Between Integration and Secession

The Muslim Communities of the Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, and Western Burma/Myanmar

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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Oxford

LEXINGTON BOOKS

Published in the United States of America
by Lexington Books
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706

12 Hid's Copse Road
Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9JJ, England

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2002107629

ISBN 0-7391-0356-3 (cloth : alk. paper)

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permancnce of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z,39.4&-1992.

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Foreword

For a quarter of a century and more, I have been absorbed with the topic of Muslim uprisings in Southeast Asia. In 1972, my book *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Otto Harrassowitz, Weisbaden) dealt with the revolt of the Mujahideen in Arakan, which is in western Burma/Myanmar. In July of 1975, I wrote a paper (in Hebrew) that dealt with Muslim uprisings in Thailand and the Philippines, which was published by the Shiloach Institute of Tel Aviv University. My intention had been to write a fuller study in English, but for a variety of reasons I was unable to do so until the beginning of 1996. In the more than twenty years that have elapsed sincc the original Hebrew monograph, there have been a host of changes and developments in the field, and other researchers have been drawn to the topic, producing a body of books and papers on various aspects of Muslim uprisings in Southeast Asia. During these two decades, particularly in the southern Philippines and southern Thailand, Muslim revolts grew in intensity. As a result, a great deal of new material is now available which requires study and research.

The present undertaking is neither a translation, an update, nor an expansion of my original paper. It is, essentially, a new work and includes a study of the Muslims of Arakan, the Rohingya. I believe it is important to assess the nature of these movements and the processes they have undergone for, despite the ethnic differences between the Rohingya of Arakan, the Malay Muslims of the Patani region in South Thailand, and the various Moro groups in the southern Philippines, the picture is better understood through a comparison of these three Muslim separatist movements of Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia has other Muslim minorities—in Vietnam, in Cambodia, in Indonesia, and in Singapore—but their situation is so different that I do not see the cogency of viewing them in comparative terms or including them in the present study.

The most difficult problem in studying the separatist movements is the question of sources. Basic historic events are not difficult to reconstruct because they have been extensively recorded by many researchers and journalists in the past few decades. An especially large body of information has been published on the Muslim revolt in the Philippines; there is also a wealth of material on the Muslim uprising in Thailand, although this movement attracted less attention on the part of journalists and researchers. There are even some comparative studies between the two movements. The situation is much less satisfactory regarding the Muslim

revolt in Arakan. Extant sources are less available perhaps because of the inaccessibility of the area, and the less than welcoming attitude of the Burmese/Myanmar government to journalists and other foreigners. The movements themselves have not all been of the same mind in the desire to bring their struggle before world public opinion. The Muslims of the southern Philippines understood the importance of mobilizing international support for their cause and made extensive use of communiques, speeches and interviews. As a result, there is a great deal of documentation about the movement. The availability of sources is not as good for the Muslims of the Patani area. In the early years after World War II, they also attempted to mobilize outside support, and for that stage of their revolt there is a good deal of documentation. In subsequent years, they devoted much less effort to this so that to a greater degree one is forced to rely on newspaper reports. There is almost no documentation for the Rohinga that originates with the movement itself, making it much more difficult to know and understand the situation of this minority. One also has to bear in mind the fact that some of the material generated by Muslim sources is tendentious, and must be evaluated with caution. Nonetheless, in most cases, by verifying the facts and weighing the material that has been published, one is able to arrive at a realistic, logical, and reasonable description of historic events which neutralizes inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and occasional misunderstandings, at least to a certain degree.

This study was conducted under the auspices of the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I am grateful to Prof. Moshe Maoz, former Chairperson of the Truman Institute, who invited me to become a Research Fellow of the Institute, and to Prof. Amnon Cohen, its present Chairperson. My sincere thanks also to the Institute staff for their generous help: Dr. Edy Kaufman, Executive Director; Dalia Shemer, Anat Mishali, and Jennie Nelson. Prof. Aharon Layish and Dr. Aryeh Oded were of great assistance in clarifying Arabic terms, and I am indebted to Ms. Tamar Sofer who drew the maps. My students at the Hebrew University with whom I discussed the issues dealt with in the book were very helpful. The librarians of the Truman Institute aided me in locating material, particularly Ricardo Schwed who was always ready to share his expertise. I was also helped by Esti Shapira, the librarian of the Oriental Reading Room at the National and University Library in Jerusalem. My thanks, as well, to Prof. Jonathan Goldstein of West Georgia College; Dr. Frank Shulman of Chicago; Prof. David J. Steinberg, President of Long Island University; Manny Ocampo of New York; His Excellency, Thai Ambassador Vara-Poj Snidvongs; Irit Ben-Aba; Ilan Baruch; David Danieli; and Ilan Fluss of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem.

In London, a wealth of material was made available to me in books and original documents at the Public Records Office (PRO), the British Library, and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). It was a genuine, pleasure to benefit from the efficient and courteous services of these excellent institutions. The librarians at the Philippine University in Manila were especially forthcoming and expedi-

tious in responding to my request.s David Kushncr of Haifa University helped me clarify a number of salient historical facts. Kari Druck worked diligently in typing the manuscript, and Rivka and Amnon Hadary translated and edited a complicated Hebrew work. Dr. Raphael Posner prepared the book for press with great dilligence and attention to detail. My thanks to all of them.

While I am grateful to all those without whom the publication of this study would not have been possible, I alone am responsible for any errors that may have crept into the work.

The Truman Institute,
Jerusalem

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Abbreviations

ABIM	Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia)
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ALA	Arakan Liberation Army
ALP	Arakan Liberation Party
ARIF	The Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front
ARMM	The Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BIAF	Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces
BMA	Bangsa Moro Army
BMLO	Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization
BNPP	Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (see also: NLFP)
BRN	Barisan Revolusi Nasional (National Revolutionary Front, Patani)
BSPP	Burma Socialist Program Party
BWJ	Barbara Whittingham-Jones Collections (SOAS)
CCIA	Central Committee for Islamic Affairs (Thailand)
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CNI	Commission of National Integration (Philippines)
CPM	See: MCP
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
CO	Colonial Office (PRO)
DAR	Department of Agrarian Reform (Philippines)
DO	Dominions Office (PRO)
EDCOR	The Economic Development Corps (Philippines)
*EI*1	*Encyclopaedia of Islam,* Leiden, 1913-1938
*EI*2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, Leiden, 1954
FEER	*Far Eastern Economic Review*
FO	Foreign Office (PRO)
FRC	Foreigner Registration Card (Burma/Myanmar)
GAMPAR	Gabungan Melayu Patani Raya (The Association of the Malays of Greater Patani)
GIP	Grekkan Islam Patani

ICFM	The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers
ICS	Indian Civilian Service
IDP	Islamic Directorate of the Philippines
KMLF	Kawthoolei Muslim Liberation Force (Burma/Myanmar)
MCFF	Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters (Philippines)
MCP	Malayan Communist Party (or: CPM)
MDA	Mindanao Development Authority
MFA	Mayu Frontier Administration
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MIM	Muslim (later Mindanao) Independence Movement
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MNLF/RG	Moro National Liberation Front/Reformist Group
MPLA	Malayan People's Liberation Army
MPRMP	Council of the Muslim People of Patani
NARRA	National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (Philippines)
NDF	National Democratic Front (Philippines)
NLFP	The National Liberation Front of Patani (see also: BNPP)
NLSA	The National Land Settlement Administration (Philippines)
NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)
NRC	National Registration Card (Burma/Myanmar)
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OSSS	Office of Strategic and Special Studies (Philippines)
PAC	Provincial Autonomous Council (Philippines)
PAPERI	Parti Persandaran Islam (Islamic Socialist Party) (Thailand)
PARNAS	Partai Revolusi Nasional (Patani)
PAS	Partai Islam se-Malaysia (see also: PMIP and PI)
PI	Partai Islam (see also: PMIP and PAS)
PKPB	Pergerakan Kemerdekaan Patani Bersatu (United Patani Freedom Movement)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PM IP	Pan Malayan Islamic Party (see also: PI and PAS)
PPM	Patani People's Movement
PPP'P	Pertubohan Bersatuan Pembibasan Patani (see also: PULO)
PRO	Public Records Office, London
PSRM	Partai Sosialis Rak'yat Malaya
PTF/RDM	Presidential Task Force for the Reconstruction and Development of Mindanao .
PULA	Patani United Liberation Army
PULO	Patani United Liberation Organization (see also: PPPP)
RAD	Reconstruction and Development Programme for Mindanao
RCC	A Regional Consultative Commission (Philippines)

RIF	Rohingya Independence Force
RPF	Rohingya Patriotic Front
RSO	The Rohingya Solidarity Organisation
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council (Burma/Myanmar)
SOAS	The School of African and Asian Studies, London
SPCPD	Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development
SPDA	Southern Philippines Development Administration
STMSG	South Thailand Muslim Students Group
TJI	Tantra Jihad Islam (Thailand)
TMPLAF	Thai Muslim People's Liberation Armed Forces
TNPRP	Tentera Nasional Pembebasan Rak'yat Patani (Patani Peoples National Liberation Army)
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UIFO	Union of Islamic Forces and Organizations (Philippines)
UMNO	United Malay National Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMC	World Muslim Congress (Moatamar al-Alam alrlslami)
WML	World Muslim League

Introduction

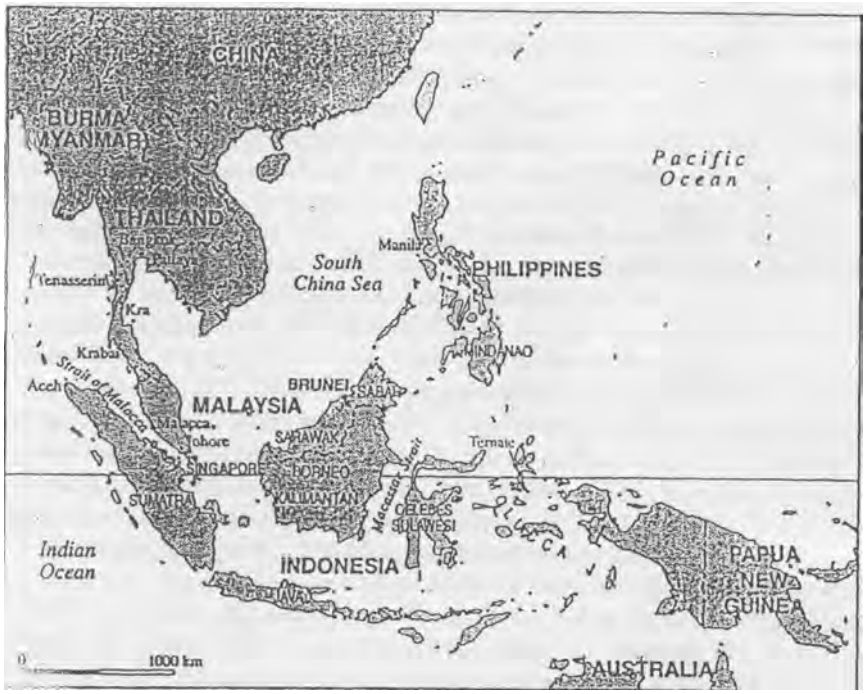
The Expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia[1]

Much before the first century, there is evidence of commerce between the Roman Empire and other Mediterranean lands, the cargo making its way mainly aboard Roman and Indian vessels. At the large port which sprang up on the southern coast of Ceylon, merchandise was exchanged between the Roman Empire, India, Southeast Asia, and China. One route went around the Indian subcontinent in the direction of the Straits of Hormuz to the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, and from there up the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers to ports on the Mediterranean. Another route skirted the Arabian subcontinent to the port of Hadramaut, from there to the Straits of Bab al Mandeb and then to the Red Sea and Akaba. Alternately, the land route went from Hadramaut to Mecca and continued from there to Gaza or Damascus. Merchandise was transported via all these routes from China and India to Mediterranean ports and Europe; merchandise was transported along the same routes from the Middle East back to China and India. In the Mediterranean littoral, the appetite for merchandise from Asia motivated Indian merchants to develop their contacts in Southeast Asia and even further afield. In the Middle East, from at least the first century, Arab merchants were also acquainted with trade routes through Asian waters. Most of these merchants came from trade centers along the Red Sea, southern Arabia, or the Persian Gulf. By the third century, there were already Persian merchants along the Malay Peninsula. These Arabs and Persians acted as go-betweens for European merchants who dealt with Asian merchants active in India and the western parts of the Malaysian archipelago. Arab commerce extended to China. It is likely that a group of Arab merchants, and perhaps Persians as well, were in the city of Canton as early as the third century. Apparently the sea lanes from Egypt and Persia to India on the one hand, and from India to Southeast Asia on the other, were in Arab hands, and the number of Arab and Persian merchants grew in the first decade of the seventh century. But, because their ships were technically inferior and so had to stay close to the shore, the Chinese were not as involved in trade in the southern waters until long after the Indians, the Arabs, and the Malays of Southeast Asia, each of whom had learned enough about seasonal winds and navigation to sail in the open sea. In time, this commerce became a Muslim monopoly at both its western and eastern ends.[2]

The rise of Islam in the Middle East, and its rapid expansion in the seventh century, severed contact between Europe, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. Consequently, the Muslims gained a monopoly over Asian trade with the West, becoming the dominant player in this commerce. Colonies of Muslims, both Arab and Persian, spread all along the sea trade routes. As early as the middle of the eighth century, a sizable Muslim presence could be found along the southern coast of China, in the commercial ports of southern India and Southeast Asia, and it apparently extended to the Philippines. The impetus for the expansion was not merely commercial. As a result of the conflict between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, many Shiite refugees fled eastward as far as Korea. A major part of the Shiite immigration to China was made up of Persians where, as noted, Persian ships had arrived even before the rise of Islam. The Chinese, themselves, had met Arabs and forged trade links with them in the fourth and seventh centuries. Arab and Persian merchants, as well as Indians, used the ports of Kedah and Patani from the eighth century onward. There were regular sailings to China via the Malabar coast in India, by way of Kedah in the Malay Peninsula, and via the Straits of Malacca. A round trip voyage to China lasted eighteen months. In the ninth century, there were contacts with Korea and Japan. In the same century, China, under the T'ang dynasty, enjoyed a period of growth which fostered close commercial links with the Abbasid Caliphate. The wide spectrum of commerce which developed was the outcome of such factors as increased agricultural production and industrial output, a network of secure land and sea routes, political stability, and the convenient geographic position of the Abbasid Caliphate poised, as it was, between Asia, the Mediterranean basin, and Europe. Trade with distant Asian lands—India, Ceylon, Southeast Asia, and China—was conducted along both land routes from the Persian Gulf and land routes which led to India by way of Afghanistan, or to China via central Asia. Merchants brought silk, spices, perfumes, lumber, porcelain, silver and gold articles, precious jewels, jewelry, and so forth from these countries, and some of the trade made its way to Europe. In 878 CE, the free flow of commerce was impeded when Muslims were killed in southern China, and the port of Canton was closed to foreign traders. Many of those who survived moved to the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra, particularly to Kalah (Klang or Kedah) and reestablished themselves there. Toward the end of the ninth century, trade along this route diminished due to both the fading fortunes of the Abbasid Caliphate and the weakening of the T'ang dynasty in China. By the end of the tenth century, direct sailings from Persia to China had almost come to an end. Now Arab and Chinese merchants would meet in Kedah, Sumatra, or Java. Arab trade was mostly limited to ports along the Malabar coast, but the importance of ports along the archipelago did not diminish. Also by the end of the tenth century, Muslims were allowed to reenter China. When Malayas entered into the trade, they broadened contacts between foreign Muslim traders and. the local population. During this same century, Chinese merchants began trade with Borneo while Muslim merchants discovered possibilities for trade with the Sulu Islands.[3]

Maps

SOUTHEAST ASIA



Because sailing ships were dependent on monsoon winds and the seasons, it was essential for Arabs and other Muslim traders from India and Persia to set up domiciles in ports that were located in the heart of local communities. Muslim settlements spread rapidly in Asian port cities as Muslim merchants became vital to the economy of local communities. Rulers in the coastal areas of Southeast Asia realized that such important crops as fragrant wood, spices, etc., which were raised in their principalities, were in great demand. In a few places in the Malaysian archipelago there was gold as well. Consequently, these rulers were able to increase their influence and power through the expeditious use of their resources. At the same time, other sovereigns gained influence by establishing entrepots where goods could be bought and sold. Merchants who engaged in such trade were warmly welcomed and protected. Thus, from the tenth century onward, Muslim traders gradually took over the spice trade of the Indian Ocean for their markets in the Middle East. For a while, in the period between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, Arab entrepreneurs were able to renew their direct commerce with China. This was made possible because of China's interest in stamping out the piracy that had paralyzed commercial trade in the Straits of Malacca throughout the fourteenth century, and was accomplished in concert with the Muslim trading communities. China found a loyal vassal and ally in the sultan of Malacca whose principality was located at the narrowest point along the Malacca Straits, offering a convenient point of meeting for vessels in both directions. Thanks to this trade, Malacca became an important commercial center in the fifteenth century. The commercial superiority and the assertive character of Muslim rulers served as a strong driving force in the expansion of Islam along the entire Malaysian archipelago precisely at a period when the influence of earlier religions and traditions was waning.[4]

Prior to the expansion of Islam, the prevalent religions for the population of Southeast Asia were Hinduism and Buddhism, which included a blend of local animistic beliefs. There are few solidly documented historic records regarding the early settlement period of Muslim commerce so it is difficult to reconstruct details of the process by which small enclaves of Muslim traders burgeoned into permanent, established communities. Historians are divided on the matter, and this lack of unanimity extends to the question of Muslim expansion in Southeast Asia in general. It is important to keep in mind that Southeast Asia was one of the last regions of the world reached by Islam. Not until the mid-fifteenth century did Islam become a salient force in the region; not until the late nineteenth century did it become widespread within the general population. In part, this was a reaction to colonial rule and, in part, a response to developments in the Middle East and influences radiating from that region. We will not, however, deal with these matters here. For the purposes of this study, a schematic description of Islam's expansion and settlement in Southeast Asia which is consistent with the consensual view held by most historians writing about the region and the period is sufficient.

It is generally assumed that in the first centuries after Muslim traders appeared

in Southeast Asia, their advent was not accompanied by large scale religious conversions. Initially, the local inhabitants who did embrace Islam were women who had married the foreign Muslim traders, concubines, or maids and their offspring who grew up as Muslims. As communities of local Muslim traders grew, numbers of *Ulama* religious scholars from abroad, some of whom were Sufis, were also attracted to the communities. It was these scholars who apparently were the spearhead of Islam's expansion into Asia. This model repeated itself in all parts of the archipelago. With the passage of time, Muslim traders integrated with local inhabitants, raised families, and founded local Muslim communities; they were followed by religious instructors who reinforced the faith among local Muslims, and proselytized among the general population. Local rulers then began to convert to Islam, whether out of political or economic considerations (Islam had extensive international commercial ties that brought wealth and affluence) or because they became ideologically convinced. Muslim traders, generally from among the Arab *Sayyid* nobility entered the ruling elites through marriage. Wealthy trading communities gained influence and achieved status, and there were local rulers who appointed Muslims to senior positions. In a number of places in Malaysia, *Sayyids* became rulers in their own right holding a variety of titles. Whether or not all these rulers came from abroad is not known because sons of *Sayyids* who married local women continued to carry the titles. To this day, such titles can be found among the aristocracy of Islamic countries of Southeast Asia. Following the example set by the ruling aristocracies, their subjects too converted to Islam. This was followed by an effort on the part of local principalities that had converted to Islam to proselytize the new religion among their neighbors, sometimes forcibly.[5]

A number of explanations have been put forward for the phenomenon of Islam's expansion in Southeast Asia. There is a theory which says that those belonging to the lower social strata embraced Islam willingly so as to be free of the repressive practices of the caste system since in Islam, at least theoretically, equality reigns between all the faithful. The same explanation is advanced for the widespread Islamization of the lower castes in India. Another theory suggests that local chieftains converted to Islam because of the political and economic alliances which Muslim traders could provide. These advantages were based on Muslim solidarity that stemmed from belonging to the *Ummah.* Again, following the conversion to Islam by the chieftains, their subjects followed suit in keeping with the tradition of compliant behavior. Observers of the scene with religious inclinations feel that Islamic doctrine appealed to the hearts of the local populations. There are some who point out that the message of Islam as disseminated by Sufi religious instructors, who tended toward mysticism, was well suited to religious concepts already to be found within the local populations. Islam was tolerant of many syncretic *customs,* even such customs as appeared to be contrary to Islamic *shari'a* law. It is clear that over the generations, Muslim communities also sprang up due to mixed marriages and these, in concert with the other factors noted above, contributed to the expansion of Islam. It should be added that after Islam took root in India, in

the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Indian merchants in Southeast Asia, most of them Muslims from Gujarat or southern India, became a major proselytizing force thus fashioning the special blend of commerce and missionary activity that was to characterize the expansion of Islam in the archipelago. The role of the Arab *Sayyids* and *Sharifs* has already been mentioned as well as the contribution of indigenous Malaysians who themselves had converted to Islam.[6]

