungsu Party; the newspapers dubbed U Nu's new government as the Pa-ta-sa (Pyidaungsu) government. The Stable AFPFL led by U Ba Swe and U Kyaw Nyein continued to be known as 'Tee-myae (Stable)'. The National United Front, consisting of leftist organizations was known as Pa-ma-nya-ta.

Pa-ta-sa, Pa-ma-nya-ta and Tee-myae fa-sa-pa-la, were the three main political parties at the time.

The Tatmadaw had stayed clear of party political affairs; the policy of Psy-War department remained unchanged, continuing as it did to produce propaganda opposing the rebels of various colours. As we carried on, we came to last week of November 1961.

One night in November that year, Brigadier Aung Gyi called us to a meeting at Dagon House. Col. Ba Than, our director had retired. The new director Lt. Col Maung Bo had succeeded him, but he was not quite interested in Psy-War, and he worked only to appear to be dutiful. We found that Brig. Aung Gyi had not invited Lt. Col. Maung Bo.

Brig. Aung Gyi told us a very important matter, something which was likely to change the future role of the Tatmadaw.

Brig. Aung Gyi told us, "Right now, the union is becoming unstable; non-Buddhist minorities, Kachins, Kayins, Chins and other religious groups have grievances against U Nu; and their activities are now linking up with the federal union movement led by former Shan feudal lords (Sawbwas) and Kayah leaders. The situation is likely to become more complicated, and for that reason General New Win has been following the events closely".

Brig. Aung Gyi continued, "We can accept that all states, including the divisions of Burma proper, should enjoy equal rights, according to the federal principles. But there is the possibility that the former feudal Shans together with some Kayah, Kachin, and

Kayin leaders would, sometime in future, exploit situations to find reasons to secede from the union. The Pa-ta-sa government seems to be unable to get the trust and cooperation of the leaders of states. As inter-party differences are brewing inside the Pyidaungsu party, factions are emerging; they are not likely to run the government efficiently. For this reason, General Ne Win is of the opinion that if the situation calls for, the Tatmadaw may have to take power. The General's political idea is that Burma needs a revolution to build a socialist system, and only by doing so can there be change for the better".

He also continued to tell us, "As for me, I hold the view that the army should avoid politics as far as possible, and only in unavoidable circumstances should it get involved, but only to a certain degree.

I would like to see army coup prevented as much as possible. I do take into consideration Bo Gyoke Ne Win's way of thinking; but Brig. Tin Pe and others are getting impatient. Bo Gyoke Ne Win would only say to us, 'Well, let's think over matters'".

In return we asked him, "Under the circumstances, what are we to do?" Brig. Aung Gyi replied, "In case the Tatmadaw has to take power, this time a socialist type of policy will have to be followed. For this reason, we should study the work of leftist socialist countries. I think we may have to refer to Marxist theory and adopt some ideas. As for Gen Ne Win, after his visit to China in October, 1960 he was convinced that China has progressed. For the present, I would like the Psy-War officers to be given lectures and discussions about these matters. My own idea is to achieve socialism in cautious steps, but not to copy the communist style. We have to give careful thought to what we do in practice".

I was the man to put into practice Brig. Aung Gyi's instructions. U Saw Oo was very busy with his duties as commander of Psy-War production battalion. Also, U Saw Oo related to me that General Ne Win had met him separately to tell what Brig. Aung Gyi had told us.

We took Brig. Aung Gyi's words seriously as we were used to understanding that political ideas from Brig Aung Gyi generally reflect General Ne Win's.

I reported Brig Aung Gyi's instruction to Major San Myint, commander of central Psy-War battalion at Mingaladon. At the time the Psy-War training courses had been temporarily postponed; the training instructors were free and spending time either reading or talking in groups about various subjects.

Major San Myint, the commander, agreed that I went ahead with my assignment. I have no knowledge whether Major San Myint reported this matter to Lt. Col Maung Bo, the director of Psy-War. He only told me to carry out my mission.

I had to think seriously about what I would tell the training instructors, and made notes accordingly.

What we had written and taught during the care-taker government were based on the basic policy to safeguard the constitution; to perform duties according to the policies of the formally elected government; to keep the status of Tatmadaw as a service organization of the state; to completely oppose parties and organizations of all shades rebelling against the union.

Now, things have got to change. All through out the period of Pa-sa-pa-la (AFPFL) and care-taker governments, the Tatmadaw had fought against insurgents of all colours, among which the most active was the Ba-ka-pa (Burma Communist Party or BCP). So serious was the threat at one time that the government was dubbed 'the Yangon Government'; the government controlled area was too narrow. At one moment, the BCP even took the leadership of a united force of rebel elements, when it could get the Kayins, some regiments of the government forces which went underground, Pyithu Yebaw Phyu and others, to be linked up and coordinated.

The central government, backed by the Tatmadaw, was successful in defending itself; eventually it drove back the rebels, sending them into disarray. Normal situation was restored throughout the Union.

The Tatmadaw leaders had systematically organized and executed Psy-War. In particular, they achieved two aims: to weaken the political influence of BCP, and to defend the principles of parliamentary democracy.

Both the military and civilian officers involved in Psy-War waged a continuous ideological struggle. However, they did not harmed socialism; the Tatmadaw had already accepted socialist economy as a preferable system. The Tatmadaw's Psy-War was directed mainly at the armed insurrection of the rebel parties of all colours.

As for the BCP, the main point of the struggle was its authoritarian intentions and its materialism which is opposed to Buddhism. Policies and ideas of foreign communist parties which were influential over the BCP have also to be taken account of and accordingly countered.

Now, however, we have to promote a new leftist policy. Stated another way, we were now going to introduce leftist socialism. The situation demanded a form of socialism that did not include the communists' materialism, and also acceptable to the Buddhist population.

Here, I would like to mention to the reader about the political convictions of U Saw Oo and myself.

Many a young men, who grew up through the period from around 1938, when World War was approaching, to the whole period of the war, have been influenced more or less by various forms of leftist ideology. They have read books published by Nagani book club and other publishers, including translations of foreign books, biographies of patriotic leaders who led independence movements, socialism and communism. Then during the period of Fascist rule, as they participated in the underground anti-Fascist, anti-Japanese movement, they came, either directly or indirectly, under the influence of Communist Party (Burma) led by Thakin Soe.

Like other patriotic young men, U Saw Oo and I took part in the independence movement. I had studied the basic principles of Marxism and Leninism from Thakin Tin Mya and Thakin Soe, and in turn I passed on my knowledge to others.

Also, in the years after the war and after independence, political activities influenced by Burma Communist Party and also by the Burma Socialist Party have been the leading movements in Myanmar politics.

Although various leftist parties, either for personal reasons or political differences, have split over principles and policies, accusing and counter-accusing each other, they all studied literature on Marxism, experiences of socialist countries and socialist economy. All these they studied and accepted and propagated. For this reason, the period from about 1938 to around 1958, a span of a little over twenty years, may be said to be an age dominated by red and pink ideologies.

U Saw Oo and I happen to be converts from red to pink. Whatever we may have been, when Brig. Aung Gyi appointed us in the Defense Ministry and assigned us duties, we accepted with good intentions and clear conscience. That was because, for one reason, we were believers in the aims of socialism and had put high expectations in it; for another reason, we trusted, to a certain degree, Fa-

sa-pa-la and socialist party leaders who promised to adopt a pink form of socialism (something which is not extreme or brutal). Also, we had confidence in the leadership of General Ne Win and other Tatmadaw leaders.

And now, a great political change was about to break out; on my part, I had only to accept the duty entrusted upon me.

As I now have to discuss the subject of socialism with the training officers at the central Psy-War battalion, I prepared a short note containing the following points: European feudal history; the French revolution of 1789; the development of the capitalist economic system; advantages and disadvantages of capitalism; the awakening of the working class; emergence of early forms of socialist and communist concepts; scientific socialism of Karl Marx and Frederick Angles; the Great Russian October revolution and the formation of the Socialist Soviet Republic; the influence of Soviet Union and Socialist economy around the world after the Second World War; problems encountered in establishing socialist system; good results and possible mistakes.

