

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

IN BURMA :

1962 - 1974

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BURMA : 1962-1974

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MAUNG MAUNG

Centre for South, Southeast and Central Asian Studies

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi-110067

1984

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Gram : JAYENU

Telephone : 652282
652114


New Mehrauli Road,
NEW DELHI-110067.

DR B. D. ARORA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
SOUTH-EAST ASIAN STUDIES DIVISION
CENTRE FOR SOUTH, SOUTHEAST, AND
CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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It is certified that the dissertation
entitled "POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN BURMA:
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partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Philosophy of the
University, is a bonafide and original work
to the best of our knowledge and may be placed
before the examiners for evaluation.


BIMAL PRASAD
Chairman


B. D. ARORA
Supervisor

TO MY WIFE CISSIE

P R E F A C E

The problems faced by many third world countries after gaining independence are manifold. One of the gnawing problems is finding a viable political system which is conducive to socio-economic welfare of the masses. The present industrialized nations passed through various phases of socio-economic development over a period of centuries to achieve the requisite advanced state in which they are today. The emerging, developing nations were expected to attain this advancement through leaps and bounds in a few decades.

Burma, too, has been involved in finding a suitable political system which would usher in welfare for the people. This research work attempts to throw some light on the endeavours of the Burmese leaders to achieve a welfare state, and, in particular, highlights the multifarious factors following independence which resulted in the army take-over of March 2, 1962.

This dissertation deals primarily with the rise of the army leadership in Burma in 1962 upto the adoption of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma in early January, 1974.

Chapter I of this study is concerned with the topographical, demographic, ethnic, socio-economic and political set-up of the country. It tries to analyse the background events leading to the March 2, 1962 coup d'état by the then Army Chief of Staff General Ne Win.

The second Chapter traces the challenges to the military regime in the political, economic and social spheres and how the army leaders coped with such challenges.

Chapter III analyses the evolution and growth of the Burma Socialist programme party which became the tool of the Revolutionary Council of the military leaders to legitimize their regime.

The fourth Chapter assesses the achievements and failures of the junta leadership in establishing a mono-party state and an authoritarian government.

The last Chapter endeavours to present the findings of the study covering the whole twelve-year period with a view to suggesting some future trends in Burmese politics.

In discussing the various reasons that precipitated the 1962 army seizure of power, the implementation of the army rulers' policy decisions, the government's performance in the economic realm, the ethnic pluralism dominating Burmese society and other factors, care has been taken to present the Burmese point of view. This scholar is of the opinion that any analysis, assessment, appraisal or evaluation of the developments in Burma should be done from the Burmese angle of perception.

This scholar wishes to record his appreciation to Professor B.D. Arora without whose valuable guidance this work would not have been possible to complete. He also wishes to thank Professor Vishal Singh for his encouragement; to his colleague U Aung Nyein at the Burmese Unit (External Services), All India Radio, Delhi, for generously offering to type the parts in Burmese script; to U Kyaw Sein, Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department, Mandalay, for helping to procure valuable primary source material; to Mr Tawatchai Koopiron, of the Royal Embassy of Thailand for his help in xeroxing certain material; to the Heads and Staffs of the JNU, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, and the

Indian Council of World Affairs Libraries for their unstinted co-operation.

Lastly, this author wishes to thank his daughters Thet Thet, Myat Myat, and Pyone Pyone Htwe for bearing with him, and at times for their impatience which prompted him to finish the work. Otherwise it would have been like the Burmese saying: အရေ: ကောင်း ဒိန်း: ခေင်း: ဖက်ယဉ်။ which means, "As you are about to concentrate, there is an unwarranted disturbance or diversion of attention."

Delhi.
November 1984.

My Maung
MAUNG MAUNG

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

Burma has, since its independence in January 1948, been in the process of establishing a political system suitable to traditions, ethos and genius of its own people. Historically, it has absorbed the best of Indian culture and Theravada Buddhism. During the period of British colonialism beginning in 1885, the emerging Burmese elites came to imbibe Western liberal ideas. The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 inspired the initial stirrings of Burmese nationalism. Growing national aspirations among the people culminated in the Japanese occupation of the country during the Second World War, and the grant of nominal independence. This type of subjugation--Japanese fascism--created the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) under General Aung San which ultimately led the country towards national independence in January 1948.

Burma adopted the British parliamentary system of government. The failure of the civilian leadership under U.Nu to work this system, certain anomalies in the Burmese Constitution, insurgencies by minority

groups, intra-party schisms, and an alien-dominated national economy led to a military-engineered coup d'état on March 2, 1962.

The study of all these factors is necessary to assess the situation which precipitated the crisis of the 1962 army take-over.

The formation of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) in the first year of military rule and the effort of the coup leadership to legitimize itself through various measures led finally to the adoption of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma in 1974, making the country a mono-party state.

During its evolution, the BSPP through the policies enunciated in the Burmese way to Socialism, declared its role as a 'historic task to save the country'. A decade of this historic role is long enough to assess the successes and/or failures registered. As such, a critical analysis of the BSPP, the political organ of the army or the Revolutionary Council (RC) is in order.

Some Third World countries have been having military rule for many years. As such, the selected topic of study

is significant, as an effort will be made to show how far a military model in a Third World society is more efficacious than a civilian model.

The year 1962 marks a watershed in the political developments of Burma after independence. It was in 1962 that the civilian leadership was replaced by a military leadership which has still not returned to the barracks. Many political and socio-economic changes were effected in Burma which had wide-ranging repercussions on the people of the country and the world. The year 1974 is also important as the initial phase of the military leadership was legitimised with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma.

Burma, bordered by two big influential neighbours, China and India, has turned in on itself to seek a Burmese future independent of its neighbours and the wider world. Isolation remains a priority interest of the ruling military elite. An attempt will be made to interpret the various reasons for such an attitude, particularly from the Burmese point of view.

In the period of study, certain questions arise. Why did the system of parliamentary democracy fail to achieve political stability despite majority support in the general elections of 1960? Was it the fault of the civilian leadership? What was the objective situation then prevailing? What were the aims and objectives of the military leaders in 1962? What were the initial advantages of the army leadership vis-a-vis the civilian leadership? To what extent did they succeed in using BSPP as an instrument to legitimise their rule? How far did the army leadership succeed in trying to stamp out ethnic and communist insurgencies? Has the problem of insurgency any relevance to the geographical location of Burma? What are the prospects of return to civilian rule in Burma after 12 years of military domination?

Answers to these and a host of other important and related questions can be sought from a large volume of literature on Burmese history, politics and economy. Besides, this researcher has been born in Burma, has been actively associated with the political and economic activities of the BSPP, and is a native

Burmese-language speaker. He is in touch with certain Burmese sources from which he can get relevant government and Party journals and publications. The study will have a descriptive historical methodology within an analytical framework. The available Burmese language materials will be used to project a Burmese viewpoint as far as possible, apart from utilizing secondary source materials.

1.2. The Background

Political developments in any country, especially so in the Third World are primarily determined by its geography, history and the socio-cultural make-up of its people. Burma is no exception. Certain geographical and historical features have moulded Burma's political developments for many decades. The mountains, valleys and lowlands have harboured various ethnic peoples and provided refuge to diverse socio-cultural and ethnic groups. Burma's ethnic groups remain compartmentalised by linguistic and racial diversity,

religious pluralism and lack of ideological unity.¹ The people are not as homogeneous as they appear to be, and this factor has been a major cause of the political changes during the nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies. Following its achievement of independence in January 1948, it came into existence under the aegis of a constitution which was expected to give the people the benefit of representative government and the rule of law. But the attempt to establish the rule of law in Burma did not succeed. Burma reverted to authoritarianism when the ethnic minorities showed fissiparous tendencies which threatened to divide the country before the army took over on March 2, 1962.

1.3. The Land

Burma is bounded by India to the West, China to the northeast, Bangladesh to the West, Laos to the east and Thailand to the southeast.² The delta region in

1. Guy J. Pauker and Others, Diversity and Development in Southeast Asia : The Coming Decade, (New York, 1979), p.23.

2. See map no. 1, opposite p.1.

the southern part is the most fertile and hence the home of the ethnic majority, the Burmans.³

Although Burma's topographic regions are conducive to political unity by nature, there are many points of difference between the peoples of the lowlands and those of the hills of upper Burma. The predominance of north-south valleys, mountains and rivers contributed to the location of the country's chief cities and towns along a north-south axis in the interior of the land.⁴ The division of the country into the plains and delta on one side, and the mountains on the other, has been instrumental in the development of the political and cultural heartland of Burma along the river routes and the deltaic plains. This physical separation of people within Burma has contributed to the growth of differences among them in language, culture and political consciousness.

3. See map no. 2.

'Burmans' denotes the majority ethnic people, as distinguished from the Shans, the Mons, the Karens, the Kachins, the Arakanese, the Chins, the Kayahs and so on. 'Burmese' denotes all the peoples of Burma.

4. P. Sharan, Government and Politics of Burma, (New Delhi, 1983) op.cit., p.2.

This has led to the persistence of separate identity and aspirations despite the strength of forces to bleed or submerge minority cultures with the ethnically Burman centre.⁵

1.4. Burma's natural resources

Burma's topography is such that the Western, Central, Eastern and Tenasserim Yoma Ranges and other ranges have made Burma's climate equitable, and monsoon rains sufficient for the country. Similarly the rivers have helped communications to develop and agriculture to flourish.⁶ So there is proliferation in timber, medicinal herbal plants, and bamboo. Rice is the main agricultural crop. Gold, silver, jade, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, pearls, tin, tungsten, wolfram, lead, zinc, copper, coal and crude oil are some of the important land and marine products.⁷

5. Ibid., p.3.

6. တိုင်း ဂင်း ဘာ: လူ မိုး မှာ: ၏ နယ် ချဲ့ ဆန္ဒ တွင် ရေး ဘိဇ်: ။
(Tainyin-Tha-lu-mys-mya-it-ne-chet-sant-kyinye-Thamaing) "The anti-colonial struggle of the National Races", BSPP H. Qtrs., Rangoon, July 1977, edn.3, p.20), free translation.

7. See map no.3, showing rainfall and resources.

1.5. Strategic Location

Topographical realities determine the strategic importance of Burma. It is wedged between two great neighbours, India and China. Burma's longtime association with neighbouring India has been more important culturally than politically and historic contacts have been mainly by sea.⁸ The mountain ranges and highlands along its land borders make it partially isolated from its neighbours. Inaccessible mountainous terrain provides sanctuary to various insurgent groups making it difficult for the government to launch anti-rebel operations. The Burma-Thailand-Laos "Golden Triangle" border area is a haven for opium smugglers.⁹

The Irrawaddy river is navigable up to the city of Bhamo near the Chinese border. Coastal delta areas bordering the Gulf of Martaban in the Bay of Bengal receive ample water for wet rice cultivation. The delta expanse of lower Burma constitutes one of the

8. John F. Cady, The United States and Burma, (Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 2.

9. The Golden Triangle area is one of the lushest areas of the world for growing poppies. See, Times of India, 23 March, 1984, "Kutch Serves as narcotics conduit for Europe" by R.K. Misra, p.17 containing a reference to the Golden Triangle.

largest contiguous rice fields in the world. Though Burma has an area of 261,760 square miles, its density of population is lower than most of the other states of Southeast Asia.¹⁰

2. The People

The indigenous peoples are all of Mongoloid stock, and at least remotely akin. But the country divides naturally into the plains and delta, and the mountains. Politically, culturally and economically, Burma's development was along the valleys watered by the rivers, and along the delta plains. The mountains along the borders provided barriers both against would-be invaders and against homogeneity of the peoples of the low lands and the hills.¹¹

The Burmans, ethnically related to the Tibetans, comprise about 75 per cent of the total population of

10. Joseph Silverstein, Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation. (New York, 1977), p.43.

Burma's density ratio is 110.6 per square mile, below Southeast Asia's average of 155 p.s.m. It is also the largest mainland state in Southeast Asia.

11. Sharan, n.4, p.2.

28,900,000.¹² Among the largest non-Burman groups are the Karens and the Shans. The Kachins and the Chins in the uphill country are about 300,000 each.¹³ Members these non-Burman groups and other hill peoples have been involved in rebellious since 1948.¹⁴

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12. See Far Eastern Economic Review Yearbook 1974.
Population is according to 1973 census.
13. See Table 1. Ethno-Linguistic Composition of Burma and map N.4 on distribution of principal peoples of Burma.
14. Two different ethnic Burman Communist factions have also been in revolt since 1948.

These groups occupy strategic positions along Burma's border with India, China, and Thailand. In the plains and lower Burma are the Mons, the Arakanese and the Delta Karens, groups of which are in revolt against the government.

The dominant religion throughout Burma is Theravada Buddhism.¹⁵ The delta Karens of the plains, the Kachins, Chins and other remote hill tribes are Christians.

On the basis of culture, people of Burma can be classified as hills or plains type. People living

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15. The alternative 'Hinayana Buddhism' is considered derogatory by the Buddhists of Burma, and hence will be avoided.

Theravada Buddhism, as practised in Burma, is concerned with the Theoretical search for Neibban (Nirvana) (an escape from the endless cycle of births and deaths) through good deeds (Kutho) in the present, according to the law of deeds (Karma). Nearly all of the Burman and Shan population, and ~~and~~ many among the Mons, Arakanese, the Kayahs and Karens, constituting some 75% to 80% of the total population, are Buddhist.

on the slopes or tops of hills in small, autonomous units, with communal land tenures and rigid clan customs may be classified as the hills type. They practise a shifting type of agriculture and hunt and raise nearly everything they eat. The Kachins, Chins and hill Karens fit roughly into this pattern. 'Plains culture' refers to a situation where people living on the plains or in valleys have a relatively complex social and political organization extending beyond the family or village group. The Burmans, Mons, Shans, Arakanese and Delta Karens fit generally into this category.¹⁶

So, these geographical, religious, demographic and socio-cultural differences have created problems of ethnic integration with the result that there have been efforts by some groups to assert indigenous independence through secessionist movements.

The government, since independence, has been overwhelmingly controlled by the Burman ethnic

16. Sharen, n.4, p. 5.

majority. The Burman ruling elite has purged most of the Karens from the high ranks of the military. Uptil now there has been no systematic effort at long-term reconciliation between Burmans and non-Burmans. The multi-ethnic diversity of the Burmese people and the domination of the government by the Burman majority continue to cause strains leading to conflict. The insurgencies in Burma are the result, predominantly, of deeply rooted antagonisms between the majority and minority ethnic groups.¹⁷

3. History

3.1. Ancient Past

It was Anawrahta (1044-77 A. D.) who conquered Thetou and introduced Theravada Buddhism with the help of Shin Arakan. He conquered Arakan and received homage from the Shan chiefs. He was thus the first Burmese king to have given a semblance of unity to the country.

17. Pauker, n.1, p. 158.

D. G. E. Hall, the well-known British historian of South-East Asia, notes:

"When Anawrahta died in 1077, his rule extended over the greater part of Burma proper, northern Arakan, and northern Tenasserim, while a number of Shan chieftains in the mountainous regions to the east of central Burma acknowledged his suzerainty. His achievements left a permanent impression upon his country and people."¹⁸

The Pagan Dynasty originated by Anawrahta ended in 1287 when Kubla Khan's armies destroyed the Pagan Empire.

The efforts of the ethnic majority, i.e. the Burmans or "core" people residing in the fertile delta regions to dominate the ethnic minorities or "non-core" people of the uplands and mountain regions, are evident in the two successive dynasties: the Toungoo Dynasty (1287-1752) and the Konbaung Rule (1752-1885). The former dynasty saw Tabinshwe-hti (1581-50), who conquered the

18. D. G. E. Hall, Burma (London, 1956), p. 18.

Talaings [sic]., Bayinnaung (1551-81) who tried to unite the various Burmese Kingdoms and check rebellion.¹⁹ The last of the Burmese dynasty, i.e. the Konbaung line of kings had Alaungpaya (1752-60) who conquered Dagon (now known as Rangoon) in 1755. This line of kings occupied the throne until the last king Thibaw Min, who was deposed by the British in 1885.²⁰

3.2. British Colonial Era

Before the British imposed their colonial rule over Burma, many other Europeans tried to do so. It started with the Portuguese freebooter Philip De Britto.²¹ In 1627, the Dutch, English and French also made incursions into Burma. The British annexed different parts of Burma, starting with 1826, at different times, extending over a period of sixty years. The three Anglo-Burmese wars of

19. The correct word is "Mon" from "Roman", (Ramanya ဂရိမ္မာ). 'Talaing' is derogatory, and hence will be avoided.

20. Hall, n.18, p. 130.

21. The Anti-colonial Struggle of the National Races op.cit., p.21.

1826, 1852 and 1885, resulted in the complete colonialization of the country.²²

As a consequence of Burma's defeat in the Third Anglo-Burmese War, it was made part of the British-Indian Empire. In 1935, the British Parliament enacted the Government of Burma Act. It was brought into force on 1 April 1937, as a result of which Burma was separated from India.²³ It was no more than a recognition of Burma's separate identity.

Burma was, in fact, very much a region apart, and alike in its ethnic character, social structure, and economic development as well as its physical geography, it belonged with the rest of Southeast Asia rather than with the Indian subcontinent.

As colonial rulers, the British gave no serious thought to the development of anything like a 'national' culture or a 'national' society that would transcend the group loyalties of the Burmans and of the minority groups

22. Bandyopadhyaya, Kalyani, Burma and Indonesia, ~~(New Delhi, 1983)~~ (New Delhi, 1983), p.2.

23. Sharan, n.4, p.10.

in the country. On the other hand, the non-Burman groups were encouraged to retain their group characteristics. The "excluded areas" were separately administered from Burma proper. Thus the people of Burma were governed by British masters, in ways that served to perpetuate their ethnic and social and cultural differences.