There was no significant Islamic presence in the countries of Southeast Asia until the end of the twelfth century. By the end of the thirteenth century, the first signs of Islamization in northern Sumatra appeared: a permanent Muslim presence in Perlak in 1290. Marco Polo, who visited the area at about that time, testified to the Islamization of the inhabitants by Muslim traders. A decade later the neighboring regions of Pedir, Acheh, and Pasai were ruled by Muslims. Other neighboring political entities were also in the process of Islamization, and from there Islam expanded along the coasts to nearby islands. Muslim merchants continued to settle in ports, marry local women, learn local dialects and customs, and associate with the aristocracy. Ultimately they converted the rulers of the coastal states and their populations to a simple, minimalist form of Islam which in turn was further expanded by the new Muslims. Of special importance for the expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia *was* the Islamization of Malacca in approximately fourteen hundred. According to traditional chronicles (*Hikayat*), the local ruler converted to Islam as a result of marriage to a princess from Pasai, and the persuasive efforts of Indian Muslims from Gujarat or southern India. The Malaccan ruler sought political support in his stand against Buddhist Siam and the Hindu Majapahit of Java. In short order, the Sultanate of Malacca developed and became a juncture for Asian international trade and a major commercial power. The conversion of the Malaccan ruler to Islam had an enormous impact on the expansion of Islam in other parts of the Malaysian archipelago, including the Philippine Islands. In the fifteenth century, and the beginning of the sixteenth, Malacca became a center for Islamic studies and propagation of the faith, in addition to its being a commercial center. Relations with Malacca induced the ruler of Brunei to convert to Islam in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Arabs, or missionaries of Arab descent, or Indian Muslims (apparently Sufis) set out for Java from Malacca in order to advance the fortunes of Islam. Many of the traders belonged to Sufi orders, and their missionary zeal stands out when compared to Arab and Persian traders of previous periods who had not concerned themselves with missionary activity. It was only after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 that Sufism and Sufi orders played an important role in the spread of the religion, at least until the end of *the eighteenth century. These* orders played an important role in Islamic commercial centers. The new and vigorous propagators of Islam stressed the brotherhood of Islam; making only minimalist religious demands on the performance of laws, leaving room for local pre-Islamic beliefs and a variety of customs. The principalities of Jambi and Palembang converted to Islam towards the end of the fifteenth century. It is interesting that Buddhist states that traded

with Malacca such as Pegu or Siam, were not influenced by the new religion, and did not convert to Islam, apparently because of the vitality of Buddhism and the firm hold it had in the mainland areas of Southeast Asia. In neither of these instances was there a political need to convert to Islam so as to gain allies against an enemy. It appears that the penetration of Islam into the Malayan peninsula (excluding the Malacca region) began after the route of Siam by Malacca in 1445. Pahang was incorporated into Malacca in 1456. Kedah converted in 1460. Trengganu and Patani became Muslim around 1474. In most of the states of the Malay peninsula, Islam became a focal point for resistance to the attempts at conquest by Buddhist Siam. Thus the early religious and political factors blended exactly as they did several hundred years later in expressions of anti-European colonialism. By 1550, all of Sumatra was Muslim, with the exception of the Batak in the interior of the island. The Minangkabau too remained anti-Muslim and faithful to their own traditions for many more years. In effect, the process of Islamization of the Malayan peninsula and archipelago drew a line of demarcation that separated the Buddhist mainland regions of Southeast Asia from the Islamic coastal states. Because of the loose, amorphous aspect of Islam, this situation remained unchanged until the end of the nineteenth century, the period of Dutch and British colonial consolidation in the region.[7]

In large measure, the Islamization of Java was decidedly different and slower than in other parts of the Malaysian archipelago where there was a determined resistance on the part of Hindus. Persian and Gujarat merchants had settled in the coastal cities of eastern Java even before the rise of the sultanate in Malacca. It is probable that systematic Muslim missionary effort began at the end of the fourteenth century when missionaries from Java, many of whom were apparently Sufis, arrived in Pasai and Malacca. Javanese journeyed to Pasai and Malacca to study Islam and, on their return, themselves became missionaries and propagators of the faith. Java's port cities were peaceably converted to Islam between 1456 and 1490 although the interior and eastern part of Java remained loyal to the Javanese-Hindu tradition for a much longer period. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, between 1515 and 1520, an uprising by a coalition of Muslim rulers from a number of Javanese areas outside Java proper broke out against the Majapahit state in the eastern area of central Java, an area that had been the core of Hindu culture. The Majapahit state surrendered and the defeated Hindus fled to the Island of Bali which had never accepted Islam.The Mataram state of central Java then increased in importance. Instability and disquiet prevailed in Java's central region for decades until a treaty was concluded between Mataram and the Muslim ports. Ultimately, this state too converted to Islam in the seventeenth century. As early as the sixteenth century, one Hindu state after another had converted to Islam. Bantam, in the Sunda region of Java, embraced Islam in 1525: Islam continued. to expand, though penetration into the hintertland advanced more slowly. It bears remembering that in Java, more than in other parts of the archipelago, the acceptance of Islam was generally of a nominal and formal nature only. Buddhist

and Hindu beliefs were incorporated into Islam, particularly those religious customs and principles of behavior known as *adat;* whereas, cultural and other social forms persisted. Only gradually, as a result of more immediate contact with the Arab culture that came directly from Mecca, Medina, Cairo, and Hadramaut, was the earlier influence of Persian-Indian Muslims who had promoted the faith replaced. Consequently, to this day, Javanese Islam differs in a number of aspects from that of Islam in other parts of the archipelago.[8]

Other regions of the archipelago were also influenced by Islam in proportion to their commercial ties to Malacca. The people of the Molucca Islands gradually converted to Islam in the second half of the fifteenth century. The Raja of Borneo converted in 1510 and subdued most of northwest Borneo by 1520. Islam reached the southernmost islands of the Philippines, Mindanao, and Sulu in the middle of the sixteenth century, (although Arab missionaries had already come to Sulu frorn China by the fourteenth century). It is likely that all these conversions to Islam were the outcome of missionary work by Malaysians who were themselves Muslims.[9] Important to note is the fact that the appearance of Islam in Southeast Asia did not entail the subjugation of the local population to foreign rule. All the principalities that became Muslim were governed, either immediately or after a brief period, by local families. This is in contradistinction to the processes that took place following European incursions in the region during the sixteenth century. The advance of Christianity saw those regions turned into colonies; that is, it involved their subjugation to European foreigners. The new religion itself, Christianity, was part and parcel of this subjugation. Basically, this explains the great opposition in the Malayan world to the coming of the Europeans.[10]

During the period of the Crusades, the crusaders and subsequently the affluent classes became accustomed to such luxury items as perfumes, silk, cotton, spices, woods, metals, ceramics, and other products that had previously been unknown in Europe. As the desire for such products grew in Europe, merchants were occupied with meeting the demand. The Crusades also sparked European fascination with geography and journeys of discovery, exciting a new interest in the science of navigation. In the wake of the Crusades, the authority and influence of western European monarchs grew, occasioning a decline in the power of the nobility and a burgeoning national sentiment; commerce expanded, cities swelled, navigational science became more exact, and, concomitantly, there was an increased appetite for luxury items. However, the expansion of Islam along the Mediterranean littoral from North Africa to the Balkans severed the contact between Europe and Asia, creating a need to find alternate routes. The Reconquest in Spain was completed by 1492, and expeditions set out with the purpose of finding a route to India and the spice islands of Southeast Asia which would circumnavigate Africa. In the fifteenth century, Portugal's explorations were the most successful in this sphere. In 1498, Vasco da Gama sailed around Africa reaching Calicut in India, and so discovered a sea route to the East that bypassed the Mediterranean and the lands under Islam. Christian religious feeling among Portuguese sailors was very strong.

The journeys of discovery were perceived as a religious war, a continuation of the. Crusades and the Reconquest against the same Muslim enemy which the Portuguese encountered anew in the Indian Ocean. In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire dispatched naval expeditions to the Indian Ocean, but they were easily subdued by superior Portuguese vessels and armaments. Following the Portuguese, other European seafarers came on the scene, establishing a western European dominance in Africa, south Asia, and Southeast Asia which persisted until the mid-twentieth century. The spice trade whose route lay along the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and from there to Europe, now shifted to ocean routes that were controlled by Europeans at either end. In the Portuguese bypass of Africa, the Mediterranean merchants who had served as middlemen bringing products to Europe until the fifteenth century, were also made redundant. In this respect, the year 1511 marked a highly significant juncture in the history of the slow but consistent expansion of Islam in the Southeast Asian islands. In that year, the Portuguese conquered the Sultanate of Malacca thereby repulsing Muslim superiority in Southeast Asia and the Arab-Muslim monopoly of international trade with Southeast Asia. They were not, however, powerful enough to take over the spice trade in its entirety. Furthermore, the relentless and cruel missionizing efforts of the Portuguese enragcd the local populations and had the precise effect of strengthening adherence to Islam rather than weakening it, stirring the Muslims to take counter measures. More, the conquest of Malacca encouraged Muslim traders to visit other ports. Ports in Java, for example, now began to develop at the expense of Malacca, and Brunei expanded as a focal point of influence in the Molucca Islands and the Philippine archipelago. Acheh, too, became an important Muslim trade and religious center. It was precisely Portuguese military victories that reinforced the extent of Islamic penetration into large parts of the archipelago during the course of the sixteenth century, and reinforced the consciousness of belonging to *Dar al-Islam.* The fall of Malacca in 1511 (which occurred less than twenty years after the fall of the Kingdom of Granada) caused the exodus of many Muslim religious functionaries to other parts of Southeast Asia, particularly to Sumatra and Java, and the rekindling of Islamic religious fervor to expand the faith throughout communities in Java, Borneo, Molucca, and other islands that had not as yet converted to Islam. The Portuguese in their combined commercial-religious thrust for spice and souls elicited only a vigorous negative reaction from determined Muslims. Wars against the Portuguese increasingly took on the aspect of a holy war—jihad. The outcome of Portuguese missionary activity in Southeast Asia was most unimpressive, particularly when compared to the success of the Spaniards in converting the majority of the Philippine populations to Christianity.[11]

Brunei's rise as a commercial center, following the fall of Malacca, led to its emergence as a maritime power with commercial depots that reached as far away as Manila. Trade began around 1520 and was controlled by Muslims from Borneo. Brunei's trade supremacy in the Philippine Islands persisted until the arrival of the

Spaniards. After the fall of Malacca, a branch of the Johor Sultan's family that had been close to the Sultanate of Malacca, made its way to east Minadanao. The Sultanate of Johor itself was established sometime after 1511. A member of the family arrived in Minadanao in 1520 and, with the aid of contacts he made through marriage, established the principality and brought Islam to Minadanao. By 1565 when the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines, there were already a number of sultanates in the southem islands connected by marriage: Brunei, Sulu, Magindanao, and Buayan. Spanish conquest of the Muslim settlement in Manila, and the establishment of a Spanish presence in its place by Legaspi in 1571, was significant because it acted as a barrier to further Islamic expansion along the Philippine archipelago. The more southerly sultanates of Sulu and Magindanao, however, put up greater opposition. It was the Spaniards themselves who said that had they come but a few years later all of the islands, or at least their rulers, would have converted to Islam. When the Spaniards arrived, the majority of the population of Visaya and Luzon practiced local versions of paganism and animism. The Spaniards began implementing their conquest by eradicating the power of Brunei in the islands and converting the local population to Christianity. With the exception of Muslims in the southern islands and the pagans of the inland mountainous region of the larger islands, by the year 1600, a majority of the Philippine population had been converted. The indigenous population of new Christians was called *Indios.* The Spaniards spared no efforts in converting the Muslims of the south and subjugating them. Instructions received by Spanish commanders sent to conduct military operations in the south stressed that Muslim conversion activity must be stopped and their mosques destroyed. This policy unleashed a series of wars that lasted three hundred years until 1898 when Spain transferred control of the Philippines to the United States. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Muslims still felt strong enough to struggle with the Spaniards for control of Visaya, but for the most part the years that followed were spent on the defensive. Muslims fought against Spanish military expeditions composed mainly of conscripted Filipino Christians. An atmosphere of religious crusades characterized the wars which were marked by mutual killing and great destruction. Tens of thousands of Christians were captured into slavery as a result of Muslim sorties and sold in the markets of Sulu and Macasar to work on plantations of the Dutch East Indian Islands. Not until the middle of the nineteenth century, when Spanish steamships and other technological advances adversely effected Muslim military potential, did hostile activity by Muslims in the southern Philippines come to an end.[12]

In 1641, Malacca fell to the Dutch, and Portuguese Catholics were expelled. Even earlier, in 1619, Holland had established its commercial depot in Batavia. Although initially the Dutch attempted to restrain Muslim missionary activity among the local population and supported Christian missionaries to some extent, for the most part they had much less interest in religion than they did in commerce. One of the reasons for this neutral approach on the part of the Dutch Protestant colonial administration was the fear that missionary activity would give rise to

anxiety among the Muslims which could lead to a fanatic reaction. Generally, missionary activities made headway only among such pagan tribes as the Batak in Sumatra, or the Torajos in the Celebes. Britain conquered Malacca in 1795, and British supremacy in the Malay Peninsula, which reached its zenith in the nineteenth century, was also devoid of vigorous missionary work. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, there were private schools maintained by missionary societies, and Chinese pupils who studied in such schools converted to Christianity. In general, the British chose to ignore Islam and its status in their sphere of influence in the Malayan peninsula, as did the Dutch who also conducted a policy of religious tolerance in their colonial acquisitions in Southeast Asia.[13]

Establishment of the Muslim presence throughout Southeast Asia from north Sumatra to the Philippine archipelago was completed in the period between the beginning of the sixteenth and the end of the eighteenth centuries. Muslim communities were possessed of a Muslim consciousness whose intensity is difficult to comprehend; that is, a sense of belonging to an inclusive Muslim community (*Ummah*) in the Malaysian archipelago, and to the Malaysian *Dar al-Islam.*[14] The sense of belonging grew even stronger in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. In that period all of Southeast Asia, with the exception of Siam, was under colonial rule.

The reigning European powers divided the area between themselves and demarcated the boundaries. They established countries whose frontiers have changed only minimally, or not at all, to this day. Among others, the countries established were Muslim Indonesia, the Malay Federation (called Malaysia today), and Muslim Brunei, as well as the Philippines and the countries of Indo-China: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Even the frontiers of Burma are essentially an outcome of British rule.

The boundaries cut across ethnic and religious regions involuntarily establishing the Muslim minorities which are the subject of this study: the Muslims (Moro)[15] of the south Philippines, a minority in a country with an overwhelming Christian majority; the Malay Muslims of the Patani region in southern Thailand, a minority in a country that is overwhelmingly Buddhist; and the Rohingya of Arakan in western Burma/Myammar who are also a minority in a primarily Buddhist state. All three of these minorities are in a situation of ferment and rebellion because of their sense of alienation from the majority; their identity is bound up with Islam and their desire is to unite with the Islamic *Ummah* and once again become part of *Dar al-Islam.*

Singapore also has a Malay-Muslim minority but Singapore is a new island city-state which declared its independence only in 1965, and the circumstances of its existence are of an unusual nature. Vietnam and Cambodia have Muslim minorities, but they are quite small and of marginal importance. There are other places in the world where Muslims are ruled by a non-Muslim majority. In many of these places; the Muslim minorities are neither at peace with the non-Muslim majority; nor have they acquiesced to its rule over them. Prominent among these

are the Muslim minorities of the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and the Arakan region of Burma/Myammar.

As noted, one of the main thrusts of this study is an examination of the extent to which there was an Islamic religious-theological dimension to the three Muslim uprisings of Southeast Asia. To this end, it is important to assess both the theoretical and the practical significance that Islamic concepts held for the rebelling populations. On the one hand, there was a generalized sense of Islamic solidarity and affinity with international Islamic bodies; on the other, there was the practical significance of support for neighboring Islamic states in Southeast Asia and countries even further away. From a practical aspect, one must take into account the kind of agenda and activity that flows from religious commandments posited by concepts of solidarity.

The most relevant and basic concept in such an examination is the *Ummah*.[16] The approximate sense of the word is people or community, and it relates to ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups. This concept, which originally encompassed only Arabs, changed its meaning in the course of time. As a result of Islamic expansion, the concept began to apply to other Muslim peoples and races; that is, all the believers in Islam. In theory, at least, it expresses the basic unity of all the Muslim faithful without geographic divisions and despite the differences between peoples and communities, or the gradations and nuances within Islam. Consequently, the notion stands in contradistinction to Western notions of race, nationality, and state. Muslims are aware that they are Muslim and they have an affinity to their co-religionists in distant lands and a sense of solidarity with them. This unity was shaken by the European colonial conquest of Arab lands, giving rise to movements of revolt for the defense of the *Ummah* in the face of European incursions. In the eyes of many Muslims, loyalty to the *Ummah* negates all other loyalties: national political, ethnic, linguistic, or geographic. The importance of this view as the source of prevailing social identity in large parts of the Muslim world persists even today.

For Islam, the primary criterion of Muslim identity has always been religion. Consequently in Islam, the world is not divided according to nations as it is in the Western view, but between Moslems on the one hand and the rest of the world on the other. Two core notions flow from this: *Dar al-Islam,* whose definition is Islamic lands; and *Dar al-Harb,*[17] defined as warring states—lands that have not yet been conquered by Islam. The differentiation that Islamic law *(shari'a)* makes between these two concepts is based on a conceptual distinction between believers of Islam and infidels. There is no necessary congruence or identity between *Ummah* and *Dar al-Islam.* While *Ummah* carries the sociological significance of defining one's identity as a result of belonging to the Islamic faith, *Dar al-Islam* stands for the political-legal aspect of the sovereign Islamic state (or states) possessed of territory and boundaries. Wherever he may be, a Muslim regards himself as belonging to the Islamic *Ummah,* even when he lives outside *Dar al-Islam,* even when he does not live under the legal authority and rule of Islam. What classifies

him as belonging to *Ummah* is Islamic faith rather than the regime under which he lives.

The central question, and the most difficult one, faced by the Muslim communities of Southeast Asia that found themselves under non-Muslim rule was how to respond to their situation. Should they accept the regime? Acquiesce? Or integrate? And under what conditions? Should they resist the regime and rebel *(jihad*)? Or should they migrate to an Islamic country?

The problem is not simply a religious-theological one, nor is it merely one with the political-national dimension of relations between a minority community within a majority state. Quite early on—once the advance of Islam faltered, retreat began in some sectors, and Muslim populations were conquered by others—Muslim theologians began weighing the problem.[18] This occurred as soon as the Mongol conquest of Baghdad, later in Sicily, and in Christian Portugal and Spain. In the nineteenth century, Bosnia fell to the Hapsburg Empire, and extensive regions were also conquered by Czarist Russia. England conquered Mogul India and, like Holland, also conquered Muslim territories in Southeast Asia. During the period of colonial rule in the nineteenth century when most Islamic lands fell to non-Muslim states, the problem gained greater urgency. As experts in Muslim law considered the issues, different approaches surfaced regarding the obligations of Muslims living under non-Muslim rule. There were Muslim judges who felt that, if they could, these Muslims ought to abandon their domiciles and emigrate to *Dar al-Islam* (reminiscent of the emigration—*hijrah*—made by Muhamad the Prophet when he left Mecca for Medina) even when the non-Muslim regime treated them with tolerance.

There were even more moderate views that held that if the non-Muslim regime displayed tolerance to its Muslim subjects, that is, enabled them to perform the commandments of their religion, act in accordance with its laws, and thus live as good Muslims who were retaining their Muslim identity, they should be allowed to remain citizens of the foreign state obeying the laws of that government. A still more moderate approach permitted Muslims to remain, if necessary, even under an intolerant regime and, in periods of oppression and persecution, pretend that they had converted to Christianity, as long as they secretly adhered to Islam.

With the expansion of Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia, religious opinions were promulgated *(fatwa),* but there is no record of theoretical theological discussions or a call for immigration to *Dar al-Islam* among the Muslims of the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, or Arakan. Many did escape to the Malay Peninsula, to Indonesia or eastern Pakistan/Bangladesh, but many more Muslims stood fast and put up resistance. The other side of the problem was also raised—the obligation incumbent upon the *Ummah*—that is, on members of the international Muslim community to concern themselves with coreligionists living as minorities in non-Muslim countries, particularly if they suffer oppression, deprivation or are subject to crisis conditions—the obligation to react, even to waging a war in which the entire *Ummah* is obliged to participate.

In the chapters that follow, we will try to review the history of Muslim minority communities in these three countries in order to assess whether, and to what extent, such religious-theological issues were reflected at various stages of their rebellion and struggle.

Notes

1. In the introduction, we limit ourselves to a general description of Islam's penetration into Southeast Asia without, however, examining the fascinating and important theories that relate to the topic because they arc not relevant to our subject. For an appreciation of the complexity of the topic, see Anthony H. Johns, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions," *Indonesia,* no. 19 (April 1975), 33-55; S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963). For a thorough overview of the topic of Islam in Southeast Asia, sec M. B. Hooker, "Islam in Southeast Asia and the Pacific," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modem Islamic World,* vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 284-290.

2. Ian Browning, *Petra,* 3rd ed. (London: Chatto & Windus. 1989), 17-18; John F. Cady, *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 23,26; Stephen Frederic Dale, "Religious Suicide in Islamic Asia: Anticolonial Terrorism in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 32, no. l (March 1988): 39-4); Cesar Adib Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," *Silliman Journal,* vol. 11, no. 4 (Oct-Nov 1964): 338-339.

