

TOWARDS
SOCIALISM
IN OUR OWN
BURMESE WAY

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THE BURMESE WAY TO SOCIALISM REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

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TOP SECRET

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(Translated from the Burmese)

Our Belief

1. THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF THE UNION OF BURMA does not believe that man will be set free from social evils as long as pernicious economic systems exist in which man exploits man and lives on the fat of such appropriation. The Council believes it to be possible only when exploitation of man by man is brought to an end and a socialist economy based on justice is established; only then can all people, irrespective of race or religion, be emancipated from all social evils and set free from anxieties over food, clothing and shelter, and from inability to resist evil, for an empty stomach is not conducive to wholesome morality, as the Burmese saying goes; only then can an affluent stage of social development be reached and all people be happy and healthy in mind and body. Thus affirmed in this belief the Revolutionary Council is resolved to march unswervingly and arm-in-arm with the people of the Union of Burma towards the goal of socialism.

Fundamentals of our Policy

2. In setting forth their programmes as well as in their execution the Revolutionary Council will study and appraise the concrete realities and also the natural conditions peculiar to Burma objectively. On the basis of the actual findings derived from such study and appraisal it will develop its own ways and means to progress.

3. In its activities the Revolutionary Council will strive for self-improvement by way of self-criticism. Having learnt from contemporary history the evils of deviation towards right or left the Council will with vigilance avoid any such deviation.

4. In whatever situations and difficulties the Revolutionary Council may find itself it will strive for advancement in accordance with the times, conditions, environment and the ever changing circumstances, keeping at heart the basic interests of the nation.

5. The Revolutionary Council will diligently seek all ways and means whereby it can formulate and carry out such programmes as are of real and practical value for the well-being of the nation. In doing so it will critically observe, study and avail itself of the opportunities provided by progressive ideas, theories and experiences at home, or abroad without discrimination between one country of origin and another.

Socialist Economy

¹ THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OF THE UNION OF BURMA. Rangoon, April 28, 1962. G.U.P.C.P.O., - No. 48, Min. of Information, 28-4-62-600-Mono-VII. Published by the Information Department for the Revolutionary Council

6. The fundamental concept of socialist economy is the participation of all for the general well-being in works of common ownership, and planning towards sufficiency and contentment of all, sharing the benefits derived therefrom. Socialist economy aims at the establishment of a new society for all, economically secure and morally better, to live in peace and prosperity.

7. Socialist economy therefore opposes any pernicious economic system in which man exploits man, and self-interest and self-seeking are the motivating forces.

8. Socialist economy does not serve the narrow self-interest of a group, an organization, a class, or a party, but plans its economy with the sole aim of giving maximum satisfaction to material, spiritual and cultural needs of the whole nation.

9. Socialist economy is the planned, proportional development of all the national productive forces.

"Productive forces" is the collective term for natural resources, raw materials, instruments of production, accumulated capital, peasants, workers, intelligentsia, technicians, know-hows and experiences, skills, etc.

Socialist economy proportionally plans, on the basis of the population and productive forces, for sufficiency and abundance of consumer goods. While improving the standard of living and increasing the purchasing power of the nation it also expands production. Socialist economy thus solves the problem of unemployment and ensures security of a means of livelihood for every individual.

10. In order to carry out socialist plans such vital means of production as agricultural and industrial production, distribution, transportation, communications, All external trade, etc., will have to be nationalized. All such national means of production will have to be owned by the State or co-operative societies or collective unions. Amongst such ownerships State ownership forms the main basis of socialist economy. State ownership means ownership by the whole nation itself, whereas ownership by co-operatives or collectives means group-ownership by respective concerns. But as all forms of ownership will have to operate within the framework of socialist national planning they are interdependent.

11. In building up an economy according to socialist plans every able individual will have to work according to his ability. The material and cultural values that accrue will be distributed in accordance with the quantity and quality of labour expended by each individual in social production.

12. In socialist society equalitarianism is impossible. Men are not equal physically and intellectually in the respective quantity and quality of service they render to society, and differences are therefore bound to exist. But at the same time social justice demands that the gaps between incomes are reasonable, and correct measures will be taken to narrow these gaps as much as possible.

13. A socialist democratic state will be constituted to build up a successful socialist economy. A socialist democratic state is based on and safeguards its own socialist economy. The vanguard and custodian of a socialist democratic state are primarily peasants and workers, but the middle strata and those who will work with integrity and loyalty for the general weal will also participate.

14. Parliamentary democracy called "The People's Rule" came into existence in history with the British, American and French Revolutions against feudalism. It happens to be the best in comparison with all its preceding systems.

But in some countries the parliament has been so abused as to have become only the means by which the opportunists and propertied people deceive the simple masses.