The British period also brought about significant changes in the economic life of the people of Burma. In pre-British times, the economy was a predominantly agricultural subsistence economy. At that time there were virtually no imports or exports. But the inclusion of Burma in the British Empire transformed the Burmese economy significantly. The introduction of cash crop economy created an influx of alien traders who formed a business community in different parts of the country. A market for Burma rice began to open up first in India and later on in Europe.²⁴ Under British rule, Burma became the largest exporter of rice.

The Burmans, who gradually came to settle in and around the new, enlarged urban areas, adopted a

24. Uma Shankar Singh, India and Burma 1948-1962, (New Delhi, 1979), op.cit., p.3.

western veneer over their deeply rooted Burmese Buddhist values. The Young Men's Buddhist Associations (YMBAs) were formed in a few big towns after the pattern of YMCAs.²⁵ Until 1917, its activities were only indirectly political. In that year Britain announced a gradual development of self-governing institutions for India. The Burmese nationalists interpreted the policy as applicable to Burma as a province of India. But the Government of India Act of 1919, applied only to India proper. This sequence of events jolted Burma politically, and in 1920 the YMBA, under the stress of the developing situation, became the decidedly political General Council of Buddhist Associations (OCBAS).²⁶ The spark that touched off the school strike of 1920, the Rangoon University students' boycott, changed the political atmosphere.²⁷ It resulted in a nation-wide anti-British

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25. YMBA (ကယံဘုဒ္ဓဘာသာသမဂ္ဂ) started in 1903. U. Ottoma and U. Wisara, two leading monks who fought against the British repression kindled the flames of nationalism.
26. Richard Butwell, U Nu of Burma, (Stanford University Press, 1963), p. 7.
27. The boycott was a protest against the University Act of 1920, which gave chances only to well-to-do parents' children and had provisions for one year's Preliminary Course for admission to the University. This boycott of December 5, 1920 is observed as national day in Burma. (See, Anti-Colonial Struggle, p. 184, (free translation).

protest of unparalleled dimensions. It led to the establishment of "national schools", schools designed to provide an education that was Burmese in orientation and to demonstrate the competence of the Burmese to educate their children.

The next stage of the struggle for freedom came when the Do Bama Asi-ayone (We Burmans organization) was formed in 1930. It included leaders who called themselves Thakins (masters).²⁸ Following this, the saya san peasant rebellion of December 22, 1930, protesting against British repression, and the 1938 Oil Workers' strike had become landmarks in the history of the anti-colonial struggle by the peoples of Burma. So in 1940, Thakin Aung San, who was General Secretary of the GCBA

28. The Do Bama Asi-ayone (ဝိပဗ္ဗသေဝဏ်း အရုံး) was started in 1930 with a song calling on citizens to respect and love the Burmese race, religion and language. A group of thirty thakins ('Thirty Comrades') went secretly to Japan during World War II to receive military training to fight against the British.

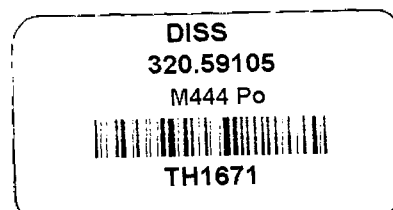
declared in its manifesto: "We stand for complete independence of Burma and for the introduction of a free, independent people's democratic Republic....."²⁹

3.3. The Japanese impact

A few members of the Do Bama Asi-ayone had become intensely nationalistic.³⁰ Their political objective was to achieve full independence as soon as possible by any possible means. They were attracted by the Japanese plan to build the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere with the slogan: "Asia for Asians!" The young Thakins of the Asi-ayone found Japan a source of inspiration, a country which had won a great victory

29. Sharan, n.4, p.16. Thakin Aung San joined the DO BAMA Asi-ayone of Thakins in 1938. He went to Japan for military training against the British. He led the resistance against the Japanese Army on 27th March 1945 and allied with the British. He was elected President of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (APFPL) in August 1945. He was assassinated on July 19, 1947, together with six other colleagues. (see also Aung San of Burma, compiled and edited by Maung Maung, The Hague, 1962 (self-portrait), pp. 3-6).

30. These were a group of young Thakins in the organisation.



TH-1671

over Russia in the first decade of the twentieth century.³¹ So Aung San was sent to Japan for military training early in 1942, when the Japanese invaded Burma, he returned with them at the head of a small contingent of thirty men ('thirty comrades') trained there.³² On August 1, 1943, Burma was granted nominal independence under Da Ba Maw as *Mipati* or Dictator. But the Japanese broke their promise of handing over the administration to the Burmese themselves. The Burmese became suspicious of the Japanese pledges. Aung San and the other army leaders informed Da Ba Maw, who headed the government set up by the Japanese, that they realized Japan had "cheated" them.³³

Invaders held the controls too tightly to suggest that they were interested in any government but their own.³⁴

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31. This referred to the Russo-Japanese war of 1904.
32. For details on the Japanese interregnum see Burma and General Ne Win by Maung Maung (Bombay, 1959) pp. 70-71; 109, 157, 168-69, and Burma Under the Japanese by Thakin Su (London, 1947) pp. xiii-xxv; pp. 74, 96, 98. Later Aung San became General Aung San.
33. Butwell, n.26, p. 36.
34. Victor Purcell, The Revolution in Southeast Asia (London, 1962), p. 71.

The attempt to place Japanese on a level with English as a second language in the schools was an example of the many differences the Burmese had with the Japanese.

Aung San soon lost his illusions about Japan's obligation to respect Burma's independence, and made contacts with the secret anti-Japanese resistance movement going on in the country. The resistance activities coincided with the declining fortunes of the Japanese in the war. In August 1944, he convened a secret meeting of nationalist leaders and towards the end of the same year, he succeeded in obtaining the support of the British military authorities. Subsequently, an Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO) came into being. The Burma Defence Army (BDA), renamed the Burma National Army (BNA), rose in revolt against the Japanese.³⁵

The Japanese occupation had actually stimulated nationalist feelings amongst the people. The resistance was "an essential part of our struggle for national freedom," according to Aung San.³⁶ After the British re-occupied Rangoon in May 1945, the AFO was renamed the Anti-Fascist

35. It happened on March 27, 1945. This day is celebrated as Armed Forces Day.

36. Maung Maung n.31, pp. 168-9. See also John F Cady, Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia (New Jersey, 1966), p.136, on the proffered assistance of Aung San to strike the Japanese.

People's Freedom League (AFPFL).³⁷ The AFPFL asked for free elections without delay. "Dominion status within the British Commonwealth," Aung San explained, "is associated in our minds with inferiority complex and alien things. We must be free to make our own decisions about our future."³⁸ The impact of Japanese fascism on Burma was a feeling of "intense nation-wide impatience to carry on the struggle for political freedom against the British administration that had returned to the country."³⁹ Aung San continued his negotiations with the British, and in January 1947, arrived at an agreement with Clement Attlee, then Prime Minister of the Labour Government in London, for granting of independence to Burma.

37. It was to this League that the British transferred power in January 1948. The AFPFL ruled Burma as a united party till April 1958 when it broke up into two factions -- the 'Clean', and the 'Stable' factions.

38. Sharan, n.4, p. 17.

39. Burma Speaks (A Collection of Broadcast Talks from the Burma Broadcasting Station) Rangoon, Ministry of Information, 1950 "Burma Since 1945" p.130, by U. Tin Aung.

There had been ethnic disagreement between the majority Burmans and the indigenous minority groups before the grant of independence. Aung San was able to unite the Shans and other indigenous ethnic minorities with the Burmans, in a compromise constitution adopted in 1947. The constitution pledged eventual grants of autonomy to be realized through the united Burmese state. On 12 February 1947, therefore, the historic Panglong Agreement was signed between General Aung San and the Kachin, Chin, and Shan delegates to stay united with equal rights.⁴⁰

On 19 July 1947, General Aung San and six of his Cabinet colleagues were assassinated. This took place within six months of the Panglong Agreement. It was the greatest shock to the national movement in the history of Burma. A leadership void was created with the untimely deaths of the national leaders. But, subsequently, Thakin Nu, who was President of the Constituent Assembly (elected in April 1947), signed the Nu-Attlee Agreement on 17 October 1947 whereby the British government "agreed to recognize

40. Anti-colonial Struggle, n.6, p. 266. (See also copy of the agreement in appendices. The Karens of the Salween District, the Kayahs of the Chins of the Arakan Hill Tracts the Nagas and the Was were not represented in the Agreement. This led to multi-ethnic insurgencies after independence).

the Republic of the Union of Burma as a fully independent, sovereign state."⁴¹ Britain also conceded the right to Burma to leave the Commonwealth. On 4 January 1948, Burma achieved its independence.

3.4. Problems of independence

Burma started its career under a parliamentary democratic constitution adopted and enacted on 24 September 1947.⁴² Soon after independence, many in opposition to the government, and even some of those in favour of it, started making efforts to bring it down, through unconstitutional means. Labour strikes, riots, insurrections, rebellions and desertions of soldiers and officers from the army took place in various parts of the country. The confused state of affairs that prevailed in Burma in the immediate post-independence period was an expression of the weakness inherent in the body politic. There were too many political parties and factions in the country. The AFPFL itself was composed of a number of affiliated

41. Sharan, n.4, p.21. Thakin Nu (Now plain U Nu) was the first Prime Minister of Burma 1948-56. He was in custody 1962-66, and left Burma in 1969 to organize an opposition movement to the military regime.

42. Ibid., pp. 25-6.

bodies. The result was personal rivalry and clash of personalities.⁴³

On account of disturbed conditions in the country, general elections for Parliament were held on a staggered and regional basis between 1951 and 1952. In the elections, the APPFL won by an over-whelming majority, and the opposition was very weak. U Nu at the head of the APPFL remained the Prime Minister. However, political predominance made the APPFL arrogant. The APPFL won in the next general elections in 1956 as well, but with a reduced majority. The opposition National United Front (NUP) scored almost 20 per cent of the seats in the Chamber of Nationalities, the Lower House of Burmese Parliament.⁴⁴

In June 1958, the APPFL split into the 'Clean' faction led by Prime Minister U Nu, and the 'Stable' APPFL led by U Ba Swe,⁴⁵ leader of the Trade Union Congress. The split was so close that U Nu had to

43. W. S. Dassi, A Pageant of Burmese History (Orient Longman, 1961) pp. 279-80.

44. Chamber of Deputies had 250 seats, and Chamber of Nationalities had 125 seats, as of 1958, in the bicameral Parliament.

45. U Ba Swe was Premier after the 1956 elections, and after the 1958 APPFL split, became leader of the 'Stable' Faction.

depend on the pro-Communist NUF to maintain a parliamentary majority. After the split, U Nu adopted a more lenient attitude towards the communists and other rebel organizations, offering them a complete amnesty.⁴⁶ The Burmese Army was alarmed by the policies of U Nu. The Army leaders apprehended that U Nu was not only carrying on his government with the support of Communists in Parliament, but also offering favourable terms to the Communist insurgents, inviting them to surrender and ^{return} to the legal fold. Besides, they also felt that in the civil life of the country, particularly in the civil departments of government, indiscipline and negligence of duty had been on the increase. It appears that under these circumstances, General Ne Win, Chief of the Army Staff, advised U Nu to peacefully transfer power to the Army, so that the country might be saved from "the evil current". U Nu, therefore, placed authority in the hands of General Ne Win through an act of the Burmese Parliament.⁴⁷ The Burmese military, albeit temporarily, took over power.

46. Sharan, n.4, p. 57.

47. Desai, n.43, op.cit., pp. 291-292.

General Ne Win's government took office in September 1958 as a Caretaker Government. The Parliament extended its tenure so that free and fair elections could be held in adequately secure conditions.

In the 1960 elections, U Nu's 'Clean' AFPFL, which had taken the new title of Union Party or (Pyidaungsu Party) won 156 seats as against only 34 by the 'Stable' AFPFL.⁴⁸ It was a massive vote in favour of a civilian rule. The new government was in a position to enact its programme, for it had gained a large national mandate, and the army had retired from politics. The programme called for strengthening of democratic institutions, establishment of Buddhism as the state religion, creation of new states within the Union for the Mons and Arakanese, and development of a plan for promoting economic and social growth. The establishment of Buddhism as a state religion had serious implications for the non-Buddhists. Hence it alarmed the non-Buddhist minorities. The secessionist movement among the shans also continued unabated.⁴⁹

48. Sharan, n.4, p. 64.

49. Articles 201 and 202 of the 1947 Constitution expressly gave the right to every state to secede from the Union after ten years of the coming into operation of the Constitution. See Ministry of Judicial Affairs, Burma, The Constitution of the Union of Burma, Rangoon, p.30.

These created serious obstacles for the government. Besides, following the restoration of civilian rule, crime and lawlessness increased due to relaxation of internal security measures. Even within the Union Party, factionalism developed. Only the power and prestige of U Nu prevented an open split and a repetition of the events of 1958.⁵⁰ The government became seriously preoccupied with the growing discontent among the minorities. A federal seminar was held in February and March 1962 at which all leaders from Burma proper and the states were invited to express their views publicly and to examine the various alternative solutions advocated by the participants.⁵¹ There was a growing feeling in the army that the Nu government was unwilling or unable to deal strictly enough with such problems. So it was that on March 2, 1962, General Ne Win and the Army returned to power in a lightning - like coup d'état that contrasted sharply with the constitutionally-camouflaged seizure of power in 1958. Forming a 17-man Revolutionary Council of senior

50. Silverstein, n.10, pp. 29-30.

51. Sharan, n.4, p. 66. (The U Nu March pre-dawn coup d'état was executed on the night of 1 March. So it meant the seminar functioned only upto 1 March.

officers to govern the country, General Ne Win declared in a radio broadcast that the Armed Forces "had taken over the responsibility and the task of keeping the country's safety, owing to greatly deteriorating conditions in the country".⁵²

Brigadier Aung Gyi, next in importance to General Ne Win in the new government, declared at a press conference on March 7:

"In Burma, we had economic, religious and political crises with the issue of federalism the most important reason for the coup... A small country like Burma cannot afford division....."⁵³

"The rebels were increasing their activities", General Ne Win observed, "and the political pillar was collapsing."⁵⁴

So came to an end the democratic parliamentary phase of government in Burma. The military resumed power to protect the country from disintegration.

52. The Guardian (Rangoon), 3 March 1962, p. 1.

53. Butwell, n.26, p. 240.

54. Ibid., p. 240.

CHAPTER II

The Military Regime:

Challenges of Development:

Political, Social and Economic

2.1. The Military Coup d'état of March 2, 1962

Initially, U Nu's second premiership was welcomed by the people as a relief from right military control imposed by General Ne Win since 1958. But he soon encountered serious difficulties in trying to carry out promises made during the election campaign. He failed to effectively deal with the stiff opposition accompanying his attempts to make Buddhism the official religion of the state. He also could not curb student unrest. The army leadership viewed his regime as leading the country towards social and political disintegration. It was reinforced in its belief when U Nu started negotiations with ethnic minority groups seeking autonomy within the Burmese Union.¹ It was also generally believed that U Nu would generally give in to the secessionist pressures of the minorities. The federal seminar in February-March 1962 provided the immediate occasion for the army to strike against the civilian

f. John F. Cady, The United States and Burma, (Harvard University Press, 1976), p.23- 'autonomy' here implied 'federalism', as mentioned by Brigadier Aung Syi. See Chapter I p. 31.

government and impose its own rule.

On the night of March 2, 1962, the Army led by General Ne Win overthrew the Constitutional Government, arrested members of the government and the leaders of the minorities, dismissed Parliament, and took full control of the state.

After the coup d'état all power was vested in a 17-member Revolutionary Council (RC) led by General Ne Win himself.

Speaking for this body Brigadier Aung Gyi, an important member of the RC, was emphatic in declaring that the country could not afford any division.³

As the coup took place, the authority of the civilian politicians was in disarray. The potential protesters lacked both popular backing and self-confidence. The general mood was one of reluctant acquiescence. The possibility of territorial disintegration of the Union was a

3. Guardian (Rangoon), March 8, 1962.

valid concern. The immediate evidence suggested that General Ne Win's basic objectives were political and economic. He was determined to prevent the imminent break-up of the Union of Burma, to eliminate alien middlemen in the commercial sphere, and to establish state control over the economy for nationalistic ends.⁴

The people generally felt that the military rule would last for a short time only. The military leaders said that the purpose of the coup was solely to preserve the Union, restore order and harmony in society, and solve some of the economic problems that had cropped up over the previous two years. But the new rulers - the Revolutionary Council - initiated and pursued policies with long-term goals. A month after the coup d'état, Brigadier Sein Win, member of the Council, characterized the military's seizure of power as the second half of the revolution that began with the fight for independence, now the Army's task was to transform the society to socialism.⁵

4. Cady, n.1, pp. 236-7.

5. Silverstein, n.2, p.80.

The coup leaders said of themselves: "We are just Burmese revolutionaries and socialists who are keeping pace with history."⁶

On 8 March, the members in charge of various ministries were authorized to assume the designation of ministers. On the following day, the Revolutionary Council vested General Ne Win with full executive, legislative and judicial powers with retrospective effect from 2 March. The Supreme Court and the High Court had already been disbanded and a Court of final appeal created in their place. Five local state Supreme Councils had replaced the Shan, Kachin, Karen, Kayah and Chin affairs Councils.⁷

2.2. The Ideological Formulations of the Revolutionary Council

From the outset, the coup leaders never seemed to doubt the legitimacy of their actions. From as far back

6. Ibid., p.80.

7. P. Sharan, Government and Politics of Burma (New Delhi, 1983), p. 67.

as World War II, the army had viewed itself as the driving force in the struggle for independence, the commanders had made the decision on the eve of the end of the war that Aung San should leave the military and lead the nation.⁸

With a view to seeking popular support and informing the people where and how the military intended to lead the revolution, the coup leaders evolved a new ideology that would become their blueprint. This ideology is contained in two documents - the Burmese Way to Socialism (BWS), and the Philosophy of the Burma Socialist Programme Party: The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment (SCME).⁹ Both were published during the first year of the military rule. As the SCME is more theoretical as a formulation of the military's

8. Ba Than, The Roots of the Revolution (Rangoon, 1962), p. 59.

9. Government of Burma, Revolutionary Council, The Burmese Way to Socialism: The Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1962), (appeared on April 30, 1962).