3. Cady, *Southeast Asia,* 27,30,66-67; Hugh Clifford, *Further India: Being the Story of Exploration from the Earliest Times in Burma, Malaya, Siam, and Indo-China* (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1904): 16; Dale, "Religious Suicide," 40; S. A. Huzayyin.*Arabia and the Far East: Their Commercial and Cultural Relations in Graeco-Roman and Irano-Arabian Times* (Cairo: Publications de la Societe Royale de Geographic d'Egypte, 1942), 151-152; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 340; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Philippines Press, 1973), 2; Majul, "An Historical Background on the Coming and Spread of Islam and Christianity in Southeast Asia," *Asian Studies,* vol. 14, no. 2 (August 1976): 2; Suwannathat-Piam Kobkua, *Thai-Malay Relations: Traditional Intra-regional Relations from the Seventeenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), 13-15. For a general description of the period, see S. Q. Fatimi, "The Role of China in the Spread of Islam in Southeast Asia," mimeo (University of Singapore, 1959); Moshe Ma'oz, The Abbasids," in Hava Lazarus Yafeh, ed.. *Studies in the History of the Arabs and Islam* (Tel Aviv: Reshafim Publishing House, 1967), 217; and H. Z. Hirschberg, "The Jews under Islam," in *Studies in the History of the Arabs and Islam,* 308-312. Hirschberg also describes the significant role played by Jewish merchants in the commerce between Europe, the Abbasid Empire, India, and China.

4. Cady, *Southeast Asia,* 67-68,82,152; Dale, "Religious Suicide," 40; M. Siddiq Khan, "Muslim Intercourse with Burma," *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad: Deccan 10, July 1936, and 11, April 1937),416-419; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 340-341, 349-352.

5. It is worth noting that the expansion of Islam in Southeast Asia is a special case in the history of the religion. In the seventh century, Arabs burst forth from the Arabian Peninsula and began their conquest in all directions—westward along North Africa as far as the Ibe-

rian Peninsula, northward against the Byzantine Empire, eastward against the Sassanid Persian Kingdom, and onward into the far reaches of the central Asian plain reaching the boundaries of China, or in the direction of India up to the Bay of Bengal. This expansion, and the conquest of still other extensive areas, was achieved by force of arms. The extent of the military expansion eastward was the Bay of Bengal but that was not the furthest spread of the new religion; in this case, it was not military prowess but the trading communities that were able to overcome the obstacle of the Indian Ocean and continue the spread of Islam which elsewhere had been primarily achieved through military conquest. Muslim traders had no military might. Indeed, the Arabs and other Muslims from abroad that reached Malaysia made no effort to conquer territory, nor would it have been possible for them to do so.

Islam was introduced into the archipelago of Southeast Asia at a relatively late date, and the region underwent an unusual process of Islamization. In most cases, though by no means all, the process of conversion was conducted through missionary persuasion without the use of violence.

6. Carmen A. Abubakar, "Islamization of the Southern Philippines: An Overview," in F. Landa Jocano, ed., *Filippino Muslims: Their Social Institutions and Cultural Achievements* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, Asian Center, 1983), 8-9; Cady, *Southeast Asia,* 170; Dale, "Religious Suicide," 41; Majul, "An Historical Background," 3—4; idem, *Muslims in the Philippines,* 2; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 341, 343—344, 362-364,372-386,395-397.

For the term *Ummah* and other Islamic terms and their meaning, see further in the endnotes, no. 16,17.

7. Abubakar. "Islamization," 8-10; *Atlas of Islamic History,* ed. Harry W. Hazard, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 42; Cady, *Southeast* Asia, 152-169; Oscar L. Evangelista, "Some Aspects of the History of Islam in Southeast Asia" in Peter Gowing, ed., *Understanding Islam and Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), 16-25; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 341-359,366-367; Majul, "An Historical Background," 2; Majul, "Malays" and "Malay Peninsula," 233-235, 239; Kobkua, *Thai-Malay Relations,* 12.

8. *Atlas of Islamic History,* 42; Cady, *Southeast* Asia, 167-171; Majul, "An Historical Background," 3; idem, "Theories on the Introduction" 360-361,369-370.

9. *Atlas of Islamic History,* 42; Cady, *Southeast* Asia, 167; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 361-362.

10. Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. McAmis, *The Muslim Filipinos* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974), I.

11. Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York-London: W. W. Norton, i 982), 32-42,91,130-131,190,195; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 345,363-364, 387-391,397-398; idem, "An Historical Background," 4-5; idem, *Muslims in the Philippines,* 6; idem, "The Role of Islam in the History of the Filipino People," *Asian Studies,* vol. 4, no. 2 (August, 1966) 309-311; C. W. Previte-Orton, *The Shorter Cambridge Medieval History,* vol. 2, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,"1953), 1075-1076,1112.

The term jihad is referred to several times in this study. At this point, it is sufficient to note that as the concept developed throughout the history of Islam it took on different interpretations in response to specific circumstances. To this day, various schools in Islam interpret jihad differently. In the context of resistance to colonial powers, particularly in the

nineteenth century, jihad took on an aggressive, militant meaning that was acted out in uprisings against foreign rule and through guerilla and terror tactics. These resistance activities had a distinct religious-Islamic coloration. And this is equally true for the twentieth century movements of rebellion dealt with in this study.

12. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction," 391—393; idem, “An Historical Background,” 5-7.

13. Idem. “An Historical Background”, 8-9; idem, “Theories on the Introduction,” 393.

14. Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos,* 5, 201, 204; Majul, "Theories on the Introduction,” 336. For the meaning of these Islamic terms, see endnotes 16 and 17.

15. “Moro” is derived from Moor, a name which the conquering Spaniards called the Muslims of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the Ummayad dynasty of the eighth to the fifteenth centuries in Spain. Subsequently the Spaniards also used the term Moro for Muslims they encountered in the Philippine Islands.

16. See *Ummah* in *El* 1 (Leiden, 1913-1938), vol. 8, 1015-1016; Sayed Z. Abedin and Sabha M. Abedin, "Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Societies,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World,* vol. 3, 112-113, 115; Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separation* (London; I. B. Tauris, 1996), 161-163; Ahmad S. Dallal, “Ummah,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,* vol. 4,267-268; Abdo A. Elkholy, "The Concept of Community in Islam,” *Islamic Perspectives* (London: Islamic Foundation, 1979), 172-173; Samuel K. Tan, *The Filipino Muslim. Armed Struggle 1900-1972* (Filipinas Foundation Inc., 1977), 3; Raphael Israeli, ed.. *The Crescent in the East: Islam in Asia Major* (London: Curzon Press, 1982), 1-4.

For the term *Ummah* as well as such concepts as *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-Harb,* see endnote 17 below. For the context of these terms among Filipine Muslims and the Muslims of Thailand, see Peter G. Gowing, "Moros and Khaek: The Position of Muslim Minorities in the Philippines and Thailand," in Ahmad Ibrahim and Sharon Siddique and Yasmin Hussain, compilers, *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), 186-189.

17. Rudolph Peters, “Dar al-Islam," *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,* vol. 1, 338-339; Mohammad-Reza Djalili, “Dar al-Harb,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modem Islamic World,* 337-338; Ahmad S. Dallal, “Ummah,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modem Islamic World,* vol. 4, 269-270; Abdo A. Elkholy, "The Concept of Community in Islam," *Islamic Perspectives* (London: Islamic Foundation, 1979), 177.

For a concrete understanding of the concept of *Ummah,* the following excerpt from an article by Bernard Lewis, “The Return of Islam” in *Commentary,* vol. 61, no. I (January 1976): 40-41, is useful: “For the Muslim, religion traditionally was not only universal but also central in the sense that it constituted the essential basis and focus of identity and loyalty. It was religion which distinguished those who belonged to the group and marked them off from those outside the group. A Muslim Iraqi would feel far closer bonds with a non-Iraqi Muslim than with a non-Muslim Iraqi. Muslims of different countries, speaking different languages, share the same memories of a common and sacred past, the same awareness of corporate identity, the same sense of a common predicament and destiny. It is not nation or country which, as in the West, forms the historic basis of identity, but the religio-political community, and the imported Western idea of ethnic and territorial nationhood remains, like secularism, alien and incompletely assimilated. The point was made with

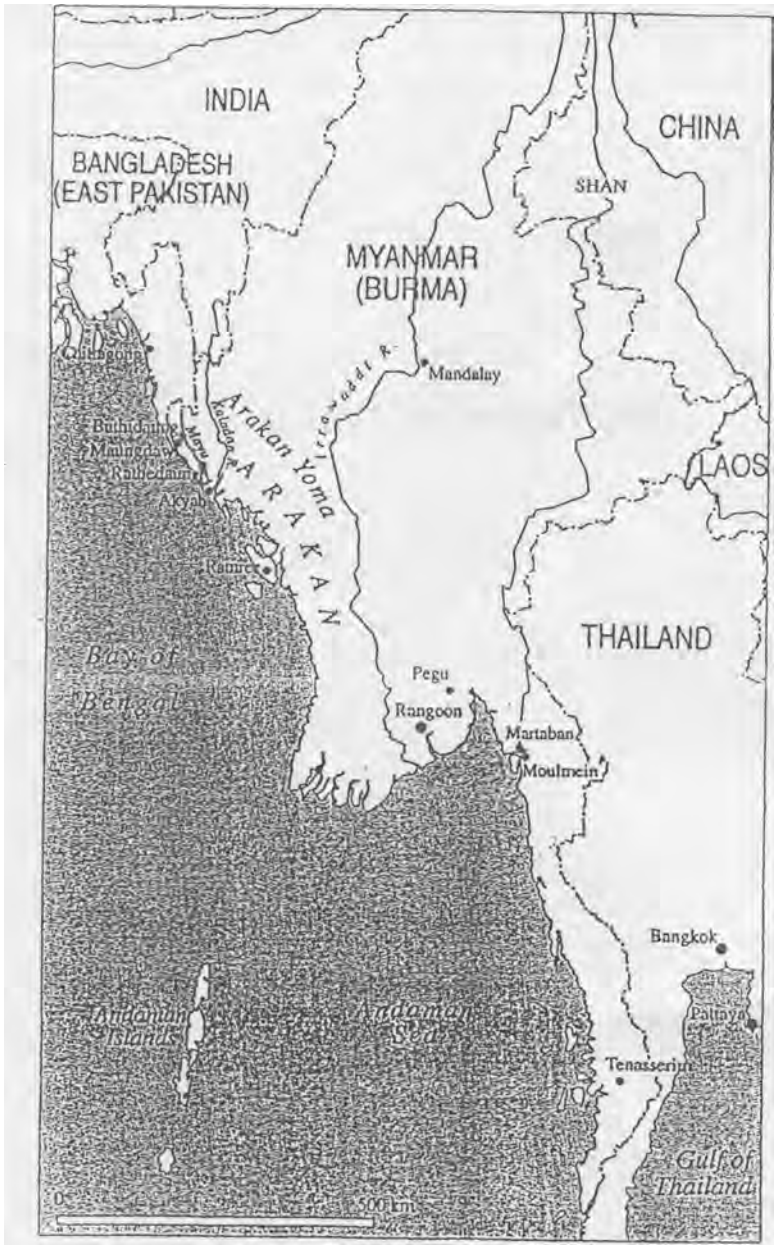
remarkable force and clarity by a Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire who, in reply to the exponents of the new-style patriotism, replied: 'The Fatherland of a Muslim is the place where the Holy Law of Islam prevails.' And that was in 1917."

18. Abedin and Abedin, "Muslim Minorities," 113-114; Elkholy, "The Conccpt of Community," 174, 178; Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). 22-24.

Part One

The Muslims of Arakan

MYANMAR/BURMA



Chapter One

Beginnings of the Muslim Community in Burma[1]

The first Muslims to come to Burma arrived in the ninth century. They were seafarers, probably from Bengal, and traded in the areas of Arakan and the coast of Lower Burma. Though Burma was not on the main route between the Middle East, India, and China, it enjoyed a lively maritime traffic. In the ninth and tenth centuries, Muslim travelers, Persians as well as Arabs, mentioned southern Burma in their writing, describing an extensive commercial traffic that was being carried out along the coasts of India, Burma, the Malay Peninsula, and Ceylon. Muslims who sailed in eastern waters were acquainted with the coastal areas of Arakan, the delta of the Irrawaddi River, and the cities of Pegu and Tenasserim. Indeed, the first Muslim settlements in Burma were established by such traders, some of whom came involuntarily because their ships had run aground and they were forced to seek refuge on land; occasionally, they settled permanently. There were Muslim settlers in the interior of Burma as well, but for the most part these were Muslims from India who had been captured in war and forcibly settled in the kingdom. Settlements in which Muslims reached the interior as mercenaries in the service of Burmese kings or local satraps are documented as early as the end of the eleventh century. There are no details, however, about the numerical strength or status of Muslims living in Burma in the tenth through the thirteenth centuries. Perhaps the absence of such information is an indication that they were not there in significant numbers.

In 1277, Burma was confronted by a Muslim force from the east when the armies of Kublai Khan, coming from China and made up of Turkish Muslims, invaded. Although the Mongol rulers of China were not Muslims, Muslims occupied important positions in China. No trace of this episodic Muslim incursion remains in Burma, nor of a subsequent one in the years 1283-1284.

European travelers[2] who visited Burma's coastal cities in the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries described the settlements of Muslim traders and the commercial traffic they conducted from Burma by way of Sumatra, Malacca, and the Molucca Islands to China and Japan on the one hand, and via Bengal and Ceylon to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea on the other. The descriptions detail the types of merchandise bought and sold by Muslim traders, and take note of the

fact that some ports in Lower Burma developed into important shipbuilding and repair centers, primarily for Arab and Armenian traders. This was possible because of a plentiful supply of teakwood. Regular commerce from Arakan through Pegu, Tenasserim, Malacca or the Maldives Islands to the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea continued in later periods as well despite interruptions caused by the wars waged against Bengal by Arakan kings, and Arakan and Portuguese pirates. The Muslims, most of whom originated in southern India or Persia, were very skillful in their conduct of trade; a number were also appointed to important administrative positions by the Burmese kings. From the middle of the sixteenth until the middle of the eighteenth centuries, Muslims served in the Burmese army, generally in the king's guard, and as riflemen, along with cannoneers from India and former Portuguese captives. Often they married Burmese women and settled in the area. The arrival of the British and French in the region at the end of the seventeenth century adversely affected the status of Muslims, and there were sporadic incidents in which Muslims were massacred by local inhabitants.

At various times, Muslim traders who were active in Burmese ports found themselves subject to restrictive regulations imposed by Burmese kings and local rulers, or suffered from the confiscation of property and other arbitrary measures. These were imposed despite the important commercial role Muslims played. Groups of Muslim traders, nonetheless, continued to be drawn to the port cities of Burma. Although Burmese trade was of secondary commercial importance when compared to the scope of commercial traffic between the Middle East and India to the southeastern Asian archipelago and China, Burmese ports had the advantage of being at the halfway point for Muslim sailors on their way from the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the ports of Coromandel, Malabar, and Ceylon, enroute to the Spice Islands of the Malayan archipelago, to China, and back. All of which contributed to Burma's prominence as a center of sea commerce. Weather, winds, and waves drove many ships to seek refuge in Burmese ports. Other ships called at these ports to take on supplies of food and water, or for repairs. The Muslim population developed as Muslim seafarers married Burmese women and remained permanently in Burmese port cities. And other nationalities, including Europeans, followed suit. In practice, Burmese rulers encouraged foreigners to marry local women; however, if the foreigner left, he was not permitted to take his wife or children with him, a practice mentioned by travelers in the eighteenth century. The offspring of these Arab, Persian, and Indian Muslims constituted the original core of the Burmese Muslim community, which was also known as the Zerbadi or Pathi.[3]

With time, the number of Muslims in Burma grew, in part the result of the offspring of mixed marriages, and in part, the result of immigration by more Muslim traders. But despite this growth, Muslims remained a relatively small segment of the local population. There was never an outside military attempt by Muslims to conquer Burma permanently, neither was their missionary activity conducted from within. Nor is there evidence that the foothold Islam established in Burma

was through conversions, as in the Malayan archipelago. It came about exclusively through immigration and exogamy. There are a number of reasons for this:

1. Burma's topographical structure of forbidding mountains and jungles presented serious obstacles to those would be invaders by land. Major invasions which changed the face of Asia all came to a halt at the borders of Burma. The Mongol and Manchu conquests in China and central Asia, the invasions of the Turkish Mongols and the Mongols of India veered in the direction of Southeast Asia but petered out before penetrating the hills of Burma and its jungles. This was. the pattern from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and even Muslim Bengal was not able to provide support for an invasion of Burma. The efforts at expansion by Muslim India and the wars of Bengal with the kingdoms of Arakan and Burma never went beyond incursions or border warfare.

2. Furthermore, from a commercial standpoint Burma was neither as much of a challenge nor as attractive as the islands of the Malayan archipelago which did entice conquerors and missionaries, and the traders and seafarers who either came with the missionaries or in their wake.

3. Conceivably the most significant factor was religion. Not only were the Malayan regions (today's Indonesia and Malaysia) of primary commercial importance for Islam, but they also presented a certain religious vacuum. The Buddhist and Hindu religions prevalent there had degenerated and fallen into decline. They had become the religion of the court and ruling classes alone, never penetrating broader segments of the population. Consequently, these strata were relatively amenable to Islam when it came on the scene. This was not the case in Burma (or in other Buddhist countries of the Hinayana or the Theravada schools—Ceylon, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.) From the end of the twelfth century, Buddhism was a truly popular religion in these places rather than a religion imposed by the Royal Court. It was a national religion in the sense that the overwhelming majority of the population subscribed to it.

Traditionally, the king was considered the defender of Buddhism, and the terms Burmese and Buddhist became synonymous. A Burman could not legally convert to another religion, and such an act was severely punished. The law was enforced by a large caste of Buddhist monks that guided the spiritual supervision of the people. (This phenomenon also explains the singular lack of success of Christian missions in Burma hundreds of years later despite the fact that the British Colonial Administration did nothing to discourage them.) Generally, this commitment to Buddhism did not deter Burmese kings from acting tolerantly toward foreigners who enjoyed freedom of worship in accordance with their own religion. They were permitted to marry Burmese women and raise their children according to their religion; this was true for Muslims who settled in Burma as well. None of which was sufficient to create a movement of conversion to Islam. Muslims were not prevented from practicing their rituals but their religion did not attract the Buddhist masses. Actually, there is no information about Muslim missionary attempts in Burma similar to those conducted, for example, in the Malayan archipelago.

Had such efforts been made, there is no doubt that they would have been met with fierce opposition.

The Muslim maritime monopoly in Asia (and the period under review here in the history of Muslims in Burma) lasted until the beginning of the sixteenth century and the arrival of European seafarers to the region. The Portuguese were first, followed by the Dutch, English, and French. As these groups took over Asian commerce, Muslim traders began to lose their traditional positions so that by the beginning of the seventeenth century they had lost almost all vestige of importance. They did maintain some independent activity in Burma, however, until the nineteenth century when the British completely consolidated their rule in India. The appearance of steamships put a final stop to international Muslim commerce with Burma though a limited coastal trade continued between the ports of India and Burma. Significant communities of Muslims were, however, already in place in Burmese port cities long before the waning of Muslim shipping. In the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, there were sizable Muslim communities in the main cities of Burma. As a rule, Muslims lived in separate neighborhoods from foreigners, enjoying a religious tolerance which was interrupted only in isolated instances. The Burmese had no interest in Muslim internal organization or religious life, nor did they try to convert Muslims to Buddhism. Mosques (as well as churches) were constructed without prejudice wherever there was a foreign community.

Notes

1.The following survey is based mainly on Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowirz, 1972), 1-17, 26-27. The sources given there are not repeated in this work, except in specific instances. New references appear in the endnotes of this survey. For a summarized version, see idem, 'The Muslims of Burma," in Raphael Israeli, ed., *The Crescent in the East: Islam in Asia Major* (London: Curzon Press, 1982), 102-139; and idem, "The Muslims of Burma since Independence" *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1966): 159-205.

2. For details of sources, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 3-6.

3. For various appellations of Burmese Muslims, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 6-7; also idem, "Burmese" in Richard V. Weekes, ed., *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey,* 2nd ed (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 187-190; "Burma." *El* I, vol. 2, 800. For a highly tendentious review of the Muslims of Arakan, see Matamar Al-Alam Al-Islami, *History of Arakan* (Karachi: World Muslim Congress-Dept. of Dawah, 1978), particularly section 1,3-35.

Chapter Two

Muslim Settlement in Arakan[1]

The Arakan region, which stretches for 350 miles along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, is isolated from Burma by the Arakan Yoma, a chain of hills that are difficult to traverse. The northern part of the area, called the Mayu region, can be seen as an almost direct continuation of eastern Bengal, with a close land connection over the years. These geographic conditions accounted for the separate historical development of the region until its conquest by the Kingdom of Burma at the end of the eighteenth century. This was true for the region in general, and for its Muslim population in particular.

Beginning with their arrival in the Bay of Bengal, the earliest Muslim merchant ships also called at the ports of Arakan and Burma proper. Bengal became Muslim in 1203, but it remained the furthest eastern point of Islam's expansion. Muslim influence in Arakan was of great cultural and political importance. In effect, Arakan was the beachhead for Muslim penetration into other parts of Burma even if it never achieved the same degree of importance it did in Arakan. As a result of the close land and sea contacts maintained between the two countries, Muslims played a key role in the history of the Kingdom of Arakan.