From early December 1961 to beyond the first week of January 1962, we discussed the above topics at the central Psy-War battalion. It was in the form of a tea-party discussion circle, and not as a training course.

The discussions were successful because the instructors had already studied, since the time of the care-taker regime, and were now familiar with socialist policies. Indeed, they have become interested in politics.

After the series of discussions came to an end, we were left without anything to do; we just spent time reading daily newspapers or with other studies.

We were not much concerned that the Tatmadaw would seize power in the near future, nor did we think it would do it.

However, outside the Tatmadaw, the political situation was moving fast. It had been some time that some states of their Union had proposed constitutional re-organization of the Union and debate on the subject continuing.

By the last week of February, 1962, tension rose to a high pitch. Especially, the voices and behavior of the states became something to be suspicious about. Rumours were widespread; but the people continued in their normal lives. An atmosphere of uncertainty prevailed. And people had reason to wonder what will happen next.

(2)

Early morning at nearly 5:30, Colonel Saw Myint had left his home in Helpin Road for Mingaladon airport. He was going to say farewell to the Chinese ballet troupe returning home.

Colonel Saw Myint was the Chief of Frontier Areas Administration Department, which was responsible for erecting the border posts, a landmark requirement of the China-Burma Border Agreement. Colonel Saw Myint was host for the visiting Chinese ballet troupe.

The night of March 1, 1962 was the last performance of the ballet troupe. General Ne Win, Chief of Staff, graced the occasion. When the programme ended at midnight, General Ne Win came up the stage and shook hands with each and every member of the delegation and he was closely followed behind by Col. Saw Myint who also greeted the dancers.

Although late in bed that night, Col Saw Myint got up early in the morning. On the morning of March 2, he had left home for the airport, accompanied by Capt. Saw Lwin, his aide de camp

When they came near the junction of Pyay Road and Inya Road, Col. Saw Myint's Opel car was stopped by a military officer. Major Tin Tun of the Air force saluted the colonel and asked him, "Where are you going Sir?" The colonel replied, "To the airport, to see the Chinese ballet delegation off. They're returning today". Major Tun Tun then told him, "Colonel, you may have not known it yet". He then explained about the Tatmadaw's coup last night and that the airport has been closed. He suggested Colonel Saw Myint to go and see the leaders.

Without hesitation, Col Saw Myint turned back and headed straight for Dagon House where Brigadier Aung Gyi was staying. It was a bit misty that morning, and visibility wasn't good. Perhaps in Col Saw Myint's mind too, vision might well be quite blurred. It was nearly six o'clock when he arrived at Dagon House.

Readily, he met Capt. Kyaw Khine, Brig. Aung Gyi's ADC. "Has Bogyoke got up from bed?", he asked the ADC. When he got the reply that he was out of bed already, Col Saw Myint requested Capt. Kyaw Khine to report his arrival. The captain went upstairs and Col Saw Myint went into the sitting room downstairs and took a seat and kept waiting.

While he was waiting Col Than Sein, the Colonel-General-Staff, and Col Kyaw Soe, Military Secretary came in. Col Than Sein said, "Ko Saw, you have arrived!" as he greeted him. He told Col Saw Myint that they have come to report to Brig. Aung Gyi. Col Saw Myint took them upstairs with him.

They saw Brig. Aung Gyi coming out of the bathroom. Col Than Sein reported to Brig. Aung Gyi, "On orders from General Ne Win, early this morning between 2 and 4 am, nominated forces of the Tatmadaw under respective officers, have seized state power. Everything is under control. In a short time, General Ne Win is coming to the War Office. We are to wait for him in the War Room".

Until then, Col Than Sein and Col Kyaw Soe have not until then sent their reports to General Ne Win. They have been told during the night to finish the job first and then to meet him at the War Office in the morning. It seemed they have also been instructed to report to Brig Aung Gyi.

Col Saw Myint was of the opinion that Brig Aung Gyi did not seem to have known in advance what had been done. However, his expression appeared to indicate he knew things in advance.

Brig Aung Gyi put on his uniform and with the colonels walked to the War Office. They waited for General Ne Win's arrival.

After a while, just after 6:30, General Ne Win arrived. They met in the War Room.

"I didn't have much sleep during the night", the General said. "I've been waiting to hear about the situation".

Col Than Sein and Col Kyaw Soe, first line commanders who carried out the coup d'état reported to the General, "We have completed the task assigned to us. But at Nyaungshwe Sawbwa Sao Shwe Thaike's residence, in spite of the security forces telling them in Shan language not to resist, the guards misunderstood and began a shootout. Tatmadaw's return fire resulted in the death of Sao Shwe Thaike's son, a seventeen year old boy".

General Ne Win said that he was sorry about the death of the boy. After a while he continued, "We have to make announcement to the country about the Tatmadaw's seizing of state power." Then Brig Aung Gyi said that he wanted Ko Ba Than (retired Col Ba Than) to write the announcement and that last night he came to Dagon House to visit him and he was still in bed there. General Ne Win concurred. Col Than Sein went out to Dagon House and asked retired Col Ba Than (former director of Psy-War) to write the announcement after explaining to him the events. Without hesitation, Col Ba Than drafted the communiqué.

Returning to the War Room, Col Than Sein handed the draft communiqué to General Ne Win who read it carefully. Then he passed it to Brig Aung Gyi, commenting, "What Ko Ba than has written is good, but it's a bit too long. We need to explain this business in short and clear terms. I'll give you points, you write it up."

As General Ne win dictated, Brig. Aung Gyi and Col Saw Myint jotted down notes. The announcement was to be read by General Ne Win himself, but the tape recorder at the War Office wasn't working. Col Saw Myint sent his ADC Capt Saw Lwin to fetch the tape recorder in the office of the frontier areas administration. Lt Col Hla Myint recorded General Ne Win's announcement. After that, Col Saw Myint was sent to the radio station to broadcast it. After arriving at the radio station Col Saw Myint made plans; General Ne Win's recorded announcement was broadcast at 8:25 hours. From that moment on the Tatmadaw's control of the country was made known to the public.

From that morning Col Saw Myint unexpectedly became the Information Minister. When he came back to the War Office, Brigadier T. Clift (Vice-Chief of Staff-Air) and Commodore Than Pe (Vice-Chief of Staff-Navy) were also in the War Room.

The announcement to the nation was as follows:

"I have to report to the people that, in order to take action about the deteriorating condition of the country, the Tatmadaw has taken control of the nation. I request the monks and laymen citizens to keep calm and just to go about their business as usual. Government employees are asked to carry out their normal duties. In particular, I urge teachers and students to continue the examinations which have been under way. I assure that we will work to the best of our ability for the happiness of our people."

The same day the formation of the Revolutionary Council was announced; it was the Council that undertook to lead the national social revolution. General Ne Win organized the Council with the following members:

1. General Ne Win Chairman
2. Brigadier Aung Gyi (Vice-Chief of Staff-Army)
3. Commodore Than Pe (Vice-Chief of Staff-Navy)
4. Brigadier T. Clift (Vice-Chief of Staff-Air)
5. Brigadier Tin Pe (Quartermaster General)
6. Brigadier San Yu (Commander, North-West Command)
7. Brigadier Sein Win (Commander, Central Command)
8. Col Thaug Kyi (Commander, South-East Command)
9. Col Kyi Maung (Commander, South-West Command)
10. Col Maung Shwe (Commander, Eastern Command)
11. Col Than Sein (Colonel-General-Staff)
12. Colonel Kyaw Soe (Military Secretary)
13. Colonel Saw Myint (Chief Administrator, Frontier Areas Administration)
14. Col. Chit Myaing (Deputy Quartermaster General)

15. Col Khin Nyo (Director of Training)
16. Col Hla Han (Director of Medical Services)
17. Col Tan Yu Saing (Deputy Commander, Union Military police Head Quarters)

The same day, the Revolutionary Council appointed the Revolutionary Government including the following Ministers.