In the Union of Burma also, parliamentary democracy has been tried and tested in furtherance of the aims of socialist development. But Burma's "parliamentary democracy" has not only failed to serve our socialist development but also, due to its very inconsistencies, defects, weaknesses and loopholes, its abuses and the absence of a mature public opinion, lost sight of and deviated from the socialist aims, until at last indications of its heading imperceptibly towards just the reverse have become apparent.

The nation's socialist aims cannot be achieved with any assurance by means of the form of parliamentary democracy that we have so far experienced.

The Revolutionary Council therefore firmly believes that it must develop, in conformity with existing conditions and environment and ever changing circumstances, only such a form of democracy as will promote and safeguard the socialist development. These then are the fundamentals of socialist economy.

PROGRAMME FOR TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

Reorientation of views

15. In marching towards socialist economy it is imperative that we first reorientate all erroneous views of our people. Fraudulent practices, profit motive, easy living, parasitism, shirking and selfishness must be eradicated.

16. We must so educate the people that to earn one's living by one's own labour and to see dignity in one's own work comes into vogue. We must educate, lead by example and guide the people away from the base notion that it is beneath one's dignity to work by the sweat of one's brow.

17. Attempts must be made by various correct methods to do away with bogus acts of charity and social work for vainglorious show, bogus piety and hypocritical religiosity, etc., as well as to foster and applaud bona fide belief and practice of personal morals as taught by ethics (sic) and traditions of every religion and culture. We will resort to education, literature, fine arts, theatre and cinema, etc., to bring into vogue the concept that to serve others' interests is to serve one's own.

Administrative machinery

18. In our road to socialism the existing bureaucratic administration is a big stumbling block. To achieve our socialist aims with this effete machinery is impossible. Steps will have to be taken to remove this bureaucratic machinery and lay firm foundations for a socialist democratic one.

Defense Services

19. The existing Defense Services will also be developed to become national armed forces which will defend our socialist economy.

Economy

20. The Union of Burma is an economically backward agricultural country. The national productive forces need to be continually developed to build up socialist economy. That is why various productions that would be compatible with existing conditions and time will have to be planned and developed. While modernizing the agricultural production which forms the main basis of the national economy such industries as would be commensurate with the natural resources and capabilities of the country will also be developed. In doing so national private enterprises which contribute to national productive forces will be allowed with fair and reasonable restrictions.

21. On the full realization of socialist economy the socialist government, far from neglecting the owners of national private enterprises which have been steadfastly contributing to the general well-being of the people, will even enable them to occupy a worthy place in the new society in the course of further national development.

The question of nationalities

22. As the Union of Burma is a country where many indigenous racial groups reside, it is only when the solidarity of all the indigenous racial groups has been established that socialist economy which can guarantee the welfare of every racial group can be achieved. In striving towards fraternity and unity of all the races of the Union we will be guided by what General Aung San, our national leader, said at the A.F.P.F.L. conference held at the middle terrace of the Shwedagon Pagoda on January 20, 1946: "A nation is a collective term applied to a people, irrespective of their ethnic origin, living in close contact with one another and having common interests and sharing joys and sorrows together for such historic periods as to have acquired a sense of oneness. Though race, religion and language are important factors it is only their traditional desire and will to live in unity through weal and woe that binds a people together and makes them a nation and their spirit a patriotism." We, the peoples of the Union of Burma, shall nurture and hug a new patriotism as inspired by the words of General Aung San.

Social Service

23. Education. – The Revolutionary Council believes that the existing educational system unequated with livelihood will have to be transformed. An educational system equated with livelihood will be brought about. Science will be given precedence in education. Our educational target is to bring basic education within the reach of all. As regards higher education only those who have promise and enough potentialities and industriousness to benefit from it will be permitted.

24. Health and Culture. – Other social services such as Health, Culture, etc., shall flourish in direct proportion to the tides of socialist success like the lotus and the water's height.

Organizational march

25. In marching towards the goal of socialism the Revolutionary Council will base its organization primarily on the strength of peasants and other working masses who form the great majority of the nation. It will march also hand-in-hand with those who will work with integrity and loyalty for national interest and well-being of the people.

26. The Revolutionary Council will therefore carry out such mass and class organizations as are suitable for the transitional period, and also build up a suitable form of political organization.

27. When political organizational work is carried out socialist democratic education and democratic training will be given to the people so as to ensure their conscious participation. (The Revolutionary Council believes and hopes that there will come about democratic competitions which will promote socialist development within the framework of socialism.) The aforesaid are in outline the belief, policy and programme of the Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma.

Responsibility of the people

28. The Revolutionary Council has faith in the people, and in their creative force. The Revolutionary Council believes that the people will, with an active awareness of their duties and responsibilities, play their part in full in this national revolutionary progressive movement and programme under the leadership of the Revolutionary Council. The Revolutionary Council reaffirms and declares again that it will go forward (sic) hand-in-hand with the people to reach the goal of socialism.