From the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the history of Arakan is bound up with Muslim Bengal. Muslim influence in Arakan began in 1430 when King Narameikhla (1404-1434) returned from exile in Bengal to Arakan. The Sultanate of Bengal helped with military support and subsequently Muslim soldiers from that expedition settled in Arakan. Narameikhla ceded some territory to the Sultan of Bengal and recognized his sovereignty over the areas. In recognition of his vassal status, Narameikhla and his heirs—despite being Buddhists—received Muslim titles which were added to their Arakan titles. The King then decreed that coins of the Bengal Sultanate, which bore the Muslim inscriptions would be legal tender in Arakan. Such coins had been in circulation in Bengal ever since its capture by the Muslims in 1203.

Later Narameikhla minted his own coins which bore the king's name in Burmese characters and, on the obverse side, his Muslim title in Persian. Arakan remained subordinate to Bengal in this way until 1531. Nine other vassal kings also carried Muslim titles. The custom of maintaining their Muslim titles, along

with those of Burma, was practiced by the kings of Arakan even after they were liberated from dependency on the sultans of Bengal. The kings wanted to be considered sultans in their own right, after the fashion of the Moguls, and they were influenced by the fact that many of their subjects had become Muslims. Indeed, many Muslims served in prestigious positions in the royal administration despite its being Buddhist.

There was another kind of interaction between the Kingdom of Arakan and the Muslim territories to its west as well. After the death of Narameikhla, Arakan grew in strength, expanded to the north, and raids bent on plunder were regularly carried out into Bengal. At the beginning of the seventeenth century when the Portuguese reached the shores of Bengal and Arakan, Arakan permitted them to set up military bases and granted them commercial rights. In return for this, the Portuguese aided Arakan's military expeditions. To Arakan's good fortune, the high quality of Portuguese firearms and artillery easily overcame that of the Moguls who reigned in Bengal. Joint Arakan-Portuguese marauding expeditions into Bengal continued through the end of the eighteenth century, coming to a halt only with the growth of British naval power in the Bay of Bengal. Taking prisoners, many of whom were Muslims, and pressing them into slavery was an important part of the joint raids. In addition to the Muslim prisoners and slaves brought to Arakan from Bengal and northern India, there were other Muslims who came to Arakan, generally mercenaries who served in the king's guard.

In 1660, an event of unusual importance occurred in the history of Arakan. The Mogul prince, Shah Shuja, escaped to Arakan following his defeat in the struggle for power in the Mogul succession, and a new wave of Muslims immigrated to Arakan in his wake. While Shah Shuja was warmly welcomed by the king of Arakan, relations between them soon deteriorated. In February of 1661, the shah and some of those in his entourage were assassinated by Arakan soldiers; in 1663, his children suffered the same fate.[2] The Shah Shuja soldiers who survived the massacre were later inducted into the king's guard, in a special archer's unit called, *Kaman* (Persian for bow.)

The year 1684 was a period of unrest that culminated when riots broke out; 1692 saw a rebellion by Muslim soldiers, assisted by Bengali prisoners, who seized power in the kingdom. For twenty years, Muslim *Kaman* units, regularly reinforced by Afghan mercenaries who came from northern India, played a crucial role in the kingdom, periodically crowning and deposing Arakan's kings. Effective control of the regime was completely in their hands until 1710 when King Sandawizay (1710-1731) managed to overcome them. Most of the *Kaman* were exiled to Ramree Island. Their offspring, still called by the same name, live in Ramree and in several villages near Akyab. They speak Arakanese and behave like their Buddhist neighbors, with the exception of their religion which remains Islam.
A 1931 census shows 2,686 *Kamans* in Arakan.

In 1785, Burma conquered Arakan and annexed it. The Burmese army of occupation in Arakan included a unit of Burmese Muslims, and their offspring still

live there. Today it is no longer possible to distinguish the various groups of Muslims in Arakan, or to distinguish between them and Buddhist Arakanese in whose midst they live. Despite a number of Shiite traditions which they practice, Arakan Muslims are Sunnis, who call themselves *Rohinga*, *Rohingya* or *Roewengya*. The name is more commonly heard among the Muslims of north Arakan (the Mayu region) where more Arakan Muslims can be found than in the Akyab region. In 1961, their total numbers were estimated at 300,000.

Notes

1. See endnotes in Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 18-25. Also "Arakan," 606, and "Burma" 1333 in E/2, vol. l; See also a general description in Ba Tha (Buthidaung). "Muslims in Arakan (Burma)." *The Islamic Review,* vol. 54, no. 4 (April 1966): 25-30, which is basically a repetition of articles by the same author. See Yegar. *The Muslims of Burma,* 137 (bibliography).

2. For a detailed account of this affair, of which there are a number of versions, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 21-24, sources there.

Chapter Three

From the British Occupation through World War II[1]

Burma was occupied by the British in three campaigns: 1824-1826, 1852, and 1885. Arakan was captured in the very first campaign. Among other structural, social, and economic changes wrought by the occupation, there was also a radical change in the makeup of the Muslim population which greatly increased as a result of immigration from India. The record of Indian immigration to Burma is as long as the history of those two countries. Throughout its existence, Burma has absorbed immigrants from India, but before the British occupation the numbers were relatively few and those who came disappeared quickly into the local population. The Hindus were completely assimilated by the Buddhist population, while the Muslims retained their religion but adapted to the Burmese way of life in all other respects.

A large scale Indian immigration, encouraged by the British, began to arrive in the districts of Arakan and Tenasserim immediately following the first Anglo-Burmese war. Subsequently, these districts were annexed to India. The second and third Anglo-Burmese wars, and the occupation of Upper Burma, greatly increased the flow of immigrants, particularly in the 1880s, creating a complicated and difficult socioeconomic problem. After Burma became a district of British India, Indians could enter the area with ease; that is, not as immigrants to a foreign country but as inhabitants moving from one district to another within the same political entity. Burma's need for such residents stemmed from fundamental changes that occurred in its economic structure after Britain began developing the country. The changes required cheap coolie labor. Burma had always been sparsely populated, and India—conveniently nearby—was a cheap source of needed manpower. One could generally tell which part of India a person came from by his occupation. For example, Muslims from Chittagong in Bengal, who made up a large segment of Indian immigrants, took over running transport on the rivers. Many of them made their homes in port towns, particularly Akyab in Arakan. The Chittagongs were well known for their loyalty to Islam. These Bengal Muslims integrated into the local Rohingya community by means of intermarriages between the Chittagong and the local Rohingyas, or even Buddhists; most often, it was Muslim Chittagong men who had come south seeking work and Arakan women. The off-

spring of such marriages were raised as Muslims and assimilated into the Chittagong community, a community not substantively different than the Rohingya's. Each year, during the plowing and harvesting seasons, twenty thousand Chittagongs from the north came south over the border to find temporary work in the rice fields of Arakan. Some returned, but many remained.

The influx of these immigrants (Hindu as well as Muslim) created a new minority which, from many standpoints, was larger, more highly developed, and certainly more alien and despised than previous groups. Muslim immigrants developed a complex network (which earlier Burmese immigrants had not) of religious activities. They established mosques, religious colleges and other institutions, and even published their own newspapers. There were a number of reasons for this. As early as the beginning of the twentieth century, there were twice as many Indian Muslim immigrants as local Muslims. Not only did their organizations have more money for community and religious activity, but they had a stronger desire to maintain a separate religious and social identity vis-a-vis the Buddhist environment. Indian Muslims established schools for the training of religious clergy and an entire chain of social institutions. They exerted a singular influence on the customs of Burmese Muslims, even to their mode of dress and the manner in which they performed religious precepts. This was particularly true for the Zerbadi, offspring of the many intermarriages that occurred in the wake of immigration, despite the fact that the Zerbadi saw themselves as Burmese Muslims rather than Indians.

By World War II, like other immigrants from India, the Muslims who left eastern Bengal established numerous social clubs that were based on place of origin, which dealt with cultural, educational, economic, and religious activities for the benefit of their membership; for example, the Dacca Club, the Chittagong Association, the Bengal Association, etc. Large-scale immigration from India combined with the rise of Burmese nationalism was the cause of considerable tension between the three different Muslim communities in Burma, as well as between those communities and the Buddhist majority. Whereas many of the Muslims from the Indian subcontinent became involved in the social clubs, the Burmese Muslims—the Zerbadi and others—tended to identify with the Buddhist majority, and supported the Burmese Nationalist Movement The Muslims of Arakan supported neither of them. This trend changed in a later period.

For 116 years, the two communities, Muslim and Buddhist, lived more or less together under British rule without much incident, even though the latent animosity between them broke out in sporadic riots and killings. Over the generations, the Muslim community in Arakan gradually expanded southward, pushing aside the Buddhists of Arakan. In 1941, only a handful of Buddhist villages remained in north Arakan; roughly a third of the seven hundred thousand inhabitants of north Arakan were Muslims.[2]

When Burma achieved independence in 1948, the status of Indian Muslims changed. Indian Muslims could no longer maintain the same ties to their former

home and were obliged either to apply for Burmese citizenship, or take on the status of aliens or stateless people. The various Indian associations in Burma did, however, continue their social, educational, and religious programs almost without change (with the exception of those that originated in Bengal, which had become East Pakistan in 1947.) All the associations from the area combined into a federation known as the All Burma Pakistan Association which, in effect, represented the largest Indian Muslim ethnic group in Burma. The heads of the association estimated the number of Pakistanis in Burma at 300,000 to 500,000 people. Because of the absence of reliable statistics, there is no way of gauging the accuracy of that estimate or other estimates regarding the number of Muslims in Burma.[3] In contradistinction to other ethnic groups of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, the vast majority of Pakistanis were in a low socioeconomic bracket. Illiteracy was rife among Pakistanis, many of whom did not become naturalized Burmese citizens simply because of ignorance or a lack of information, and who lost their Pakistani citizenship as well. There were some who opted to retain Pakistani citizenship.

The association lobbied the authorities, either directly or through the Pakistan Embassy in Rangoon, to facilitate the naturalization of those who desired citizenship. It also interceded with Pakistani authorities to ease the process of acquiring a Pakistani passport for those who wanted one. In the early years after independence, Pakistanis in Burma were treated in the same way as immigrants from other parts of India. The *mujahideen* rebellion (see chapter 5) and the mutual accusations regarding it between Pakistan and Burma had no adverse effect on the life of former Pakistanis in Burma.[4] This situation deteriorated following General Ne Win's 1962 military coup in Burma.

As a result of the large-scale, preponderantly Muslim immigration from India which began in 1870, the British administration set up special laws with regard to the personal status of Muslims using the Anglo-Muhammadan Law of British India as a model. Since Burma was a part of British India, the problem of legal jurisdiction did not arise and, in fact, basic legislation for Burma was copied from Indian regulations for Bengal. Anglo-Muhammadan Law assumed a formal basis in 1898 with the outcome that Indian law took precedence in matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, religion, and religious institutions. Difficulties arose because of the artificiality of the situation, particularly in cases regarding the Zerbadi where one of the parents was, or had been, a Buddhist for whom the laws were different. Such a legal system was more suited to the customs of Indian Muslims than to those of Burmese Muslims. Muhammadan Law lost some importance when Burma achieved independence in 1948, and declined even more after the Nationalization Program of 1964 during which many Muslims of Indian origin returned to India and Pakistan. Muslim laws in Burma had been an artificial creation of the British colonial period. When it came to an end, so did the laws.[5]

The large-scale immigration from India was opposed by Buddhist Burmans, particularly in Arakan, Tenasserim, and Lower Burma. This position became a

central issue of the Burmese National Movement. The worldwide economic depression, which effected Burma as well, was a major cause of the 1930-1931 anti-Indian riots. The riots of 1938 were directed specifically against Indian Muslims, and some two hundred Muslims were killed. As the Burmese National Movement grew stronger in the pre-World War II period, opposition to the presence of Indians, and to Islam which Indian immigrants brought with them, grew.[6] World War II and the Japanese occupation disrupted all previous arrangements and relations between the communities of Burmese Muslims. When the Burmese struggle for national independence began, Burmese Muslims wanted to take part. They were opposed to maintaining any links with India or any involvement in India's internal struggles between the Congress Party and the Muslims. They were also opposed to demands that would guarantee constitutional rights to the Muslim minority in Burma once Burma gained its independence. Indian Muslims had made such demands during the British occupation, and after the war, and both governments—first, the British and subsequently, the independent Burmese—had rejected them. Already in the period immediately preceding independence, it was clear that Indian Muslims were progressively losing their status as equal citizens, and that they would find themselves a foreign minority in independent Burma. The changed atmosphere brought about a partial reimmigration to India, though the majority remained. The Indian Muslims who remained in Burma were determined to weaken their ties to India and Pakistan, and adapt to the new reality. Confronted by an increasingly intolerant Burmese national movement, they chose not to emphasize their separate ethnicity. In their desire for Burmese society, many Indian Muslims began adopting Burmese behavior and Burmese names. The trend was particularly strong among the Zerbadi—even those who, in the prewar period, had seen Indian Muslim customs as proper religious and cultural behavior.

There was a great degree of overlap between the Burmese Movement of National Liberation and Buddhist religious revival in Burma, a coalescence that was strengthened after Burma's independence. Consequently, popular Burmese public opinion did not distinguish between Indian Muslims and Burmese Muslims, a differentiation which Burmese Muslims would have wished for.[7] Instead, the Muslims of North Arakan who regarded themselves as Burmese citizens, because of this and other factors unique to their situation, found themselves in a most difficult strait.

Notes

1. Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 29-31.
2. FO 371/75660, Survey by Ft Murray from the Foreign Ministry to Commonwealth Relations Office (January 16,1949).
3. Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 27-28,41.

4. R. H. Taylor, “Myanmar" *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 214-215.

5. See appendix A.

6. For a detailed account of Burmese reaction, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma,* 29-39. Important sources regarding anti-Muslim riots can be found in the two reports of the Government Inquiry Commission, Superintendent, *Interim Report of the Riot Inquiry Committee* (Rangoon: Burma Government Printing and Stationery, 1939); and Superintendent, *Final Report of the Riot Inquiry Committee* (Rangoon, 1939). See also Clive J. Christie, *A Modem History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism. and Separation*, Tauris Academic Studies (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 63-164; “Burma,” E/2, vol. 1, 1333; Jan Becka, “Muslims,” *Historical Dictionary of Myanmar* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1995), 140.

7. For a detailed discussion, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 107-113.

Chapter Four

World War II and Its Aftermath

During the British occupation, hostility developed between the Muslim and Buddhist populations in Arakan due to the same economic and social causes that had brought about a similar hostility in other parts of Burma. The turning point in their relations came when this tension, which had been present in Arakan even before the war, was let loose with the retreat of the British and the approach of the Japanese. Arakan was the furthest point the Japanese reached in the drive for India and thus, at the beginning of 1942, it became the front-line until the British recaptured it in early 1945.

During the course of these three years, civil administration collapsed, arms were easily acquired, and crime and lawlessness became commonplace. Both armies, British and Japanese, exploited the frictions and animosity in the local population to further their own military aims. During the war years, Arakan was isolated from the rest of the world in general, and particularly from other parts of Burma. One outcome of the war years was the growth of close relations between the British army and Arakan Muslims.

When the Japanese advanced into Arakan in 1942, the Buddhists instigated cruel measures against the Muslim population. Thousands of Muslims (their exact number is unknown) were expelled from regions under Japanese rule in which Buddhists constituted a majority. The Muslims fled to eastern Bengal, or to North Arakan, seeking refuge in territories under British military rule. As they fled, many were killed or died of starvation. For their part, Muslims conducted retaliatory raids from British controlled territories where they were the majority, particularly in the vicinity of Maungdaw. In short order, these acts of mutual slaughter caused the Buddhist population of North Arakan to flee just as the Muslims had abandoned the South. In effect, Arakan was divided into Buddhist and Muslim areas.

From December 1942 until April 1943, the British waged an unsuccessful counteroffensive, and the Japanese were able to expand their hold over most Muslim regions in Arakan including Maungdaw. The situation continued to deteriorate, and communal strife grew worse impelling more Muslims to abandon their homes. In April of 1942, the British set up Force V, a guerilla unit that was active

along the British-Japanese front. Muslims of Arakan were mobilized into the force beginning in September of that year. During the relative military stalemate that existed after the spring of 1943, Arakan Muslims in Force V took on such increasingly important military roles as reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, rescue of downed aviators, and raids on Japanese collaborators. British officers serving in Force V provided assistance, particularly medical aid, to the Muslim population. In general, Muslim religious leaders supported the British (although there were those who sided with the Japanese) and this enabled the British to mobilize villagers. At the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944, the British launched a new counteroffensive in Arakan. In January 1944, Maungdaw was recaptured. Force V played a decisive role in the offensive. The campaign was both arduous and long so that only in December 1944 were the British able to capture Buthidaung. By January of 1945, most of Arakan was back in British hands.[1]

It is not clear whether the British had made any commitments to the Muslims of Arakan regarding their status after the war since there are still no documents extant that would support such an assumption. The only evidence available indicates that at the end of 1942 a Muslim officer of the Indian Civilian Service (ICS) visited the areas of both Maungdaw and Buthidaung with the aim of gaining support for the Indian-British war effort. It stands to reason that such a commitment remains in the realm of speculation until such time as more decisive proof is found. In any case, Muslim leaders had the impression that the British had promised to grant them a Muslim National Area in the Maungdaw region. Among Muslim leaders there were those who supported the immediate secession of such a territory from Burma and its subsequent annexation by Pakistan or India when these countries achieved independence.[2] Based apparently on what they had heard from British representatives, leaders of other ethnic communities—such as the Kachin and the Karen—who had supported the British war effort were also certain that when the war ended the British would reward their loyalty, granting them independence from Burma.

At the same time, in the wake of British military successes, the Muslims of Arakan bolstered their position in all of North Arakan where they already constituted the majority. The British appointed Muslims to administrative positions in local authorities which easily enabled them to retaliate against those who had collaborated with the Japanese, particularly Buddhists. Muslims from Arakan who had fled to Bengal during the war, now returned to their villages. Their return was accompanied by land-hungry immigrants from Chittagong who settled in North Arakan, swelling the postwar Muslim population in the region. In addition to the large stocks of weapons that were left in Arakan after the war, extensive areas were controlled by roving bands which had been supplied with arms by both the British and the Japanese during the war. The new British administration had no influence with these bands so they were free to engage in robbery and smuggling rice to Pakistan. The primary concern of the British administration was that an influx of refugees and other immigrants from Bengal would sharpen the communal and

religious tensions, and the hostile actions, between North Arakan Muslim and Buddhist communities which had continued unabated since 1942. The British fear was echoed by a new suspicion on the part of Arakan's Muslim leaders that there were growing indications that the British would leave Burma, granting it independence. The country would then be ruled by the Burmese Buddhist majority. These portents served to focus the attention of many Rohingya and Chittagong living in Arakan on events and developments on the other side of the border, in Bengal. When it appeared that areas with a large Muslim majority in eastern Bengal, including Chittagong, would be incorporated in Pakistan, irredentism tendencies in North Arakan (evident during the war) grew stronger.

In May 1946, public statements called for the annexation of Arakan areas with a Muslim majority to Pakistan. Some statements even called for the establishment \of an independent Muslim state in the area between the Kaladan and Mayu Rivers. In July 1946, an irredentist movement, the North Arakan Muslim League, led by Moulvi Lookman Sahib, was founded. Its goal was to realize an independent Muslim state. The drive to create a movement was more strongly felt by Muslims who had come from Chittagong than among the Rohingya. In July 1947, a number of Arakan Muslim leaders met with Ali Jinah of the Muslim League of India who, together with members of his party, were to be the founders of Pakistan. Beset by problems of their own, they did not want to take on the burden of hostility with the leadership of Burma so—understandably—they avoided encouraging such irredentist tendencies. Ali Jinah went so far as to pointedly assure Burma's first prime minister, General Aung San, that he did not support Arakan irredentism.[3]

With the Japanese expulsion from Arakan, there was an outburst of national sentiment by the Buddhist population which no longer wanted to be ruled by Burmans. Turbulence in the region continued until the end of the regime on 4 January 1948, when Burma gained independence. Within six months of independence, several rebellions broke out. The most serious of these was by the Communists who had been denied membership in the government coalition; four other rebellions were on an ethnic basis—the Karens, Kachins, Mons, and Muslims of Arakan all of whom hoped to realize their separatist aims in opposition to the central Burmese government in Rangoon. For a long period of time, the government was able to maintain its sovereignty only in the major cities. Gradually, and with great difficulty, it succeeded in extending its rule throughout the country.[4]

Notes

1. Christie, *A Modem History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization, Nationalism and Separation*, Tauris Academic Studies (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 164-166; Bertil Lintner, "In the Dragon's Wake," *FEER*, vol. 124, no. 17 (April 26, 1984): 33-35.34; John W. Henderson, John W., Judith M. Heinman, Kenneth W. Martindale, Rinn-Sup Shinn, John O. Weaver, and Eston T. White, *Area Handbook for Burma* (Washington, D.C.: American University, Foreign Areas Studies Division, 1971), 78; Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency*

and the Politics of Ethnicity (London: Zed Books, 1991), 64.

2. FO 371/75660, Report by P. Murray of the Foreign Office to the Commonwealth Relations Office (Jan. 26,1949). ("Indeed, if these thoughts were not already in their minds, they were probably put there by a fanatically Moslem ICS officer who visited the area at the end of 1942, nominally to whip up support for the British-Indian war effort."); Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 96, note 2; Christie, *A Modern History,* 166; Andrew Selth, "Race and Resistance in Burma, 1942-1945," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1986): 502; Henderson et al.. *Area Handbook,* 78.