The Philosophy of the Burma Socialist Programme Party: The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1963), (appeared on January 18, 1963).

concept of a national ideology than the BWS, which focuses on the approach to be taken on immediate economic goals, an analysis of the former, first, would be appropriate.

According^{to} the SCME, the ideology of the RC rests on three basic principles: change, revolution, and socialism. It draws its ideas from a variety of contradictory sources: the Burmese Buddhist tradition, Marxism, socialism, humanism, and pragmatism.¹⁰ The SCME blends moral pronouncements,^{no} abstract generalisations, and utopian goals. Like Buddhism, it is based on the assumption that all things are subject to the law of impermanence and change. Change takes many forms. As long as the changes alter things in only a limited way, they may be considered as evolutionary, however, as the tempo quickens and the degree of change increases, they become revolutionary. Social revolution is "an effect and not a cause; whereas the evolutionary process is the cause of that

10. Silverstein, n.2, p.81.

Henceforth the following abbreviations will be used:

RC: for the Revolutionary Council

BWS:for the Burmese Way to Socialism

SCME:for the System of Correlation of Man and His Environment.

revolutionary change.¹¹ While change, most frequently, is involuntary, it can be induced and directed by action. Man is the mover, he also is the centre of all things. According to the SCME, man's nature is dual - egocentric and altruistic. Man strives for freedom in order to fulfil himself, at the same time, his empathy and concern for others leads him to identify and work with his fellow men to achieve common objectives. The military leaders seized power, according to the SCME, to transform society and improve the conditions of the working people.¹² They believed they were accelerating the rate and quality of change to a revolutionary level.

Man's nature, the military - social theorists argued, has a propensity for evil as well as for good. "Aware as we are of such human frailties, we must make our way of life a living reality, i.e. a socialist way of democratic life that can constantly check and control this evil tendency to lapse. Only then can everyone

11. According to SCME, "When an evolutionary process reaches a certain condition, point or stage, it passes into revolution historians call side changes social revolutions".

12. Society, i.e. Burmese Society

have the right of using his own creative labour and initiative",¹³ socialism, according to the SCME, is a necessary form of social control to restrict the unbridled freedom of individual man and channel his energy and effort along socially useful and constructive paths.

The socialist democracy envisaged by the military leaders "includes the unity of the will and initiative of the individual, man and group on the one hand and the centralised guidance of society on the other."¹⁴ Democratic centralism and individual freedom, therefore, are mutually compatible and when combined, produce a progressive and prosperous society. "An empty stomach is not conducive to wholesome morality", these military Theorists argue.¹⁵

Society is defined as more than a collection of individuals - it is the interaction of people in a particular

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13. SCME, n.9 pp. 28-29.
Emphasis in the original.
14. Ibid., p. 31.
Emphasis in the original.
15. This is a Burmese saying:

"ဆူမ မတောင့်တယ်လမတောင့်နဲ့"

way. That way is determined by the productive forces - the interaction between the "spiritual life" (man's imagination and creativity), the "material life" (the instruments of production created by man), and the productive relationship. The latter, according to then SCME, means the mutual relationship between men as defined by their legal codes, traditions, and customs. Man inherits the social system of the previous generation and "by his own creative effort changes it as he deems to be good".¹⁶

Socialism, as expressed by Burma's military leaders, is utopian in its goals. A socialist system, they argue, is based on justice: it "is a prosperous and affluent society free from exploitation or oppression of man by man, where there is no profiteering v.....no class antagonism that threatens human welfare and where man's physical well-being and happiness are assured."¹⁷

The Burmese Way to Socialism is a guide to action that is flexible and tentative. Awareness of the goals

16. SCME, n.9, p. 19.

17. Ibid., p. 21.

Please see also "OUR BELIEF" in Appendices.

allows the measurement of progress along the Burmese Way and, if necessary, alteration of the course. In economic terms, Burma's socialist future will see production and ownership in the people's hands, rather than in those of a few individuals. The state, either directly or through co-operative societies or collective unions, will manage the economy for the people.

The theories and concepts of the Burmese ideologies follow no particular school of socialist thought. Rather they have sought to blend traditional Burmese ideas and popular Western concepts that are attractive to those who, like the leaders themselves, grew up under capitalism and colonialism and rejected both because of their negative impact upon Burma. The ideology provides them with a theoretical justification for changing the economy and polity of Burma in a direction they feel is more in keeping with Burmese traditions.¹⁸

In the BWS, the military's social theorists declared that both the economic and political systems

18. Silverstein, n.2, pp. 83-84.

must be altered before the nation's other problems could be tackled. The immediate economic goal of the BWS is to expand production, so that the general standard of living can rise, unemployment can disappear, and everyone can be assured of a means of livelihood. In order to achieve these objectives, agriculture, industrial production, distribution of communications, and external trade would be nationalized in various ways. During the transitional period, state ownership would form the main basis of the economy. During this period however, there would also be a place and a need for private capital and enterprise; but these would be in Burmese hands and reasonably restricted. All individuals would contribute according to their ability and would receive according to the quality and quantity of their work. The aim of the government would be to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor.

To realize these socio-economic goals the political system must be altered during the transitional period. A socialist democracy will replace parliamentary democracy ~~with~~ because the latter failed to produce a truly socialist society.¹⁹ Under the new system,

19. Ibid., op.cit., pp. 85-87.

democratic centralism must be introduced and must respond to existing conditions and ever-changing circumstances by being flexible and non-dogmatic.

During the phase of military rule, the people must begin to change. They must be re-educated. The guiding moral principles of this new education will be the following: human dignity is derived from one's own labour, and every religion and culture teaches the moral truth. The educational curriculum must be re-organized to emphasize science and moral training, basic education will be open to all, higher education will be open only to those with promise and potential.

The immediate objectives outlined in the BWS included the rebuilding of the administrative structure and the re-ordering of economic priorities. Because the bureaucratic machine is effete and a stumbling block in the path of change. The BWS stated that it must be reformed so it can contribute to the conversion of society. The modernization of agriculture and the building or expansion of industries - which are geared to the nation's resources and capabilities - will be given first priority in the allocation of new resources.

The new Burma, like the old, will incorporate all the indigenous peoples in its territory. In the new Burma, unity and fraternity between ethnic and religious groups and progress for all ^{of} them will be the fundamental goals. As everyone has a place in the new society, the right of everyone freely to profess and practise his religion is recognized.

The uniqueness of this ideology was explained later, following the establishment of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) in July 1962. The BSPP issued a pamphlet in 1964 that set forth the specific differences between their ideology and that of any other found in or outside of Burma.²⁰ The pamphlet emphasized five specific characteristics that had been explicit in the Burmese ideological statements. First, their ideas came from several sources, both Marxist and non-Marxist, second; the BWS recognized freedom of conscience and religion; third, the party was not the leader of a single class, but rather the vanguard of all the people except those who exploited others; fourth, the leadership of

20. Government of Burma, The Specific Characteristics of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (Rangoon: Burma Socialist Programme Party 1964). The BSPP was formed on July 4, 1962.

the party and society belonged to the working people regardless of race or religion; fifth the Burmese beliefs were not based on a theory of inevitable progress, but on the idea of change as a constant in a material and non-material things, and men and society could progress in retrogress depending on their own ideas and endeavours.

Many of the socialistic ideas expounded by the military ideologies were not new to Burma. Socialism was one of the goals of the first Burmese constitution, and of the AFPFL.²¹ Though vague and incomplete, the ideas of the military theorists were part of a continuum in the growth of a Burmese socialist tradition. They provide a frame of reference for analyzing Burma's development under military rule and a rationale for the decisions and priorities of the men in power since 1962.

2.3. A brief description of the Society and economy before the coup d'etat:

According to the BWS, the aim of the socialist economy was "The establishment of a new society for all,

21. Silverstein, n.2, pp. 86-87.

economically secure and morally better, to live in peace and prosperity".²² The first step was to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor and to see that each worked according to the quality and quantity of his labour. For this, the new leaders would have to restructure society - to carry out an economic as well as a social revolution. They would have to alter institutions, values and behaviour patterns that had been carried over, not only from the constitutional period, but from colonial and pre-colonial times. Prior to the coup, the government policy had been to achieve transformation of Burma by using its own financial, intellectual, and technical resources. Thus, from independence on, economic plans were based on using revenue earned from the sale of rice and other primary products to create an industrial sector. Economic development was assumed to be the responsibility of the government, assisted by the private sector. Between 1947 and 1962, several plans were drawn up, altered, and replaced by new ones. All assumed quick

22. Ibid., p. 147.

recovery of agricultural production from the devastation of World War II and an expanding world market for Burma's products.

A second characteristic of the economic policy was the dependence upon the individual farmer to make technical decisions about planting and harvesting and to do the work. The land was held primarily by private owners, who bought and sold and all too often pledged it as security against a loan. The rice output was low, approximately thirty basket per acre.²³ The government, through the State Agricultural Marketing Board (SAMB) purchased the product from the farmer at a low fixed rate - with no difference for quality - and sold it abroad at world market prices. Between 1950 and 1954, the government netted large profits that were invested in the industrial sector, and relatively little was put back into agriculture. By the end of 1954, the demand for rice fell and Burma found itself with ever-increasing stocks of poor quality, due in part to poor milling practices.

The farmer received little inducement to improve the quality of his product, even though the government tried to encourage the sowing of high-quality seed. The

23. A basket (One-din-၀၆၀၆) weighs about 46 pounds.

cultivator had few needs and was able to purchase consumer goods at relatively stable prices. He found himself standing alone against insurgents as well as against a government that did not listen closely to what he said. He grew crops in the traditional way, and wanted to be left alone by government and insurgents.

The urban sector was relatively small with a mixed community of alien (mostly Indian and Chinese) and indigenous members. While the professions, law, medicine, and engineering, were controlled by both groups, the business community was dominated by aliens. Despite the Government's policy of assisting the growth of an indigenous class of businessmen, its method - parceling out export and import licenses primarily to Burmese businessmen - encouraged corruption and failed in its objective.

Both the business elites and the labour sector were ineffective in influencing government policies.

The declining international market prices forced the government to seek new customers. Between 1955 and

1960, it traded rice to socialist states on barter, thus disposing of surplus stocks. This, however, forced it to accept manufactured goods that often were substandard, and, in many cases, not suited to its needs. But this form of trade was not abandoned when the market changed, as the Burmese government felt that retaining these contacts would enable it to offset the evil effects of fluctuating prices.

During the constitutional period the industrial sector never developed as planned. At its base were small manufacturers primarily of consumer goods. When the government began to invest in the industrial sector, it was hampered by a lack of managers and technicians, shortages of raw materials, poor products, and lack of an adequate transportation system and power resources; it neither fully satisfied internal needs nor made products competitive enough in the world market.

To solve some of these problems, especially in the area of personnel, it embarked upon a programme of mass education. Lack of trained teachers and well-equipped facilities, construction of schools in urban or nearby urban areas not directly threatened by insurgency resulted in education being concentrated in the urban

population - the smallest sector of the society.

Problems of law and order, insurgency and civil war, deflected the government's energies between 1948 and 1951. Between 1951 and 1956, a fall in the price of rice meant there was no financial surplus and Burma was forced to engage in deficit financing. During the first 4-year plan (1957-1961), expenditure in maintaining law and order continued as the government sought to bring insurgency to an end. From 1958 to 1960, the caretaker government of General Ne Win, under the military-managed Defense Services Institute, introduced new business practices and demonstrated the business capability of Burmese managers when backed by sufficient capital and given sufficient authority to do their jobs.²⁴ The experiment in caretaker government revealed that a small pool of able administrators existed in the military who had the capacity to apply their talents to economic and commercial matters.

A cursory idea of the state of the Burmese economy in 1960:

24. Government of the Union of Burma, Ministry of Information, Is Burma Vindicated? (Rangoon: Director of Information, 1960), pp.233-290.

The paddy acreage in 1960 was 85 per cent of the pre-war level, but in the next two years, it increased by 5.5. per cent. Production of rice in the same period dropped by 2.5 per cent of the 1960 tonnage, as did the exports of rice from 2.080 Million tons to 1.841 Million tons. The trends noted in Graph 1 continued for the 1960-62 period until the military seized power. The level of rice exports of 1962 was never again achieved throughout the military period. For agriculture as a whole, acreage increased by 9 per cent to equal the pre-war high. Both teak and other wood products grew appreciably and petroleum products continued an upward trend. Both power and transport also showed significant gains.²⁵

The most notable change in the economy in 1961 was in the area of ownership. In 1961, the land was still in the hands of the cultivators, although technically it belonged to the state; rice milling and external marketing of rice and teak were government enterprises. The government was a major partner in mining. It controlled the Central Bank and through its Commercial Bank and Agricultural Bank, provided more than half the commercial

25. Silverstein, n.2, p.155.

Please see Table 3.

credit offered to business and a large portion of the loans to the farmers.²⁶ Through joint ventures with private and domestic entrepreneurs and the encouragement of co-operative societies, it was moving positively toward complete national control of the economy and laying the basis of its neturiate socialization.

2.4 The Economy under the Military Government

It was not until January 1963 that the military government took serious steps to carry out its ideological goals. In that month, General Ne Win announced that the government had adopted a new economic policy. Henceforth the functions of production, import, and export would be taken over by the state. No new private industry would be started. Eventually, all rice milling would be taken over by the government.²⁷ On January 23, the government seized all private banks, foreign and domestic.²⁸ Later

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26. a. The Central Bank was the chief financial institution of the government;
 b. the Commercial Bank offered business credit,
 c. the Agricultural Bank provided loans to farmers.
27. Nation, February 16, 1963.
28. Silverstein, n.2, p.156.

that year the government moved against private firms in the areas of exports, imports, and sales. It also nationalized all gasoline filling stations (or petrol pumps), the pearl and marine fishing industries, and several large and small manufacturing and assembly plants. Under the new Trade Disputes Amending Law (1963), the government seized businesses where labour disputes were in progress and suspended their operations. The military rulers also forced the liquidation of all joint ventures between government and private sector and put their activities directly under government control.²⁹

The Revolutionary Council created several administrative and managerial agencies to manage its work. Import business was divided between several new government corporations. The export-sector was unified under a state-controlled office. The rapid action of nationalizing the economy produced shortages, rising prices and black market.³⁰ Because there were no trained personnel to assume the management functions of so many state enterprises, the

29. Ibid., p. 156.

30. Ibid., p. 156.

government gave added responsibilities to the proven managers within the military ranks and appointed junior officers as their subordinates.

In contrast to the great haste shown in nationalizing business, trade and industry, the government moved cautiously in the agricultural sector. There, the military rulers who were eager to win popular backing and establish a broad base of support among the peasants, moved to restrict landlords and free the farmers. In April 1963, they promulgated the Peasants Rights Protection Law, which prohibited the courts from attacking and seizing land, animals, and implements in payment of outstanding debts and protected the farmers right to save his land or personal property as he desired. During the same year, the government also promulgated the Tenancy Act, which declared that rent could be paid in either cash or kind and fixed the rate of rent according to the particular crop grown. The government also created land Committees in every village to decide land use and sales and to settle disputes in ownership. Finally, the government appropriated kyats 700 Million for loans to farmers to that they would not need to seek financial aid from private

money lenders. Two years later, General Ne Win declared: "We have one unfinished business which mocks our declaration that we will not permit the exploitation of man by man. It concerns the continued exaction of tenancy rent by the landlords."³¹ On April 5, the RC promulgated an amendment to the Tenancy Act abolishing rent on farmlands.³²

The tenant was now free to farm his land as he chose and to market as he desired. The backing of the local land committee protected his tenure. In turn the military government expected that he would feel indebted to it for his new freedoms, and would produce more, pay back the money it lent to him, and sell his produce to the state at the prices it set. It also hoped that the farmer would adopt more modern methods of farming, support the socialist objectives of the leaders, and begin to develop co-operatives and other socialist institutions in place of the traditional modes of economic and social organization.³³ The peasant did not respond

31. Government of Burma, Burma Socialist Programme Party Party Seminar 1965 (Rangoon: Burma Socialist Programme Party, 1966), p.82.

32. Ibid., p.83.

33. Silverstein, n.2, pp. 157-8.

exactly as desired. Chaotic purchasing and grading policies of the new rulers alienated the farmer from his benefactor.

Further, the government's failure to distribute basic consumer goods efficiently, gave the farmer no incentive to produce more than he needed for his family. The government's effort to purchase paddy at low nationally uniform prices, caused some peasants to shift from paddy to other crops offering larger margins of profit and less government regulation. The emergence of black market in imported goods from Thailand promoted illegal disposal of the annual crop in exchange for consumer goods. Finally, the Thai Market for cattle depleted Burma's scarce supply as animals were sold out of the country.