1. General Ne Win (Minister for Defense; Finance and Revenue; Justice)
2. Brigadier Aung Gyi (Minister for Trade and Commerce; Industry)
3. Brigadier Tin Pe (Ministry for Agriculture and Forests; Cooperatives and Supplies)
4. Commodore Than Pe (Minister for Education; Health)
5. U Thi Han (Minister for Foreign Affairs; Labour; Housing and Public Works; Mines)
6. Col Kyaw Soe (Minister Home Affairs and Immigration)
7. Col Saw Myint (Minister for Information; Culture)
8. Lt. Col Ba Ni (Minister for Transport and Communications)

General Ne Win's act of forming a revolutionary council rather than military council as soon as he has taken state power was an indication that he meant to launch a social revolution.

That morning, like other people, I heard General Ne Win's announcement on the radio. When I arrived at the central Psy-War battalion at Mingaladon, the instructors as well as the commander Major San Myint asked me for my personal opinion. I told them that I thought it would be related to the prospect for socialism which we had discussed about three months back, but I couldn't tell them more. When we got informed about the formation of the revolutionary council our belief became stronger than what we hoped would happen. However, we got no more news that day.

The next day U Saw Oo telephoned Major San Myint asking him to tell me that I will have to contact Col Saw Myint and work with him.

On March 4, General Ne Win met the representatives of AFPFL, Pa-ta-sa, and Pa-ma-nya-ta and explained to them about the views of the revolutionary council.

General Ne Win said, "We have worked together in unity for independence and have unitedly built up our nation. But we are now sad to see that we are facing conditions likely to lead to disunity of the nation. In future we would like all of you to take part with us in building a socialist system. We would like to have consultations with political parties and to produce united effort. As the present constitution is too flexible, we would like to consult with political parties to write a new constitution". He invited the political leaders to contribute ideas.

The same day, March 4, Brigadier Aung Gyi met three of us, Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and me, at the Dagon House. After explaining to us about the new situation, he told us that on March 6, General Ne Win will meet the three of us and tell us about our future task.

Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and I were summoned to the War Office on March 6. General Ne Win, Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, greeted us cordially. After greetings he told us about the events that led the Tatmadaw to take control of the nation.

"As the country has been tending toward instability, we have to take timely action to prevent the disintegration of the Union. After taking up this unavoidable duty, we have to be seriously dedicated to rebuilding the country. So we have to stop our anti-leftist stance which we adopted during the Psy-War days. Hence forth, even if they may say we are like communists, we must work for the good of the country, for the good of the people. So you fellows should tell us what you think we should do. As for our revolutionary council, it needs to tell the country what is our policy. So I'll tell you the main points."

The General's main points are the following which I mention in his own words.

"Economy is the most important. In this case, major businesses must be nationalized and managed by the state. Private businesses will remain permitted to some extent. Cooperatives will have to be reorganized carefully and seriously operated. Then we'll transform into socialism step by step."

"In politics, we'll try to negotiate with existing political parties. If negotiation is successful, we'll have a united front to move ahead. If that fails, we'll have a one party system. This is unavoidable.

If we go on in the same old ways, like in the parliamentary system, with parties competing, we cannot go far. Call it eastern democracy, call it dictatorship of the proletariat, call it what they like, we'll work for the benefit of farmers, workers, the majority of the people. In our country, farmers are the majority; they'll come first. We cannot put workers first like the communists. Not just for the farmers and workers, in working for the country we'll unite all good intentioned people."

Without rehearsal, Col Saw Myint and the two of us said, "It's true that one party system is efficient. But in the long run, we have to prevent our men, the party men, from becoming intoxicated with power and doing all sorts of injustice among the people".

"Ha! How can we allow this to happen? We will carefully make all arrangements to prevent such injustice", the General replied.

Then he continued, "We have it like this. We'll try it. Say, socialism. Aye, as we go ahead with it, if the country does not improve, if what we expect don't happen, after all we are Bama fellows, we'll discuss among ourselves in a spirit of fellowship and make amends where necessary. Let's make changes where necessary."

He pondered for a moment and then continued. "What I have just said are the main points for economy and politics. For the remaining subjects also we'll have to change where necessary. We'll do what is appropriate. For unity, for party affairs, we will negotiate again with the existing political parties."

That moment, a message came to the General; it was from the rightist General Phumi of Laos, (at the time he was visiting Thailand), who had come to power by means of a coup. After reading the message, the General jokingly told us, "My fellows, this bloke Phumi says he congratulates me. That's throwing shit in my face. What the hell has he got anything to do with us?" We laughed with him. He looked very eager and motivated; we felt much inspired about the future.

That moment Brigadier Aung Gyi came into the office. He saluted the General. He said, "General, I have an appointment with foreign correspondents at Dagon House. There, if they ask me what is the

form of socialism that we are going for, how should I answer? I am consulting you. Should I just say Evolutionary Socialism, just to say something, but not too much?"

"Hey, Ko Aung Gyi. Don't define it that way. Just now we are pondering over these things. So don't say Evolutionary. Don't say Revolutionary. Oh! Just say our Socialism will be Practical Socialism. This much should do for the moment", the General replied. Brig Aung Gyi reported a few other matters and left the room.

After briefing to us the above facts, the General told us to produce a draft paper, to take time and to carefully think out the contents. He told us to submit the draft paper to him.

As we came out of the room, Col Saw Myint picked up a crumpled ball of paper. That was the message from Laos General Phumi; our General had squeezed it into a ball and thrown it away. (But that document is not with Col Saw Myint now.)

From that time on, we, the three of us led by Col Saw Myint, have become a sub-committee, assigned by the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, to draft a paper on the policy declaration of the Council.

That evening, we went to Dagon House and reported about our assignment to Brig Aung Gyi. He just told us to write it as instructed by the General.

Our group, with Col Saw Myint as leader, used to meet every other day or every third day for discussions. Usually we meet in the studio of Burma Broadcasting Service where U Saw Oo had his office. To thoroughly accomplish the duty assigned us by the Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, we collected facts and figures from home and abroad, studied them and made extracts where necessary.

During those days of March, the Revolutionary Council was preoccupied with meetings. Col Saw Myint was very busy as he was acting as secretary to the Revolutionary Council, and also in his job as Minister for Information; U Saw Oo was also very busy as he was in charge of the information office of the Revolutionary Council. As for me, I often went to the central Psy-War battalion, but I

wasn't regular there; I spent most of my time in Col Saw Myint's office in the broadcasting studio where I would be reading, or taking notes, or writing.

Col saw Myint and U Saw Oo asked me first to write the draft which was to be submitted to the General.

On March 21, I presented the first version, a form of extract of the socialist ideas which should be adopted. It was entitled "Burmese Approach to Socialism", or "Burmese Style of Socialism". The ideas contained in it are:

1. It should be socialism that is adaptable to the natural conditions in Burma; that which is based on the critical acceptance according to the psychology and philosophy of the Burmese people.
2. It should be socialism based on cooperative course of action and techniques; it should be socialism that will bring good to the people, and capable of effective means to achieve concrete results.
3. To derive theories based on experience, to test them by experience.

Col Saw Myint took this short version to General Ne Win, who met us again on April 8, and he told us facts that could be added to our presentation. The meeting took place in the General's residence, an informal but very cordial meeting.

The General was speaking in a very jovial mood. He was very candid. Col Saw Myint made notes containing points we presented and also contributions from the General. That was a very useful record for our group. It goes as follows.

Abstract of the paper "Burmese Approach to Socialism" dated March 21, 1962, written by U Chit Hlaing

1. From the beginning, we have worked for freedom, democracy and socialism.
2. That the nation aims to establish a socialist economic system which could bring prosperity to the poor folk who are the majority in the country.