3. Christie, *A Modern History,* 166-168; Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 96-97; FO 371/75660, Murray; Trevor O. Ling, "Religious Minorities in Burma in the Contemporary Period." in de Silva, K. M., Pensri Duke, Ellen S. Goldberg, and Nathan Katz, eds. *Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies: Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma* (Boulder, Colo.: Pinter Publishers, 1988; London: Westview Press, 1988), 182; FO 435/1, Confidential print from FI 1229/17/79, *Events in Burma 1939-48* (Foreign Office Research Dept., July 9, 1948); Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 64; Virginia Thompson and Richard Adlofff, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), 154.

4. FO 371/75660, Murray; Selth, "Race and Resistance in Burma," 483.

Chapter Five

The Mujahideen Rebellion[1]

After Burma achieved independence in January 1948, the situation became even more chaotic. Pre-independence officials were replaced by Arakan Buddhists, Buddhist refugees were allowed to return to and rebuild the homes and villages they had been forced to leave by Muslims several years earlier, and Muslims were forced off Buddhist lands they had seized. In fact, Muslim guerilla activity had already begun in November 1947. Incidents were followed by riots, and by March-April, the government lost all semblance of control in the region. The few Burmese military units that remained found themselves completely surrounded by a hostile Muslim population. Bands of armed Muslims began wandering throughout the region frustrating government activity. They forcibly isolated the Arakan villagers who had resettled on their lands, denying them drinking water and food supplies, harassing them in every way imaginable, so that they were compelled to turn around and return to the south. Muslim religious leaders began preaching jihad against the Arakan "infidels." Indeed, initially, guerilla activities were directed more at "ethnic" targets (against the Buddhist Arakanese) than against the Burmese government. In April, many *mujahideen* gathered at a place called Taung Bazar led by Jafar Hussain (or Jafar Kawwal) who stood at the head of the movement. A police launch sent to disperse the crowd was fired upon, and several policemen were killed in the exchange of fire. *The Mujahideen* Rebellion had begun. The significance of the Arabic term *mujahideen* chosen by this revolutionary movement—Fighters in a Holy War for Islam—should not be lost sight of.[2] Subsequently, the Rohingya's separatist struggle for a Muslim state in North Arakan took on a religious dimension.

Estimates place the number of *mujahideen* armed men at anywhere from 2,000 to 5,000, organised into units of 500. The *mujahideen* movement, with former army people at its head, ran a training camp in the hills between Buthidaung and Maungdaw. They existed on assessments of food from villagers, enjoying a level of popularity and active support that extended beyond the Muslim population of Arakan, which was estimated at between 100,000 to 120,000 people.[3] Indeed, Muslim support for the *mujahideen* went beyond the frontiers, in the Chittagong region, but there was no aid from the authorities of East Bengal. With the border,

in effect, wide open for movement in both directions, the *mujahideen* crossed it to obtain clothes and other necessary supplies, all the while smuggling rice into Pakistan which had a shortage of food and once in Pakistan, they were well received. As the Burmese government was engaged in fighting rebel movements in other parts of the country and attempting to stave off economic collapse, the *mujahideen* took over a large part of North Arakan within a short span of time. All told, there were no more than 1,100 government troops in Arakan at the time, and not until 1951, could the government direct sufficient means or military forces to counter the revolt in the north. In the early days of the rebellion, there were rumors from Arakan about a possible *mujahideen* link to the Communist Red Flag Movement that had been operating in other parts of Arakan since 1947. The rumors spoke of combined operations with the Communists against the central regime. Arakan Buddhist separatist rebels also fought against the central Burmese government whose authority they did not accept and were known to cooperate with the Communist movement. Any fears concerning a *Communist-Mujahideen* pact were quickly dispelled when the profound religious and ethnic hostilities that existed between North and South Arakan were taken into account. There was, however, some cooperation between the various rebel movements in Arakan, despite all the suspicions involving arms and of rice smuggling. In reality, Arakan Muslims did not want to see a .semiautonomous state as the Arakan Buddhists would have liked, since the Muslims certainly did not want to live by sufferance under a Buddhist administration. Conversely, there was no hope for an irredentist drive on the part of the Muslims to join Pakistan. In effect, what the rebels wanted, as did many of the Muslims of Arakan who did not actively support the rebels, was the establishment of a distinct Muslim region—"a frontier state" which would not, of necessity, secede from Burma but rather would be separated from Buddhist Arakan. This demand was sounded as early as April 1947 at a Muslim conference held in Maungdaw.[4]

Moderate Rohingya leaders attempted to convince the rebels to end the rebellion, even as they attempted to persuade the government that the rebellion was instigated by an assortment of individuals. The majority of Arakan Muslims, they claimed, not only refrained from supporting the rebellion, but were themselves victims of the rebels. It was only the government's actions and the incendiary behavior of the Buddhists in Arakan that had spurred feelings of rejection among the Arakan Muslims, fanned hostility between Muslims and Buddhists, and thus led to rebellion. They also contended that the rebellion stood in opposition to the principles of Islam, and that there was no justification for a declaration of jihad. Indeed, there were Rohingya leaders who, in 1948, demanded that Prime Minister U Nu provide them with arms to fight the rebels; the demand was repeated in 1950 and 1951, but the plea went unheeded. In any case, the responsibility for failure to quell the rebellion was put at the government's door. This dissatisfaction with the government's role caused many Rohingya to submit to the rebels, sometimes aiding them against their will, particularly when they were threatened and could

not resist. At the same time, there were leaders who warned the rebels against acts of vengeance toward the government and the army. Pressure by the moderates increased after the rebels suffered a surge of losses and casualties were not even afforded a Muslim burial.[5]

The government did attempt to negotiate with the rebels but in 1948 a government delegation was sent to hear their complaints. The rebels claimed that the Rohingya were natives of Arakan, indigenous to the region. They were the offspring of Muslims who had settled there hundreds of years earlier, and despite similarities in religion, language, culture, and ethnicity differed from the population in the adjacent Chittagong region. It was simply propaganda on the part of Arakan Buddhist extremists that had attempted to identify them with the Muslims of Pakistan. The rebels complained that Arakan Muslims were not permitted to serve in the army; that the government had replaced Muslim officials, policemen, and village headmen with Arakan Buddhists who frequently discriminated against members of the Muslim community, treating them as though they were aliens; humiliated Muslim dignitaries; extorted money, demanded bribes, and arbitrarily arrested Muslims. Nothing was done, they insisted, to improve the lot of the Rohingya either by providing education or improving the economic situation. Buddhist Arakanese spread anti-Rohingya propaganda accusing the Rohingya of being pro-Pakistani and wanting to unite with Pakistan, thus raising doubts as to their loyalty to the country. Limitations had been placed on the movement of Muslims who lived in the Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and the Rathedaung districts. With the exception of villages evacuated in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung districts, Muslims were not allowed to return to the villages from which they had enlisted in 1942 in support of the British war effort. There were still approximately 13,000 Rohingya living in refugee camps in India and Pakistan, where they had fled during World War II, who were not being permitted to return. Those who managed to return were accused of being illegal Pakistani immigrants, and refugees' property and the lands were confiscated. The *mujahideen* demanded that the injustices be corrected so that they could live as full Burmese citizens in accordance with law rather than subject to arbitrariness and oppression. After all their protests and pleas produced no results, they took up arms.[6]

After the breakdown in the talks, the rebels made quick work of driving out Buddhist Arakan villagers that had been resettled earlier. Batdes raged with police and army units encamped in the region that had been under siege. As of December 1948, the main towns remained in government hands, but the limited government forces in Arakan could not prevent entire rural areas from falling to rebel control. The rebels employed guerilla tactics and had ample supplies of light weapons and ammunition, although much of it was antiquated and in poor condition. Intelligence information indicated that they were in possession of some light artillery as well. Nonetheless, in August 1948, government circles in eastern Pakistan, who followed events in Arakan, assumed that the Burmese government would have no difficulty in regaining control of territories it had lost to the rebels

as soon as the rainy season ended and the army could travel along the roads again.[7]

The Burmese government did not respond to the five demands made by Moulvi Jafar Kawal, leader of the *Mujahid* movement in Arakan, in September 1948: - (1) declare the Akyab district to be an autonomous Free Muslim State under the sovereignty of Burma [a status resembling that of Hyderabad under the government of India]; (2) recognize Urdu as the language of the state; (3) establish independent schools whose language of instruction would be Urdu; (4) release prisoners; (5) grant legal status to the *Mujahid* movement. In the absence of any response, the *mujahideen* maintained their guerilla warfare. Refugees crowded the cities; in rural areas, rice growing was cut back because there were no seasonal laborers from Chittagong. But the identity of the Muslim movement in Arakan is unclear.[8] From a report by the British Embassy in Rangoon, one gains the impression that there were two Muslim movements in Arakan. The first, the *Mujahid,* a separatist movement with an affinity to Pakistan; the second, the Arakanese Muslim Autonomy Movement, the stronger of the two, which aspired to the establishment of an independent state within the Union of Burma.[9] It is conceivable that difficulties in obtaining information on events in Arakan resulted in confusion and that activities attributed to both movements, as well as the demands presented by Moulvi Jafar Kawal, were actually the demands of the Arakanese Muslim Autonomy Movement rather than those of the *Mujahid* movement.

The notion of regional autonomy continued to grow. Though limited by a lack of ammunition, the rebels did not encounter effective military opposition. In November there was a severe erosion of their position. Although the Burmese army sustained losses, it was on the offensive in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung regions, burning down thirteen villages and six mosques near Maungdaw. As a result, the stream of refugees to the Pakistani shore of the Naaf River grew. The months that followed saw no change in the situation. Fighting between the *mujahideen* and the Burmese army went on with both sides making occasional forays into Pakistani territory in Chittagong. Nor was there a letup in rice smuggling or the flight of refugees. Early in February 1949, the number of refugees who had escaped. to Chittagong in advance of the Burmese army was estimated at 20,000. *Mujahideen* who crossed the border into Pakistan were not handed over to the Burmese army in order to forestall hostile reactions among the Muslims of Arakan. The British ambassador in Rangoon, in a report on 12 February 1949, estimated that apparently there were only 500 armed Muslim rebels, although they had many more supporters. He had difficulty determining whether or not the ultimate aim of the Muslims was the establishment of an independent state in the framework of the Burmese Union; however, should such a state emerge as merely an autonomy, he believed it would inevitably be drawn towards Pakistan. One may assume that his report was drawn from Burmese government circles and reflected what the latter knew or conjectured.[10]

Relations between Burma and Pakistan were not as strained as the tensions

between India and Pakistan following the division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, which resulted in the establishment of two states. Nonetheless, toward the end of 1948, the mounting agitation occasioned by the Muslim rebellion in the frontier region between eastern Bengal and Arakan took on serious political implications.[11] In October of that year, Prime Minister U Nu and commander in chief of the army, Lieutenant-General Smith Dun visited Akyab where they heard reports about arms and ammunition obtained by the rebels from the Pakistani side of the frontier, and that *mujahideen* casualties were getting medical attention in Pakistan. They learned that government forces were unsuccessful in preventing rice smuggling, and that the profits realized from this illicit trade were an added source of support for the rebellion. Muslim leaders such as Sultan Ahmed and Omra Meah, with bases in East Bengal, were also involved in the smuggling. It was assumed, however, that the Pakistani aid was a localized initiative which apparently stemmed from the sympathy of local government functionaries. Smuggling was caused by a genuine shortage of rice in the Chittagong territory. The rebellion posed a problem for Pakistan that complicated its relations, with Burma.
The fighting waged by the Burmese army against the Muslim rebels in Arakan, who had ties to the frontier populations of eastern Bengal, was marked by cruel and repressive measures. This exacerbated the danger that the number of refugees seeking asylum in Chittagong would grow. Although the Pakistani government did everything it could to seal the border, its efforts were ineffective. Pakistani government behavior vis-a-vis the Burmese government remained correct. Even in the face of border incursions by Burmese forces who occasionally opened fire, the authorities displayed restraint, limiting their reactions to official protests. Pakistan was not interested in reinforcing an impression then current in certain Rangoon government circles that it was covertly involved in encouraging the Muslim rebellion in Arakan or that it was aiding the rebels. The early demands of the Bengal Muslim League, which had been set forth well before India and Pakistan achieved independence, embarrassed Pakistan. The Pakistani government was certain that the Indian ambassador to Rangoon had maliciously spread rumors that Muslim rebels in Arakan were supported by Pakistan.[12]

In reality the situation on the ground was not as grave as such a connection would seem to imply. In mid-February 1949, the governor of Chittagong province estimated that some 2,000 Muslim refugees had moved from Arakan to Pakistani territory, most of them living in areas close to the border to ease their return home once normalcy was reestablished. Another figure given at the time stated that 20,000 Muslims had entered Chittagong since the beginning of 1949. There was also a report that 150 armed *mujahideen* who crossed the border were sent back to Burmese territory when they refused to hand in their arms.[13] This was apparently the outcome of several days' fighting in North Arakan between the first and the fourth of February. Only limited forces were involved: on the government's side, the Fifth Battalion of the Burma Rifles; and on the side of the Muslim rebels, relatively small guerilla units. The military success of the battalion was somewhat

limited. While it did managed to force the retreat of a few rebel units to the other side of the Pakistani frontier, the guerilla units suffered almost no casualties. The Burmese army practiced a scorched earth policy, torching villages and crops. Subsequently, the battalion was sent out of the region because it was needed more urgently elsewhere. These events reinforced the sympathy of North Arakan Muslims for the *mujahideen* whose reputation had suffered because they practiced robbery and because of their hit-and-run tactics. The actions of the *mujahideen* resulted in acts of retaliation by the army during which innocent Muslim families were forced from their homes to seek asylum in Chittagong. At this stage it appeared that the army did not possess sufficient strength to suppress the various uprisings in Arakan by direct military action, nor was there a likelihood of arriving at an arrangement through negotiations, particularly since the army's behavior served to destroy any confidence in the government, even among moderate Muslims.[14]

As Pakistani newspapers began reporting on the repression of Arakan Muslims by the Burmese government, political tension grew between Burma and Pakistan. Prom discussions Mohammed Ikramullah, secretary of the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, held in London with officials of the British Foreign Ministry in May 1949, one gets an inkling of Pakistani policy and aspirations regarding its border with Burma. Ikramullah stated that the Pakistan government had attempted to seal off its border with Burma but that such a closure could neither be total nor could it prevent Arakan Muslim refugees from entering Pakistan territory. Great numbers of refugees had already arrived and maintaining them was very costly for the government of Pakistan. The Pakistani government had called the plight of the refugees to the attention of the Burmese government on a number of occasions and had demanded that they be returned to their former homes. However, since those homes had been seized by Buddhists, the Burmese government had not been enthusiastic about making appropriate arrangements for the return of the refugees. Ikramullah went on to tell the British officials with whom he was meeting that Pakistan was interested in suppressing the *mujahideen* rebellion but that it had made it clear to the Burmese government that this should be done in "a civilized manner" which avoided atrocities. Pakistan was worried lest the cruel measures already carried out by the Burmese army could unleash anti-Burmese demonstrations in Pakistan sparking counterdemonstrations against Pakistan in Burma, and that ultimately Pakistani residents living in Burma would be endangered. Pakistan was also concerned about the rising numbers of refugees from Arakan to the Chittagong region. Between six and seven thousand had already crossed the border and were being housed in camps. There was the added fear that Communists were among the refugees. Ikramullah stated that in an effort to diffuse mutual suspicions between Pakistan and Burma, an agreement had been made between the two countries to appoint a Pakistani consul in Akyab and a Burmese consul in Chittagong.[15]

In May 1949, the Burmese government appointed a Peace Committee for North

Arakan. Among its members were Muslim dignitaries who, at the behest of Prime Minister U Nu, initiated contacts with the Muslim rebels. The hope was that the Peace Committee could convince the *mujahideen* to lay down their arms and forego their demands for autonomy. Committee members reported that some rebels had, indeed, given up their arms. While there was a letup in the fighting at the time, the government felt that it was caused by the monsoon rains, which made movement difficult, rather than the efforts of the Peace Committee. The government expected the rebels to renew their offensive once movement in the terrain was possible again after the rains stopped.[16] In June 1949, government control was limited to the port of Akyab while the *mujahideen* controlled North Arakan and the other rebel movements ruled the remaining parts of Arakan. Lacking sufficient regular forces, the government set up the Arakan Territorial Units. These units acted with great cruelty against the Muslim population, and the Muslim rebels retaliated in kind against the Buddhist population.[17]

In August 1949, the Burmese government appointed another committee, unconnected to the Peace Committee, which' was to function in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw regions. Its task was 1) to identify the causes for the *mujahideen* rebellion in Arakan; 2) to make recommendations for and against partition of the Akyab District and, in the event that it recommended partition; 3) to delineate boundaries. The committee was composed of leaders of the Arakanese Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (a governmental political organization), Muslim members of Parliament, and a number of prominent private individuals. It appears that nothing came of the committee since nothing further was heard of its activities although sporadic incidents in the Muslim areas continued to be reported.[18] At the same time, representatives of North Arakan Muslim refugees in eastern Pakistan were also active, and on 22 December 1949, they sent a communication to the government of Burma with copies to various government offices in Pakistan. (A copy found its way to the British delegation in East Pakistan.) In the communique, they protested the atrocities that were being perpetrated by the Burmese army and which continued unabated despite all protests. And they cited the ongoing confiscation of food and fuel. The refugees demanded that the government encourage members of the Rohingya community to establish a home guard in every village and supply it with arms and ammunition so that they could defend themselves against Communists and Buddhist Arakanese whose aim was to rout the Rohingya as they had attempted to do in 1942.[19]

In February the British ambassador in Rangoon attempted to summarize the situation in Arakan, making it clear that the intelligence coming in from the territory was sporadic, meager, and often contradictory, so that it was difficult to arrive at a cogent picture. He pointed out that since the end of 1948, the situation in North Arakan had deteriorated. Pressure by the Muslims on the government's units in Maungdaw and Buthidaung increased. By 7 January 1949, the rebels had captured such places as Rathedaung and others. The government sent no reinforcements, but its meager forces on site did everything in their power to resist and, on

February 4 were not only able to recapture Rathedaung but managed to reopen the road between Buthidaung and Maungdaw. In the opinion of the British ambassador, it was clear that following upon the cruel acts employed by the Burmese government against the Muslims of Northwest Arakan, the latter would find it impossible to acquiesce quietly to Burmese rule. Minimally, the only solution they would find acceptable would be the establishment of a semiautonomous enclave. It seemed unlikely, however, that the Burmese would accept this concession because such an enclave would have strong pro-Pakistani tendencies. On the other hand, in his opinion, the Burmese were incapable of maintaining a strong, just, and moderate rule. Consequently, there would be a flood of refugees bearing tales of atrocities into South Chittagong, and the Pakistani government would find it difficult to restrain the attendant which it would find embarrassing. The ambassador noted that despite this unsettled situation, rice cultivation and intensive smuggling from the Akyab district northward to Chittagong continued.[20]

In 1950, U Nu, the prime minister of Burma, set out on a visit to Maungdaw accompanied by the Ambassador of Pakistan. After that visit there were a number of changes in personnel, and officials as well as army units were replaced.. But two years later in 1952, there were renewed accusations in the Pakistani press about the harassment of Muslims in Arakan. Burmese newspapers responded with descriptions of the persecution of Buddhists by Muslim extremists in Pakistan, including forced conversions. Reports were recirculated that the *mujahideen* received arms and financial support from Pakistan. These rumors were denied by both Pakistan and Burma, but it was clear that the *mujahideen* did frequently cross the border into Pakistan (a difficult border to patrol effectively) so as to conceal their spoils or seek refuge from government forces that were in pursuit. Unofficial as it was, the aid extended to the *mujahideen* in East Pakistan where they were regarded as national and religious heroes and met by popular support.[21] Between 1951 and 1954, reinforced government units annually waged large-scale offensives against the *mujahideen.* Despite the fact that the military operations invariably ended with the onset of the monsoon rains and the difficulties of the jungle-covered terrain impeded military operations, the *mujahideen* progressively lost their hold on the region. At the beginning of 1952, their strength was estimated at two thousand fighters; by the beginning of 1953, the number was down to a mere three hundred. As with other guerrilla units in Burma, the *mujahideen* forces too were unstable. There were villagers who joined the fighters for limited periods, and then surrendered to government forces or returned to their homes while others replaced them.