The adverse results of the economic measures were obvious. During 1971-72, average per capita income rose by only 1 per cent and production increased by only 0.8 per cent.³⁴ Industrial output depended on agricultural output, so that a drop in the latter adversely affected

34. Far Eastern Economic Review Asia Year Book, 1973.
p. 101.

the farmer. Burma remained primarily a one-crop economy and, with its traditional markets becoming self-sufficient in rice, its exports slumped as dramatically as its capacity to import.³⁵ In July 1974, workers went on strike and protested over the unprecedented rise in the prices of essential consumer goods, particularly rice. Although the official retail price of rice was about Kyat 30/- for a basket, inadequate government sales pushed it up to as much as Kyats 150/- on the black-market, a level well beyond the reach of the average worker.³⁶ So in July 1974, the government, finally recognizing the need to give the farmers monetary incentives if it wished to purchase his crops, set the price of paddy 50 per cent higher than in previous years - from K.600 to K. 900 per hundred baskets.³⁷

The smaller urban sector also faced serious shortages, extreme inflation, and black-market for the basic commodities necessary for daily use. There were

35. See Table 8, Exports and Imports 1964-74.

36. Tun, M.C. "Burma: Turning Against the 'socialist way' " Far Eastern Economic Review, 27 (July 1, 1974), 30.

37. Silverstein, n.2, op.cit., p. 158.

lower exports, less foreign exchange earned, fewer consumer goods imported. The economy gradually declined as its growth slowed down.³⁸ Paddy acreage increased to over 12 million acres from 1963 onward, but it never exceeded pre-war planting of 12.8 million acres. During the first two years of military rule, production increased only to descend in 1965 and reach a low point in 1966-67. Production, however, does not give an accurate picture of the success or failure of government policies. State purchases and exports are a more reliable measure. During the first two years of military rule, state purchases were strong; after 1964, the state never reached the levels of the preceding constitutional period. From 1.7 million tons in 1961-62 rice export declined to 0.5 million tons in 1974-75.³⁹

In its drive to nationalize the economy, the Revolutionary Council sought to eliminate foreign firms and alienate capitalists active in the field. On January 1, 1963, it ended its joint ventures with the Burma Oil Company by taking over the outstanding shares and, on January 18, 1965, it ended a similar joint venture with the Burma Corporation (mining) in the same way. Other

38. See, Graph I.

39. Ibid.

foreign firms were nationalized because they failed to repay government loans or pay income taxes or did not maintain specified production level. To get at the small businessman and indigenous capitalist who was suspected of supporting the black-market and hoarding goods, the government, on May 17, 1964, demonitized all fifty-and one-hundred-Kyat notes and demanded explanation of those who held them. This law fell most heavily upon alien Indians and provoked a mass exodus among those living and working in urban areas.⁴⁰

The burden of socialist policies and measures fell hard upon the urban population. Caught between law, fixed wages and high prices and commodity shortages, they had few options open as a means of escape. In a nation where a peon received a monthly salary of Kyats 82, necessities had to be purchased from the People's stores.⁴¹ Prices for ordinary cloth longyi (outer lower garment worn by Burmese males) and food had doubled

40. Silverstein, n.2, p. 160. See also Asia Recorder 20 no.10 (March 5-11, 1974) 11881. Burma's Indian residents, mostly engaged in business, assimilate very slowly. By contrast the Chinese in Burma are more easily assimilated ethnically.

41. One Burmese Kyat was worth Re 0.66 People's Stores (ပြည်သူ့ဆိုင် -Pyithusasing) were opened by the government as early as 1964, when the economic measures of nationalization were being implemented.

between 1962 and 1966, and the buyer often found that the desired item was out of stock or in very short supply.

By mid-1966, the deterioration of the economic situation provoked general Ne Win to make a personal investigation. As a result, on September 28, the Trade Council rescinded some of its nationalization orders issued the preceding January and restored a portion of private trade in locally produced goods.⁴²

Serious shortages still occurred of such basic items as rice, cooking oil, and ngapi (fish paste) in the larger towns and cities of Burma. The Red Badge incident in June and July 1967, was followed by anti-Chinese rioting because many Chinese merchants openly blackmarketed such items.⁴³ The shortages were so severe that the people were totally disenchanted and enraged. The Red Badge affairs however, deflected their wrath from their own leaders to the Chinese.

42. Silverstein, n.2, p. 161.

43. Certain Chinese-dominated schools in Rangoon disobeyed the government's order banning the wearing of Mao badges by school-children, leading to anti-Chinese riots. See, Silverstein, p. 161, Chapter 7.

From 1968 to 1971, good harvests and some improvements in state purchasing and distribution gave the urban population sufficient goods at reasonable prices. For the next two years poor harvests brought a return of rising prices, hoarding, and black marketing. By 1972, Bogyoke Market - the largest in Rangoon - offered both domestic and foreign goods at prices most people could not afford.⁴⁴

During the initial years of the military rule, and as long as Brigadier Aung Gyi maintained his influence in the RC in his role as minister of National Planning, the programme of nationalizing the Burmese economy proceeded on a moderate, pragmatic basis. He advocated the policy of granting incentives for the delivery of exportable grain into the 1962 growing season so that cultivation expanded during the year by 84,000 acres, and export of rice touched the post-war peak of 1.8 M tons.⁴⁵

44. Bogyoke Market, located in the heart of Rangoon city, is a shopping complex of stalls run by private traders.

45. See, GRAPH-I.

The principal opponent of this policy was the Marxist civilian economist, U Ba nyein. The new revolutionary goals were drastically doctrinaire. U Ba nyein's plan to enlist the participation of locally-developed co-operatives and communal worker and peasant agencies to function under central direction to ensure that market control by "economic insurgents" was prevented, had little relevance to economic reality.⁴⁶

General Ne Win was unable to enlist the services of experienced civilian administrators in the task of devising an alternative governmental structure.⁴⁷ So U Ne Win ended by accepting the offered help of several doctrinaire communist advisers. The new order was oriented

46. "Economic insurgents" is a term used to describe private, exploitative, profiteering traders. U Ba Nyein was a former adviser to Brigadier Tin Se, member of RC in 1971. In 1973 his influence declined when Ne Win shifted the economy toward a more moderate course.

47. The RC had invited the three principal political parties - the Phidaungay, the AFPFL, and the National United Front (NUF) on March 4, 1962, two days after the coup d'etat, to join them, to forge national unity, but disagreement emerged on the question of forming a party. See, Shan, p.71.

towards ideologically Marxist approach but without a communist party. It also lacked capacity for creative initiative.

2.5. The Administrative Process under Military Rule

Unrestricted by the fetters of a constitution, a legislature, or an electorate, the RC governed by decree and proclamation. All its pronouncements had the force of law and remained in effect until withdrawn or replaced. The line between the RC and the government was undefined. Initially, the RC, designated no prime minister, the government consisted of eight members, six drawn from the RC, one civilian - responsible for four ministries - and a military officer from outside the circle of leaders in the RC (see Table 1). All members of government were responsible for more than one ministry and, therefore, depended upon the Secretariat and bureaucracy to do most of the administrative work.⁴⁸ Following the Congress of the BSPP in 1971, the formal government assumed a more traditional facade. But, although its name was changed to the Government of the Union of Burma, and its leader, Ne Win, was designated

48. The Secretariat is at present known as the office of ministers (ဝန်ကြီးရုံး).

prime minister, there was little significant change. In September 1971, Brigadier San Yu's rise within the RC and the government was confirmed by his appointment as deputy prime minister.

In April 1972, the retirement of twenty senior officers from the armed forces - including Ne Win - gave the government the appearance of being in civilian hands, as military titles were dropped in favour of traditional civilian prefixes.⁴⁹ San Yu was promoted to General and given control of the Ministry of Defence while still retaining his post as deputy prime minister. It indicated that a close linkage between the armed forces and the government was anticipated, whether the members wore gannabaung (traditional formal headwear for Burmese male civilians) or military braid.⁵⁰

Under the military, the Security and Administration Councils were the key organisations for unifying the national administration.⁵¹ Each council was composed of

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49. 'U' is a prefix meaning 'Minister'. Thus General Ne Win became U Ne Win.
50. Silverstein, n.2, pp. 91-92.
51. Henceforth the Security and Administrative Councils will be cited as SACs.

representatives of the civil administration, the local police, and the military commander in the area. The RC created a hierarchy of the Security and Administrative Councils (SACs) both in Burma proper, through the Security and Administration Central Committee in Rangoon down to the division, district, township, and village, and in the states where they descended through the state supreme council down a parallel line to the village level. Thus the country was tightly linked through the monolithic structure of committees and the participation of the military at all levels of government, from the RC down to the village. In 1972, when the Secretariat was abolished, membership of the SACs was broadened by adding representatives from the BSPP and the People's Peasants and People's Workers Councils.⁵²

2.6. The Judicial System

The military leaders of Burma re-organized the judicial system by abolishing the Supreme and High Courts on March 31, 1962, replacing them by a single

52. See, Chapter III for the formation of the People's Peasants Councils and the People's Workers Councils.

new Chief Court of Burma. This change reflected their conviction that the old courts served the interests of the wealthy and the privileged.⁵³ As the court of final appeal, it was authorized to exercise the powers and the functions of its two predecessors.⁵⁴ Over the years nearly all the original members were replaced. Dr Maung Maung, a famous journalist, writer, and scholar-lawyer, became a member in 1962, and shortly thereafter became chief justice. In an attempt to deal more quickly and effectively with acts of insurrection, crimes against public safety, and those endangering life, property, culture and national economy, the RC created a new set of Special Crimes Courts. These courts had power to impose the death penalty, exile, and ordinary imprisonment, but all sentences were subject to review by the Chief Court.⁵⁵

The government worked with officials in the states to try to create a uniform pattern of justice. Achievement of this goal was hindered because standards differed in

53. Silverstein, n.2, pp. 94-95.

54. See, "Union Judiciary Act Amending Law, 1962", in Forward (Rangoon), 1. No.9, December 7, 1962, p.22.

55. Guardian (Rangoon), July 11, 1962.)

Burma proper and in the states. The new hierarchy of courts and jurisdictions did not help to achieve the ideals of the socialist transformation.

2.7 Freedoms and Rights

Although the coup leaders were determined to concentrate power in their own hands, initially they were equally concerned that the individual retained a limited area of privacy. With regard to religious freedom. They moved indirectly, such as by ending observance of the Buddhist sabbath (fasting) days and lifting the ban on slaughter of cattle in order to increase the food supply and the lower prices.⁵⁶ The government also banned for one year all foreign religious pilgrimages.⁵⁷

The military rulers were most intent on restraining the Buddhists. In March 1965, a government-supported All Sangha Conference drew up a constitution for All Buddha

56. Sabbath is the three month wa(၁) period of Buddhist Lent - July to September/October.

57. See, Nation, March 23, 1962.

58. Silverstein, n.2, p.98.

Sasana Sangha Organization with an identification card and a programme for reforming religious education. Several Buddhist monasteries and many individual Monks rejected the Conference and denounced its results, particularly registration of individual monks. After a month of violent protests, the government moved forcefully, arresting ninety-two monks, and closing several monasteries.⁵⁸ Outright opposition ceased after these incidents. In the years that followed the government organized class, mass and political organizations, and re-established the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Religious freedom was maintained but restricted. Buddhism was treated the same way as other religions, and the clergymen of all religious organisations were barred from participation in politics.

The RC permitted the press a limited degree of freedom and curtailed the rights of assembly and freedom of speech. None of these rights was to be used against the regime. In September, 1963 the government promulgated a new law requiring all publishers to register annually. The next year, it arrested and imprisoned the editor of the Nation for "hindering the implementation of internal

58. Silverstein, n.2, p. 98.

peace."⁵⁹ A year later the government created its own news service to which all local papers were required to subscribe and began to publish its own newspapers in Burmese and English. From 1964 to 1969, it gradually absorbed nearly all other Burmese papers or made certain that those nominally independent published only what the government allowed. It replaced private and foreign-owned libraries and reading rooms with its own, and expanded into the production and distribution of films and reading materials. The government thus controlled all media.

In August 1963 top leaders of the AFPLP and the Pyidaungsa were arrested for their public criticism of a number of measures; from September, the Government started rounding ^{up} numerous middle-level leaders and followers of the AFPLP, the NUP, and many prominent figures in leftist organizations. On March 28, 1964, the RC banned all political parties except its own Burma Socialist Programme Party.

After the coup, freedom of movement and personal contact with foreigners was seriously curtailed. Visits

59. Guardian (Rangoon), April 5, 1964.

by foreign tourists and journalists were restricted. Western journalists were barred from residing in Burma and reporting directly on Burmese affairs. Gradually, after 1969, tourist visas were granted for upto seven days to be spent in limited and specific areas of Burma. Burmese State employees who met with foreigners or diplomats had to report immediately to the government on the content of their conversations.

Travel outside the country by Burmese citizens was restricted both to conserve foreign exchange and to control their people. The government made it almost impossible for Burmese to take jobs outside the country or to travel for personal reasons. To go abroad for personal reasons was seen as turning one's back on one's own country. Internal travel to areas of insurgency or where military rule was under direct challenge was forbidden. Even in government-controlled areas the traveller had to report to local officials.

Thus the elimination of political parties and the severe restriction on civil liberties and freedoms marked the expansion of authoritarian rule and contrasted^{sharply} with political life under constitutional rule.

CHAPTER III

**Evolution and Growth of the Burma Socialist
Programme Party : Patterns of
Interaction with the
Revolutionary Council**

3.1. Evolution of the Burma Socialist Programme Party

Bogyoke Aung San, in his "Blueprint for Free Burma," wrote: "Our aim is finally to establish an independent republic suited to our own conditions and needs"¹ "What we want is a strong state administration.... There shall be only one nation, one state, one party, one leader. There shall be no parliamentary opposition, no nonsense of individualism. This form of state we call a Republic for want of any other name, but it may become ... quite a new state form, peculiar to our own country."²

This re-read today, rings with the tone and temper of the Burmese Way to Socialism (BWS). The Revolutionary Council (RC) was deeply disillusioned with parliamentary democracy. The RC on April 30, 1962 pointed out in a statement that "parliamentary democracy has

1. Maung Maung, Burma and General Ne Win (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969), p. 298. The "Blueprint" was written in Japan by the Bogyoke (General) during military training against the British.

2. Ibid., p. 298.

failed to serve our socialist development ... and deviated from the socialist aims"³

The new course would "develop... only such a form of democracy as will promote and safeguard the socialist development."⁴

The military leaders wanted to raise the standards of living of the people, raise the amount of income per capita, educate the people, develop their health and discipline. For the creation of such a state, the essential pre-requisite was the building of one united nation. In concrete terms it meant that all gulfs be bridged and all sections of people be united.⁵

General Ne Win believed that the goal of Socialism could not be achieved through parliamentary democracy.⁶

3. Ibid., p. 296.

4. The Policy Declaration of the RC: The BWS: (Information Department, Rangoon, April 30, 1962) pp. 3-6.

5. P. Shazan, Government and Politics of Burma (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 71-72.

6. Ibid., pp. 69ff.

Leaders of the three principal political parties - the Pyidaungsa, the AFPFL and the NUF - who were invited to lunch with General Ne Win on 4 March 1962, found him anxious to forge national unity and march forward with the people to the socialist goals. "Let us work together", he urged. "You are welcome if you wish to join us in the march. If you do not, please do not hinder us". On three different occasions, the RC explained and discussed its convictions and programme with the leaders of political parties, inviting them to strive together in unity. All the parties unanimously announced their agreement and support for the BWS, but disagreements emerged on the question of forming a party. In the circumstances, the RC decided to proceed with the building of a new party called Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) as a cadre party with emphasis on quality of the cadres rather than their numbers.

3.2. The Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)

The Revolutionary Council had a monopoly of power, but it needed to win and hold support of the people. It recognised from the beginning that it had

to establish contact with the people to win their loyalty if it was to convert its authoritarian rule into a more democratic form.⁷ Claiming itself as "revolutionary in essence", it declared that "the natural leader of the revolution is a revolutionary party."⁸

Basically a military group and desiring to legitimize itself, the RC announced on 4 July, 1962 that it was creating a new party to be known as the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP).⁹

While making the announcement, the Council expressed the hope that members of the old parties would be able to "discard their partisan feelings and come closer for unity and understanding through intimate exchange of views".¹⁰

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7. Joseph Silverstein, Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation (Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 100.
8. The System of Correlation of Man and His Environment, (Rangoon, 1963). It contains the philosophy of the Party, the Burmese Way to Socialism, and the constitution of the Party. This will henceforth be cited as SCME.
9. Myanma - soshellit-lansin party (မြန်မာ့ဆိုရှယ်လစ်လမ်းစဉ်ပါတီ) Lansin means the Path.
10. SCME, n.8, p. 101.

The BSPP was to be a transitional party under the leadership of the RC and its purpose was to start the country towards the ideological goals expressed in The Burmese Way to Socialism. At this early stage of development it was proposed to be a cadre party with emphasis upon identifying, training, and indoctrinating members who would assist the military rulers in carrying out their programmes. The BSPP remained a cadre party until 1971, when it was transferred into a mass national party and given the responsibility of drawing up the new Constitution and the opportunity to assume leadership of the nation.

Party membership was open to all citizens who were eighteen years or older, applicants had to accept the ideology "out of conviction", to be prepared to carry out "unswervingly" all tasks assigned, and to be willing to accept the authority of the party. Each applicant had to be supported by two party members. Since the only founder members were the RC, the coup leaders had picked its members from among its most loyal supporters. All candidates were required to serve for at least two years for becoming eligible for

full membership. During the initial period, candidates were permitted to resign, after obtaining full membership they forfeited that right. Persons applying for membership were graded initially as candidates¹¹ - these of likely to earn full membership, and sympathizers¹² - these of questionable social and political background and therefore required to prove loyalty to party ideas and party discipline. To transform the idea of a party into a reality, the RC appointed two committees drawn exclusively from its own ranks to create the Party units, recruit, screen, and train the candidates and to plan the mass organizations subordinate to the party. The membership of the two committees remained fairly constant throughout the cadre period of the party.¹³ After several months of preparation, applications for party membership were accepted between March 2 and June 30, 1963. In November the party leaders began to announce the names of the successful candidates and the party, technically sprang to life.