3. However, in the past 14 years, socialism has not succeeded because both AFPFL and communists have made wrong interpretations of socialism.
4. The communists have been dogmatic, textbook bound. They adopted left-extremist theories, and copied Russian and Chinese models regardless of whether they match the Burmese scenario or not. Because of that they have failed.
5. AFPFL also has not been serious with socialist approach, and has not been whole hearted in its efforts. Both AFPFL and communists have made trial attempts that have gone wrong. (The AFPFL was right-deviationist while the communists were left-deviationists. Neither of them have gained the support of the people).
6. For these reasons, we will learn the lessons from the mistakes of the AFPFL and communists and face the correct path. We will take care to avoid left- or right-deviations in our socialist principles. Our socialism ought to be the Burmese Way to Socialism.
7. The Burmese Way to Socialism should be compatible with Burma's natural setting, its history and also match the psychological and philosophical make up of the Burmese nationals including monks and laymen alike; it must be in line with their way of thinking and withstand their critical attitudes.
8. The Burmese socialism must be practicable, free from the dogma of big textbooks. It must be practical and only effective methods should be used to bring prosperity for the poor people.
9. The principles of Burmese socialism must be based upon experience of daily life.
10. The Burmese socialism should deduce its analysis of theories based on practical experience, and they should be put to the test accordingly. In short, it is to formulate theories out of practice in real life, and their test should be only by their applicability to life. Only in this way we will be able to practice a natural theory.
11. We must be able to create a form of socialism that is compatible with the Burmese conditions of life and freely practiced.
12. For the time being, only the programme that is practicable for the Revolutionary Council and at the same time acceptable by the majority should be declared. It should take time to compose detailed theories.
13. In presenting our views, we ought to avoid Marxism, Leninism etc which can be controversial. Instead, we should find extracts either from Marxist texts or treatises on

socialism that are appropriate for Burmese people, and to put them in a form acceptable from the point of view of Burmese thought and Burmese ideas and Burmese speech.

14. Whatever the circumstances, so long as we do not lose sight of the basic rights of the farmers, the poor working people, the advanced classes etc, even if we make mistakes, we will be able to correct them.
15. In short, it is our belief that as long as our practical achievements can bring prosperity and progress for the people, we will never go in the wrong direction.

If this submission is accepted, we will be pleased to produce and submit a theoretical paper based on these ideas.

April 8, 1962, General Ne Win's criticism and guidance on the draft paper submitted by the drafting team

Place - General Ne Win's residence

Participants - the Chairman of Revolutionary Council General Ne Win, Col
Saw Myint, Leader, drafting team, U Saw Oo, U Chit Hlaing
(members)

Subject – Aims of policy and guidance from the Chairman of Revolutionary Council based on the various points in the paper prepared by the drafting team

The General –

On the economy

- import only by the state
- export distribution by the state and cooperatives
 semi-private to be allowed in limited extent
- manufacturing state and cooperatives with little allowance
 for private; semi-private to be allowed

Socialism is for all people. Everybody must take part, not just for poor people, or workers. The educated class is apprehensive; but they must also be mobilized. It's only because farmers and workers are the majority that discussion is directed at

them. In fact, if all classes of people believe in this system and would come along, we will take them with us. Our first aim is socialism.

Yesterday, Brig Aung Gyi met with businessmen, but what he told them wasn't quite comprehensive. He should have told them, one day you will be fit in the system; there's security for them. In future, action will be taken if they go on exploiting as before. If they agree with us they can work with us, we'll accept them. We are not like those communists. C's don't accept them; businessmen are enemies. If they accept our system, they will work in manufacturing and distribution sectors, hand in hand with us. By telling the business community early, it will be clear for them what they are to do about their future. Our attitude toward business people is one point that distinguishes us from the communists. This should be made clear in your writing.

Our Socialism

The socialism we trying to achieve is only for the poor people and workers. It is aimed for all people in the Union. It is National Socialism, Burmese National Socialism

What you write must include that it is only Burmese National Socialism. This point is also a difference from the way communist countries work.

Class Problem

We don't like Thakin Soe's system of 'resetting to zero' all rich people, that is system of common ownership where people are leveled off. Let there be status quo of existing levels; the well to do will wait for those who are rising up. Mathematically, progress is for sure. With this principle for progress, those at zero level will go up; those who are bourgeoisie, because we will take a bit from them; they will come down a little, but they need not be set at zero. With this give and take adjustment, we will achieve equality.

Democracy

We no longer have faith in parliamentary democracy. We have tried it. For example, parliament members and businessmen have been engaged in that four

year cycle of elections, to win the election. They are dependent on businessmen's support to win the election. When the election is won, they have to repay by working for their benefit. Education and knowledge of the electorate is not high enough. Even in countries like America, they are spending huge amounts of money to fetch votes from the people. It's capitalist democracy.

Even England, the Mother of Democracy, they haven't reached the goal.

Therefore, democracy that we need, in simple terms is Eastern democracy. Let's say people's democracy.

Second paragraph

Need to change wording; we don't want to put too much blame on others. If unavoidable, just use them as examples. In our system, we will avoid blaming others; we will not adopt the attitude that only we can do good work, it must be avoided. For example, I don't quite like the frequent use of the word 'imperialist'. I want it used only once in a while for objective criticism. For example, instead of communism, capitalism, I would like it written 'we will carefully avoid the world's left- or right-deviations'. In the section on democracy, we must explain its practice in the East. We must explain that businessmen never come to the people.

Adaptability to the Burmese Conditions

I mean our geographical influence, status of material products, the mindset, past history. It all depends upon these factors. For example, the attitude of town-folk; they believe it's right and proper to gain profit from others. We must expose results that originate in such mode of thinking.

Wrong Ideas

In Burmese language, we use 'one whose placenta was washed in a golden bowl', or 'one whose leg hair never gets burnt'; such are our ideas of honour and prestige. I like to see such ideas disappear. The idea that manual labour, i.e. work

requiring one's physical strength, is mean must disappear. One likes to eat, but he's scared to be headed toward hell; so he eats what other people have killed, such as pork licensee. Really, they are hypocrites. You should make such things clear in your write up. Before changing to socialist economy, we need to change ideas; systems of belief must be changed.

To make socialism succeed, every one must work. Everybody must remember that he has to work. 'Where the water is deep, the lotus grows high.' In the same way, when the nation prospers, the individual also prospers.

'There must be no selfishness'.

'There must be no one starving'.

'The people shall share the nation's resources'.

What I want to add about society and progress is the principle that 'When the water is deep, the lotus grows high'. People should realize the difference between use and abuse. They must know what charity means. Such ideas as 'un-scorched leg-hair or un-scorched hand-hair' should go away. In submission to monks and piety also, people should be sincere – they should not just pretend. There's lots of civic duty to observe. We have social ethics in religion. We find them in Lawka Niti (Morals and Ethics in Life), and in Puttaw Vada (Advice for Son). If people are properly religious, they will not exploit like they are doing now; because they are not hungry, they will observe morals.

'Classes should not be too different'

'There will be slight discrimination between those who are brilliant and those who are dull'

'There will be differences according to intellect, effort, hard work, labour'.

'Between one in position of high responsibility and an ordinary porter there will of course be differences in privilege.'

These constitute the essence of the socialist system we are going after.

Para-13

Here we should mention the differences between our procedure and the work in other socialist countries. We have no attachment for a specific country. We will accept all good ideas and progressive ideas that are current in today's world. It's not just Marx Lenin as the primary source.

We will accept all progressive treatises. We accept that socialism is good. This is where we are primarily different from other socialist countries. This point must be included.

The Class Problem

At present, people see that there is sort of class discrimination. On our part we will organize all classes. Poor people do exploit; for example, street hawkers. Nationally, we will fit in all nationals. They will all get what they deserve. We will fight anyone who opposes the socialist system.

Pamphlet 2

I don't like the use of the term 'sin-ye-that lu-dan-sar' (poor classes) in it. It implies upper classes and lower classes exist. We want those disappear. Everyone must benefit.

What we want is real democracy. Because they oppose the well-to-do classes, it appears people in those classes will have to die. It's like a non-VIP desiring VIP treatment. The way lawyers are doing is quite demonstrative.

There is difference from what U Ba Nyein has written. He says, "Authority comes from sin-ye-thar (poor men)". We are not like that. They completely reject capitalists. But we don't. So long as they don't oppose us, we will make use of them. But every body must be productive, either manufacturing or some sort of work.

International Relations

In relations with other countries, we will accept any country or ideology which does not exploit. We accept any fair exchange. If there is no exploitation,

we accept any country East or West. We reject any country which has lopsided relations.