In the second half of 1954, the *mujahideen* recouped and went on the offensive again, recapturing the areas of Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and most of Rathedaung. In Rangoon, Buddhists monks from Arakan held a protest fast against the *mujahideen.* In response to pressure, the government began a major offensive, called Operation Monsoon, in November. *Mujahideen* strength was broken, their strongholds captured, and a number of their leaders killed. From that point on,

their military threat lessened considerably. *Mujahideen* units broke down into small groups which continued to rob and spread terror among Muslims and Buddhists alike, particularly in remote regions. As they ceased their organized battles against army units, some turned to a campaign of systematic smuggling of rice from Arakan to Pakistan. Rice was either bought at a low price or confiscated from villagers, and sold for high prices in Pakistan which continued to suffer from a shortage of the grain. The smuggling operation was not limited to the north but was prevalent in all parts of Arakan. Many non-Muslims (including government officials and army personnel) who were involved were brought to trial and imprisoned. On the other side of the border, Pakistanis cooperated in the smuggling and provided refuge to the *mujahideen* and their families. The rice harvest began in January, and smuggling activity was carried out during the dry season from January through May, a period also suitable for military activity. Consequently, there were frequent run-ins between smugglers and navy river patrols; occasionally the smugglers even attacked police stations. *Mujahideen* gang leaders would convene village heads, impose a tax, and proceed to organize the smuggling efforts with their cooperation. The *mujahideen* also encouraged the illegal immigration of thousands of Chittagongs to Arakan from East Pakistan where there was a surplus population. Because of the disorder and the hard local conditions, it was difficult to recognize illegal immigrants or distinguish between them from the local population. The *mujahideen* interest in the illegal immigrants from East Pakistan was as workers who would cultivate abandoned land and grow rice on it. Rohingya leaders denied all this, claiming that not only was there no such immigration but that the Burmese authorities had invented the story in order to deny genuine Rohingya refugees the possibility of returning from Pakistan. Using the argument. that they were Chittagong made it possible to discriminate against the refugees, and arriving immigrants were often turned over to local authorities. Indeed, there were instances when Pakistanis were expelled and indigenous Muslim Arakanese were expelled along with them. In August of 1961, Burmese immigration officials estimated that ten thousand Pakistanis had destroyed their identity cards, acquired forged Burmese documents, and disappeared among the Muslim population of Arakan. A similar situation with similar claims was to reappear in that area several decades later.

At the beginning of 1954, the Pakistan Embassy in Rangoon announced that Cassim, a leader of the *mujahideen*, had been killed. The leadership had passed to him after Kawwal was murdered by his competitors in 1950.[22] Later it transpired that Cassim was only imprisoned in Chittagong where he was accused of illegal entry into Pakistan. The Burmese government expected that the rebel would be turned over to Burma even though there was no extradition agreement between the two countries. Pakistan refused and, in a debate in the Burmese Parliament in Rangoon, members of Parliament complained that despite the friendship between Burma and Pakistan, the rebel leader was not extradited. After his release from prison, he continued to live in Chittagong.[23] Cassim's imprisonment weakened the

mujahideen. His forces dispersed and established a camp for their families on the Pakistan side of the frontier continuing the insurrection, smuggling rice, and robbing until 4 July 1961 when approximately 290 *mujahideen* from the area of South Maungdaw surrendered to Brigadier Aung-Gyi, the deputy chief of staff of Burma. The rebels felt that there was no longer any point to their rebellion, especially after December 1961 when an agreement was reached between Pakistan and Burma to demarcate the border along the Naaf River, and to establish procedures for cooperation between the border commanders of Pakistan and Burma. Crossing the frontier became increasingly difficult. The two countries wanted to prevent the *mujahideen* issue from becoming a bone of contention between them. The establishment of the Mayu region and the intensification of military operations helped speed the surrender. The several hundred remaining *mujahideen* who surrendered to Brigadier Aung-Gyi on 15 November; in East Buthidaung, received monetary grants and books of the Koran and were resettled in a special area in Maungdaw adjacent to a Burmese army camp.[24]

Notes

1. Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 95-105.

2. FO 371/75660, Murray; Clive J. Christie, *A Modern History of Southeast Asia: Decolonization*, *Nationalism and Separation*, Tauris Academic Studies (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 168; Yegar, "Muslims of Burma," 123-126; DO 142/453, "Burmese Border War: Muslims' Fear of the Arakanese Pakistani Attitude," from Michael Davidson, Special Correspondent, *The Scotsman* (May 18, 1949); Tonia K. Devon, "Burma's Muslim Minority: Out of the Shadows?" *Southeast Asia Chronicle*, no. 75 (Berkeley, California: October, 1980): 27; Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London: Zed Books, 1991), 87; Jan Becka, *Historical Dictionary of Myanmar* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press. 1995), 139.

3. See appendix B.

4. FO 371/75660, Murray; Christie, *A Modem History,* 168-169; FO 371/69515, the British Embassy in Rangoon to the Foreign Office in London (June 29,1948); DO 142/453, Deputy British High Commissioner, Dacca (July 18,1948); ibid., July 25, 1948; ibid., August 4,1948; DO 142/453, London to High Commissioner in Karachi (August 13, 1948); Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), 154.

5. See footnote in Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 97.

6. Ibid., 97-98.

7. DO 142/453, Deputy British High Commissioner, Dacca, (August 1,1948).

8. Ibid., September 5,1948.

9. DO 142/453, Letter from the British Embassy, Rangoon, to the High Commissioner in Karachi (October 12, 1948).

10. DO 142/453, Deputy High Commissioner, Dacca (Nov. 6, 1948); DO 142/453 and FO 371/75660, British High Commissioner in Karachi to the Commonwealth Relations

Office, London (Dec. 17, 1948); DO 142/453, Deputy High Commissioner, Chittagong, (Feb. 7, 1949); DO 142/453 and FO 371/75660, letter by the British Ambassador in Rangoon (February 12, 1949).

11. FO 435/2. Confidential print from FI 701/1013/79; James Bowker, *Burma: Annual Review for 1948* (Rangoon, January 20, 1949), 7.

12. DO 142/453 and FO 371/75660, op cit.; DO 142/453, British High Commissioner in Pakistan to the Commonwealth Relations Office (February 12, 1949); DO 142/453 and FO 371/75660, British Embassy in Rangoon to British High Commissioner in Karachi (February 28, 1949); DO 142/453, British High Commissioner, Karachi (March 4, 1949).

13. DO 142/453, British High Commissioner, Pakistan (February 19, 1949).

14. Ibid., (February 19, 1949); DO 142/453, Deputy British High Commissioner. Dacca (February 28, 1949); FO 371/75660, British Embassy, Rangoon (April 4, 1949).

15. FO 371/76091 and DO 142/453, Mohammed Ikramullah in the Foreign Office. London (May 5 and 19, 1949).

16. DO 142/453, "Burmese Border 'War': Moslems Fear of the Arkanese Pakistanis' Attitude" from Michael Davidson, Special Correspondent, *The Scotsman* (May 18.1949), a dispatch from Akyab; FO 371/75660, Deputy British High Commisioner, Dacca (June 18, 1949).

17. Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma,* 98; Bertil Lintner, "In the Dragon's Wake." *FEER*, vol. 124. no. 17 (April 26, 1984), 33-35.

18. FO 371/75660, British Embassy's letters, Rangoon (Aug. 9, 1949), and also (Dec. 22, 1949).

19. FO 371/83115, The Central Arakanese Muslim Refugee Organization, East Pakistan, Head Office, Nilla (Dec. 22,1949).

20. FO 371/83115, British Embassy, Rangoon (Feb. 21, 1950).

21. The descriptions that follow about the final stages of the *mujahideen* rebellion are based on Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma,* 99-101 and the footnotes. See also Thompson and Adloff, *Minority Problems*, 155-157; Fred R. von der Mehden, *Two Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 54.

22. Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, 129; Christie, *A Modem History*, 169-170.

23. For biographical details regarding Cassim, see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*. 101, footnote 1.

24. *Asia Yearbook I963,* 55; Devon, "Burma's Muslim Minority," 27; John W. Henderson, John W.$_f$ Judith M. Heinman, Kenneth W. Martindale, Rinn-Sup Shinn, John O. Weaver, and Eston T. White, *Area Handbook for Burma* (Washington, D.C.: American University, Foreign Areas Studies Division, 1971), 78.

Chapter Six

The Mayu Frontier Administration (MFA)[1]

Even before fighting ceased in Arakan, the rebellion produced political results which were influenced by the enormous hostility that existed between Muslims and Buddhists. The Muslims rejected a demand by the Arakan Party (Buddhist) that Arakan be given the status of a "state" within the larger Burmese Union. All the party's efforts to draw the Arakan Muslim members of Parliament into an all-Arakan faction following the elections of 1951, which would guarantee Muslim rights in the "state" to be established, were rejected because of deep-seated distrust. Even moderate Muslim leaders who had reservations about the *mujahideen* rejected an Arakan Buddhist regime. Heads of the Rohingya in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung regions claimed the right of autonomy which would place the areas directly under the rule of the central government in Rangoon without benefit of Buddhist Arakan officials or any other Arakan intervention in their life. As a minimal condition, they demanded the establishment of a separate region—even without official autonomous status—insisting only that it be directly answerable to the central government. The two Muslim members of the Burmese Constituent Assembly, and subsequently the four Muslim members of Parliament from Arakan, raised the demand at sessions of the assembly, in Parliament, and in the press.

From 1960 through 1962, the Rohingya and other Muslim organizations in Arakan[2] were active on behalf of Arakan Muslims, particularly those in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung regions. This was a direct response to U Nu's declaration on the eve of the April 1960 general elections that if his party were to win he would grant Arakan the status of a "state" within the Burmese Union, parallel to the status of other states in the union. After his election victory, U Nu appointed a Commission of Inquiry to assess all problems related to the Arakan question. A lengthy and closely argued memorandum was presented to the commission by the Rohingya Jamiat-al-Ulama Organization which posited that the Muslims of the area were a separate racial group, constituting a decisive majority there. They insisted on a distinct district that would be directly answerable to the government in Rangoon. Only such an arrangement could assure the cessation of illegal immigration and of commercial smuggling across the frontier, and would restore

law and order. A special district would improve the dreadfully low standard of living of the inhabitants (most of whom depended on subsistence farming) would raise the backward conditions of education, and could prevent abuse of the population by Arakan officials. They insisted on the establishment of an independent regional council which would enjoy local autonomy. As a compromise measure, those who drafted the memorandum agreed that the district could be a part of the Arakan "state" but that the head of state would be guided by the regional council in matters pertaining to the affairs of the district. This would apply as well to appointed officials who would be guided by the advice of the regional council. Furthermore, the district would receive a direct government allocation for its needs, particularly in the areas of culture, education, and the economy. The Rohingya Youth Organization held an Assembly in Rangoon on 31 July 1960 demanding that Arakan not be granted the status of a state because of the communal tensions that existed between Muslims and Buddhists, dating back to the disturbances of 1942. A similar resolution was passed by the Rohingya Student Organization which added that if, nonetheless, a state were to be established, it would necessitate the partition of Arakan with separate autonomy for Muslims.

Muslim members of Parliament from Maungdaw and Buthidaung also demanded that their regions not be incorporated into the proposed State of Arakan, and presented their demands to both the government and the Commission of Inquiry. While they had no objection to the establishment of a state as such, its sovereignty ought not extend to Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and parts of Rathedaung where there were Muslim majorities. They expected these areas to be set up as an independent unit in order to insure the existence of the Rohingya. The imposition of an overriding state on the entire region could bring about the resumption of bloodshed.

The problem of the Muslims of Akyab, and other areas in Arakan where Muslims were not a majority, was more complex and resulted in tension between them and the Rohingya organizations. There were among them those who thought it pointless to oppose U Nu's proposal of a state, which led them to favor statehood for all of Arakan including Muslim areas. Their fear was that separating the northern regions of Arakan would adversely effect Muslims in other parts of Arakan and, consequently, they demanded guarantees for the Muslims. They wanted Muslim participation in the Founding Constituent Assembly. In a memorandum presented to the Commission of Inquiry, their organizations stated that their support for a state would be contingent on the reciprocal support of Arakan Buddhists for their demands that the religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative, and educational needs of the Muslims be guaranteed in the constitution of the state. The head of the Arakan state would be alternately a Muslim and a non-Muslim. When a Muslim was head of state, the speaker of Parliament would be a non-Muslim with a Muslim deputy, and vice versa. The same arrangement would hold for nominating committees and other bodies. Muslims would account for not less than a third of the ministers of the state. No law whose provisions might effect the life

of Muslims could be passed in the absence of support by the majority of Muslim members of the council. The head of state would act in accordance with the advice of Muslim members of government when making appointments to positions in the Muslim area. In all government positions, in public bodies, municipalities, etc., Muslims would enjoy a fair proportion in accordance with their size in the population; the government would look after the educational and economic needs of Muslims; no student would be forced to participate in religious instruction in a religion other than his own; and the followers of all faiths could acquire religious instruction in keeping with their faith in all educational institutions. Supporters of every persuasion could establish their own educational institutions which would be recognized by the government. Muslims would be able to cultivate their unique Rohingya language (a combination of Arakanese, Bengali, and Urdu) and culture, and propagate their religion in conditions of complete freedom. A special official for Muslim affairs would be appointed whose responsibility would extend to inquiries into complaints and grievances on which he would report to the head of state. Every region in Arakan, particularly the North Arakan region, would retain the right to secede from the state during a ten-year period, bringing them under the direct rule of the central government in Rangoon. The advocates of this plan, proposed to use as a model the arrangements between Christians and Muslims in Lebanon, Greeks and Turks in Cyprus, and the Chinese, Malaysians, Indians and Pakistanis in Singapore. Of course, this preceded developments that occurred in Lebanon and Cyprus some years later which proved that the arrangements between the communities there were a failure and did not meet the test of reality.

On 1 May 1961, the Burmese government announced the establishment of the Mayu Frontier Administration (MFA) that encompassed the regions of Muangdow, Buthidaung, and western Rathedaung. This could not be construed as autonomy since the region was administered by army officers. However, as the region was a separate administrative unit—not subject to Arakan—the Rohingya leadership agreed to the arrangement, particularly in view of the fact that the change occurred at the same time that the army, which was responsible for returning security and order to the region, suppressed the *mujahideen* rebellion. At the beginning of 1962, the government prepared legislation to establish the "state" of Arakan, acceding to the Muslim request that it not include the Mayu district. But in March 1962 there was a military coup in Burma. U Nu's government was overthrown and supplanted by a government under General Ne Win. The new military government rescinded the plan to grant Arakan statehood within the union although the Mayu Administration was retained within the special framework established for it in May 1961. The military coup brought Muslim political activity to an end. The policy of the military government put a stop to all activity by the minorities, many of whom had demanded greater measures of autonomy, a trend that gained momentum following U Nu's 1960 election victory. General Nc Win regarded minority demands as a threat to Burma's national unity. The military government instituted a much more radical economic policy than the one practiced

by the civilian government that preceded it, and all businesses owned by foreigners, including large local establishments, were nationalized. Economic enterprises owned by members of the Indian communities, as well as the Chinese minority, were expropriated in the course of 1963-1964. The result was a large-scale emigration from Burma. It is estimated that between 1963 and 1967, some 300,000 Indians left, most of them Muslims, along with 100,000 Chinese. The majority of the emigrants returned to their countries of origin—India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but there were some who settled in various districts of northern Thailand. From the standpoint of the Muslim community, the nationalization policy of the military government hurt Muslim traders throughout Burma, especially in Rangoon. These business people had been the backbone of the entire Muslim minority and most of the leaders, functionaries, and financial supporters of the community's activities and organizations were drawn from this circle.[3]

Notes

1. The following survey is based on Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 101-105, 113, and see notes there.

2. Ibid., 102, note 2, regarding these organizations.

3. Nalini Ranjan Chakravarti, *The Indian Minority in Burma: The Rise and Decline of an Immigrant Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 185-186; M. Ismael Khim Maung, *The Population of Burma: An Analysis of the J973 Census*, vol. 97 (Honolulu: East-West Population Institute, 1986), 17; David Joel Steinberg, ed., *In Search of Southeast Asia: A Modern History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), 400; Trevor O. Ling, "Religious Minorities in Burma in the Contemporary Period," in K. M. de Silva, Pensri Duke, Ellen S. Goldberg, and Nathan Katz, eds.. *Ethnic Conflict in Buddhist Societies: Sri Lanka*, *Thailand*' *and Burma* (Boulder, Colo.: Pinter Publishers, 1988; London: Westview Press, 1988), 182-183; Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London: Zed Books, 1991), 219; Omar Farouk, "The Muslims of Thailand," in Ibrahim Lutfi, ed., *Islamica* (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan United Selangor, 1981), 102.

Chapter Seven

The Military Coup and Its Aftermath

The *mujahideen* did not totally disappear after the military defeats of 1961 and the subsequent end of hostilities. Activity continued in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw districts, and Muslim underground organizations were set up or reactivated in North Arakan. There is some difficulty involved in ascertaining the names of those who were the heads of these organizations—indeed, the very names of the organizations—because various sources suggest different names. In any case, it is clear that after the forcible suppression of the student demonstration in Rangoon on 7 July 1962 by the Burmese army, there was a partial renewal of activity on the part of Muslim rebel organizations in Arakan and other protest movements in Burma. Muslim students who fled from the city to join the rebels in Arakan were among the students who had demonstrated at Rangoon University. One of these, Muhammad Jafar (or Jafar Habib or Muhammad Gafoor—it is unclear whether this refers to one man or to different individuals), who had been the chairman of. the Rohingya Student Union in Rangoon, went underground in 1963 and reorganized the rebel movement that was seeking independence and separation from Burma. The movement was now called Rohingya Independence Force (RIF). Another leader, Zafar Sani. set up guerilla units called the Muslim (or Arakan) National Liberation Party among Muslims living along the northern bank of the Naaf River. It is conceivable, but difficult to determine, whether or not the two movements are in fact one. Contradictory reports exist concerning outside support for the Rohingya rebels. One view holds that Muhammad Jafar (Jafar Habib) sought help from Arab countries but received only token support.

Another report says that Saudi Arabia sent aid including arms. Bangladesh itself avoided helping the rebels preferring to retain good relations with Burma. In this, they mirrored the behavior of East Pakistani authorities who, in 1954, actually arrested Cassim, the Mujahid leader, because his operations along the Burmese frontier complicated Pakistan's delicate relations with the Burmese government. Again, there is contradictory information which indicates that the Rohingya obtained arms from Bangladesh when the latter was engaged in a war of liberation against Pakistan in 1971. Not much is known about the military activity of these guerilla organizations, other than that in 1969 the Burmese army uncovered a rebel

arms cache in the jungles of the Mayu Hills in Arakan. In 1975, the rebel movement changed its name to Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF) but the number of armed members is unknown. The movement was based mainly in the hills of North Arakan close to the Bangladesh border. In 1983, Jafar Habib and three other leaders of the RPF went on the *haj* to Mecca. While there they met representatives of the Saudi government but apparently did not convince them to provide aid. Nor were they successful in their efforts that year to obtain observer status at the Islamic Conference of Muslim Foreign Ministers which would have enabled the organization's involvement in the struggle. An appeal to the Burmese government was rejected, again because of the staunch desire of Bangladesh to retain good relations with Burma. At the same time, publications originating in Bangladesh point to some foreign attention to the movement—stemming, no doubt, from the following vexing events.[1]

When Bangladesh became an independent state in December 1971, Burma was one of the first countries to grant recognition. As a result of the war, an undetermined number of Bengalis who were opposed to the cessation of Bangladesh from Pakistan fled to Arakan. Subsequently almost 17,000 Bengalis returned though the number that remained in Arakan continues to be unknown.[2] General Ne Win's visit to Bangladesh in April 1974 was intended to underscore the friendship between Burma and Bangladesh. (In January of that year Arakan had been granted the status of a state within the Union of Burma.) After the assassination of Bangladesh president, Sheik Mujib in August 1975, Burma again promptly recognized the new government in Dacca. Recognition came despite differences of approach on two bilateral issues between the countries. The first issue, actuated by oil explorations in the Bay of Bengal, concerned the demarcation of a maritime boundary between the countries; the second problem was related to the rebellion in the frontier area, a matter of no small importance since the land frontier crossed a mountainous terrain which could provide hiding places for rebel movements on both sides, making the task of monitoring entry into the country difficult. At the beginning of 1975, about 15,000 Muslims from the Arakan region (one version suggests the number was only 3,500) were forced to leave their homes because of persecution by the local Buddhist population, crossing the border into Bangladesh. Burmese authorities detained 300 people in Arakan, accusing them of illegal immigration from Bangladesh. Bangladesh voiced official protests. In July 1977, Bangladesh president, General Ziaur Rahman, spent four days in Rangoon at the invitation of General Ne Win. The visit was marked by gestures of friendship which were exchanged between the rulers, and a commercial treaty was signed. At the same time, the question of the frontier and illegal crossings was raised. Bangladesh suggested convening periodic meetings between the sides to assess the situation along the frontier. Burma responded by saying that it would look into the proposal. Burma also agreed to look into a Bangladesh proposal that the 150 Bangladesh citizens who had been arrested in Rangoon and Akyab be returned. No progress was made in these talks.[3]

The military regime of General Ne Win stepped up its suppression of autonomy seeking minorities, including the Muslims. And several months after his visit to Bangladesh, new tensions developed between the two countries. The immediate cause was an operation earned out by Burmese immigration officials in western Arakan. There are conflicting reports about what occurred. The Burmese government explained that the influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh—where conditions of poverty and hunger that began in 1971, in the wake of Bangladesh's war of independence, still prevailed—had grown lately and assumed threatening dimensions. The government also claimed that bands of illegal immigrants had razed isolated villages in Arakan in April 1978 and attacked police stations and immigration offices. There was a similar influx in other sparsely settled regions such as Shan, Kachin, and Chin along the Burmese border but the extent of illegal infiltration in Arakan was enormous. In response, the government set out on a campaign called Naga Min which was a systematic search throughout the problematic regions intended to update the government's demographic data: to register and classify all the residents as to whether they were Burmese citizens, legally residing foreigners, or had entered the country illegally. In Kachin, Chin, and Rangoon itself, the operation was launched in May of 1977. On February 11 1978, it began in the city of Akyab in Arakan. From there 200 immigration police moved to the Buthidaung area; difficulties occurred at the end of the month when they reached the rural areas. On May 19, the Burmese government declared that it had examined 108,431 people. Legal steps were taken against 643 of them; 35,590, all Bengali, fled leaving 6,294 empty houses behind them. The government blamed "incitement by irresponsible people" and the apparent inability of residents to produce bonafide identity cards or acceptable registration documents—an indication that they were either illegal immigrants from Bangladesh or criminals running from justice who were afraid to face legal action. Later, Burmese sources stated that by 27 May, 101,048 people had abandoned Buthidaung and Maungdaw, many of whom had not gone to Bangladesh but were hiding in the jungle.[4]

The results of the Naga Min operation were detrimental when viewed from the Bangladesh side of the frontier. Initially, 70,000 refugees crossed the border into Bangladesh seeking asylum from what they described as acts of torture and atrocity carried out by the Burmese authorities. It was reported that in the jungles along the border there were another 50,000 refugees who had been driven out of their homes and who were attempting to reach Bangladesh. Many of those who sought safety in Bangladesh claimed that they were both Rohingya and Burmese citizens. They expressed the fear that, in effect, the Burmese authorities were intent on ridding Arakan of Muslims, all of whom they regarded as a foreign element, yet Bangladesh was not extending citizenship to them. The Bangladesh government established six refugee camps, and the refugees set up additional camps on their own initiative. By July, it was reported that there were 300 refugee camps! Although it is unclear what the term "camp" encompassed, it is almost certain that this was a highly inflated figure. Certainly there were eleven main camps along

the border. By mid-June, the number of refugees reported to have crossed the Naaf River had reached 200,000, and an additional 3,000 a day were leaving Burma. Between March and August 1978, more than a quarter million Muslims crossed the Naaf River. Again and again refugees told horror stories about the Burmese army and local Arakan Buddhists—arbitrary arrests, rape, desecration of mosques, and the destruction of villages. Various sources indicated that if the army itself had not committed these acts, neither had they made any effort to prevent Buddhist Arakanese from spreading terror or destroying Muslim villages.[5]

In the 11 February swoop by 200 Immigration Department police who had come from Rangoon to Akyab, it was reported that the Muslim quarters of the city were sealed off and 1,734 people arrested in one night, some of whom had forged identity cards. The Muslims saw this as an attempt to oust them from Arakan and held a demonstration in the city on 17 February. The demonstration was put down by force, causing extreme panic. The Muslim population fled further north as the campaign pushed forward. Regarding the lack of identity cards, the Muslims argued that when the Burmese government issued identity cards to its citizens in 1962, Rohingya Muslims were not issued National Registration Cards (NRC); instead, they were given Foreigner Registration Cards (FRC). They refused them. As a result, the majority had no identity cards of any kind, and therefore were not considered Burmese citizens. Those few who had accepted NRC documents were forced to return them in 1977 when the authorities demanded them back. It was plainly unjust that now people without documents were being punished as infiltrators from Bangladesh. One estimate places the number of such persons in prison at 6,000.[6] At the beginning of April, an advisor to Bangladesh President ***Kazi*** Anwarul Huj traveled to Rangoon in order to initiate a dialogue on the refugee problem. The negotiations were continued in mid-April when Burma's foreign minister, Brigadier General Myint Maung, came to Dacca. The talks were not concluded, and it was decided that they would be resumed in Rangoon.

At the end of April 1978, the Bangladesh government registered a sharp protest with the Burmese government concerning the expulsion by force of "thousands of Burmese Muslim citizens" to Bangladesh. The President, Ziaur Rahman, spoke about the inhuman removal of Burmese Muslims from their country, and demanded that they be allowed to return. The Burmese government continued to insist that those who were expelled were Bangladesh citizens who had resided illegally in Burma. Tension along the Burma-Bangladesh border intensified. Naval units of both sides patrolled the Naaf River, and army reinforcements were sent to the region. Each side accused the other of sniping and opening fire. Apparently the negative worldwide publicity Burma received after Bangladesh called for international aid changed the Burmese position regarding repatriation. On 6 June, the foreign minister of Bangladesh, Tobarak Hussein, went to Rangoon to discuss the refugee issue with the Burmese government. Despite some monetary support from the United Nations, maintaining the refugees was a difficult proposition for poverty stricken Bangladesh where the standard of living was extremely low. The

UN assistance enabled Bangladesh to maintain ten or eleven temporary camps of bamboo huts and straw and to provide food for approximately 140,000 refugees. During the first three months there were cases of cholera and some 850 people, mostly women and children, died of malnutrition, dysentery, pneumonia and malaria. It was clear that conditions would worsen with the beginning of the monsoon season. And, indeed, by the beginning of March 1979, 1,583 deaths were recorded, most of them children. Much higher estimates have been suggested as well. Aid was sent by a number of Muslim countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia, and by international bodies. Saudi Arabia demanded that Burma cease expelling Muslims. India was worried because small groups of refugees had managed to find their way into India. On 30 May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) requested a budget of $15.5 million which would cover an eight-month period of support for the refugees. The World Muslim League, headquartered in Mecca, issued a press release on 15 April 1978 regarding the distress of Arakan Muslims.

On 9 July, both governments agreed to the repatriation of 200,000 refugees to Arakan. The Burmese agreed that anyone in possession of a National Registration Certificate could return but conceded that not all the refugees had such a document. Repatriation was scheduled to begin at the end of August, the first stage intended for those who held National Registration Certificates, or Foreign Registration Certificates. The two parties also agreed on measures to prevent illegal entry into either country and a demarcation of the border. The Burmese insisted on guarantees that criminals would not be given refuge in Bangladesh. Dacca consented because it too had run into difficulties in frontier regions with dissident elements that had escaped to Burmese territory. The Saudi ambassador to Bangladesh participated in the negotiations. For its part, the Burmese government continued to publish denials in the press about government repression of Muslims in Arakan, and to press the point took twenty-eight journalists to the border area to show them villages which, they said, were actually burned down by illegal immigrants who came from the city of Chittagong in Bangladesh.[7]

Burma agreed to the repatriation of refugees, but neither the number who wished to return nor the number Burma would actually accept was known. Bangladesh officials believed that there would not be any difficulty regarding approximately 100,000 refugees, about one-half of those who had National Registration Certificates or Foreign Registration Certificates (although the Burmese officials claimed that many of the documents were forgeries). Bangladesh felt that many refugees would fear to return unless they received sufficient guarantees about their safety in the future. The first group was scheduled for repatriation in early September. The beginning was slow. The refugees exhibited little enthusiasm for the project, and it was not easy to persuade them of its merit. The National Patriotic Front of the Rohingya continued to believe that the Naga Min campaign was aimed at expelling the Muslim population of Arakan and that was the true goal of the Burmese government. It was a notion that planted fear in the hearts of the

refugees and deterred their return. There were those who had signed petitions to return, but later disappeared and apparently remained in Bangladesh. Others who were signatories were beaten, probably by opponents of repatriation. The repatriation campaign began on 15 September, but by the end of the month only 250 people had availed themselves of it. Inspection of documents was carried out by representatives of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to facilitate the operation, the Burmese authorities agreed to simplify procedures by accepting refugees without documents who could be identified by village heads, or in some cases, even by other returnees. In time the rate of return accelerated, and by March 1979, the number had grown to 80,055, with a weekly rate of some 5,000 to 6,000. Because of corruption on the part of the Bangladesh officials who were in charge, it was difficult to obtain accurate figures about the numbers of people living in camps or those who wished to return. Officials of the World Health Organization (WHO) claimed that highly inflated figures of deaths were reported in order to obtain cloth for shrouds, cloth which could then be sold. Conversely, there were exaggerations about the number of living refugees in order to get food rations. In theory, journalists and photographers were allowed to visit the camps, but camp officials were less than cooperative. Though the rate of return accelerated and procedures became more organized, aid officials believed that 50,000 refugees would, nonetheless, remain in Bangladesh because the Burmese government would not accept their means of identification. The UNHCR allocated seven million dollars to the land resettlement program of refugee farmers. Other returnees were offered public-works employment such as paving roads or improving the irrigation network. There were plans for the expansion of existing hospitals and health clinics and the construction of schools in distant hilly regions. In June 1979, the Burmese ambassador to Bangladesh announced that 151,000 refugees had already returned and that by the end of the month all the rest would be repatriated. In actuality, the program lasted somewhat longer. In mid-October, UNHCR officials supervising the operation stated that the Burmese government had provided returnees with construction materials, agricultural tools, and fishing nets but that there were still 9,000 people awaiting repatriation. A certain number of refugees managed to immigrate to other countries such as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states.

The government prevented many of those who did return to Arakan from coming back to their original villages. No new houses, schools, or mosques were built, nor did people return to their previous places of employment. Among those who found that they had no place to live and that their land had been seized by Buddhist residents, were people who opted to recross the border into Bangladesh. The truth is that the precise number of Muslim refugees from Arakan is unknown because many of them never registered at a specific place. The majority of the Rohingya were illiterate and few were able to provide documentary proof of any kind as to their citizenship.[8] In any case, the large-scale return of the refugees motivated the Burmese regime to make yet another effort to rid itself of foreign populations, and

in 1982, an immigration law was passed which turned the Rohingya into de facto foreigners.

Throughout the crisis, the Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF) had absolutely no impact on events and remained inactive. By contrast, the Burmese Communist Party reacted quickly. They saw to it that passage was secured for refugees to Bangladesh, and they distributed literature calling on Arakan Buddhists to halt attacks on Muslims and join a united effort to overthrow the Ne Win government. A direct consequence of the RPF's inaction was a split within the organization. In a 1978 magazine interview, Mohammed Zaffir (Ja'afar?) the leader of the RPF, said that the sole aim of the movement was to achieve territorial autonomy in the areas of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. There was an assumption that the underlying reason of the Naga Min ‘‘identity" campaign in Arakan, ostensibly intended to provide demographic data on the number of illegal immigrants (accompanied as it was by stepped-up military activity), was actually to identify *mujahideen* elements in the population. The assumption was prompted by a fear that Arab states, particularly Libya, would use the *mujahideen* as a springboard for subversive activity as had happened in the South Philippines. The fear was shared by Bangladesh.

The rebels mingled with their coreligionists in order to cross the border as refugees into Bangladesh; RPF members were greatly encouraged by the rise of pan-Islam movements in Islamic countries and looked to Muslim states, particularly, Libya and Saudi Arabia would support their separatist aims in Arakan, providing them with aid and equipping them with arms. More moderate Muslims hoped that publicly expressed moral support by Islamic nations would help them to achieve human rights, freedom of religion, and civil equality in Burma.[9]

Burmese Muslims presented their case to the International Conference on Muslim Minorities held in London in April 1980, and sponsored by the Islamic Council of Europe. A long list of accusations was presented against the Burmese government including the closure of Muslim schools in Burma following the army's seizure of power in 1962, confiscation of mosque property, requirement of a license to slaughter cattle for Muslim holidays; prohibitions against joining the *haj* pilgrimage to Mecca, restrictions on religious publications, and detention of Muslim religious leaders due to an assassination attempt on Ne Win in 1977. (At about the same time, the Burmese government issued a statement accusing Libya's Muammar Qadhafi and Bangladesh of being behind the attempt.) Muslim complaints also spoke of instances of torture and the fact that Muslims were singled out for attack by government forces during the suppression of the 1962 student riots. The issue of Muslims fleeing Arakan to Bangladesh was not mentioned. The conference responded to all these claims by expressing sorrow that there was no improvement in the condition of Muslim communities in non-Muslim lands, and regret at the lack of human and civil rights in these countries. Thailand and Burma were specifically mentioned. The conference appealed to all Muslim countries to aid their coreligionists everyplace that help was needed without, however, infringing on the sovereignty of any country or its territorial integrity. In such places

where Muslim communities were in physical danger, or their Islamic identity threatened, the Muslim world was called upon to employ its material and moral resources, and its significant economic and political powers in order to insure the protection of Muslim rights.[10]

Ferment among Arakan Muslims did not subside. Some sought out allies in other minority separatist groups that had been active in Burma since the end of World War II, particularly the Karen minority. In May 1976, a conclave of thirteen separatist minorities from Thailand-Burmese border areas met to work out military cooperation among themselves. All the organizations demanded full autonomy. Similar meetings had taken place earlier: in 1975, representatives of five bodies, including the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), which represented Arakan Buddhists, set up the Federal National Democratic Front The organizations agreed to cooperate with one another and to coordinate military operations against the central government, but nothing came of the meeting.[11]

A new Muslim rebel organization, Kawthoolei Muslim Liberation Force (KMLF), was established on 31 August 1984. Its leader, Mohammed Zaid, known as Brother Zaid, was a forty-seven-year-old former official in the Burma Airways Corporation. The strength of the KMLF was unknown although there is information that a number of Muslims, apparently two hundred men, were armed and equipped by the Karen rebels in the hills of North Burma, the locale where the new Muslim organization was active. It was reported that members of the group had already taken part in a number of clashes with Burmese army units who were fighting against the Karens near the Thailand border. The KMLF said that it was organized in response to the anti-Muslim riots of June and July 1983 in the cities of Moulmein and Martaban where mobs had broken into Muslim quarters and burned mosques. A month later the riots spread to several places in the Irrawaddy Delta. Here, too, mosques were burned and hundreds of refugees streamed to the Thai border. Conceivably, the KMLF replaced earlier Muslim underground groups such as the Ummat Liberation Front, which was founded in Mandalay in 1976 and was no longer in existence, and the Rohingya Patriotic Front which was ineffective. The KMLF claimed that it represented all of Burma's Muslims and that their aim was not the establishment of a separate Islamic state but rather a struggle to insure freedom of religious expression and guarantees against religious coercion. Muhammad Zaid circulated an open letter he had written to the president of Burma, San Yu, which included a declaration of war against the central government In his letter, he lambasted the burning of mosques in southern Burma and called for unity among Muslims. Copies of the letter were sent to the governments of Libya, Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, as well as to several Muslim youth organizations in Southeast Asian countries. In March 1987, differences surfaced between Sunni and Shiite leaders in the movement, and the organization disbanded even as its members were fighting in Karen guerilla units. Rumors circulated that an organization in Burma was mobilizing Muslims and Buddhists in Arakan[12] sending them as mercenaries to reinforce the Karen rebels. When the KMLF was

disbanded, it was replaced by the Muslim Liberation Organization. It is possible that KMLF served as the core of the new organization about which very little is known. What is known is that independent Muslim units continued to operate within the broader Karen rebel framework. It should be emphasized that the information with regard to these organizations is essentially disjointed, lacking in clarity, and based on partial reports in the press without other direct or reliable substantiating sources.[13]

It must be added that in one area—smuggling—there was apparently no change in the traditional practices despite all the ups and downs in the political [and] military situation along Burma's frontier. Black-market activity and smuggling into and out of Burma in several directions, including Bangladesh, continued unabated. Rice, corn, and betel nuts were smuggled out of Burma in exchange for textiles, medications, kerosene, sewing machines, canned goods, and other commodities that were in short supply there. The income from smuggling these items along almost the entire Burmese border was a primary source of funding for the various rebel groups.[14] In 1982, an agreement to demarcate a 142 kilometer stretch of the frontier was concluded between Bangladesh and Burma. The border was actually set in 1985; there is no indication, however, that this facilitated sealing the border to prevent smuggling. The second area in which there was no change was the abuse of minorities (including the Rohingya of Arakan). During the 1980s, Amnesty International cited the imprisonment of Muslims and abuses in Arakan in its annual reports. It reported torture carried out by the army and the police in their interrogations, attacks on villagers engaged in prayer in mosques, restriction of freedom of movement, denial of human rights for refugees, and summary executions carried out by the army. Amnesty International appealed to San Yu, the president of Burma, interceding on behalf of forty-five Muslims of Bengal origin who were accused of illegal immigration and who had been imprisoned for many years. The organization expressed suspicion that they were arrested because of their ethnic origin and religion. It is not known whether this appeal had any effect.[13]

Burma regarded minorities as a threat to its unity which was, in any case, shaky and sought to rid the country of them or limit their numbers. This tendency to deny foreigners the benefit of citizenship status could be seen not only in the nationalization of property owned by foreigners and pressure on them to emigrate, but in the formulation of the Burma Citizenship Law. Passed on 15 October 1982, it replaced the Union Citizenship Act promulgated after Burma became independent and in force for only two years. Preparations for the enactment of the new citizenship law began in 1976 and went on for approximately six years. The intent of the new law was to safeguard dominant positions of power and advantage for the Burmese people who, according to the official definition, also included such local indigenous groups as the Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Mon, Arakan Buddhists, Shan, and others who were present in Burma before 1823. The year 1823 was chosen as a baseline because the first Anglo-Burmese war broke out the following year during which the British annexed the border areas of Arakan and Tenasserim. As the

result of that war, and the two Anglo-Burmese wars that followed when all of Burma came under British rule, foreigners began to move in freely, particularly from the Indian subcontinent and China. The law distinguished between three categories of citizenship. The first related to Burmans and members of the local communities noted above, all of whom enjoyed full political and economic rights. The second category applied to offspring of mixed marriages between communities, and to the mates of ethnic Burmans. These persons were classed as associate citizens. The category also applied to anyone who had lived in Burma for five consecutive years or had lived there for eight out of ten years preceding 1942 or before independence in 1948. Associate citizens had the right to earn a living but could not serve in any office. The third category related to naturalized citizens who were the offspring of other ethnic groups who entered Burma as immigrants during British colonial rule. Most people in that category had come from the Indian subcontinent, though there was a scattering of Chinese and others as well. Within this category were many Muslims regarded by the Burmese army as potential security risks. Naturalized citizens could not fill any political function, serve in the armed forces, or be appointed as directors of government institutions. The manifest aim of the law was to discriminate against those who belonged in this category. The law occasioned great anger in the Muslim community of Burma, particularly among the Rohingya of North Arakan. The Rohingya saw themselves as Burmese citizens by virtue of their centuries-long residence in the region; however, the authorities regarded them as illegal immigrants from Bengal. Indeed, the close contacts across the border and the widespread assimilation between indigenous and immigrant Muslims, which went on uninterrupted throughout the period of British rule and before it, made it difficult to distinguish between who was indigenous and who was immigrant. The new citizenship law coupled with the series of military operations that had been waged against Muslims over the years raised suspicions that Burma was conducting a de facto process of ethnic cleansing.[16]

The perception of anti-Muslim prejudice was reinforced by events that occurred in the second half of 1988. For the twenty-six years following the military coup of 1962, Burma had been a socialist dictatorship with a single legal political party—the army. In June 1988, there were widespread, primarily nonviolent demonstrations of students and Buddhist monks protesting against police violence, against the repression of political rights, and against the government's failure in the conduct of the country’s economy. The authorities reacted by shutting down campuses and killing a number of students. The demonstrations intensified and on 23 June, General Ne Win resigned as head of the ruling party, the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP). Demonstrations intensified even further during the months of August and September when the demonstrators declared a general strike and demanded a change in the system and a return to democracy. On 18 September, the previous regime reinstated its rule by means of a military operation which put down demonstrations throughout the country, formally reinstituting military rule. The new regime called itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council

(SLORC). Muslim leaders accused the government of using torture and extortion in predominantly Muslim populated regions, i.e., North Arakan. Muslims were being punished with special severity for participation in antigovernment demonstrations, even though the demonstrations had been countrywide and were carried out by several ethnic groups which had acted in concert against the government.[17]

At the end of 1989, the government of Burma/Myanmar[18] began to settle Buddhists in Muslim areas of Arakan/Rakhine by displacing the local population which had traditionally been regarded as a hostile element in Burma. Muslims claimed that political activists and heads of their community were put under arrest. The army was implicated in robbery, rape, murder, and the burning of mosques. In April 1991, those who had been expelled or had escaped from their homes began arriving in Bangladesh as refugees, pushed to leave by the army. Others were conscripted by the army to work as forced laborers in road building, the construction of camps, or as porters. As is the case with much that relates to Burma, one is unable to determine the exact number of this new wave of refugees, with wide divergences reported in media sources. In the early months of 1991, hundreds of Muslims left Burma every week arriving at refugee camps in Bengal. When the monsoon season began, health problems broke out and became progressively worse. An April cyclone badly damaged some of the refugee camps. In June. 1992, the estimated number of refugees who had come to Bangladesh fluctuated between 210,00 to 280,000. There were, however, many other refugees who were dispersed within the Bangladesh population, a population already crowded and impoverished, many themselves without a place to live, wandering about in search of shelter, improvising temporary huts out of any material available. The government of Bangladesh attempted to register the refugees systematically, provide medical examinations, and send them on to one of the dozen camps that had been prepared for them where they would receive ration cards. In December 1991, a unit of the Burmese army attacked an army camp in Bangladesh on the pretext that it was in pursuit of Rohingya rebels. One soldier was killed and three injured. The incident precipitated an increase in the stream of refugees that swelled at first to 1,000 a day, grew to 5,000, and finally to 7,000 a day. At that point, Bangladesh appealed for international aid. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees attempted to find funding, arrange for tents, provide medicines, and coordinate the work of private aid organizations that had begun working among the refugees. In March 1992, the number of refugees from Arakan eased somewhat but soon mounted again, reaching 2,000 to 3,000 a day. Among them were people who had first run away in 1978, returned to Burma, and were now in flight once more. The refugees reported that there were tens of thousands more refugees on the way. At the time the estimated number of homeless people was 85,000. In July 1992, Bangladesh had registered 268,551 refugees; in 1993, the count by the UNHCR stood at 228,000 Muslim refugees from Arakan, placed in seventeen camps in South Bangladesh. It was reported that 2,000 refugees died of disease and malnutrition during the first five months after they arrived at the camps.[19]