11. അദ്വൈതം (candidate member)

12. ദ്വൈതം (party sympathizer)
See Table 5 in Appendices Section.

13. See Table 6 in Appendices Section.

Despite the screening procedure and probationary period, the problem of finding and recruiting good and reliable cadres persisted. The report of the Secretary General and the speeches of General Ne Win at party meetings and conferences mentioned that many recruits were actually party saboteurs, self-seekers, or non-conformists.¹⁴ Despite the efforts of military leaders to rid the party of those with doubtful loyalty, its ranks were never fully purified. With recruiting under military control, the bulk of the recruits were drawn from the armed forces and the police.

3.3. Composition

Three years after the party was founded, it had only 20 full members though there were 99,638 candidates and 167,477 sympathizers. The Report of the Secretary General of 1966 published the first occupational breakdown of cadres showing that 31 per cent of the candidates were drawn from the military and police. Six years later

14. Government of Burma, Burma Socialist Programme Party, Party seminar 1965 (Rangoon: Burma Socialist Programme Party, 1966), pp. 10 ff., 128-141.

the same two occupational groups provided 33 per cent of the candidates and full members combined. More important, however, they provided 58 per cent of the full members - more than twice the number of full members drawn from the peasantry and workers combined.¹⁵

Failure to recruit peasants was a particularly vexing problem for the party leaders. In 1966 the Secretary-General said that this was because recruiting was limited to the towns, the peasants were politically backward and indifferent. During the period of study, this problem was never solved.¹⁶

In 1972, out of the total national population of slightly more than 28 million, the party represented a very narrow elite of 1.2 per cent. As nearly one-third of its members were drawn from the military and police, the remaining members and candidates represented no more than 0.8 per cent of the population. Clearly the military and police were the new political elite, and through the party and its subordinate organizations they continue to dominate the government.¹⁷

15. See Table 5.

16. For instance, in mid-1969, there were 22,677 peasants among the 257,463 party candidates. See The Guardian editorial March 6, 1971.

17. Silverstein, n.7, p. 102.

3.4 Training of Cadres

To train the cadres, on July 1, 1963, the party organized a Central School of Political Science at Chawdwingone outside Rangoon. Here the candidates received instruction in basic policy, political thought, economics, politics, organization, and management. The Defence Services also created a political leadership School - Command Inservice training courses. Together, these schools gave instruction to 44,173 servicemen and civilians. To support the programme the Party published a variety of papers, journals, and special studies. Despite all this attention to education, the party leaders complained about the poor quality of recruits and their failure to become successful cadres. The 1966 Report of the Secretary General stated that once cadres finished their courses at the Central School, they "puffed up with arrogance thinking they alone were the most learned."¹⁸

3.5 Structure, functions and organization of the Burma Socialist Programme Party

The structure of the party during the cadre phase -- lasting until 1971 - was based upon tight central control.

18. Ibid., p. 104.

At the base was the local unit which drew its members from the community where it was located. Recruits were selected because of occupation or social background and were organized in functional units, factories, military units, administrative organizations, and the like. Above the local and functional units were the township, divisional, and national organizations. All were under the supervision and control of the Central Organizing and Disciplinary Committees. At the national level, the party was divided into six divisions, corresponding exactly to the six military commands, which together were divided into fifteen party subdivisions, also corresponding to military commands.¹⁹ Both in structure and composition, the party and the Defence Services were inter-locked.

A basic organizational problem arose because all who sought candidate status applied to the party headquarters rather than to a local unit. If accepted, they

19. The six commands and fifteen subdivisions were:
 Eastern Division: Northern Shan, Eastern Shan, Southern Shan, and Kayah
 Southeast Division: Kawthoolei,
 Southeast Division: Tenasserim and Irrawaddy,
 Central Division: Arakan and Pegu
 Rangoon Division: Rangoon,
 Northwest Division: Mandalay, Magwe
 Chin Special Division: Sagaing and Kachin.

were assigned to a local unit, although, this did not happen in all cases. This problem persisted during the cadre period.

Among the most important party functions during the cadre stage was to mobilize the nation behind the party leadership. Mass and class organizations were formed under the control of the Central Organizing Committee. In 1966 departments of this Committee were set up to organize Peasants' Affairs, Workers' Affairs, and Mass Affairs Councils. Recruiting of peasants and workers went forward during that year, and planning began for the creation of mass organizations, the first being a youth organization. Through either the party or its mass and class organizations, every citizen had a place in the new political order.²⁰

At the First Party Congress held in 1971, the Party transformed itself from a cadre to a mass organization. The party, had grown to include 17,559 cells, organized into 2,595 sections in 313 party units. In

20. Silverstein, n.7, pp.104-105 ff. The class organizations included the Peasants and Workers Councils.

attendance at this meeting were 532 delegates representing area and functional civilian units and 125 delegates representing military units. The remaining 825 delegates and 302 alternates were designated as central delegates. Though the civilian delegates outnumbered the military, they did not take over the structure created by the First Party Congress.

The Congress elected a Central Committee of 150 members and 50 alternates to reorganize the party. Of the full members elected, 118 were drawn from the armed forces while 32 were civilians. The alternates were 26 from the military and 24 from the civilians.

The Central Committee elected Ne Win as Chairman, Brigadier San Yu as Secretary General, and Col. Thaung Kyi as Joint Secretary General. They formed the nucleus of the Central Committee. Twelve additional members - eight full members and four alternates - were elected. Only U Ba Nyein, of the eight full members, was a civilian. The four alternates were all from the military;²¹

21. The Central Committee consisted of: General Ne Win, Chairman, Brigadier San Yu, secretary general, Col. Thaung Kyi, joint secretary general; Col. Mg Lwin, Col. Mg Shwe., Col. Hla Han; Col. Kyaw Soe, U Ba Nyein; Brig. Thaung Dan, Col. Sein Maya, Col. Maung Lwin; Comm. Thaung Tin, Col. Tin U., Col. Aung Pe, Col. Mg Mg Kha.

The Congress also set up several subordinate committees: a Party Inspection Committee; and a new Discipline Committee; and a Central Affairs Committee to assist the Executive Committee in formulating policies.

The day-to-day affairs of the Central and Executive Committees were concentrated in the hands of a small Secretariat that included the Secretary General, San Yu, the joint secretary general Col. Thaug Kyi, and three senior military officers.

3.6 The Burma Socialist Programme Party and the Revolutionary Council: Relationship.

One of the most important actions of the Central Committee was its reconstitution of the Revolutionary Council. Although this appeared to place the party above the government, there was, in fact, no change in power structure, for the leaders of the Revolutionary Council were merely seeking to give legitimacy to their own creation, the BSPP, by placing themselves technically under the party.

At the Congress, General Ne Win indicated three goals for the party - party unity, national unity, and the new constitution for the nation. This was the first

formal mention of a new constitution, and it signalled the nearing of the end of the first phase of military rule. The Secretary General's report gave first priority to the drafting of a new constitution. According to it, during this transitional period, the RC would be under the leadership of the party, the Council of Ministers would act like a Cabinet, the administration would be streamlined and the Secretariat abolished. The report also called for the formation of mass organizations under the leadership of the party and set as the immediate goal ^{for} the creation of a Youth organization.

3.7 Mobilization of the nation through mass organizations

The Revolutionary Council sought to create mass and class organizations with the party as their core. Its objective was to mobilize the nation behind the military leadership and, in a limited and controlled manner, to involve the people in politics. Dividing the population roughly into peasants and other workers, the government sought to create a separate organization for each group. With this end in view, about nine months after the coup, the military organized the first peasants seminar at Ohndaw.

Here the leaders discussed both the technical and particular problems of the participants and the broad ideological goals of the government. In their effort to link the peasants with government, in 1964, the military changed the date of Peasants' Day from January 1 to March 2. At a regional seminar in Boungoo, in March 1964, the delegates decided to form peasants' councils. A Peasants Affairs Division of the BSPP's Central Organizing Committee was created under the leadership of Colonel Thuang Kyi. In 1967, a constitution for the new organization was approved and recruitment began at the village level. By 1969, two-thirds of the required township councils had been formed, thus permitting the Central People's Peasant Council (CPPC) to be created. By Peasant's Day 1972 there were over six million members.²²

Because the People's Peasant Councils were designed to unite the peasant with the new political order, the leadership at all levels included both elected peasants and government appointees drawn from the party and the bureaucracy. The structure was such that the councils were closely supervised and co-ordinated by the military leaders at the top and by party members and government

22. Silverstein, n.7, p. 108 ff.

appointees throughout the hierarchy.

The government created a parallel organization for the workers. On Workers' Day, May 1, 1963, the RC called for the workers to form associations. A year later, following the RC's promulgation of the Draft Law on the Basic Rights and Responsibilities of People's Workers Councils, Workers Councils were created and active recruiting and organization began. By 1968, the organization had 1.3 million members. This enabled the creation of a Central Peoples' Workers Council. By 1972, the membership rose to 1.5 million.

The Workers Councils, like the Peasants Councils, were composed both of workers and party and state appointees. Leadership was tightly held by party loyalists.

The key role of the two organizations in the political system was to draw the workers and peasants into controlled political activity and to create a popular base for the military in power.

The only other mass organization to emerge during this period was the Lenin Youth Organization. Founded in August 1971, this new organization was open to all youths between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. In

time it enlarged to include children from the age of five. The organization was divided into three groups: Tasa youth, five to ten years, Shaysaung Youth, ten to fifteen years, Lanzin Youth, fifteen to twenty-five years.

The goal of the Youth Organisation was to turn the youth of the nation into an auxiliary force of the party and to make them into "good socialist workers who will build and defend the socialist system."²³

Thus, through these mass organizations and the BSPP, the military ruler intended to legitimize their power and authority. The BSPP was, in fact, a projection of the military government itself.²⁴

3.8 Opposition to the Revolutionary Council : Problems, Counter-measures and Pacification

Throughout the first phase of military rule, the government faced opposition from several quarters - university students, Buddhist monks, indigenous minorities, communist groups, political parties, and particular individuals.

23. Forward (Rangoon) Vol. 9, No. 22, July 1, 1972.

24. John F. Gady, The United States and Burma (Massachusetts, 1976), p. 239.

The most active and vocal above-ground opposition came from University students. Shortly after the new academic year commenced in June 1962, a student protest against newly imposed restrictive regulations turned into a riot on July 7.²⁵ The army was called in, and several students were killed. The universities were closed. The following day General Ne Win ordered the total destruction of the Rangoon University students' union Building.

The general declared in a radio broadcast on July 7, 1962:

"I had no alternative but to meet dah with dah and spear with spear."²⁶ The protest demonstration was seen as a challenge to the military's authority. When the universities were re-opened later that year, the students were required to present suitability certificates and agree to abide by regulations. On its part, the

25. The new regulations required dismissal of a student who failed in his examination three consecutive times. See Cady, n.24, p. 240.

26. dah is a Burmese long knife. The idea is to meet force with force, or to meet the adversary with the same kind of weapons. (The students were protesting, unarmed). See Joseph Silverstein and Julian Wohl, "University students and Politics in Burma", Pacific Affairs, 37, no. 2 (Spring 1964), 50-65.

government appeared to tone down its harsh policies. During 1963, however, the students made fresh demands. They also supported the opposition during the government-insurgent parleys of the same year.²⁷ When the negotiations with the insurgents were broken off in November 1963, the army once again moved against the students, closing the universities and sending the students home. Although the universities were re-opened after eleven months, they were re-organized, and the students who were re-admitted, were screened carefully. For all practical purposes, student opposition to military rule ended, apparently, until 1969, when the students again rioted over the issue of tickets to the Southeast Asian Peninsula (SEAP) games. Once again the government responded with force and closed the universities.²⁸ For the remainder of the period of this study (i.e. up to 1974), the students remained quiet.

The Buddhist monks provided the only other organized open opposition to the government. As mentioned earlier, the military government had silenced them by 1965.²⁹

27. On July 31, 1963, the government held peace parleys with various insurgent groups which ended in failure on November 14.

28. Silverstein, n.7, pp. 111-112.

29. See Chapter II p. 68.

The underground opposition of the insurgent ethnic minorities and the Communist parties continued through the entire period of military rule. Fearful of "Burmanization" and motivated by the desire to establish their own separate cultural identity, groups further from the Karens, Shans, Kachins, Kayahs and Mons were openly fighting against the government.³⁰

The insurgents represent such a variety of causes and ideologies that Burma is frequently said to suffer from 'multi-coloured' insurrections.³¹ The Karens and Mons had been in opposition since 1949. The Shans and Kachins since 1958, and the Kayahs since 1959. All were seeking some degree of political autonomy. The Mons were eager to obtain a state of their own. The Karens were interested in redrawing their state boundaries to include more of their people and more natural resources.

30. "Burmanization" implied the domination of the Burman majority in the political and social spheres.

31. Sharan, n.5, p. 73.
'multi-coloured' signifies the various ideological hues of the insurgents. Burmese - ငါ့ခရီးဖွဲ့ပုံ။"

The Shans and Kayahs desired either a redefined federation that would give them parity with a Burmese State or the right to secede from the Union. The Kachins, who had a state, wanted greater power and more autonomy. These ethnic insurgent groups united at times.³² In the Shan States, they joined forces with remnant Kuomintang (KMT - nationalist Chinese forces still in Burma) and engaged in illegal opium and arms trafficking in the Golden Triangle Area.

The most important coalition of ethnic groups was the banned National Democratic United Front (NDUF) of the Karen National Union (KNU), the New Mou State party, and the Karenni National Progressive Party. This coalition allied itself with the Burma Communist Party of Thakin Than Tun. During the period of negotiations with the military in 1963, the Kachin Independence Army and the Shan State ~~dem~~ Independence Army also co-operated with the NDUF. Following the failure of the negotiations, the NDUF fell apart, and each unit sought to gain its goal independently. The various insurgent ethnic groups operated in the hill areas and near Burma's borders with China, Laos, India and Thailand, and engaged in smuggling of opium,

32. Silverstein, n.7, pp. 112, 119.

precious stones and leak out of Burma and illegally bringing consumer goods from these countries. All attempts to negotiate with these insurgents failed and the insurgency continued unabated.

Early in 1946, the main Burman Communist group had split into the pro-Chinese white flag Communists, and the anti-Chinese Red Flag Communists. These two groups were led by Thakin Than Tun and Thakin Soe respectively. Both these communist parties were declared illegal by the government, the Red Flag in 1946 and the White Flag in 1953. The bitter feuding between the two groups climaxed in the assassination of Than Tun on September 24, 1968.³³ Government troops overran the old Pegu Yoma Communist headquarters, forcing the principal directing centre to shift to the China border above Kut-Kai. Thakin Soe was captured in the army's campaigns in 1967-68. As the CPB was a one-man party, his removal from his followers was a severe blow to the party.

33. Gady, n.24, p. 26.

The White Flags are known as the Burma Communist Party (BCP), and the Red Flags - The Communist Party (Burma) (CPB).

Burman resistance activities centred in the National Liberation Council (NLC), started back in 1963 by Bo Let Ya, Bo Kya Dore, and DR BA MAW's son-in-law Bo Yan Naing. The NLC leaders finally took refuge in a jungle headquarters located along the Thai border behind Mou-lmein and Tavoy where they operated with local Karen rebels. But the rebel groups broke up.

The Shan dissidents were comparably split. The more conservative Shan unity preparatory committee shunned communist collaboration. In the spring of 1969, some 1500 Shan rebels turned in their guns to the Ne Win government. Subsequently however, no acceptable peace terms could be formulated and some dissident elements drifted back towards a communist alignment.³⁴

Insurgent forces remained active in many parts of Burma throughout 1970-73. The heaviest fighting took place in the Shan State near the Chinese frontier where communist forces co-operated with the Shan State Independence Army. It was estimated in September 1975 that the communists numbered 3,000 to 5,000, the Shan about 4,000 and Kachins 3,000 to 4,000. A communist

34. Ibid., p. 26.

force about 600-strong attacked the town of Hsenwi and the railway station at Lastrio in May 1970, near Kutkai, ~~XXXXXX~~ around which fighting continued for the next three months. A force of about 1,500 communists launched repeated attacks on government positions in October losing over 600 killed.³⁵

Opposition was also made up of individual political leaders who would not support the coup government. Chief among them was U Nu, former Prime Minister. Imprisoned without trial in 1962, he was released in 1966. In 1968, General Ne Win sought co-operation from U Nu and other former leaders to plan for Burma's future. A new Internal Unity Advisory Body (IUAB) was formed. It was composed of thirty three former political and ethnic leaders who were asked to "submit ideas on the means of establishing internal unity that would effectively and directly benefit the working people of the Union of Burma politically, economically, socially and ethnically." By proclamation, they were asked to prepare a report by May 31, 1969.³⁶ The IUAB report included three different sets of recommendations and a separate report by U Nu.