Even in USA they have to try to equalize by higher taxation because the rich class is growing.

Socialist Economy

Write that in future all people have to work. Put it in early. Emphasize it. (If you write it later, it will become too long, like Thakin Nu's speech, and you lose the whole meaning.)

'Every one will enjoy benefits for his work'

'Differences must be minimized'

The reason for the slight difference is that differences arise from the amount of work, its quality, ability. That is natural difference.

It's not for a particular class of people. Don't use 'sin-ye-that dwey ah twet' (for the poor people). I want to make it clear that it's for all citizens of the nation.

Commodity production will not be mainly for profit. We only aim to enhance the ability to produce consumer goods. Basically, food, clothing and lodging are fundamental needs. From there, we will gradually raise the standard of living; then we proceed with the development of culture.

Parliamentary Democracy

Must criticize parliamentary democracy. People have a certain understanding of parliamentary democracy. We need to mention it fully in this chapter.

For example, we must begin with British parliament. Parliament emerged during the age of feudalism. That was a real step forward. Laws have been enacted. In the industrial age, when industry developed, people no longer liked working the farms; then they had to make laws to make farmers work on the farms. After that, the French revolution. You will write about the French parliament. Then the history of German parliament; Bismarck era, Kaiser's era, Hitler's era, all to be included as gist. Don't make them lengthy. It had been accepted at the time that parliament was theoretically the best system. But people didn't behave properly.

Although it was good in theory, in practice it didn't work. Who's to blame? We now know. Parliamentary system has deteriorated.

About the French revolution, parliament and Napoleon –

Americans have declared they have full democracy. So called democracy! Really, it's constitutional dictatorship for four years. It's the seizure of state power for four years with the assistance of parliament. It is understood that once the people have elected, the man in power cannot be removed. As long as there are elections, they have to find money. Those practically involved used to get the assistance of thugs and pimps; these are obvious observations. Then comes the age of neo-capitalism; We have 'ponnas' (Brahmins), the men in front of others. They still exist. So, such elections benefit only the capitalists. The people do not get anything special.

'Bilat' (England or UK)

Their system is to be explained. Both 'Tories' and 'Labour' played foul. Of course it's better than in the age of absolute monarchy. Even now money buys everything. Conservative capitalists have piled up money to attract votes. We've got to see how important influence is in politics.

During the period 1931-33, under the Labour government, there was slump and inflation, producing repercussions. Government has to be sustained by money borrowed from USA. But the money was spent within one month. When the government fell, it was expected Baldwin would form a government; but no, a McDonald coalition came up. There were also exploitations in labour unions. When a labour government was in power, the conservatives did much to sabotage. For example, during the labour administration, when Bogyoke (Aung San) was working for the country's independence, the conservative army officers killed him. So when power is the hands of capitalists, it will benefit only the capitalists. We can no longer have faith in such a parliament.

'From whatever background one comes from, one must be cautious, and adopt correct views'

'Therefore we must criticize the shortcomings of parliamentary democracy; we need also to include critical discussion of the Burmese parliamentary system which we practiced.'

We must change the way we think. We must look for model examples from England and countries near by. We will also set up a political party. Think about the party's name. In future, the army will form only a component of it.

Our committee met many times to produce the Policy of the Revolutionary Council. We wrote the draft paper five times. The draft was first written by U Chit Hlaing (myself) as Col Saw Myint and U Saw Oo entrusted the job to me.

The meetings of our committee took place either at the Broadcasting studio, or on instruction from the General, at the old president's house, where we discussed, do the writing and rewriting, checking and reviewing. Either on alternate days or every third day, the General used to come to the president's house to meet us, in a friendly way, and had discussions with us; he gave comments and suggestions.

Our committee finished the final draft on April 16. It was given the title "Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council: Let us March on the Burmese Way to Socialism". The finished draft was sent by Col Saw Myint to the General who made a few additions and approved it. Col Saw Myint had that draft typed and sent copies to members of the Revolutionary Council. The paper was to be discussed at the meeting of the Revolutionary Council to be held on April 24 and 25.

Just around that date Brig Aung Gyi immediately went off to Machanbaw village, Putao township in Kachin state. Our group and Revolutionary Council members who were friendly with him were worried and felt uncertainty.

The General called in Col saw Myint and told him, "Bo Aung Gyi is in an unhappy mood, he doesn't want to speak to us. Go and fetch him. Take Ko Saw Oo and Ko Chit Hlaing with you". Our team led by Col Saw Myint flew in a special flight of the air-force to Putao. We landed briefly at Myitkyina airport where we took brigade commander Colonel Lun Tin on the flight. From Putao,

we drove to Machanbaw on the bank of Malikha River; the district headquarters of the frontier administration department had its office there.

Col Saw Myint told Brig Aung Gyi about the General's desire, in particular that he wishes him to attend the meeting of the Revolutionary Council on 24 and 25 April. The General's comradeship and affection for him touched Brig Aung Gyi's heart; he shed tears and we were pleased to see it. We spent one night at Machanbaw. The next day when we flew back to Yangon, Brig Aung Gyi was happily with us.

A special meeting of the Revolutionary Council was held on April 24, 25, 1962, in the War Room in the office of the Chief of Staff, with General Ne Win in the chair and Col Saw Myint as secretary. U Saw Oo and I were allowed to attend that meeting as observers, and also to take notes of the proceedings and to give answers to questions.

Col Saw Myint, member of the revolutionary council and minister for information, in his capacity as secretary of the meeting read the finalized version of the paper "Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council: Let us March on the Burmese Way to Socialism". He read it paragraph by paragraph. After each paragraph, the Revolutionary Council members discussed about it or asked questions. The General answered their questions. The council members also gave their ideas and opinions. The meeting did not finish on April 24; it continued the next day.

On the second day, there arose a disagreement between Brig Aung Gyi and Brig Tin Pe over a point in the economic policy. It concerned the private sector. Brig Tin Pe did not like the statement 'that the revolutionary council will welcome those in the private sector to march hand in hand with us'. He wanted it deleted from the policy statement. However, the General felt that to boost production the private sector should be encouraged.

To tell the truth, that the private sector should be encouraged and welcome was an idea from the General himself; our drafting committee had inserted it because it came from him. The three of us also understood the General's intention and believed in it.

Brig Aung Gyi and Brig Tin Pe didn't have any personal problems between them. They have been very close colleagues since the independence struggle. The present disagreement was over a matter of principle. Brig Aung Gyi wanted socialist construction to go ahead slowly and steadily, step after step. Brig Tin Pe wanted, if possible, to swiftly wipe out the private sector and substitute it with state and cooperative enterprises. General Ne Win was not committed to any fixed plan; he liked to follow practicable policies and methods.

Regarding the point of argument with Brig Tin Pe, Brig Aung Gyi proposed, "Well, in this problem, I think we should decide it by vote". A few minutes of silence fell on the meeting.

The Chairman tackled this problem.

The General said, 'You fellows, this is not a problem for you to argue about. It is something we have to tackle in future as the situation arises.' Then he looked toward Brig Tin Pe and said in English, "Hey, Ko Tin Pe, why can't you agree with that point?" (sic).

Then Brig Tin Pe promptly replied, "General, there's nothing I cannot agree. What I meant is on a matter of principle. I agree with what you have just said." With the problem solved, the Council unanimously agreed with the policy declaration of the Revolutionary Council.

To my mind, April 25, 1962 was a landmark, a major turning point in the political history of Burma.

April 29 and 30 were the dates fixed for the conference of commanders. It would be held in Yangon at the Yatanabon naval base. At that meeting, the policy declaration of the Revolutionary Council would be presented, discussed and endorsed.

Under the supervision of Col Saw Myint as Minister of Information, the government printing press at Theinbyu Road was temporarily taken over on April 26 and 27. To prevent news leakage, the press workers were not allowed to go back home. Four army captains were placed on duty to keep watch and oversee the business. On authority from Col Saw Myint, I selected those four captains; they were Capt Tin Aye, Capt Pe Than Maung, Capt Maung Maung Gyi and Capt Khun Phyu, from the central Psy-War battalion. They spent two whole days at the government printing press. I also

stayed with them, and had meals there. Occasionally, Col Saw Myint and U Saw Oo also used to visit us.

