

BURMESE WAY TO SOCIALISM

(1962 - 1988)

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Abstract

In Myanmar, Socialism had considerable influence over patriotic educated young people and it was the political guideline of young Thakhin members around 1930. Socialism and Communism was the policy of politicians in a fight against the British government. Moreover, it was also an effective policy to organize the people. Taking advantage of the Second World War, Leftist youths in cooperation with Japan drove the British out of the country. Later, they had to cooperate with the British to quell the Japanese troops out of the country. In the post-independence period, the AFPFL which was under the influence of Socialists could play a leading role in the political sphere, and Socialism survived various situations. At the same time, disagreements based on dogmatism grew among the left-wing groups, who then went underground. That was followed by a series of events of political unrest throughout the nation. On 2 March 1962, the Caretaker Government took over power from the Union Party Government. The Revolutionary Council, sticking to Socialism, launched the Burmese way to Socialism with the intention of legally holding on State power. After establishing the Burma Socialist Programme Party, the system of the correlation of man and his environment was laid down as the guideline of the party. Private businesses were nationalized, and the party exercised the government-led planning economic system. The Revolutionary Council, after drawing and adopting 1974 constitution, handed over power to the Pyithu Hluttaw (legislative body), and it dismantled itself. The Pyithu Hluttaw formed the Council of State. Members of the Council of State elected U Ne Win as Chairman of the Council of State. According to Article 66 of State constitution, U Ne Win became President of

the Socialist Republic of Myanmar. Then, members to People's Councils at all levels were elected under the democracy centralization system. After that, the Burma Socialist Programme Party transformed from the nucleus party into the People's Party. The People's Party then became the sole political party of Myanmar. Practically, it exercised the party centralization system. In consequence, the Socialist economic plans hardly made progress. The mass demonstration due to economic and political crises in 1988 caused total paralysis in the Myanmar Socialist Programme Party and the government's administrative mechanism.

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