35. Lucian W. Pye, Southeast Asia's Political Systems (New Jersey, 1967), pp. 73 ff.

36. Forward 7, no. 9, December 15, 1968, 2.

The majority report called for a return to the original constitution, with amendments where necessary. The minority report called for the adoption of a federal, one-party, socialist system. U Nu presented his own views separately. He argued that the real issue was the question of legitimacy. Power must be returned to him, and the old parliament reconvened to elect Ne Win as president of the Union. Following the election, U Nu would transfer power to him. The ban on parties would have to be lifted, political rights restored, and political prisoners released.³⁷

When his suggestions were rejected, U Nu asked for, and received permission, to go abroad. In London, he called for a popular revolt against the military. He visited several countries, collected money from various sources and then settled in Thailand. He formed the National United Liberation Front (NULF) with several minority dissidents. He then organized a rebel army. He called his movement the Elected Government of the Union of Burma. He organized a new political party, the Parliamentary Democracy Party, as a major constituent

37. Working People's Daily, June 5, 1969.

unit of the front. His army launched raids into Burma and temporarily held territory on the Burma- Thai border. The NULF's Patriotic Liberation Army (PLA) confined its activities in the Thai border area, while broadcasting appeals for a general revolt from a secret radio station.³⁸

In January 1972, U Nu resigned as president of the NULF over his differences with the representatives of the minorities on the question of the future of the federal state in Burma. He refused to make any commitments on the right of the minorities to secede. Against his wishes, the right to secede was adopted as part of the NULF manifesto. All his political life he had fought to hold the Union together, and he refused to agree to anything that contradicted that position. U Nu's departure from the insurgents' ranks ended his challenge to the military dominated government in Rangoon.

After the breakdown of talks with the insurgents, the military chose a new path in 1964 by declaring a new national policy on minority - majority relations. On Union Day 1964, General Ne Win declared that while certain tasks such as economic development were the concern of the entire nation, other tasks such as

38. Sharan, n.5, p. 75.

language, culture, literature, religion, and customs were the responsibilities of the individual ethnic groups. He warned against any activity that threatened national unity.³⁹ In 1965 the Academy for the Development of National Groups, near Saging, in upper Burma, was opened. Recruits from ethnic groups lived together, gaining understanding of the diverse cultures and traditions they represented, and receiving instruction in leadership and community organization. But the goals of the Academy were never fully realized. The training period was so short that it could not inculcate the habits of transcending ethnic and linguistic barriers, the new skills were relatively simple so that most trainees did not learn much more than they already knew.

Other efforts were also made to overcome racial antagonism. Nationwide celebration of ethnic national days, publication of folklore of certain minorities, and historical and anthropological studies of the minorities were intended to express the idea, as stated by Brigadier San Yu, that "the culture of one nationality was part and parcel of the culture of the whole nation".⁴⁰

39. Guardian, June 29, 1971.

40. Silverstein, n.7, p. 114.

But these positive steps were negated by the government's policy of centralized control and domination of the hill areas from Rangoon.

On the other hand, those who opposed military rule were unable to unite and pose a major challenge to the men in power. The military leaders remained a cohesive unit and retained the loyalty of the armed forces. The military did not exercise control over the whole of Burma - but it did exercise authority over the centres of population, controlled the means of communication, and was able to protect the bulk of the population from assaults by insurgents. Thus it was able to survive in power.⁴¹

41. Ibid., p. 119.

CHAPTER IV

Achievements and Failures:

An Assessment

In a period of twelve years, from March 1962 to January 1974, the Revolutionary Council established a One-party state structure in Burma. It is a sufficiently long enough period to allow one to analyse the achievements and/or failures of a regime. The efficacy of a political system ultimately depends on how far it has succeeded or failed in delivering the goods. Therefore, a critical analysis of the role of the Burma Socialist Programme Party, particularly from the Burmese point of view, is in order.

Bogyske Aung San had envisaged the establishment of a one-party rule which was "the best form to give and maintain a strong stable administration...." "For the creation of the above form of State, the essential prerequisite is the building of one united nation."¹ Following the attainment of independence, however, the parliamentary system of government based on multi-party system was established. It failed to check the secessionist tendencies of the minorities, and the various types of insurgencies flowing therefrom. It virtually brought the country to the brink of chaos and

1. Maung Maung, Burma and General Ne Win (Bombay, 1969), p. 299.

disorder. The military coup d'état of March 2, 1962 did not come about because the existing political institutions proved to be ineffective, but because the civilian leadership failed to identify itself with these institutions. General Ne Win's takeover was related to the problems of national integrity. It was motivated in large measure by the Burman concern that various parts of the Union, particularly the Shan, the Kachin, and the Karen states, and probably even the Mons and the Arakanese, might actually break away under the weak-kneed policies pursued by the Nu government.

It was soon clear that the military regime which installed itself in March 1962 was not to be a mere caretaker government such as that which had achieved its limited objective in eighteen months (1958-1960) and had voluntarily returned power to civilian hands. Less than two months after the takeover, the Revolutionary Council had published a policy declaration entitled the "Burmese Way to Socialism", revealing the long-range objectives of the new regime. The statement stressed the welfare state goals of a socialist society "which cannot be achieved with any assurance by means of the

form of parliamentary democracy that we have so far experienced.²

So, the RC started the process of a cohesive, dominant control of the state's administration, legal system, economy, and of transforming the country into a one-party state. The unity of the country was achieved with the adoption of the new constitution in January 1974. The threat of secession of the ethnic groups had been successfully thwarted. This had been the primary objective of the coup leaders and it had been achieved.

In the administrative sphere, the Revolutionary Council carried out administrative changes by completely over-hauling the bureaucratic machinery. This was followed by the changes in the judicial system which replaced the old legal structure. The administrative changes, carried out through the Burma Socialist Programme Party, the Workers' and Peasants' Councils,

2. Government of Burma, Revolutionary Council, The Burmese Way to Socialism: The Policy Declaration of the Revolutionary Council (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1962), pp. 3-6. This document appeared on April 30, 1962.

and technical and professional officials, helped the military rulers to maintain national unity and territorial integrity. The military was able to mobilize public opinion in the adoption of the new 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma.³ The goal of preserving national integrity had been achieved.

The gains in mass benefits have also been immense. Agricultural reforms gave the peasants the right to cultivate their land and pass it on to their heirs. Credit institutions were set up. There was free education up to university level and good schools were now available in the rural areas.⁴ Health services and hospitals, although not totally satisfactory, were equitably spread. Workers had social security such as sickness benefits, hospitalization, marriage, funeral aid, and workmen's compensation.⁵

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3. See Albert D. Moscotti's "Burma's Constitution and Elections of 1974". Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Singapore, 1977, Preamble pp.74-75; for reference to unity of races, harmony and racial equality, please see also Appendices.
 4. Burma: Socialism without Commitment. Far Eastern Economic Review (13 September, 1974), p.27.
 5. Ibid.

The formulation of the military's concept of a national ideology in the Burmese Way to Socialism (BWS), and the System of Correlation of Man and His Environment (SCME) envisaged that both the economic and political systems must be altered before various other national problems could be tackled. The published documents were vague about how these goals were to be achieved. All that was certain, was that there was a Burmese Way to Socialism (BWS), a guide to action that was flexible and tentative. The BWS stated that the state, through co-operatives and collective unions, would manage the economy of the state. How this would be done, and in what proportion, was not mentioned in the BWS and the SCME.

The Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) was formed to legitimize the creation and existence of the Revolutionary Council. Because of the centralized structure of the party, its monopoly of power, and the absence of open opposition, it could not attract widespread support. The government failed in the economic field also. In spite of its efforts to imbibe in the people the new values of the socialist system, hoarding, ~~and~~ black-marketing and other illegal practices grew and thrived. When in 1971, the government finally stopped

trying to halt the black-market, it was an open admission of the failure of the RC and the party to transform ideals into realities. It served the political motive of the RC to eliminate the alien-dominated economic interests through nationalization of the vital means of production, distribution and trade, but it also proved to be the one basic reason for the economic decline in Burma.

Doctrinaire economic goals like the collectivization move, the arbitrary paddy pricing system, the displacement of private entrepreneurship, the introduction, on a large scale, of army officers at every level of the nationalization process, the government's restrictive policy towards foreign capital--all these continued to bring about economic decline. For example, in the industrial and mining sectors of the economy and in transportation services, an estimated one thousand firms closed down during 1963, leaving some 2 million workers without employment.⁶ The principal economic decline sustained in 1965-66 was due to a forty per cent cut in the volume of imports. The total domestic output suffered a three percent loss for this year.

6. John F. Cady, The United States and Burma (Massachusetts, 1976), pp. 245 ff.

The government's agricultural credit programme and its associated policy of monopoly procurement of the rice crop proved to be a complete fiasco. The average farmer sold only minimal quantities to the government, and hoarded the rest for bartering. The rice export figures dropped progressively from the high of 1.8 million tons in 1963, to 1.3 million in 1965, to 1.1 million in 1966, and to 0.6 million in 1977. In 1968 the figure was only 0.3 million tons.⁷

The scarcity of consumer goods, coupled with the inability of the government to make available supplies adequately and expeditiously, resulted in a thriving black-market. As the government operators of the People's stores at the low level got Rs 82 per month as salary. They augmented their incomes by disposing of portions of their supplies in the black-market. A typical complaint voiced in the Press ran in part:

"It is glaring as daylight that ...parasites get their stuff through links and connections with the respective branches of the government..."^{7a}

7. See Graph No.1 in Appendices.

7a. Gardian (Rangoon), May 20, 1968, p.4.

With socialism as its avowed objective and guide for reorganizing society, the economy and the policy, the military government took full control of all imports and exports, production and distribution. With shortage of capital, absence of expertise, grossly imperfect means for mobilizing both human and material resources, it made a mess of the economy.

By 1967, there were widespread shortages of rice, cooking oil and other basic items in the urban areas, leading to the blackmarketing of such items. State enterprise had killed individual initiative. In the ten-year period of military rule, (i.e. 1962-1972) imports of consumer goods declined by 15 per cent from that of 1962, raw material imports by 33 per cent, machinery and equipment by 33 per cent. Burma's per capita income of US \$ 80 per annum was among the world's lowest.⁸

The military leaders also continued to face opposition from various sections - the indigenous people, political parties, particular individuals, and students.

8. Far East ^{ern} Economic Review, 85(36) (13 September 74) p. 27.

But these groups could never coalesce into a unified opposition as their goals and tactics differed. The basis of their unity - when it occurred - was opposition to the Ne Win government. But that was never strong enough to transcend the issues and personalities that divided them. None of the minority groups was in a position to challenge the military leadership which had the backing of the core majority Burmans.

In trying to assess the success and/or failures registered during the twelve-year phase of military rule, certain criteria may be taken as the bases of this assessment.

The Revolutionary Council claimed that the army took over because of the failure of U Nu's government to control spiralling prices, its 'hesitant attitude' towards trade, its inability to guarantee Burma's security and its 'weak stand' against the minority secessionists.

The economic policies pursued by the Revolutionary Council resulted in the general short supply of necessary items, and the emergence of a black market which the government failed to stamp out. A ten-year balance of payments of Foreign Trade from 1962/63 to 1970/71 showed a balance surplus for the first two years, followed by an

erratic deficit/surplus/deficit balance in the subsequent years.⁹

The living index in Rangoon had risen by 4 per cent per year from 1962 to 1972. In April 1974, the Consumer Price Index for Rangoon had increased by 54 per cent over that of April 1972.¹⁰ In mid-August the government selling price of rice of the coarsest variety was Kyat 1.75 per pyi (3.6 lbs). This had to be supplemented by purchases from the open [sic]¹¹ market at Kyat 3.50 per pyi, cooking oil (sesame and groundnut) was Kyat 14 per viss in government stores and from Kyat 20 to Kyat 30 in the open [sic] market. An average Rangoon family needs 120 pounds of rice monthly. The government supplied less than half of the cooking oil and rice needed by households.

During the period 1973-74, industrial growth was very slow. The 1973-74 Report to the People listed the six major industries as food and beverages, wearing apparel, construction materials, minerals, industrial raw materials, and personal goods, which, together absorb 91.7 per cent of the nation's industrial capacity.

9. See Table 7 in Appendices.

10. FEER, n.8

11. blackmarket.

Despite the extensive government takeovers of private factories, the private sector continued to produce most of the nation's manufactures.¹²

On the other hand, there were improvements in certain sections of the Burmese economy. While many countries continued to suffer from the global energy crisis, Burma's military rulers gave attention to the search for, and production of petroleum, both to satisfy domestic needs and to produce revenue from sales abroad. Beginning in 1964, four important fields were opened at Myan-aung, Proma, MAMA and Shwepyitha. Burma's daily production of 21.1 thousand barrels a day made it the largest mainland oil producer in Southeast Asia.¹³

Under the military, the government had reordered its import priorities, in 1961-62, 26 per cent went into capital goods, 43 per cent for inter-industry goods, and 31 per cent for consumer goods. In 1973, the figures for the three categories were 35 per cent, 50 per cent,

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12. Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Report to the People by the Government of the Union of Burma on the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions for 1973-74, Book-I (Rangoon: Ministry of Planning and Finance, 1973), pp.4-5.
 13. Joseph Silverstein, Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation (Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 37.

and 15 per cent respectively.¹⁴ The increase in capital goods improved Burma's capacity in such areas as manufacture of fertilizer, industrial tools, and electrical goods, but did not reach the point where its utilization could sustain production to maintain the 1961-62 standard of living.

In the field of national security, mass and resource mobilization and authoritarian measures taken determinedly by the military rulers helped to guarantee Burma's security and to ward off the threat of secession by the minorities. Where the civilian government failed to implement policies and programmes rigidly, the military leadership succeeded to some extent. By central control over the centres of population, it was able to retain power and maintain national unity and territorial integrity.

Various types of insurgencies, however, continued to be a source of serious political, military and diplomatic worry for the Burmese leaders. The growth and stability of Burma has been subject to constant threat due to the activities of the Burma Communist Party (BCP), and the other ethnic minorities like the Shans,

14. See Graph No. 2 in Appendices

Kachins, Kayahs, and so on, in the frontier regions of east and north-east Burma adjoining China, and the Karen, Mon and Arakan insurgents in South and West Burma. The remnants of the Kuomintang (KMT nationalist Chinese), and the BCP insurgents exercised political and military control over large areas of Burma's rugged and inaccessible regions. The BCP, Kachin Independence Army and other groups, about 15,000 to 20,000 guerrillas, were reportedly in control of different parts of Burma containing rich mineral deposits, precious stones and teak reserves. The Karens had many smuggling routes bordering the Golden Triangle under their control.¹⁵

Yet one significant achievement after the Revolutionary Council was the successful adoption, through a referendum, of the new Constitution of Burma. It plugged any loopholes like those which existed in the old Constitution permitting the right of secession from the Union at any time after ten years from the date on which the old Constitution came into operation.¹⁶ The military rulers succeeded in keeping the unity of the nation intact and this fact need not be over-emphasized.

15. Kalyani Bandyopadhyaya, Burma and Indonesia (New Delhi, 1983), p. 138.

16. Maung Maung, Burma's Constitution (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1959), p. 295. (See Chapter I, Right of Secession).

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

The problem of modernizing a developing country such as Burma is a multi-dimensional one, covering various political, economic and ethnic issues. The liberal democratic traditions of the west provided the basic ideas underlying the 1947 state constitution. Nevertheless party politics centred around personalities and the economic goals of the post-1948 leaders were socialistic. There was ~~xxxx~~ lingering antagonism between the historically predominant Burmans and the indigenous minorities. Theravada Buddhism permeated the nationalist movements for freedom and independence. Later on it was even used by leaders, such as U Nu, in the election campaigns in 1960.

The blending of concepts of the liberal west and the traditional east created problems for the Burmese polity. According to the generally accepted principles of political theory, the basic ingredients of political modernization include a broad-based parliamentary system, an efficient functional bureaucracy, pressure groups, freedom of press, and wide scope for public criticism. The qualities were present in the Burmese society, but the pre-1962 leadership failed to identify itself with these existing political institutions. There are many reasons for the failure of democracy in

Burma. At the root was the inability of the party system to have roots in the religious-cultural milieu of the traditional society. The struggle for power among the members of the ruling elite lowered to people's confidence in their leadership. The government's failure to control insurgency and to curb the activities of the rebel groups created a sense of insecurity. The national leaders also failed to solve the minority questions. While most of the people trusted U Nu, the peoples of the plains and those of the hills did not trust each other. If Burman ethnic domination funnelled fears of loss of ethnic-cultural identity among the minorities, the secessionist movements reinforced apprehensions of the military about disintegration of the country. Both these fed each other and put constant pressures on the men in power. None of the proposed solutions - the creation of more states, the relaxation of controls from the centre, could help in the process of building a politically organized and economically viable, cohesive, stable and integrated nation.

The gap created by the absence of a strong sense of nationalism following independence, which had helped to unite the nation to achieve freedom, was filled in

by the military leaders in 1962. The Revolutionary Council incorporated the Burmese Way to Socialism (BWS) and the System of Correlation of Man and His Environment (SCME) in its new ideology. By drawing its ideas from Burmese Buddhist tradition, humanism, Marxism, Socialism and dictated by pragmatism, it aimed at creating a happy and strong modern nation.¹

The Burmese military leaders sought to restructure the existing political framework in such a way that the social-political role of the military would be legitimized. Whereas the civilian government failed because of lack of politically articulate, efficient and dynamic leadership, the coup leaders succeeded in mobilizing the masses in favour of the new state constitution. When faction-fighting threatened to dismember the country, the military stepped in, took the reins of power, and checked the impending disintegration of the country in 1962.

1. Some of the relevant tenets of Buddhism were ignored in the party philosophy: The life of man was discussed without including saṃsāra သံသရာ. The doctrine of rebirth, the KARMA element (law of deeds) was omitted in asserting man's ability to direct his own destiny, renunciation of worldly pleasures was not mentioned. The statement declared that the party's ideology was not final, but a purely mundane doctrine. (See Smith, Donald Eugene, Religion and Politics in Burma (New Jersey, 1965,) p. 269.)