In the afternoon of April 27, the paper "Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council: Let us March on the Burmese Way to Socialism" was printed and bound and ready for distribution. We sent all the copies to Col Saw Myint. He distributed them to the Members of the Revolutionary Council the next day, April 28. More are to be distributed at the commanders' conference for discussion on April 29.

The commanders' conference was held on April 29 in the meeting hall of Yatanabon naval base.

Col Saw Myint acted as master of ceremonies with General Ne Win in the chair. In his inaugural address, he talked about the policy declaration of the revolutionary council, about Burma's past and future. He said that in future, only by establishing a socialist system, it would be possible to bring about the prosperity of the people.

After that, Col Saw Myint read the policy declaration of the revolutionary council paragraph by paragraph. The commanders attentively followed the presentation. There were no special discussions that day by the participants.

But the next day, April 30, the commanders actively participated in the discussions. Some commanders stated their concerns that the leftist communists who had been insurgents and returned to town would take active roles. On that point the General assured them that they should not worry. The meeting became lively and the commanders were eagerly participating.

The Chairman of the revolutionary council, General Ne Win was pleased to see the commanders' eagerness. The General said, "It's really good to have such open discussion. I want you to thoroughly discuss the subject". After that the meeting adjourned briefly. The drafting committee (Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and I) and Lt Col Than Nyunt (Chicago) were asked to discuss separately.

Lt Col Than Nyunt and our group sat together in the meeting hall for group discussion. Some majors who were participants at the conference were present within hearing distance. We did not have a difficult discussion; it was resolved easily. Lt Col Than Nyunt wanted to use "Myanmar Socialist Lanzin" (Burmese Way to Socialism) instead of "Socialist Lawka" (Socialist Society). We agreed to accept his proposal. Accordingly, we reported to the General, and he, together with the revolutionary council members, concurred. In this way, instead of the slogan 'Let us March on the Burmese Way to Socialism' was deleted; the title became 'Burmese Way to Socialism: Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council'. That was definitely a contribution by Lt Col Than Nyunt (Chicago).

It was evident that General Ne Win wanted his colleagues, the commanders to be convinced and thoroughly understand the policy they are going to follow. It was in that spirit that he desired open and candid discussions.

The commanders meeting, which wound up that day, endorsed and adopted the Burmese Way to Socialism. On the evening of that day, Col Saw Myint read the Burmese Way to Socialism and broadcast it from Myanmar Athan (Burma Broadcasting Service)

After the Burmese Way to socialism was declared, General Ne Win met for the second time at Dagon House, on May 7, with the leaders of three political parties. He did not meet all three parties simultaneously. He met each party separately. He asked them to take time to study the Burmese Way to Socialism, and that he would like to meet them again. He gave the Burmese way to socialism booklets to the party representatives. The party representatives were from AFPFL, Pa-ta-sa and Pa-ma-nya-ta.

Our committee under Col Saw Myint has now been instructed by General Ne Win to draw up a constitution for a political party that will accomplish the Burmese Way to socialism. If negotiations with the three political parties failed, the revolutionary council would form a political party to carry out the task. In preparation for it we drew up a party constitution after consultations with revolutionary council members Col Than Sein, Col Kyaw Soe, Col Hla Han and Brig Tin Pe. On authorization from these council members, I wrote the first draft of the party constitution. The revolutionary council members read the draft I submitted, and after several discussions and

revisions approved the constitution. Suggestions for the name of the party were variously made. But then Col Than Sein pointed out that 'Burmese Way to Socialism' has already been declared, he proposed 'Myanma Socialist Lanzin Party' (Burma Socialist Programme Party) as the party's name. Col Than Sein's proposal was accepted by the Chairman and members of the council.

However, the formation of the Burma Socialist Programme Party was not publicly declared. For the two months of May and June, consultations with other parties went on to form a common front for a common task. The consultations did not materialize. Then on July 4, 1962, the revolutionary council announced the formation of 'Myanma Socialist Lanzin Party'.

Although the Myanma Socialist Lanzin Party has been organized, the revolutionary council did not ban other political parties. They were allowed to exist.

A sad event occurred on July 7. It was the shooting by the army to disperse the anti-revolutionary council demonstration by Yangon University students, and the demolition of the students' union building early next morning. I, the author of this record, felt really sad for that event. I still hold the view that the demolition of the students' union building was unacceptable; I am against it. This will be taken up in part 3 of this record where I present my retrospection.

Having announced the formation of the Myanma Socialist Lanzin Party, the task now is to organize party cadres. By party cadre, it is meant the foundation members of the party who have thoroughly studied the policies and programmes of the party. In order to do this, applications for party membership (cadres) were invited and training courses were given to selected cadres.

Under the arrangements made by Col Saw Myint, Captains Tin Aye, Pe Than Maung, Maung Maung Aye and Khun Phyu were got together at recreational residence near Inya lake (Former Prime Minister U Nu once used that residence as a place of meditation). They have all been instructor officers at the central Psy-War battalion. Their business there was to prepare the training course syllabus. (By that time Major San Myint of the Psy-War department had been promoted to lieutenant colonel and has been transferred as Principal of the Institute of Education under the Ministry of Education.)

I allotted respective duties to the above officers to draw up the syllabus. First, I asked them to read books on world history and political ideas. They took out concise notes from their reading. In addition, I let them read monographs and small books on socialist economy. I worked with them to review page by page, paragraph by paragraph, what they have read.

In this way we came to November 7, 1962, the date which marks the Russian October revolution. That day, at about 6:00 pm, Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and I went to Dagon House to see Brig. Aung Gyi. We have heard that he was sick. We saw him in his bed room, looking sick and unpleasant.

While we were talking with Brig Aung Gyi, the Chairman of revolutionary council came to Dagon House, accompanied by Brig Tin Pe, Col Kyaw Soe and Lt Ko Ko (secretary in the office of the revolutionary council). He was in civilian dress and quite relaxed. He had come to meet U Htein Lin and wife Daw Saw Mya, who had left the red flag communist party. Close friends and revolutionary colleagues of the chairman, they have arrived earlier to meet him.

Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and I went downstairs to give courtesy to the chairman. "Are you not coming down?" we asked Brig. Aung Gyi. "I'm feeling giddy. You please tell the General and apologize for me", he told us. We were a bit shocked. We went into the sitting room where the General and his company were seated, and after gesture of respects to the chairman took our seats.

"Well, it's so good. It's for some time that I haven't met Ko Saw Oo and friend. Here we have Ma Saw Mya and company," the General said in a pleasant mood.

Col Saw Myint said, "Sir, Bogyoke Aung Gyi is not well; he's in bed". "That's alright. We have no important business here", the General replied. He then continued talking about the wife and husband team of Daw Saw Mya who have resolved to join the Myanmar Socialist Lanzin Party. After having discussion for some time Daw Saw Mya and her husband went back.

"Now, Ko Saw Oo and Phoe Chit Hlaing", he began to tell us. "I have something to tell you". Phoe is a friendly form of address usually used for a younger fellow. He has known me since BDA days under the Japanese, when I was a sergeant in the Burma Defense Army.

He continued' "It's not some other business. We have formed a party. And you are planning training courses, aren't you? Under the circumstances, we need a guiding philosophy for the party. It's true the economy is the priority in our programme. But we do need theory. What preparations have you made in this respect?"

"Brig Tin Pe became interested in what the General has just said. His expression showed it. He has special interest in Marxist philosophy and theory.

In reply to the General, I said, "It's true, as you have just said, we do need a philosophy. At the moment, we don't have one already written. But, during your care-taker government days, we have prepared a paper on human nature and critical and revolutionary aspects of democracy. And we have conducted some training courses based on it. If we add socialist orientation to that paper, it can come out as a form of guiding principle for our party. I would like to write it and submit to you."

The General replied, "Yes, I remember it. You write it and show me the draft."

"If you would like it, I can produce the paper by about day after tomorrow", I said. "No, you don't have to do it that quickly. Take time."

With regard to writing the party ideology, the chairman gave us the following guide lines.

1. It should not contain anything contrary to nationalism, religion and culture.
2. It should reflect modern outlook.
3. It should contain theoretical aspects that are practically applicable.

The job of writing the party ideology was entrusted to Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and me. The two men were very busy, with hardly any time to spare. But, three of us used to meet for discussions as much as possible.

I collected basic facts that conform to the guide lines laid down by the chairman. Among the relevant material, I have a series of articles on 'Namma-rupa vada' (Dialectics of mind and matter) which I have written during the care-taker government, and the paper on human nature and critical

and revolutionary aspects of democracy. Combining their contents with the ideas of socialism, I wrote the first draft of party doctrine and philosophy

The draft contains six chapters with the following headings:

1. Dialectics of matter and mind
2. Reciprocal relation of matter and mind
3. Dialectics of man and his environment
4. Reciprocal relation of man and his environment
5. Dialectical correlation of matter and mind
6. Dialectical correlation of man and his environment

I had the assistance of sergeant clerk Maung Aung Khin, from the Psy-War department, who typed the manuscript and made copies on a duplicating machine.

Before the copies of this manuscript were distributed to revolutionary council members, in the last week of December, 1962 (I think it was 29-12-1962), it was submitted to a special meeting held at Dagon House. Copies were given to General Ne Win, Brig Tin Pe, Col Hla Han, and Lt Col Ko Ko. The presenters were Col Saw Myint, U Saw Oo and I. I started by presenting the chapter titles and their explanation. I then asked for suggestions for more appropriate titles. General Ne Win and the colonels unanimously agreed on the main title 'Lu hnint pat-wun-kyin doe ei in-nya-myin-nya tha-baw-ta-yar'. Three of us who were charged with writing the draft were pleasantly surprised. Even Bogyoke Tin Pe, who had been impressed by Marxist dialectical materialism, openly commended the use of 'in-nya-myin-nya tha-baw-ta-yar'.

(Bogyoke Aung Gyi was not present at that meeting).

The General instructed the copies of the manuscript to be distributed to the revolutionary council members and to ask them to study it. This paper would be discussed at a meeting of the revolutionary council in January.

A special meeting of the revolutionary council was held on January 14 and 15, 1963, in the War Room of the office of the Chief of Staff. All members of the council were present. Brig Aung Gyi was also present; he was healthy. U Saw Oo and I were also allowed to attend.

General Ne Win presided and Col Saw Myint acted as master of ceremonies. The chairman urged the members to thoroughly study 'Lu hnint pat-wun-kyin doe ei in-nya-myin-nya tha-baw-ta-yar', the ideological doctrine of the party. He then asked Col Saw Myint to read the document paragraph by paragraph. The chairman urged the members to 'openly ask questions about points which are not clear and also to suggest amendments or additions'. Brigadiers Aung Gyi and Tin Pe also took part in the discussions. They did not have disagreement with regard to this theoretical doctrine.

General Ne Win eagerly explained, "We have to talk about mind and matter not for other reasons, but for the fact that we want to uphold the principle that man, the owner of mind, is of primary importance in all respects. We are not like those in politics who are arguing mind or matter is primary, but we believe man is primary. This is the essence of the principle of 'in-nya-myin-nya'".

The meeting did not finish in one day. After adjourning for one day, it resumed on January 17. General Ne Win spoke about the corrections and additions he had made in the manuscript. He had initialed in the bottom of the pages in which he made corrections or additions. I was also asked to put my signature at the bottom of all pages, and I did accordingly.

At the meeting that day, Col Khin Nyo, the director of training candidly discussed, "As for me, I must admit, I cannot understand how or why mind and matter are related to politics." To this the general replied in a pleasant voice, "Hey, Bo Khin Nyo, you don't have to worry too much about it; take time to read it leisurely. We can discuss it again and again among us. Then you will understand it".

The meeting closed after the morning session. The council unanimously approved the draft of the in-nya-myin-nya theory. After all it had taken time to be drafted, the revolutionary council chairman has given personal attention to it and made the necessary modifications, and the revolutionary council members had seriously deliberated on it prior to its adoption. The complete text of 'Lu hnint pat-wun-kyin doe ei in-nya-myin-nya tha-baw-ta-yar' was read over the Burma Broadcasting Service radio on the night of January 17, 1963. The announcer was U Kyaw Nyein.

After the party ideology was formally declared, I got involved in preparations to open the revolutionary council's Central School of Political Science. General Ne Win nominated Col Saw Myint as Principal of the school and I as Chief Instructor. That was a special assignment.

The Central School of Political Science, directly administered by the revolutionary council, opened on July 1, 1963, in the campus near Dubern Road (now Parami Rd.), in Yangon. The training course for the first batch of instructors successfully ran from July 1 to November 21. The inaugural address for that course was given by General Ne Win who explained the aims and objectives of Burmese Way to Socialism.

I had performed the duties assigned by the revolutionary council from March 6, 1962 to January 31, 1971, when I retired from my position as an employee of the Ministry of Defense.

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Appendix : A Review

1. As soon as he had taken over state power on March 2, 1962, General Ne Win formed a Revolutionary Council, rather than a military council. That was an indication of his intention to launch a social revolution.
2. The revolutionary council declared its policy on April 30, 1962. Having done that, it organized the Burma Socialist Programme Party on July 4, 1962. These two acts of the revolutionary council gave it the appearance of a 'Political Policy Council' rather than a military council.
3. General Ne Win had once been a politician with the name of Thakin Shu Maung (a member of the Dobama Party faction led by Thakin Ba Sein). He had been a member of the Unit of Thirty Comrades who took military training under the Japanese on Formosa Island (Taiwan), occupied by Japan at the time. On special assignment from General Aung San, he re-entered the country stealthily for covert activities. He took a leading role in the anti-British Underground Unit Movement, also known as the People's Revolutionary Party. All Thirty Comrades including General Ne Win, all members of the Underground Unit, and all members of Burma Independence Army (BIA) took up arms during the independence struggle. True, they were soldiers – they were politicians who became soldiers because of their patriotism.
4. This shows that General Ne Win was not a soldier who turned to politics, but the other way round. Indeed, he was a general with political aptitude. It was with a political outlook, rather than a militarist outlook, that he grabbed political power from the U Nu government.
5. This being so, we ask, "What was General Ne Win's political outlook?"
His political vision was based on the political instabilities in late 1961 and early 1962. He considered that by taking power himself, he would be able to do what he deemed fit and proper, and that the nation was also expecting some kind of change. Linking the two ideas, he came to the decision to stage the coup d'etat.

Once he decided to take charge of government, he had also thought out a certain political agenda. That was, in accordance with internal and external circumstances at the time, a kind of socialist politics, fashionable in developing countries. (I have mentioned in parts 1 and 2 of this document how General Ne Win's inclination to establish a certain form of socialist policy had led Brig Aung Gyi to cautiously commission two of us, U Saw Oo and I, to do what we have done.)

6. Did General Ne Win believe in socialism? If so, what sort of socialism did he like?

It is not easy to give precise answers to these questions. The reason is that General Ne Win never adhered to a rigid political doctrine. His political ideas were not dogmatic, not unchangeable. His method was pragmatic approach, action to be dictated by conditions. Based on my observations, from whatever contacts I have had with him, intimately as well as remotely, and also from what I gathered from other people,

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General Ne Win, my leader, was talented in pragmatic approach to problems, without having studied William James' Pragmatism. This is what I have noted about him.

In his youth, when he was Thakin Shu Maung, General Ne Win had, together with, and under the guidance of, his leader Thakin Ba Sein, studied 'The Communist Manifesto' of Karl Marx and Engels. I have noted it as I have heard about it from the General himself. This means that he was familiar with the basic principles of socialism.

However, like a lot of other leftist political leaders, quite a number in this category, General Ne Win had not got the time, nor the opportunity, to study completely either Marxism or Leninism, or the big and small treatises on socialism and communism. (Even Thakin Soe, the most senior leader of the Marxist movement in Burma, did not get the opportunity to completely study the works on Marxism-Leninism).

Therefore, we cannot say that General Ne Win had systematic and thorough knowledge of socialism.

However, we can say that, in accordance with his pragmatism, beginning around 1960, he started to become interested in the political systems of communist Soviet Russia and East European countries dominated by communists.

The socialist ideology accepted by General Ne Win and also by some colonels led by Brig Tin Pe (revolutionary council members) was to adopt and adapt the socialist political and economic systems practiced in the communist countries at the time. (Essentially, Myanma socialism is similar to this; but it carries characteristics that make it different from communist policies).

7. There are various forms of socialism. One variety is communist socialist propounded by communists who accept Karl Marx's theories. Democratic socialism, or social democracy practiced in England and some European countries is another. In Yugoslavia, the Communist League under Marshal Tito practiced what is known as 'direct producers' management socialism', in which working class organizations managed planned economy. Another form is from China where Mao Tse Dong applied 'the People's Commune System'; but the present system in China is 'One Country Two Systems Policy' laid down by the late leader Deng Xiao Ping. There is yet another type known as 'Liberal Socialism' which works step by step for social equality and justice.

In Burma, the peculiar, perhaps strange, system adopted by revolutionary council chairman General Ne Win is 'the Cooperative Socialist Planning System under the leadership of the party'. The General himself had talked about that system to U Saw Oo and I. But it appears that General Ne Win has aligned himself with the policies of Brig Tin Pe and others who were in favour of socialism with a communist bias.

General Ne Win had told us that the term cooperative reflects socialism in its meaning.

Any way, the Burmese Way to Socialism that existed from March 1962 to September 1988 was truly a 'State Capitalism', which was a socialist system in name, and managed by the state apparatus under a communist-biased one party dictatorship.

This does not imply that State Capitalism is a bad system.

If a socialist system is ever to be established in a developing country (i.e. economically backward country), it must inevitably pass through an age, or a step, of state capitalism. But if the state capitalism is controlled by a 'Democratic Competition between a Party in Power and a

Party in Socialism, both being socialist', and without the government's direct involvement, it should be possible to establish a socialist parliamentary democracy system.

I wonder if such a system was the one which General Ne Win had had in mind. When the business of drawing up a socialist constitution was discussed for the first time, in 1972, he told the meeting held at the President's House, "What I want to say is just as the saying goes, 'by facing the problem now, so that we have no problem in future', I want you consider and decide whether the constitution we are going to write will be a one-party system, or a two-party system". I have attended that meeting on invitation. The participants were dead silent, being either doubtful, or perplexed. "Aye, you've got to consider that; but you have time for it", he continued.

Colonel Than Sein, a member of Brig Tin Pe's clique, which was generally considered to be a leftist group, was sitting next to me. It was quite strange that he said to me in a near whisper, "Hey, Ko Chit Hlaing, I think we should consider what the chairman has said. One-party system is not quite good'. He showed a look of repentance when he said it to me. But, he also said it to U Saw Oo who was sitting near by. Col Kyaw Soe also heard his words. With a gentle nod, he appeared to be contemplating. I still hear Col Than Sein's words and I can still imagine his expression.

I have always thought that if we had adopted a Two-Party System as suggested by General Ne Win, Burma's political history would probably have been different.

8. We have to say that, when he got the opportunity, General Ne Win did what he thought were good for the nation. But his ideas kept changing.

Moreover, General Ne Win did not have bad ill will for other people, nor did he deliberately give trouble to them. But he wasn't tolerant of people who he thought have been unjust to him, or who plotted against him; he used to show them who he was. He used to study people and put that knowledge to use.

While he was in power, General Ne Win made some errors of judgment, leading him to make mistakes. Both in personal matters and in politics he used to apply the 'security first policy' and this had led him to some blunders. But once he knew something was wrong, he used to amend it as soon as possible.

9. We can divide General Ne Win's life into two aspects, personal and political.

As the author of this record, I have no duty to comment on General Ne Win's personal life, nor am I in a position to do it.

But, we ought to study as well as make critical comments about both good and bad aspects of his political life. It is true that he had done great things for the country; but given the human nature, he had done bad things too. There was duality of good and bad in his life.

10. During the last week of November, 1987, General Ne Win invited us, U Saw Oo and me, to his residence on Ady Road (now Maykha Rd). He was free that day and he wanted to talk with us about old days. During our conversation about various subjects, he abruptly asked us a question.

"While we have time together, I have something to tell you", he started the topic, and looking at me he asked, "Hey, you fellow, Phoe Chit Hlaing, do you believe in that thing called destiny?" I was unable to answer him immediately. After a pause I replied, "Yes I believe in it. Destiny means the destination".

Then he continued, "Aye, call it 'kamma' or anything you like, but there is definitely that thing called destiny. I am not going to say other things, but only about myself. My uncle Thakin Nyi, although he's my uncle, we are not many years different in age, let's say he's my brother. Yes, because he was in bad health, I had to get on the ship bound for Japan, to substitute for him. I was with other fellows on the boat. From that moment, my life changed; that was a turning point. Had I not gone on board, I wouldn't have become Bo Ne Win. I just want to call it destiny".

At that point, I remembered something and thinking about it, I asked, "Excuse me, General, I have a question to ask you". "OK. What's that?" he consented.

"It's not something new. U Nyo Mya in his book 'Konbaung shar daw bon' (The search for Konbaung Dynasty), has written some thing to imply that you Bo Gyoke (Ne Win) are a descendent of King Bodaw Paya. He does not mention your name, but I am interested in it".

I couldn't make out whether General Ne Win liked my words or not. And I couldn't make out anything from his expression at that moment

"You seem to have great impression about Konbaung royalty. Because Konbaung kings were bad rulers, we have lost our country. Can you say 'No' to that? I don't know what my younger brother Thein Nyunt has told Ko Nyo Mya. But there's one thing. It's correct to say that I am a descendent of Bo Ton", he replied definitely. Then I arrived at a conclusion. "Although General Ne Win does not explicitly say that he is descended from Bodaw U Waing, he has implicitly implied it. Bo Ton was a General and a close colleague of King Alaung Paya. This is because Bodaw U Waing, alias Padon Min (the founder of Amarapura city) had made Bo Ton's daughter his queen. (For a more complete story, the reader is referred to Oway U Nyo Mya's Konbaung Shardawbon.)

I have reason for telling this episode. Because General Ne Win believes he has royal blood in his veins, he feels, in his unconscious mind, the pride and honour of kings and princes. So I thought there is more 'Royalism' (sic) in him than "Socialism'. Whether he knew it or not, he does have 'Commandism' (sic) working in his mind.

11. People used to say that the so called Ma-sa-la era, that period of revolutionary council and Myanma Socialist Lanzin Party was a period of military government.

But the truth is the Ma-sa-la era was a period of one-party dictatorship. Ma-sa-la era should not be said to be a time when the country was ruled by military officers. This is because the Tatmadaw was just an organization which had to obey the orders and follow the policies of the revolutionary council, the Council of State, Ma-sa-la party etc. I wish to say, from the legal

point of view, as well as from an objective point of view, 'the Tatmadaw is not responsible for the good or bad things that had taken place during the Ma-sa-la rule.' (I do not seek other people's agreement; I am just stating my view.)

12. Events have taken place. But whatever they were, although the leadership of the Myanmar Socialist Lanzin Party declared its democratic principle with the motto 'From the People to the People' in the constitution, we find that it failed to practice that principle consistently and dutifully. This has led the party away from the people, getting further and further apart, and thus losing the respect and confidence of the people. That is how it was forced to get off the political stage.

Finished December 3, 1995

U Chit Hlaing

IV. APPENDICES

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. 10:1.1, Additional Material on Nagani

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

No. 10:3, Ba Hein and Hla Shwe on Capitalism

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

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

No. 10:6, Nu, *Gandalarit*

No. 10:7, Mogyo, *José Rizal*

No. 10:8, Three Books on World War and Burma

No. 10:9, Two Works on the History of the Russian Revolution

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

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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