As early as November 1991, the government of Bangladesh asked Burma to permit the repatriation of refugees who had crossed the frontier. Burma disregarded the request, asking instead that the UN mediate between it and Bangladesh. At that juncture, Burma was facing harsh criticism at the UN. In December 1991, the SLORC government of Burma was condemned by the UN General Assembly in New York, and in February and March 1992, there was a similar condemnation by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. This condemnation related to the repression of democratic opposition (the National League for Democracy) headed by Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as the flight of the Muslims. States that generally displayed friendship toward Burma, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Muslim Brunei, now showed signs of hostility. The uneasiness of the SLORC government grew following remarks made by Prince Haled ben Sultan ben Abd el-Aziz, commander of the Saudi units in the Gulf War of 1991, when he visited Dacca in mid-April. He called on the UN to take measures against Burma similar to Operation Desert Storm which the UN had mounted against Iraq. The Burmese government continued to reject accusations of abuse by the army of ethnic minorities, including Muslims, but it did show some elasticity regarding its previous stance and indicated a willingness to permit the refugees to return. On 28 April 1992, following five days of negotiations, Foreign Ministers, A. S. M. Mostafizur Rahman of Bangladesh and U Ohn Gyaw of Burma, signed two documents that called for the rapid repatriation of refugees. The Bangladesh foreign minister stated that there were 223,000 refugees. The first agreement signed by the two foreign ministers laid down the principles for repatriation, and the second signed by officials of both foreign ministries dealt with technical modalities. The agreements called for a "voluntary and secure" return. The arrangements for checking on the identity of refugees, most of whom had lost their documents or had them confiscated by security forces, were worked out. The Bangladesh foreign minister clarified "voluntary" return to mean that refugees would not be forced to return against their will. This was a matter of vital concern because many had lost trust in the Burmese government after experiencing the army's brutality. The Burmese foreign minister said that even those refugees who had no proof of their citizenship would be allowed to return if they could prove that they had lived in Burma previously (by remembering the names of their village or of the village heads). The agreement included a paragraph on monitoring by the UN and about rehabilitation of the refugees. Both ministers expressed the hope that the process of return could be achieved in six months.[20]

In disregard of the agreement, the Burmese government refused to allow representatives of the UNHCR or other UN agencies to supervise the repatriation process. On their part, the refugees feared that they would once again be confronted with a fate of persecution and harassment at the hands of the Burmese authorities, circumstances which had been the cause of their earlier flight. They refused to return unless Burma agreed to independent international supervision of the repatriation and of the situation in Arakan. On 24 July 1992, the UN High Com-

missioner for Refugees visited Rangoon, and after a series of talks, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in November between Burma and the UNHCR that regularized the presence of the organization, as well as other UN bodies, in Arakan. It also determined the form of supervision over the process of return for the refugees from Bangladesh. Not only was the number of refugees returning to Arakan by the end of 1992 quite small, but Bangladesh accused Burma of being responsible for the continued flight of refugees from Arakan even after the foreign ministers had signed an agreement in April. Toward the end of 1992, Burma began accepting refugees who returned voluntarily, without benefit of international supervision. It was an extremely slow process; only 5,981 refugees returned by December 1992, but the pace picked up in 1993 when approximately 50,000 refugees returned. Representatives of both governments met once a month to check on progress. Bangladesh officials were even taken on guided tours in Arakan to review the situation. But in Bangladesh the disagreements between refugees who refused to return without international supervision and those who agreed even in its absence generated acts of violence in the refugee camps which culminated in exchanges of fire between both sides.[21]

The world showed little interest in the problems facing the Muslims of Arakan, and what interest there was, was limited in its scope. Only the United States attempted to bring pressure to bear on the SLORC regime. At a meeting of the ASEAN held in Manila in July, 1992, James Baker, the American secretary of state, asked the member nations who were attending to adopt a sharp stand against the infringement of human rights in Burma/Myanmar. The ASEAN countries, most of whom had their own difficulties with regard to human rights, preferred to adopt a policy of “constructive engagement" influenced, no doubt, by their interest in recruiting Burma to their organization. Even the two large Muslim states, Indonesia and Malaysia, sufficed with communiques critical of Burma/Myanmar’s treatment of Muslims in Arakan and registered diplomatic protests about the treatment of Muslims by the Burmese army, but refrained from taking any concrete steps beyond this. Representatives of the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) sought aid from the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and sent their representatives to that body. They achieved very little in their efforts to get outside help from Islamic countries beyond a statement issued by the OIC in 1992 blaming the Burmese government for its persecution of Muslims and for the plight of the refugees. Myanmar continued to reject the UN’s expression of concern for the denial of human and political rights. In December 1992, the UN Assembly called for the reinstatement of human and political rights in Burma demanding the return to power of the National League for Democracy, led by those who had been duly elected in 1990; the release of Aung San Suu Kyi; and the protection of ethnic and religious minorities. The United States criticized Thailand for inviting a Burmese delegation to the Annual Meeting of the ASEAN Ministers which was to be held in Bangkok in July 1994. It took until 10 August 1996, when General Than Shwe, Head of the SLORC, was on a visit to Kuala Lumpur, that a protest was made by

the representatives of twenty-nine nongovernmental agencies. Prominent among these was the influential Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) which boasted such important leaders as Anwar Ibrahim, then deputy prime minister. The protest was somewhat embarrassing to the Malaysian prime minister, Dr. *Dato* Muhammed Mahatir, who in other circumstances could be counted on to raise a variety of Muslim issues which might range from Bosnia to Chechnya. An important factor in the increased criticism of Burma was apparently economic. Malaysia was heavily invested in Burma to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Nonetheless, Malaysia permitted a leader of the Rohingya, Dr. Ahmad Kamal, to live in Malaysia. He had escaped to Bangladesh from Burma in the early 1990s, and from there to Malaysia. Once there, he was active in helping the ABIM movement publicize the persecutions of Muslims in his native country.[22]

Repatriation of refugees was renewed in 1994 though it proceeded at a slow pace. By the end of the year 60,000 people had returned; by the end of 1995, 115,000; and by the end of 1996, 200,000. Some 20,000 refugees remained unaccounted for; it was reported that they simply disappeared from refugee camps when they refused repatriation. There were also reports of retaliation carried out against refugees who had returned to Arakan. UNHCR representatives in Myanmar investigated information that had come to them about the mistreatment of returnees and brought the information to the attention of local Burmese officials. A sense of uneasiness prevailed about the fate of Muslims in the area once the UNHCR mandate was no longer in effect.[23] It is interesting that throughout this period there is no mention of significant operations of any kind by Rohingya units, the only exception being some skirmishes with army patrols in jungle areas. Nor is it clear whether organizations that were known—but whose names changed at various times—were the selfsame organizations or whether they were, in fact, new organizations. Additionally, nothing is known about their specific goals. At the beginning of the 1990s there were two organizations, the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO). Both were based in southeast Bangladesh where the Dacca government permitted them to operate. Not surprisingly, their spokespeople claimed that they had thousands of supporters and hundreds of armed people in training. Perhaps they did not engage in military operations because of the overwhelming firepower of the well-trained Burmese army, or perhaps because there was no substance to their claim of numbers. Reports indicate that they tried to recruit experienced fighters from among the veterans of the Afghanistan war. For financial support, they had to turn to external sources. Representatives of the movements attempted to mobilize material and moral assistance from Muslim states and international Islamic bodies, and an attempt was made to convince Muslim countries that taking a public stand against Burma would be acting in the defense of Islam. In any case, the ROS was apparently the larger of the two organizations. The second group, the ARIF, received aid from the Jamaat Islami, a fundamentalist Bangladesh organization, which in turn received its support from Middle Eastern countries. The Jamaat

Islami themselves protested against the return of the refugees. They did not make a demand for independence, but pinned their hopes on the leader of the Democratic movement, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the possibility that she might stand at the head of a government that would replace the SLORC regime. Bangladesh newspapers carried feature articles about fundamentalist Islamic groups that preached against the return of refugees to Arakan and in favor of the establishment of an independent Rohingya state in Arakan by means of rebellion. There was also a report that a Saudi aid agency was behind incitement in the camps calling for refugees to denounce the work of a French aid agency because it was Christian. All of this raised fears in the Bangladesh government that refugee camps from Arakan would become a training ground for extremists, that arms would be smuggled to them, and that pan-Islamic activity among the refugees could, when combined with material aid, be a goad to militancy. It was a situation that had the potential of raising the level of tension in the area. India was also worried about such possibilities and called for "peaceful repatriation." Insofar as is known, the reaction of Islamic countries was less than spirited. Rohingya rebels were unsuccessful in getting military aid from external Muslim sources, although a few Muslim governments and several agencies sent some humanitarian assistance.[24]

Apparently the problem of Arakan Muslims will continue to weigh on Myanmar, and new crises will break out periodically. Indeed, when most of the Muslim refugees who fled at the beginning of the 1990s returned to Arakan, outbreaks and anti-Muslim riots—instigated by Buddhists monks—broke out in Mandalay and other Burmese cities, in March 1997.[25] Consequently, there is no reason to suppose that there will be a change in the situation of the Muslim population in Arakan.

Notes

1. U Min Thu (ex-Reuters correspondent in Burma), "Islam and Muslims in Burma," mimeograph document; unclear whether it was ever published, found in my private papers (Aug. 27,1986); Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity* (London: Zed Books, 1991), 219; Bertil Lintner, "In the Dragon's Wake." *FEER*, vol. 124, no. 17 (April 26,1984): 33-35 34-35; *Asia Yearbook 1970,* 81; David I. Steinberg, "Constitutional and Political Basis of Minority Insurrections in Burma," in Lim Joo-Jock and S. Vani, eds.. *Armed Separatism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984), 68-72.

It bears mentioning that the Muslim rebels in Arakan were not the only ones operating in that area. There were also strong nationalist sentiments among the Buddhist majority of Arakan whose geographic isolation west of the Arakan Yoma Hills resulted in scanty contact with the Burmans living on the other side of that range of hills. The Buddhists were unable to forget that they once had an independent kingdom which was conquered by the Burmans in 1784. In the 1950s, Arakanese members of Parliament attempted to finance a separate Arakan "state" within the Union but to no avail. In 1964, two years after the military coup,

a group of Arakan nationalists formed an underground group called the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) with a military arm, the Arakan Liberation Army (ALA). In 1974, the military regime granted Arakan the title of "state." Only a formality, the "state" had no influence on the expanding rebel movement. In 1976, the army routed the rebel movement but insurgent remnants continued to stage occasional operations. Other rebellious groups persisted in Arakan, primary among them were the Communists. See Bertil Lintner, "A Legacy of Rebellion, *FEER,* vol. 124, no. 17 (April 16,1984): 34-36.

2. J. P. Anand, "Burma-Bangladesh Refugee Problem," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 2, no. 4 (July 1978): 129.

3. P. B. Sinha, "Ziaur Rahman Visits Burma," *Strategic Analysis,* vol. 1, no. 5 (August 1977): 9-11; Uma Shankar Singh, "Burma's Foreign Policy in the *70s," *India Quarterly*; vol. 34, no. 3 (July-September 1978): 359; Anand, op cit., 129; Moshe Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group* (Wiesbaden: University of Heidelberg, Otto Harasowitz, 1972), 128; Jan Becka, *Historical Dictionary of Myanmar* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1995), 170.

4. Daud Majlis, "Disturbance on the Border of Peace. The Exodus Reversed," *FEER,* vol. 100, no. 20 (May 19, 1978): 37; M. C. Tun, "Burma: Census Raises the Temperature," *FEER.* vol. 100, no. 21 (May 26 1978): 30; J. P. Anand, "Bangladesh: Refugees from Burma," *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 13, no. 27 (July 8,1978): 1100; Yegar, "The Muslims of Burma," 128-129. Figures are based on "Burma-Bangladesh," *Keesing's Contemporary Archives,* vol. 24 (October 6, 1978): 29238; Tonia K. Devon, "Burma's Muslim Minority: Out of the Shadows?" *Southeast Asia Chronicle,* no. 75 (October 1980): 27-28.

A curious note: the government of Bangladesh encouraged Muslim settlement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which was close to its border with both India and Burma, displacing the local population of Buddhist tribespeople and other non-Muslims. During the 1970s, the Bangladesh army engaged in cruel and repressive measures in the area, and large units of army and police were garrisoned in the region. At the end of 1977, disturbances broke out between the army and the tribespeople who demanded regional autonomy such as they had under the British. Their guerilla movement was called Shanti Bahini. In "Bangladesh: Revolt in Chittagong Hill Tracts," *Economic and Political Weekly,* vol. 13, no. 17 (April 29, 1978): 723,726-727.

5. Majlis, "Disturbance on the Border of Peace," 36; Susan Drake and Barry Came, "Refugees: The Forced March" *Newsweek* (June 19, 1978): 24; Richard Nations, "Refugees: Arab Eyes on Burma's Border," *FEER,* vol. 100, no. 26 (June 30, 1978): 12-13; Anand, "Burma-Bangladesh Refugee Problem," 127-128; *Asia Yearbook 1979,* 128; M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today* (London: Mansell, 1986): 142—144.

6. Majlis, op cit., 36; William Mattern, "Refugees: Burma's Brand of Apartheid," *FEER,* vol. 101, no. 28 (July 14,1978): 30-31.

7. Majlis, op cit., 36-37; idem, "Refugees: Repatriation for the Rohingyas," *FEER,* vol. 101,No. 29 (July 21, 1978): 20; Drake and Came, op cit., 24; Nations, op cit., 12-13; Anand, "Burma-Bangladesh Refugee Problem," 127-131; idem, "Bangladesh: Refugees from Burma," 1100-1101; Mattern, op cit., 32; Singh, op cit., 359; *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 29238-29239; William Scully and Frank N. Trager, "Burma 1978: The Thirtieth Year of Independence,"Asian *Survey,* vol. 19, no. 2 (February 1979): 152-153. For the April J 5, 1978, text of the World Muslim League's press release, see *History of Arakan (Burma),* 57.

8. Daud Majlis, "Refugees: Repatriation for the Rohingyas " *FEER*, vol. 101, no. 29 (July 21,1978): 20; idem, "Burma and Bangladesh," *The Economist*, vol. 268, no. 7041 (August 12, 1978): 55. Maurice Lafite, "Burma: Still in Fear of the Dragon," *FEER*, vol. 102, no. 44 (November 3, 1978): 32; James P. Sterba, "At a Camp for Burmese Refugees, Death Is Routine " *The New York Tunes* (March 2, 1979): A2; Sterba, "Return of the Rohingya," *Asiaweek* (March 23,1979): 18; S. Kamaluddin, "Dialogue across the Fence," *FEER,* vol. 104, no. 23 (June 8,1979): 32; William Scully and Frank N. Trager, "Burma 1979: Reversing the Trend," *Asian Survey,* vol. 20, no. 2 (February 1980): 171; *Asia Year Book 1980*, 114; Robert Shaplen, *A Turning Wheel: Three Decades of the Asian Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1979), 134-135; Ahmad Shafijul Huque, "Stranded Pakistanis and Burmese Muslims in Bangladesh: Historical and Contemporary Dimensions," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 2 (July 1990): 286-287; Lintner, "In the Dragon's Wake," 33; Bernard Imhasly, "The Flight of the Rohingya," *Swiss Review of World Affairs*, vol. 42, no.3 (June 1992): 21-22. In the *History of Arakan (Burma),* 37-103, see photocopies of Indian, Bangladesh and Afghanistan newspapers that deal with the suffering of Rohingya refugees since World War II and in the years 1955, 1959, 1975, and 1978.

9. Nations, "Refugees: Arab Eyes on Burma's Border," 12-13; Anand, "Burma-Bangladesh Refugee Problem," 130; idem, "Bangladesh: Refugees from Burma," 1100; Mattern, op cit, 32; R. H. Taylor, "Myanmar," *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modem Islamic World*. vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 215; Devon, "Burma's Muslim Minority," 28.

10. Ibid.

11. "Burma: Rebel Groups Aim for a United Front," *FEER* (May 21, 1976): 14.

12. In 1983, Arakan's name was changed to Rakhine. Earlier, in January 1974, it had been granted the status of a state within the Union of Burma. David Steinberg, "Constitutional and Political Insurrections in Burma," 64; Becka, *Historical Dictionary,* 170.

13. Bertil Lintner, "Muslims in the Mountains," *FEER* (Feb. 9,1984): 23; "Burma: Rebel Groups Aim for a United Front," 14; Smith, op cit, 400; U Min Thu, "Islam and Muslims in Burma," 4-5; Steinberg, op cit, 68; R. J. May, "Ethnic Separatism in Southeast Asia," *Pacific Viewpoint,* vol. 31, no. 2 (October 1990): 28-59.

14. M. C. Tun, "Letter from Rangoon," *FEER*, vol. 103, no. 7 (February 16, 1979): 70; Becka, op cit, 44.

15. *Amnesty International Report* 1982, 190; 1985,203-204; 1986,214; 1987, 152-153.

16. Sricharatchanya Paisal, "Burma: Some Are More Equal," *FEER*, vol. 118, no. 4 (October 8, 1982): 27;Husain Haqqani,"The Roots of Rebellion," *FEER*, vol. 118, no. 45 (November 5,1982): 26; David Steinberg, "Burma in 1982: Incomplete Transitions," *Asian Survey*, vol. 23, no. 2 (February 1983): 170; idem, "Constitutional and Political Basis " 44, 51, 78; Shamsuddin Ahmed, "The Dilemma of the Arkanese Muslims," *The Muslim World League [MWL] Journal [Makkah] (Shawwal]* 1403) (July-August 1983): 59-61. The article includes an accusation that the Rohingya leadership did not rebel in order to change its fate. The writer disregards the *mujahideen* rebellion. Lintner, "Muslims in the Mountains," 23; idem, "More Equal Than Others,"36; Huque, "Stranded Pakistanis,"285; Becka, op cit, 18, l49;Christie, op cit, 170-171; idem, "Myanmar (Burma) " *The Far East and Australasia 1996*, 632.

17. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1988*, 740, 746; Becka, op cit., 18-19; Huque, op. cit, 287.

18. Burma's name was changed to Myanmar on May 27, 1989. Most other place names,

such as districts, cities, rivers, etc., were also changed; e.g., Arakan became Rakhine, Rangoon became Yangoon, etc. See Becka, op cit, 19,2, 170,260.

19. *Indian Express* (April 26, 1991); "Burma; The Flight of the Rohingyas,'" *Asiaweek* (August 23,1991): 29; Imhasly, "Flight of the Rohingya," 20; *Asian Recorder* (July 22-28, 1992): 22458; Soutik Biswas, "Purge of the Muslims: Myanmar Refugees," *India Today*, vol. 17, no. 17 (September 15, 1992): 15-16; U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992*, 528; David Steinberg, "Myanmar in 1992: Plus Ca Change?' *Asian Survey* (February 1993): 182; Syed Aziz al Ahsan, "Burma's Iron Hand toward Ethnic Minorities: The Rohingya Plight" *Asian Profile*, vol. 21, no. 4 (August 1993): 312; *Amnesty International Report 1993*, 217; ibid., *1994*, 217, *219; Asia Yearbook 1993*,92; "Myanmar (Burma)," *The Far East and Australasia 1996,* 638.

20. *Asian Recorder*, vol. 38, no. 25 (June 17-23, 1992): 22379-22380; Biswas, op cit, 15-18; U.S. Department of State (February 1993): 528; John Bray, "Ethnic Minorities and the Future of Burma," *The World Today,* vol. 48, no. 8-9 (August-September 1992): 144, 147; *Asia Yearbook 1993*, 92; Becka, op cit, 20, 44.

21. *Asian Recorder*, vol. 38, no. 30 (July 22-28, 1992): 22458; ibid., no. 36, (September 2-8,1992): 22554-22555; U.S. Department of State (February 1993), 528; ibid., (February 1994), 593, 595; *Asia Yearbook 1993*, 93; ibid., 1994, 99; *Amnesty International Report 1994*, 219; Biswas, op. cit., 17-19; Syed Aziz al Ahsan, op. cit., 315-316; Steinberg, "Myanmar in 1992" 182.

22. Donald Wilson and David Henley, "Bearing the Crescent," *The Nation* (September 15, 1995): A8; Bruce Matthews, "Religious Minorities in Myanmar: Hints of the Shadow/' *Contemporary South Asia,* vol. 4, no. 3 (November 1995): *299; Asia Yearbook 1995,* 216; S. Jayasankaran, "Diplomacy: Seeing Red," *FEER*, vol. 159, no. 35 (August 29, 1996): 18; Fred R. von der Mehden, Two *Worlds of Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 54.

23. *Asia Yearbook 1995*, 96; *Amnesty International Report 1995*, 221; ibid., 1996, 233; "Myanmar (Burma)," *The Far East and Australasia 1996,* 638; "Burma: The Flight of the Rohingyas," op cit., 29.

24. Imhasly, op cit., 22; *Asian Recorder* (September 2-8, 1992): 22554-22556; Biswas, op cit, 20-21; Syed Aziz al Ahsan, op cit., 316; Becka, op cit, 44-45.

25. Bertil Lintner, "Burma: Ethnic Scapegoat," *FEER*, vol. 160, no. 15 (April 10, 1997): 18.