W. Howard Wriggins outlines a typical political situation in which there is military rule where military leaders may have seized power in efforts to bring more effective governance, to press reforms or assert their traditional prerogatives.² The 1962 Ne Win coup d'état may be likened to this kind of situation. Military regimes possess the short-term advantage of being based on an existing structure of power, hierarchically organized to get certain things done. At the outset they are usually able to avoid the annoying compromises, the polemics, the petty or dramatic corruption and the public quarrelsome ness which has done so much to lower the repute of democratic practice in many emerging countries. The Burmese military leadership could therefore muster enough authority to ward off the danger, in practical terms, of secession by various groups. Nevertheless, few policies can persist for long on command alone. The military leaders of Burma, like their civilian predecessors, were obliged to deal with subsidiary factors, i.e. economic, ethnic and socio-cultural.

2. J. Ronald Pennock, ed., Self-government in Modernizing Nations (New Jersey, 1964) p.45.

The military government's economic record in certain fields has already been discussed. During the twelve-year period of study, the economic growth rate averaged only 2.2 per cent, whereas the population rose by an average of 2.3 per cent yearly.³ Also, the nation's vast resources in men and materials remained untapped. The blackmarket economy continued to operate side by side with the socialist economy, with the government finding itself either unable or unwilling to seriously move to halt this practice. Given the choice between smuggled goods and no goods at all - and hence social unrest and a fertile ground for opposition and insurgent propaganda - the authorities were forced to turn a blind eye to this traffic in contraband goods.⁴ With the intricate set up

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3. Burma: "Socialism without Commitment", FEER, 85(36) (September 13, 1974), p. 27.
4. Lintner Berfil, "Alliances of Convenience" FEER 120 (15) (April 14, 83) pp. 23-30. This article mentions Panghsang, located on the western bank of the Namka River in the Wa state bordering China, and under the control of pro-Peking BCP insurgents. It is an important transfer point for all sorts of contraband goods from China and Thailand: Soap, cloth, toothbrushes, medicines, radios, cassettes recorders, bicycles, refrigerators, new air conditioners and other goods destined for Burma's parallel blackmarket economy. Lintner says: "This... trade... is of vital importance for Burma, because of the collapse of the country's own consumer goods industry after the 62 coup d'état."

in border areas of this ubiquitous blackmarket with the support of insurgent groups, the central authorities were incapable of physically liquidating this lucrative border trade.

As a society, Burma is still divided between the Burman majority and the ethnic minorities of the plains and the hills. The Burmese continue to accept authority from above and have never widely accepted the idea of authority stemming from the people.

It is this characteristic pattern of behaviour of the Burmese Buddhist society which kept the country going.

Yet the problems of insurgency persisted. The crux of the tensions remained ethnic. The Red Flag (pro-Soviet) and White Flag (pro-Chinese) Communist rebels would not pose such a threat to the central government if the Shans, Kachins, Karens, and other non-Burmese groups were not in rebellion. The major anxiety of the army leadership was the constant though yet unrealized possibility of the Burmese communists succeeding in connecting a solid alliance with one or more of the rebellious communities. Though the rebel groups shared a common resentment of Burman ethnic

hegemony and political centralization as the design for the Burmese nation-state., they were more concerned with their own communal interests and had achieved only temporary and shaky alliances among their armed forces.⁵ Yet insurgencies remained and so did the political power of the army.

The institutional changes which the military leaders introduced in the country failed to deliver the goods. While being able to maintain and safeguard the unity of the country, the military rulers, after legitimizing themselves, could not do much in the economic field. The stability of the government was more likely to depend on its ability to provide the basic minimum standard of living to the people and to build a society which is just and fair to all.

The first twelve years of military rule saw the economy decline steadily as dogmatic pursuit of ideological goals displaced common sense policies, and inexperienced military administrators removed the civilian

5. See article "Karen National Union (KNU) destroying the good tradition" (in Burma) Loketha-pyithunesin (Rangoon) 21 March 84 by Saw-Hla Tun, mentioning the fragility of various insurgent group alliances.

politicians and bureaucrats. Although the ruling group expected a breakthrough in the fields of politics and economy following the adoption of the 1974 Constitution, yet the trends emerging from the study showed dim prospects of any improvement.

The complex ethnic and insurgency problems, moulded by historical and geographical forces and the British colonial system, showed likelihood of persisting even intensifying, as the Burmese government sought to extend central authority. It adversely affected the ability of the Burmese government to translate its national goals into politically effective development programmes.

Socialism, as it is practised in Burma, appeared to serve primarily as a means of sealing the country from the outside world. This isolationist tendency is unlikely to change radically over the next decade.

A genuine fear among the ruling elites, both of free expression and of radical change, grounded in the country's historical experience, may be expected to determine future policy decisions. The military's obvious penchant for the dominating role it has given itself in Burmese political affairs will ostensibly continue.

It is quite reasonable to presume also that the unity of the nation against secessionist or disruptive elements will be kept intact. With Burma's heartland fairly in the hands of the government, it is plausible that it will ignore the dissidents. Even if there should be a change in leadership, the policies the new guardians inherit may not bring peace to Burma. The ethnic disunity and revolt by the minority groups and the Communist insurgents might continue ⁱⁿ as the past.

The downward trend of the economy may call for a re-assessment of the economic policies adopted by the leadership and various policy liberalization measures may be on the cards. Greater incentives to increased production, the appeasement of the private sector, more efficient guidelines for increased public sector autonomy, and substantial increases in foreign aid for economic development might be expected in order to improve or activate the stagnant economy. The road ahead, anyway, seems to be uneven. After a decade or ever-expanding economic nationalization, the government may not find it practicable to reverse its course abruptly. By ^{doing} ~~doing~~ itself off from the international economic system, Burma tried to limit the vulnerability of domestic economy to external economic pressures over

which it had little control. It is likely to pursue strategies of rapid industrialization based on protectionist policies. This automatically implies restricting economic development. The Burmese economy, thus, is likely to remain at a low level of growth. Population growth is likely to place greater pressure on national leadership to speed up implementation of their plans and make suitable changes as and when and where required.

Lucian W. Pye says that in most transitional societies no government can harness the energies of the people unless there is genuine communication between the decision-makers and the population.⁶ These societies lack two basic essential prerequisites. First, there is no social mechanism to determine and clarify continuously the pattern of values and interests within the society and relate these to the pattern of power. Secondly, there is no efficient bureaucracy. The bureaucratic structure in Burma, founded as it is on a rigid political and economic base which is authoritarian

6. J. Roland Pennoek, n.2.

in nature, lacks these conditions. This is likely to produce a conformist tendency, an absence of initiative, and a resistance to change. This trend, particularly within the inflexible bureaucratic machinery of Burma, may continue to act as an inherent deterrent to development.

There is no likelihood in the single-party state of Burma that any rival could supplant the army leadership. As such, the prospects of early return to civilian rule and parliamentary democracy are quite dim. The change, if at all, will be from the Army generals themselves. The army leaders, in all probability, will continue to "hold two pots on one head" and "hang on to the tiger's tail," come what may.⁷

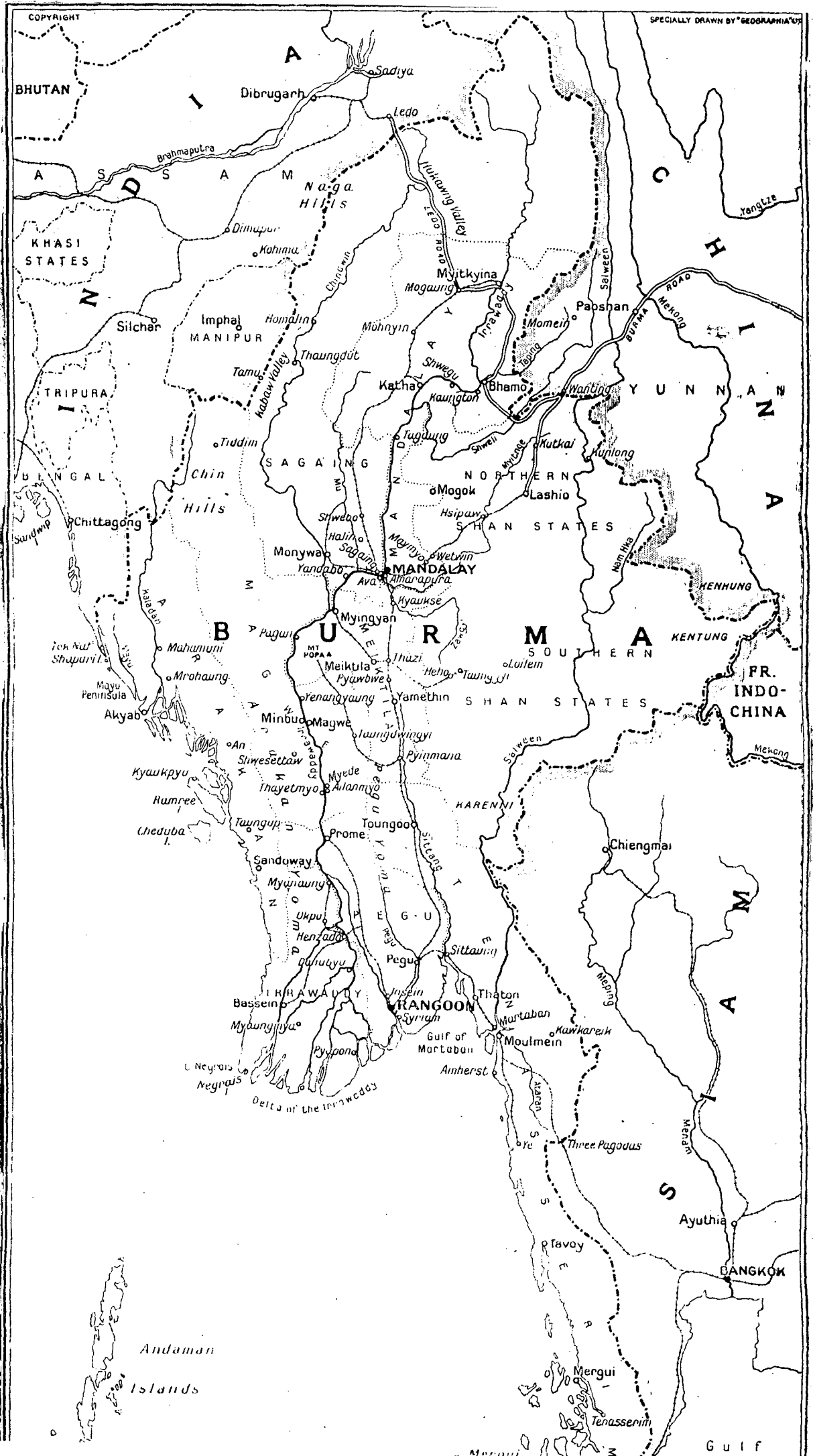
7. The Burmese axiom "a man cannot hold two pots on one head" means one should not do more than one can manage. This refers to the military leaders' role in political, economic and ideological affairs. (ခေါင်းတလုံးထဲ နှစ်ပုလဲ မဝှက်နိုင်။) "Holding on to the tiger's tail" implies continuing with your task at hand, without any alternative to, or respite from, such work, (ကျားခြံဆွဲထားမိသလို။)

APPENDICES

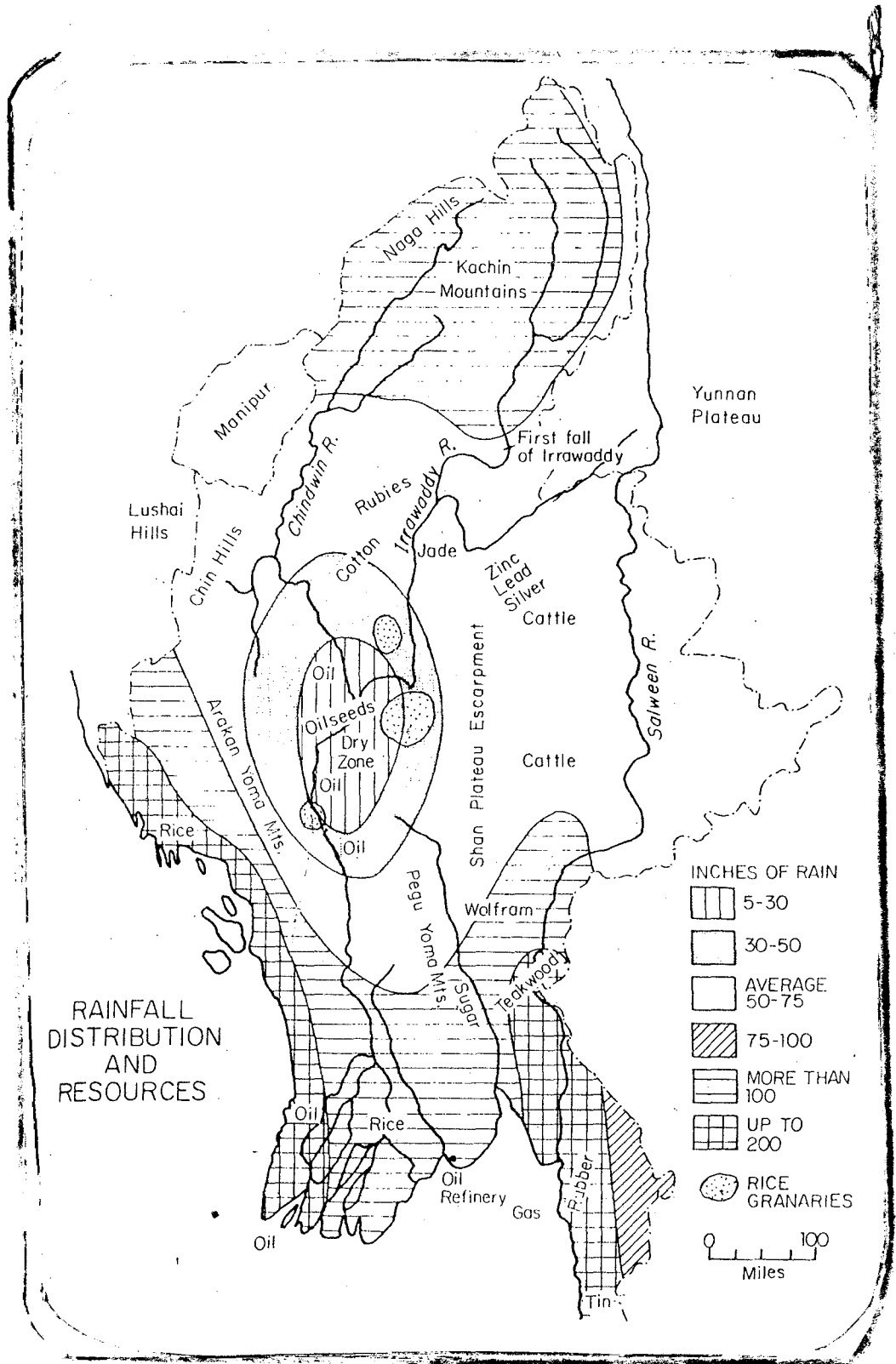
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S H O W I N G M A J O R V A L L E Y S , R I V E R S , M O U N T A I N R A N G E S ,
H I L L S , A N D C O A S T L I N E .

Source: Hall, D.G.E., BURMA (London, 1950).

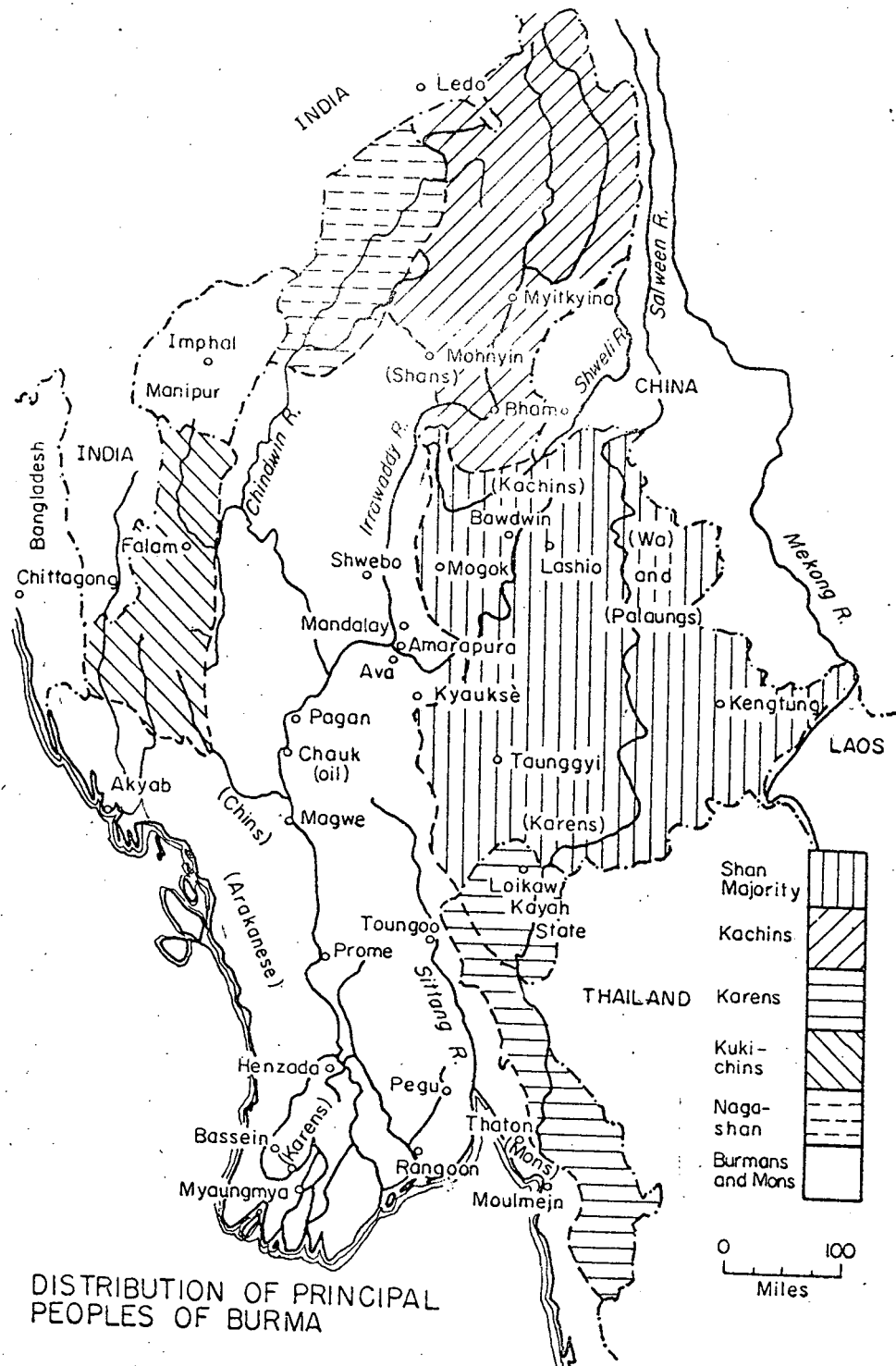


M A P N O : 3



Source: Cady, John F., United States and Burma (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1976), p.5.

MAP NO. 4



DISTRIBUTION OF PRINCIPAL PEOPLES OF BURMA

Source: John F. Cady, The United States and Burma (Massachusetts, 1976), p.9.

Table 1.

Ethno-Linguistic Composition
of Burma

Ethno-Linguistic category	per cent of total population
Burman	75
Karen	10
Shan	6
Indian	3
Chinese	1
Kachin	1
Chin	1

Source: Gay K. Pankar and others, Diversity and Development in Southeast Asia (McGraw Hill, N.Y., 1979), p.140.

TABLE 2

Table 2 Ministers of government during selected periods

Name	Ministers held March 1, 1962	Ministers held July 15, 1971	Ministers held April 20, 1972
Gen. Ne Win Brig. Aung Gyi Brig. Tin Pe	Defense, Finance & Revenue, Judicial Trade Develop., Industries Agri. & Forests, Commodities, Distribution & Cooperatives	Prime Minister, Defense	Prime Minister
Comm. Than Pe U Thi Han Col. Kyaw Soe	Education, Health Foreign Aff., Housing, Mines, Labor Home Aff., Immigration	Home Aff., Judicial, Democratization of Local Bodies, Religious Aff., Immigration, Nationalities, Registration & Census	Foreign Aff.
Col. Saw Myint Lt. Col. Ba Ni Brig. San Yu	Information, Culture Transport & Communications	Dep. P.M., Finance & Revenue, Natl. Planning Pub. Works & Housing Agri. & Forests, Land Natl. Industries, Labor Transportation, Communications Foreign Aff., Education, Health Information, Culture, Relief Rehabilitation, Natl. Solidarity, Social Welfare Trade, Cooperatives Mines	Dep. P.M., Defense " " Construction Agri. & Forests Indust., Labor Transp., Comm. Education, Health Information, Culture, Social Welfare Trade Mines Judicial Aff. Cooperatives Home, Religion Immigration
Col. Maung Lwin Comm. Thauing Tin Dr. Maung Maung U Ba Nyein U Sein Mya* U Lwin			
* Arrested in 1972 and dismissed; both convicted of treason.			
Military command change announced on April 20, 1972			
Brig. San Yu			Prot. to gen. chief of staff
Col. Tin U			Prot. to brig. vice chief of staff

Note: The three dates are those on which the Revolutionary Council officially organized or reorganized the government.

Source: Joseph Silverstein, Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation (Cornell University Press, 1977).

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF SOME ECONOMIC INDICATORS, PREWAR AND 1960

	Prewar	1960	1960 as a percentage of prewar
Paddy production (thousand tons)	7,426	6,916	93
Rice exports (thousand tons)	3,303	2,080	64
Teak production (cubic tons)	453,481	332,900	73
Teak exports (cubic tons)	215,000	89,800	39
Petroleum products (thousand gallons)	275,673	143,342	52

Source: Ministry of National Planning, Second Four Year Plan, pp.17-18.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

(1964 - 1974)

<u>Y E A R</u>	<u>EXPORTS</u> (Million kyats)	<u>IMPORTS</u> (Million kyats)
1964	1293	1126
1965	1178	1073
1966	752	927
1967	741	590
1968	859	526
1969	785	629
1970	807	516
1971	933	610
1972	867	655
1973	522	628
1974	615	954

Source: "Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 1975"

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,
Bangkok, Thailand. Burma, p.68.

OCCUPATION OF BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAMME PARTY MEMBERS

Occupational background	1966		1972	
	Candidates	Members	Candidates	Members
Armed Forces	54,028	20	63,537	42,359
Workers	91,999	-	123,098	20,316
Peasants	15,383	-	43,553	8,207
Police	2,875	-	4,644	308
Others	21,662	-	26,025	2179
Totals	185,947	20	260,857	73,369

Source: Joseph Silverstein, Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation (Cornell University Press, 1977), p.102.

TABLE 6

COMMITTEES OF THE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAMME PARTY

Members	Discipline Committee	Central Organising Committee
Gen. Ne Win	Chairman	Chairman
Brig. San Yu	Member	Member after Jan. 1965
Brig. Sein Win	"	
Col. Hla Han	"	Member after Jan. 1965
Col. Chit Myaing	Member (dropped in 1964)	
Col. Kyaw Soe	Member (added in 1964)	Original member
Brig. Aung Gyi		Original member (dropped Feb. 1963)
Brig. Tin Pe		Original member (dropped in 1968)
Col. Than Sein		Original member
Col. Saw Myint		Original member (dropped in 1964)
Col. Thaung Ayi		Member after Jan. 1965
Col. Maung Shwe		"
Col. Maung Lwin		"

Source: Joseph Silverstein, Burma: Military Rule and the Politics of Stagnation
(Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 102.

TABLE 7

BALANCE OF TRADE 1962 - 71

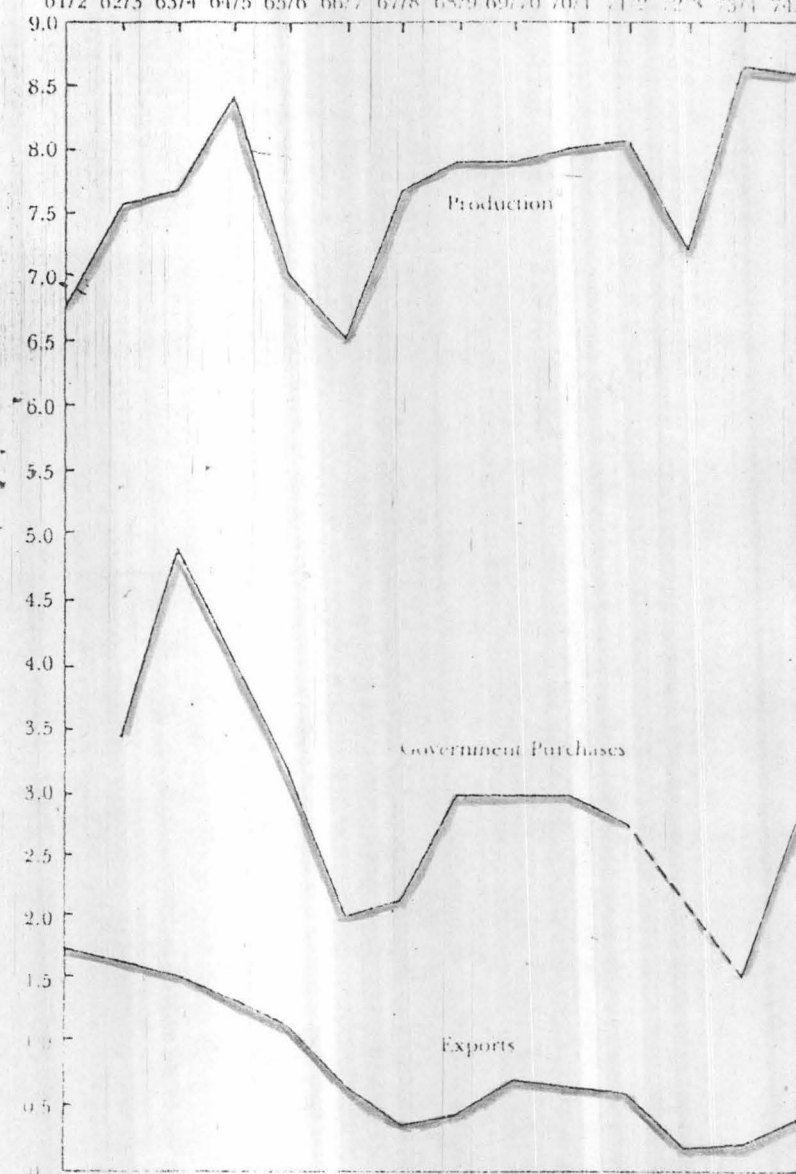
(at 1963-64 prices)
 (in Million Kyats)

Year	Export	Import	Balance
1962-63	1,271	1,096	174
1963-64	1,142	1,086	56
1964-65	1,089	1,413	- 324
1965-66	929	803	125
1966-67	672	817	- 144
1967-68	521	757	- 236
1969-70	543	778	- 235
1970-71	296	290	6

Source: Working People's Daily, 16 October 1971.

G R A P H NO. 1

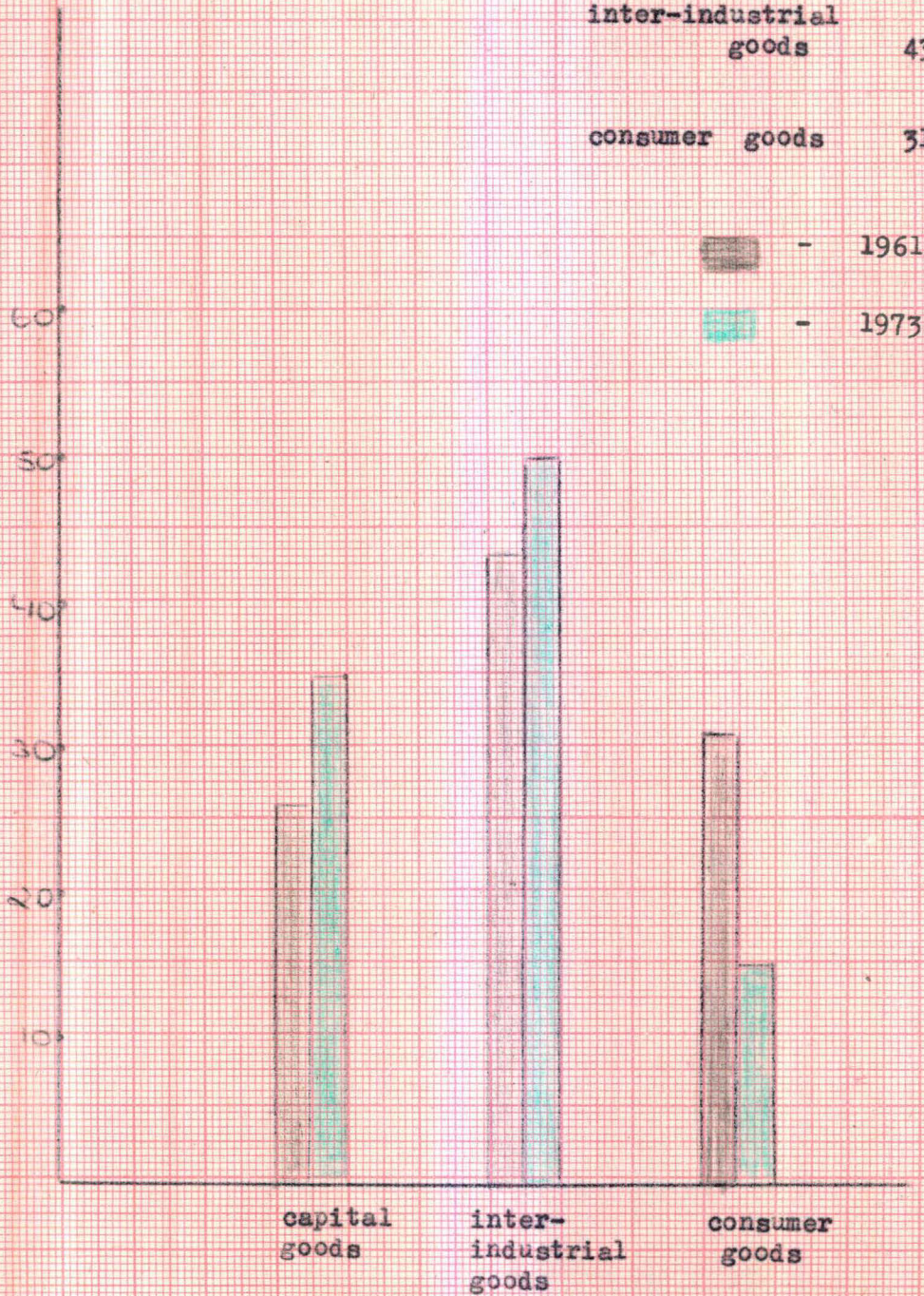
Paddy: Production, government purchases, and exports (million tons)



Note: Data on government purchases for the year 1972-1973 not available.
 Sources: *Report to the People*, 1970, 1971, *ibid.*, 1971-1972; *Report to the Prathu Hlathan*, 1973, 1976; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Asia Yearbook*, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1976.

IMPORT PRIORITIES 1961, 1973

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1973</u>
capital goods	26%	35%
inter-industrial goods	43%	50%
consumer goods	31%	15%



THE PANGLONG AGREEMENT OF 12th FEBRUARY 1947

THE PANGLOSS AGREEMENT, 1947

...agreement having been held at Pangloss, ...
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သုဇ်ဇ် ဝဉ်ဉ်ဉ်ဉ်ဉ်

PREAMBLE

We, the people residing in the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, have throughout history lived in harmony and unity sharing joys and sorrows in weal or woe.

The people of the land have endeavoured with perseverance and undaunted courage, for the attainment of independence, displaying throughout their struggles for national liberation against imperialism an intense patriotism, spirit of mutual help and sacrifice and have aspired to democracy and socialism.

After attaining independence, the power and influence of the feudalists, landlords, and capitalists had increased and consolidated due to the defects in the old Constitution and the ill-effects of capitalistic parliamentary democracy. The cause of socialism came under near eclipse.

In order to overcome this deterioration and to build socialism, the Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma assumed responsibility as a historical mission, adopted the Burmese Way to Socialism, and also formed the Burma Socialist Programme Party.

The Burma Socialist Programme Party has drafted the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, in accordance with the wishes of the people, after extensive and thorough discussions with them, for the purpose of building a peaceful and prosperous socialist society to which the working people of the national races have long aspired.

We, the working people, firmly resolved that we shall

- faithfully follow the leadership of the Burma Socialist Programme Party,
- build a socialist economic system by the Burmese Way to Socialism, for the country to be peaceful and prosperous, opposing all pernicious systems characterized by exploitation of man by man, and of one national race by another, with a view to promoting justice and goodwill among the people, and to freeing them from apathy and callousness, ignorance, backwardness and want of opportunity,

- build a socialist democratic social order which will afford an opportunity to the people to shape their own destiny, by the Burmese Way to Socialism,
- live together in harmony, unity, and racial equality, sharing joys and sorrows through weal and woe in the socialist Republic of the Union of Burma,
- efficiently perform all duties and fulfil all obligations in the interest of the State and for the cause of socialism while enjoying the democratic rights and personal rights and freedom bestowed by this Constitution,
- constantly strive to promote international peace and friendly relations among the nations,

and do adopt this Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma by a nationwide referendum this 11th day of the waxing of Pyatho of the year 1335 B.E. (the 3rd day of the month of January, 1974 A.D.):

CHAPTER I

THE STATE

Article 1

Burma is a sovereign independent Socialist State of the working people. The State shall be known as The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma.

Article 2

The Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma is a State wherein various national races make their homes together.

Article 3

The territory of the State shall be the land, sea and airspace which constitute its territory on the day this Constitution is adopted.

Article 4

National sovereignty shall reside in the entire State.

CHAPTER II

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Article 5

A socialist society is the goal of the State.

Article 6

The economic system of the State is a socialist economic system.

Article 7

Socialist democracy is the basis of the State structure.

Article 8

There shall be no exploitation of man by man nor of one national race by another in the State.

Article 9

The State safeguards the interests of the working people whose strength is based on peasants and workers.

Article 10

The State shall cultivate and promote the all-round physical, intellectual and moral development of youth.

Article 11

The State shall adopt a single-party system. The Burma Socialist Programme Party is the sole political party and it shall lead the State.

Source: Albert D. Moscotti, Burma's Constitution and Elections of 1974 (Singapore, 1977), pp.74-75.

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 ဦးစဉ်: ပုံနှိပ်ရေးနှင့် ပုံနှိပ်ရေး ဝန်ကြီးဌာန
 (Pyidaungsu-socialist-thamada myanmanaingandaw
 Hpwetsipon-achegan-ubaday-hnit-pat-thet-thaw
 asiyinkhansa) (Report Relating to the Constitution
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 (Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the
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MAP NO: 1 BURMA



BURMA 1975 (FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE)