THE ROHINGYAS OF ARAKAN

Their quest for justice



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By

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Due to insecurity in Burma a few of the names are nicknamed in Chapter 23 and Chapter 24

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Foreword

This comprehensive and fascinating work of historical literature by A.F.K Jilani tells the story of one of Asia's most extraordinary and little-known ethnic groups, the Rohingyas. The people called "Rohingya" established themselves in Arakan, western Burma, centuries ago. Their true epic history is reminiscent of the tales of Scheherazade and Sinbad the Sailor. The triumphs and tragedies of their poetic early times are stirringly recounted in this book by Mr. Jilani, who is well versed in the archaeology and court chronicles of Burma, Bengal and the Mughal Empire.

From those adventurous beginnings, often called "glorious", the fall of the Rohingyas into a dark well of persecution is then detailed by the author. While the historic victimisation of the Rohingyas at the hands of Burma's brutal military regime is well-known due to periodic refugee crises, Mr. Jilani gives us the history of their resistance as much as their oppression. The struggles of the Rohingya intellectual elite, and ordinary farmers and fishing-folk, against the military campaigns of obliteration, are well portrayed in these pages.

Mr. Jilani draws on an astounding array of sources for his history of the Rohingya people, and this makes his work especially valuable for scholars of the region. At the same time, this is the product of individual opinion, and Mr. Jilani, a frequent contributor to the lively editorial pages of Dhaka's press, gives the reader a representative sample of Rohingya thinking on current and historical topics. Some of these opinions, and even terminology, may be controversial. But it must be remembered

that in the free society to which we all aspire, such views are to be considered, examined, and debated without fear. One hopes that the other ethnic groups of Arakan, and Burma, will in the future produce such books of reference as this one about the Rohingyas.

Although this function as a specialised work of research, digest and commentary, it is also useful as a fine example of the struggle for identity and survival of a highly endangered people. Mr. Jilani refers to the Orwellian nature of Burma, and indeed one of the dire efforts of the regime involves removing the Rohingyas from their history, geography -- and therefore identity. For that reason, this book is a valuable defiance of the evil will of Burma dictatorship. I hope that one day it will help spur a Rohingya renaissance of thought and culture (which will be to the benefit of multi-ethnic Burma), as it will grace the stacks of new free libraries in Arakan. May this book be an inspiration to all who read it.

Edith T.Mirante

Director
Project Maje
USA



In the name of Allah the Compossionate the Merciful !

PREFACE

We subscribe to the quest of justice, truth and virtue. We long for knowledge, peace and security. Enduring peace and security must be built not upon religious, cultural, racial, economic or political grounds but on mutual awareness and concern, for understanding brings respect, and respect prepares for affection. Affection takes us to justice, true and virtuous.

The dignity of man is very important for the establishment of a society enjoying justice, peace and security. There can be no dignity in poverty, sickness, deprivation, illiteracy and ignorance.

Dante Alighier, in the twelve century, envisaged the establishments of the "Universal community of the human race." Dante formulated his philosophy from the ruminations of Averroes (Ibn Rushd) on doctrine of the universal intellects. Dante's' idea of the "Universal community of the human race" was infect realised for centuries in Spain under Moorish rule. This period witnessed peaceful coexistence between the Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The false idea of racial superiority has been responsible for subjugation, oppression and exploitation of man by man has ever let in hatred among human race only to result in disaster. It has been visible in various ways and different forms

in Burma. Their ruthless hearts would not pay any heed to the fatality with which it makes human life a hell. Conscience seems to have deserted them.

Aristotle set forth three rules for "successful" tyrants; "break the spirit of their subjects," "breed mutual distrust", and "make their subjects incapable of action." Consent is to become obedience.

George Orwell's book "1984" is similar to the military junta of Burma. Thought control, Brainwash, News-peak, the Ministry of truth, the Ministry of love, all of them exist today in Burma with the SPDC for the same reason to deny life. Orwell's Animal Farm" is also similar to the Military dictatorship of Burma.

The junta is deliberately distorting the history of Rohingya and Arakan in order to make it appear that there were no Muslim Rohingya in Arakan despite their more than millennia old history. They use all weapons-racial, religious, political, economic and propaganda to mislead and divide the two sister communities of Arakan. It is time that the two sister communities should be able to realise how the enemy is using them one against another, amend their wrong attitude and join hands for the restoration of their glorious past. The appreciation of the realities of Arakan must be by all people of Arakan for a peaceful and prosperous Arakan.

Arakan State of present Burma is separated from Bangladesh by the Naf River, which can be crossed in half an-hour by sampans and country-boats. The frontiers of both the countries in the North are contiguous. Burma is a Buddhist majority country and Bangladesh a Muslim state in terms of population the latter is the second largest Muslim State in the world. Both are inhabited by a considerable number of adherents

of the other religion more or less concentrated along the borders. By language and literature, by habit and custom, by costume and appearance by culture and religion, the Muslims and Buddhists across their respective borders are complementary to each other of their own category with indissoluble affinities.

The close proximity and congenial next-door neighbourhood transcend geographical limitations and from time immemorial there had been influx of people from both sides at different periods of History. At times, the Arakanese had even penetrated up to Dhaka and their colourful canoes plied on the placid water of Buriganga. The "Magh Bazar" in Dhaka city is reminiscent of the presence of Maghs in bygone days.

Many distinguished Muslims from Bengal, except for the tragic, misadventure of Shah Shuja, adorned the court of Arakanese kings, captured the imagination of the indigenous people by their rectitude in life, liberality of outlook, diffusion of love and comradeship and above all, by the simplicity and purity of their religion.

A close cultural contact between Arakan and Bengal was first made early in the fifteenth century when Narameikhla, the king of Arakan, dispossessed by the king of Burma, came to Bengal and took refuge in the court of Gour (1404). After a sojourn of many years he was helped by Jalal Uddin, the Bengal Sultan, to regain his throne in (1430). Since then Bengali culture was enduring in the court of Arakan.

The influence of Bengali attained further development when Chittagong was annexed to the Arakanese Empire. Politically Chittagong was subjugated by Arakan, but culturally it was Arakan which was greatly influenced by a strong culture and powerful language. A number of competent Bengalees were appointed to high government post. People of all ranks enjoyed the literary beauty of Bengali works. The Arakanese kings of the seventeenth century were enthusiastic patrons of Bengali

language. One of the most glorious periods of Bengali literature was seventeenth century, based in Arakan. In the view of Satyendra Nath Ghoshal it was a golden age of the Bengali literature. The Arakanese king adopted Bengali names such as Thiri Thu Dhama, Sanda Thu Damma, in addition to their Muslim names. The Bengali immigrants in Arakan were almost all Muslims and the officials, ministers, Prime Ministers and Judges (Qazis) were mostly Muslims.

"The Rohingya of Arakan and their quest for justice" is originally intended to write with a view to give light on the history of Rohingya and other indigenous races of the Union of Burma not only because of the distorted facts and machination made by some writers, who were instrumental during the reign of military rulers but also because no adequate research has been made on the back ground of this particular race. Once a distortion or hypothesis is accepted without sufficient ground or due to lack of strong argument from any side, it later becomes a history. It is, for this reason felt that such a book on Rohingya is needed for the historians, researchers and interested quarters. It is hoped that the book would help uncover the truth and dispel misunderstanding that earlier took in those interested to know on Rohingya and Arakan.

What has been happening in the Union of Burma under the military rule is beyond one's belief. Denying rights of ethnic minorities is well practised. And above all, the junta has been obliterating the history of once glorious people. Historical establishments, antiques, monument sites, etc. were destroyed. The ethnicity of Rohingya in Arakan has been questioned. The general populace in Burma has been led to believe that the Rohingyas, who resembles the Bengalees are aliens while the people have still the memory of how the Rohingya was treated as an indigenous race, their language broadcast in the BSS and their culture promoted during of the democratic rule in Burma.

In ancient Burma, Mon-Khamar, Tibeto-Burma, Thai-Chinese came from the north-east and settled down there. With the passage of time many more new races emerged out of those mixed blood. Similarly, in Arakan Rakhine and Rohingyas have been born with the arrival of the Aryan people from the north-west and their inter-marriage with the locals through the evolution of history.

It is the right of a distinct group to live in their own place, uphold their culture and practice religion of their own freely. Depending on the extent of civilisation and environment and in course of time, many changes take place within and around. And it is no exception in Burma. The ethnic Ta Line has become Mon, Taung Thus is now Pa-oh, Karenni is known as Kaya, Shan Taroke as Kokan, etc. It is, thus, not unfair to call the Muslims of Arakan as Rohingyas as they like to be called so. Infact, Rohingya is not a new name nor it is invented or adopted, as some Burmese ultra-nationalists do prefer to brand. 'Rohingya' is a historical name based on replete historical back grounds. While changes of names of cities from Akyab to Sittwe, Rangoon to Yangon, Arakan to Rakhine, Burma to Myanmar, etc. have recently been made, the centuries old name of ethnic Rohingya has however, been branded as a name created by anti-state elements in post-independent Burma. It simply gives a grim picture on the status of the Rohingya race. Thus, it is the historical duty of Rohingya to face the challenge to restore their lost glory and civilisation.

Many plans have been drawn and implemented by the successive military regimes of Burma, to conceal the reality but history has proved that reality always resurfaces and injustice has never got its hold. Their ill designs against the Rohingyas are never accepted by the soil of Arakan and the world's eye could catch what are what and who is who.

In the light of what has been stated, it is my humble desire to let the world know about the Rohingyas and Arakan, their

home-place with whatever limited capacity I have, out of which "The Indigenous Rohingya of Arakan and their quest for justice" has got compiled for presentation to those misunderstood and for those willing to store more knowledge on this particular subject.

Acknowledgement

Although my name appears on the cover of this book, it should be regarded as a collective product, compiled by me, but based on the works of numerous writers on Arakan, Burma, Bengal, Rohingya, Rohingya refugees and so on. My work would not have been progressed, had not Haji M.A. Kalam given me continuous encouragement, most precious advice, invaluable helps, facts and figure on Rohingya's struggle, particularly the RPF (Rohingya Patriotic Front) era and activities of the AHS (Arakan Historical Society). My sincere thanks also go to Shuna Ali, Ashraf Alam, Aman Ullah, Salim Ullah and Mr. Taher who provided me some important materials for this work.

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A.F.K. Jilani

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Introduction

It is a fact that geography plays a great part in shaping the political life of a country and moulding the socio-cultural pattern of its people. The physical features and natural peculiarities indeed reflect the life and culture of the land. Hence, it is felt absolutely necessary to describe the geography.

History is the mirror of life. It reflects human life and evaluates its works through ages. It is through this mirror that others would know and understand of nation and its people who can as well know themselves through this mirror. The past always guides the people to better future if care is taken. We the Muslims of Arakan have a more than 1300 years old history of our own.

In historical perspective Arakan is more a frontier province of Eastern India than a province of Burma. From the very early days till the arrival of the Mongolians and Tibeto-Burmans in the Tenth Century, Arakan was an Indian land with a population similar to Bengal belonging to Aryan stock. The spread of Islam in Arakan during those early times and the impact of Islamic civilisation on Arakan particularly after Bengal became Muslim in 1203 A.D is well known.

According to history, Islam reached Arakan before 788 AD and it attracted the local people to come to the fold of Islam en masse. Since then Islam played an important role towards the advancement of civilisation in Arakan. From 1430 to 1638, for more than two hundred years Arakan was ruled by the Muslims. The system of government was Muslim Sultanates as was

common in those days. It was an independent Muslim kingdom in 14th and 15th centuries. According to Dr. Than Tun Professor of history, there were Rohingya kings from the majestic Mayu valley who used to visit kings of Ava, which was written in the inscription (Kyaukza) of 1442.

For almost a century from 1582 to 1666 Chittagong remained under the effective rule of Arakan. From 1665 to 1710, Muslims were Prime Ministers, War ministers, Judicial ministers, judges, generals and high-ranking army officers, and poets who were Muslims in the court of Arakan. Coins and medallions bearing "Kalima"(the profession of faith in Islam) in Persian script were in circulation. Persian was the court language of Arakan.

The Rohingya lived separately with their own territorial boundary maintaining their national identity since the early time of civilisation. History has already testified to it.

Despite systematic extermination of Rohingya population by means of genocidal actions and continuous persecution, Rohingyas still predominant in North Arakan. Moreover, other parts of Arakan were also their homeland before the pogrom of 1942.

The position of the Muslims of Arakan was glorious during the time of the Mrauk-U Empire but it slowly declines following Burmese occupation (1785-1825). During the British rule too they had been discriminated again and politically blindfolded by the British so much so that none of the Muslims could hold a high position in the administration of the government. As they were the conqueror of Muslim Mughal Empire, the British politically confined the Muslims of the sub-continent and of Arakan to illiteracy, and sub-human standard.

The exodus of Muslims from Arakan to Bengal is not new. It is indeed the legacy of history for Bengal to bear the burden of refugees from Arakan. In 1404 AC the King of Arakan,

Narameikhla (1401-1434) fled to Bengal. According to Sayadaw U Nyana, the author of "Danyawadi Razawin Theit," Narameikhla was adopted son of the Sultan of Bengal. The Sultan restored Narameikhla to the throne of Arakan in 1430, with the tittle of Sulayman Shah. There are some writers who claim that Narameikhla converted to Islam. According to the inscription of 1442, some Muslim kings of Arakan used to visit Ava. Narameikhla also visited the king of Ava.

In 1660 AC Mughal Prince Shah Shuja fled to Arakan. Shah Shuja and his followers and every one wearing Moorish beard were killed by the King of Arakan on 7th February 1661. In 1665 the Mughal Force conquered Sandwip, Chittagong and Ramu and Maghs of the area fled to Mrauk-U. Thus North Arakan became Muslim area since 1666.

In 1875 when Burmese King Bodaw made an invasion in Arakan many people left for Bengal. Following British occupation of Arakan in 1825, some of the people who earlier migrated to Bengal since 40 years ago started to return to their former home land - Arakan. Many, however, chose to remain in Chittagong District. They are today known as Rohai (Rohang).

In 1942 the Maghs launched a pogrom against the innocent, poor and unarmed Rohingyas throughout Arakan. As many as 100,000 Muslims were killed and some eighty thousand fled to Bengal. During this carnage, some 307 Rohingya villages were completely razed to the ground by the militant Rakhine Maghs.

From 1942 to 1945 the whole of North Arakan was under the administration of a "Peace Committee", under the leaderships of Mr. Umrah Meah and Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed. This was an important period for the Muslims of North Arakan. The children of able people were sent to Aligrah, Calcutta, Dhaka for better education. The British colonial rulers became a tittle flexible over the posting of Muslim in the government posts. As a result some Muslims were accommodated in A.T.O.,

T.O., S.D.O., Police Inspectors, High School and Middle School Headmasters.

Soon after the independence of Burma on 4th January 1948, the Burma Territorial Force (BTF) went on a rampage against Muslim villages. Thousands of Rohingyas were made homeless and nearly 50,000 were forced to leave and take shelter in the then East Pakistan. Rumors of the Muslims of Arakan's border were indirectly intimidated that they would be relocated to central Burma. There were also threats from multi coloured Magh insurgent groups, especially the Magh Communist Party.

Mujahids, a group of Muslims who took up arms claimed that they had taken up arms only when all their protests and appeals had gone unheeded. They said the Rohingyas settled in Arakan since the 7th Century and yet they are branded as aliens in their own homeland. Muslims, who were appointed by the British in the administration as officers after the transfer of power from the Peace Committee under the notification No-11-OA-C/C/42, were dismissed by the Burmese government.

On 1 May 1961 the government created the Mayu Frontier administration Area covering Maungdaw, Buthidaung and the western parts of Rathidaung townships. It was the only administration, which gave due consideration to Rohingyas status during the post independent Burma. Rohingya found relief during the Frontier Administration. Many Mujahids laid down arms before the government. The Mayu Frontier administration had been in force till it was handed to the ministry of Home in February 1964.

In 1978, the Naga Min Operation was carried out by Ne Win's BSPP government driving out 300,000 Rohingyas across the border to Bangladesh. Under an agreement without condition to restore the rights of Rohingya, the Bangladesh government repatriated some 200,000 refugees to Arakan.

According to UNHCR estimate, 40,000 died in Bangladesh camps. The rest diffused into Bangladesh society.

The SLORC, which came into power after suppressing Burma's 1988 democratic uprising, reactivated Rohingya extermination and as a result 300,000 Rohingyas, had to flee again to Bangladesh in 1991/92. However, repatriation of these people began since 22-September 1992. Meanwhile, unabated infiltration of Rohingyas from Arakan to Bangladesh continued alongside the repatriation and pushback, making the whole syndrome looks like the burden of Sisyphus.

History repeats itself. So let us wait and see when the history of Narameikhla the King of Arakan who was restored to the throne of Arakan by the Sultan of Bengal repeats again.

Chapter-1

A brief Account of the Regional

Geography of Arakan

(Physical Features)

Arakan is blessed with geographical diversities. These are sky-scraping mountains in the far north, lush green forest in the east with many kinds of flora and fauna, giant rivers, large natural water falls, a long coast line with unspoilt beaches and archipelagos and the majestic Bay of Bengal in the west. It is bounded in the Northwest by Bangladesh with 171 miles maritime and land boundary and in the north by Chin Hills and India.

The lofty Arakan Yoma range completely separates Arakan from mainland Burma in the east forming it a natural physiographic unit. It comprises a strip of land along the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal from the Naf river on the border of Bangladesh to the cape Negris between the Arakan Yoma range and the Bay of Bengal.

Arakan is situated between North latitude 17 degrees 15 minutes and 21 degrees 27 minutes and East longitude 92 degrees 15 minutes and 94 degrees 55 minutes. The total area of Arakan during the British period was about 20,000 sq. miles (including Arakan Hill District 5235 sq. miles now incorporated into Chin State and southern most part from Kyauk Chaung river to cape

Negaris which were partitioned from Arakan mainland without the native people's consent). Now the present area of Arakan is only 14200 sq. miles. It is wider in the Muslim north, which is about 100 miles in breadth and tapers down gradually to the south where it is at least 20 miles wide.

Population

Arakan is a land of mountains, thick tropical forests, rivers and creeks. Its 70 percent of the total surface area is covered with forests. The northern part of the country has wide plain delta and is thickly populated whereas the southern portion is narrow, rocky and sparsely populated.

The population of Arakan is now estimated at about 5 millions. The major ethnic communities are Rohingya and Rakhine. There are some tribal people like, Chin, Mru, Khami, Sak, Chakma and their number are very few- about 2 lakhs. Despite the fact that about 1.5 million Rohingya have been expelled from Arakan since 1942, the numerical strength of the two major ethnic communities of Rohingya and Magh Rakhine now stands at almost in equal proportion inside Arakan.

Since 1942 bulk of the Rohingyas fled their land to various countries of the world, to escape persecution and they were not counted at home due to gross racial discrimination. The composition of the population itself reflects the gradual development of the history of the land.

Rivers

In all there are seven rivers the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan, Lemro, Ann, Taungup and Sandoway. All four major navigable rivers - the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro are situated in the North.

The Naf: The Naf is the boundary line between Burma (Arakan) and Bangladesh. Maungdaw Township is situated on the eastern

bank of the Naf River whereas Teknaf is on the West Bank of the Naf in Bangladesh side. The length of this river is 50 miles only. The mouth of the river is about one and half a mile wide. Zinzira or St Martin Island is at the mouth of the Naf River. Though Zinzira is now in Bangladesh side most of the inhabitants are Rohingyas mostly from Habi para of Maungdaw. St. Martin Island is famous as a tourist spot and it produces onion.

The Purma, Myothit, Sabebinyin, Ushingya, Minglagyi, Pyinpyu, Kayin, Tat (Maungdaw), Magyi, Gawdusara, Tun and Ngakungdo Chaungs are the streams which flow from the Mayu hills through the Maungdaw township into the Naf river and the Naf river flows to the majestic Bay of Bengal.

The Mayu River:

The importance of the river Mayu cannot be ignored for several reasons, the principal one of which is that it rises from the northern hilly area and gently flows meandering through the heart of the alluvial area between the eastern bank of the Naf and the western estuary of the longest Kaladan river, admittedly and traditionally known as "The Muslim Majority Area in Arakan". The length of the river is over a hundred miles. It flows through Buthidaung and Rathedaung and joins the Kaladan river's mouth before flowing to the Bay of Bengal. The upper portion of the Mayu, known as the Kalapanzin river, is joined by numerous streams rising in the hills to the east, down the Nagasanbow, Rathedaung and Ngan-a-bya Chaung, also on the east, joins the Mayu. The Khandaung river empties itself into the estuary of the Mayu, a few miles from the sea. The Mozi river is called the Tawbya river in its upper reaches, it flows between hills and is navigable for a considerable distance by launches. The Kyaung, Kamaingdaung and Gweduck Chaungs are the only tributaries of importance on the west of the Mayu.

The Kaladan:

The lower reaches of the Lemro and the Kaladan after they emerge into the low level plain are connected up by numerous tidal streams. The Kaladan, the largest and most important river in Arakan, rises in the Chin Hills in the Yahow country and is known there as the Boinu. Its course at first is southwards, then northwards, bending westwards, it passes through a portion of Lushai hills and then turning south again, enters Northern Arakan at its northern end, and flows down the western side of Arakan, past Paletwa, which lies on its western bank. Further south it enters Akyab district, and continuing in a southerly direction, empties itself after a course of 404 miles in the Bay of Bengal at Akyab, where its estuary is 6 miles in breadth. It is a picturesque river, navigable for steam traffic as high as Paletwa, nearly 150 miles from the sea. Like the Kaladan the rest of the rivers flow into the Bay with some variations. These rivers serve as the main source of transportation. Particularly the mouths of the Kaladan and the Lemro are quite wide and deep where scores of ocean going vessels of various kinds could be seen all the year round, manned with Muslim sailors. Akyab town was established once by the Muslim seafaring and maritime people. It was once a resting-place of the Muslim army of Arakan.

The Lemro river:

The Lemro receives the drainage of the western slopes of the Arakan Yomas, passes along the eastern side of the Hill District of Arakan and Akyab district and flows into the Bay of Bengal about 10 miles north of Akyab. The length of the river is (144) miles. The estuary of this river is connected with that of the Kaladan by tidal creeks.

On both banks of the historical river Lemro there flourished some ancient cities like Wesali, Laungyret, Parim and Mruak-U (Mrohaung/ Patharikillah).

The interior riverine ports: Kyauktaw, Myebon, Minbya, Pauktaw, Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Ponnagyun. These all are situated in North Arakan. Ann, Taungup, Gwa and Sandoway are all in south Arakan.

HILLS

The northern portion of the district, bordering on the hill district of Arakan and Chittagong is hilly. Along the east runs the Arakan Yomas, the eastern border being cut up by the spurs of this range. To the south of Akyab district are the Barongas, three detached ranges of low hills running Southwest into the sea. In the west, between the Naf and Mayu rivers and terminating near the mouth of the latter, is the steep Mayu range, the southern portion of which lies parallel with and not far from the coast. Between the Kaladan and Mayu rivers two similar ridges run parallel to each other to within 20 miles of Akyab on the coast, throwing out spurs into the Mayu valley and Ponnagyun township but with steep sides on the Kaladan side.

The Mayu Range:

The Mayu range rests between the Naf and Mayu rivers. The highest peak of the range is (2174) feet. Since it is connected with the Himalayan Mountains, various kinds of wild animals are found in this range. The legendary Hanifa Tonki and Khayafuri Tonki are at the top of this Mayu range.

Mingyi Taung:

The Mingyi Taung Mountain is situated in Maungdaw Township between the Naf and Mayu rivers. It is 3055 ft. high.

Saindaung Mountain :

Saindaung Taung which lies between Saindaung Chaung and the Mayu river is famous for its beautiful natural Saindaung water-fall at the height of 220 ft. The highest portion of the range is

2400 ft. It is situated at about 15 miles Southeast of Buthidaung. According to the survey carried out by the UN experts, a large amount of electricity could be generated, if a Hydroelectric Plant is set up and exported to Bangladesh after meeting entire consumption of Arakan and lower Burma.

Aurama Taung:

The Aurama Taung is a part of the Mayu range. The Yu Chaung which originated from this mountain has a small size water fall by the name of Tanton at this mountain. The construction of a small size hydroelectric plant is under consideration.

Bayngara Taung:

The Bayngara Taung is the highest part of the Aurama Taung. It is a beautiful peak and is situated at Ponnagyon Township.

Mrangmatin:

Mrangmatin is a part of Rakhine Roma situated at Ann Township. The height is 4848 ft and is the highest peak in Arakan.

Moehti Taung:

Moehti Taung is located at Arakan Roma's Taungup pass. It is 3838 ft high and is between Arakan State and Pegu division.

Sea-beaches

From Maungdaw to south of Gwa Chaung up to Irrawady division Thabang border - Kyaukchun Chaung the coastline of Arakan is 360 miles long with beautiful sea-beaches. As the region is very hilly beyond the alluvium the beaches of Arakan are rocky. They are composed of shale and sand stones intersected by bands of limestone.

The important seaports of Arakan are Akyab, Kyauk Pyu and Sandoway. Sandoway is famous for Ngapali-sea beach - the

tourist resort. There are many offshore islands of which the Rambree and Cheduba are the largest. There is a deep natural harbour at Kyauk Pyu.

Climate

The average maximum temperature of Arakan for the whole year is 86(F) degrees and the average minimum 74 to 78 (F) degrees. The difference is thus, insignificant. There is no extreme heat or cold. The summer season from March to May is quite bearable due to the cool sea breeze that springs up during the early afternoon. The average rainfall is 200 inches. It is not wearisome, however, during the rainy season, June to October, as there are occasional breaks of a few days and even during rainy spells a few hours of sunshine, almost daily, breaking the monotony of the gloom. The winter starting from November to February is not so extreme and is pleasant. The prevailing wind during December to May is north-easterly. During monsoon, June to November, the breeze settles in the Southwest.

The Bay of Bengal breeds cyclone storms and Arakan is frequently visited by this unwanted guest, bringing in some of great violence, which cause damages to life and property. The cyclone of November 13th, 1867 was the severest. It was accompanied by a tidal wave, destroying everything. On May 17, 1884 a cyclone of similar magnitude caused great destruction. Severe storms lashed over Arakan in April 1895, in November 1908, in May 1915, in 1926, in 1967, the sixth one in 30 April 1991 and the seventh in 1994.

Flora

Arakan is a land of mountains, thick tropical forests, rivers and creeks. Its 70 percent area is covered with forest. The most prominent feature of the vegetation is a 'single-stemmed' bamboo. This bamboo covers the greater part of the hill masses of Arakan, part of Assam, and has even spread over the watershed into the Irrawaddy valley. The forest of Arakan can

be divided into three categories. The evergreen forest, the monsoon forest and the tidal forest. Of these the monsoon forest is of great importance.

Teak: The best variety of teak is found in this monsoon forest. Arakan is famous for its naturally grown world's best teak. If teak is grown scientifically, then large qualities can be exported. Experimental plantation of teak is carried out in the forest of Maungdaw, Minbya, Taungup and Sandoway but lacked modern know-how of plantation. The area of the teak plantation in Maungdaw is 76800 acres only. With the aid of modern expertise, teak can be grown for major export to world market.

Pyinkado: A hard timber known as iron wood, is very useful for making pillars of house, railway sleepers, or any other work exposed to rough weather. It is in a fair supply in North Arakan. It is in great demand and most of the local demand is met from Kyauk Pyu, Sandoway, Ann and Taungup.

Kamaung: A tough timber, which lasts fairly well in exposed situation. It can not be seriously attacked by white ants. Used for building of a better class and for boat ribs. It is one of the most important valuable timbers of North Arakan.

Kanyin: Excellent planking timber, but it needs seasoning for better lasting. There is a local impression that timbers in the open season and swan green can be effectively treated by a few days immersion in salt water. It is a large supply in North Arakan but the only demand is from Bangladesh, where extraction is largely confined to the forest of the Naf. In olden days oil from this tree was used for lightening lamps.

Bamboo: Bamboo and cane are plentiful in the forest of Arakan. According to experts, Arakanese bamboo has the quality of producing fine paper and packing materials for the world markets. A paper mill at Saindaung waterfall could have produced large quantity of papers and its by- products could be exported to neighbouring states.

Arakan is also ideal for rubber, tea and palm oil plantation. There were tea plantations in Fakirabazar (Kamaun-seik) of Maungdaw Township and Sahebbazar of Buthidaung Township before the 2nd World War. Rubber plantation was experimentally made at Bukkaguna during Mayu Frontier Administration in 1960s. These had disappeared due to absence of proper preservation. Now rubber and palm oil plantation is going on in Sandoway though it is in a small scale.

Arakan is also famous for its abundant best quality honey from beehives. There are so many kinds of wild beast animals, reptiles, birds, trees and flowers in this inaccessible beautiful forest of Arakan.

Fauna

The commonest varieties of wild animals found practically all over the Arakan are elephant, the historical and rare white elephant, tiger, rhinoceros, Gauyal (gaur), Taungru (wild ox), Malay deer, Himalayan black bears, antelope, barking deer, the wild goats and taw myin, sambhur deer, brow antlered deer, pig, wolf, leopard, wild dogs, and variety of monkeys.

Among game birds, jungle fowl, imperial pigeon, two varieties of snipe, the pin and fantail and several varieties of green pigeon are fairly plentiful. Of pheasants, the black, the silver and the argues are seen within hilly localities where growth of bamboo predominates. There are also two varieties of quail. Several kinds of teal and duck are also to be met in the inland water of Akyab district. Guest birds like Siberian and Russian ducks visit around the Akyab during the winter season. Peafowl are found in Taungup and Ann. There are also large numbers of crane, paddy-birds, hawks, eagles, kites, owl and fish eagle.

Reptile: Deaths from snakebite are very rare though poisonous snakes are common in Arakan. Arakan is also home for crocodiles.

FISH

Arakan's 360 miles long coast is rich in fish. However, lack system of well-equipped fishing trawlers and restrictions and heavy taxation imposed on Muslims make annual catch much lower than that of Bangladesh. Arakan coastal areas are ideal for breeding shrimp, which fetches hard currency in the international market.

Shrimp culture along the Naf River side produces best quality shrimp, but with the forced collection of almost all the shrimp from the Muslim owners without any compensation by the Burmese government since 1982, production has fallen down. In spite of unfavourable circumstances, cross border trade of shrimps from Arakan to Bangladesh amount to more than 50% of Bangladesh shrimps export.

The Bay of Bengal teems with fish of many varieties, as do the great rivers of Arakan, the Naf, Mayu, Kaladan and Lemro with their many tributaries and connecting creeks. Among the fish Arakan is famous for the hilsa. Oysters are in plenty at Oyster Island. Fish makes their way into inland tanks, lakes, watercourse and even paddy fields, during the wet season of the year. It is a common sight in the hot months of April and May when the tanks and lakes are at their lowest, to see scores of villagers delving in the mud for the fish.

Fish forms the main food of the people of Arakan both in its fresh and preserved state. Commonly called, as Nga-pi is fish paste, which is generally used by the Buddhist community of Arakan and Burma. Fish is also sun-dried or smoked. Tons of dry-fish, salted fish and dehydrated fish of Arakan are sent to Rangoon and Bangladesh via-border-trade from Maungdaw.

Agriculture

The Economy of Arakan depends mainly on Agriculture. The land is fertile and out of 954,257 acres of arable land only

854,824 acres are under cultivation every year. It is single cropping though neighbouring Bangladesh practices 3 to 4 crops a year. Despite the fall of production in 1980s, the region produces a vast surplus of some 200,000 tones annually. Arakan produced 450,000 tones of surplus rice during 1950s. It was historically known as Dhanavati (the land of wealth) which exported surplus rice to many countries of the world. Production gradually fell down as many Muslim farmers have been driven out from their motherland. Rohingyas are agricultural workers and have every branch of knowledge. By virtue of their vast knowledge the growing of rice in Arakan was so extensive and successful. It has been estimated that if modern machinery and scientific methods are used the state could produce a million tons of surplus rice annually.

In Arakan State the land tax is ten or twelve Tung (about 40 kilos) of paddy per acre. The government price for paddy is seventy-five kyats per Tung, compared to a market price of 350 kyats. This has to be paid regardless of the fertility of the land or the rice yield, generally no exemption on cyclone effected area or tidal surge or destruction by wild animals like pigs and elephants is made. Most of the lands of Rohingyas are confiscated by the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) to build roads, model villages for Rakhine, Pagodas, Buddhist monasteries, military barracks etc.

Beside rice, Arakan produces sugarcane, ground-nut, tobacco, chili, beans, onion, mustard, sesame, coconut, garlic, ginger, betel leaves and nuts, rubber, varieties of carrots, cabbage, potatoes, sunflowers, maize, varieties of cucumber, pumpkin, tomato, peach and many other fruits such as mango, jack-fruit, plum, papaya, banana, litchi, orange, lemon, lime, guava, water-melon, pineapples, pomegranate, tangerine, musk-melon, star-apple, gooseberry, arrow-roots, cashew-nut. These are grown in small scale. If these crops are scientifically grown on large scale, export to Bangladesh and many other countries could be done.

Communication

For obvious reason Arakan is kept abandoned and under-developed region of Burma. The motorable roads are those built during British era. However, the SPDC have been making infrastructure development by conscription of forced labor and levying taxes for the purpose. There is no railway now, but the one existed was serviceable during British period between Chittagong and Buthidaung through Maungdaw. Communication with Burma proper is mainly done by sea and air.

River ways :

1. Akyab to Paletwa through Ponnagyun and Kyauktaw.
2. Akyab to Mrauk-U through Ponnagyun.
3. Akyab to Kyauktaw through Ponnagyun and Mrauk-U.
4. Akyab to Buthidaung through Rathedaung, about 80 miles. It takes 12 hours, and some times 24 hours putting numerous kinds of troubles to the Rohingya people are to suffer most on the route.
5. Akyab to Pauktaw, Minbya, Mraungbwe and Panmraung
6. Akyab to Pauktaw, Minbya, Mraybon, Kyaukpyu, Snay, Rambree, Kyauknimaw, Manaung (Cheduba) up to Taungup.
7. Kyaukpyu to Ann.
8. Akyab to Ponnagyun - Yotaruk, Kanzauk.
9. Maungdaw to Teknaf, Bangladesh.
10. Maungdaw to Bowlibazar.
11. Maungdaw to Taungbro through Ngakura.
12. Maungdaw to Gyikanbyin - Nganchaung - Krarobyin
13. Buthidaung to Taung Bazaar.
14. Buthidaung to Yungchung Ponyolik.

Land ways:

A. Maungdaw to Buthidaung. The road is 16 miles long. Once it was Railway line. It is a tarred road constructed through Mayu range with two tunnels, one 658 ft. and another 98 ft long.

B. Maungdaw - Alaythankyaw Road : It is 12 miles long only.

C. Maungdaw - Bawli - Khamauckseik road. The road is about 45 miles long. Tarred up to Gyikanbyin. The rest are underdevelopment process with forced labour.

D. Akyab to Rathedaung road: The road is 27 miles long. The road is famous because of steel suspension bridge over the Kyaukdan Chaung.

E. Minbya-Kyauktaw road: The road is 47 miles. After ten miles journey from Minbya to Mraungbwe one has to change vehicle. From there through Mrauk-U one will reach Yaungbinhla after crossing ferry at Tinnyo village.

F. Kyaukpyu - Rambree : The road is 47 miles long. Tarred 15 miles only up to Kyaukpyu-Minpyin.

G. Rambree - Sany : The road is 17 miles long only. It is connected to the Rambree jetty.

H. Sandoway - Taungup: 50 miles long.

I. Sandoway - Gwa: This road is 83 miles long. Ferry has been provided twice.

J. Tet Taung - Ann: This road is 12 miles long. It will be connected with Ann-Minbu road and will be an important way to send fish and other goods from Arakan to Burma proper.

There are four mountain passes connecting Arakan and Burma proper. They are Taungup, Ma-yee, Ann and Gwa. The Taungup pass alone can be used and the Ann pass is still at work to be linked with Mrauk-U and Minbu of Burma proper.

Occupation

Over eighty percent of the population of Arakan are farmers. Over eighty percent farmers of Arakan were Rohingyas. One hundred percent of the skilled labourers plying river crafts and fishing high sea vessels are Rohingya too. Rohingyas, who were the back bone of the economy of Arakan, are today found wandering across the world jobless and homeless. As a result, presently, more than one fourth of the total acreage of arable land is reduced to vast tracts of jungles. The government has started a massive reclamation of these lands and newly confiscated Muslim lands for resettlement of Rakhine from both inside and outside Arakan. Constructing pagodas and monasteries, particularly on the site of demolished Islamic structures with a view to changing the face of Arakan and give it a Buddhist's appearance is also taking place, for example, Tharaykunbung and Waladaung mosques of Maungdaw Township. In addition to farmers, mariners and sailors, there are also fishermen, traders, woodsmen, weavers, artisans, artists, craftsmen, carpenters, government servants, labourers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, potters etc.

Industry and other economy of Arakan

In an area of 20,000 sq. miles or 15,000 sq. miles there is not a single modern industry or mill or factory though raw material is abundant. The people of Arakan are the best tax-payers of Burma, especially, from Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung, where Rohingyas are in majority.

There are about 30 old rice mills in Arakan state. The government had set up some saw mills in different townships. In some towns there are at least one ice-factory and an aerated-water factory. A small sugar-mill attached with a wine factory is established by the government at Kyauktaw township. There is a chaff oil mill at Akyab. The oil is refined from the chaff produced by the 13 rice mills of Akyab. There is a marble factory near Taungup township which can be converted into a fine marble factory.

There are small size rope factories in Sandoway, Gwa and Manaung (Cheduba). A small size cotton yarn factory is at Akyab where raw cottons from Buthidaung and Paletwa are refined only. A soap factory, a leather factory and a rope factory are also under construction at Akyab.

Molasses is produced from sugarcanes manually as sugarcane plantation is abundant. There is petroleum off Arakan coast, but still unexplored. Attempts to explore oil with the collaboration of some Japanese firms in 1970s were taken. But due to political and financial reasons the Burmese regime had abandoned the project. In Rambree, Cheduba and Borunga islands (near Akyab) of Pauktaw township, oil is pumped out manually.

Lime stone: Lime stone is abundant at Kyaukpyu, Sandoway, Taungup, Gwa and Rambree. The stocks of limestone are found at 3 places in Kyaukpyu, 5 places at Gwa, 2 places at Sandoway and 14 places in Rambree Township.

Marble: Marble is found at Nyabutaung about 30 miles away from Taungup producing since 1974-75 under the Nyabutaung Marble project. 750 cubic meter is produced annually.

Coal: Coal is found at Rambree and Cheduba. The quality is inferior.

Iron Ore: High deposit iron ore are found at Kyaukpru township. Geologist has said Rathedaung (Mozi) may contain large reserve of crude oil.

Salt Industry: Salt is produced from the sea water along the Arakan coast as well as from the rivers and streams which are located in the township such as Maungdaw, Pauktaw, Akyab, Kyaukpyu, Rambree, Sandoway, Taungup and Gwa. Salt is also produced by sunning from the salt-pits which are only located in the township of Maungdaw, Rambree, Kyaukpyu, Akyab and Sandoway. Although there is no government assistance, one has to pay heavy taxes.

Coconut: Coconut trees can be found at every place of Arakan, especially near seashores. Manaung (Cheduba), Gwa and Sandoway produced the most. Coconut production from Kyaukpyu, Rambree, Taungup and Akyab also are not the least. The total output of coconut from Arakan is 15 millions. State plantations are at Sandoway, Akyab and Cheduba. Now the state is buying the coconut. There is one small rope factory in each town of Sandoway and Gwa. Two rope mills are under construction in Akyab and Cheduba. One soap factory is under construction in Akyab, which would use coconut oil as major raw material.

Livestock and animal husbandry

Although there are no commercial and government initiative for livestock and animal husbandry project in Arakan all farmers breed cattle, buffalo, duck, goat, fowl, geese and pigeon. The breeding of cattle is in progress at Kyaukpru, Cheduba, Rambree and Taungup. About 5 to 10 thousand cattle heads are sold to other places.

Townships of Arakan State

(1) Akyab (2) Kyaukpyu(3) Sandoway

(4) Kyauktaw (5) Buthidaung (6) Maungdaw
(7) Minbya (8) Mrauk-U (9) Gwa
(10) Taungup (11) Pauktaw (12) Ponnagyun
(13) Myebon (14) Manaung (15) Rambree
(16) Rathedaung (17) Ann

Akyab:

The origin of the name Akyab comes from Ek-ab meaning, "land of one water" in Persian. Persi was the state language of Arakan till 1845. Until the British occupation Akyab was a small fishing village as the capital of Arakan being Mrohaung. After the annexation of Arakan, in 1826, Akyab was made the capital of the new province and has since ranked as its chief port. The town is situated on well-wooded low-lying ground between sea face and the Kaladan and the Mayu. The area is 89.42 sq. miles. Its population is 169,090. In 1901 there were 12864 Buddhist and 24103 Muslim population. There are 31 wards 27 village tracts and 9 small villages. At the north side of Akyab is Ponnagyun township, Pauktaw township is in the east, Bay of Bengal is in the south and also in the west.

All the state office headquarters are in Akyab. There is a 200-bed hospital. An old aged home for 20 males and 20 females is built on the way to the Akyab airport. One college, 6 high schools and one weaving school and many middle and primary schools are in Akyab. It has two municipal bazaars, 13 rice mills and many saw mills, one chaff oil refinery mill, one rope factory and a soap factory. Akyab, being the seaport, handles all trade of the state and goods destined to Burma pass through it. A clock tower commemorating the first jubilee of Queen Victoria is at the centre of the town. The Rakhines of Akyab take pride for having of this clock tower. The height is 71 and half feet and was built in the year 1887.

The climate of Akyab is very pleasant with a healthy sea breeze from the Bay of Bengal. The Baronga and Savage islands partially protect Akyab from the monsoons. The latter of these lies at the seaward end of the port and is surmounted by a lighthouse. The harbour has an outer or inner bar. At high water, vessels of any draught can safely enter or leave. During low tide, a pilot is needed.

Two sides of the triangle run in a southern direction to where the river meet the sea, and the apex is known locally as "The point" and is famous for recreation. At the point there is a tower which was used as a lighthouse built in the year 1844. It was the first lighthouse of Burma. At present a new lighthouse is built near the point tower. One mile north of the point there stands the historical and archaeological monument - the Bader Mokam.

In the northern side of Akyab there is the Kandawgyi (big lake) from where water is supplied to the whole of Akyab town. On the West Bank of this great lake there stands the shrine of *Babagi Shah Monayam*. The name of that place is Ambari.

A dockyard is constructed at the Cherogea, which is popularly known as Arakan Jetty. The Cherogea creek is northern boundary of the Akyab proper. The Cherogea creek is always full with boats, steamers and various kinds of river crafts. Along both banks of the creek the rice mills are situated. At the mouth of the creek, where the creek meets the mouth of Kaladan, some gunboats of Burma - Naval force are kept. The head quarters of the Burma Navy of Arakan is at the point near Badar Mokam. Now the Badar Mokam is inside of the Navy compound. The army head quarters of the Burma Western Command is in the north-western side of Akyab.

Akyab is indeed a beautiful city. Rice, meats, fish, vegetables of various kinds are cheaper than other cities and towns of Burma.

Kyaukpyu:

Kyaukpyu is situated on the Rambree Island off the Bay of Bengal. It is in the centre of Arakan State. The area is 678.35 sq. miles. The population is 123,734 in 1980s. There are ten wards, 54 village tracts and 267 villages.

Kyaukpyu Township is bounded on north by Akyab district, on the east by the Arakan Roma, on the south by Sandoway district, and on the east by the Bay of Bengal.

Kyaukpyu is (121) miles away from Akyab. There is a small airport, which is used throughout the year, at north west of the town. The first intermediate college for Arakan State was established in Kyaukpyu. There is also a primary teacher-training institute. Kyaukpyu produces salt. Sane' salt site and Kyauktalon salt site are important government sponsored salt industries. There is a government cattle breeding pasture where foreign grass is grown. Kyaukpyu harbour is deep and wide. However, due to several dangerous rocks rising abruptly out of the sea, access to port is dangerous at night. Kyaukpyu is generally thought to be rich in minerals. Iron and coal had been traced.

Sandoway:

A district town and Burma's only tourists resorts sea-beach is in Sandoway which is amidst Bay of Bengal and evergreen majestic Arakan Yoma at its back ground with a moderate climate with unceasing sea-breeze. Sandoway is famous for Ngapali sea-beach. Gen. Ne Win discovered it while President Ayub Khan promoted the sea-beach of Cox's Bazaar.

Sandoway is 272 miles away from Akyab in water journey. The area is 1360.16 sq. miles. Its population was 95,490 in 1980s. There are seven wards, 63 village tracts and 292 villages. Rubber and Palm oil plantation is done on

experimental basis in Sandoway and an Agricultural Research centre is also situated there.

Buthidaung :

Buthidaung Township is on the West Bank of the majestic Mayu River. The area is 779.99 sq. miles. The population was 185,263 in 1980s. There are 7 wards, 78 village tracts and 340 villages.

It is separated from Maungdaw Township by Mayu range of hills in the west. Bangladesh is at the North, Kyauktaw Township lies in the east and Rathedaung in the south

Buthidaung Township is 80 miles away from Akyab. The means of communication is only waterways except 16 miles road to Maungdaw. It's has fertile land yielding surplus crops. Army head quarters of North Arakan is in Buthidaung in the name of Byuha (Tactical operation command, TOC). Byuha Hmu (head of T.O.C.) is a colonel of Burmese army. Tea was once grown at Paungdawbyin, a waste land grant in the Buthidaung Township by Messers Mounjoy Company, the quality and flavour were good, but the firm did not make a commercial success of it. A few shrubs are still to be found growing there. It is an ideal place for cattle and goat breeding. The Saindaung waterfall is about 15 miles Southeast of Buthidaung. If waterpower is extracted and a paper mill saw mill, sugar mill, textile mill, cement and fertiliser etc are constructed, Buthidaung would be the most developed city of Arakan.

Kyauktaw :

The area of Kyauktaw Township is 695.55 sq. miles only. The population is 154419 with 5 wards, 79 village tracts and 306-villages. The township is situated on the both sides of the Kaladan River with plain and fertile land yielding better harvest

of rice and many other crops. Paletwa is at the northern side of Kyauktaw Township. Mrauk-U is in the east, Ponnagyun in the south, Rathedaung and Buthidaung are at the western side of Kyauktaw township. It was a Rohingya majority township till 1962.

It is 80 miles away from Akyab. Kyauktaw is connected with Minbya and Mrauk-U with motorable road. There is agriculture High School. It has large sugar cane plantation and a sugar mill with wine factory.

Minbya Township:

The area of the Minbya Township is 1338.46 sq. miles with a population of 126436. There are 3 wards, 62 village tracts and 266 villages in Minbya Township. It is situated on the low plain of Lemro River with very fertile lands.

Minbya Township is bounded to the north by Mrauk-U Township, Kyaukpyu in the east, Myebon and Pauktaw in south and the west. It is connected with Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw by road. And Akyab is forty miles away. The production of rice and vegetables is economically viable.

Gwa Township:

Gwa is the southern most town of Arakan having an area of 885.11 sq. miles with a population of 50784 only. There are three wards, 34 village tracts and 178 villages in Gwa Township. Gwa is bounded to the north by Sandoway Township, on the east Myanaung, Paung Township is in the south and Bay of Bengal is at the west.

Gwa is 356 miles away from Akyab. There is a 85 miles road connecting Sandoway. It has a small airport used only in summer season. At the upper most side of Kyintale Chaung of Gwa Township a hydroelectric project with a paper mill is under

consideration. Gwa to Nga Thine Chaung road project is under way to connect with the Irrawady division.

Taungup Township:

Taungup Township is at the foot of Arakan Yoma range. The area is 1906.62 sq. miles. Its population is 92,949 only. There are 4 wards, 50 village tracts and 200 villages in Taungup Township. Taungup is bounded by Kyaukpyu and Ann Township to the north, Padaung township is to the east, Sandoway is to the south and Rambree township is to the west.

Taungup is 224 miles away from Akyab. Through Taungup pass it is connected with other states and divisions by road.. As it is a border town of Arakan, Taungup is a prosperous town with communications to other states and divisions. The biggest saw mill of Arakan is in Taungup. There is also a marble extracting project and teak plantation by the forestry department of the Union of Burma.

Pauktaw Township:

The area of the Pauktaw Township is 413.74 sq. miles only and the population is 104113. It has five wards, 53 village tracts and 183 villages. At the north is Mrauk-U, at the east is Minbya township, at the south is the Bay of Bengal and at the west are Akyab and Ponnagyun townships. The three Baronga islands are included in the Pauktaw Township. It is only 16 miles away from Akyab.

Mrauk-U:

The area of the Mrauk-U Township is 490.97 only comprising of 6 wards, 94 village tracts and 255 villages. It has a population of 146,878. At the northern side of Mrauk-U is Paletwa township, Minbya Township is at the east, at the south

is Pauktaw township and Kyauktaw is at the West Side of Mrauk-U. It is 40 miles away from Akyab. A museum of historical records is in this town. The paramount historical importance of Mrohaung cannot be overlooked, mostly on the incontrovertible facts that it is the solitary ancient city which have over lived 545 years of vicissitudes in Arakan and was also *the proud centre of Islamic civilisation and culture, at least from the time of Minsawmon* (1430-1434) up to 1784 A.D, in which year the Burmese king Bodaw Min pillaged, the Mrauk-U empire.

Maungdaw Township:

Maungdaw Township is a border town opposite Teknaf of Bangladesh. It is situated at the foot of the Mayu range and on the east bank of the Naf River and sharing the beautiful sea-beaches of the Bay of Bengal. The area of the township is 585.92 sq. miles with a population of 479,798 of which 98.55 is pious Rohingya Muslims living in 6 wards, 98 village tracts and 338 villages. The Muslims are uncompromising as regard to their religion and race and the women observe strict *purdah* system.

Maungdaw Township has long common border with the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the north, Buthidaung Township to the east, the Naf river to the west, and the majestic Bay of Bengal to the south and west. It is 96 miles from Akyab. Previously, there was direct Maungdaw and Akyab steamer service in winter season. It is a prosperous border town. All goods from Burma, including Chinese and Thai products are exported to Bangladesh, or imported Bangladeshi goods as per Bangladesh-Burma border trade agreement.

Maungdaw Township is scenic with evergreen tropical forest in the background, criss-cross roads north to south and east to west with two tunnels in addition to valley, dales and creeks etc.

The legendary Hanifa Tonki could be seen distinctly at the top of the middle of the Mayu range at the foot of which is Maungnama village. Some writers wrote that Maungnama was the original town of Maungdaw. Maungdaw town proper is situated about a mile from the Naf River on the Tat Chaung (Takkhali). It was originally a village used to be the frontier post (tat) of the Burmese government and was surrendered to the British without a war. It was constituted as a town by Revenue Department Notification No. 100 dated the 29th December 1908. In 1911 there were 420 houses only.

When Myawadi Mingyi U Sa, came to Maungdaw to fight against the British army during the First Anglo-Burmese war, he was impressed with the natural beauties of the place, kept aside his weapons, took papers and pen and wrote the famous poem, "The Seis Chidaw" (Army on the March) leaning on a tree at the foot of the Maungnahma's mountain where at the top the legendary Hanifa tonki is in grandeur. Maha Bandola sat nearby with his advisers and astrologers. The time was just before the sun set. Flocks of white crane and white paddy birds were flying towards west. When Bandola asked his astrologers about it, they told him the white faced (British) would retreat to west, as they would be defeated.

On a visit to Burma, President Ayub Khan of Pakistan proposed to establish a cement factory at the foot of Maungnhama hills, as there may be abundant limestone. At the sea beach of Maungdaw i.e. from Alithangyaw to Kyaukpandu (15 miles) there is a kind of sand, which is useful for making jet engine. The valuable minerals to be explored at the beach are zircon, garnet, retile, megalith and illuminate which could be profitably utilised in the country and earn foreign exchange by exploring the items.

There was tea-plantation before the 2nd World War and rubber plantation during the Mayu Frontier administration. Lack of proper maintenance made the plantation unsuccessful. Now

the Military Intelligence department is growing cashew-nut tree gardens with the forced labours of Rohingyas. The forest department's teak plantation is only 76,800 acres.

Ponnagyun Township:

The area of Ponnagyun Township is 419.63 sq. miles with a population of 85191 in 4 wards, 92 village tracts and 201 villages.

Mrauk-U township and Pauktaw township lie in the east of the Ponnagyun township, Akyab is at the south and Rathedaung and Buthidaung townships are at the west of it. The Township is bounded on the north by hills, on the Northeast it is separated from Kyauktaw Township by the Yo and Kywelan Chaungs and the Kaladan River. It was constituted as a township of Buthidaung sub-division. In 1891, it was annexed to the Kyauktaw Township. In 1905 the name was altered from Uritaung to Ponnagyun and in 1906 it was put under the Akyab sub-division.

Ponnagyun is 16 miles away from Akyab. A road is being constructed from Ponnagyun to Akyab using forced labour. Ponnagyun is a regular port of call for all steamers going up and down the Kaladan River. Opposite the Ponnagyun is the famous Uritaung Pagoda.

As the land is infertile large areas are left fallow or as grazing field. Cattle breeding are carried out there.

Myebon township:

The area of the Myebon Township is 942.12 sq. miles with a population of 79360 in 6 wards, 52 village tracts and 141 villages. At the north of the Myebon township is Minbya township, Ann township is in the east, the Kanbamary bay in the south and the Hanta bay is in the west.

Myebon is 46 miles from Akyab. The only mean of communication is waterway. It was a majority Muslim town-ship before 1942. It is a good fishery town. There is also a pottery workshop at the north of the town. An office of the pearl and fishery department and a microwave station are in the town.

Manaung Township

Manaung Township is on the Manaung (Cheduba) island off the Bay of Bengal. It is constituted with Manaung Island, Reisland and Teik Island. The area of the township is 202.04 sq. miles with a population of 63736 in 5 wards, 36 village tracts and 135 villages.

It is 224 miles away from Akyab. An airport only used in the summer by small Otter plane is in the island. The airport is 3 miles away from the town and could be used throughout the year. The main communication is waterway with steamer and other watercraft.

The coconut plantation is grown on large scale. The junta buys them. There is also a rope factory. The famous Taungnitaung is in this town where a kind of perfumed grass grows naturally. Also there is a microwave station.

Rambree Township:

Rambree Township is situated on the Rambree Island off the Bay of Bengal. The area is 506.73 sq. miles with a population of 94574 in 6 wards, 51 village tracts and 203 villages. At the north is Kyaukpyu and Ann Township, Taungup Township is in the east and the Bay of Bengal is around the south and west.

Rambree is 176 mile away from Akyab. It was an old city of Arakanese Kings and the native town of the last two Arakanese kings, Thadita and Thamada. Lay Taung of Rambree town-ship is famous for betel nuts and the people are well-known artists and craftsmen. The tobacco of Rambree is

famous. Geologists opined that petrolium could be found at Lay Taung. There is a 47-mile long road connecting Kyaukpyu. There are some workshops of Pearl and Fishery Corporation.

Rathedaung Township:

After Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships, Rathidaung Township is the third majority area of Rohingya community. The area is 437.76 sq. miles with a population of over 200,000 in 4 wards, 87 village tracts and 197 villages. Though there are now a few Rohingya in the town proper (mass Muslims of the town were killed during 1942), the majority of the rural population is Rohingya. Rathidaung Township was once a township of the Buthidaung sub-division till 1st January 1906, when it was annexed to the Akyab sub-division. It is bounded on the north by the Buthidaung sub-division, on the east by hills, the Peinnemyaung Chaung and the Mozi River, on the south by the Kywide River and the sea and on the west by the sea and the Mayu hills. It comprises the valley of the lower Mayu, which nowhere exceeds 12 miles in width. The eastern and western border adjoining the hill are broken, but the greater portion of the township is a fertile level plain with small detached ranges of hills dotted about the level plain.

Rathidaung town proper is situated at the mouth of the Rathidaung creek, a tributary of the Mayu on the left bank. The steamers and motor boats touch regularly at Rathidaung on their way to and from Buthidaung and Akyab. It is only 40 miles away from Akyab.

Rathidaung is an ideal place for cattle breeding, fruit and vegetables growing apart from rice-production. There are also brickfields. A 27-mile long motor road connecting Rathidaung and Akyab is recently built. There have been some attempts to explore Petroleum at Kudaung village of Rathidaung Township but they stopped due to some unknown reasons.

Ann Township:

A hilly township with an area of 2467.51 sq. miles. The population is 75,942 living in 4 wards, 31 village tracts and 237 villages. It is bounded on the north by Magwe division and Myebon township, on the east by Minbu township, on the south by Taungup and Rambree Township and on the west by Minbya township.

Ann is 197 miles away from Akyab. Tat Tong -Minbu road crossed Ann, which is also known as Ann-Minbu road. An office of Pearl and fisheries department is at Ann, which is in the process to send fish from Arakan coast to central Burma through this road. Steamers cannot reach Ann. It can reach to Tattong, from Tattong by boat or canoe to Aauk Rwa. From Aauk Rwa to Ann one has to go by bullock-cart.

Ann to Mrauk-U road would be constructed in the very near future.

Dress of Rohingya

The male Rohingya traditionally wears a shirt with long sleeves called *bazu* covering the upper part of the body while the lower part is covered with a rectangular sheet of cloth stitched from side to side called *longi*. Most of the Rohingya males wear coat and cap.

The adult female Rohingya normally wears long-sleeved garment known as *suli* to cover the upper part of the body while the lower part is covered with a *tami*. A scarf known as *romal*, which covers the head and shoulders, is traditionally used. When going out door a *burka*, a traditional veil completely covering the whole body is put on.

The Hill Tribes

The Chins:

The Chins are the most widely spread of all the tribes and inhabit the Arakan Yoma mountain range east of the Lemro river that divides Arakan from Burma, and extend from far south down into the Sandoway district and across the Yomas into the Pegu division and Chin state. They are divided into numerous clans, each of which is located on certain tracts sufficiently large to supply them with cultivation, the boundaries of which they never exceed.

It has been said that they adopted the custom of tattooing the women's faces to prevent their being taken by the Burmese rulers. Their language, though not understood by Khami or Mro, has many words in common with theirs. The men knot their hair over the forehead and the waistcloth is the smallest pretensions to decency. Those of the tribes who live east of the Yoma dressed somewhat differently.

The women wear a short waistcloth but open on both sides and a smock frock like that worn by the Karen but very short. The clans further south wear it long.

The Khami:

The Khami first dwelt in the hill district of Arakan, but they were driven down by the Shandhu towards the Kaladan gradually pushing the Mro and the Chaungtha who formerly dwelt there. They are divided into clans and obeyed influential heads of the clans. The dress of the male Khami is a long homespun cotton cloth, about one-foot in width, which is passed several times round the waist one once between the legs, the coloured ends hanging down in front and behind. The hair is knotted over the front part of the head and long twisted white cloth is bound round the head so as to make a turban.

The Mro:

The Mro wears but a small blue waistcloth about four inches wide, and is not particular as to their head-dress or personal appearance. Their houses are small. The woman's dress is a short dark blue cloth reaching to the knee and open at the side is fastened round the waist with a belt of cords covered either with large beads or copper rings. Over the breast is worn a small strip of cloth. Unlike the man they are very squarely built but the habit of carrying heavy weights on their back in baskets with a band passing over the forehead up the precipitous hill paths makes them walk with a constrained and waddling gait. This tribes lives on the Mi-a tributary of the Kaladan, and on some streams to the south.

Daingnet:

As far can be ascertained the Daingnet appear to be of Tibeto-Burman origin with a strain of Chittagonian blood and speak Bengali. In features they are somewhat like the Goorkas of Nepal and differ from the hill tribes of Arakan. They dress in white and wear their hair at the back of the head and do not tattoo their bodies. They speak a corrupted Bengali, and are descendants of slaves of the Rakhine Magh Kings of Arakan. The Daingnets are decreasing in numbers, an indication that they are gradually ceasing to exit as a separate tribe and are being absorbed into the general Chin, Rakhine Magh, Rohingyas of Arakan and Chakma of Bangladesh.

The Chaungthas:

The Chaungthas, or "children of the stream" are descendants of Pyu and Mon of Burma. The history is that in A.D. 1596, the King Salim Shah (Min Rajageri) having rendered assistance to the king of Taunngu in invading the capital of Pyu and defeating the Shans and driving them off from the country, received a portion of the treasure and a princess of the supreme

king, Nanda Bayin. Thousands of the Pyu and Talaing people were sent along with the princess. The king Salim Shah made the Burmese princess a queen and was styled Pegupyu Minthami. Her followers were later settled on the west of the Kaladan river and settled them in the following localities in the hills which extend as far as Chittagong Hill Tracts. They were sent to the hills for their reputed bravery and hardiness to control the hill tribes. In manners and customs they differ but little from the Rakhine Magh and Burmese, they have straight black hair, high cheekbones, oblique eyes and scanty beard.

Manners and Customs of Hill tribes

Though there may be a few minor differences in the manners and customs of these tribes yet on the whole there is great similarity.

Every year there are two important ceremonies, at the time of sowing seed and before harvest. There is also another annual feast, in honour of departed spirits who are called *palow*. This custom is followed by the Khami and Chaungtha but not by the Mro. During the dry weather numerous feasts are given at which large numbers of cattle are killed. The gayal, buffaloes and oxen are tied up to a post and speared behind the right shoulder, but other animals have their throats cut. At the feast there is always drinking of *Kaung* or rice beer.Dancing must be seen to be clearly understood. It is more of side-closing steps than a dance. The step consists of closing two steps to the right and one to the left in time bending the body so as to throw the posteriors outwards. The young men commence it and then drag in the girls between them, to whom they love and whom they stimulate with ardent spirits.

Till marriage, intercourse between the sexes is perfectly free and unrestrained. It is considered highly proper to marry a girl with a child though it be that of another man. If the girl bring forth before marriage the child, it is said exposed.

Marriage is a simple contract on making valuable presents to the parents.

Conclusion

It is a fact of history that geography plays a great part in shaping the political life of a country and moulding the socio-culture pattern of its people. The physical features and natural peculiarities indeed reflect the life and culture of the land. The history of a country cannot be appreciated without the knowledge of its geography. It is absolutely necessary to describe the geography of our rightful and sacred motherland where we have been established for centuries and have our home and families and our dead. The geographical peculiarities of Arakan had a tremendous influence on the political, social, spiritual, and economic on cultural life of the Rohingyas, Rakhine Maghs and the Hill tribes. The natural features of this land, which were, even now are, peculiar to itself, left distinctive marks on socio-cultural institutions, mental outlook, way of life, education, food, dress, and manners and customs of its people. Arakan has thus some geographical features of its own, which distinguish it from the rest of Burma.

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Chapter-2

The Rohingya

The word Rohingya is derived from Rohang, the ancient name of Arakan. Situated on Burma's south-western with Bangladesh, Arakan has a population of five million, half of whom are Muslims[1]. The Muslims of Arakan are the direct progeny of the early Muslims. They are the descendants of the Muslim Arabs, Pathans, Moors, Persians, Turks, Afghans, Mughals and Bengalis who came mostly as traders, warriors and saints through over land and sea-route. Many settled in Arakan and mixing with the local people developed the present stock of people known as "Rohingyas"[2]

Some people say that the term Rohingya is derived from the Arabic word 'Raham' meaning "sympathy". They say that it was during the reign of Mahataing Chandra (788-810 A.D.) some Arab ships were wrecked along the shores of Arakan and the ill-fated people who boarded them begged for help by uttering Raham, Raham. Gradually it changed from Raham to Rohang meaning God bless-land and finally they were named Rohingyas.

A Rohingya writer Mr. Khalilur Rahman in his book "Tarik-i-Islam Arakan and Burma"[3] first expressed this view. Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed, former President of Buthidaung Peace Committee, rejected this view. In his view Rohingyas are the descendants of the inhabitants of Ruha in Afghanistan.[4] This view is also untenable.

It is true that the term Rohang or Roshang is the corrupt form of the old name of Mrohaung. Later on, the inhabitants who lived in Rohang or Roshang were treated as Roshangee or Rohingya.

Among the Muslim population of Chittagong two distinct groups are found; one is known as 'Chatganiya' and the other is 'Rohai' Even the latter form half the total population of Chittagong, who trace their origin to Arakan or Mrohaung[5]. Since Chittagong was an integral part of the Arakanese Kingdom till the first half of the 17th century[6], the natives of Chittagong lived in the capital Mrohaung to serve the Kings in various capacities. In the medieval Bengali literary works the name Roshang is frequently used instead of Arakan. In colloquial Chittagonian dialect the country is called Rohang and the people Rohingyas.

There are also those who believe that Rohingya is a mutilation of the word Rwa houng ga kyar, "tiger from the ancient village". Which means, "brave" and is the name given to the Muslim soldiers who settled in Arakan.[7]

After spending 24 years in Bengal, Narameikhla was restored to the throne by the Sultan of Bengal. Since he was dethroned from his palace in Launggret earlier he decided to build his capital at a strategically secured place. As he might have felt that living among the Muslim community would be safer and wiser, he chose a large Muslim village known as Rwahaung, which literally means "old village" and named it Mrohaung - "old town". The city was inhabited by the descendants of Moorish Arabs who were rehabilitated by the king of Arakan, Mahataing Chandra (788-810) after shipwrecks. The Muslims of the areas were known as 'Rwa-haung ga kyar' pronouncing it as Rohingyas. As they were Moorish origin, the city came to be known as Morocco and later mutilated as Mrauk-U. (Moulana Abu Taher Nodwi "SarjmininArakan ki Azadi Pas Manzarmi"). Advocate Shamsuddin Ahmed, an authority on the history of Rohingya, also theologised the same.

In Rashid Uddin's work compiled in 1310 C.E. the name of Arakan appeared as Rahan closely resembling to Rohang. [8] In his book Rashid Uddin writes, "Beyond that is the country of

Ratban (Martaban), then Arman (Mramyan, old name of Burma), then Zardandan... after wards comes the country of Rahan the people of which eat carrion and the flesh of men." According to Dr. S.H. Hodivala, Rahman, " which the people ate carrion, must be Mrohaung - the ancient capital of Arakan or Rakhang, as it was called by old Muslim authors. Jahangirs says of the Mugs of Arakan that "they eat every thing there is, either on land or in the sea, and nothing is forbidden by their religion"(Tazuk-i-Jahangir, Ed (Sir) Sayyid Ahmed, "Aligrah," 1864 - P-115). Rashid Uddin probably wrote Rakhan. The modern form of Arakan is said to be derived from the Arabic "Al-Rakhang". (S.H. Hodivala, studies in History of Indian Muslims, New Delhi, 1992 P-59)

Chakma queen Manikbi's husband sided with the Bangalees and fought many battles with the Maghs in a country called Roang (Arakan) in the year 118-119. Manikbi's great grandson was Kamalchega. During his reign there was a war in Roang and the Chakmas migrated into that country.[9]

The Tripura Chronicle Rajmala mentioned that the Tripura king "Dhanyamanika occupied Chittagong and appointed Roshang Mardan Narayan (the conqueror of Roshang) governor of that conquered country."[10]

Dr. Shwe Lu Maung defines Rohingya as a Chittagonian dialect of Rakhine Thar.[11] He said that the Buddhists of Rakhine state view the Rohingyas as spearhead of the Islamic expansionism. But his presumption was rejected by A.F.K. Jilani saying that Rohingyas are victims of permanent intolerable persecutions in the name of Kalas (with contempt the Burmese call Muslims as Kala). Beside the Rohingya believe in peaceful coexistence and unity of the people of Arakan regardless of their religion and creed. They are asking for a piece of peace only. Not only did the Rohingya participate in the pro-democracy uprising of 1988, many Rohingya organisations actively take up (for democracy and human rights) for the 45 million people of Burma including

the Magh "Rakhine of Arakan".[12] One Khin Maung Saw(Berlin) alleged that Rohingyas was a creation during the 1950s. Widura Khin Maung Gyi saying that Rohingya is as old as Bengali literature refuted it. In Bengali, Arakan is called Rohang and the people who live in Rohang are called Rohingyas. Kin Maung Saw (Berlin) also alleged that Rohingyas are not the citizens of Burma because they don't know any language except Chittagonian dialect. But he should study the ruling- "Hasan Ali V. Union of Burma and Mehar Ali V. Union of Burma Supreme Court criminal miscellaneous case No. 155 and 156 of 1957" and also "Sayed Alam (a) Sayed Khan Ahmed & 23 others Vs. Secretary of Immigration & two (1960 BLR (SC) 218)," in which their lordships of the Supreme Court of Rangoon remarked: "Mere face appearance of a person or whether he has knowledge of Burmese or Arakanese is not the test as to whether he/she is a citizen of the Union."

Dr. Shwe Lu Maung also alleged that Rohingya are British-era settlers, which is quite contrary to the real history. History says that Muslims of Arakan fought along with Burmese generals Maha Bandula against British. The Rakhine Maghs sided with Britishers against the Burmese forces as the British promised to restore Rakhine Kingdom. During the Japanese occupation the Muslims of Arakan fought along with the Britishers and the Rakhine Maghs sided with the Japanese. It indicates that the Muslims of Arakan were always faithful to the existing administration and stood against the invaders. Although the British promised to make the Rohingya people a happy and fair state out of Arakan, it was not materialised. The Rohingya language was in use widespread during the era of Arakanese kings[13], their written language was however, mainly destroyed by the Burmese invaders in 1784.

The celebrated 17th century Arakan court poet Shah Alawal who composed the famous ballad on the lamentations of Ameena, the youngest daughter of ill fated Mughal prince Shah Shuja after his death, amply mentioned about the Kingdom of

Rohang and Rohingyas. The poet similarly referred to Rohang and Rohingyas in his two other popular ballads: "Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal" and "Sikander Nama" which were composed in 1669 and 1673 AD. This was also endorsed in Dr. D.C Sen's two Ballads on' The Bereavement of Pari Banu' the wife of the said Mughal Prince and 'The lamentation of Shuja's daughter'.

In the medival Bengali works of Qazi Daulat, Mardan, Shamser Ali, Quraishi Magan, Ainuddin, Syed Nasir, Abdul Gani and Alawal had made frequent references to "Rosanga Shahar (Rohingya city) "Roshanga" and also sometimes, 'Roshanga des' Abdul Karim Khandakar of the eighteenth century, call the people, Moraung: and the king of the country is described as Moranga Rai' and the capital as 'Roshanga shahar' (Qazi Daulat, Sati Moyna O Lor Chandrani ed. Ghasal, p-45, Alawal, Saiful Mulk Badiuzzama, ed. A. Sharif P-63, Tohfa, ed. Ibid, P-78 Puthi Parichili, Ibid P-242,349,600)

A British Army officer who served in the Arakan front during the Second World War remarked about the ethnic character of the Arakan Muslims as, "and to look at, they are quite unlike any other product of India or Burma that I have seen. They resemble the Arab in name, in dress and in habit. The women and more particularly the young girls, have distinctive Arab touch about them." [14]

The Maghs (Rakhine)

There in Magadha, old Bihar, the Buddhists were so seriously persecuted by the fanatic Hindus and rival Mahayana Buddhist sects that the Theraveda Buddhists were compelled to flee eastward who took shelter in Vesali reigned by Hindu Chandra Kings. Since then they have been called Maghs. But their Aryan blood was adulterated as a result of intermarriages between them and their co-religionists - the Mongolians and the Tibeto-Burmans. Thus the present day Buddhists of Arakan originated in Magadha but they were overwhelmed by the Mongolians and lost the Indian character.

Today both the Maghs of Arakan and Bangladesh disown this name because the word Magh became synonymous with pirates or dacoits as for more than 2 centuries the Maghs of Arakan were sea pirates. They carried off the Hindus and Muslims, male and female, great and small, few and many, that they could seize, pierced the palms of their hands, passed their canes through the holes, and threw them one above another under the deck of their ships. In the same manner as grain is flung to fowls, every morn and evening they threw down uncooked rice from above the captives as food.[15] The Maghs earned such a bad name during the last many centuries that it has become a great shame for their descendants of today to own the name Magh. Thus, they started calling themselves Rakhines.

According to them the word Rakhine is derived from Rakkapura or the land of Rakkash - imaginary man-eating monster. The claim is based on legends of imagination or mythology. The term Rakhine is in fact derived form Rohan or Arakan.

The spoken language of Maghs or Rakhine is not a separate language but pure Burmese with phonetic variation. Historians commented on the Rakhine language as follows:

"The question of the Arakanese Rakhine language is more difficult. Whether it was the language of the Mongolian invaders of the 10th century or whether it filtered across the mountains after contact with Burma in the 11th and 12th centuries is undecided. As Rakhine language is the same language as Burmese, being merely a dialect, to suppose that it was the language of the invaders is to contend that the Mongolians who extinguished Chandras spoke afterwards became predominant in the Irrawady plain. If the contrary is postulated, and it is argued that the Burmese language, coming over the mountain road, impinged upon the Mongolian speech of the then Arakanese and created modern Arakanese. Linguistic difficulties are raised which are difficult to resolve, this question awaits judgement."[16]

Etymology of Arakan

The term Arakan is of Arabic or Persian origin having the same meaning in both these languages. It is a slight variation of the word *Arkan* plural of the word "Rukn" meaning a pillar. The fundamental tenets of Islam are called 'five pillars of Islam'. Thus the word Arakan signifies the land of Islam or peace. The name might be given by the early Arab traders or by the Arakanese kings while Persian was the official language of Arakan up to 1845.

One of the coins found in Arakan and preserved in the Museum of Calcutta, minted by Sultan Bahadur Shah dated 965 A.H. (1557-58 C.E.) is inscribed in Persian with *Kalimah* on the obverse side and mint name Arakan on the reverse side.

The name Arakan did not appear as a solitary instance in the above languages. Different important places, rivers and mountains in Arakan also bear names of Persian or Arabic. For example: the name of the capital city of Arakan is Akyab (Ek-ab) meaning "one water" in Persian like Punjab (Panj-ab) meaning, "land of five waters." Chaduba Island meaning "Right angular". Kaladan (Intellectuals) Kulapanj (fifty learned men) are also of either Persian or Arabic origin, the Naf (naw, meaning "boat" in Rohingya) and Mayu (Mayur, meaning "Peacock" in Rohingya) testify to the fact of Islamic sway over the region now known as Arakan.[17]

The superior ideas, culture, etiquette and ways of life of the Rohingyas to an appreciable extent reacted the Maghs in many ways. The Maghs until this day speak Rohingya as well, the original lingua franca of these two communities in Arakan. The word Arakanese attributed to the Magh alone is highly erroneous. Looking at the past history of Arakan it can legitimately be asserted that if the indigenous Rohingyas cannot claim Arakan as their sacred motherland the Maghs too have no right at all to be the sons of the soil.

" I shall now add three dialects, spoken in the Burma Empire. The first is that spoken by the Mohammadans, who have long settled in Arakan and who call themselves Rooinga, or natives of Arakan," Francio Buchanan, "The languages of Burma,"[18] Asiatic Researches (Calcutta) Vol.5 (1801). In 1795 Francis Buchanan was attached as surgeon to Captain Michael Symes,(Ambassador of British to Burma) Embassy in Ava, the capital of Burma. He used this journey to collect and records information on many aspects of life in Burma and the Andaman Islands.

In a memorandum to the government of the Union of Burma, dated 18th June 1948, Mr. Sultan Ahmed, in his capacity as parliamentary secretary, Ministry of Minorities, it was written that according to history, Islam reached Arakan before 788 A.D. and it attracted the local people to come to the fold of Islam enmasse all over Burma. Since then Islam had played an important part towards the advancement of civilisation in Arakan where Muslims and Buddhists lived side by side for centuries with amity and concord as one family and ruled the country together... The Muslim of north Arakan have been together as a race in a group from time immemorial in a territory included within the union of Burma..... the President of the constituent assembly, at that time His Excellency the President of the Union of Burma, who when approached for clarification with this question (of Rohingya as an indigenous race of Burma) said "Muslims of Arakan certainly belong to one of the indigenous races of Burma, and that if you do not belong to indigenous race of Burma we also can not be taken as indigenous race of Burma". Being satisfied with his kind explanation, the objection put in was withdrawn.[19]

There is a historic stone pillar of Vesali Chandra dynasty (788-957 C.E) known as Vesali stone pillar or Ananda Chandra's Stone Pillar, which now lies close to the Shittaung Phara Pagoda's entrance down the stairway in the old Mrauk-U city. The pillar has inscriptions on three sides - east, west and

northern side. The northern side has a total of 73 lines of inscription of which, 69 lines were written in Proto-Bengali script. In the 42nd line, the name of Arakan (country) was written "Arakandesh". (Dr. Saw Tun Aung: Shittaung Phara Stone Pillar's Northern side Inscription, Rakhine Welfare Association's 25 Anniversary Magazine, P-49, 51 and Pamela Gutman: Ancient Arakan, Ph.D.-Thesis, Australian National University, 1976.)

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Chapter – 3

The settlements of Rohingyas in Arakan

Advent of Islam in Arakan

Dr. Than Tun, the Rector of Mandalay University and former professor of History, Rangoon University wrote that, "The Kings of Arakan had Muslim titles. The Muslim kings mentioned in the inscription might be Rohingya, from the Mayu River, the eastern part of the Naf River, who claimed over thousand years of their existence. Their existence might be from the time of 1202 CE when the Muslim conquered Bengal, that is 800 year ago. In the Kyaukza or stone inscription of 1442, it was written that some Muslim kings of Arakan were the friends of king of Ava. They used to visit. Ava[1] Narameikhla had paid visit to king of Ava. [1(a)]

Islam came to Southeast Asia borne on the seas by Sufis and merchants rather than overland by soldiers brandishing swords. Conversion was by choice, not coercion. This peaceful and gradual Islamisation has moulded the Southeast Asian Muslims' psyche into one, which is cosmopolitan, open-minded, tolerant and amenable to cultural diversity. [2]

In his journey from China to the Levant in 1292, Marco Polo stayed for five months at a city port of Northeast Sumatra called Perlak. He observed:

"That the people of Perlak ... owing to contact with Saracen (Muslim) merchants, who continually resort here in their ships,

they have all been converted to Islam. This applies only to the inhabitants of the city. The people of the mountain live like beasts".[3] According to authentic historical references there is direct evidence of Arabs being in contact with the Far East since 300 A.D as they were a foremost seafaring and maritime people of the ancient time. Since then the Arabs had founded small trading colonies all along the shores of South Asia and South East Asian waters including Arakan up to Sumatra, Java and Moluccas.[4] Then towards the middle of the Seventh Century CE dawned a new day for the Arabs with the rise of Islam as a great spiritual, social and political force. Within hundred years after the Prophet they became masters of a mighty empire greater than that of Rome. Their domination of seas extended from the two Basins of the Mediterranean, down the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean.... The Red Sea was virtually an Arab lake. In the Indian Ocean their political control extended up to the Indus valley. There were numerous Arab settlements with the full enjoyment of their religious and social practices, along the Konkan, Malabar and the Coromendal coasts, in the Maldives and Ceylon, and their commercial activity extended to the Andamans, the Nicobars, the Arakan coast, Malaya, Sumatra and Java. Islam had come to these regions without any political support whatsoever and remained rooted to the soil for centuries, away from the turmoil of Mohammed's invasions of India and the struggle between the Cross and Crescent in the world of the west.[5]

During the same period, Arakanese chronicles states that Muslim Faqirs and Sufis (saints) used to visit the Arakan coast. One of the widely known facts is the existence of Muslim shrines called Bader Mokam which are essentially the commemorative shrines originally erected by the followers of Pir Badruddin Badri-i-Alam popularly known as Pir Bader scattered along the coastline of Arakan.[6] The legendary Hanifa Tonki and Khayafuti Tonki in Mayu mountain, the Shrines of Babaji Shah Monayam of Ambari and Pir Badar Shah at Akyab

all bear evidence of the arrival of mystic saints as early as the 7th Century.[8]

When Hazarat Hanifa, according to Hanifa O Khayafuti Laric "Janganama" by Muktul Hussain, arrived from Korbala, Iraq to Mayu valley the natives were wild cannibals.[9] Their queen was Khayafuti. She was married to Hazarat Hanifa[10] and after embracing Islam the natives became the civilised citizens of the majestic Mayu valley. Hence, from the Kaladan river to the Naf River the whole fertile Mayu valley became a Muslim area. Some say Khayafuti and most of her subjects were Hindus and the rest were Chakmas. The local Hindus believed that Rama and Sita Devi arrived at the southern side of Maungdaw, and her trial of purity was performed there and the place was still known as Sitaforikka para. Some believed that Khayafuti was a Chakma Queen and Manikbi was her ancestor. Some say that her name was not Khayafuti but Khayafuri and she was a fairy and the whole legend was a fairy tale, though there are many Puthi (ancient Bengali history) books telling the story as true supporting Taher Ba Tha of Buthidaung.

The more literate often read out Puthi to the villagers. In recent years, scholars have generally recognised the relevance of indigenous literary sources for writing the history of the people. Puthi in Bengali may literally mean 'a book or ' a manuscript' but the term generally came to be associated with a particular genre composed in verse. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Puthi became almost an exclusive concern of semi-literate Muslims. It became a vehicle for transmitting to the Muslim mass stories relating cultural heritage of Islam as well as the basic issue of their religion.

The Arakanese chronicle further gives reference to the travelling of Muslim mystics in the country during Pagan period. The chronicle while referring to an incident during King Anawrahta's rule (1044-1077) states: "When he (attendant of the king)

entered the forests he found a fakir, possessed of mystic wisdom, dead with marks of violence upon him".[11]

While Burmese King Anawrahta was ruling the Burmese people the Mon King Manuha was ruling the Mon people from Thaton, the then port city. An Arab ship wrecked. And two young Muslim brothers escaped from the jaws of the death with the help of a timber from the wrecked ship. The monk of Thaton took the two brothers, Byawi and Byatta and the clergy adopted them. One day the monk took the two boys to a deep forest where they found a dead body of a Muslim saint. The two brothers grew up and they became famous for their strength of even fighting elephants with bare hands. The king felt envious and afraid of these two Muslim mighty men who might took his throne by force. He had trapped Byawi as he felt in love with the daughter of the king's Prime Minister. Byatta escaped to King Anawrahta. With the help of Byatta, King Anawrahta conquered Thaton and Manuha was taken as prisoner. Byatta was married to a woman from Popa from where he had to carry magnolia flowers seven times a day to the Pagan palace. He had two sons in the service of king Anawrahta's army. With their help King Anawrahta won the battle with Chinese. On their returning journey from China, the two sons of Byatta, Shwe Pyine Gyi and Shwe Pyine Ngay were beheaded by the king because they refused to put bricks on the construction of a Buddhist Pagoda as they were Muslims by faith. It shows that from the very beginning the Burmese were ungrateful toward Muslims. Anawrahta was killed in a fight with a mysterious mad buffalo. There were Muslims residing at Pagan and Popa in those days.

Anawrahta's son Saw Lu was fed milk from the breast of Rahman Khan's mother. Thus King Saw Lu was the foster brother of Rahman Khan. Rahman Khan was the ruler of Pegu. With a minor quarrel Rahman Khan fought with his Mon army and conquered Pagan. But he was defeated by Saw Lu's half brother Kyansistha.[12]

The daughter of Kyansistha was in love with a Muslim prince. The king was unable to agree with his daughter to marry the Muslim prince as his ministers protested the love saying that the country would turn into a Muslim state.[13] (In a statement by General Khin Nyunt, the SLORC Secretary). (With contempt they call Muslim as Kala).

The Muslim prince who was the Majinun to the daughter of Kyansistha, the Laila, might be an Arakanese Muslim prince from Mrauk-U or from Mayu. According to Dr. Than Tun there were Muslim kings who ruled Rohingyas of Mayu valley. There are numerous Rohingyas folk tales supporting it.[14]

On the southern side of the island of Akyab, near the Eastern Shore of the bay, there is situated Bader Mokam, Bader being the name of a saint of Islam, a Mokam, a place of abode. It is said two brothers named Manick and Chan with a vessel with turmeric called at Akyab for water. On the following night, after Chan and Manick had procured water near these rocks, Manick had a dream that the saint Bader Aulia desired him to construct a cave or a place of abode at the locality where they procured water. Manick replied that he had no means wherewith he could comply with the request. Bader then said that all his (Manick's) turmeric would turn into gold. When morning came Manick observing that all the turmeric had been transformed into gold, consulted his brother Chan on the subject of the dream and they conjointly constructed a cave a mosque, and also dug a well at the locality now known as Bader Mokam [15]

There were orders in Persian in the Deputy Commissioner's court at Akyab dated 1834 and also from T.Dickerson Esq. Commissioner of Arakan, to the effect that one Hussain Ally, the then Thugyi of Budamaw circle, was to have charge of the Buddermokam and to enjoy any sums that he might collect on account of alms and offerings.[16]

"About 788 A.D Mahataing Sandya ascended the throne, founded a new city (Vesali) on the side of old Ramawadi and died after a reign of twenty two years. In his reign several ships

were wrecked on Ramree island and the crews said to have been Muhamadens, were sent to Arakan proper and settled in villages."[17]

The Arab merchants and mystics carried out missionary activities among the locals. The superior moral character and high missionary zeal of these devout followers attracted large number of people towards Islam who embraced it enmasse.[18] Many of the early Arabs married locals women and settled in towns and villages permanently. The Arabs and Persians such as Sulayman (AD 851) Yaovbi (AD 880) Masudi (AD 943) Marvazi (AD 1120) Hudud Al Alam (AD 982)[19] and many others used routes over Arakan Yoma to travel to Burma and then to China. They wrote about the relation between Burma and China and internal ethnic groups' relations.[20] The Arabs were said to be in control of the foreign trade of Arakan until recent centuries.[21]

During the successive century the Muslim population grew in large number as a result of conversions, inter-marriage and new immigration. The Rakhine Maghs also graduated themselves in Islamic studies and even embraced Islam in numbers.[22] Muslims inter-married freely with the women of the country who nominally at least become Mussulmans.[23]

The Muhamadans of Arakan, who were bona fide residents though recruited by immigrants from Bengal were for the most part, descendants of slaves captured by the Arakanese and Burmese in their wars with their neighbours. The Arakan kings in former times had possessions all along the coasts as far as Chittagong and Dacca, and many Muhamadans were sent to Arakan as slaves. Large numbers are said to have been brought by Min-Raja-gri after his first expedition to Sandwip. The descendants of the slaves are resident, of the most part in the Kyauktaw and Mrohaung township.[24]

The Indians and the Pakistanis numbering about 1,200,000 who came to Burma (after the British occupation) left the country

decades back. Those who left after 1962 have never been compensated. So to brand the majority of the indigenous Muslims in Burma now as aliens is nothing short of racism.[25]

Joint Magh/Portuguese raids on Bengal continued until the end of the eighteenth century and ceased entirely with the strengthening of the British naval force in the Bay of Bengal. The capture and enslavement of prisoners was one of the most lucrative types of plunder. Half the prisoners taken by the Portuguese and all the artisans among them were given to the king of Arakan. The rest were sold on the market or forced to settle in the villages near Mrohaung. A considerable number of these captives were Muslims. In addition to the Muslim prisoners and slaves brought to Arakan from Bengal and even from North India, many more came to serve as mercenaries in the Arakanese army, usually as the king's body guard.[26]

The main source of information on that period is the Portuguese traveller, Sebastian Manrique, who was in Arakan from 1629 to 1637. Manrique in his book describes the arrival of Muslims and Muslim army unit at the king's court; he mentions important Muslims who were holding key positions in the kingdom and comments on the foreign trade colonies, mostly Muslims, which existed in Arakan. The prisoners were brought from Bengal in Portuguese and Arakanese ships, some of whose sailors were Muslims themselves. Manrique gives a detailed description of a convoy of Muslim prisoners, which he accompanied. He even tried without success to convert the Muslims to Christianity. A conversation, which Manrique had with one of the captives, and which he later recorded, contained a good many Arabic and Persian words and expressions. The captive slaves were settled in special areas guarded by Muslims soldiers.[27]

There was large-scale conversion of Buddhists to Islam. During the successive centuries the Muslim population grew in large numbers as a result of conversion and new immigration. By the Thirteen Century the coast from Assam to Malaya had dotted

with the curious mosque known as Bader Mokam. Doubtless it is Muslim influence which led to women being more secluded in Arakan than in Burma.[28] Even the Buddhist women of those days practised Purda (veil system).

By the 13th century Islam had conquered the heart and soul of the people between Africa's Atlantic seashore to Bengal and from Bengal to Southeast Asia. Arakan's contacts with Muslim India were closer than Burma.[29]

It is noteworthy that the Arakan king, Narameikla, had preferred to take refuge in Muslim Bengal rather than adjacent Buddhist Tripura or Hindu Indian states. His long stay in Bengal has had a tremendous impact in the history of Arakan. "Narameikla had spent the intermediary year at Gaur court learning revolutionary ideas in the fields of Mathematics and natural sciences which together with monotheistic belief fostered the Islamic success. Asia's feudal caste oriented societies could offer no lasting resistance and were unable to halt the eastward surge of this formidable alliance of faith and knowledge.[30]

Two maps in the "Time Atlas of the World History" edited in 1979 by Geoffrey Burraclough clearly indicated Arakan as a Muslim country. Arakan had turned into a Sultanate and Islam had flourished to its zenith. Persian was adopted as a state language, which continued up to 1845. One of the preconditions for Mrauk-U kings before their ascension to the throne of Arakan was that they were to be graduated in Islamic studies. Coins, medallions and state emblems were inscribed with 'Kalima' (the profession of Faith in Islam) and "Aqimuddin"(establishment of God's rule over the earth) in Arabic script.

Thadomintra (1645-1652) succeeded Narapati. During his reign relation with the Dutch deteriorated and ordered to the closer of the Dutch factory at Mrauk-U. It may be mentioned that when the Dutch Industrialists were ordered to quit Arakan they were afraid of leaving behind their offspring through local wives for

fear of their conversion to Islam. A relevant position of information containing in the Dutch Dagh register on Bativia runs as follows:" Another important demand was for the extradition to Bativia of all the children born to the Dutch of Arakanese Magh mothers. It had been reported at Bativia that these children were being brought up as Muslims and the pious Dutch Calvinists were extremely horrified". Since they are reported to be brought up as Muslims, the influence of Muslims were much greater than Buddhists.

According to the author of the "Time Atlas of World History" Muslim rule in Arakan had already been established before Narameikla fled to Bengal. Muslim kings of Arakan used to visit to Ava as was written in the Kyaukza (stone plates) inscription of 1442, as state guest of kings of Ava.

One of the coins of Sultan Ali Shah (Thatasa- 1525 CE) found at Mrauk-U, inscribed in Persian, in the obverse side, read as follows:

"There is no God but Allah, Mohammad the Messenger of Allah. May Allah perpetuate his kingdom." On the reverse side, also inscribed in Persian, it reads as "Sultan Alı Shah, father of the victorious May Allah perpetuate his kingdom."

The eleven kings, who ruled Arakan for one hundred years (1430-1530) from Sultan Sulayman Shah to Sultan Ali Shah, were feudatory to Bengal. From the time of Min Bin (Zabuk Shah 1531-1553) Arakan was no more feudatory to Bengal. The south-eastern district of Bengal, Chittagong, came under the sway of Zabuk shah around 1540. Even after becoming independent from Bengal Sultans, Arakanese kings had continued the custom of using Muslim titles, inscribing Kalema in coins, using Persian as state language and graduating in Islamic studies.

Apart from the position of ruler many important posts like Chief Minister, Senior Minister, secretaries, Governors, Qazis

(Judges), court poets, Doctors and army generals are also Muslims. The Chief Minister of Salim Shah II (Thiri Thudamma), according to Dagh register of Dutch in Bativia, was a Muslim named Lascar Zuzil (Wazir). According to Guerreio, a certain 'Rumi' exercised considerable power over the king. The works of Daulat Qazi and Alawal give reference to a number of Muslims holding important posts by persons like, Lashkar Wazir, Ashraf Khan, Qureishi Magan Thakur, Sulayman, Sayed Musa, Sayed Mohammad Khan, Navraj Majlis, Sayed Shah etc. (Dr. S.B. Qanungo - A History of Chittagong Vol.1, p-291)

Of the Muslim poets who found patronage at the palace of Arakan the most notable are Daulat Qazi, Alawal, Magan Siddiqi (Thakur) and Mardan. Daulat Qazi wrote his "Sati Mayna O Lor Chandrani" at the request of Ashraf Khan, who was the Chief Minister and defense Minister of Salim Shah II. Ashraf Khan patronised many other Muslim immigrants - Sayyids, Sheiks, Mughals and Pathans.

Daulat Qazi died before he could complete the work, which was subsequently completed by Alawal. Alawal's father was a courtier or minister of Fathabad (Faridpur). On a trip to lower Bengal by boat, the Portuguese pirates attacked Alawal and his father. The father fought and was killed by the pirates and the wounded Alawal was taken prisoner to Arakan. Later he became a cavalry officer of the king of Arakan.

One of the most glorious periods of Bengali literature was the seventeenth century. It was indeed a golden age. The romantic Bengali literature free from unnecessary divine or religious sentiments began in the hands of the Muslims poets at the court of Arakan. Their works corroborate some facts about Arakan and its history. Their poems in the seventeenth century have left clear records of the reigning monarchs of Arakan.

Daulat Qazi wrote his Sati Mayna O Lor Chandrani at the request of Ashraf Khan, the Chief Minister of Salim Shah II

(Thiri Thudama) 1622-1638. This great work of Daulat begins with a graphic picture of the capital of Arakan of the king and his chief minister and of the people of the country in general. The chief minister was Ashraf Khan and in whose able hands the reins of monarchy were entrusted for the major period of the king's reign. In this context Daulat writes that "the great king (Thiri Thudama or Salim Shah II) knowing that his life would come to an end, transferred the rule of the kingdom to the hands of his minister Ashraf Khan".

According to history, the coronation of Salim Shah II was deferred for twelve years, in pursuance of an astrological prediction that the king would die within a year of his coronation. Alawal mentioned that the kingdom of Arakan was entrusted to the joint rule of the son and the daughter of the Thado Mintra, after his death. The daughter and the Chief Minister, Magan Thakur, had very important roles in the administration of the state. Another minister Sulayman of the king Sanda Thudama also figures very prominently in one of the Alawal's works.

Alawal, was not only a good army officer, but also was a man of literature, a great scholar, writer, poet and musicians, well-versed in Arabic, Persians, Pali, Sanskrit, Bengali, Rohingya, Rakhine, Hindi and Urdu. Soon his qualities attracted the Chief Minister of Arakan Magan Siddiqi (Thakur). Magan himself was a scholar and a poet. Under his patronage, Alawal wrote, "Padmavati" a famous Hindu romantic epic by Malik Mohammad Jaisi, in Bengali. Alawal turned the mystic idea and supernatural ornamentation of Jaisi into human life and activities. His next work was "Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal" based on "Arabian Nights". This was followed by "Haft Paikar (seven Portraits)" based on the Persian poet Nizam Ganjabı's work of the same name.

Alawal was arrested on alleged involvement in the Shah Shuja revolt instigated by Mirza. But Qazi (Justice) Masud Shah and Minister Sulayman Siddiqi released him. At the latter'

request Alawal composed the "Tuhfa" based on Yusuf Gada's Persian work of the same name. In his old age Alawal was promoted noble or minister. He also wrote "Sikandarnama" and many other poems in his old age.

The incident of Shah Shuja had been recorded by Shah Alawal in his two later works "Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal" and "Sikandar Nama" composed in 1669 and 1673 respectively as follows:

Saiful Mulk Badiuzzamal

After this Shah Shuja, the king of the kings, came to the city of Rosango accidentally. He quarreled with the king of Rosango,....Most of them got death punishment..... A sinner, Mirza, did harm to many men like Yazid, the son of a slave girl. Got many men arrested telling lies. Many men lost their lives untimely due to him. The sinner made me a culprit too. And I was thrown into the prison without any justice, torture, and pain, affliction I got, For fifty days I was living in a womb. God saved me as I had longevity. But I am now earning my bread by seeking alms. (Arakan, Sept. 3, 1993)

Dara Sekandar Nama

In this way I spent sometime in happiness, But unfortunately I was implicated in troubles at last, Shah Shuja came to Rosango accidentally. All his foolish counsellors befogged him, All caused his destruction due to his own fault. A sinner falsely accused me, I was thrown into the prison without any justice. He was ultimately impaled who defamed me. My residence and other dwelling were destroyed, I was tortured like any thing at an evil place, My life became miserable due to begging and ill repute. With my wife and son I had to depend on others. Some great men still loved me because of my parts. My son and wife paid off taxes by seeking alms. In this way I spent eleven years, After which the sun of my fortune rose again. (Arakan, Sept. 3, 1993)

Poet Marden stated his birthplace to be Kanchipuri in Arakan where there lived a number of Ulamas and Sheikhs. He wrote an epic entitled "Nasib Nama". Another Muslim poet was Abdul Karim Khandakar. He said that his great grandfather Rasul Mia was a custom officer of Arakan Port. His grandfather Masan Ali was an interpreter at the port. His father Ali Akbar also was a man of learning. Abdul Karim received the patronage of one wealthy merchant named Sadiq Nana Atibar.

Speaking about a village named Bandar in Roshang (Arakan) Abdul Karim says, "There lived in that village Qazis, Muftis, Ulema, Pir and Sufis. Those high ranking Muslims used to converse with the kings on equal and friendly terms. Whenever a poor man happened to visit the village, he was never returned empty handed. For saying prayers a mosque was built there by Sadiq Nana Atiabar.

For this act he became well known in the society. There gathered a good number of Ulamas in the village who supervised the regular saying of prayers. One of them was appointed as Khatib, while another was appointed Imam."

Other well-known Muslim poets of the Arakan court were Shamser Ali, Quraishi, Aminuddin, Syed Nasir and Abdul Gani and etc. Some of the prominent Judge in the history of Arakan are: Daulat Qazi, Gawa Qazi,Shuzu Qazi, Abdul Karim, Masud Shah, Mohammad Hussain, Osman Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Gaffer Mohammad Yusuf, Rawsan Ali and Nur Mohammad etc..

Since Naramiekhla, the whole kingdom was a feudatory of the sultans of Bengal. He turned away from what was Buddhist and familiar to what was Muhamadan and foreign. In so doing he loomed from the mediaeval to the modern, from the fragile fairyland of "the glass Palace Chronicle" to the robust extravaganza of "the Thousand Nights and One Nights". (JBRS).

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Chapter-4

Islamic Civilisation

And

The Renaissance of Arakan

After the downfall of the Roman Empire Muslim civilisation extended from Cordova to Dacca. An average observer of the period would have seen nothing in the world but the triumph of Islam. From all points of view, military, political and cultural, the Muslim Sultanates were in the vanguard of civilisation. For every other state they represented modernity as western countries now represent what is modern for Asia and Africa. Bengal was absorbed into this great polity in 1203.[1]

After the Mongolian invasion, the five centuries that followed the arrival of Tibeto-Burmans in Arakan were an age of darkness. A new dynasty was founded in the city of Parim. King Gaulya ascended the throne in 1133 C.E. Numerous dynasties ruled during the ensuring centuries each with its own city. Till 1287 Arakan had been more or less feudatory to Pagan kings. [2]

After 1287 there was no Burmese over-lordship till 1374. In that year some Rakhine Maghs went to Ava and invited them to invade Arakan. But the Burmese intervention did not last long.[3] In 1404 Narameikhla was the king of Arakan ruling from Launggret. Again another batch of disgruntled Magh Buddhists went to Ava and asked for intervention. Under the growing Islamic influence world wide, which had conquered the heart

and soul of the people from the Atlantic to the Indus and the Ganges and from the Ganges beyond the strait of Malacca, Narameikhla might have been impressed by Islam. This enraged the fanatic Buddhists to the extent of surrendering their independence by inviting Buddhist Burmese from the other side of the Arakan hills.[4]

The king of Ava, Minkhaung, sent his son Minye Kyaw Swa, the heir apparent to the throne of Ava, to invade Arakan in 1406. The deposed Arakanese king Narameikhla fled to Bengal and was received by Sultan Giyazuddin Azam Shah (1390-1411). The Sultan was a great advocate of Islam and Islamic learning. After his death a Hindu courtier, Raza Ganesh, usurped the throne for a while. He was killed by his converted son, Jallauddin Mohammad Shah who shifted the capital from Pandua (Firozabad) to Gaur. That kingdom had been independent of the Sultanate of Delhi for eighty-six years. It was one of the many sovereign states of the world wide Muslim polity. The Arakanese king remained there for twenty-four years, learning revolutionary ideas in the fields of Mathematics and natural science, which together with monotheistic belief fostered the Islamic success.

During his long 24 years in exile the Arakanese monarch had the opportunity to live closely with two most learned and pious Sultans of Bengal and Noor Kutb Alam, the famous spiritual leader, who brought down the rule of Raja Ganesh. He learned many things from the culturally superior Bengal Sultans and above all, Islam the dynamic socio-cultural and political force of the day.

He turned away from what was Buddhist to Mohammedan. In so doing he loomed from the medieval to the modern, from the fragile fairyland of the glass palace Chronicle to the robust extravaganza of the Thousand Nights and one Night. [5]

In 1426 Narameikhla took the title of Sulayman Shah. The Arakanese Chronicle corrupted it to Sawmuan.[6] The king of

Bengal, dispatched his military commander of Chittagong Gen. Wali Khan, at the head of 50,000 soldiers to conquer Arakan and reinstate Sulayman Shah on the throne.

Wali Khan drove away the Burmans but took control of power himself. Sulayman Shah returned to Gaur. In Arakan Wali Khan introduced Persian in his court and appointed Qazis.[7] On learning the king of Bengal sent a second batch of army under Gen. Sandi Khan who over-threw Wali Khan and restored Sulayman Shah to the throne in 1430 C.E.

Arakanese history narrate the story of Narameikhla as follows:

When Longgeret dynasty's last king Thingathu died, Narameikhla, the son of his elder brother, Razathu, ascended the throne of Longgeret. Saw Pu Nyo, the sister of Anandathein (the governor of Dallah) was very beautiful and Narameikhla was mad for her. Being unable to control himself, he took her as his queen after a forced divorce from her husband. Anandathein was furious. He took it as a great insult to the courtiers, people and to himself. So, he sought assistance from Burmese King of Ava, Min Khong.

King Min Khong, considering the previous infiltration of Arakanese king Hla Ra Giri to Yaw, Saw and Long Shay, the request of Anandathein and his own lust for expansion of his territory, sent his 13 years old son Min Ye Kyaw Swa, as the head of 30,000 soldiers, to Arakan in 1404 A.D. He conquered Arakan. The deposed king, Narameikhla, fled to Bengal and took refuge at the court of Sultan Giazuddin Azam Shah. His younger brother Naranu fled to Hanthawadi and took refuge at the court of Mon (Talaing) king Razadirize.

When King Min Khong received the news of victory, the king gave his daughter, Shwe Pyi Chan Tha, in marriage with Anawratha Saw, the governor of Kalay, and sent him to Arakan to replace his son. But his tyrannical rule was unbearable to the people of Arakan. At this Naranu requested help from Mon king

Razadirize, who sent Mon and Muslim army - both land and naval forces to Arakan. They conquered Arakan and Naranu ascended the throne of Longgret. Anawratha Saw and Shwe Pyi Chan Tha were taken captives to Hanthawadi where the former was put down to death and the latter was made queen.

King Min Khong, on hearing the fall of his son-in-law sent again Min Ye Kyaw Swa to Arakan. He again captured Arakan and Naranu fled to the upper part of Kassapa Nadi (Kaladan River). Mon soldiers came again to drive the Burmese. In this way Arakan became the battlefield of Burmese and Mon.

While Narameikhla was serving at the army of Sultan Azam Shah, the Indian King of Delhi (according to Rakhine Razawin, the king of Janpur, Sultan Ebrahim) invaded the Sultanate of Bengal. Narameikhla fought back with full of valour and skill and won the battle, The king was very pleased and called him son, and Narameikhla called the king, father, which was written by Sayadaw U Nyana in his Danyawadi Razawin Theik (The Modern History of Arakan). Their relation became as father and son, Since then, fraternity began to develop between Rakhine and Muslim Rohingyas. Hence, Rakhine Maghs and Muslims became brothers and sisters.

Then Narameikhla pleaded help from the king to take back his lost throne of Longgret. The King sent Gen. Wali Khan at the head of 50,000 Pathan army with Narameikhla to restore him the throne of Arakan. The Pathan army crossed to Arakan through Golangi pass and Wali Khan (later Ali Khan) pass. They conquered Arakan and Narameikhla ascended the throne at Longgret.

Soon Wali Khan and Narameikhla had a dispute. Wali Khan arrested Narameikhla and locked up fettering him at Balouchaung. Sir Arthur Phayer wrote that Gen. Walikhan arrested Narameikhla with the collaboration of Magh Chief who was Narameikhla's enemy (may be Anandathein). Gen. Wali Khan ruled the country for one year, He introduced Persian in

the court of Arakan, which lasted till 1846, and appointed Qazis - Muslim judges.

From the upper Kissapa Nadi (Kaladan River) Naranu came down and rescued Narameikhla from the lock-up at Balouthoung. He went straight to Sultan Giazuddin Mohammed Shah and reported the matter. The king became furious and sent his ministers of right hand and left hand, such as Dampasu, Razamani, Setta Khan with an army larger than that of Gen. Wali Khan under the command of Gen. Sandi Khan. They defeated Walikhan and throned Narameikhla with the title of Min Sulayman Shah (in Rakhine Razawin, Min saw Mon) at Longgret in 1430. A.D. and sent back Gen., Wali Khan to Bengal.

Min Saw Mun or Sulayman Shah shifted his capital to a new site known as Mrauk-U or Mrohaung or Roshanga in 1433. As Pathan soldiers of Gen. Sandi Khan were faithful to him, Narameikhla not only kept them in his army but also deployed them at all important and strategic places and all bordering areas. They lived in Arakan and faithfully served. Though the religion of Islam and the culture of Muslim began with the arrival of Arabs, but it came to prominence with the arrival of Gouri Pathan armies of Gen. Wali Khan and Sandi Khan.

It is noteworthy that one of the Sultan's coins was found near the site of Mrauk-U. It is a unique document in the history of Arakan. When the Muslim entered Bengal in 1203, they introduced inscriptional types of coinage that the coinage of Mrauk-U was subsequently modelled on. In this way Arakan became oriented towards the Muslim civilisation resulting in a renaissance of Arakan. The country's great age began. [8]

Shin Arahan would have found himself as much out of place at the court of Gaur as St. Bernard in the University of Cordoba. To avoid such a sensation and snatch advantage from change the Arakanese had to forsake a tradition in ideas, and bring themselves up to date. They had to learn the history of recent

events, the meaning and the triumph of Islam. It took the Arakanese a hundred years to learn the doctrine from the Muslims. For the hundred years, 1430 to 1530, Arakan remained feudatory to Bengal, paid tribute and learnt history and politics.

Eleven kings successively ruled Arakan for the hundred years. They were:-

1.	Sulayman Shah	(Narameikhla)	1430-1434
2.	Ali Khan	(Men Khari (a) Naranu)	1434-1454
3.	Kalima Shah	(Ba Saw Pru)	1459-1482
4.	Mathu Shah	(Doulya)	1482-1492
5.	Mohammed Shah	(Ba Saw Nyo)	1492-1493
6.	Nori Shah	(Ran Aung)	1493-1494
7.	Sheikh Modullah Shah	(Salimgathu)	1494-1501
8.	Ili Shah	(Meng Raza)	1501-1523
9.	Ilyas Shah	(Kasabadi)	1523-1525
10.	Jalal Shah	(Men Saw Oo)	1525-
11.	Ali Shah	(Thatasa)	1525-1531

Some Arakanese kings with Muslim tittles ruled for another hundred years were:-

12.	El Shah Azad	(Min Khong Raza)	1531
13.	Zabuk Shah	(Min Bin (a) Min Pa Gri)	1531-1553
14.	Daud Khan	(Min Dikha)	1553-1555
15.	Sikandar Shah	(Min Phalaung)	1571-1593
16.	Salim Shah	(Min Raza Gri)	1593-1612
17.	Hussain Shah	(Min Khamaung)	1612-1622
18.	Salim Shah II	(Thiri Thudama)	1622-1638

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Chapter-5

Arakanese Empire

Zabuk Shah (1531-1553)

In 1531 Zabuk Shah ascended the throne. He was one of the strongest rulers in the history of Arakan. With him the Arakanese graduated in their Muslim studies and the 'Arakanese Empire' was founded. (JBRS Vol-II, P-493)

In Mr. Htoon Aung Gyaw's collection is one of Minbin's coins. It presents a succinct commentary on the sudden rise of ' Arakan to importance' in the Bay. On one side of it is inscribed the word 'Minbin' and on the reverse Zabuk Shah. So ' Arakan had turned into a Sultanate'. (JBRS Vol-II, P-494)

Copying the imperial court of Delhi, the kings[8] of Arakan adopted the title of Padshah.[9] At that time Arakan was only second to Delhi.

Two chances were blessed to Zabuk Shah, which he boldly exploited and yielded a great profit. The events, which gave Zabuk Shah necessary weapons and opportunity to consolidate and enlarge his empire, were the arrival of Portuguese and civil war in Bengal.

The Portuguese had already entered Arakan port in 1517, fourteen years before Minbin's accession. He turned Mrauk-U into the strongest fortified city of the Bay, employing the Portuguese to lay out his walls and moats and to forge and mount his cannon. He appointed them as military officers to train and equipped a mercenary army of heterogeneous races, foreign and domestic. Zabuk Shah built, with their aid a large

fleet manned with his own men who were hardy boatmen, but guided and stiffened by Portuguese mariners. Zabuk Shah, in this way became master of a powerful modern weapon.

The Arakanese sharpened by the second chance of opportunity was the civil war in Bengal. Sher Shah, an Afghan, captured Gaur in March 1538 for a while. But in July of the same year the Mughals under Humayun entered Gaur, displacing the independent dynasty. But he could not maintain himself against the pretender Sher Shah. During the whole of Zabuk Shah reign the administration of Bengal was interrupted by that struggle and eastern Bengal was virtually defenceless. Zabuk Shah took the opportunity without delay. With a combined fleet and army movement he occupied Eastern Bengal which remained under Arakan for the next hundred and twenty years, till 1666. Its administration was left in the hands of twelve local rajahs, who paid tribute to the Arakanese king.

While Zabuk Shah was engaged in war with invading Burmese King Tabin Shweti in 1546-47 the Tripura king Bijoymaniky invaded and occupied Chittagong and the Pattan chief regained his position.[10]

Zabuk Shah was able to fuse diverse elements into a particular style. Arakan had turned into a 'Sultanate'. The court was shaped on Gaur and Delhi, there were the slaves and the executioner (JBRS Vol-II, P-494). There was freedom of religion, movement and culture. Zabuk Shah embellished Mrauk-U with mosques, pagodas and monuments which were neither Indo-Islamic nor Indian but of a particular type came to be known as 'Bengali Muslim architecture' of the Muslim Bengal period. Zabuk Shah died in 1553.

Sikandar Shah (1571-1593)

After an interregnum of misrule by usurpers for more than two decades Sultan Sikandar Shah (Min Phalaung), the son of Zabuk Shah ascended the throne. Sikandar Shah captured Chittagong

from Tripuras. The significant result was that the age long rivalry between Arakanese and the Tripuras for the supremacy over Chittagong came to end.

Following the occupation of Chittagong the Arakanese now felt directly exposed to the Mughal threat. He therefore, relied on the assistance of Portuguese. Facilities were given in exchange. However, the Portuguese were later found to be disloyal for which there was strained relations.

Salim Shah (1593-1612)

Sikandar Shah was succeeded by his son Salim Shah (Min Raja Gri) in 1593. If Zabuk Shah founded the prosperity of Mrauk-U, Salim Shah, his successor of forty years later, may be said to have consolidated it. In 1576 central and western Bengal was under Akbar, the great Mughal king. The Arakanese in Eastern Bengal were now bordering with the Mughal. The Mughal regarded the entire Bengal as their rightful territory. Hence Mrauk-U kingdom had to guard the frontier well. But it was not feasible to do so with the regular army alone. Arrangements were, therefore, made with other Portuguese for this purpose. They were not from his army at home. They were Portuguese mariners who had been to found a trade settlement and refitting base near Chittagong. It was agreed between them and the king that they would protect the frontier against the Mughal in return for all the trade openings their positions at Chittagong afforded. On the other hand the king appointed his brother and relatives to closely watch the activities of the Portuguese, who were treacherous and on at least one occasion they had to punish them by burning their settlement. On another occasion Don Gonsales Tibau who belong to an outside set of Portuguese attacked Mrauk-U. He was repulsed and defeated in his own independent island at the mouth of the Ganges. Thus, Mrauk-U was strong enough to keep the Portuguese in order, the policy of posting them on the northern frontier was a right one.

Salim Shah's (Razagri) reign was the first and only period in its history when Arakan was able not only to repulse the Burmese but even to annex part of Burma. Razagri Salim Shah, in alliance with Ava, took Pegu. On the division of the spoils the strip up to and including Syriam and Moulmein was added to his long coastline. This campaign was rendered possible by his excellent navy and Razagri Salim Shah in appointing the Portuguese de Brito, as Governor of Syriam was repeating the policy of the north west frontier.

For a short period during the reign of Razagri Salim Shah Arakan extended from Dacca and the Sundarbans to Moulmein a coast strip of a thousand miles in length and varying from 150 to 20 miles in depth.[12]

This large domination was built up by means of the strong cosmopolitan army and navy organised by Zabuk Shah and by inducing the Portuguese outside his army to fight for him in return for trade concessions. During the short years of its greatness, the century from 1540 to 1640, it was brilliant and imposing. Copying the imperial court of Delhi its kings adopted the tittle of Padshah. The French traveller Fyiard, who was in India at the time, sums up its position in the Bay as second only to that of the Mughal. Arakan at that time was at its highest destiny.

The coins of Sultans were inscribed with a precise inscription in useful and sufficient Persian lettering. With Akbar and his successors the script becomes a fine art. Imperial cursive, whirling under the eye, it has a living beauty. The coin of Razagri Salim Shah, on the obverse is his title in Burmese, on the reverse in Persian and Nagari. The style is essentially that of the Sultanates. From 1540 to 1640 it was the heyday of Arakan.

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Chapter-6

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF ARAKANESE EMPIRE

Since the time of Salim Shah II(Thiri Thudamma)(1622-1638), Portuguese piratical activities increased in the Bay. The Portuguese freebooters committed in-human atrocities in lower Bengal with the cooperation of the Magh raiders. They seized from the riverbank goods and persons. Large numbers of these latter were sold in Arakan, where the rice crop was sown and reaped by them. But it was a short-sighted policy for the kings of Arakan to annoy so strong a neighbouring state as the Mughal empire. However, Salim Shah II sent an envoy to the Mughal prince, Shah Jahan, who came to Dhaka in 1624 for a while. Salim Shah with great humanity, prayed that he should be considered as loyal vassal and he swore by God, the Almighty, that he would serve loyally whenever he should be summoned for any work.[13] This was only a tactic but he continued his father's policy of aggressive raids into Bengal as soon as Shah Jahan retired from the province. Shah Jahan came to Bengal in rebellion against his father in a palace intrigue. Shah Jahan's rebellion, followed by Bengal viceroy Mohabat Khan's coup, had brought Bengal in turmoil. Taking advantage of it, the king of Arakan raided Bhula, plundered the territory and then retired with a rich booty.[14] When Mohabat was away, he led another expedition into Bengal, advanced as far as Dhaka and, "entered the city, burnt and looted it and retired with a large number of captives."[15]

Salim Shah II (Thiri Thudamma) also had good relations with the Dutch at Batavia who were in urgent need of regular supplies of rice and slaves for their Indonesian settlements. The

Dutch opened a factory at Mrauk-U.[16] During his reign terrible famine visited Arakan in 1631-35 C.E.[17] The price shot up to four times of the normal price. The famine was due to crop failures of the successive years.

After Thiri Thudamma the usurping kings were unable to control the Portuguese or did not try to control them. These foreigners had established an independent state on the Bengal border. So intolerable a condition of affairs could not last. It was only a question of time when the Mughal would move. As soon as Aurangzeb had secured the throne, he sent to Bengal a strong governor, Shaistah Khan with instructions to stop the piracy.

Shaistah Khan made it clear to a certain section of the Portuguese bandits that the whole force of the empire would now be used to suppress them, but if they liked to come over to his side before he attacked, they would be given rewards greater than they had received from the king of Arakan, and in 1665 many came over.

With the death of Salim Shah II in a palace intrigue in 1638 the period of Arakan's greatness came to an end and the period of decline began. He was succeeded by his son Meng Sani but was murdered by his Queen's paramour, Nga Ku Tha, the governor of Lamgrat. Nga Ku Tha was imprisoned and Min-Sa-gwe the son of the murdered sovereign, proclaimed king, but only to be poisoned within seven days by his mother, who by her intrigues succeeded in effecting the release of Nga Ku Tha, whom she married and ascended the throne. [18]

The Arakanese king closed the Dutch factory in Mrohaung as the relations with the Dutch deteriorated. The people of Arakan suffered much as a result of the king's misrule. There was internal disturbance and the king had to rely on the Portuguese. Chittagong was turned into a haunted place of Portuguese and Rakhine Magh pirates and free booters.[19] The Arakanese king had also committed the folly of making a naval raid into the southern part of Barisal district where they had been defeated.

According to Alawal, with Narapatigyi on the throne (in 1638), the direct dynasty of Zabuk Shah (Min Bin) became extinct. After the death of Narapatigyi (1635-1645) his son, Thado Min Tara (1645-1652) ascended to the throne. Salim Shah II was succeeded by his son Meng Sani but was murdered by a commoner who usurped the throne with the title of Narapati. He tried to win the support of the people but failed to achieve. The late King's brother, Matak Rai (Kamal), the viceroy of Chittagong, attempted to oust the usurper. Kamal failed in his attempt and took refuge at Jahangirnagar with his family and nearly 9,000 of his Arakanese followers. Narapati sent a naval expedition with more than 650 vessels to get hold of Kamal. Islam Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal, met the threat with his army and navy and the Arakanese fleet withdrew from the estuary of the river. (Abd al-Hamid Lahori, Badshah Nama P. 118-120 - History of the Muslims of Bengal Vol 1A, by Dr. Mohammad Mohar Ali p.369)

Narapati was succeeded by Thadomintra in 1645. During his reign relation with the Dutch deteriorated, The Dutch factory in Mrohaung was closed down by the king's order. The situation was chaotic. Alawal writes that the people had left the country in panic. A feeling of safety returned with the succession of the new king Sanda Thudama. The exact works of the poet in this context are, "All those who had gone away to different countries in fear of the former king and had suffered from sorrow and grief, now returned.... and forget the sorrow of this place which had gone wrong....."(J.A.S.B.XV-1846 p-235 and Missing links in Arakan History - S.N Ghosal - p- 263).

Thadomintra had relied on Portuguese for the protection of Chittagong from Mughal penetration. His exclusive dependence upon the Portuguese for the defence of Chittagong turned the port town virtually to a haunt of Portuguese freebooters. (A History of Chittagong by S.B. Quanungo Vol.I p-272).

Alawal writes that, "... The King (Thadomintra) sat on his throne in all his royal splendour while people from all parts of the work poured down into the capital.....The King's army and navy were strong and vast, the very sight of which struck terror into the heart of the enemy. His hunting expeditions were gigantic in size and character..." (Missing links in Arakan History by S.N. Ghoshal P-259-60).

Alawal's Padmavati was composed in the court of Arakan during the reign of Thadomintra (1645-1652) at the request of his chief minister Magan Thakur, who was a poet himself. Alawal pictures him as a very important personage at the palace of Arakan. The rule of the kingdom was vested in Magan. His influence continued the reign of Sanda Thudama. Another minister Sulayman, of Sanda Thudama, who was a best friend of Magan was also mentioned in one of Alawal's works. (Missing links in Arakan History by S.N. Ghoshal P-264)

According to Daulat Kazi, "..... The king made Ashraf Khan his chief minister and the commander of his army..... One day king Thiri Thudama (Salim Shah II)... went on hunting expedition ... with his army..... The king with his army stayed there for four months. The chief minister returned to his court with the permission of the king.... When Ashraf Khan sat in court the Mughal, the Pathans and numerous Hindus... sat in rows..... Ashraf Khan was like full moon in its sixteen parts." Ashraf Khan was virtually in charge of conducting all state affairs.(Missing links in Arakan History by S.N. Goshal P-258).

In 1652, Sanda Thudama son of Thadomintra, became king of Arakan. The Dutch reopened their factory at Mrohaung after concluding an agreement with Batavia. Magan Thakur, the Chief minister since his father's reign and his sister had an important role in the state affairs. During the reign of Sanda Thudama the fugitive prince of Delhi, Shah Shuja came to Arakan on 26 August 1660. The king warmly received him, but soon all of a sudden the attitude of the king changed and

massacred Shuja with his family members and many Muslims suspected to be Shuja's supporters. The reason was not clearly given by Alawal. The lines written by Alawal are as follows:

"..... It was by chance that I had come to the city of Rosanga ... subsequently the great king Shuja came there..... He had difference with the king of Rosanga and Shuja's downfall came... All the Muslims who stood by his side give their lives in the hands of the Lord of Rosanga. The Royal official, Mirza who had difference with me reported to the king about my involvement in the treason. So I was put into prison. In the long last, where the king knew everything... this villain met his death on the stake spoiling many lives..." (S.M.B. pp.175-177)

Even if the charge brought against Shuja was treason, but it is not clear whether the charge itself was false and cooked up, or real or Shuja was also a victim of conspiracy hatched by the said villain Mirza or Mir Jumla had bribed to accuse Shuja falsely and destroy him or Mirza acted at the direction of the king in planned way. The plight of Shuja is discussed in the following chapter.

According to Shah Alawal's ***Sikander Nama***, Srimata Majlis became a ***Mahamatya*** or Chief or Prime Minister of Roshang after the death of Prime Minister Sayyid Musa. Hearing the name and fame of Alawal, Nabaraj Mujlis called the poet to his court and gave him much support, so much so that Shah Alawal was able to clear the state dues. Once Prime Minister sat in the assembly of learned men, arranged foods and drinks for the guests. Those present in the assembly praised the Prime Minister for his good works, particularly the construction of Mosques and excavation of tanks. In reply Nabaraj Majlis said that mosques and tanks were not permanent. In old days great men did these beneficial works, but they did not last. Only books have lasted, books pleased the readers, books impart education. Illiterate people became learned by reading books; books and poets are honoured not only in their own country but

also out side, and books last until the day of resurrection. The book ***Sikandernama*** was completed by Shah Alawal in 1673 AD.

Nabaraj Majlis was so important a personality that he administered the coronation oath to the king Sanda Thudhamma. Shah Alawal says about this: "The great religious king had a Prime Minister known as Nabaraj Majlis. Now, I will tell something about Majlis. When the king died, the crown prince came to sit on the throne. Out side the throne, he stood facing the east. The Majlis wore his dress and standing before the prince advised him, "Treat the people as your sons, do not deceive upon the people. According to religious rites, be just in state duties, and see that the strong do not oppress the weak. Be kind, be true to your religion, be kind to good people, and punish the wicked. Try to forgive and do not be impatient, do not punish anybody for the past offence". The king accepted all this principles, then bade Salam to the Majlis and then all others of the family of his mother.

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Chapter-7

The Most Bizarre Episode

'Shah Shuja's flight to Arakan'

The most bizarre episode in the history of Arakan was the tragedy of Shah Shuja. In 1660 Shah Shuja having been utterly defeated by his brother Aurungzeb was driven to seek refuge in Arakan. On the frontier he was received by an envoy who assured him of welcome, and on reaching the capital he and his family and followers were met by an escort who conducted them to quarters set apart for them. The king of Arakan promised him to provide ships to take him to Makkah where he wished to spend his last days. He appeared there on August 26, 1660. Eight months passed and the promise had not been kept. The Magh king wanted to marry Shuja's daughter, grab his great valuables and treasures.

At that time the king of Arakan was dependent for its financial resources on the shares of booty, plundered treasures, merchandise and slaves pirated from the sea or from the coastal regions of Bengal. So the king casted a coveted eye on the treasures carried by Shuja with him. Khafi Khan says that boats loads of Shuja's personnel effects, vessels of gold and silver, jewels, treasure and other valuable were taken away. Manucci also speaks of the rich treasure carried by Shuja and one Portuguese Manoel Coelhohad 'pinched' not less than 23 tons of treasure from the boat of which he was commander. Bowrey says: "Shuja's store of treasure, viz. gold and silver rupees, vast riches in jewels, namely diamonds, rubies, and pearls, which caused ..... his destruction. [20]

According to Alexander Hamilton, Shuja carried six or eight camels' load of gold and jewels, which proved his ruin.[21]

Mir Jumla, the new Subahdar of Bengal demanded from the king of Arakan, extradition of Shuja. He tried both by fair and foul means to get back Shuja from Arakan. He offered the king of Arakan large sums of money. Mir Jumla also wrote letters to the king of Arakan threatening to invade his country and taking possession of Shuja by force.

Mir Jumla's threat of an invasion of Arakan had changed the attitude of the king of Arakan towards Shuja, the period of his hospitality was over. He had to take defensive measures against Mir Jumla. It was due to Shuja's presence he had to incur extra expenditure for the security of his country.

A second point of conflict arose out of protocol. Shuja should visit the royal court as a suppliant, a refugee or one protected. The Mughals were a highly cultured people and they considered the Maghs as savages. Jahangir the emperor wrote in his memoir about the Maghs: ... "Briefly they are animals in the form of men." Jahangir' observation about the Maghs of Arakan were accepted by others. Manucci, also observed that "The inhabitants are as barbarous as the tiger, elephants, rhinoceroses and buffaloes which dwell in its jungles."[22] It is therefore understood why Shuja did not visit the king. It is also probable that Shuja was afraid of being seized if he visited the court because as Bernier states, "Mir Jumla had offered the king large sum of money and other advantages on condition of his delivering up the prince". Though Shuja did not visit the court himself, he sent his son to deputise him, who, "as he approached the palace, bestowed largesse to the people, throwing among them half rupees, and also whole rupees, both of gold and silver, and when he came before the king, presented him with various rich brocades and rare pieces of goldsmith's work, set with precious stones of great values."[23]

Then followed the basin of raw buffalo blood at the festive table. Even though Sultan "was much revolted and held his nostril," the king appeared not had been annoyed at this breach of etiquette. [24]

What precipitated the crisis, in which the blue blood of the Mughal royalty was lavished on the arid rocks of Mrauk-U, was the Arakanese king's mad and tempestuous passion for one of the Mughal princesses whom he wanted to marry and carry off into his seraglio.

The king's motivation in suddenly asking the hand of a Muslim princess of the imperial Mughal family the members of which were strong believers in the tenets of the Muslim faith has been interpreted as political by certain writers. Hamilton suggested that Sanda Thudamma was deliberately out to provoke a quarrel with Shuja. Says Hamilton in this regard:

"The threatening letter (from Mr.Jumla) wrought so far on the base Arackaner, that he contrived ways and means to pick a quarrel with his guest, to have a pretext to oblige Emir Jamal. At last he found a very fair one.

"Sultan Shuja having a very fair daughter, the king of Arackan desired her in marriage but knew very well that Sultan Shuja would never consent to the match, he, being a pagan and she a Mohammadan. The father used all reasonable arguments to dissuade the Arackaner from prosecuting his suit, but in vain for the Arackaner grew daily more pressing, and Sultan Shuja at last gave him a final denial on which the base king sent him orders to go out of his dominion in three days and forbade the markets to furnish him any more with provision for his money."[25]

The later writers, Alexander Dow, Charles Stewart and A.P. Phayre also support the view that, whether alarmed by the threats or won by the bribes of Mir Jumla, the king suddenly changed his behavior, and he became cold and reserved and prohibited his servants to attend to the needs of Shuja. He also

asked Shuja either to give him his daughter in marriage or immediately quit his kingdom. Shuja replied in haughty term that the race of Taimur never submit to dishonour themselves by so inferior a connection. Shuja further said that as soon as the monsoon arrives, and a ship could be procured, he would quit the country and proceed towards Mecca. Shuja further said that before leaving the country he would recompense the king of Arakan liberally for the trouble he had given him.[26]

It was undoubtedly the frustrations that Shuja faced, e.g. his failure to get a sea-going vessel to carry him to Makkah even after a long waiting of eight months, along with the growing consciousness of his increasingly difficult position and the threat to the physical safety and honour of himself and his family, which made him decide on gambling on a forlorn chance. Sanda Thudamma from being a patron and benefactor had turned into a watchful hostile on the alert to pounce upon him on any pretext inspired by the greed for gold or the lust for a beautiful woman. The king's behaviour became insulting and insolently aggressive and it was obvious that a showdown was bound to come- and it came very soon.[27]

To die was cast. To live, Shuja had to dare. Bowry sums up the Mughal prince's highly critical position very opposite as below:

"At which [the refusal of Sanda Thudama's suit] the king was sorely displeased and could be pacified, by sought the total destruction of the Sultan and all that appertained to him"[28]

With the supporters of the Muslims settled in Arakan, and particularly those in and around Mrauk-U, Sultan Shuja's dreamt of bringing off a coup by which the royal house of Mrauk-U would be exterminated and the throne would be his.

Shah Shuja's gamble had some hopes of success. Seventeenth Century Arakan and particularly its capital Mrauk-U and the seaport towns harboured a considerable population of Muslims,

both natives and Indians among whom those from Bengal predominated.

Strong Muslim influences in late seventeenth century Arakan has been remarked upon by a host of writers. Benier mentions: "Although the king of Rakan be a gentile, yet there are many Mohamadens mixed with the people, who have either chosen to retire among them, and have been enslaved by the Portuguese before mentioned, in their expeditions to the neighbouring coasts..."Manucci also mentioned, he (Shah Shuja) found many dwellers in Arakan, Moguls and Pathans, who showed themselves well inclined towards him..." Even San Shwe Bu agrees that " there were numerous Mohamadans settled in the country.[29]

The real position and strength of Muslims in Arakan of those days have been assured by Mohammad Enamul Haq and (the late) Abdul Karim in their work, and corroborated later by Mahbubul Alam.[30]

The authors hold that Islam began to spread from the eastern bank of Magna to Arakan since the 8th and 9th centuries AC. long before the establishment of a Muslim kingdom in this frontier region. Since then, this influence grew fast and was consolidated fully by the Seventeenth Century. The authors very rightly attribute the growth and development of Muslim influence from the days of King Min Saw Mun of Arakan (1404-1434) who was restored to the throne in 1430 by the interventions of his patron, Sultan Jalal al-din Mohammad Shah of Gaur. The inscription of the Muslim Kalima on Arakanese coins and the adoption of many Muslim costumes and terms were other significant tributes to the influence of Islam. Mosques including the famous Sandi Khan mosque began to dot the countryside and Islamic customs, manners and practices came to be established since this time. For about two hundred years the Muslim domination seemed to have been complete.

From the days of the restoration, there was an influx of Muslim officials, including ministers and courtiers, physicians, qazis, soldiers both of the cavalry and infantry, merchants, traders, labourers and workers who were soon absorbed in the general population. In addition there was transient population of sailors of the calmed Arab, Persian and Indian Muslims vessels who spent considerable periods of the year in the seaports of Arakan waiting for favourable winds.[31]

Haq and Karim base their claims on contemporary Bengali literature, which blossomed at Mrauk-U particularly puthis written in the 17th century by Bengali poets. The authors mentioned a number of their Muslim officials, including Chief Ministers, war ministers, ministers, Judges, and other officials of major and minor, at the court of Mrauk-U[32]

Therefore, Shuja's plan was not entirely the last desperate throw of a gambler. Had the element of surprise in his plot taken the Arakanese aback, the course of Arakanese history might well have been changed.[33]

In addition to Bowrey, Dow, Stewart and their followers, Spearman and Phayre, do not put any credence on the story of Shuja's attempted rebellion. They hold, that the Arakanese king antagonised by Shuja's haughty refusal to his suit for the hand of one of the princesses, foisted a concocted charge of rebellion on Shuja and used this pretext to finish off the Prince and his family. The matter was complicated by the general wave of sympathy for the distressed Mughal, not only among Muslims of all races, but the general populace as well. Dow says:

"Therefore to assassinate him in private was impossible from the vigilance of his party of forty friends (body guards) A public pretence must be made to gain the wealth of Shuja and to appease his enemies by his death..... the report of conspiracy against the Raja was industriously spread abroad. It was affirmed that Shuja had framed a design to mount the throne of Arracan (Arakan), by assassinating its monarch."

Dow opines in continuation:

"The thing was itself improbable. How could a foreigner, with forty adherents hope to rule a people of a different religion……

"The Raja in a pretended terror, called suddenly together his council. They were unanimously of the opinion that Shuja and his followers should be immediately sent away from the country… The Raja was disappointed in his expectations,... he, however,.... resolved to execute his own designs..."[34]

San Shwe Bu, who claims to report the account common to Rakhine Magh historians, dismisses the episode with not a word of regret or sympathy for the unfortunate Shah Shuja. He tries to rationalise the cruellest conduct of the Magh Raja. He describes Shuja as being without the philosophic calm which had stood his elder brother Dara in good stead even in the days of his dire adversity. [35]

However, San Baw U, another Rakhine Magh historian, records a different view of Shah Shuja's character, the view of U Nga Me's Maha Razawin, the royally approved chronicle of Arakan. It describes Mughal prince thus: "The Sultan Shuja, whose handsomeness, majestic bearing and striking personality that never failed to touch the heart of every person who behold him excelling even those of the Thagya Min, the king of Heaven, Tawateimsa..." Dow and Steward also give very favourable reading of Shuja's character.

San Baw U reproduces later the description of Shah Shuja's revolt as below:

"In the month of Tabodwe 1023 B.E (February 1662 AD) Shah Shuja with the object of seizing the throne of Arakan, rebelled against Sanda-Thudama. Being defeated he escaped to the south Kaladan river (Gachapa nadi) leaving his family and followers to their fate. The elder son (Mohammad Bank) was wounded and some of the followers were killed by the infuriated

troops of king. When the king knew that the rebellion had failed, he at once issued strict orders that those who remained alive should be spared."[36]

Manucci adds, "..... the Maghs ... pursued the poor (Shah Shuja) prince like famishing wolves, cutting his body into pieces and plundering all his valuables ... to his attempting once more some treachery, the Magh ordered Prince Bang's head to be cut off with a hatchet.."

It is recorded in the Dagh register that, "the sons of Shah Shuja and everyone found wearing a beard in the Moorish fashion had been beheaded as a result of an attempt by the princes to set fire to the royal palace."

Bernier writes, "..... In a plot similar to the last..... the king gives orders for the total extermination of Shuja's family. Sultan Banque and his brother were decapitated with blunt axes, and the female members of this ill fated family were closely confined in their apartments, and left to die of hunger."

Neither Dow nor Steward mentioned this second revolt. Spearman alludes to Shuja's two surviving sons "who were subsequently drowned," and Phayre just mentioned that "the remaining daughter (Amena Banu) was brought into the palace, where from grief she died." Mahbubul Alam. In passing, says: "Many of Shuja's followers died at the hands of the palace guard. Now Amena Banu was also killed on the charge of conspiring with the rest of the family."[39]

The poet, Alawal is not very clear as to why the Arakan king, having given a hospitable berth to Shah Shuja was all on a sudden so annoyed with him as to destroy him ultimately. It may be because he was a servant of the autocratic king. The relevant lines, which can be read from the writing of the Alawal are as follows:

"..... It was by chance that I had come to the city of Rosanga.... Subsequently the great king Shuja came there.....He

had difference with the king of Rosanga, and Shuja's downfall came..... All the Muslims who stood by his side gave their lives in the hands of the Lord of Rosanga. There was a royal officer (perhaps the secret service) whose name was Mirza. He reported to the king that I (Alawal) was also guilty of treason. I had already difference with this man, and seizing this opportunity he fulfilled his object. The king not knowing the conspiracy of this wicked man threw me into prison in fury. In the long last, when the king knew everything, he grabbed this wicked man and punished him severely... This villain met his death on the stake spoiling many lives..... I was put in prison for no fault of mine.....?

It is evident that the lines quoted above do not clearly indicate any concrete charge against Shuja beyond a probable charge of treason. Even if the charge brought against Shuja were treason, Shuja was also a victim of some intrigue or conspiracy hatched by the king subsequently sentenced this fellow to die on the stake, may be, out of repentance for his action on Shah Shuja. It appeared to be probable explanation of the king's hasty action against Shuja and his subsequent acts. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain why a person responsible for exposing a major treasonous plot and saving the king, so to say should in turn be sentenced to a cruel death by the same king. It is also probable that Mir Jumla might bribe this Mirza so as to accuse Shuja falsely and destroy him.

Shah Shuja was killed on 7th February 1661. Mir Jumla received the news through the Dutch factor. Mir Jumla made an attempt to take Shuja's children back from Arakan without success. Shuja's sons were killed in July 1663. The women lost their lives in between these two days. Some killed themselves, or drowned themselves, while others were starved to death. When the news was brought to his father, the dethroned Shajahan, he exclaimed: "could not the cursed infidel have left one son alive to avenge the wrongs of his grandfather?"

Now that the story of Shah Shuja's tragic end has been told, one main conflict in opinion is about the route taken by the unhappy Mughal prince in his flight to Arakan, liberty and death. Some of the most reliable sources hold that Shah Shuja and his party left by ship from Dacca.

Shah Shuja in Arakan

"Looting, bloodshed, enmity are the order of the day. Shuja was the emperor of twelve Bengal, the kingdom had no end, He fought for the succession of his father's throne, But a brother from the same mother womb became his deadly enemy, what is allotted cannot be blotted. He started towards the south riding on an elephant. On the centre sat Emperor, Shuja, Parijan on his left and two daughters sat on the right who were as beautiful as the full moon. The village women saw them, some show them the right Path, and some requested them not to proceed, saying.... "Oh Pari! Don't go to the country of Rosango, the people of that country eat boiled flesh of human beings, "Don't go south towards the bank of the sea, The sea pirates will take you with a rope tied around your neck," But Shuja paid no heed to them. They rode on their elephant and resumed their journey, trekking the difficult hilly roads. After travelling for many days Shuja arrived at the bank of a river, one Rosnagi helped Shuja reached the city of Rosango. The king of Arakan came to know of Shuja's miserable condition. He had lost his country and his kingdom. Due to the irony of fate his brother had became his enemy ....." ..... Extracted from : ... (Professor Sultan Ahmed Bhuiyan: Shah Shuja in Bangla Ballads - The Bangladesh Observer, Dhaka February 21, 1975).

However, a sizeable body of opinion adds that the route taken was mainly overland through hills and jungles by the present day Arakan road. It took 113 days, from 6th May to 26th August 1660 to reach Mrauk-U as he had to move slowly with

women, children and considerable quantity of baggages. The old people of Dulhazara told the writer (in the year 1963) that Shah Shuja had rest at their village with one thousand Phalkis, so their village is called Dulhazara.[40] Shuja had also took few days rest at Shujapara one mile north of Maungdaw, so the village is called Shuja Para.

Many historians of Arakan hold that the name of the king of Arakan who killed Shuja and family was Nga-Ku-Tha not Sanda Thudama. Some says that the notorious Nga Ku Tha ascended the throne with the title of Sanda Thudama and committed the great sin as he had committed before to King Meng Sani and King Min Sa Gwe with the help of his lover the queen of Meng Sani.[41]

The fact remains that the king of Arakan was guilty of taking advantage of the helplessness of royal refugees including women and children, who had thrown themselves at his mercy and that he did not stop short of force in taking one of the Mughal princesses to wife and then disposing of her in a heartless manner. In this context the Rakhine versions that Shuja gladly offered his daughter and sister (or both)seem to have been based on remarkable feats of imagination.[42] The Rakhine Chronicle concealed their king's ugly behaviour. [43]

Niccolao Manucci Says, "The king planned the assassination of Shah Shuja and all his adherents, and to this intent called to him his four principal captains, each of who had three thousand armed men.....To these he issued orders that one morning of daybreak they should all with one accord shout "Long live the King of Arakan! Death to Shah Shuja and all traitors!" Under cover of these, they were to kill everyone. The captains carried out the order of their king, killing everybody they encountered. Upon this news reaching the unfortunate prince Shah Shuja, he tried to save his life by getting on his elephant, hoping that he might thereby impose some respect for his person.

But it was grievous to see the fury with which the Maghs came on, throwing everything into disorder, with blows and cries, some saying "Death to the Prince Shah Shuja! Other, "Death to his son, Prince Bang!" "Slay those traitorous Mughals who fled here from Bengal!" Prince Bang was taken prisoner, while Shah Shuja with a few men fled to the jungle. He made liberal use of the bags of jewels and pearls, which he scattered among these savages, attempting by the use of these valuables to mitigate the rage of the soldiers and gain a free passage for his flight. But the Maghs paid no heed to his proffered wealth; they pursued the poor prince like famishing wolves, cutting his body into pieces, stripping it bare, and plundering all his valuables...."

According to D.G.E. Hall, on 25th July 1663 A.D., the Royal Palace had been fired by 10 or 12 desperate "Mogolders" and brunt to the ground. In the general confusion Manaw Thiri, the Governor of Mrauk-U, was brunt into death and the king and his family barely escaped with their lives. Shah Shuja's three sons were suspected of having been the cause of it, the king gave orders for the total extermination of Shuja's family. Sultan Banquet and his brothers were decapitated with blunt axes and the ill-fated family were closely confined in their apartments and left to die of starvation.

As for the end of Shuja himself, while no conclusion can be arrived the overwhelming weight of evidence indicates that he perished. Speculative theories about his escape into Tippers or Burma and thence to Sulu Island or Surat, Persia or Yusufzai country all appear to be unfounded.

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Chapter-8

The loss of Chittagong

Aurangzeb had been quite prepared himself to murder his own brother, but became angry when the Arakan king dared to harm a member of the Royal Mughal family. He decided to use this as an excuse to put an end to the Portuguese-Arakanese pirate raids on the East Bengal coast. In 1665 to 1666 a large Mughal force attacked the Portuguese and Arakanese, demolished their settlements in Sandwip and destroyed their navies and conquered Chittagong and Ramu. During their retreat to Mrohaung, the local Muslim who had been settled on the land also attacked Arakanese army units. [1]

After the death of Mir Jumla, Shaista Khan became the new viceroy of Bengal. He was ordered by the Emperor Aurangzeb to teach how impudent Raja was chastised and to finish Ferengi-Magh pirate raids. All necessary preparations had been carried out to put an end to Ferengi-Magh depredations by capturing Chittagong. Shaista Khan threatened the Dutch to withdraw from Arakan or risk their trade with Bengal. So one night in November 1665 the Dutch loaded four ships with everything they could carry from their Mrohaung factory, and before the king of Arakan realised what was afoot, they were beyond pursuit.

Shaista Khan first attacked and occupied Sandwip -- a strategic island situated at the mouth of Ganges on Nov.12, 1665 before the Arakan expedition began.

Shaista Khan thought that the Island of Sandwip would be conquered as a first step to the conquest of Chittagong. The base of operation to Chittagong was Bhula, which was for long under the occupation of the Mughals and where they had a fort. Bhula was base for land force, but Arakan was primarily a naval power, and to conquer Chittagong's navy was most effective

and Chittagong was to be attacked both by land and sea. So a base for the fleet was necessary and Sandwip was an ideal naval base.

Shaista Khan ordered Abul Hasan to attack Sandwip, which he did on 9th Nov.1665. Dilawar Khan the ruler of Sandwip, who was 80 years old, fought with valour and skill, but was defeated. He was taken in chains to Dhaka with his family consisted of 92 souls, men, women and children as prisoners of war. Dilawar Khan died there in a few days. His grownup sons were kept in confinement. But Shaista Khan granted land for the support of the younger members of his family, One thousand Mughal soldiers were stationed in the island and Sandwip was brought under imperial admnistrations.[2]

According to the Alamgir nama, Dilawar Khan was in league with the Magh and was in friendly term with them. This was another reason why Shaista Khan conquered Sandwip before his invasion of Chittagong. As a result, his rear became safe and he also subdued the Portuguese and severed relations with the king of Arakan.

Expedition starts against Chittagong:

Shaista Khan's preparations for the conquest of Chittagong became now complete. 300 war boats became ready for battle. The Ferengi pirates were won over and they came to the Mughals. The Dutch withdrew from Arakan and their assistance to Shaista Khan in his conquest of Chittagong was assured. Sandwip was also occupied. With all these preparations being completed, Shaista Khan became ready to strike.

It was decided that the Nawab's son Buzurug Umed Khan would lead the campaign. A number of imperial officers were ordered to accompany him. The nowwara was to be led by Admiral Ibn Hussain to be assisted by other zamidars of the nowwara. Hayat Khan was ordered to go to Noakhali, join Farhad Khan and

Captain Mor and other Ferengis and then all to proceed on land and sea as the vanguard of Buzurug Khan's army.[3]

Farhad Khan, Mir Murtaza and Hayat Khan marched by land. Simultaneously Ibn Hussain also started with his flotilla of war boats. He was ordered to creep along the coast, while the army should march parallel to the fleet, so that one could support to the other. On 21 January, Farhad Khan and Mir Murtaza joined hands with Ibn Hussain, probably at the creek of Kumera. On the evening of 23 January, the Arakanese navy was sighted at Katalia creek. On 24 January the first naval battle was fought at the Karnafully.

On the night of 25 January, Admiral Ibn Hussain took rest with vigilance and encircling the fort of Chittagong. He also sent information to the Magh commandant of the fort to surrender and open the gate of the fort of the following day.

On 26 January, the fort of Chittagong was surrendered to Ibn Hussain. Buzrg Umed Khan reached the foot of the fort. On 27th January Umed Khan entered the fort.

Mughal gains at Chittagong:

After the surrender of the fort of Chittagong, the Magh Commandant of the fort was sent to the Subader at Dhaka. He was taken prisoner with one son, some relatives and 350 men of his tribes. The Maghs' commandant was the uncle of Arakanese king Sanda Thudama or Nga Ku Tha. The Mughals also captured 235 ships, 3 elephants, 1026 guns made of bronze and iron, many matchlocks and zamburaks (Camel-swivels) and much ammunition. Besides the main fort of Chittagong, the Mughals also captured the stockades built by the Rakhine Magh on the other side of the river near the Dianga settlement of the Portuguese. The Maghs who were at the stockades fled but they were attacked by the Muslims, who had been kidnapped by Maghs before, killing many of them including the leader. Another important result of the capture of Chittagong was the

release of thousands of Bengali peasants who had been kidnapped by the pirates and held in slavery. "We can easily imagine how fast cultivation will increase in Bengal, now that Magh violence has been put down," [4] reported Shaista Khan to the Emperor.

The most important result of the conquest of Chittagong was the annexation of Chittagong permanently with Bengal. The Bengal southern border became fixed at the West Bank of the Naf River or Kaladan River. The Magh fled to Arakan beyond the east bank of Kaladan (boundary of Bangalee) river. Ex-Health Minister of Bangladesh, Mr. Salauddin Quader Chawdhury, writes in an article that Shaista Khan had conquered up to the Kaladan River. Ex-Health Minister of Burma, Mr. Sultan Mahmud, writes in many articles and told at the parliament and at press conference and an article on 'Muslim in Burma' published in the Nation on 12 April 1959, that Shaista Khan conquered up to the Kaladan River. In his book "Rohingyas and Kamans"(page 39) M.A Tahir Ba Tha writes that there are historical views that Buzurg Umed Khan had conqured the whole of Arakan but retreated soon as Arakan was not important for them. If after the conquest of the Chittagong the eastern border of Bangladesh is extended to the Naf river, then from the east bank of the Naf to the west of Kaladan that is the whole Mayu valley was independent under the control of Rohingya Muslims as Maghs fled beyond the Kaladan river leaving their hearths and homes at Chittagong, which is known among the local people as *Magh-dhaiya* (the fleeing of the Maghs) from Bengal to the Kaladan or Mrauk-U. Burma historical commission's compiler Prof. Dr. G.H. Luce and History Prof. Dr. Than Tun also support the possibility of Rohingya and their kings in the Mayu valley since 800 years back;[5]

Sufi A.M Waheed's view is as follows: "Under the order of Emperor Aurangazab, the Subeder of Bengal, Nawab Shaista Khan deputed his son Buzurg Umed Khan, and in 1666 he conquered Chittagong and annexed the area from Dhoom in

Chittagong, to Bay of Bengal. The Buddhist (Maghs) population of Chittagong then migrated to Myohaung and started whispering campaign against the Muslim(Rohingyas). After a lapse of eleven years in 1677, when a fresh batch of Magh refugees from Chittagong reached Myohaung with stories of atrocities by Muslim rulers of Chittagong, the whispering campaign of Maghs refugees against the Muslim gained momentum. The Muslims on the face of all odds, created by the whispering of Maghs, managed all the affairs of state till 1710. Then things went out of control. There was disturbance all over Arakan. As a result two-sided migration took place. The Buddhist (Maghs) going eastward and the Muslims (Rohingyas) northward. And the land between Sankau (Sangu) river in Chittagong and Seindaung Range (east of the Mayu river) became almost depopulated in which subsequent Muslims refugees came from south Arakan and settled down there. They are still known as Rohingyas though all the entire Muslim population from Dhoom in the north of Chittagong up to Sandaway in the south of Arakan is the same people of same origin. They have same language, a mixture of Bengali, Arabic, Persians, and Magi (Rakhine) language and the same culture."

After the conquest of Chittagong an expedition to conquer southern Chittagong was also sent under Mir Murtaza. Murtaza travelling difficult roads, dense jungle and terrible rivers reached Ramu after 12 days march and captured it from the Magh king's brother Rowli. Many Muslims who had been kept as captives were set free. Thus was the pirates' nest broken and the Muslim sway re-established over the sea.

The fall of Chittagong was a terrible blow to the Arakanese and with it their century of greatness came to an end. Never again would they hold Chittagong or even Ramu and then lost their sword arm by the desertion of Ferengis. In fact Sanda Thudama sowed the seed of the downfall of Arakan by massacring a refugee Prince, Shah Shuja and his followers and thousands of

innocent Muslims of Arakan. His death follows a century of chaos with internecine feud raging the whole country.

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Chapter-9

The last days of Mrauk-U

The massacre of Shah Shuja along with his family and great many number of Muslims of Arakan led to the loss of Chittagong which spelled the end of the power of the kingdom of Arakan. From 1666 to 1710 the political rule of Arakan was completely in the hand of Muslim Kaman units.[1] They were the king makers of Arakan. They played a decisive role of not only king makers but also displacers of kings of Arakan. Ten kings were crowned and dethroned by them during the period. In 1672 they burnt the palace and for twenty years roamed over the country carrying fire and sword, wherever they went.[2] These Kaman units were being continually reinforced by fresh Afghan mercenaries from North India. They cared neither for the person of the king nor for the aspirations of the people, adventurers appeared every few years, some times every few months and the throne constantly changed hands. Between the fall of Chittagong (1666) and Sanda Wizaya (1710) there were ten kings averaging two and a half years each. Three reigned only one year and two did not reign one month. Between Sanda Wizaya and Nora Abaya, (1742) the average was under two years each and the last seven kings to 1784 averaged just three years each. The three kings named, Sanda Thudama, Sanda Wizaya and Nora Abaya, each were notable men and each tried to stop the downward tendency, but without success. So insecure a polity is little removed from anarchy. Of the following set of six, two are represented and of the last seven all have coins except number 42 and 46 who both ruled but a few weeks. The coins themselves exhibit little variation. It remains in the

Mohammadan tradition of 1450 A.D.[3] There were 48 kings in Mrauk-U dynasty (1430-1785 A.D.).

Sanda Wizaya (1710-1731) succeeded in gaining upper hand over the Kamans. He deported them to Ramree, and at Thinganet or Tharagon near Akyab, their descendants still exist under the name of Kaman (Persian Kaman a bow), speaking Arakanese but retaining their Mohammadan faith and Afghan features.[4] Sanda Wizaya was murdered. King after king was murdered and village fought against village. The last two kings Sanda Thadita (1777-1782) and Thamada (1782-1785) were Muslims, belonging to the descendants of Kaman archers who were earlier deported to Ramree by Sanda Wizaya, writes Dr. Mohammad Yunus in his "A History of Arakan - Past & Present". [5] According to G.E Harvey, "The last king Thamada 1782-5 bearing as if in irony the name of the first king on earth had less authority than ever, for he was from the despised race of Ramree". [6] In 1782 Thamada became king of Mrauk-U. So reduced had become the once great kingdom, that his role did not extend more than a few miles beyond the walls.[7]

A band of lords went to the king of Burma asking intervention. Historian Harvey commented on the appeal of the Arakanese lords for Burman intervention, "Perhaps they were patriots desiring to see their land at rest. "But the actual fact is that the bigoted Maghs could not tolerate the role of Muslim kings once again" is the comment of Dr. Mohammad Yunus in his 'A History of Arakan'.[8]

Such a kingdom as was Arakan from 1666 to 1784 could only stand alone and independent as long as it had no aggressive neighbour. The Mughals had ceased to be an expanding power. Burma was merely as distracted as Arakan: the English were new comers. In other circumstances it could not have endured a century and a quarter. But when in 1760 the Alaung Mintara dynasty had united Burma, Mrauk-U's fate was certain. The sole question was when the blow would fall.

There were six pretenders in the country, each with his followers and each anxious to enter the capital city. One of these, Ngathande, asked King Bodaw of Burma, to invade the realm. After so long a period of looking west, Arakan turned eastward again. Ngathande's idea was that King Bodaw would place him on the throne as a feudatory monarch. It was a familiar point of view in Arakanese foreign relations. Bodaw, however had no intention of anything of the kind. He used Ngathande, invaded the country and reduced it to the position of an administrated province, the first in its long history that it had lost a home government of its own. [9]

Bodaw's first act was to strike a medallion in the style of the Mrauk-U coinage. The Burmese had never used coins and hence he had no model of his own. He copied therefore the Muslim design. The legend reads-"The kingdom of the Master of Amarapura and of Many white Elephants."This is the numismatic document to the fall of Mrauk-U. It was the last coin struck in Arakan.[10]

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Chapter-10

The Burmese Occupation

(1785-1825)

Arakan learned nothing from Burmese connection of 1784-1825. The Burmese governor of Mrauk-U found the country in a very lawless state. One Chinbyan organised a rebellion. To secure peace and maintain order the Burmese put to death some and deported others to Burma. Two hundred thousand were said to have fled to India (Bengal).[1]

After his victory and to clinch the affairs and prove to the world that Arakan was really down, King Bodaw removed Mahamuni to Amarapura, where it now sits. This event, long prophesied and long guarded against, crushed the Arakanese more than defeat in the field.[2]

He carried away the Royal family, the commanders, the Educators, the Ministers, and manufacturers etc. over to Burma. And in order to carry the huge booty of Arakan and the heavy Muhamuni Image from Mrohaung to Mandalay in Burma, the Burmese conscripted hundreds of thousands of Maghs and Muslims. Of these conscripts thousands died on the way due to fatigue and hunger. When the purpose of conscription was over the survivors among the Muslims, a paltry numbers of 3700 were settled in different areas of Burma. These formed the nucleus of the Muslims of Burma. They are known as Thun Htaung Khunya, meaning three thousand seven hundred.[3]

R.B. Smart writes, "When Bodaw was king of Burma, the discontented Arakanese who hated their Ramree ruler invited the Burmans to aid them in dethroning him. A large Burmese

Force assembled at Prome under three Royal princes and invaded Arakan by three different routes. After some severe fighting the Arakanese army was defeated near Kyaukpyu, and the Burmese advanced on the capital and took possession, meeting with hardly any resistance; the country was annexed and Thamada Raja was carried prisoner to Ava, where he shortly afterwards died".

There was also a Muslim unit, "Myedu," in the Burmese standing army posted to Sandoway. Their descendants, few in number, live there still and can not be distinguished from their Burmese and Arakanese neighbours, but by their religion and religious habits.[4] All these event in Arakan caused certain population movements eastward. Among these there were also Muslims who came to service the Burmese Kun Baung king.[5]

In her previous connections with outside states, Arakan had always been the gainer. As feudatory to Pagan she had received the little vehicle and learnt her present alphabet. As feudatory to Bengal she had laid the foundations of her great age. But administered as a governor-ship by the Burmese of the 18th century, she had nothing to gain for the Burmese had nothing to teach a country which for centuries had been in touch with the world of thought and action through the Muslim Sultanates at a time when Burma herself was isolated and backward.[6]

But an extra-ordinary turn of events had changed the face of India since the fall of Chittagong in 1666. The Mughals had disappeared and their place had been taken by other foreigners, not Mongolians on this occasion but English, persons stranger to say who resided three thousand miles away but who maintained themselves by means of a sea connection as the Portuguese had done but far more successfully. These individuals became irritated with the Burmese in 1824 for the same reason that Aurangzeb had become irritated with the Arakanese in 1665, namely in the matter of frontier raids.[7]

The fall of Mrauk-U was a mortal blow to the Rohingyas for everything that was materially and culturally Islamic was razed to ground.[8] 40 years of Burmese rule over Arakan was marked with unprecedented tyranny and cruelty. People were forcibly conscripted for army services and engaged in forced labour. Collection of tax was beyond common men's ability. Thousands of Arakanese captives had to work as slaves for seven full years in construction of a pagoda in Burma. Bodaw's repeated demand for forced labour and conscript service and the rapacity of his local officials drove the Arakanese into desperate resistence[9] and thousands of them to flee across the border into Chittagong district. By 1798, two thirds of the inhabitants of Arakan were said to have deserted their native land. In one year alone, 1798 a body of not less than ten thousand entered Chittagong followed soon after by many more.[10] The East Indian Company made no objection to the settlement of these people in the southern part of the district partly on ground of humanity, partly because the district was sparsely populated and an increase in the number of inhabitants was welcome.

The condition of Arakan during Bodaw's rule is summarised in a nutshell by Harvey as follows: " From the very first year of its conquest, 1785, Arakan had been in turmoil. It was no unusual thing for a Burmese outpost to have to run for their lives; terrible reprisals were exacted but the trouble continued. The Arakanese had every excuse: they were rebelling not against government but against tyranny. Thus they would be called in various garrison headquarters on the pretext of disarming them and when they arrived the Burmese would round them up and massacre them. Quite apart from extortionate revenue, there were continued exactions of human cattle. Thus 3,000 men were called to work on the Meiktila Lake and none ever returned. 6,000 were dragged away to serve against Chiengmai, where they died of disease in numbers. When in 1797, 2,000 more were required to work on the Mingun pagoda, the people beat the war drum and rose wholesale. Year after year the fighting

never ceased, while thousands flocked in terror across the English frontier to Chittagong, where folk could go to bed at night without wondering if throats were going to be cut in the morning, Arakan had never been populous, and now it became a desert; the towns were deserted and overgrown with jungle, and there was nothing to be seen but "utter desolation... . morass, pestilence and death". [11]

This acquisition brought the Burmans into contact with the British and disputes soon arose. Large number of inhabitants escaped from the cruelties of the Burmans and settled in Chittagong and in other parts of lower Bengal. Chin-byan who was usually styled King Berring in the official accounts of this period -- the son of the man who had invited the Burmans into Arakan, twice raised a revolt, and his standard was joined by most of the respectable Arakanese families; but the raising was finally suppressed and those who could do so escaped to Chittagong. Here Chin-byan continued his intrigues till he died in 1815, and the difference which arose in consequence between the two governments and the retaliatory eruption's of the Burmese, who attacked and carried off the East India company's elephant hunters, together with the attitude assumed and the demands made by the Burmese court not only regarding this part of the county but also in connection with the northern frontier in Manipur, led eventually to an open rupture. [12]

By the middle of 1811, the whole of the Burmese province of Arakan corresponding roughly to the modern district of Akyab was in Chinbyan's control. At the end of the rainy season the Burmese began offensive against Chinbyan. They met 300-armed boats near Cheduba, under the command of Chinbyan. In the battle two hundred war boats of Chinbyan were destroyed. With the remaining 100 boats Chinbyan again tried his luck which did not favour him. Chinbyan escaped to British area with his remaining followers.

The Burmans were making frequent incursions across the frontier in hot pursuit of the rebels and refugees. They even threatened to occupy from Teknaf to Dhaka with the assistance of the French. But the tension was defused diplomatically while strengthening Chittagong with the reinforcement from Calcutta. When the rain began the Burmans withdrew to Mrohaung so was the company's posts to Ramu.

Taking advantage of the absence of troops Chinbyan crossed the Naf and took possession of Maungdaw. But the Burmese soon routed them again. The relation between Burmese and British again deteriorated. The Company had ordered to arrest Chinbyan. But nobody could arrest him. In November 1812 Chinbyan occupied Cox's Bazaar and started building war boats to attack Burma. The company's forces attacked him. Chinbyan shifted his head quarter from Cox's Bazaar to Minglagyi of Maungdaw township and advanced towards Mrohaung. They were intercepted by the Burmans and defeated. Chinbyan retreated to the British area. The Burman followed them and once more the problem of Burmese incursion to British area arose. The problem of Chinbyan and Burman incursion continued until Chinbyan died in 1815.[13]

After the death of Chinbyan the Burmans began a series of petty irritating outrages upon British subjects. On the night of 24th September 1823 the Burmans proceeded to enforce their claim to Shahparirdip; a thousand men landed on the island, over-powered the guard, killed and wounded several of them, and drove the rest off the island.

The Burmese had lived so long out of the world that their geography and political information were lamentably weak. They were not aware that the then masters of Hindustan represented a more modern polity than their own. The Arakanese, however were better informed. For just as Min Saw Mwan realised in 1430 that the Sultanate of Bengal was a polity in the vanguard of the world thought and would be able to drive

the Burmese out of Arakan and restore him, so the Arakanese of 1824 perceived that the English were moderns and that the Burmese could not resist them. Accordingly they sided enthusiastically with them and facilitated in every way their occupation of Arakan in 1825.

Books of reference:

1. *"Arakan place in the civilisation of the Bay" in JBRS Vol-II*
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Sufi A.M. Waheed "Arakan was free Muslim State till British occupation", The New Nation, Dhaka*
4. *W.B. Tydd, "Sandoway District Gazatteer" Vol-A, P- 19.*
5. *Ba Shin op.cit.*
6. *"Arakan place in the civilisation of the Bay" JBRS Vol-II*
7. *Ibid*
8. *Rohingya's Outcry.*
9. *D.G.E. Hall "Burma" P .96.*
10. *"King Bering" in JBRS Vol-II, P. 445.*
11. *G.E Harvey, "Outline of Burmese History" PP- 154-155*
12. *R.B. Smart, "Burma Gazetteer, Akyab District" Vol-A, P- 27, Published in 1879 and 1957.*
13. *D.G.E. Hall "Burma" P. 102.*

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Chapter-11

Arakan Under British Occupation

The first Anglo-Burma War (1823-24)

In 1824 war was declared and the Burmese dominions were invaded, a force under General Morrison moved on the Arakan and another under Sir Archibald Campbell operated by way of the valley of the Irrawady. General Morrison's force camped at Teknaf, opposite the extensive stockades of Maungdaw, the first Arakan post, until the 31st January 1825, just a month from the period of advancing from Chittagong. On the evening of the 1st February when they landed on the east bank of the Naf, Maungdaw, the Burmese beat a hasty retreat over the mountains, leaving the invaders to take undisputed possession of their stockades at Maungdaw. Here were found the great quantity of grain, several war-boats, one about ninety feet long and a small ship on the stocks. A considerable force was sent in pursuit of the fleeing Burmese through the forests, but of no avail. After a halt of many days at Maungdaw, General Morrison pushed on through dense forest and grass plain, or by the seashore, to the Mayu River. Commodore Hayes left Maungdaw on the 16th February commanding half of the gun boats and Magh boats and proceeded to the Arakan river to join General Morrison with the main body of the army.

The Burman army under Maha Bandoola began operations by crossing the Naf River and routing a small detachment of company's troops and went on to concentrate troops for a march on Chittagong. While Bandoola arrived at Ramu, British troops staged a sea-borne invasion of Lower Burma from an assembly point in the Andaman Islands without a blow, to the complete surprise of the Burmans. The news of the British capture of

Rangoon put a stop to Bandoola's advance in India. Two Burmese generals were sent successively to retake Rangoon but failed and Bandoola was called back to expel the invaders.

Bandoola marched with an army of 60,000 men and a considerable artillery train. His two main attacks were repulsed and he was forced to retreat to Danubyu. On 1st April 1825, Bandoola was killed in action. The capture of Mrohaung ended the war as far as the Arakan province was concerned, the Burmese troops at once abandoned Ramree and Sandoway and retreated through the mountain into Pegu. The steady advance of Sir Archibald Campbell up the valley of the Irrawaddy, driving the Burmese forces before him. This advance ended at Yandabo, where a treaty was signed on the 24th February 1826 by which Arakan and Tanansaerin became British territory.

British rule over Arakan

When the First Burmese war came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Yandabo on the 24th February 1826, the main body of the British troops was withdrawn, one regiment was kept in Arakan and a local battalion was raised to keep law and order. In 1836 a rebellion breakout but was suppressed in time.

Arakan was divided into 160 circles, of which 148 were denominated Kyun or islands, being situated in the lowlands, and 12 were called chaung or streams being in the hill districts. They contained total 960 villages. Each of the circles was placed under an officer designated Kyun-ok or Chaung-ok according to the locality of the charge. His main duty was to collect revenue: he was paid 15 percent upon his collection. Under the Kyun-ok there were Ywa-gaung (village head-man) who delivered it(revenue) to the Kyun-ok. He was paid 4-percent of his collections.

To conduct all revenue affairs there was an officer styled myo-thu-gyi, his duty was to superintend all the Kyun-ok. This

officer was paid a fix salary and resided at the chief town of the district.

The district officer, styled Senior Assistant Commi-ssioner, performed the duties of a District Magistrate, Judge and Collector; under him was a junior Assistant Commissioner, who exercised similar powers except those of hearing appeals, civil, criminal and revenue; there was also a tayama-thugyi, who tried all civil suits of a value not exceeding Rs 500. In 1863, Township officer was appointed to each town of Arakan and every T.O. or Myo-ok was Magistrate, Judge and Assistant collector within his jurisdiction.

A new police force was organised for the whole of lower Burma in the year 1861 and placed under the Inspector General of Police. At Akyab headquarter a police training school had been established for the training of recruits and at this school each constable in the district had to attend annually for one month's training.

With the return of peace, Magh and Mussolman or Rohingyas who were earlier expelled started to return to their former homes in Arakan. It is unnatural and bias in its entirety to remark that bulk of the Muslims entered Arakan during British era. The fact is that many Muslims families who were from Arakan returned to their respective homes when peace prevailed.

Communication:

The British government improved the communication system of Arakan to certain extent. The Arakan Flotilla Company's steamers plied all over the inland waters of Arakan. This company also maintained services between Akyab and Paletwa, the headquarters of the hill district of Arakan and the district of Kyaukpyu and Sandoway. The road communication was also improved. Telegraph and postal services were introduced.

Education:

In 1894 there were only 9 Urdu schools, with 330 boys and 45 girls. These schools were then under the control of the Deputy Inspector of Burmese Schools. The appointment of a special Deputy Inspector of Muslim schools gave an impetus to Muslim education in Arakan. In 1902 the number of schools rose to 72 and that of boys and girls attending them to 1,474 and 104 respectively. Muslim education began to retrograde as the Deputy Inspector neglected the North Arakan due to communication reason. The result was that both schools and pupils decreased year by year till 1912, when a Deputy Inspector of Muslim school was appointed for Arakan division. With appointment of this officer, a new life was given to Muslims' education. The number of schools rose rapidly to 68 and boys and girls attending to them to 1849 and 174 respectively. The year 1912 also witnessed the establishment of two District Cess Muslim school at Maungdaw and Kaungdauk. In 1894 there were 187 private schools with 1055 pupils and in 1913 the return shows 175 school with 2839 pupils. Two Anglo-Vernacular schools, one Government High School, another St.Anne's School were established in Akyab. The former was established in 1846 and a Roman Catholic Mission started the latter in 1890.

The number of girls attending school had risen from 335 in 1894 to 1047 in 1913. The progress though slow was steady and continuous. Female education had, however, been a comparatively less progressive because of early marriage and seclusion observed by the Muslim grown up students. Want of qualified female teachers was also a bottleneck.

Health:

Maungdaw Hospital with six beds was opened in 1885. A new ward of six beds was built by the generosity of Ali Hussein, headman of Ngakura, and Kazi Abdul Ali at a cost of Rs.4000. The daily average of attendance indoor and outdoor in 1915 was

9 and 45, respectively. In Buthidaung a hospital with ten beds was opened in 1904. The building was erected by a private enterprise. In 1915 the average attendance of indoor and outdoor patients was 6 and 39. Kyauktaw Hospital was opened in 1907 and Minbya Hospital was opened in 1908. Rathidaung and Myohaung had model dispensaries since in 1910. At Myohaung a hospital of eight beds had been added by U Tha Baw at a cost of Rs.8000, while another hospital with 12 beds had been provided at Rathidaung.

The Akyab General Hospital was established in the year 1864. An up to date operation theatre was built from provincial funds, and a female ward and lying in ward were built mainly by the generosity of Mr.Maracan and U Re Kyaw Thu.

Akyab Municipality:

The British Burma Municipal Act was extended to Akyab on 1st October 1874. The committee was consisted of six officials and five non-officials. This body was responsible for and managed police, roads, beggars, hospital, conservancy, and water supply within the limit of the town. The committee as newly constituted in 1882 was relieved of charges for police and was entrusted with additional responsibilities and powers in respect of schools, hospital, vaccination and similar charges. The committee consisted of three officers - the Deputy Commissioner was President, the Civil Surgeon was vice-president and the Executive Engineer - two members nominated by the Government and twelve members elected from the public: European community-2, Muslim-4, Buddhist-4 Hindu-2.

Commentary

When the Burmese fled and the English occupied Mrauk-U. The Arakanese expected that the history of 1430 would be repeated and that an Arakanese prince would be placed on the throne. For subsequent forty years Arakan was treated as part of occupied

Burma and hence, to reconstitute it as a princedom by the British ruler would have been just a matter of their decision. If the Arakanese were disappointed it indicates that they were in need of the very education they were about to receive.

The Arakanese had learned many things during the course of the history in Hindustan in Hinayanism, and graduated in the real Politic of the Muslim Sultanates. They were to graduate again and this time in economics. Just as the country's connection with Muslim Bengal dissipated mediaeval fantasies, so its subordination to the Government of India brought it again up to date.

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Chapter-12

Independence Movement of Burma

The last major public speech made by General Aung San was, on July 13, 1947, as the nation had prepared for the challenge of independence from Britain; he emphasised the need for discipline, unity, patience and self-sacrifice.

"Aung San is as much a hero, if not more, to the Burmese as is George Washington to the Americans or Winston Churchill to the British...."(Roger Mathews, the Asia Editor of the Financial Times.)"

"Burma was conquered by British imperialism in three Anglo-Burmese wars - the first in 1823, the second in 1852, and the third and the last in 1885. I shall not go here in to the question of whether British imperialism was justified in subjugating our country. Suffice it to say in the words of President Abraham Lincoln that no nation has the right to rule another nation. Anyway, Burma has since lost her sovereignty and independence"(Address delivered by Bogyoke Aung San, at the meeting of East and West Association held on Aug. 29, 1945, at the City Hall of Rangoon.)

It was the publication in the Rangoon University Students Union magazine of the article "Hell Hound at Large" by Aung San which indirectly helped to trigger off the far-reaching university strike of 1936 led by the Students Union President Rashid. Rashid was also the first President of the All Burma Students Union, which had been founded after the strike. The 1936 strike was an important landmark in the political development of the Independence movement.

In 1938 Aung San became a member of the Dohbama Asi-ayone ("We Burmese Organisation"), a party that had its origin in the Indo-Burmese riots of 1930. Internal friction split the organisation into two, and Aung San joined the majority faction led by Thakin Kodaw Hmaing.

In August 1940 Aung San left for China and flew out to Tokyo to meet Colonel Keiji Suzuki. Aung San came back to Burma in February 1941 disguising as a Chinese seaman. He did not remain long in Burma went back to Japan with Hla Pe and three others, the vanguard of the group that was to be known as the "Thirty Comrades". The selection of these thirty, who were to become the core of the Burma Independence Army, was made public partly by availability, which precluded those nationalists who were in jail, and partly by a desire to appease contending factions within the Thakin party, which sowed the seeds for future dissension.

Aung San emerged as the unmistakable leader not of the Thirty Comrades but of the Burma Independence Army (B.I.A). Suzuki was the commanding officer with the rank of general; Aung San, as Chief of Staff, was made a major general. "Major-General Teza" or Bogyok (General) was idolised as the hero of the people.

The march of the B.I.A. into Burma alongside the Japanese troops was an occasion of great pride and joy to the Burmese. But the soldiers of Nippon, who were welcomed as liberators, turned out to be worse oppressors than the unpopular British. Kempei (the Japanese military police) became a dreaded word and rape, torture, disappearances and forced labour conscription were part of everyday's routine job.

Suzuki set up a central government of Burma with Tun Ok as the head soon after Rangoon had fallen to the Japanese in March 1942. But the government was short-lived. In July 1942 Suzuki left Burma and the BIA was reorganised as the Burma Defence Army with Aung San as the Commander-in Chief. However,

there were Japanese military "advisers" attached to the new army at every level and the actual powers of the Burmese officers were heavily restricted.

In August 1942, the commander of the Japanese forces in Burma, General Lida introduced the Burmese Administration and Dr.Ba Maw was appointed Chief Administrator. On the surface it seemed as if her people had ruled Burma, but in fact it was entrenchment of Japanese military rule.

Realising the motive of the Japanese, Thakin Soe and Thein Pe had been organising resistance against the Japanese and later went underground. After a brief meeting with Aung San and Ne Win at Shwebo, Thein Pe made his way to India to try to contact the British troops.

By November 1943, plans for the resistance had gone far enough for a British Major Seagrim, who was hiding in the hills of Burma, to report to the India that " a certain Aung San of the Burma Defence Army was planning to turn his force against the Japanese when the opportunity presented itself." Aung San made bold public announcement that their present "Independence" was a counterfeit and that the struggle for the real thing was yet to come.

Towards the end of 1942, clashes broke out between irresponsible elements among the BIA and the Karen that led to bloodshed and racial strife. In the words of Bertil Lintner, "As a general rule, the BIA regarded the Karens especially as British collaborators; after all, they had been favoured by the British and many of them had been recruited into the colonial army and police.... Many Karens had been in the rank of the force that crushed the Saya San rebellion in the early 1930s. Bo Tun Hla, a BIA officer, shot 17 Karen elders at Papun. In Myaungmya, 150 Karens were slaughtered, including a former cabinet minister, Saw Pe Tha, his English wife and their children. The reprisals against the Karen civilian population was so brutal that Hugh Seagrim of the Burma Rifles surrendered to the Japanese shortly

afterwards. His self-sacrifice on the Karen's behalf is still a treasured memory." "Outrage" Page 36, 37

Throughout the latter part of 1943, Aung San, Than Tun, and Let Ya laboured to bring about peace and understanding between Burmese and Karen. Their concerted efforts were rewarded. The Karens came to reconciliation to the extent that a Karen battalion had been added to the Burmese army.

The Barbaric anti-Muslim massacre of Arakan started on 28 March 1942. The plunder, slaughter and rape by the Maghs and their Thakin masters was so barbaric that thousands of Muslim men and women and children were butchered. The result was that the Maghs took over the southern part of Arakan and the Mussalman the northern. Muslim north was administered by the Peace Committee under the leadership of Umrah Meah, till the return of British in 1945

In August 1944, a meeting was arranged between the communist leaders and members of the Burmese Revolutionary Party, officially launching the Anti-Fascist Organisation (AFO). Some young officers of BNA were frustrated, and Aung San resolved the situation by giving them specific roles to play within the AFO movement.

On 27th March 1945, Burmese troops throughout the country rose up against the Japanese. After the meeting between General Aung San and Field Marshal Sir William Slim, the Burmese and Allied troops joined in the operations against the Japanese army, which rapidly, crumbled. By 15 June, a victory parade was held in Rangoon at which the Burmese army participated alongside units representing British Empire and Allied forces. The resistance against the Japanese was thus over. In August 1945 AFO was expanded and renamed AFPFL the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League.

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Chapter-13

Anti Indian Burmese Nationalism

Modern Burma owes much to Indian civilisation. The soil of Burma is highly saturated with Indian ideals, culture and civilisation. The history of Burma would give heaps of instances from which it would be evident that without the Indian brain, even no kind of political administration was possible on any part of Burma. In spite of it, anti-Indian Burmese nationalism began with the formation of the General Council of Burmese Association, (GCBA). GCBA was the outcome of YMBA Young Men Buddhists Association, which was formed in 1906. GCBA and Buddhist monks had fanned Anti-Indian hatred. Fiery speeches were delivered to drive out Indian and loot their properties.

Around 1930 a new organisation Do Burma Asi-ayone ("we Burmese" organisation), a party that had its origins in the Indo-Burmese riots of 1930 was born. The Asi-ayone members were not popular, there were those who looked down on them as brash young upstarts or feckless trouble-makers and found their use of the prefix, "Thakin" affected and objectionable. Thakin, which means "master," was the term, by which the British rulers expected to be, and for the most part were addressed by their Burmese subjects.

Though the first anti-British demonstration was led by an Indian Muslim, Mr. Rashid, father of M.A. Rashid and the Rangoon University students strike of 1936 was led by M.A Rashid himself, the Thakins sent a wave of anti-Indian thrill throughout the country.

During 1938-39, momentous events occurred which were collectively known as the revolution of Burmese era 1300. There was the march of Yenangyaung petroleum workers, the march of the peasants on Rangoon to demand agrarian reforms, the student protests in which Aung Gyaw was killed in a police baton-charge, the consequent school strikes all over the country, the communal riots between the Burmese and the Muslims, the labour strikes, the Mandalay demonstrations in which seventeen people died under police fire, and the fall of the government of Prime Minister Dr. Ba Maw.

All these combined to create a ferment of unrest such as the nation had not known and speeded up the tempo of nationalist activities. But even amid such stirring events, factionalism and jealousy, began to cast their shadow in Burmese politics. The desire to claim the distinction for being the more effective, the most patriotic, the best was to seize groups and individuals and lead to recriminations and bitterness.

Burmese Buddhist masses are not taking trouble to distinguish native Muslims, like Kaman, Rohingyas, Burmese Muslims, Bashu or Malay Muslims from general Indians of colonial era and attacked them indiscriminately. They call them Kalas, a word full of contempt and hatred. They regarded them as sub-human. They treated them worse than animals. If any one professed Islam, they call him Kala, Indian, foreigner. Oppression, injustice and humiliation are for Muslim whoever he may be. This attitude prevails till today. Ironically, on the other hand, their leaders declared "India and Burma are twin nations" in New Delhi in 1936 and "Bangladesh and Burma are twin brothers," by U Mya Thein, the Home Minister of SLORC in Dhaka in 1993. The term Kala is generally applied to mean ethnic Indians and carries sarcasm.

The relations between the Buddhist and Muslims were traditionally cordial since the time of Burmese king in Burma proper. There is no evidence whatsoever of friction between

them from these early days or even during earlier time of British rule. The turning point in the centuries old harmonious relation was since the emergence of the Dobama Asi-ayone and Thakins.

In 1930, one Yogi Pan Nyo wrote "Molvi Yogi-Paper", attacking the religion of Islam. It was refuted by Sayagyi U Sin of Saghine Ywa publishing a book by the name of "Winissaya Yogı Molvi Kyan" and by U Shwe Pyi's "Molvi Yogi Wawada Kyan". By publishing these books the religions were attacked by each other.

Myasaluway wrote in "Mhaw Kaway Magazine" under the title of "The Buddhist religion is insulted". With the instigation of British who made Muslim scapegoat, to avoid the 1300 revolution of the Burmese era, the communal riots between the Burmese Buddhist and the Muslims broke out in 26 July 1938. The Buddhist zealots had killed as many as 30,000 Muslims.

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Chapter-14

Peace Committee of North Arakan

The Muslim massacre of 1942

When British withdrew, the administration of Arakan division was entrusted to a Magh Buddhist extremist, U Kyaw Khine, with the power of commissioner of Arakan division. Many British soldiers left leaving behind a large number of arms, which easily reached the hand of Maghs.

The barbaric Muslim massacre started on 28th March 1942 at the order of Thakin leaders of Arakan. The Magh fell upon the innocent Muslims of Chanbilli village of Minbya Township. The carnage was unbelievable and hundreds of Muslims including children and women met their fatal end. Many Muslims jumped into the river and hid in the forest. People in water were shot dead. With their long swords the Maghs butchered the half-dead men, women and children. Those still alive in the carnage were stabbed with the pointed spears and cut them into pieces. Rohingya girls and women after having been raped were murdered and the children were mercilessly slaughtered by throwing them upward and putting the sharp side of the long-*dahs* or swords under them. The breasts of the women were peeled.

The same event of the tragic end of Shah Shuja and his followers in 1662 was just repeated once more in 1942. The Maghs of the neighbourhood carried away their cattle, rice, paddy and even clothes. The Thakin leaders took costly things like gold and silver and other booties were given to savage plunderers. The waters of the historic Lemro River had once more turned red with the blood of Muslims.

The next day on 29th March the armed Maghs attacked Lombaissor. The Rohingya resisted but were defeated and many Muslims were massacred. Like the daughter of Sultan Shuja many women in order to save their modesty threw themselves into the river. Some escaping group of 15000 Muslims were intercepted at Taungyi Nyo by the Maghs and were killed after looting their belongings. Women were killed after being raped for some days. Also, 10,000 men, women and children were killed at Apawkwa pass in the same way as Taungyi Nyo.

After destroying Chanbilli and Lambaissor in Minbya Township the Thakin attacked Raichaung and Pankha villages of Myebon Township on 1st April 1942. Almost all of 15,000 Muslims of these two villages were massacred.

Attempts were made to carry out massacre at Kyauknimaw of Ramree Township, but they were saved in a miraculous way. The Muslims of Kyaukpyu were given protection by British forces. On 8th April 1942 the Magh carried out the massacre at the villages of Kyauktaw, Mrohaung, Pauktaw and Rathidaung.

Abedin the richest man of Afouk (Apawkwa) used to say that "the Maghs are like dogs, if you throw bones at the dogs they are silent. Similarly if you give money to the Maghs they would not harm you." But at the last moment his wealth could not save him. Although he narrowly escaped the massacre he had to breathe his last in refugee camps at Rangpur, needy and broken heart. It is one of the thousands of examples.

At the end of April the onslaught swept over the township of Rathidaung and Buthidaung. The villages up to Khwachoung in the township of Buthidaung were destroyed and burnt down. Taung Bazar, north of Buthidaung and its surrounding villages also came under Magh attack.

Three fourths of the Muslims of Rathidaung Township were massacred. The rest were lucky enough to reach Akyab. The Muslims of Akyab had the opportunity of acquiring some arms

and training to defend themselves. Both offensive and defensive preparations of the Muslims in Akyab under the leadership of Sultan Mahmud, Tambi Maracan and others frightened the Maghs.

The result of the Muslim massacre of 1942 is that, 307 Muslim villages had disappeared from the soil of Arakan. More than 100,000 Muslims were massacred and 80,000 fled to Chittagong and Rangpur Refugee camps. The Muslim majority area of the east of Kaladan River had turned into a Muslim minority area. But the loss in terms of human civilisation and moral value is much greater. The 1942 massacre gave the scar mark of bitterness in the minds of the two-sister people against one another who, otherwise, peacefully co-existed in Arakan since 1200 years back.

The battle of Buthidaung, The turning point

As the blood of innocent Muslims was flowing in the rivers of Kaladan and Lemro, the Muslims of Mayu valley under the leadership of prominent Muslim leaders Atura Raja of Phoundaw Prin (his real name was Abdul Majid), Mir Ahmed Gannal of Alihaung, Abdul Jabbar Dubashi, Abul Baser Chowdhury etc. had prepared to resist the onslaught of Maghs. Meanwhile hundreds of fighters from Maungdaw under the leadership of Zahiruddin, Zamira, Amir Hamza Gandhi, Master Sultan Jinnah, Noor Ahmed Gannal, Master Du Du Meah of Bagguna, mechanic Abul Husaain of Nagpura etc. crossed the Mayu range in groups and joined the main resistance force at Buthidaung. Meanwhile, Muslims who escaped from the brutality of the blood thirsty Maghs also joined and fought courageously in the Battle of Buthidaung.

Buthidaung came under siege. The Muslims from the out side were on the verge of taking over the town. The Maghs found themselves in weaker position and started retreating. In a disorderly manner they boarded on a steamer at the jetty. Chinese of the town who felt unsafe also tried to join the Maghs,

but were not allowed to board. At these, there was serious clash between them. The Chinese shot at a steamer jam-packed with the Magh. Without a second thought, the passengers took shelter on safe side and the steamer tumbled upside-down. Two steamers sank at the same point. Another one could leave only to be sunk by Faruk Raja at Saindaung.

Peace Committee of North Arakan

On hearing of the ill fate of the streamers, the Magh fighters of Buthidaung fled into the hill. The Muslims captured Buthidaung. The report of the fall of Buthidaung halted the advance of Thakins from the east. The Muslims liberated all area up to Razarbil in Rathedaung Township. The whole Mayu frontier area comprising Maungdaw, Buthidaung and most part of Rathedaung Township were brought under the administration of the Peace Committees set by the Rohingya Muslims of Arakan. Mr. Omrah Meah became the head of the Peace Committees.

Mr. Omrah Meah was the son of Mr. Farhat Ali. Farhat Ali was the Head Master of Maungdaw Vernacular Board Mohammadan High School. The other members of the Central Peace Committee were Mr. Noor Ahmed of Asikapara, Mr. Azizur Rahman of Kadirbil, Sultan Ukil of Balu Khali, Yakub Kerani of Shujapara, Master Ali Hussain of Pandawbyin and etc. Abdul Rahman Gannal, whose military tactics were highly commandable at Buthidaung battle, was made military in-charge. British time Police Inspector Mr. Abul Khair and sub-inspector Mr. Ali Joher were head and deputy head of the police administration. Mr. Mohammad Darga, Abdur Shukkur Darga, Abdul Rahim Darga, Kalu Darga etc. also played important part in keeping law and order under the administration of Peace Committee.

Abdul Rahman Gannal, the hero of Buthidaung Battle, was a native of Kayandan, Dale Para of Maungdaw. His father was Zawnu. There existed rivalry between Zawnu and Osi

Rwathugri of same village for the post of Rwathugri (Headman). Zawnu wanted Abul Hussain (Father of GR Sultan) to be headman of Kayandan and Maung Ni village.

Maungdaw south was under the administration of the Peace Committee headed by Mr. E.D.S. Marcan (Tanbi Saheb). Molvi Abul Khair, Molvi Amir Hamza and Master Ashraf Hussain were the executive members. Noor Ahmed Gannal was the Police head of the Maungdaw South Peace Committee. Maungdaw north was under the administration of the Peace Committee headed by Mr. Faruk Ukil of Bowlibazar. The head of the Buthidaung and part of the Rathidaung Township Peace Committee was Mr. Zahiruddin Saheb.

Mr. Zahiruddin was the second son of Master-Molvi Abdul Hakim, the Head Master of Maungdaw Vernacular Board Mohammadan School. He was the younger brother of Mr. Faizi, the Education officer of the Thaton district in lower Burma and the elder brother of Mr. Sufi M.A. Waheed. His mother and second wife were from Buthidaung. He was a popular leader during the battle of Buthidaung. So he was made the head of the Buthidaung Peace Committee which had ruled the region till British re-entry in 1945. It was he who declared the Mayu Republic during Japanese time.

On May 1, 1942, the Japanese Imperial Army (JIA) led by Lt. Gen. Esa Goda and Burma National Army (formerly BIA) Arakan Front led by Bo Ran Aung marched to Minbya town from Prome in the lower Burma across Arakan Yoma. Minbya was the headquarter of Japanese supporting Thakins in Arakan. On 3rd May Japanese troops and BNA reached Ponnagyun. British Navy stationed in Kaladan river shelled Japanese positions and the Japanese returned fire. On 5th May British navy was withdrawn and the Japanese advanced towards Akyab via Pauktaw. The Japanese occupied Akyab on 7th May without any resistance. On that fateful day Bo Ran Aung also entered Akyab accompanied by Boom Pauk Tha Gyaw. They chopped

off 30 heads of innocent Muslims of Ambari and Manupara. The frightened villagers left their houses. The BNA troops and the Maghs entered the villages and carried away all the belongings of Muslim Rohingyas. The presence of Japanese forces at Akyab helped considerably in saving the lives of the people from the marauders and thugs. An uneasy peace prevailed around Akyab area.

During the first half of May, a contingent of BNA with Thakin leaders cruised upstream in a patrol boat along the Mayu river towards Buthidaung. They fired shots at the Muslims whenever they saw them on the bank of the river. But a group of Muslim fighters led by Azhar Meah Chowdhury of Godum Para intercepted the boat and the Magh Commissioner U Kyaw Khine, was shot dead. The boat returned to Akyab.

Now the Japanese calculated that without the support of the Muslims of North Arakan it would be rather difficult for them to complete the occupation of Burma and move further westward. The Japanese, therefore, began to discuss with many Muslim leaders including Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Yasin Ukil and Po Khine (Kaman) Ukil.

A delegation constituted by Yasin Ukil and Po Khine Ukil from Muslim side and Bo Yan Naung, Bo Yan Kin and Bo Myo Nyunt and some other Maghs, was sent to Maungdaw by the Japanese. The delegation met Tambi Saheb and other Rohingya leaders. A public meeting was held at Sikdarpara on 8th June 1942. They spoke for making peace between the two warring communities. The Japanese had done a mistake. Because the presence of BNA tops brass and some Magh nationalists made a negative impulse. Local Muslims joined by the refugees became furious. Rohingya leaders and Tambi Saheb tried their best to control them.

In the ensuing hue and cry gunfire broke out. There was exchange of fire. Bo Yan Naung, Bo Yan Kin and Bo Myo Nyunt died from the Magh side whereas Inna Amin, Abu

Bocker, Habibullah, Molvi Abdul Salam and a son of Molvi Abdul Rahman died from the Muslim side. The rest of the Magh fled. Both Po Khine Ukil and Yasin Ukil were arrested while Tambi Saheb was confined at an unknown place. They were released as the Japanese ordered BNA leaders Bo Yan Aung to do so.

The 1942 massacre of Muslims in Arakan halted the Japanese advancement for a while, but gradually they pushed northward along Mayu valley and occupied Buthidaung and Maungdaw towns in October. The British had withdrawn already to the West Bank of Naf River.

British re-entry into Arakan

The British had their forward's outposts at Cox's Bazar and Teknaf. A local intelligence organisation known as "V" force was raised with recruits from Muslims of Arakan. Field Marshal Sir William Slim, writes in his "Defeat into Victory" that "Although they were, initially untrained later along the whole front V force became an important and very valuable part of the intelligence framework for the British". Had not the Muslims of north Arakan sided with the British and risked their lives and properties for the British, it would have been rather impossible for the Allied Forces to re-enter Arakan and further their advancement to southern part of Burma. It was only with the help of "V" force that the British successfully made their way to control Arakan.

"Only Thirty Comrades slipped out of the country to return with the Japanese Imperial army (JIA) and successfully drive out the mighty British from it sacred soil. And when the Japanese failed to honour their bond, the people of Burma at the behest of their beloved and undisputed leader, General Aung San, rose as one man in what is popularly called the "Resistance Movement". The Japanese, undefeated in a straight run up to the North-eastern gate of India at Imphal and the western gate of Burma at Maungdaw, ever shattered and ran pell-mell out of Burma to

meet their ultimate doom at Hiroshima and Nagasaki". Sultan Mahmud's article, "Burma and Bangladesh", published by "People's view", Chittagong on 1st February, 1972.

From Akyab Sultan Mahmud, ex-minister, Haji Sultan Mahmud and Saya U Ba Khin (Master Ashrafuddin) led the Japanese and BIA (Burma Independent Army) to Buthidaung. The British for his collaboration with Japanese sentenced Kala Meah, the educated youth leader of Koandaung village of Buthidaung Township to death. ("A short History of Arakan and Rohingyas" by National Democratic Party for Human Rights, P-17).

Passing of death sentence on Kala Meah was indeed unfair, because most of the people of Burma had collaborated with the Japanese. But no body was ever taken action by the British although they joined with the Japanese against the British.

Kala Meah was educated at St. Anne's Convent High School of Akyab. He welcomed the Japanese with thousands of local people. The Japanese appointed him administrator. During his administration he had an accident of shooting hitting the leg of a man. With this case the British arrested him, while he joined British force at Bowli Bazar of Maungdaw, with the instigation of some enemies of Kala Meah. Kala Meah's father, the headman and landlord of Koandaung went straight to the Governor General to appeal for the release of his son. Before his arrival, with the release order, Kala Meah was awarded death sentence and was shot dead by the firing squad. Alas! With the release order in hand, his father, amidst thousands of people shedding tears for Kala Meah's unnatural death buried Kala Meah. For decades the Rohingyas with full of lamentation remembered Kala Meah.

"After the re-occupation of Burma by the Allied Forces,.... thousands more both from the Armed Forces and civilians were taken into custody including myself. At first all were lodged in the Rangoon Central Jail. Thereafter the civilians were separated from the members of the Armed Forces and a batch of about

twenty of us was taken to Calcutta by steamer. We were then removed to a detention camp in Jhingergacha in Jessore District. In our group were well-known names in Burma like. Tilla Mohammad Khan, S.M. Bashir, Dina Nath, L.B Lathia, Mohammad Jaffar and several others. We were released after Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been atom-bombed by Truman and the consequent surrender of the Japanese. We were in detention for about ten months.

While in detention in Jhingergacha, it so happened that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad came to Jessore on an election campaign. We manage to smuggled out a letter to Panditji requesting him to use "Jai Hind" as the only form of greeting and satlutation by the people of India. A few days later, at a meeting at Allahabad, Panditji greeted the huge gathering with "Jai hind" for the first time in India amidst thunderous applause." The letter of Sultan Mahmud, published by the People's view, Chittagong on 25th January 1972.

British forces marched into Arakan and captured Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway around the end of 1944. In 1945 lower Burma was cleared off of the Japanese. Thus Burma became again under complete control of the British. On August 6th the first Atomic Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on the 9th the second fell at Nagassaki. On 2nd September 1945 the Japanese surrendered.

The position of the Muslims of Arakan was glorious during the time of Mrauk-U Empire and it was ruined during the 40 years rule of Burma. They had been discriminated against and blindfolded by the British so much so that none of the Muslims could hold a single high position in the government. As they were the conqueror of the Muslims Mughal Empire, they politically kept the Muslim of sub-continent and that of Arakan uneducated, unhealthy and underdeveloped.

A friend in need is a friend indeed! The Muslims of Arakan helped the British when they were in need. They served the

British soldiers very faithfully. They risked their lives, fought and died for the British. There were numerous instances where the Muslims gave their lives to save the lives of their English officers. A British officer wrote with sorrow, lament and sympathy how his life was saved by a Muslim Boli (wrestler) of Arakan while he was drowning at the mouth of Ngakangdu creek, and while the Boli tried to save another British officer the Boli was drowned and disappeared under the current of the water forever - gone forever down the river of no return.

A young cook of Myothugyi village saved his officer by putting on him a veil. The officer was so grateful that he had taken Ali Ahmed to Calcutta and educated him. These are two of the thousands of instances of Muslims of Arakan rendering great services for the British.

Only then the British began to write in favour of the Muslims of Arakan, though their early writings were not appreciative. Anthony Irwin writes in his "Burmese Outpost", "Without these people we would have been blind and deaf. With them we have eyes and ears and continual entertainment. They make wonderful material for the fair-minded and far-seeing coloniser. Their future is in our hands; we have a chance of making a happy people and a fair state out of Arakan. Any fairness, kindness will be repaid us one hundred fold. I would very often wonder whether the fairness and help that they have shown us will be repaid as fully as it would have been, had the boot been on the other foot."

In order to bolster the tremendous sacrifice rendered to the British, they promised them they would make North Arakan a "Muslim national area" while taking the power of administration from the President of Muslim Peace Committee, Mr. Omrah Meah, by Col. Phillip, Col. Edgerly and other military officers of the British in 1945. The same promise was also given to Atura Raja (Abdul Majid) by the British officers in written.

Haji Azizur Rahman was a native of Kadirbil. His father was Mali Chand, who made roads and ponds on charity. Aizur Rahaman was an executive member of the Peace Committee. He was in-charge of finance. He insisted Peace Committee to demand for a separate Autonomous Muslim State of North Arakan both from the British and Burmese. Dr. Sanaullah also advised them for the same.

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Chapter-15

Achieving the Independence of Burma

The years 1945-47 saw the emergence of Aung San as a strong leader and an able statesman who had the confidence and love of the people. In May 1945 the British government had declared its future policy towards Burma in the form of a White Paper. This provided for a period of three years direct rule by the Governor, which were no more than what had been established under the 1935 Burma Act. Burma would be granted dominion status, but the hill and frontier areas would be excluded unless the people of these areas express their desire to be included within Burma.

The terms of the White Paper were totally unacceptable to the AFPFL. The leader of AFPFL explained to Sir Regional Dorman Smith, the returning Governor of Burma, that their party represented the people and they should, therefore, be allowed to form a national provisional government to replace the military administration. Dorman Smith was reluctant to accept it.

In January 1946, Aung San was elected President of the AFPFL. He formed the Peoples Volunteer Organisation (PVO), as the military wing of the AFPFL, which made the government highly uneasy. He made it evident that he would not refrain from violence should it be necessary for the freedom of Burma. In July 1946, Dorman Smith was replaced with Major General Rance.

The old Governors Council was dissolved, and in September 1946 Aung San was appointed Deputy Chairman of the new Executive Council with the portfolios for defence and external affairs. He warned the people not to imagine that his acceptance of office meant the end of all problems.

Aung San denounced the communists for seeking to wreck the unity of the country, for putting their own party above the cause of Burma's independence. *He would allow no ideology to come before the cause of Burmese freedom and unity.* The socialist Kyaw Nyein displaced the communist Than Tun as the general secretary of the AFPFL. The communists were expelled from the league in October.

In December 1946 the AFPFL, accepted the invitation of the British government for the agreement of the independence of Burma. The delegation was headed by Aung San and included several Councillors, politicians and civil servants. "Aung San - Atlee Agreement" was duly signed by all the members of the delegation except U Saw and Ba Sein. On getting back to Burma, Galon U Saw and Ba Sein joined Dr. Ba Maw and Paw Tun, another former Prime Minister, to form the national opposition front, claiming that Aung San had gone over to the imperialists for the sake of holding office.

Aung San felt imperative and went straight into negotiations with ethnic minority groups within the country. The agreement reached with the British had left the future of the frontier areas to the decisions of its people. To settle the issue a conference was held at Panglong on 12 February 1947. All nationalities except Rohingyas attended the conference. Aung San had been emboldened to neglect Rohingyas as a result of Mr. Razak's attitude. He claimed to represent the whole Muslim population in Burma including that of Arakan. U Aung Zan Wai, a Magh Rakhine, represented on behalf of the whole people of Arakan. During the conference the Rakhine Magh did not even raise any objection as to the keeping of Arakan under the administration

of the central government, though Arakan was an independent country till 1784. The Jamaitul Ulema party of North Arakan sent Molvi Hashim and Noor Ahmed Saheb to see the conference. But the conference ended before their arrival, due to communication difficulty. They met the Governor, who told them that they were not qualified for getting statehood as per the constitution, instead they should demand for a separate District. Five national groups achieved autonomous states, some of them with the right of secession, except Arakan.

Immediately after the Panglong conference, Aung San went on a tour throughout country, campaigning for the AFPFL in the forthcoming election in April. He arrived at Akyab and sent Sultan Mahmud to Maungdaw to campaign for AFPFL. A general meeting was held at Kayandan village near the High School ground. Thousands of people gathered at the meeting. They pretended to listen him attentively. At the conclusion of his sermon of Persi and Urdu reference from Mirza Galeb to Iqbal, when he urged to join AFPFL, people shouted the slogans of anti-AFPFL and the meeting ended in a fiasco. Then they gathered at High School ground where Mr. Omrah Meah spoke to the people to be united like sticks in a match box under the banner of Jamaitul Ulema.

Then rumours broke out that Aung San and his associates might bar the Rohingyas from voting in the forthcoming election of 1947. The Jamiatul Ulema sent telegram to the Prime Minister Atlee. The Prime Minister allowed the Muslims of Arakan the right of voting and filing nomination papers. U Aung San gave nomination to Mr. Sultan Ahmed and Mr. M.A. Gaffar from the Muslim Area and were elected by the Muslims as voting right was granted.

The demand of a Muslim state was also put to Rees William Commission without a fruitful result. Some went to New Delhi and met Mr. Jinnah. They appealed to Mr.Jinnah either to incorporate their territory in the future Pakistan or pressurize the

Burmese leader Aung San to grant autonomy to the Muslims of north Arakan. Abdul Gaffar, a Rohingya Member of Parliament made a remark on this at a press conference on 8th April 1960 that, "The main adherents of the scheme to annex with Pakistan were Muslims of Chittagong origin, the native Rohingyas were not interested for the annexation."

The people of Burma responded by returning on the elections an overwhelming majority of AFPFL candidates, only a handful of seats going to the independent and the communists. From the north Arakan Mr. Sultan Ahmed and Mr. Abul Gaffar were from their local party, the Jamiat Ulema party. But they were in semi - alliance with the AFPFL. The "Saw-Sein-Maw" group had boycotted the elections knowing that there would be a certain defeat for them. Allegations were made against the AFPFL. But the findings of the election tribunals indicated that the results had been a fair reflection of the people's choice.

The AFPFL laid down the independence policy at a convention in May. A committee was formed to draft the constitution of the independent Union of Burma. On 19th July at a meeting of the Executive Council, Aung San, together with six other councillors, including his elder brother, U Ba Win, Sayagyi U Razzak and his young aide, Yebow Ko Htwe (Muslim), were assassinated by uniformed men who burst into the guarded conference chamber with machine guns.

The assassins escaped, but they were quickly trailed up to the home of Galon U Saw. Shortly before U Saw had joined the Burmese delegation to London, he had been shot at and wounded in the eye by men dressed in Khaki. There were those who surmised that U Saw had believed Aung San's PVO members to have been responsible for the shooting and therefore sought revenge. But the trial held that the instructions had been for the whole Executive Council to be destroyed, and it seemed that Galon U Saw had sought the death of Aung San and his colleagues in the odd belief that once they had been killed, he

would become the head of the Burmese government. He was found guilty of abetment and sentenced to death.

Although Aung San had died, the independence for which he had sacrificed his life came to his country. U Nu, the most senior member of the AFPFL, completed the final negotiations under the Nu-Atlee agreement. On 4th January 1948 the independent Union of Burma was born.

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Chapter - 16

Mayu Frontier Administration and Arakan State

In the Pang Long Conference regional autonomy, in the name of State, was granted to the Shan, Kachin, Karen and Kayah with the right of secession after 10 years to the Shan and the Kayah. The Chins were granted 'Special Division' status.

The characteristics to gain a state are drawn in the constitution of 1947, as follows:

1. Having a clear geographical boundary,
2. Having a separate language other than Burmese,
3. Having a separate historical back ground,
4. Having a separate civilisation,
5. Having economically viable enterprises and economically self-sufficient community'
6. Having a fair large population and by
7. Having a desire to maintain its distinct identity as a separate unit.

In response to the submission of constitution amended bill regarding granting of 'State' to Arakan in parliament on Feb. 22,1956 by U Ba Myaing of Ramree constituency, Government Minister Bo Khin Maung Gale replied:" Before the death of Bogyok Aung San in 1947 he considered the issue of Arakan

state. He told the Rakhine leaders to decide whether they would like to remain under Burma Proper or to take a separate state like Shan and Kachin. The then Rakhine leaders Myochit Kyaw Oo and U Pinnya Thiha, believed it would not be useful to have a separate state and supported to keep Arakan as a division while drafting the constitution.

Rakhine Magh representatives at the Pang Long did not demand statehood for Arakan state. Rakhine Magh members led by Tun Aung Gyaw, had every opportunity to demand a separate state for Arakan at the 'Burma Round Table Conference' held in London Nov. 1931 to January 1932. They remained silent while Shan and Kachin members of the delegation demanded it forcefully.

Ra-Ta-Nya (Rakhine National Unity Organisation) member, U Hla Tun Pru of Mrohaung constituency, while submitting the constitution amendment bill for granting 'State' to Arakan on February 19, 1958 told the parliament that "Bogyoke Aung San agreed to grant 'State' to Arakan. His statement was supported by U Paw Thin, M.P. of Ponnagyun constituency, who claimed that Bogyoke Aung San in a meeting at Kyet Khine Tan village of Akyab told that Arakan had all 4 characteristics of gaining a 'state'. In replying the proposed amendment Bill, Minister U Ba Saw told the parliament that while he was performing the affairs of Japanese revolution at Calcutta, he met and discussed the matter with U Thein Pe Myint about the future of Arakan. U Thein Pe Myint replied that since Arakan division has historically and geographically a separate entity the people of Arakan have the rights to ask for self-government. However, since the Rakhine and Burmese worked so intimately and were responsible for the weal and woe of Burma, by enjoying that right the Rakhine will have no benefit and can't prosper. U Ba Saw continued, before independence of Burma in 1946-47, while the constitution was being drafted, he met ex-chairman of Ra-Ta-Nya, U Ba Myaing, M.P. and discussed with him how to write the constitution for

the progress and prosperity of Arakan Division. U Ba Myaing replied the same as U Thein Pe Myint. U Ba Saw continued, in 1946-47 a meeting was held with Rakhine AFPFL members and Rakhine intellectuals living in Rangoon in the residence of U Kyaw Min. In the meeting it was discussed whether to take a separate state or to remain with Burma proper, U Kyaw Min, the then M.P. replied if 'State' was taken Arakan would have no fund. If there is no fund nothing can be done."

However, after the independence of Burma the movement for achievement of Arakan state was launched in and outside Parliament. Muslim MPs of northern Arakan differed in their opinion regarding the granting of Arakan State. They joined with the ruling party, the AFPFL, and opposed it with Minister U Ba Saw of Kyaukpyu.

The large majority Rohingya of north Arakan demanded that North Arakan be made autonomous and subject directly to the central government in Rangoon, having no Magh officials and influence, or at best that a special region be created which, though not autonomous, would still be subject directly to the central government.

From 1960 to 1962 Rohingya and Arakanese Muslim organisations took hectic activities on the subject of Arakan statehood. This was indirect reaction to U Nu's proclamation, on the eve of the general elections of April 1960, that should his party emerge victorious he would confer statehood on Arakan. When he won the election, U Nu appointed a committee of inquiry to look into all the aspects of the Arakan question. The Rohingya Jamiatul Ulema presented the committee with a long memorandum setting in the view of the Muslims of North Arakan. In the memorandum it stated that the area's Muslims were from a separate racial group which constituted an absolute majority, and creation of an autonomous region to be subject directly to the government in Rangoon was necessary. A separate administration would also help to raise the existing low

standard of living of the people, almost all of depended for their subsistence on primitive agriculture; it would raise the standard of education, and prevent abuses of the local population by Maghs. The region would be eligible for direct allocations from the central government, and get special attention with regard to cultural, economic and educational questions concerning it.

Abdul Gaffar (ex-MP) Akyab North Constituency at a press conference on 8th April 1960 and Sultan Ahmed, the parliamentary Secretary's memorandum to the commission, Guardian daily, 28 June 1960, also demanded from the government and the inquiry committee that their constituencies be excluded from the projected state of Arakan. While they had no objections to the creation of such a state, they did not want to make Maungdaw and Buthidaung or the part of Rathidaung where Muslims constituted a majority a part of it. Those areas would become a separate unit to ensure the separate existence of the Rohingyas. If Arakan State, as a whole, was to grant statehood without considering the delicate factors that might well bring about renewed bloodshed they feared.

The position of Muslims in Akyab and in other parts of Arakan was a more complex one, resulting at times in tension between them and the Rohingya organisations. Some felt it was no use opposing U Nu's scheme of single state of Arakan, including the Muslim majority area, fearing detachment of the Muslims residing in other parts. They did, of course, want guarantees for the Muslims, and demanded that Muslims be included in the committee working with the framework of the future Arakan State.

A memorandum submitted by Mr. Sultan Mahmud, ex-Minister and 4 other law makers to the inquiry committee stressed that the Muslims would support state status for the territory only if the Arakanese Buddhist endorsed their claims and embodied in the constitution of the future state, religious, cultural, economics, political, administrative and educational

guarantees for the Muslims. Non-Muslims and Muslims should alternate in the position of head of the state, whenever the head of the state was a Muslim the speaker of the state assembly should be a non-Muslim but his deputy should be a Muslim, and vice versa; a similar arrangement should govern the membership of civil service appointment commissions and other such bodies; no less than one third of the ministers should be Muslims; and no law affecting Muslims should be passed unless it secured the support of a majority of the Muslim members of the state assembly.

In making appointment to administrative positions in the Muslim district the head of the state should heed the advice of Muslim State ministers. And the number of Muslims holding posts in the civil service, on public bodies and in local government should be proportional to the percentage of the Muslim population.

There should be competition among Muslims for the post allocated to Muslims under the above system. The government should devote special attention to meeting the Muslims' educational and economic needs. No pupil should be compelled to attend instruction in religion not of his own. The adherents of every faith should be provided with facilities for instruction in their religion in any educational institution. Adherents of any faith should be free to set up educational institution of their own. Such institutions should benefit from government recognition.

The Muslims should have full freedom to foster their particular language and their culture and to propagate their faith. A special official in charge of Muslim affairs should be appointed in the state administration. His function is being to investigate complaints and to report on them to the head of state.

Finally, any part of Arakan, and specially its northern districts, should reverse for a period of ten years the right to be

detached from the state and come under the direct control of the central government in Rangoon.

Mayu Frontier Administration

On 1 May 1961 the government created the Mayu Frontier Administration Area covering Maungdaw, Buthidaung and the western part of Rathidaung townships. It was military administration and not autonomous rule, but as it did not involve subordination to the Rakhine authorities the arrangement earned the support of the Rohingya community. A special police force known as 'Mayu Ray' was raised with recruits from local Muslims and the law and order situation was improved. Economic, education and health improvement were done by the Frontier Administration. It was the only administration, which favoured Rohingyas during the post-independent Burma. Rohingya language was aired by the Burma Broadcasting Services twice a week till 24 October 1965. Every year Rohingya representatives, especially wrestlers were invited to 12, February Union Day celebration. Rohingya feast and cultural show were part of the Union Day celebration. During the Frontier Administration the Rohingya people were as happy as that of 1942 to 1945 Peace Committee Period.

In 1962 the government drafted a bill for Arakan statehood excluding Mayu area in the territory projected Arakan state. General Ne Win staged a coup on 2 March 1962. The revolutionary government of Ne Win cancelled the plan to grant statehood to Arakan. But the Mayu Frontier Administration remained till it was put under the Ministry of Home Affairs in February 1, 1964.

On that day all the government servants of Mayu Frontier District were assembled at Mayu House of (4 mile) Maungdaw with the order of frontier D.C Major Tin Oo. Lt.Col Than Nyunt, head of the Frontier Administration of Burma handed over the Mayu area to Lt.Col. U Sein Lwin (afterwards

Gen. Sein Lwin, President of Burma), the then Secretary of Home Ministry in front of all the attending government servants. In a sympathetic mood Col. Than Nyunt told the audience not to be sorry for the change of the administration. However in a haughty manner Col. Sein Lwin warned the audience to be faithful to the new administration with a voice of thunderbolt nodding his head and moving his hands in support of what he was delivering.

In 1974, the revolutionary government of Burma, renamed as the Socialist Republic of Burma popularly known as BSPP government. It convened the first Pyithu Hlut Taw (Parliament) which ratified the constitution drawn by BSPP. The new constitution granted 'state' to Arakan manned by Buddhists only without the participation of Muslims of Arakan, with Burmans in the top posts and Rakhine Magh in lower strata. Pro-Burman Rakhine Maghs who tightened the screw against the Rohingyas further dominated the 'Arakan State Council'.

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Chapter-17

Resistance Movement of Rohingyas
(1948-1961)

The quest for Identity

Hegel says man is distinguished from animals by his struggle for recognition. There exist primitive passion and extreme ethnic hatred in Burma. U Saw, the former Prime Minister of Burma had been raising the voice that until the Muslims of Arakan can prove their grandfather or grandmother to have the real Burmese blood, so long they will be treated as foreigners. That is to say, if the flow of Burmese blood is not found in them they will be deprived of civic rights. In this disorderly world not every thing is logical and organic.

"Humanity will not be redeemed, " wrote Rizal, "While reasons is not free, while faith would want to impose itself against facts, while whims are laws and while there are nations that subjugate the others."

Human dignity must be promoted in society through justice, virtue and compassion. They belong to all. All of us belong to only one community of mankind. Asia is a region with diverse population with different ethnicity, culture and faith. This has not been by choice, but were forced by circumstances and history to become a nation not by dissolving our identities.

In 1942, at the instigation of Nationalist Burmans and Thakin Maghs, the Maghs of Arakan carried out brutal mass killing of the Muslims of Arakan. Thousands of innocent Muslims were placed on the point of sword. They perpetrated torture and

atrocities on the Muslims women and the tender infants were placed on the point of spears. As a result about 100,000 of Muslims were killed by the Maghs and rendering 500,000 homeless. About 80,000 fled to Bengal and took shelter in the Refugee camps of Chittagong and Rangpur.

In 1945, when the British were able to recapture Burma, only a limited number of Muslims went back to Arakan in 1946. But they could not get favourable atmosphere for rehabilitation.

In April 1946, Aung San came to Akyab and declared that the demands of Arakan Muslims would not be considered before their achievement of citizenship on the same level of other indigenous minorities. Consequently the Muslims of Arakan in order to establish their identity carried out movement through their political organisation "The Jamiat-e-Ulema E Arakan." They wired to Lord Atlee for their recognition as the indigenous race of Burma. By his pressure Aung San granted them the voting right and the right to contest the parliamentary elections. U Aung San, categorised them as "Arakani Muslims". But rumours were afooted that the Muslims of Arakan border would be shifted to Central Burma and Maghs would be placed in their place. The Muslims of Arakan felt insecure and the future for them was uncertain.

The principal political effect of the Peace Committee was, it made the Muslims of Arakan autonomy conscious. The promise of British to create a Muslim national area doubled their desire for a Muslim state.

The Muslims of Arakan were elbowed out, from the political parleys and the national conference at Panlong whereas the Buddhists alone represented on behalf of the whole people of Arakan. Even after reaching to a consensus enabling Aung San to achieve independence, the country soon plunged into a state of deep political turmoil. Soon after the independence in 1948, the whole country was engulfed by multicoloured insurgency. In

1948 the powerful Karen rebels were at the suburbs of Rangoon before they could be beaten back by massive Indian aid.

In the Arakan region the Maghs, wielding fully political power, after the independence, started to massacre the Muslims in tens and thousands, burnt their villages and looted their properties. The memory of Burma Territorial Forces (BTF) and their brutality still shudders the conscience of every living Rohingya till today. Being put to a serious task of maintaining their existence, the Rohingya were compelled to rise in arms against the tyranny of the ruling regime and Maghs.

Mujahids claimed that they had taken up arms only when all their protests and appeals had gone unheeded. They said that the Rohingya settled in Arakan since the 7th Century. Yet extremist Magh propaganda had represented them as Pakistani Muslims. The new Burmese government dismissed Muslim officers who were appointed by the British in the administration soon after the transfer of power from the Peace Committee under the notification No. 11-0A-C/C/42. All Muslim police staff from officers to constables was transferred to other regions thereby compelling them to resign. Maghs who increasingly offended the Muslim community, discriminating against them, putting their elders to ridicule and treating them arbitrarily replaced them. The authorities made no effort at all to correct the wrongs against Rohingyas.

The Immigration authorities' criminal act of wrongful restraint and wrongful confinement and wrongful deportation made the odd situation. Thousands of Muslim refugees, who were forced to flee during the Muslim massacre of 1942 to Bengal, were not allowed to return. Their properties had been given to the Maghs.

Considering their position, the Muslim of Arakan felt strongly the necessity of organising a strong political body. But as no peaceful and secure positions were found anywhere in Burma and in face of the attack of the Maghs and other insurgents, some young Muslims organised the Mujahid Party. Arakan was

one of the places where anarchy prevailed. Attackers would lay raid on their lives and property, and they were expected to be ruined any moment due to lack of proper resistance. This precarious position led them to organize the Mujahids Party.

A young patriot, Mr. Jafar Hussain, son of the most revered Moulana Abdul Bari of Alaychoung, Buthidaung, singer by profession with a background of Japanese military training, started organising the people. Though his real name was Jafar Hussain, by virtue of his profession he was popularly known as Jafar Kawal. He ignited the conscience of the young Muslims by singing lyrics of the great Muslim poet, Alama Muhammad Iqbal, who was highly regarded by the Muslims as a great reformer, and urged them to sacrifice their properties and lives in defence of their faith, honour and dignity. Jafar started recruiting and training Mujahids.

Three young brave men joined the Mujahid Party. Mr. Abbas, son of Mr.Khalil and grandson of Theikthugyi Nuruddin of Sindaung village of Buthidaung. He passed his matriculation and was well versed in Burmese and Arakanese like Mr. Rashid. Mr. Rashid was son of Molvi Abul Khair of Phoimali, Buthidaung Township. Another important man was Mr.Kassim, who was later known as Kassim Raja. He was from the Kolum village of Maungdaw Township. Though less educated he was a Havilder of British regular forces. Other important members of the movement were Mr. Abdul Sukkur, Mr.Abdul Hamid and Mr. Abdul Rashid of Borichaung to mention only a few. The first battle between Mujaheed Party and Burmese forces was waged in Pondawpyin on 15th May 1948. The Mujaheed Party defeated the enemies.

In the political field Mr. Omrah Meah, Master Sultan of Myothugyi and Du Du Meah Master of Buggona were important figures. One Ebrahim, whose all-family members were killed by the Maghs during the 1942 Muslim massacre escaped to Myothugyi village of Maungdaw Township. He was married to

Nur Jahan, the daughter of Master Abul Hashim. He was in touch with Jafar Kawal through Mr. Jinnah Sultan of Myothugyi village. He organised Abul Hussain and Mohammad Sharif of the same village and Zulungya of Ukil Para of Maungdaw town proper. In 1948 they killed the Magh SDO of Maungdaw at Daungkhali Nayapara as an act of revenge for the massacre of Ebrahim's family members and other tens and thousands of Muslims. There was also another political reason was they did not want Magh officers to rule them.

The Muslim police of Maungdaw arrested all of them. But they all escaped on 13th April 1948, while the Magh police were intoxicated during the water festival. This gave the Burmese government the lame excuse of transferring all Muslim police from officers to constables, though the fault was of Magh Police, and the OC of Maungdaw Police station was a Magh Police officer.

Ebrahim and other joined the Mujahid party stationed at Kadirbil under the command of Mujahid vice-president Mr. Jinnah Sultan. Every night they fought to capture Maungdaw town proper as the rest of the whole township was under the control of the Mujahids. At that time Colonel Adus Shukur led campaign in Buthidaung area for almost two months in order to get a firm footing for the Mujahids. Colonel Abdul Hamid captured Bawli Bazar.

The Burmese AFPFL government sent 5th Burma Regiment from Akyab district to Maungdaw by steamers supported by the Burmese Naval force's gunboats. The regiment ascended at Maungni para and went straight to Shikdapara (Kayandan) village from where Mujahids were hard struggling to capture Maungdaw town. Fierce battle was fought for three or four hours. The Mujahid forces retreated. The Burmese Force captured and burnt down the village at 4:00 PM. of November 10, 1948. They killed every Muslim in their sight.

"We were just nearly a mile away from the awful scene. All of our villagers ran away to the nearby mountains abandoning our hearth and homes. The next day the 5th regiment marched along the road to Buthidaung. As our house was near the road it was burnt down though my father was a police officer serving at Akyab and not long before he was transferred from Maungdaw demoting from Police Inspector to Police Station officer. It was the reward we received out of the Burmese Independence." told by Anwar.

After a few hours of their quick march the fifth regiment reached Buthidaung which was under the control of Col. Abdus Shukur, and all the Maghs wore Muslim caps and recited Kalima Tayeba Sharif. Fighting started. After a fierce fight Buthidaung felt into the Burmese army. Col. Abdus Shukur was killed in action.

"The oppression seems now to have increased in thousand-folds rendering our law abiding and peace loving people homeless, compelling them in thousands to take refuge in foreign land. We are at pains to mention that since the 10 November 1948 our area has been turned into a land of tragedies. Many villages were burnt down and crops destroyed. In some villages, innocent women were made to enter into trenches. And automatic weapons were used freely on them. Life has become intolerable for the Rohingyas in this area. Thousands of them were compelled to leave their ancestral home.

"Starting with the occurrences at Nayapara, Ngakandok, Siddarpara, Kandhakata (Myothugyi) villages, these tragedies enveloped slowly by the whole of Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships. These are many cases in which the Muslims in Maungdaw Township were burnt alive in their houses. Hardly very few persons living in area south of Maungdaw could escape from this carnage, on the 10th, 11th November 1948." ***(Address presented to His Excellency Thakin Nu, Prime Minister,***

Union of Burma, on his visit to Maungdaw on the 10th March 1950, by the Rohingya elders of North Arakan.)

After capturing the Kayandan village a group of Burmese army further proceeded to Southeast up to the black bridge known as Mayan Khalir Phool's Mujahid's out post. They fought the post from all sides. The Mujahids fired back causing so many of the Burmese military's death. On Mujahid side Zulungya and Abul Hussain gave their lives.

Dabbori Chaung Declaration

Col. Abdus Shukur was the Commander in chief of the movement. Which was formed at Dabbori Chaung village of Buthidaung Township with the Dabbori Chaung declaration on 20 August 1947. The following are the demands in the declaration:

1. To form an Autonomous Muslim state named North Arakan, comprising Buthidaung, Rathidaung and Maungdaw townships taking the region from the west of Kaladan river up to the eastern part of Naf river. The region will remain under the union of Burma.
2. To form an army named North Arakan Muslim Regiment by the help of those Muslim youths who possess Military training or military experience in North Arakan. The Muslim youths of this regiment will sacrifice their lives for an inch of land in case of foreign aggression.
3. Urdu should be accepted as a regional language and a medium of instruction of the North Arakan. But the Burmese language will remain compulsory as a national language.
4. Responsible government officials for the North Arakan state must be appointed from the local Muslims. But a Burmese advisor on behalf of the central government may remain in this region.

5. The non-Muslim minority community of North Arakan will have the similar fair treatment like other Muslim minority of other parts of Burma.

6. Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance and Commerce will remain directly under the Central Government. As regards the rest what should remain under the local authority as well as the Central authority should be decided by the joint discussion of the central and local representatives and concurrently shared by both the centre and local authorities.

7. Subject to the acceptance of the above conditions by the Burmese government, a Pact will be signed by the Mujahids representatives and the Burmese government. But before signing of the pact a General Amnesty must be announced to the other political leaders along with the Mujahids Party of North Arakan. There upon in accordance with the section II of the Pact, the Mujahid known as Muslim Regiment of North Arakan will have the same privilege like the Nationals Army of Burma and they will be included in the Burma Regular Army as Territorial Force of North Arakan.

To consider the above seven demands there were discussions between the government representatives and Mujahids leaders. In the first stage some leading local persons along with the North Arakan Muslim members of the parliament were sent to Thamy village for mutual exchange of views and ideas. They proposed that the demands of the Mujahids would be considered if they abandon arms. The Mujahid leaders, however, refused to do so till the acceptance of the demands of them. In the second stage, Mr. Sultan Ahmed, Parliamentary Secretary and Mr. Abdul Gaffar M.P. were sent to Fakira Bazar in Maungdaw. But they also had to return unsuccessful. Earlier Mr. Abul Bashar of Phomali, a former township officer was sent to Thamy with the same mission. It was to him that the Mujahids submitted their seven demands.

In February 1950, Burma's first Prime Minister U Nu, Minority Minister Aung Zan Way (Magh) accompanying Sardar Aurangazeb Khan, the Pakistani Ambassador to Burma came to Maungdaw in order to hold discussion on the seven demands of the Mujahids with their representatives who crossed from Teknaf. U Nu gave assurance to them that if they came to legal fold they would consider their demands. Then he assured the Muhajirs (refugees) that (a) a welfare officer would be appointed in order to assist them (b) the government would take the task of rehabilitation of the Muhajirs. If any Muhajirs return to the land within the specific time, they would not be put into troubles by the Immigration Act, complaints of such nature would remain postponed.

None of such assurances were ever entertained. On the other hand, the Muslims of Arakan have been passing their days in the most inhuman persecution by Burma Territorial Force (BTF). In Arakan 99% of the BTF was manned with Rakhine Maghs particularly those who were sworn enemies of the Muslims. The BTF under the direction of Miteik (Fire brand) Kyaw Oo, special Deputy Commissioner (not professional civil servant) a Magh, who wanted to finish all Muslims of Arakan, unleashed a reign of terror in the whole of north Arakan. Muslim men, women and children were mowed down by machine gun fire. Hundreds of religious Ulemas, intellectuals, old men and village elders were killed like fowls and ants. Almost all the Muslim villages were razed to the ground. The BTF massacre triggered refugee (Muhajir) exodus into the then East Pakistan numbering more than 50,000 Muslims.

As the demands of the Muslims to correct the injustices, and allow them to live as Burmese citizens according to laws, and not to subject them to arbitrariness and tyranny, were not listened, the Mujahid insurrection gained momentum and spread quickly, for the central government was busy putting down rebellion that broke out in other places in Burma and was unable to check the development in Arakan. In June 1949 the 26th

Battalion, Union Military Police, stationed in Arakan mutinied and together with communist and PVO brought the fall of Kyaukpyu and Sandway, both being district headquarters. Thus, government control was reduced to the port of Akyab only whereas the Mujahids were in possession of all of north Arakan. They held a conference in Taungbru and a Mujahid Council was formed on 19th July 1948 with the following leading persons:

1. **Mr. Omra Meah - Ex-President of Peace Committee, Chief Advisor.**
2. **Janab Jafar Hussain - Mujahid-e-Azam (Chief of Command).**
3. **Mr. Jinnah Sultan Master - Deputy Mujahid-e-Azam**
4. **Mr. Waziullah - General Secretary.**
5. **Colonel Abdus Shukkur, Army Chief.**
6. **Janab Md. Abbas, Assistant Secretary.**
7. **Col. Rashid – Defence.**
8. **Salauddin (Du Du Meah) member.**

Soon after the fall of the gallant fighters like Abdus Shukur, Abdul Hamid, Zulungya, the government put the north Arakan under the military administration of 5th Burma Regiment. The Government troops started a pincer attack on the Mujahid and they were compelled to retreat to the hills and jungles. Then the government replaced 5th Burma Regiment with emergency Chin Regiment No. (2) to wipe out the Mujahid from the hills and jungles.

Subsequently the government troops started operations on Taungbru, the Headquarters of the Mujahids, from east and west. From the east Burmese Land Force advanced to Sahib Bazar and Fakira Bazar and from the west Burma Naval gun boats advanced along the Naf River. Besides in a straight way, many Burma troops proceeded as if advancing ants to crush the

Mujahids. After a tremendous fight, the Mujahids had to retreat. Taungbru fell before the government troops; indiscriminate looting went on and the Muslim villages were set on fire.

On Jan 5, 1949 Lt. Habi Saheb of Sita Furakka broke away from the Mujahid party with some of his men. But Jafar Kawal succeeded to persuade him and was appointed commander of the south centring Alisangyaw.

Meanwhile Arakanese Magh insurgent leftist leader Tun Aung Pru met Jafar Kawal at Kyaungdaung village of the Rathedaung Township and they discussed the future of Arakan. An agreement was signed between them, to fight together until the fall down of the AFPFL's government. Then the Mujahid would govern the western side of the Kaladan River and the rest of the Arakan would be under the control of Rakhine communist.

Changes in Leadership

In February 1950 the governing council of the Mujahid fired their leader and the founder of the Mujahid party, the Mujahid-e-Azam Jafar Kawal from the Mujahid party. They selected Abbas as the new leader. The following were their new E.C. members:

1. Abbas	**President**
2. Rashid	**Vice-President**
3. Abdu Rashid	**Secretary General**
4. Moulana Shafiqueue Ahmed	**Foreign Affairs**
5. Saleh Ahmed	**Joint Secretary**
6. Mohammad Shofi	**Finance**
7. Du Du Meah	**Adviser**

Jafar Kawal's committee's vice-chairman Mr. Jinnah Sultan and Chief adviser. Mr.Omrah Meah was no more in the new E.C.

committee of Abbas's Mujahid party. *On October 11, 1950 at 12 p.m the great Mujahid Jafar Kawal was assassinated.* As mentioned above the brave Mujahid commander Zulungya was killed at the Mayankhali bridge battle, Col. Hamid was killed at the battle of Dal Pahar battle of Bowli Bazar and the formidable Mujahid commander Col. Abdus Shukur at Dabborichaung battle of Buthidaung. Commander Bodiur Rahman of Kalizabanga was killed at Shuza Para while he tried to capture Maungdaw town from north side. Very sweet smell of perfume was felt by many from his blood and grave for months. Then an air of disappointment prevailed in the Mujahid rank and file. The government troops utilised the situation and laying raids occasionally and looted crops and everything from the Muslim villages. In Taung Bazar area where they carried inhuman massacre, there occurred an unforgettable atrocity of the Burmese troops of killing four brothers with the help of Sten Guns. Besides, when the Mujahid forces were away, the government troops all of a sudden pounced upon a village tied out all the aged and respectable persons on false allegations of being collaborators of the Mujahids.

Meanwhile, the Mujahid leaders rallied round a place named Amtala and the Mujahid army was reorganised. Strongholds were constructed in different places. The Headquarters remained in Amtala. Taungbazar was recaptured and made a stronghold under the command of Captain Akhtar. Captain Kassim was sent to fight the communists on the eastern slope of the Mayu range and the western slope of the Arakan Yoma because the movement was against the communists. In the words of Muzaffar Ahmed Arakani in his book "The Muslims of North Arakan", the Muslims of North Arakan who did not care to sacrifice their lives for the British inspired by their love for democracy".

After the death of the great Mujahid leader Jafar Kawal, the new President Abbas and Col. Rashid worked together for a while, but they soon divided their forces and established separate

Headquarters and ruled over small liberated areas. Captain Kassim also followed the example, declaring himself the chief of the Mujahid in the south of Maungdaw. After 1954 Kassim became a major threat to the government as well as to the communists and restored their superiority in Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung. Breaking away from the Mujahid party of Mr. Abbas, Captain Siddique, with the co-operation of Tohra Ali and Ahmed Hussain controlled Buthidaung North under their command. The three were the natives of Buthidaung North. Tohra Ali was a cruel man. He oppressed the local people. The foreign secretary of Mujahid party of Abbas, Mr. Shafiqueue, visited Siddique for reconciliation. But the attempt was without a success.

In the meantime the government took a strong political initiative to isolate the Mujahids from the Muslim masses. On 25th September 1954 at 8:00 p.m. Prime Minister, U Nu, in his radio speech to the nation declared that the Rohingya who resided at the western border of Arakan are indigenous ethnic race of Burma. All basic rights of Rohingyas had been restored to certain extent. The government tried to convince the Muslim leaders and Parliament members that it was good for nothing to fight against the government as the rights of Rohingyas had been restored.

Muhajirin-e-Arakan

The circumstances being such, about thirty thousand Arakani Muslims had been compelled to take shelter in Teknaf and Ukhiya of earstwhile East Pakistan. There they organized Anjuman-e-Muhajirin-e-Arakan under the leadership of Moulana Muzaffar Ahmed. As the president of the said organisation, Moulana Muzaffar Ahmed had been bringing the pitiable plight and political aspirations of the Arakani Muhajirs (refugees) to the notice of the Secretary General of the UNO down to leader of government and non government groups of Burma and Pakistan. He, however, did not receive any

favourable response and assurance from any quarters. And misery and sufferings of the Muhajirs (refugees) could not have been mitigated.

When Bo Htin Gyaw carried out a reign of terror in North Arakan, Abdul Mutalaf Munshi and other Rohingya elders at Teknaf sent a Telegram to President Ayub Khan. Pakistan government protested the new arrival of refugees driven by Bo Htin Gyaw.

Mr. Abdul Mutalaf Munshi of Alisangyaw Kayandan was a prominent figure during the time of Peace Committee. He left Maungdaw for Teknaf to escape BTF threat of killing. He with the cooperation of other Rohingya leaders such as Molvi Wadu (Obidur Rahman) of Kyauktaw, Master Habibullah and Master Wazillah of Kiladong, Zakir of Nurullah Para, Master Mohammudul Hasson of Habi Para, Haji Omar of Kayan Khali, Azhar Hussain Darga etc., broke the Maghs supremacy over the local people of Teknaf. Due to the conspiracy against him by some notorious people Abdul Mutalaf was compelled to leave for good to Chittagong and settled at Chandanpura, Chittagong. He established Chamon Engineering Corporation at Chittagong with the corporation of Molvi Wadu, Master Habibullah, Master Moahammudul Hasson and Mr. Fayas Ahmed. But the cooperation was later collapsed with a case against it.

It is not irrelevant to mention that the Burmese Ambassador to Pakistan U Pe Khin (Muslim) and Burmese consul U Hla Aung at Dacca visited Totadia (Parrot island) on several occasions in order to hold discussions about that disputed island. But they never felt necessary to see the Arakani refugees in Teknaf and Ukhiya.

Of the seven demands, the first and foremost demand of the Arakani Muslims was to form an autonomous unit under the Union of Burma with the Muslim majority area of Arakan (North Arakan). It is indispensable for the Arakani Muslims to keep intact the majority of Muslims in North Arakan. On the

other hand the opponent party is never idle in sabotaging this fact of majority Muslims in this region.

Accordingly, those Arakani Muslims had been compelled to take shelter in Teknaf of Pakistan because of the tyranny of B.T.F. in north Arakan. Their return to Arakan would constitute the Muslim majority region, was greatly worried over by some quarters. These worries were like thorns for the Arakani (Rohingya) Muhajirs (refugees) on the way back to their homeland (Arakan). This being the situation, the Burmese government purposely did never meet the Muhajirs and create smooth return to their homeland.

Leaving aside the question of calling back the Muslim Muhajirs of North Arakan, the Burmese govt. had appointed an Enquiry Commission in the name of Immigration and thereby were giving a lot of troubles to the local Muslims. This Enquiry commission made it clear that those Muslims found absent in the course of enquiry would not be admitted as the legitimate citizens of Arakan in total contradiction to the Prime Minister U Nu's solemn assurance to Muslims that they would be allowed to come back to Arakan and would not be given any kind of trouble.

In December 1954, it was said in a declaration of Burmese government that there was nothing like 'Arakan Muslims' in the census of 1931. The propensity was that the Muhajirs (refugees) were the people of Indo-Pak sub-continent. The Burmese government also resolved to relocate the Muslims of Arakan somewhere in Pyabon District of lower Burma leaving their home and hearths.

But the Muslims of Arakan are determined to hold on their soil even with empty stomachs knowing the fact that the Burmese army and their hostile brothers (the Maghs) are out to drive them by any means. Hence, a manoeuvre of the Burmese troops was going on against the Mujahids that led to the inhuman

torture by the government troops and the Maghs upon the lives, property and dignity of the Rohingyas.

Along with the unanimous resolution of shifting Muslims from Arakan an announcement was made by a spokesman in Lucknow Press Conference that this time the Burmese government would commence the work of the uprooting the Mujahids. Then it was clear that the onslaught upon the Mujahids army by the govt. troops was imminent.

In the meantime, there was an unfortunate development for the Rohingya Muslims which was that, the Mujahid forces under the command of Brigadier Abbas had to resist the attacks of Kassim Raza.

Kassim Raja

After the 1942 communal riot two leaders of Rohingya emerged. They were Mr. Omrah Meah and Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed. There existed rivalry between the two. As Omrah Meah supported the Mujahid movement of the north, Mr. Zahiruddin sided with their rival Kassim Raja. A Muslim Conference was convened at the order of Kassim Raja. He was elected as the commander in chief. Mr. Saleh Ahmed of Undung was selected as the President of the Arakan Muslim Conference and Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed as the Secretary General. Mr. Nazir Ahmed was Kassim Raja's Adviser.

Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed, in his capacity as the Secretary General, of the Arakan Muslim Conference, wrote open letters to Prime Minister U Nu several times. The copies of the letters were still in the possession of Rohingya Muslim elite. He also wrote to world bodies, world leaders and to the government of Burma and Pakistan. His writing on "Stop Genocide" is highly placed.

In an open letter to the President, Premier and the Government of the Union of Burma, Mr. Saleah Ahmed, President, Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed, Secretary, of the Arakan Muslim Conference, wrote on 10th June 1951, that:

"Hereby we submit to you the Constitutional Demands of the Arakan Muslim who, along with you all, claim to be Equal and Faithful Citizen of the Union of Burma and, therefore, entitled to equal share in the Freedom, Democracy, Progress and the Collective Security of the system of the Union. …… We assert that we are the most Loyal and Faithful citizens and nationals of the Union of Burma in the whole of Arakan, if not in the whole of Burma. ….. We are not and shall never be "Separatists". We are dead against the "Separatists". We claim Burma as our home. …… We urge upon you to treat your Minorities not only justly and fairly but generously and benevolently …….. You should make us feel that the Union is our Own and not the exclusive property of this or that Race and the Instrument of their imperialist Rule over other people. This way lies Ruin and Disintegration."

Their demands are as follows:

1. **That North Arakan should be immediately formed a free Muslim state as other races of Burma.**
2. **That Arakan as a whole may be treated as a single defence unit.**
3. **That in view of the great importance of the strategic position the Muslims occupy, the principle of Muslim Parity of 50% Muslim representation on the Armed Forces and the police, the regulars and the irregulars, should be recognised and implemented.**
4. **That Akyab should be recognised as the Common Port and City of the North Arakan Free Muslim state and South Arakan with the Principle of Condominium of the North Arakan Unit and South Arakan Unit in the City. The Muslims and the non-Muslims should have joint administration of the city and the port with 50% Muslim representation.**

5. **That a representative of the Muslims of North Arakan should be appointed as Minister for Muslim Affairs.**
6. **That the North Arakan Muslims should get equal representation on the parliamentary membership.**
7. **That a Congress of peoples and races should be instituted for looking after the cultural as social welfare and especially to promote amity among them.**
8. **That the Muslims should be guaranteed fair and adequate share in the central services of the Union including all the departments of the government.**
9. **That the complete religious freedom and equality and cultural and educational autonomy as a distinct community and equal civil and economic rights and liberties should be guaranteed by the Constitution of the Union of Burma for the Muslims as a recognised minority.**
10. **That Muslim properties destroyed or looted or confiscated should be compensated.**
11. **That Quazi Court should be established for the Muslims of Burma.**
12. **That a Muslim Religious Council should be established for the proper management of the religious, social, educational and cultural affairs of Muslims.**
13. **The Islamia schools and colleges should be established for the Muslims.**

Gen. Kassim continued to fight and threw back the forces of BTF as well as the Magh Communist Party. Meanwhile the Government of Burma sent large contingent of troops through the mountains. Navy pounded on Kassim Raja's forces from the Naf River. Yet the government forces suffered miserably. The government started negotiations with the Muslim forces of Kassim. This time the government was in a positive mood to

grant the Muslims a separate district. The Mujahid refused it. "An autonomous Muslim state under the sovereignty of Union of Burma or nothing else," was the reply from the Mujahid side and fighting continued. In the late April 1954, a conference of Mujahid was held at Taungbru, Maungdaw Township. The resolution for the demand of 'Autonomous State' of 4,000 sq. miles from the west bank of Kaladan to the east bank of Naf river comprising Maungdaw, Buthidaung and part of Rathidaung township was passed in the conference.

Towards the beginning of November 1954 the Burmese government launched an extensive campaign against the Mujahids code named 'Operation Monsoon'. The leader of the advanced camp of the Mujahid Col. Rashid encountered the attacks on the east of Phoimali. After a furious fight for seven days, the worthy son of Moulana Abul Khair, the brave son of Arakan, Colonel Rashid embraced matyrdom. Major centers of Mujahids were captured.

The Burmese army proceeded forward crushing everything on their way. This time they encountered Col. Ahmed Hussain, the right hand man of Kassim Raja. A furious fight took place in the hills near Hanifar Tonki. The Burma army had to use 6" mortar shell to make headway. Two weeks passed by, the Burmese army could not advance an inch. The army of Ahmed Hussain broke the seige and got his followers safely out.

Gen. Abbas, the Commander in Chief of the Mujahid Party (North) entrenched himself in Dhal-Pahar near Bowli Bazar awaiting enemy's attack. Avoiding his trench the Burmese army advanced towards Sahib Bazar and there when they hoisted the Red Flag as a mark of victory, Brigadier Abbas opened two more trenches. Advancing further, while the Burmese army came to recapture the "seemed forsaken" camp they fell in to the trap of skilful warrior Abbas. Instantly, the Mujahids closed down the trenches and encircled the entire Burmese army. After

a furious fight of 48 hours, the Burmese commander managed to escape with the loss of over 100 lives.

Gen. Kassim went to East Pakistan and was barred by Pakistan government to go back to his area. The backbone of the Mujahid insurgency was thus broken. Their forces gradually broke up into small bands engaged in looting and terrorising the Muslims and Buddhists alike particularly in the more outlying and less accessible areas.

His bodyguards assassinated Major Bodiuz Zaman. They ran away by taking his money. One ***Kana*** Jamal filled up the vacancy. But a few years later Jamal was replaced by Major Saiful Mulk, another nephew of Kassim Raja. The Mujahid movement was further weakened as a result of more break-ups in their rank and file, but lingered on. ***Nafanga*** Kassim kidnapped Abul Basar Chowdhury of Taminkhali, Buthidaung and was killed. Ebrahim, another Mujahid major was killed by his man ***Baitta*** Saleh.

After the discontinuation of organised military operations, some of the Mujahids switched to smuggling rice, brought at low prices or seized without payment from the local people, to Pakistan, where it fetch high profits due to rice shortage. They levied high taxation in various ways and numerous kinds by force for which the rich man had to become poor and the poor had to become poorer. The ornaments of the rural women had to be sold to pay the Himalayan ransom to the so-called Mujahids. Delay in paying the ransom meant burning of the villages.

Early in 1957 the Pakistani Embassy in Rangoon announced that Kassim, the Mujahid leader had been killed. Later it transpired that he had only been arrested in Chittagong on a charge of illegal infiltration into Pakistan. The Rangoon government hoped that for the sake of the good neighbourly relations Pakistan government would hand over Kassim not withstanding lack of an extradition agreement between the two countries, but this hope proved in vain. During a debate on the issue in

Burma's Parliament several members complained that the Karachi government had failed to hand over the rebel leader despite the friendly relations between the two countries. After his release Kassim remained in Chittagong, where he operated a Hotel and a sawmill in Cox's Bazar. An English trader residing in Rangoon, who often visited Chittagong knew Kassim personally, narrated about him. A story in Dacca Morning Star of 23 June 1957 praising Kassim, was reproduced in The Burman, 1957. It was said that Kassim walked about freely, was very popular and considered a national hero.

On 19th May 1955 at Zumma Para, Shaeb Bazar area of Maungdaw township, Mr. Saleh Ahmed was made President of the Mujahid of Party (North) and Mr. Shafi was made the Secretary General and Abdur Rashid was made Vice President.

The forces of Kassim Raja went dispersed. They continued their acts of sabotage, smuggling and looting. The government raised a "Volunteer Force" from among the local Muslims, with the help of whom the Burmese government was successful in crushing the Mujahids. In their separate visits to Maungdaw and Buthidaung, Prime Minister U Nu and ex-Prime Minister U Ba Swe (Big Tiger) held big political rallies, they spoke of recognising Rohingyas as an indigenous ethnic community of Burma like Shan, Kachin, and Karen. They also promised equal rights to them as citizens of Burma. Meanwhile, the Mujahid factions had had difference of opinion over the government offer of establishing a 'Muslim National Area' in North Arakan with Substantial local autonomy.

On 4 July 1961, Mujaheed Sourthern Commender Rabi Ullah and his Deputy Commender Mustafiz surrendered with 290 followers before Brigadier Aung Gyi, the then Deputy Chief of Staff of the Burmese Army. They felt that there was no longer any point to take arms. The creation of Mayu Frontier Administration and the intensification of military activity in the region also helped to put an early end to such movement. The

Mujahid forces of Maungdaw North under the leadership of Vice President Abdul Rashid arrested their President Saleh Ahmed and Secretary General Mohammed Shafi (as they were opposing to surrender) and surrendered to Brigadier Aung Gyi in Buthidaung on 15 November 1961. Government concession towards the demands of Rohingya as a whole and sliding down of support from Muslims to ramshackle Mujahid groups operating in disorganised way forced the leadership of Mujahid party to return to normal life. Hence, Muslim underground arms activities diminished faster than expected.

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Chapter-18

Political Activities of Rohingyas

(1948-1962)

In the General Elections for the Constituent Assembly, Mr.Sultan Ahmed and Mr. Gaffar were elected from Maungdaw and Buthidaung with the tickets of Jamiat-e-Ulema, the political party of Muslims of Arakan. Mr. Sultan Ahmed was made Secretary of Parliament to the Ministry of Minority. The Post of Parliamentary Secretary was like the Deputy Minister of present day politics. The Minister of Minority was U Aung Zan Way (a Rakhine). In 1951 General Elections Muslim won 5 seats, four with Jamiat-e-Ulema's tickets. They were, Mr. Sultan Ahmed (Maungdaw North), Daw Aye Nyunt (Zhura Begum) Maungdaw south, [She is the wife of Mr. Sultan Ahmed, her father U Po Khine (Akyab) won with Burma Muslim Congress Ticket]. Mr. Abul Bahser (Buthidaung) and Mr.Abdul Gaffar were elected to the house of Deputies and Nationality (Akyab west-comprising Maungdaw and Buthidaung) with Jamiat's ticket respectively.

Before the general elections of 1956, the U Nu government abolished Burma Muslim Congress and Jamiat-e-Ulema, branding them as religious parties. As Muslims of North Arakan refused to accept AFPFL of Maungdaw and Buthidaung, the Rakhine were in full control of AFPFL branches of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. As a ruling party, the AFPFL had full influence in the administration. And the Muslim of Arakan began to feel their mistake of refusing the offer of Bogyoke Aung San to join AFPFL. In 1955, on his return from Haj. Mr. Abul Khair met Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Sayadaw U Pinnya Thiha and U Oo Saw

and discussed on AFPFL and the position of the Muslims of north Arakan. U Pinnya Thiha, the Chief patron of the Arakan division AFPFL and U Oo Saw the Secretary General of the Arakan Division AFPFL had agreed to appoint Haji Abul Khair to organise AFPFL among the Muslims of Arakan as he was recommended by the most powerful AFPFL leader U Kyaw Nyein, the then Deputy Prime Minister (Finance) with the help of Ohn Gyaw, the man of U Kyaw Nyein.

Haji Abul Khair became the President of Township AFPFL of Maungdaw. The AFPFL party gave the nominations for the 1956 general election to Haji Abul Khair for Maungdaw south constituency and Sultan Ahmed for Maungdaw north. They came out successful.

The other Muslims MPs were Mr. Abul Bashar (Buthidaung south), Mr. Ezhar Meah (Buthidaung North) and Mr. Abdul Gaffar (House of Nationality). A bye-election was held for Buthidaung north constituency in 1957 as the election of Mr. Ezhar Meah was challenged and the verdict was against him. Mr. Sultan Mahmud contested from it and came out successful defeating U Po Khine. Mr. Sultan Mahmud was ex-cabinet secretary, an important post in British India legislative Assembly. He was inducted into the cabinet of U Nu as Health Minister.

Buthidaung Hospital, Akyab General Hospital and numerous health centres in Maungdaw and Buthidaung rural area were established during Mahmud's tenure of Health Ministry. Saheb Bazar Middle School, Minglagyi Middle School (later Ngakura middle school) and many primary schools were established by approaching Education Minister. Rohingya students were sent to London on state scholarships. He was also a hero during 1942, communal riots against the Magh offenders.

Haji Abul Khair secured the top most votes among all the successful AFPFL members. He was highly honoured both by the AFPFL party and the Burma Police Force. Ye Kyimon, the

Police News paper published in its front page with his life history along with his big photograph in police uniform. A party was held by the Inspector General of Police of Burma in honour of him. In his speech the IGP said, "we take pride of Mr. Abul Khair" He was very famous among the Police of Burma not less than the famous writer of "Animal Farm", George Orwell, who was also a Police officer of Burma.

Haji Abul Khair shot to limelight among the Muslims of Arakan for his hardship to establish the High School of Maungdaw, mosques, Madarasa and Eid-gah. His contributions towards the promoting of the living standard of the Muslims of Arakan were remarkable and unforgettable to the Muslims of Arakan. He not only helped building mosques in Maungdaw and Buthidaung but also helped in Kyauktaw and Sandoway where he served as a Police Officer. He was also a pious Muslim.

AFPFL party also honoured him. Soon Mr. Abul Khair was made an executive member of the Arakan division AFPFL party. He was also offered a post of Minister by U Nu. He did not accept it but advised to give it to Mr. Sultan Mahmud who was his political teacher.

President Nasser of Egypt nationalised Suez-Canal in 1956. The Muslims of North Arakan were all on the streets in support of their Arab brothers when the British, French and Israel waged a war for the Suez Canal. In 1967 the Rohingya Mujahid group of Jafar Sani offered one thousand volunteers through the Arab embassies at Karachi for the liberation of Arab lands. RIF also donated a small sum of money for the Arab refugees through the Ambassador of Sudan, who was at that time the acting head of the Arab diplomats as the Iraq Ambassador Abdul Kader Jilani, the head of the Arab diplomats in Pakistan, was away. The President of Sudan, Ebrahim Aboud, acknowledged their generous donation.

At that time Burma was very friendly with Israel. Israeli experts were brought for military training, agriculture and business.

Israelis ran Burma five star shipping line. Most of the Directors of the Ava bank were Israelis. Many Jews were brought to settle at central Burma and Shan State. Ben Gorian the Prime Minister paid a private visit to Burma and he took rest and meditated at Kaba Aye's Buddhists Shrine, for which he was strongly criticised by the Jew religious leaders. U Nu was invited by Nasser and explained actual fact and began to think about Arab stand.

Throughout Parliamentary tenure the Ra-Ta-Nya members were always acted unfriendly against the Rohingyas. They hated Rohingyas and called Rohingyas as 'Kalas' a word full of sarcasm. They branded Rohingyas as Chittagonians and never regarded them as fellow human beings. They always cried (wolf-fool) illegal entry of large number of Chittagonians. They not only distorted the image of the Rohingyas but also accused Muslim MPs of masterminding illegal entry of large number of Chittagonians into Arakan with the approval of AFPFL to win elections. Moreover, they incited Buddhist monks of Arakan to use force against the Muslim MPs of Arakan on the question of Arakan State. The hostile attitude of the Ra-Ta-Nya members towards Rohingyas caused Muslim MPs to oppose their demand of Arakan State.

In response to the submission of constitution amendment bill with regard to grant 'state' to Arakan in Parliament on Feb. 22, 1956 by U Ba Mying of Ramree constituency, Mr. Basher (Buthidaung) strongly opposed it-, ".. .. the implementation of local government is underway. Soon it will be in Arakan. According to it the administration will be in the hands of the people. At that time the people of Arakan can do what ever they like for the development of Arakan. We don't want to hear 'Rakhine Praynay'. State is under restriction of centre. We cannot proceed beyond the boundary. We don't want to live in a state, which is like a pool, we will live in Burma proper, which is like an ocean.

"Mr. Speaker, certainly there would be communal riots if a state is granted. If the government still grant state we request not to include Maungdaw and Buthidaung in the state and keep it as a separate district under the direct control of central government."

Ra-Ta-Nya member of Parliament, U Hla Tun Pru (Mrohaung) while submitting the constitution amendment bill for granting 'state' to Arakan on Feb. 19,1958, told the parliament that... by gaining Arakan statehood they could stop illegal immigration of Chittagonians, the smuggling of rice and crush the Mujahid."

At that time the examination centre for matriculation students of Akyab district is at Akyab only. If any Rohingya MP opposed the bill, the Maghs might attack Arakan state Muslim students of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. So Haji Abul Khair asked the authority to grant an examination center at Maungdaw and Buthidaung. The Authority approved Mr. Abul Khair's demand and a matriculation examination centre has been granted at Maungdaw since 2nd March 1958.

While opposing the proposed bill of Hla Tun Pru, Mr. Abul Khair told the parliament that, "Mr. Speaker, if the state is granted we will be Ministers and Deputy Ministers as we are the ruling party MPs in Arakan. But we are not greedy for the posts. We are looking for the betterment of the people of Arakan. In all aspects we Arakanese are not inferiors than Burmese. We want equal status with Burmese. If one kyat is for Burmese, then one kyat also is for Arakanese too. If state is granted there is the risk of depending on Burmese. The Burmese may become the donors and we may become beggars. Mr. Speaker, by no means we can be in that position. We must be in equal status with the Burmese. We cannot accept the proposal of development of the Union by granting state. While the relation is good it may be better. If the relations were not good then it would be harmful to the Union. The people and the Union will prosper when we are united. So I oppose the proposed amendment bill of 1958 of U Hla Tun Pru."

After wining the election of 1960, U Nu appointed an enquiry commission to study all the problems involved in the question of Arakan. On 3rd January the commission put up their report to the Prime Minister U Nu. According to the report they met 32 Arakanese in Rangoon, 57 at Sandoway, 63 at Kyaukpru, 30 at Akyab and 14 at Buthidaung.

80% of the people of Sandoway opposed the Arakan state. If the state is granted they want to remain in Burma by incorporating Sandoway with the Bassein district.

The Rohingya of Mayu district did not want Arakan state. They requested to keep them under Burma proper if the state is granted. 90% of the people of Akyab district want the state. 50% of Kyaukpyu's district opposed the granting of state. The commission recommended for the plebiscite to grant the state of Arakan.

The preparatory committee for the formation of the Arakan state was formed with all the members of parliament of Arakan excluding the MPs of Mayu Frontier region as the region was kept outside the would be Arakan state.

For the appointment of the Arakan Affairs Minister there was very much competition between U Ba Myine and U Kyaw Min. There were big friction among the Rakhine masses between the U Ba Myine supporters and U Kyaw Mın's supporters. Lastly Ra-Ta-Nya decided that U Ba Myine and U Kyaw Min would routinely take the post for eight months each.

When the Frontier Administration has been withdrawn, Mayu district would be part of the Arakan State. To oppose such arrangement the MPs of Buthidaung and Maungdaw, Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Mr. Abul Basher, Mr. Rashid and Mr. Abul Khair met Judiciary Minister Dr. Aye Maung. He was empowered by U Nu for the formation of Arakan and Mon states, on 27 November 1961. The leaders of the MPs Mr. Mahmud asked Dr. Aye Maung not to include Maungdaw and Buthidaung in the Arakan

state and as for the 29 villages of Rathedaung which are now in Mayu Frontier Administration, dicision there of be by ballot in the area before including in the Arakan state.

Arakan Indigenous Muslim League opposed the draft bill of Arakan state through Arakan State preparatory committee to the government, stating that the draft bill had no fundamental rights of the all races of Arakan, the power was given to only a handful of persons, which was against the principle of the Prime Minister and the bill had no provision on the rights of the indigenous Muslims, Chin, Kami, Dinet. So they protested the draft bill of Arakan. The protest letter was given to Dr. Aye Maung.

While there was the problem of appointing Arakan Affairs Minister, the Indigenous Arakan Muslim League of Kyaukpyu demanded for a Muslim Minister in the proposed Arakan State. If a Minister was given to the Muslims of Arakan, the Muslims of Burma and the Muslim of other states would also demand Muslim Ministers, by saying so the Union Party government rejected the demand of the Muslims of Kyaukpyu.

On February 27, U Ba Swe the President of AFPFL wrote to Prime Minister U Nu that he requested earnestly to postpone the bill of Arakan and Mon states till the settlement of Federal proposal of the minorities. The Union Party government of the Prime Minister U Nu postponed the schedule time of Arakan state bill to parliament on 28 February for unspecific time.

Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Health Minister in U Nu's government demanded a Muslim state comprising the region from the Kaladan river to the Naf river, pointing out that in 1666 - Shaista Khan had conquered up to the Kaladan river. Since then the Kaladan river became a permanent border between Rakhine and Rohingya majority areas. Kaladan itself means "boundary of Kalas". Muslim state was the platform of election campaigns of Mr. Sultan Mahmud and his colleagues' in1960 election. They won the election with the slogan of Muslim State. The

coup of Gen Ne Win shattered the demand of the "Muslim State" of North Arakan.

Source: "The True History of Burma" SLORC's Publication. Burma's Politics (from 1958-62) Vol: III.

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Chapter-19

Rohingya Belong to Burma

Muslims of Arakan certainly belong to one of the indigenous races of Burma....In fact , there is no pure indigenous race in Burma, if they do not belong to indigenous races of Burma, we also cannot be taken as indigenous races of Burma": Sao Shwe Thaike, the first elected President of the Union of Burma.

Mr. Sultan Ahmed, son of a Landlord - Molvi Akramuddin, was born in 1901 at Molvi Para (Balukhali - Thaychaung), Maungdaw, Arakan, Burma; matriculated from the government Muslim High School, Chittagong in 1919; received B.A degree from the University of Calcutta in 1924 and B.L degree from Rangoon University in 1929; enrolled as Higher Grade pleader on 2nd December 1930 and practiced law both in Rangoon and Akyab; worked as an Assistant Township Officer (A.T.O) at Maungdaw from December 1942 to 7th June 1946; joined the Judicial department and became First Class Magistrate under British Government; President of the Jamait-e-Ulema, North Arakan and became Member of the Constituent Assembly of the Union of Burma in 1947, and since then a member of the Chamber of Deputies in the Burmese Parliament; admitted an advocate of the High Court, Rangoon; served nearly 10 years from October 1949 to September 1959 – as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Minorities, Ministry of Relief and Resettlements, and the Ministry of Social and Religious Affairs; took refuge in Bangladesh during 1978 Rohingya exodus to Bangladesh and struggled as the President of the Rohingya

Refugee Welfare Organisation; died in his old age on 2nd March 1981 at Chittagong while in exile in Bangladesh.

In a memorandum to the government of the Union of Burma, dated 18th June 1948, Mr. Sultan Ahmed (MP) in the capacity of the President of Jamait-e-Ulema, North Arakan, lodged strong protest against a conspiracy to deny the Rohingyas of their right of franchise immediately after the independence. The excerpt of the memorandum follows:

1. That it is disheartening to note the decision and attitude of the government at this late stage towards the Muslims of Arakan who have always identified themselves as Burman with whom they have merged themselves in good faith that they will be treated on the same lines as Burman and will be given equal rights. Those Arakanese Buddhists, historically known as Mugs have been taken as one of the pure indigenous races of Burma merely because of their religion. On following the line of artificial classification, it will be quite clear that if the Muslims of Arakan adopt the religion of Lord Buddha they would be included in the indigenous races of Burma or Arakan. If this religious distinction is eliminated the Muslim of Arakan will come under the same racial category as the Arakanese Buddhists.

2. That according to history, Islam reached Arakan before 788 .AD and it attracted the local people to come to the fold of Islam en masse all over Burma. Since then Islam had played an important part towards the advancement of civilisation in Arakan where Muslims and Buddhists lived side by side for centuries with amity and concord as one family and ruled the country together. Coins and medallions were issued bearing "Kalima" (the profession of faith in Islam) in Persian script. Persian was the court language of Arakan and it was common for the kings to adopt Muslim names.

3. That the British played divide and rule in Arakan with the result that many of the Arakanese Buddhist brethren bear

hatred against the Muslims and threat them as "Kalas" foreigners. This hatred should no longer be bred in the Union of Burma as it had been brought up in the nursery of British imperialism.

4. Like other indigenous races of Burma, the Muslims of North Arakan inhabit in a sufficient contiguous territory in sufficient numbers in defined geographical area having all necessary characteristics of an indigenous race which can never be denied by any right thinking person uninfluenced by feelings of racial and religious hatred.

5. That different races have different names, but the Muslims specially the orthodox type throughout the world to what ever nationality they may belong keep, on their birth, the Islamic names in Arabic language. Some prefer national names, some Islamic name, some both national and Islamic names and this is the custom with the Muslims every where in the world. Thus with Islamic names, one should not be misled that the children of the soil should be foreigners. It is the most lamentable and unfortunate tragedy that the officials of the government are fully ignorant in this respect. As soon as they find any person with Islamic names they take him as "Kalas" though he may be pure extract of indigenous races and strike out his name from the voters list. Immediate change of heart and practice of this nature is called for.

6. That the Muslims of Arakan who have their proud history, culture and tradition as other indigenous races of Burma, and there is no justification to take them as foreign race for the simple reason that they profess Islam and keep Islamic names. If the Kachin, Chins, Shan Karen and Burman are brought together, one can easily distinguish from their features who are Kachins, Karens, Shan and so on.. They are also different from one another in their language, customs and culture. Similar is the case with the Muslims of North

Arakan who have been together as a race in a group from time immemorial in a territory included within the Union of Burma. If the Kachin, Chins, Shans, Karen etc. are defined as indigenous races, there can not be any question why the Muslims of North Arakan who have merged themselves with the Burmans will be ignored and will not be treated as such. Any different treatment will be unjust, illegal and unconstitutional.

7. That many of the high officials of the state, who do not even care to turn out the pages of the history and old records and to trace the development of the Muslims of Arakan which according to them, a Kala race - this misconceived notion has always been mooted and challenged in press and platform and finally set at rest by the authorities concerned.

8. Just before the last election, the Muslims of Akyab district North constituency were recognised as children of the soil and first taken as eligible to vote or to stand for election on the ground of their being one of the indigenous races of Burma, but when the Aung San - Atlee Agreement was out, the government misunderstood the position and it was notified that unless they declared themselves as Burma nationals, they would not be eligible to vote or to stand for election to the constituent Assembly.

A protest was immediately made against this decision on the ground of their being one of the indigenous races of Burma and the government withheld the first decision and allowed the Muslims to vote or stand for elections held in March 1947, and Mr. Sultan Ahmed and Mr. Abdul Gaffar returned on the votes of this Muslims as members of the constituent Assembly and these members are still continuing in office, representing the Akyab district North constituency and took the oath of allegiance to the Union of Burma on the 4th January 1948 as members of the new parliament of the Union of Burma.

This decision and action of the government conclusively proved that these Muslims as a whole or in-groups are accepted as one of the indigenous races of Burma. And in this connection, it may be pointed out that the Akyab district North constituency is non-communal rural constituency and these Muslims of Arakan belong to this constituency. It is not understood how they can be treated under clause (IV) section II of the Constitution. By so doing about 95% of the population residing in this constituency, at a stroke of the pen, become foreigners, which action they strongly felt as unjust and uncalled for.

9. When section II of the Constitution of the Union of Burma was being framed, a doubt as to whether the Muslims of North Arakan fell under the section sub-clauses (1) (II) and (III), arose and in effect an objection was put in to have the doubt cleared in respect of the term "Indigenous" as used in the constitution, but it was withdrawn on the understanding and assurance of the President of the constituent Assembly, at present His Excellency the President of the Union of Burma, who when approached for clarification with this question, said, "Muslims of Arakan certainly belong to one of the indigenous races of Burma which you represent. In fact there is no pure indigenous race in Burma, and that if you do not belong to indigenous races of Burma, we also can not be taken an indigenous races of Burma." Being satisfied with his kind explanation, the objection put in was withdrawn.

10. When Hon'ble Bo Let Ya the Deputy Prime Minister, was pleased to visit Maungdaw recently, he was kind enough to expound the principles laid dawn in the constitution of the Union of Burma, but it appeared on the "New Times of Burma" that he addressed the inhabitants of Maungdaw as "Chittagonians" which term, although it might not be his intention, was objectionable, and contradictory in relation to the Muslims of North Arakan forming parts and parcel of

Indigenous races of Burma. The Prime Minister U Nu expressed regrets for the use of wrong terms "Chittagonians" and directed that it should be either "Arakanese Muslims" or "Burmese Muslims".

11. The term Burmese Muslims published in the form of Press communiqué dated 9th August 1941 was embodied in a notification dated 27th September 1941 issued by His Excellency Sir Domon Smith, the Governor of Burma. This notification still holds good under the constitutional rights given in the constitution of the Union of Burma.

12. That the Muslims of North Arakan owe their allegiance to the Union of Burma and their loyalty to the present government is unquestionable. But the action (Telegram) of the Election Commission has created a strong resentment and unpleasant atmosphere among the public. Could this telegram be issued and things were allowed to drift like this if our beloved Bogyoke (Gen. Aung San) were alive today?

13. That in the last war, during the North Arakan campaign the Muslims of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Kyauktaw scarified their lives and properties and fought against the enemy and gave it a crashing blow, for the attainment of freedom of Burma, and their brilliant and heroic records will, certainly go down to history like other races of Burma. They have had to put up with British withdrawals yet they had come back with government forces and died with and for them. I wonder if any other people in like circumstances can tell the same story of loyalty and patience as can these Muslims.

14. By practical deed throughout Burma campaign and after the war till this day, the Muslims of North Arakan have proved that the responsibilities for maintaining peace and tranquillity in the country and for preserving in the independence of the Union of Burma, with the best hope of getting equal treatment in all spheres of life, as developed on

the all races and citizens of the Union of Burma, are being discharged in the letter and spirit.

15. That it is the birth right of each and every Muslim of Arakan as a whole to be one of the indigenous races of Burma, and nothing short of this, will satisfy this race, and justice should be done to them in their legal and constitutional demand.

Under the circumstances stated above I, in the best interest of the government and the people, fervently pray and confidently hope that the birth right of the Muslims of North Arakan taken as a whole as other indigenous races of Burma, be safeguarded and they be taken as qualified voters as Karenis, Karen, Chins, Rakhine etc, and the contents of the Telegram referred to above be withdrawn immediately and that necessary orders be issued without delay to avoid further dissatisfaction and confusion.

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Chapter-20

Rohingyas are Peace-loving Yet Persecuted

Mr. M.A. Gaffar, son of Ulah Meah, was born in 1910 at Rohingyadaung village, Buthidaung, Arakan, Burma; graduated in his Islamic studies from Chittagong Senior Madarasa in 1924; received BA from Dhaka University and B.T from Aligrah University in 1930 and 1933 respectively; served as Inspector of Schools from 1931-42 in Arakan; Township officer of Buthidaung during 1944 and 1945; elected Member of Parliament (MP) from Akyab west constituency from 1947 to 1959. He also served as parliamentary secretary during the Nu-Tin government in the Ministry of Health. Following are excerpts from the statement of Mr. Gaffar given in a press conference in Rangoon on 21st April 1960:

"Some leaders of Arakan have been engaged in malicious propaganda against the Rohingya people. Soon after the second world war, when the British reoccupied Burma, they began to conspire against the Rohingyas with the slogan that the Rohingyas are Pakistani minded and wanted to join Arakan with Pakistan. This slogan is utterly false and is but a device to tarnish the image of the Rohingyas with a view to exterminating them.

In fact, the Rohingyas are law-abiding people. I was township officer at Buthidaung before 1945 when the insurgency of Rakhine Magh was started. But the then defence Minister, Bo let Ya had appreciated the Rohingyas and described them as 'Peace-loving and loyal, to the Union'.

Continued persecution of Rohingya forced many of them to leave for Saudi Arabia from Akyab district. Their suffering beggared description. These communal and narrow minded Rakhine leaders engineered a communal riot in 1942, resulting in the total destruction of the age-old Rohingyas settlements from 6 of the 9 townships of Akyab District. The Rohingya population of Myebon in Kyaukpyu district was completely annihilated. Many Rohingyas had taken shelter in Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. A number of them had taken refuge in East Bengal. The following are the number of Rohingya villages destroyed during the 1942 communal riots:

Myebon Township30 villages

Minbya Township27 villages

Pauktaw Township25 villages

Myohaung Township58 villages

Kyauktaw Township78 villages

Rathedaung Township21 villages

Ponnagyunt Township5 villages

Buthidaung Township55 villages

Maungdaw Township 8 villages

Total .. .. 307 villages

These uprooted Rohingyas excepting those from the township of Maungdaw and Buthidaung have not been repatriated and rehabilitated yet in their original places. There is no security for their lives. More than half of their landed properties were taken away by the Rakhine Maghs who are not ready to return the properties to original Rohingya owners. It had become an attraction for the Rakhine of other areas to leave for those 7 townships to grasp the chance of seizing Rohingyas' lands. Accordingly, the Rakhine from Maungdaw and Buthidaung had

sold out their lands to the Rohingyas at high prices and scrambled to get the possession of the Rohingyas' lands.

Now let us ask those leaders who are shouting that the Pakistanis are infiltrating into the country. Where are these Rohingyas from 244 villages have gone? Were all these people killed in 1942 riot? The answer is certainly not. How long the Rakhine will illegally hold the lands of the Rohingyas? How long will they show this drama? The alleged illegal immigration of Pakistanis is false. It is nothing but a conspiracy to perpetuate their illegal possession of Rohingyas' lands and to oppose their repatriation and rehabilitation in their homeland.

In 1949-50 more than 30,000 Rohingyas, that included women and children, were inhumanly driven across the border to East Pakistan. Plans after plans of conspiracy have been hatched out to finish of the Rohingyas with the slogan of illegal immigration. This was carried out with an ulterior motive to disturb Rohingyas and to oppose their rehabilitation.

During the month of July and August 1959, the immigration officials had inhumanely uprooted thousands of Rohingyas from 24 villages in Maungdaw North and 8 villages in Buthidaung north. They were tortured and pushed into East Pakistan, where they have been taking temporary shelter. They are still hoping to return to their ancestral homeland. This is a great responsibility of the Prime Minister U Nu to arrange for their immediate repatriation and rehabilitation.

If statehood of Arakan is granted to Rakhine a separate Rohingya state must be granted comprising the area between West Bank of the Kaladan and east bank of the river Naf. Otherwise, Prime Minister U Nu will be responsible for any bloodshed over the issue.

The Mujahideen in Arakan destroyed not a single monastery. It is surprising how the govt. allow these narrow-minded leaders to

spread such a baseless propaganda to preach communalism in the minds of people.

Polygamy and early marriage enhance the population growth of the Rohingya people. Except the Chinese community their birth rate is the highest.

Again 78 Rohingya were illegally arrested by the immigration and were carried to Rangoon Jail. Despite the Supreme Court ruling that the arrest of the careless immigration personnel without any due enquiry was unlawful, such an arrest of the Rohingya in Shan State said to have been continuing. Although they possessed valid documents the judges are clearly biased in their judgements under the influence of the administration.

In Tulatali village of Maungdaw township, there was not a single Rakhine according to the census report of 1921, but the AFPFL government uprooted the Rohingyas of that village, who were for generations there and settled the Rakhines instead and distributed landed properties to them belonging to Rohingyas.

Muslims are generally blackmailed for smuggling. In fact, the non-Muslims themselves with co-operation of the insurgents carry out major portion of smuggling. To ascertain the truth of it the 80% of the smugglers arrested and convicted are non-Muslims.

The government is probably thinking of shifting Rohingya population from Maungdaw and replacing them by non-Muslims under its 'human barrier policy'. If so, the government is seriously mistaken and going to commit an irreparable blunder.

The government is indifferent to the plights of the Rohingyas. They don't get any legal redress. Even the government officials publicly threaten: "Why don't you Kalas (aliens) understand the policy of the government? Why don't you leave the country despite continued persecution?"

What an unfortunate thing is this! They are not Pakistanis and so the Pakistan government does not accept them. But by all legal standards they are Burmese Citizens entitled to all rights and protections guaranteed by the constitution. In spite of this they are unwanted by their own government. So, where shall they go and who will give them asylum? It is very unfortunate that instead of getting any remedies the culprits and the violators of law are encouraged and rewarded."

What we understand from the statement of Mr. M.A. Gaffar, the political leader of the Rohingya people: If statehood of Arakan is granted to Rakhine a separate Rohingya state must be granted comprising the area between the west bank of Kaladan river and the east bank of Naf River.

According to Sultan Ahmed (1901-1981), Parliamentary Secretary of the Union of Burma, the Muslims of Arakan have always identified themselves as Burman with whom they have merged themselves in good faith that they will be treated on the same line as Burman and will be given equal rights. That means we have merged with Burman relinquishing our chances of secession.

The Muslims of North Arakan inhabit in a sufficient contiguous territory in sufficient numbers in defined geographical area having all necessary characteristics of an indigenous state which can never be denied by any right thinking persons uninfluenced by feelings of racial and religious hatred or not having any kind of prejudice.

The Muslims of North Arakan have been together as a race in a group from time immemorial in a territory included within the Union of Burma. They have their proud history, culture and tradition. There is no justification to take them as a foreign race for the simple reason that they profess Islam and keep Muslim names ignoring the kings of Arakan with Muslim names. Thus with Muslim names, one should not be misled that the children of soil should be foreigners.

According to Mr. M.A. Gaffar statement, the Rohingyas have been experiencing wrong and injustices for very long. Their problem is a case of woe upon woe and is a man made tragedy. Conspiracies after conspiracies have long been hatched out against them with a view to exterminating the entire Rohingya people to the last man.

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Chapter-21

Hasan Ali Vs The Union of Burma

Meher Ali Vs The Union of Burma

Criminal Miscellaneous Applications

No.155 and 156 of 1959, the Supreme Court. BLR (SC) 187

The Burma Immigration (Emergency Provisions) Act.

The amendment of section 7(2), gives powers to the President or the authority appointed by him in this behalf to hear and decide cases like a Court as to whether a person has contravened the provisions of this Act. The President or the specified authority is invested with jurisdiction to decide whether any provisions of the Act have been contravened. A decision of the President or the authority appointed by him in this behalf relating to a finding about contravention of this Act is a judicial act and not an administrative act and can therefore be the subject of writ to the Supreme Court. One Youn Yun Saung applied for a writ to the Supreme Court, against the finding and order of deportation made in respect of Youn El Chin. The Supreme Courts jurisdiction to deal with the order was challenged by the government. But the objection was over-ruled and the court held that it had jurisdiction to entertain such applications, as the finding to the effect that the provisions of the Act have been contravened was a judicial one and was covered by Section 150 of the constitution. The application was heard and dismissed on merits as the deportee had admitted before the immigration authorities that he had entered the Union without a permit after the promulgation of the Burma Immigration (Emergency Provision) Act.

In Criminal Miscellaneous Applications No.155 and 156 of 1959 of the Supreme Court, Hasan Ali and Meher Ali applied for directions in the nature of a writ of Habeas Corpus. According to the affidavits filed, some two hundred persons were rounded up in raids in the Akyab district and detained alleging Pakistani origin.

The learned Attorney General, who appeared for the respondent, requested the court for inspection of the proceeding of the Immigration Officer, Akyab in respect of the applicant Hasan Ali. According to the diary entries Hasan Ali was arrested on the 15th June 1959. On the 22nd June the Deputy Commissioner, Akyab was approached for orders to deport him. Judging by the entry under date 26th June, the Deputy commissioner demurred. The Ministry of Immigration then stepped in, and under the orders of the ministry Hasan Ali and others were sent to Rangoon by steamer for ultimate dispatch to Gawduthoung in Pyapon District. On arrival at Rangoon an Immigration officer lodged them in the Rangoon Central Jail under a detention order, presumably of Rangoon. The relevant portion of the detention order filed in the court by the superintendent of the Rangoon Central Jail reads as follows: "Whereas Hasan Ali son of Abbas Ali has been subject to an order of deportation under Sec. 7(2) of the Burma Immigration (Emergency Provision) Act by the controller of Immigration Burma.

"And whereas it is expedient to detain the said Hasan Ali into your custody pending removal out of Burma, this is to authorise you to receive into your custody and produce him before the 17th August 1959."

It was held that in first place the controller of Immigration was not an authority appointed by the President to exercise the powers of deportation under Section 7(2) of the act and secondly that the applicants were not yet subjected to orders of deportation under Section 7(2) as recited in the order. On these

consideration alone the detention order were liable to be quashed.

The Supreme Court further held as follows: However the question involved goes much deeper. Section 7 under which detention is authorised has so often been amended piecemeal that the position is confusion and it is necessary to determine, at what state and in what circumstances and whose behest a foreigner can be detained under the immigration laws:

Section 7 as it stands today reads:

7(1): The President of the Union or any such authority as may be appointed by him under the Sub-section, may order any foreigner who has been convicted under any section of this Act or the rules made thereunder to be deported from the Union of Burma and pending orders of deportation he may be detained in such manner as the President of the Union may direct and whilst so detained shall be deemed to be in legal custody.

7(2): The President of the Union or any such authority as may be appointed by him under the Sub-section, may in lieu of prosecution order any foreigner who contravenes any of the provisions of this Act or the rules framed there under to be deported from the Union of Burma and pending orders of deportation such foreigner may be detained in such manner as the President of the Union may direct and whilst so detained shall be deemed to be in legal custody.

7(3): The President of the Union or the authority competent to order deportation under Sub-section (2) shall have power to adjudge if any foreigner has in fact contravened any of the provisions of the Act or rules made thereunder.

(4): Any foreigner ordered to be deported under Sub-section (2) or Sub-section may be detained by such authority and in such manner as the President of Union may direct pending completion of arrangements for his removal out of the Union of

Burma and whilst so detained shall be deemed to be in legal custody.

(5): Any foreigner who has been detained under Sub-section (1) or Sub-section (2) or Sub-section (4) may be admitted to bail by such authority and upon such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the President of the Union.

(6): The carrier who is responsible for the illegal entry of any foreigner against whom any order of deportation is subsequently issued under Sub-section (1) or Sub-section (2) shall remove such foreigner from the Union of Burma.

This Section has been amended from time to time. It was last amended by Acts XXVI of 1956 and XXXIX of 1957.

Please see notes under Section 4 of this Act. Under Sub-section (2) above a foreigner may now be deported in lieu of being prosecuted of an offence under this Act. and the authority competent to deport has the power to adjudge if the foreigner has in fact contravened the provisions of this Act or the rules made under the Act.

Under the Sub-section (1) a foreigner who has been convicted under the Immigration laws may be ordered deportation by the President or by someone appointed by him to order such deportation and pending such orders of deportations, the man may be detained in such manner as the president may direct. The purpose of the provision is clear. A magistrate may convict a foreigner but the order of his deportation must emanate from some other authority, and some time may elapse before the actual order of deportation is issued, and therefore it may be necessary to detain foreigner to ensure that he does not disappear.

Sub-section (2) provides an abnormal procedure, under which a foreigner is not prosecuted but is sent before a competent authority that has to decide if the foreigner had in fact contravened the provisions of the Act or the rules. If the

judgement, the exercise of which is vested in the competent authority under Sub-section (3), is in the affirmative in lieu of prosecution the foreigner's deportation can be ordered. Pending orders of deportation such foreigner may be detained in such manner as the President may direct.

Sub-section (4) deals only with those against whom orders of deportation have already been passed. They may be detained by such authority and in such manner as the President may direct. The purpose of this Sub-section is also clear, because some time may elapse for arrangement to be made for the actual removal of the foreigner, such as securing his passage or obtaining the consent of the country to which he is to be sent.

It was urged by the learned Counsel for the applicants that under Sub-section (1), it is only after a conviction that a foreigner can be detained and that only it is after the adjudgement that he can be similarly detained under Sub-section (2). The position, the learned Counsel submits, is made clearer by the Burma Immigration (Detention) Rules, 1951, under which detention is contemplated one in respect of those liable to be deported (see Rule 2). A foreigner, it was submitted, may be liable to prosecution, but mere prosecution does not render him liable to deportation. It is only when he is convicted is adjudged under Sub-section (2) of having contravened the immigration law that he becomes liable to deportation. A foreigner may be arrested on suspicion under Section 10 and his subsequent detention if he is detained at all, will be under the criminal Procedure Code and not under the immigration laws. The suggestion therefore is, a detention under Sub-section (2) before the adjudgement is not authorised by law.

The applicants presumably were arrested under section 10. The normal procedure after such arrest to prosecute them under section 13 (1) and in that extent, in view of section 13A and 13B, the onus of proving that they are legitimate residents or that they are not foreigners, is on them. *And since this onus is*

placed upon them as a special rule of evidence, a reasonable opportunity must be given to them to discharge the burden Their detention in Rangoon, when their normal residence is Akyab might be tantamount to a denial of such an opportunity. The opportunity must be afforded whether the proceedings against them are by way of prosecution under Section 13(1) or by way of adjudgement under Section 7(2).

On the question of adjudgement we desire to observe that this procedure is meant to be confined to cases where there is not room for controversy and where a prosecution would be a waste of time and labour, such as when a foreigner remained on in Burma under an expired stay permit, or where a stowaway is caught in Burma waters. But where the question of a man's nationality is involved anywhere, as in Hasan Ali's case he is even in possession of National Registration Certificate (NRC) recourse to Section 7(2) and (3) would be undesirable.

We note that the 1st respondent in his return, has stated that the applicants are Pakistanis in appearance; that they have no knowledge of the Burmese or the Arakanese languages; and that they are unable to answer questions relating to events which had occurred in Arakan during the past decade. From these he stated, the immigration authorities were satisfied that the applicants are illegal immigrants of recent origin. It must be born in mind that it is the President or the competent authority that must be satisfied. Further, in applying the tests, which the 1st respondent has mentioned, Section 4(2) of the Union Citizenship Act must not be lost sight of. A person descended from ancestors who for two generations have made Burma their permanent home, and whose parents and himself were born in Burma, is a statutory citizen. To day in various parts of Burma there are people who because of their origin and isolated way of life, are totally unlike the Burmese in appearance or speak of events which has occurred outside the limits of their habitation. They are never the less statutory citizens under the Union Citizenship Act. The applicants claim that they belong to that category. They might

be right and therefore the opportunity of proving that they are should be given to them. To deny them this opportunity would be a violation of their fundamental rights."

The detention of Hasan Ali and Meher Ali, under Section 7(2) of the Burma Immigration (Emergency Provisions)Act under the orders of an Immigration officer were held to be unwarranted in law and therefore the orders under which they were detained in the Rangoon Central Jail were quashed and they were ordered to released forthwith.

After some time on 26th October 1960, the Supreme Court again quashed the orders of deportations passed by the sub-divisional officer, Maungdaw, Akyab district, against 23 Arakanese Muslims who were among those rounded up by the immigration authorities in 1959 in their drive against illegal immigrants. They had applied to the Court for writ of habeas corpus.

Their Lordship observed that on November 4,1959, the Supreme Court had passed orders directing the release of Hasan Ali and Meher Ali who were arrested about the same time and on the same ground. It was pointed out then that as the detainees had claimed Burmese citizenship, the deportation orders passed without having given them opportunity to prove their claims were illegal. Their Lordships added it was thought that the two cases would have served as test cases to the Immigration Department and the deportation orders against their detainees would have been cancelled. This was not done and the court had to order the release of 76- more detainees who had subsequently applied for writ of habeas corpus. Still, it was added the Immigration Department had not taken the guidance given by the Court and had continued to hold the present applicants in detention.

It was pointed out that when the applicants were examined by an Immigration officer after they had been rounded up, they claimed Burmese citizenship as they were born and bred in

Burma and their ancestors had settled down and made Burma their home. Never the less the Immigration officer filled in printed forms of deportation and Sub-Divisional Officer, Maungdaw, had put his signature to them without giving the applicants opportunity to substantiate their claims that they were not foreigners. This it was pointed out was to deny them their rights. Their lordships reminded the Immigration officer that they had been invested with very wide powers and that they should therefore be extremely careful in their use. The Immigration Act only provided for the expulsion of foreigners and to order the expulsion of a Burmese citizen was a very serious matter and was like sentencing him to the death penalty. It was therefore very improper for the Sub-Divisional Officer, Maungdaw, to have disposed of the cases in the slipshod manner he adopted by simply signing the deportation forms put up to him by the Immigration officer.

It was observed that the Immigration authorities had claimed in their returns that the applicants did not know the Burmese language and that they could not show that they were not illegal entrants. The same defence had been put forward in the previous case it was pointed out and it had been observed by the court that in Union of Burma there were races who could not speak the Burmese language and who never-the-less were citizens of the Union under the provisions of the constitutions. Under Section 4(2) of the Union Citizenship Act. also, it was pointed out, those persons whose ancestors had made Burma their home and who and whose parents were all born in Burma were also citizens of the Union.

The detention of the applicants on suspicion that they were foreigners and without giving them an opportunity to establish their claim to Union citizenship being held illegal, their lordship directed their immediate release. ***

Chapter –22

Citizenship Legislation

In 1947 the Constitution defined a citizen to be "(I) Every person, both of whose parents belonged to any of indigenous races of Burma, (II) Every person born in the territories included within the Union, at least one of whose grand parents belong or belonged to any of the indigenous races of Burma; (III) Every person born in any of the territories included within the Union, of parents both of whom are, or if they had been alive at the time of the commencement of this constitution, would have been, citizen of the Union; (IV) Every person who was born in any of the territories which at the time of his birth was included within, His Britannic Majesty's dominions and who has resided in any of the territories included within the Union for a period of not less than eight years in the ten years immediately proceeding the first January 1942 and who intends to reside permanently therein and who signifies his election of citizenship of the Union in the manner within the time prescribed by law."

In 1948, however, a new Citizenship Act was promulgated which restricted Section IV to any person "from ancestors who for two generations at least have all made any of the territories included within the Union their permanent home and whose parents and himself were born in Burma. They were required to apply for registration within one year of the law and were given identity cards.

Rohingyas were not required to apply for citizenship and were given identity cards. They voted as citizens of Burma in British rule, in the 1947 Constituent Assembly Election, during the democratic period from 1948 to 1962, during BSPP U Ne Win's

reign (1962-1988) and also in the election of 1990 given by the SLORC. Thus allowing Rohingyas to take part in the elections since British rule to SLORC's election must be upheld as a measure of recognition. Rohingyas were not only permitted to vote, but also allowed to get elected in all general elections.

Mr. Gani Marcan was the proud representative of Rohingyas during the British period. Mr. Sultan Ahmed and Mr. Abdul Gaffar were the Rohingyas members of the Constituent Assembly. Mr. Sultan Ahmed was also a member in drafting Constitution Committee of 1947 for only three months while U Rashid was in America on official visit. Mr. Sultan Ahmed, his wife Daw Aye Nyut, Daw Aye Nyut's father U Po Khine, Haji Abul Khair, Mr. Abul Bashar, Mr. Rashid, Mr., Sultan Mahmud, Mr. Abdul Gaffar, Mr. Soban, Mr. Azhar Meah were all Rohingya members of Parliament during the democratic period. From 1947 to 1958 Mr. Sultan Ahmed was Parliamentary Secretary of the Burmese Parliament. Mr. Gaffar and Mr. Abul Basher also served as Parliamentary Secretaries while Mr. Sultan Mahmud was the Minister of Health in the cabinet of the Prime Minister U Nu.

The Rohingya representatives of Hlauttaw (parliament) during the socialist period of U Ne Win are Mr. Abul Hussain, Dr. Abdul Rahim and Advocate Abdul Hai. Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed, Kyaw Thein Mustaque, Mustaq Ahmed, Saleh Ahmed, Elias, Aman Ullah and many others were Rohingya representatives to Arakan State Council during the BSPP periods.

Under the 1989 Election Law all citizens, Associate citizens and Naturalised citizens are permitted to vote, but are not allowed to stand for election. No foreign resident has the right to vote. Thus, allowing the Rohingyas to vote and stand for the national

election must be upheld as a measure of recognition of Rohingya as bonafide citizens of Burma.

In fact Rohingyas were not only permitted to vote, but also allowed to form political parties in 1989. Two parties were formed, the Students and Youth League for Mayu Development and the National Democratic Party for Human Rights (N.D.P.H). The NDPH won all four seats in Maungdaw and Buthidaung Township, and in each constituency votes for the two parties counted were eighty percent of the total vote cast. Moreover, the turn out in both townships the national average, at seventy percent of eligible voters. It is likely that the high percentage is due to the government's low estimate of the population in northern Arakan. "Population figures, as with all statistics in Burma are notoriously unreliable", wrote Zunetta Liddell (London) published in Human Right Watch/Asia, September 1996. Vol.8. No.9 (c) page 34 footnote No.80.

The NDPH also filed candidates in four other constituencies: Kyauktaw-1, Minbya-1, Mrauk-U-2 and Sittwe-2 where they gained an average of seventeen percent of the votes. For Sittwe-2 constituency the NDPH support the Kamans National League for Democracy, candidate U Shwe Ya as NDPH candidate, U Kyaw Hla Aung was jailed. U Shwe Ya, the Kaman Muslim was the winner.

While not permitted to use the name Rohingya in the party title, the NDPH was allowed to publish a book in Burmese called "Arakan State and Rohingya People: A Short History " on August 31, 1990.

Of the four NDPH elected members of Parliament, Fazal Ahmed of Maungdaw-2 constituency was arrested in June 1992. Fazal Ahmed was accused of involvement in planting a bomb in Maungdaw, along with the NLD Maungdaw Township

secretary, Mohammad Ilyas. Another NLD Organiser escaped the arrest and left his homeland. Both men were severely tortured, resulting in the death of Mohammad Ilyas. Fazal Ahmed was given five years sentence and has since been released on completion of jail term.

In January 1993 the government, having failed to honour the result of the election, formed the National Convention, to draft a new constitution. There is only one representative from the whole of Arakan State at the National Convention, U San Tha Aung of Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organisation. U San Tha Aung gained 15,801 votes in the election. He therefore represent less than 0.7 percent of the population of Arakan state.

According to the 1947 Constitution, a group of people who entered Burma before 1825 and settled in a defined territory are also indigenous race of Burma. This clause was especially written for Rohingya people, said Dr. Aye Maung, one of the author of the 1947 constitution. Accordingly U Nu government recognised Rohingya as an indigenous race of Burma. Their language was aired from 1961 to 1965. U Soe Shwe Thaike, the First President of the Union of Burma also told, while he was in the highest office, that Rohingya is an indigenous race as he himself, and there is no difference between Rohingya and Shan in the case of nationality.

After the military coup in 1962, it became difficult for the children of recognised citizens to have citizenship cards. In 1974 a new constitution was introduced to enshrine one party rule. When nearly 300,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh in 1977/78, the government of Burma branded that they were all illegal immigrants. Ironically they were accepted back in 1979 as the citizens of Burma.

In 1982 a new citizenship law was promulgated which was deliberately targeted at the Rohingyas yet it was not fully applied.

In 1989 all residents had to apply for new Citizenship Scrutiny Cards. The Rohingyas have applied for it. But no cards are issued to Rohingyas. Only those Rohingya who were successful businessmen or professionals or lackeys of the SLORC were able to get the new green cards. Ten of them whom Human Rights Watch/Asia had met who obtained these cards, six admitted having paid large bribes to local officers for them.

International Law and the 1982 Citizenship Act

"*The 1982 Citizenship Law should be revised or amended to abolish its over burdensome requirements for citizens in a manner which has discriminatory effects on racial or ethnic minorities particularly the Rakhine Muslims. It should be brought in line with the principles embodied in the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 30 August 1961,*" Prof. Yokota reported United Nation.

Burma's citizenship law violates several fundamental principles of international common law and leaves Rohingyas exposed to no legal protection of their rights. Nationality is the principal link between the individual and Law. People invoke the protection of the state by virtue of their nationality. As well as being denied, specific rights in Burma, such as the rights to freedom of movement, (a new 'great wall' is erected for the Rohingyas of Burma, barring them to move), the right to education, the right to own property, and so on, by being denied citizenship Rohingyas are also denied recourse to the law in any situation, including international law. Since citizenship is thus essential for the protection of all rights, international norms have been developed that impose an obligation on states to grant citizenship to stateless people who are not recognised as citizens of any other state. The International Convenient of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) addresses this issue in Article 24(a), which states: "***Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.***" The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness goes further by obliging the state in which a

person is not to grant nationality under certain circumstances. Article 1 states "***A contracting State shall grant its nationality to a person born in its territory who would otherwise be stateless.***"

Burma is not a party to either ICCPR or the Convention on statelessness, but the cited provisions do reflect a clear in international law that Burma should follow. In the case of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Burma did accede in 1991 and is therefore legally obliged to respect its provisions: Article 7 of the CRC states: "***The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right to a name, the right to acquire a nationality.... States Parties shall ensure implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless***". This means that, in the case of children who would otherwise be stateless, Burma is obliged to grant them citizenship.

The country with the primary responsibility to provide a nationality is the one where the person has lived for more years or generations than anywhere else, where he or she at one time enjoyed legal status, settled and was given reasonable expectation of being a citizen.

Under this standard, the 1982 Citizenship Act clearly violates international norms by placing an excessive burden of proof on the applicant. Section 8 (b) of the act permits the state to arbitrarily revoke the citizenship of anyone "except a citizen by birth" In contravention of Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "***No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality***."

The 1982 Act is even more objectionable in so far as it was promulgated to deliberately deny citizenship to persons who had previously been recognised as citizens.

While in practice the law is often not actively applied, as can be seen by the fact that Rohingya were permitted to vote and to contest in the 1990 General Election - a right given only to citizens - the fact remains that the law discriminates against Rohingyas though they are the people of the soil since over a thousand years back.

In the opinion of Sweden's eminent security expert, Earling Bijol, "The Rim States' problem is the problem of Pilot fish - how to keep close to the shark without being eaten"- Now the condition of Rohingyas is like that harmless and small but wily pilot fish.

In front of every Immigration office throughout Burma there is a large signboard which reads in Burmese "***The earth cannot swallow a nation, but a nation can swallow another nation***" Although it is an eye catching slogan of the regime since 1962 cautioning the ethnic races of the danger of aliens' presence, in practice the regime itself has been annihilating all the ethnic races in a systematic and planned ways. Even the Rakhine have not been spared. Pogrom aiming at depopulating ethnic Christian Karen, Muslim Rohingyas has been actively oppressed and also driving out Muslims from Arakan, Karen and Mon states.

According to 1982 Citizenship Act, there are three types of citizen. This indicates that there are a wide variety of possibilities for a child to be statelessness or to be deprived of nationality. It is actually more a question of categorisation and discrimination.

The Rohingyas have had difficulties being recognised even as the third category of citizens. This leads to the picture that there are actually stateless children in Burma, even those who have been born in Burma and live there with their parents who have been born in Burma.

Someone grows up in the country where he was born, where his only problem is that he cannot prove a very technical letter of a certain year of his record of grand parents, he grows up with the feeling that he will not be able to achieve the maximum...This means that his development is restricted, is harmed.

His identity, sense of identity, sense of potential, is damaged. Their right to grow into full citizens is damaged due to the fact that they don't have the documentation to prove a certain existence in a specific year. The impact on the children that they will not be able to grow to reach their full potential is infringement on the possession of the right of the child.

The question of whether the conditions of nationality established by a state under their jurisdiction are in conformity with the Convention or not are of concern to the international community. And there is one condition saying that every child under the jurisdiction of the state has the right to a nationality, so all possible risks of losing or not acquiring a nationality is a problem, is an international concern.

In a country that has been affected by political instability and insurgent movements, it would be hard to accept that there is no kind of document given to those living in Burma to prove that they are citizens. There is a system of identity cards. They have to prove a number of conditions. *There are two elements of discrimination in that identity card, which are the reference to religion and the reference to ethnic origin When the identity card includes these elements, it must pave the way to stigmatisation and to discrimination*

The Rohingya returnees having been refugees have had problems to establish their right to stay in the country, to be recognised as citizens of the country and among them is quite a number of children.

Article 13 of the Convention which says that in those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of

indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right in community with other members of his or her group to enjoy his or her own culture, to progress and practice his or her own religion or to use his or her own language.

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Chapter-23

Rohingya Independence Force (RIF)

(1964-1973)

Phase-I

The great Prophet of Islam in his Hijja al Wida (Farewell Pilgrimage) said: " O mankind, your blood, your property and your honour are as sacred as this Holy Land."

The quest for democracy and civil society is an integral part of the liberation and self-determination which began in the first half of the century. The basic proposition governing democracy and civil society is the idea of the dignity of man. That idea took a long time to grow. Abdala the Saracen, the source of Pisco's idea on the dignity of man was Ibn Qutaiba, the celebrated humanist of the Abbasid era and author of the *Khalaqal-Insan* or "the Creation of Man." ("The Asian Renaissance" by Anwar Ibrahim)

A century and a half after Pisco, the idea of the dignity of man was expressed by Shakespeare in Hamlet: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form, in moving, how express and admirable! In action how like angel in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The Paragon of animals!"

There can be no dignity in poverty, sickness, deprivation, illiteracy and ignorance. Democracy is not a luxury that Asians cannot afford. As Rein Neibahr said," Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." In resisting democracy, some would argue that the people are not sophisticated enough to

practice democracy. To this Dr. Sun Yat-sen replied earlier in this century, "Alas! This is like telling a child that he cannot go to school because he is illiterate."

General Ne Win overthrew the popular elected democratic government of U Nu on March 2, 1962 in a coup. All powers of the state legislative, executive and judiciary were under the control of 'Revolutionary Council' (RC) which was formed with top military officers headed by him. Habeas Corpus and all the writs were suspended. The reasons of the coup given by Ne Win were inefficiency of the political government to solve the outstanding issue of federalism, a faulty economy and bureaucratic and exploitative system of government, among others.

The military regime quickly launched one party political system and established Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) with its whimsical ideology of 'Burmese way to socialism' an ambiguous amalgam of both socialist and Buddhists views. This is in fact an added device to blackmail the principle of 'Unity in Diversity' promised to nationalities at the time of independence. All of the top executives were the army officers and BSPP stalwarts. This military hierarchy was backing the BSPP government while they themselves were making fortune at the cost of the suffering millions. Attempts had been made to delude the people with a false heaven on earth in order to establish one party military dictatorship. Rights and freedom of the people particularly the country's Muslims were seriously denied.

At the same time all other political parties had been banned and the BSPP established its branches all over the country. In Arakan, only Arakanese Buddhists (Rakhine) were inducted to the new political party. Moreover party membership had been confined to non-Muslims only.

In February 1963 the Revolutionary Council regime nationalised entire banks and business enterprises all over the country. In Arakan all business establishments, big or small, ranging from

grocery and rice shops to big departmental stores were nationalised.

Directions were sent by the Revolutionary Council to Arakan division authorities to restrict the movement of the Muslims. (Thus began a new area of racial discrimination in post-independent Burma). The Muslims of Arakan are not allowed to travel to Rangoon. They are not allowed to get a government job. Muslims in police department posted at Maungdaw and Buthidaung were either transferred to far-flung corners of Burma or expelled. Other high-ranking officials were forced to retire or dismissed or suspended. Besides, appointment of those Rohingyas who were earlier selected for judicial services and civil services were withheld without giving any reasons. All other services excepting clerical post and lower grade school teachers in government were filled up by either Burmans or Maghs including recently migrated Maghs from East Pakistan.

Ne Win then started taking action against the Rohingya Muslims of Arakan. While talking to newsmen, he used sarcastic language against Rohingyas and incited that the Arakanese Buddhists should take appropriate steps against these Kalas. The State controlled media began attacking Rohingya Muslims branding them as foreigners. Before the coup there were 30 newspapers in Burma published in eight different languages. Now there are only a few controlled by the government.

On the evening of 7 July 1962, in the Rangoon University campus the regime carried out a shooting spree where hundreds of students were indiscriminately gunned down while scores of others were detained. It was simply because the students of the Rangoon University raised a protest against some rules and regulations imposed upon them by the junta. After the shooting the campus was cleared up, the dead and the wounded were carried away, and at midnight the historic Student Union Building, where the seed of Burma's independence movement was first planted, was dynamited and bulldozed. The massacre

on the campus prompted hundreds of students to join underground insurgent groups.

In 1964, the Revolutionary Council abolished the special Mayu Frontier Administration and put the area again within the jurisdiction of Akyab district under the Home Ministry and the Rohingya Language Programme relayed from Burma Broadcasting Services (BBS), Rangoon was cancelled in October 1965. All socio-cultural organisations viz. United Rohingya Organisation founded in 1956, Rohingya Students Association founded 1955, Rohingya Youth Organisation, Rangoon University Rohingya Students Association, Rohingya Jamiatul Ulema, Arakanese Muslims Association and Arakanese Muslims Youth organisation were banned in 1964.

On May 1964 the BSPP government demonetised its currency notes of Kyats 50 and 100. Under the initial term of swap sums, up to a value of 500 were to be exchanged. Above that sum only 50% refund was allowed while the saver's source of finance were investigated, taxed and in some cases confiscated. Later the regime changed the terms of the currency swap limiting refund to 25%. Thus, the Rohingya received a great financial shock and many businessmen went bankrupt.

Following nationalisation of the shops, demagnetisation and imposition of restriction on movements, the backbone of economy of the Rohingya began to cripple. The Rakhines were given chance to make easy profits by drawing consumer goods from 'People's Shops' at cheap price only to sell them in the black market with lucrative profit. Except a few service holders, no Muslims were entitled to draw the ration quota from the 'People Shops' whereas it is open to all Buddhists. Due to restriction, the Buddhists now carried out business of Rohingyas only. In cross border trade some Muslims who yet continue business have to give lion shares to their Buddhists sleeping partners in-order to enable them to run their business smoothly. Many poor Maghs had turned rich overnight at the expense of

the Muslims while other ethnic races were reeling in acute poverty. In Arakan, as elsewhere in Burma, the BSPP was the de facto administrative authority and the Maghs, being the sole members of the BSPP in Arakan, enjoy rights and freedom. Thus the Rohingyas were amidst the double-edged sword during the reign of BSPP.

Use of violence was an instrument of state policy. The Rohingyas of Arakan have been made targets of genocide, oppression, repression and the regime enacted many black laws for Rohingyas in flagrant violation of the international norms. Thousands of indigenous people were rendered homeless and driven out of the country.

As the power abuse went on in full swing, arrest of prominent Muslims, in the dead of nights without warrant and subjecting them to torture and releasing them after extorting huge sum of bribe had become the order of the day. Law enforcing agencies and judges were clearly instructed to harass the Muslims and deny justice.

In 1967 bulk of the rice produced in Arakan was carried away to Rangoon causing rice shortage in Arakan and many people had died of starvation. Continuous hunger provoked anger among the people of Akyab and a riot erupted which was crushed down by deploying army at the scene who gunned down many on the spot. Persons seriously injured but still alive were said to have been dumped in mass graves in unknown places of Akyab.

Apart from physical torture, molestation of womenfolk and extortion of money, many innocent Rohingyas were subjected to imprisonment with false charges. The military regime carried out the so-called 'Immigration Inquiry Operation with a combined force of well armed security forces and immigration officials. In order to have a maximum result, most of the officials deputed for the combing operation were Maghs migrated to Burma in the past.

Since 1962, Rohingyas were not issued with National Registration Cards (NRC) and those earlier given were taken back by the authorities from Rohingyas. Papers showing the list of household or family members were also denied to Rohingyas. Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), states: "The child shall have the right to a name, the right to acquire a nationality..." But the Junta denied this right to Rohingya children despite Burma being a signatory party.

The BSPP started to drive out Rohingyas from the towns of Kyauktaw, Mrohaung, Pauktaw, Myebon, Minbya etc. and they were forced to board on boats bound for Buthidaung township. The authorities confiscated all their immovable properties. The internal refugees had passed their days under open sky in Maungdaw and Buthidaung.

In the post-Independent period when the disgruntled Rohingyas took up arms they were hoodwinked into surrendering their arms on the false promises of granting all the political rights and treating them at par with all other nationalities. The Burmese authorities, however, overtly backed out from this solemn promise. The Rohingya had always been treacherously duped.

Since the regime was fast moving towards Burmanisation of ethnic races in the country, it opened a chapter against Islam. Thus, the junta practised all necessary measures to de-Islamic the Muslims. As a result of this, many Muslims, male and female, are found today practising Buddhist culture and many of them even converted into Buddhism. The process of Burman hegemony has been promoted, through assimilation of all ethnic communities, by way of Burmanisation, Buddhiziation, and the so-called Burmese way to Socialism. But the stumbling block in their way in Arakan has been the existence of the compact Rohingya community inhabiting en-bloc in this strategic frontier still retaining their strict socio-cultural entity. Thus, the Burmans adopted the policy of exterminating the Rohingyas in a

systematic and planned way through various schemes and designs.

In British Burma, the Burmese language was recognised as a national and the English as an official language. The national identity, ethnic entity and character of other non-Burmese nationalities were thus neglected. This resulted the Burman becoming the "big nation" or "Prime nation" and dragging the other to be 'sub-nations'.

Realising the odious intention of Burmese leaders, the Kachin students of the Rangoon and Mandalay Universities and other institutions decided to go underground in 1961 to form KIA. Again the events of 1962 coup which ended the real democratic government in Burma and replaced it with autocratic Burmese way to Socialism further showed the dark future of ethnic minorities as well as the general population. Military intolerance to public exasperation and students uprising of 1962 and brutal dealing on 7th July gave rise to underground parties from ethnic minorities mostly led by students from Universities and colleges. History testifies that many Shan, Karen, Chin, Magh and Rohingya were among those who joined their respective underground movement as the military rule in Burma was clearly seen as a stumbling block in achieving their noble cause.

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase II

Between the Naf River and the Mayu range, there lies the beautiful border township of Maungdaw. Between Maungdaw town and Mayu range there is a village called Myothugyi or Razabil. On the southern outskirts of the village there is a coconut garden of one Omar Sharif where a group of students were engaged in serious discussion. The time was 1965 Winter/Fall evening.

"The devil wouldn't step where the young man step" In English he started his speech. "The students of today are the Leaders of tomorrow" pointing out to the students who were sitting in front line. At the middle of the row, there sat a tall student by the name of Nurul Islam in front of the speaker. At his right side was Habibur Rahman, a famous student renowned for fighting and others were Ba Maung, Kyaw Myint, Jafar and so many students in full spirit.

'Say the struggle is naught availeth' the speaker continued. Before the end of the speech the speaker recited some poems of Dr. Iqbal in Urdu, which impressed the participants very much. All the students were too much attentive and they seemed to be very obedient to the speaker.

"As the belief of one God is in our heart in insurance, it will not be easy enough to vanish our name and fame" with those words he concluded his long speech among the enthusiastic students of the Rohingya community.

Who was the speaker? Was he their leader? He was in fact Master Sultan of Kayandan. He was the headmaster of a primary school, Kayandan. But he was the President of the teachers association of all government primary, middle and high schools

in Maungdaw Township. He was also a strong supporter of Haji Abul Kahir M.P. and Sultan Mahmud ex-Minister who won election in the North Arakan, with the slogan of the "Muslim State."

Master Sultan, an energetic school teacher at his 40s, went to Phomali with Mr. Shuna Ali of Daborichoung and was accorded with red carpet reception. When he went to Alithangyaw, Maungdaw south, all the elders of Maungdaw south were his audience. Abul Alam Chowdhury of Bowli Bazaar, Abdul Gaffar master of Ngakura and many elders of the Maungdaw North frequently visited him.

Master Sultan visited the Mujahid groups at Udang and was received by the leader of the Mujahid, Jafar Sani and his assistant Mustabis. Before meeting them he was received by Oli Chand who was particularly sent to provide special security on the way to the meeting place with two dozens of best fighters.

The talk was very cordial. Mr. Sani promised that he would work under the guidance of Mr. Sultan. He also promised to bear all the foreign expenses. The Mujahid forces were even eager to go and liberate Palestine and to recapture Masjide Al Aqsa because the Muslims of North Arakan believe in the Muslim Ummah's oneness and fraternity of Muslims.

One evening Mr. Sultan crossed to Teknaf in erstwhile East Pakistan from the Maungdaw Jetty with seven educated associates. On the way the custom patrol boat halted them. But they were allowed to go when the custom officer saw the men with Mr. Sultan. In the evening they arrived at the residence of Haji Omer, a native of Kayanchoung, Burma, then running a business in Teknaf. His nephew Haji Zahir Ahmed welcomed them. Within half an hour B.A. Jafar arrived with his brother-in-law Saiful Mulluk Chowdhury. They discussed about their future. In the morning Sultan and his party went to Shahpurirdip. They were guests of honour at the residence of Nazir Chairman. They invited Nazir Chairman's arch rival Mr.

Ezhar Chowdhury to Nazir's house. The situation in Arakan was the hot topic of discussion and they promised to be united at least in the cause of Rohingyas.

They came back to Teknaf in the same day. Then they proceeded to Dul-Hazara to meet Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury. On the way they took Sarfaras with them. They took rest at the guest house of Fazul Kabir Chowdhury, which was presented by President Mohammad Ayub Khan as a gesture of friendship among them. When Ayub Khan was a major in the British - India army, he went for hunting for deer in the deep forest of Dul-Hazara and met an accident. But he was saved by Mr. Kabir. So was the man Mr. F. Kabir. He hosted Mr. Sultan and associates. During the night he narrated a story. "Once a saint had the knowledge of making gold. The King of the land ordered him to teach the formula to him. As the saint refused he was then arrested. The next day he was taken to the King. The King told him he would be executed if he failed to give the formula within three months. Still the saint refused and was sent to the jail. The King used to visit the jail in guise of a fellow inmate of the jail and served the saint whole night. On the last day of the three months the saint gave the formula to the inmate, who served him everything. The servant of the saint made a mosque, which was on the way from the jail to the palace, with the formula he received from the saint. When the saint was brought before the King, the King asked the saint whether he could keep the formula without teaching anybody else. The saint had seen the mosque and he realised who was the servant he had taught the formula. Then the saint replied that the formula was taught not by the order of the King but with the services. The learned King released the saint". In the end, Mr. Kabir advised his guests to serve the people whenever and what ever they could.

Mr. Kabir also narrated the flight of Shah Shuja to Mrauk-U. On his way to Arakan Sultan Shah Shuja stayed at Dulhazara with many Phalkis. So the place was known as Dulhajara. He also

told about the Fakir Molvi Abdul Jabbar, who was a great saint of North Arakan.

The next day Mr. Sultan and party proceeded to Chittagong and met Rohingya business community and discussed about the movement. He met firebrand Molvi Nazir popularly known as Kuruf pata, Molvi Ismail, nephew of Mr. Jinah Sultan, Vice Chairman of the Mujahid movement of Jaffer Kawal. Mr. Bodiur Rahman, now the owner of the United Hotel, was the student of Mr. Sultan. He hosted a dinner party.

In Chittagong, Master Sultan made a series of discussion with prominent Rohingyas among whom were, Mr. Saleh Ahmed, Ex-Mujahid President, then Chairman of Garzania Union, Mr. Saleh Master of Undang, and Mr. Bhutto Saleh, Feroz and Salim of Maungdaw Habi Para.

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase III

The time was 1961-62 winter season. '***Gangaw Myine***' or the garden of ***gangaw*** (mesua ferea) flower is the name attributed to Rangoon University used by the poets and writers. It is pleasant to have an evening walk along the convocation road up to the Inya Lake. Mandalay Hall is at the starting point of the road. The warden of the hall was Dr. Khin Maung Win, the Professor and the head of the department of Philosophy, of the Rangoon University. The philosopher used to take the evening walk along with a student of his hall. They looked alike wearing spectacle, walking soft and gentle, talking slowly, looked like two philosophers. They were talking in English, as the student did not know Burmese as he passed his intermediate from Notre Dame College of Dhaka and joined the Rangoon University with the recommendation of the Burmese Embassy in Pakistan. The student did not know that he was walking with a future education Minister of Burma nor the poor Professor did

know that he was walking with a future leader of Rohingya Resistance Movement.

At the Merchant Street of Rangoon, there situated YMCA building. In March 1962 morning at the guest room of the YMCA a group of Rangoon University Rohingya students were waiting for a guest of honour who just arrived from USA after taking Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics. After a while Dr. Tin Maung came in to the guestroom and was greeted by the students. The leader of the students introduced himself as Mohammad Jafar S/O Habibuz Zama, Alihaung, Buthidaung, Arakan. Dr. Tin Maung was also a native of Buthidaung. He is the elder brother of Dr. Abul Kalam, civil sergeant of Meikgyina General Hospital. His Muslim name is Abul Hussain and he is the eldest son of Mr. Fosumeah Munshi of Buthidaung.

They invited Dr. Tin Maung to a party arranged in honour of him. After the party was over they formed "Rohingya Student Organisation." They elected Mr. Hussain Cassim as President, Jafar as Vice President and Mohammad Khan as General Secretary for two years term. After two years Jafar became the President and one Shabbir Hussain became General Secretary of the organisation.

In 1962 after completing B.A with subjects' combination of Philosophy, Political Science and Modern History, Mr. Jafar enrolled in BL first year but did not complete the course. One of his friends used to visit the Egyptian embassy as a Vice President of the Rangoon University Muslim Student Association (RUMSA). The Ambassador, Mr. Ramzi told him that the embassy wanted a translator from Urdu to English to see what two daily and two weekly Urdu newspapers were writing about Egypt and other Arab countries. The friend sent Jafar to the embassy where he was duly appointed with a reasonable salary.

In March 1964 Jafar visited Buthidaung to participate at the wedding ceremony of his first cousin Abu Sufian where he met

with Shuna Ali of Daborichoung, health assistant Maung Ni (real name withheld), and middle school Head Master in-Charge, Mr. Aman (real name withheld). They went to nearby Sikander Dargha and discussed the miserable life of Muslims under the military dictatorship. They unanimously felt that the situation was demanding to launch an anti-junta movement for the emancipation of the Rohingya Muslims and resolved to resist Revolutionary Council of Burma. The next day they went to Maungdaw to discuss the matter with Master Sultan and other patriots. They all agreed to start a movement. Afterwards they all went to the old site of Mayonkhali Bazaar and said Asr prayer at the site of the Mosque of the old Bazaar. On 26 April 1964, a new chapter for the Arakanese Rohingya was just going to open as all the participants took oath for giving birth to a resistance movement with the objective of creating North Arakan as an 'Autonomous State'. Thus, the name Rohingya Independence Force (RIF) came into being to lead the Muslims of Arakan. The Head of the movement was named as Grand Raja (GR) and members were named as Rajas: Buthidaung's members as ER, Maungdaw's members as WR, Akyab members as AR, Kyaukpyu members as KR and the member of Burma proper as RR. Code named 'marriage' was given for the movement and its constitution to follow Quranic law. They elected Mr. Sultan as GR as Rohingya people mostly believe that the leader should be at least 40 years old. After the marriages of his cousin and a few friends, Mr. Jafar went back to Rangoon.

One pleasant evening Jafar was sitting at the corner of panoramic Bandola Park of Rangoon pondering about the future. By that time the Revolutionary Council banned all the Urdu newspapers of Burma. So his job of Urdu translation at the embassy of U A R (Egypt) was at stake. But Helen told him that she would try a job at Cambodian embassy where she was then working. In certain condition, Mr. Jafar was thinking of his future step. He thought of one Dr. Tin Maung (a) Abul Hussain,

a native of Buthidaung who was a favourite soccer umpire of North America serving at San Diego as a scientist. Dr. Tin Maung left Burma because of his personal reason with the help of one Rakhine friend via East Pakistan.

Then Mr. Jafar recalled Mr. Imam Hussain, who came from USA in 1962 and stayed at his cousin's residence for one or two months with his wife. For Jafar it was easy to migrate to the USA as there were his relatives and Iman Hussain who were ready to take necessary responsibility for his migration to USA. In spite of many possibilities to migrate to prosperous countries, Jafar was unwilling. The revolution stood as great wall between him and his charming future prospects.

His friend, Syed Anwarul Azim (Anwar), who was the Vice President of RUMSA, interrupted his deep thoughts. That was the man who took him to the UAR (Egypt) embassy. When he had to give the names of two persons to certify his birthplace as Aliyoung, Buthidaung, Anwar's father was one of them. Sayed Anwar Azim popularly known as Anwar played very important role for the Muslim students of Rangoon University. In his capacity as the vice president of RUMSA, he successfully faced the authorities in revoking the expulsion notices served to some Muslims students, constructing a student centre with the help of Minister U Rashid, U Khin Maung Lat, Gazi Hashim, Col. Ba Shin and many others.

After the 7th July 1962 massacre of the Rangoon University students, all students were required to be recommended by a gazetted officer in their new admission forms. Anwar took all Rohingya students including B.A. Jafar to U Ba Thaung, secretary of the House of Nationalities. He was a Burmese Muslim. He recommended all Rohingya students on Anwar's request. One of Jafar's friends was expelled from the university for three years. On Anwar's request the then Rector, U Kha cancelled the expulsion order. U Kha also was a Burmese Muslim.

Before U Kha, Dr. Tha Hla was the Rector of the Rangoon University. Anwar and his friend had a meeting with him. They requested Dr. Tha Hla to grant Idd holiday like previous years. "On the request of Minister U Rashid I granted it last year because at that time I was weak," retorted the Rector.

Dr. Maung Maung Kha became the Rector after U Kha. He ordered to dismantle some cottages in the campus. Some Muslim students including Anwar met the Rector and explained him that one of the cottages was being used by them to say Friday Prayer. The Rector granted three months extension. With the co-operation of Muslim elders including Hajima Daw Pu, the students were able to construct a Muslim Student Centre near the Rangoon University.

Anwar and Jafar sat down and discussed many things including the present politics of Burma, people's rights and so on. Jafar told him he could be called whenever he was in need.

Then Jafar recalled how he accompanied with Anwar to collect advertisement for the publication of RUMSA annual magazine and also to the secretary of Religious Ministry with regard to the subsidy of Ks. 65,000/- which was cancelled by the Religious Minister Colonel Kyaw Soe, by giving the lame excuse of the disunity among the Muslims. The Secretary was U Than Nyunt, a good gentlemen who promised that he would try his best to persuade the Minister to divide the money among the prominent Religious Associations of Muslims, as the visitors proposed. As a matter of fact there were more than 500 Muslims who were individually paying tax more than Kyat 65,000 annually. Out of hatred, the Revolutionary Council of Gen. Ne Win did not want to grant the subsidy of Ks.65,000/- for the Islamic Religious affairs. Anwar and Jafar discussed all the ill treatments of the Military government. The two were supporters of parliamentary democracy and federal system of government with a flexible constitution. They opposed to any form of autocracy and dictatorship.

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase IV

In front of the Maungdaw Juma Mosque of Ali Hussain Munshi, there was a small Hotel run by Abu Shamma. As he was a native of Ngakura village, people of Ngakura and nearby villages used to reside at his Hotel, whenever they came to Maungdaw town. One Dos Mohammed was one of them. In the morning an immigration officer came and called Dos Mohammed and began to beat him till sunset in front of many Muslims disregarding them like anything in front of a Mahabama officer.

When one Habibur Rahman a member of RIF entered the hotel, and attacked the officer breaking his right hand (holding Pistol) then all the spectators started to beat and kick the Burmese. Habibur Rahman fled the scene as soon as the police arrived and rescued the officer. At night ADC U Hla Pe came and took back the pistol. Abbas and one Zafor and two other students were arrested in this connection. After a few days they were released.

The government confiscated the waqf-land (trust land) of the Ali Hussain Munshi Mosque, stretching from Maungdaw town to Kayandan on the northern side of the Maungdaw - Buthidaung road and planned to distribute it among Buddhists. The youth wing of RIF protested by sticking wall posters three times.

The government started to drive out the Muslims from the east of Kaladan River. The headquarters of persecution of Muslims was the local BSPP office. Habibur Rahman and some of his colleagues, one night, burnt the office of the BSPP, Maungdaw.

The youth group of RIF was all in full spirit. They wanted to go underground and join the Mujahid group entrenched in the Mayu range. They approached G.R Sultan Master who did not agree to the proposal until and unless they got the strong backing. He discussed with his executive members and unanimously agreed to send Jafar abroad to make way for an effective international support. Thus a telegraphic message was sent to Jafar.

Jafar's marital engagement was with his cousin-sister since childhood as arranged by parents of both sides. The marriage was supposed to take place after his graduation.

While Habibuz Zaman was at Maungdaw he met Anwar and sought his assistance on the matter. Anwar promptly agreed. Jafar came and arrangement was made for his marriage.Where there is a will there is a way. One day Hla Myint met one Karim. He told that his father Mawnu Chowdhury was a very close friend of Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury of Dulhazara who was a very intimate friend of President Ayub Khan. So they decided to send Jafar to Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury with Moulvi Mohammed Sayed, the cousin of Karim who had very good relation with Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury.

Shortly after the introduction of Jafar to Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury by Molvi Mohammed Sayed, Mr. Fazul Kabir Chowdhury took Jafar to Dhaka as President Ayub Khan arrived there. Mr. Kabir alone was allowed to meet the President and the Rohingyas' affairs was told to him and the President directed his secretary Mr. Faydha Hassan to deal with the matter. Next day Jafar and Kabir met Faydha Hassan who told them that the government had no soul but the policy. But agreed that the agonies of Rohingyas would be sent to the Foreign Minister of Burma by the Foreign Office of Pakistan. Copy of such letter was also sent to Jafar. G.R. Sultan was not satisfied with the reply and instructed Jafar to try again and again.

Wazaw was a saint, highly revered by the people of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. His cousin Mr. Sarfaraz, was the most demoralised person passing his life in sorrow and grief. He was a bosom friend of the then commissioner of Chittagong. Mr. Sultan went to him, organised him and sent him to see his old friend. It was said that Mr. Jafar representing RIF in East Pakistan, did not extend all out co-operation in this mission.

Meanwhile, a telegram was received by Mr. Sultan from Mr. Cassim who was in Rangoon. Mr. Cassim asked to send an emissary to Rangoon as early as possible. As the Ramadan Idd was approaching, nobody was ready to proceed for Rangoon except Anwar. On arrival the two prepared a memorandum and went to the Pakistan embassy. The Ambassador told them "the moon will not come to you, nor you cannot reach the moon easily". The First Secretary of the Embassy encouraged them. However, he was transferred to India. He had done much for the liberation of Bangladesh while he was in India. His early death was a great loss for the RIF.

As the mission of Jafar and Fazul Kabir Chowdhury and that of Mr. Sarfaraz and Salahuddin still did not bear fruit, members of RIF sent Anwar and Cassim to try their utmost to accelerate the movement. They crossed to Teknaf and met Jafar and the three proceeded to Dhaka.

Later Anwar and Cassim proceeded to Karachi to see the Arab diplomats to put their case for the consideration of certain Arab countries.

On arrival in Karachi, they went straight to Hotel Salatin. Next morning they shifted to the residence of Saleh Master of Undang. The next day they went to the office of the World Muslim Congress. The Secretary General of the World Muslim Congress was Mr. Anamullah Khan, ex-Principal of Burma Muslim High School, Rangoon. Mr. Cassim told him that they were sent by Mr. Sultan Mahmud to seek his advice for the movement. He gave kind hearing to them as he regarded Mr.

Sultan Mahmud as a great leader of Burma. He advised them to see the Saudi Ambassador, Ebrahim Bawany and Dadabhoy. They went to Dadabhoy, who was at that time the president of the Pak-Burma Friendship Society and found that Mr. Dadabhoy was a true friend of Burma. He proved to be a friend of the then Military government though he was driven out of Burma by that government. He showed no sympathy for the distressed Rohingyas. Yet he advised them to launch a well disciplined movement.

After a week they were lucky enough to get an interview with Mr. Ebrahim Bawany, the managing director of the Bawany groups of Industries, with the arrangement of Mr. Anamullah Khan. He listened patiently about the agonies of Rohingya Muslims of Arakan and expressed his deep sympathy. However, he suggested them to visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Libya to seek their assistance. He also told them that he would bear all the expenses for the journey.

In case if he was unavailable in Karachi, the expense should be taken from Mr. Anamullah Khan and the latter was informed of it. Bhawany was kind enough to provide his private car to the Rohingya delegates so that they would see the Saudi Diplomat Abdullah al Habibi, the first secretary of the embassy. He was courteous and assured all possible assistance.

At that time the grand conference of the World Muslim Congress was being held at Lahore. The Grand Mufti Hussaini of Palestine, who was the President of the World Muslim Congress, attended it. Delegations from many countries also arrived. Mr. Cassim met with many delegates including the Korean. The secretary of the Grand Mufti was also met at Hotel Javesh, Karachi.

Afterwards the Rohingya delegates visited the Iraqi Embassy and met first secretary as the Ambassador Abdul Kader Jilani went to Baghdad. Mr. A.K. Jilani was the head of the Arab diplomats in Karachi. As he was away, the Ambassador of

Sudan was acting head of the Arab diplomats. When Cassim and Anwar explained the agonies of the Rohingyas of Arakan, he was really moved. He promised that he would send their memorandum to his President Ebrahim Aboud. He did it and the President gave an encouraging response.

After the Six Day War Anwar and Cassim collected funds for the Arab refugees among a few Rohingyas and donated them through the Ambassador of Sudan. They also offered one thousand Rohingya volunteers to fight for the cause of Masjid-e-Aqsa and all lost lands of Arab brothers.

The Rohingya delegates also visited the Algerian Embassy. The Charge-de-affairs of the Algerian Embassy told them that they had many men to fight and they were in need of Air Force personnel and requested if they could offer some officers of the air force.

When they went to the Syrian Ambassador, he asked them to donate some tents for the refugees on Syrian side.

Their visits to Saudi and Sudan Embassies, Ebrahim Bawany and the office of the World Muslim Congress were very regular. Their memorandum was published in the 'Al-Yaqin' a worldwide circulated weekly and also in a weekly of Kuwait.

It took time to find out the Kuwait Embassy. A local employee played hanky-panky in arranging a meeting with the Kuwaiti ambassador. After overcoming the trouble, they met the ambassador. The ambassador was very cordial in discussing the matter and told them to visit him time to time so that he could digest the matter in detail and report it to his government. Their failure to continue the contact was really unfortunate for their people.

Anwar and Cassim also went to the Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco. Though the first secretary was short the Ambassador was tall and thin wearing sunglasses inside the room. They produced their letter of sympathy for the great loss

of Muslims and their offer of volunteers. The Ambassador read thoroughly the memorandum of the Rohingya issue submitted by them.

With a heave of sigh the Ambassador asked them whether they knew the real cause of the failure of the war. Before Anwar and Cassim answered, the ambassador replied that it was only because of Arab nationalism, the brotherhood of Muslim Ummah and the spirit of Islamic brotherhood were forgotten by the Arabs. He advised them to do something for the unity of Muslims and then only all problems of Muslims would be solved. He also advised them to learn Arabic as the Sudanese Ambassador said so. He promised that he would send all their papers to the King.

Anwar and Cassim also visited the Egyptian Embassy. The first secretary of the United Arab Republic (Egypt) thanked them for their offer and donation. The delegation met a man in Jordanian Embassy at the top of a building introducing himself as the Charge-de-affairs. The condition of Jordan after the Six-Day War could be imagined after looking the condition of the Embassy of Jordan and the Jordanian in Karachi.

In the US Embassy, a young man of about 35 met them introducing himself as First Secretary. Cassim and Anwar gave him the real picture of the political situation under the military dictatorship introducing Socialism in the name of Burmese Way to Socialism. He asked them to keep constant contact so that they could make a decision on the Rohingya issue.

In short, the visit of two Rohingya delegates to West Pakistan and their contacts with diplomats and influential persons was encouraging. Yet difference opinion in the leadership could make no progress.

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase-V

The 28 hour train journey from Rawal Pindi to Karachi made Anwar and Cassim bored and drowsy. Cassim felt asleep and Anwar was thinking something remembering his family, his native town and high school where he studied and served as a senior teacher. While he was a senior teacher, their Head Master was one Foruk Ahmed. He was a lawyer. He served as a Township officer during World War II. Once he could not sleep for three nights as he had jailed a criminal for three months, the minimum sentence of the case. He was a simple man. He always refused to take salute from police with guns because he was afraid of being shot by accident. He was childless like Mr. Faizi, another Head Master of a High School. Anwar also remembered Saya Tha Tun Aung, who was a life-long Burmese teacher at Maungdaw High School. But Mr. Foruk was not only a walking English dictionary but also a walking encyclopaedia. Though his complexion was like European he never dressed smartly. He passed B.Sc. B.L. from Calcutta University in 1930s. He was the third graduate of Maungdaw, Mr. Faizi was the second and Mr. Sultan Ahmed B.A.B.L advocate was the first graduate of Maungdaw.

The Victoria Road is a commercially important road crossing the Sadar Bazaar of Karachi. Starting from 3 p.m. people are gradually crowded on the Victoria Road. At about 5 p.m. after praying Asar, Anwar and Cassim looked from 3rd floor corridor of the Salatin Hotel to the Victoria Road. To their astonishment they saw two women one wearing Burmese dress another Sari. The women of Karachi seldom wear Sari. The two went down and met the two ladies. The Lady who wore Burmese dress was a relative of E.C. Mahda of Rangoon. In Sari was the daughter of Aziz Co. She was one year senior to Anwar in Bachelor class at Rangoon University. Sophia was like his sister. He used to

call her Didi (elder sister). Her cousin Shamsuddin proposed him to marry her sister Aiasha. But Anwar declined to marry her, as he would have to live apart with his parents and community. After 1964 nationalisation they all went to Karachi where they established mills and factories. They gave their addresses and asked them to visit their houses and meet their parents. With Aiasha once he attended a function held by Burma Muslim Youths in honour of Japanese youths. Sophia asked Anwar to visit Aiasha who was at that time the mother of two children. Anwar promised he would.

The next morning while Anwar woke up he saw that Cassim was standing on his head. Cassim told Anwar that he was practising like Nehru. In the afternoon the door of their room was knocked. When they opened it they saw an old man wearing greybeard, cap and longyi asked permission to get in. They talked in Chittagonian dialect. He said that he inquired at counter about the residence of the Chittagonians. The Manager gave the room number. He said that he was very pleased to meet them and he offered any help he could render towards them. They said that they came from Chittagong to seek jobs. The visitor said that he had so many sources so he could manage jobs for them. He said he would come the next day and takes them to a Bengale tycoon. So saying he went out. Then Mr. Cassim asked Anwar to pack luggage and the two went to the residence of Saleh Master as Mr. Cassim doubted the old man. After three months while they were praying at a Mosque in Rawal Pindi that very old man was praying in the front row. They hurried to a hotel to avoid him. But within a few minutes he was gossiping with a group in a large table next to them. They hurried to pay to the cashier, there they saw many photos of President Ayub in the cashier's room. The man in the cash was a big Pathan, he was the owner of the hotel. He was a powerful Pathan and a very close friend of the President Ayub Khan. The Khan Saheb greeted them politely and asked them from where they came. They replied that they came from

Chittagong for a visit to the capital city. Then the old man rushed to the cash and tried to pay the bill and recommended to the Khan Saheb that the two young men were from their port city of Chittagong and they were looking for jobs. Khan Saheb just nodded as if he was not pleased with his interruption. Then they paid the bill and went out with the old man. The old man enquired from them and where they were staying. The old man said not to spend money by staying at hotel, as they were job seekers. He could manage for them to stay in his friend's house. So he took to one of his friends who was a cloth merchant. On the way he told them that he could manage an interview with the President if necessary with the help of Khan Saheb.

The next day they went to the President office in Rawal Pindi. The President had at that time shifted his office to Muree. They met an officer at the President's office of Rawal Pindi and advised them to go to Muree to meet the President if necessary. So they proceeded to the hilltop town of Muree but could not meet the Pakistan President, as he was indisposed. Thus they left for Karachi to wrap up some half-done work.

While Anwar and Cassim were busy in Pakistan, Mr. Sultan, Shuna Ali and Elias were organising in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. They passed many sleepless nights holding meetings. Mr. Shuna Ali went to Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway and Rangoon and organised Muslims in almost every town in Arakan and among the Rohingyas living in Burma proper. They also established strong links with Mujahid groups. Frequent meetings were held between the RIF leaders and the Mujahid party.

In 1967, a large number of Rohingya Muslims had been evicted from the towns of Eastern Kaladan, forced to board on boats and brought to Buthidaung. From there they reached Maungdaw where they passed their days under open sky for many days. The local people provided them with food. The immigration authorities were trying to push them to the other side of Naf

River. Enraged at the inhuman treatment of these innocent Muslims the Muslims of Maungdaw under the leadership of RIF leader Mr. Sultan protested and at one stage, the head of the Arakan State Immigration, U Thu Daw was beaten severely. There was, however, a rumour that two people were killed. With that false message Mr. Malick crossed to Pakistan with two Rangoon University students. Subsequently, several RIF members were rounded up and arrested. Mr. Sultan escaped to Shahpurirdip of East Pakistan. Next day he went to Teknaf to meet his foreign secretary Mr. Mohammed Jafar. But they differed in their movement. Misunderstanding prevailed since long between the two. The next day while they were travelling to Cox's Bazaar Mr. Sultan and two others were arrested by the O.C of Teknaf at Weikhong including Anwar. According to Mr. Sultan the OC was very friendly with Jafar and his family. They were released by the OC at the request of Mr. Sulayman.

At Maungdaw the members of RIF assembled and selected Mr. Elias as acting G.R. The young members were very keen to join the existing Mujahids. Among the elder members one Shuna Ali master joined the Mujahid with the negotiation of RIF founder and executive member Shuna Ali and Jafar Sani, the Mujahid Chief. Soon young member Eliyas joined the Mujahid party and he was made Secretary General and Master Shuna Ali as vice president of Mujahid Party. In 1968 one Maung Tin alias Shabbir arrived from Burma proper to join the Mujahid party. Shabbir joined the Mujahid party and E.C. Shuna Ali left for Pakistan as his involvement in the movement was exposed to the government with the joining of Shabbir to the Mujahid party. Another RIF's member, Deen Mohammed of Nurullahpara also joined the Mujahid Party.

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase-VI

Mr.Sultan proceeded to Chittagong along with Molvi Siraj and met Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed, the ex-President of Buthidaung Peace committee. They discussed on the Rohingya issue three days and nights and left for Dhaka in 1968 for the purpose. They were joined by Anwar and resided at the residence of Kabi (Poet) Benazir Saheb. Kabi was a contractor at Bowli Bazar during the 2nd World War. He was very sympathetic to the Rohingyas. Moreover, he was a very close friend of Mr. Zahirudeen. Being a generous man the first floor of his house was like a Musafir Khana (guesthouse) and many poor students were living there and supported by him. His house was in a big compound at Shajahan Pur, Dhaka. For Anwar, Benazir Saheb, Ebrahim Bawany and Abdullah al Hababi were the three great and unforgettable men he ever met.

Kawbi Benazir Saheb took his guests to Advocate Molvi Forid's residence at Elephant Road. Molvi Farid hailed from Cox's Bazar and was also a great Rohingya sympathiser. He wrote a memorandum for Mr. Zahiruddin to the Government of East Pakistan on the distressed Rohingyas of Arakan. They went to the office of the Governor and were received by the Secretary. The governor promptly replied that the case was sent to the foreign office. They would inform as soon as they received a reply. They visited Asgar Ali Shah who was a sub-divisional officer in Bowlibazar during the Second World War. Shah narrated a story of a Sikh military who entered a house at Bowli Bazar. While the Sikhs was trying to rape the housewife the husband ran away and the Sikh raped her.

Mr. A.A. Shah was an influential person and was very friendly with Ayub Khan. So he promised to bring the Rohingya issue to

the notice of President Mohammed Ayub Khan personally. Mr. Sultan and party were very pleased.

Besides, Mr. Kabi Benazir Saheb took them to Allama Ragib Hasan, head of the Bihari community who was a friend of Kasim Raja and Molvi Kuruf Fata Nazir. He also promised to help with manpower and politically. Then he took them to one Modabher, a freedom fighter of Pakistan. He was very much moved to hear that the agonies of Muslims in Arakan and promised to render help within his reach. They also visited one Sultan a minister of East Pakistan. He was a Chittagonian and told Zahiruddin to visit him while he was in Chittagong. After one week, they paid farewell to Benazir Saheb and left for Chittagong by bus as they missed the train. On the bus an intelligence officer followed them and so they discontinued the journey at Comilla. And continued to Chittagong by train in the morning.

In Chittagong, Mr. Sultan held a meeting with the Rohingyas residing there. He narrated about their trip to Dhaka and all were very happy. The youth wing of RIF used to send money to Mr. Sultan but the amount was too small and did not last long. The Mujahid wing also used to send money to Mr. Sultan, especially, for the foreign contact.

In 1968-69 many senior members, especially the educated members went to Pakistan and joined B.A Jafar. Some younger members of RIF were studying the Revolution of Cuba, China etc. There was a riot in Burma proper between Chinese and Burmese. The riot started while the Burmese teacher forbade the Chinese students to wear the batches of Mao Tse Tung. Throughout the country the BSPP sponsored rallies condemning the Chinese. A Magh lady teacher saw that some Rohingya college graduates were reading Mao's red books, and reported it to the BSPP concerned. Police were after them and some were arrested. They were however, released on bail and all fled away

to the East Pakistan to join B.A. Jafar, then living at the residence of Molvi Shafiqueue, 38 Bandal Road, Chittagong.

B.A. Ahmed Hussein and B.A. Abul Faiz (s/o of Abul Rwa thugri) were sent to Sani's party to serve as commanding officers representing RIF. A group of youth also joined and they were sent to Bashpari Camp established by RIF. The name of RIF was code-named as AIR so that the activities of RIF would not affect RIF members at home. AIR means Rohingya Independence Army.

Some students of Ngakura village were arrested by the OC of Taungbro, Tana Zaw Tin with a letter to AIR Chief. When the students were tortured, they disclosed that Master Nagu of Kaserbil wrote the letter. Then Master Nagu alias Fraydus was arrested and tortured and pointed out Jamil alias Zaw Win, a clerk of Immigration. When Jamil was tortured he told that their present boss of the organisation was Mr. Eliyas (a) U Maung Nyo, a head clerk of the Education officer of Mayu District. U Maung Nyo was arrested and had passed three years under solitary confinement in a cell of Akyab central Jail. Nobody took notice of his family's difficulties during his three years confinement.

Sultan Mahmud was a prominent leader of Burma and that of Muslims of Arakan. He was born and brought up at Akyab and educated at Calcutta. He was a secretary of cabinet of the British Burma Government. He claimed to be the author of "Jai Hind," the famous Indian greeting. Before the independence of India and Burma, Nehru and his daughter Indra Gandhi were his guests of honour for one day at Akyab. He was proud of it. While U Nu was launching democratic movement against the army rule of Ne Win, some of his ministers went across the border to meet him. Mr. Sultan Mahmud secretly crossed to the then East Pakistan. At Chittagong he met with the RIF members. He took the oath of the RIF membership and worked with them

till 1972. He used to write political articles in the English Daily of Chittagong.

In spite of repeated approach, the response from Pakistan government was not so encouraging except a message from the centre through their military intelligence of impending co-operation. The RIF members were very happy. However, following misbehaviour of a RIF member with an army officer of Pakistan East Wing Regiment, some RIF members were detained. However, at the intervention of Mr. Sultan Mahmud, the ex- Minister, the RIF members were released. Two of his letters in the code name of Mohammed Shaheen are as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

Mayu Territory,

Arakan, Burma.

To.

Lt. General Sahibzada Yakub Ali Khan,

The Commander (Eastern Command) and

Martial Law Administrator Zone 'B'

DACCA, East Pakistan.

Subject: Memorial for clemency

May it please your Honour!

This is a humble memorial for clemency in continuation of my appeal dated the 24th November 1970. May I be permitted to reiterate the salient facts which led to the arrest and conviction of 11 (eleven) of our comrades under Section 11 and 23 M.L.R. and sentenced to 9 months R.I. on the 26th October 1970. They

were arrested on the 13th May 1970 and held in custody for over 5 months during the pending of the trial. The Particulars of these unfortunate convicts are given below: -

Name	**Father's name**	**Previous Occupation**
1. Ezhar Meah	Kholilur Rahman	Ex-Member of Parliament
2. Dr.Noor Ahmed	Saiful Mulluk	Health Officer
3. Nurul Kabir	Abulkhair	Union Chairman
4. Yunus Ahmed	Amir Hussain	Landlord
5. Dolil Ahmed	Zamiruddin	Electrician
6. Gura Meah	Abdul Jabbar	Teacher
7. Shamsu	Fazal Ahmed	College Student
8. Gonee Ahmed	Haji MohammadKasim	College Student
9. Abdur Rahim	Ezhar Hussain	College Student
10.Abdul Khaleque	Mohamad Hussain	Student
11. Abdul Hamid	Azimuddin	Employee in P.W.D.

From the above description of the persons concerned, it will be evident that they are neither bandits nor ordinary criminals. They are young and educated people fired with the zeal of launching a movement to liberate their homeland and co-religionists from the inhuman yoke of Burmese rule and Communists supremacy. They have inadvertently erred-taking a short rest after a long campaign, and this error has an element of justifiable condemnation. They have always been in the good grace of Pakistani authorities. They have been employed in collecting and assimilating valuable information, which they passed on to the authorities of Pakistan. In the belief that they enjoyed a sort of immunity under the protective wings of the local authorities, they dared to enter Pakistan territory with their

few arms and surrendered themselves peacefully to the E.P.R. There was neither resistance nor any attempt made to escape by any of them. They co-operated with their captors and admitted the plain facts before the Chairman of the Summery Military court No. 3, Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts Districts, Chittagong.

They have abandoned their hearth and home, their property, their family, and some of them their services and had embarked upon perilous course, which might endanger even their lives. They scorn death and would even embrace it with alacrity like true Muslim. No obstacles however great would hinder them on their onward march. Are these not criteria of a selfless dedication in pursuit of noble cause and attainment of sacred goal?

They are not ordinary criminals in the true sense of the word. Their only offence if it can be construed as offence in the eye of law by a stretch of the imagination - is tat they had strayed into Pakistan Territory with a few arms which were meant to be used against their mortal enemies in their homeland in Arakan. Their object is to liberate the area and emancipate their brethren and co-religionists from the cruelty of an alien Government and cruel Communists who are bent upon their total annihilation. Most of them are well educated and used to lead a life of comfort, honour and dignity. One is an ex-member of Parliament of Burma, another is doctor (Health Officer) and some others are teachers, technicians, students and one a headman (Union Chairman).

It may remembered that Northern Arakan comprising of what is called Mayu Territory is a contiguous area with East Pakistan inhabited by a people of whom 95% are Muslims. They are descendants of Moors, Pathans, and Arabs. By language and literature, by habit and customs, by culture and religion, they are no less Muslims than Pakistanis. They are accursed with geographical separation only - the dividing line being the Naf

River but adjacent and continuous on the North. After the annexation of Arakan by the British in 1823 it was administered by the Commissioner of Chittagong Division and even the court language then used was Persian for a considerable number of years.

These Muslims are constantly accused by their Government on extra-territorial loyalty i.e. loyalty to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Burmese Government have drawn up an elaborate scheme to eliminate the Muslims from the border areas by a systematic plan viz.: restriction of movement; confiscation of property; denying the rights of peaceful avocation; settlements of Buddhists from Pakistan on their land and last, but not the least, by massacre on the flimsiest of pretexts. Of late, we have learnt from reliable sources that even the only Muslim Minister from Arakan in the Cabinet of former Prime Minister U Nu, has fled the country leaving behind his family and extensive properties in Arakan.

In contrast, it may be mentioned that thousands of Buddhists from Barisal, Teknaf, Ramu, Cox's Bazar and Chittagong Hill Tracts migrate to Arakan annually. They are welcomed by the Burmese authorities with flag and music; issued with National Registration Certificates; Pakistan money in their possession exchanged with Burmese currency; provided food, clothes, medicines and building materials. They are finally settled on lands acquired from Muslim without payment of compensation. They are thus firmly and happily rehabilitated with cultivable lands seized again from Muslims with allotment of cattle, seed-grains and fertiliser, free of cost. But when any Muslim from Arakan happens to cross the border into Pakistan (now Bangladesh) where they may have his own relatives or driven by the exigency of circumstances forced on him or to avoid persecution and take shelter in a paternal and fraternal country, he to say the least, is arrested, prosecuted, convicted and finally incarcerated in jail. What an irony and dismal despair of Muslim brotherhood!

"Alas ! for the rarity,

of 'Muslim' charity!"

We have been greatly elated by the gracious act of the benign President of Pakistan in granting amnesty to persons convicted or otherwise involved in various categories of political offences. Can this benevolent act of the President be not extended to our unfortunate comrades? Can their unintentional commission of an alleged crime be brought within the ambit of a political offence? For certainly, they are members of the Executive Committee of Rohingya Revolutionary Army (A.I.R.) and others are devoted *fadayeens* and they were in possession of some arms, which is but natural. But these arms were never meant to be used in furtherance of self-interest. The technical offence is that they had entered Pakistan with arms. The motive ought to be the crux of the problem and the criterion with which they should be judged. Under the circumstances, I believe that it would not be difficult for you to exercise your discretion mingled with a scintilla of Islamic sympathy on their behalf. Their release, as an act of clemency, would earn Your Honour the eternal gratitude of the Muslims of Arakan.

INQUILAB ZINDABAD!

For which act of kindness we shall ever pray for your health and longevity.

Yours in service of Islam

(Mohammed Shaheen)

Secretary General (AIR)

Mayu Territory.

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

Mayu Territory,
Arakan, Burma.

Dated: the 29th January 1971.

To.

Lt. General Shahibzada Yakub Ali Khan,
The Commander (Eastern Command) and
Martial Law Administrator, Zone "B",
DACCA, East Pakistan.

Reference: ***Our memorial for clemency dated the 28th December 1970.***

Assalam-u-Alaikum

May it please Your Honour,

All praise be to Allah who rules absolutely over the destiny of mankind. He is the Dispenser of all matters, mundane, celestial and divine. It is He who has filled the heart of our Sahibzada with the "milk of human kindness." It is He who has guided you to exercise the prerogative of clemency for our eleven unfortunate comrades. It is an act of poetic justice on our part to have ordered their release from prison. We are simply overwhelmed with ecstasy. Language fails to express our feelings of gratitude.

On Thursday, the 28th instant, we received information that our comrades had been released. We rushed to the gates of Chittagong Jail to ascertain it. To our shock and dismay, we were told that although the term of the sentence of imprisonment under Section 11 M.L.R. was not expired has been remitted, they were immediately re-attested under 7 Pass Port Rule and held in custody. They are now to stand a fresh trial under the latter Rule for illegal entry into Pakistan. We were also

informed that the trial would take place in Bandarban as the offence was said to have been committed within its jurisdiction - vied Naikongchari Police Station Case No. 1 of 9-8-70. The maximum punishment prescribed for this offence is three months imprisonment or fine or both. We have also been apprised that after conviction, they would be pushed back into Arakan (Burma). Nothing can alarm us more. If they are thrust back into Arakan, they are sure to be charged with treason and face the firing squad of the Burmese Military. We have become desperate. Who can save these precious lives but your august self?

We most fervently appeal to you to quash the proceedings against them under 7 P.P.R. It is admitted that they had inadvertently entered into Pakistan. In this connection, a reference is humbly invited to our memorial dated the 28th December 1970. You have been gracious enough to forgive their major offence under Section 11 M.L.R. We pray that the trivial offence of transgression into Pakistan under 7 P.P.R. may also be kindly condoned. It is too much to expect from your generous and benevolent heart? We further respectfully submit that in case they are tried and convicted, they may be directed to find their own way out of Pakistan instead of being pushed out into Arakan. They can then easily retreat to their Headquarters in North Arakan. Thus their lives can be saved. We trust that you will not fail to rescue them from an ignoble death. We would rather prefer that they die heroically on the battlefield, sacrifice themselves on the altar of Freedom. We have every confidence that your noble heart will be starred to act with mercy and commiseration. But let us also assure you that the fall of eleven comrades will not retard our march towards the liberation of our country. There are thousands more who are ready to fight and die for the Cause.

We are anxious to meet you personally. We would like to stand before you in silence and reverence for a while. We have a desire to seat at your feet and pour out our heart, unfold our

grievances and seek your advice and guidance. We know that you will not despise us; we hope that we deserve no less sympathy and encouragement than the Nagas and the Mizos. It is possible for you to snatch a little time out of your multifarious duties and summon us before you at any time and place, we would not only too grateful but feel that half our battle has been won.

Almighty! We pray to Thee in absolute submission for our deliverance and may our sacrifices be not in vain. Ameen!

We pray to Allah for your health and longevity.

Inquilab Zindabad!

Yours in service of Islam
(Mohammed Shaheen)
Secretary General (RRC-AIR)
Mayu Territory.

Jafar met Major Zia-ur-Rahman who would later become the President of Bangladesh. Maj. Zia asked him what help could they expect if their liberation army took refuge at North Arakan. Jafar replied they could only provide rations and shelter. During the liberation war, the situation did not call for their shelter in Arakan. Jafar and his RIF members joined Jafar Sani's Mujahid party in 1971.

During and after the war of independence sophisticated arms flooded Bangladesh. Jafar Sani acquired a large number of arms and his strength increased rapidly.

Ex-Prime Minister U Nu was in Thailand meditating and thinking to wage a war against the military ruler. Mayu Ray Rashid alias Ba Maung and Molvi Mohammad Kabir went to U Nu. Both of them were asked to go to Jafar Sani with a message from U Nu. They remained there with Sani before the RIF

leaders joined. Ex-Minister Mr. Sultan Mahmud crossed to Chittagong and persuaded B.A. Jafar to contact U Nu. But Jafar ignored the proposal. Abu Siddique, Abdul Jalil, Abul Hashim and three brothers all old Mujahid commanders joined Sani Jafar. Sani built stronghold at Maidaung of Rathidaung township. He took economic development projects such as diary farms, goats breeding, poultry farms and etc., which were established there. For some years the Burmese government turned blind eye to his activities. Shuna Ali and others advised him not to establish those things in the heart of enemies but to do it at the border or if possible inside Bangladesh. Jafar Sani began to realise it.

In the meantime Master Shuna Ali, Vice President of Jafar Sani's party and a member of RIF was killed in an ambush by Burmese army at Nganchong village of Maungdaw township on 4th August 1968 while he was on his way to cross to East Pakistan.

In 1973 the communist insurgents attacked a Mujahid outpost of Sani at Rathidaung Township. Four Mujahids were killed. To retaliate, Sani summoned all his commanders of southern part of the district at Sita Forikka village. He selected the best fighters and made two groups of sixty each. They were well equipped. One group was to march from the east of Mayu range and the other from the west. After the Friday prayer the group in the east started to cross the pass to Maidaung. As they entered the pass, they encountered the Burmese army. There was exchange of fire. When the western group heard the firing, they took position on both sides of the way. When the Burmese army entered in the range, the Mujahids shot them one by one. It was reported that at least fifty Burmese soldiers were killed. The Burmese army retreated to the Undung village, 3 miles away from the scene. The next day the army collected the corpses and their arms and ammunition. From that day onwards the forces of Jafar Sani were always on retreat. A major army offensive against Jafar was on and forced him to abandon all his strongholds. ***

Rohingya Independence Force

Phase – VII

From RIF to RPF (from 1973 to 1987)

Meanwhile, Jafar Sani received an invitation from a foreign source. B.A. Jafar was represented by one of his most trusted lieutenant B.A. Shabbir and Jafar Sani took Mayu Rashid as his adviser. The three were taken to a place and kept for a few days to observe whether they were fit for leading the revolution and whether they deserved aid. On their last day the authority called Shabbir and told that their leader was not fit and advised him to form a new resistance group with educated persons leading the movement. Then only they would help them.

On return, they began to form a new group. They called Shuna Ali and Dalil Ahmed from Buthidaung north. They formed a new organisation renaming the mother organisation RIF to RPF (Rohingya Patriotic Front), in 1973. On 12 September 1973 the RPF was formed with the following E.C members.

1.	Jafar Habib	Chairman	Major
2.	Shuna Ali	E.C	Captain
3.	Shabir Hussein	E.C	Captain
4.	Moulvi Mohammed Kabir	E.C	Captain
5.	Abul Faiz	E.C	Captain
6.	Dalil Ahmed	E.C	Captain
7.	Mohammed Hussein (Ex. Mujaheed Commander)	E.C	Captain

Shuna Ali said mandate must be taken for renaming. Shuna Ali, Shabbir and Ahmed Hussain were entrusted to take the mandate of the RIF members. After keeping his men inside the jungles Shuna Ali met major Abdul Jalil and Kasim Ali, commanders of Mujahid. They agreed to join the newly formed RPF. After sending the message of Abdul Jalil and Kassim Ali to RPF president BA Jafar, Shuna Ali and party set out for the mandate of other people.

When Shuna Ali arrived back with the mandate of RIF members to rename RIF to RPF, he found Abdul Jalil and Kasim Ali without any message from B.A. Jafar. Abu Siddique Sb. called BA Jafar and party for a meeting. But Shuna Ali represented them. Abu Siddique and other members present told Shuna Ali that the meeting would not be held without B.A. Jafar. When Shuna Ali was returning, the guard told him that they would kill all the breakaway party of BA Jafar. So Shuna Ali hurried to BA Jafar's camp. Shuna Ali told that the situation was not good. He also told that he would shift the camp to a safer place. So they should come to the new place which he mentioned to them. In the meantime the forces loyal to Sani disarmed Kassim Ali. BA Jafar attended the meeting and took the time for next day. The next day they met Shuna Ali and discussed about their critical hours. Shuna Ali said they should not attend the meeting of Abu Siddique. But BA Jafar wanted to face the consequences. Mr. Shuna Ali resigned from the movement and went back home.

Some times in the year 1973, under the command of Major Aung San, Burmese military carried intensified military operation, forcing Jafar Sani to flee away to Burma Bangladesh border. Some persons persuaded Jafar Sani to surrender his arms in exchange of safe haven. The authorities assured them that the surrendered arms and ammunition would be returned whenever they need.

Under the circumstances, the zeal of Rohingyas in the movement was dying down. Mr. B.A Jafar continued to

maintain links with some of the old Mujahids who had not surrendered their arms. Though RPF was formed following tacit supports from the authorities during the ten years of RPF movement since 1973 the authority, still lack laudable promise of help. Some people presumed that they wanted a new party only to weaken the Mujahid Party, which led to surrender or deposit arms to the authority.

Salimuz Zaman, Abdul Rashid, Yunus and Elias always assisted Mr. Jafar. But in 1974 a group of young graduates came from Rangoon and joined with Mr. Jafar. In June 1974 an Executive Committee was formed with the following members:

1.	Mr. Jafar Habib	President
2.	Mr. Nurur Islam	Vice-President
3.	Mr. Shabir Hussein	General Secretary
4.	Mr. Ashraf Alam	Joint Secretary
5.	Mr. Salimuz Zaman	Treasurer
6.	Mr. Abu Taleb	Member
7.	Mr. Abul Faiz	Member

***

Chapter-24

Phase-1

Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to GOD

ROHINGYA PATRIOTIC FRONT MANIFESTO

As the suppression of Rohingyas continued, manifestation of their outrage surfaced. A group of youths including new University graduates, lawyers, doctors and high school students went underground in August 1975. They reformed the Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF) already in existence since 1973, under the leadership of Mr. Jafar Habib popularly known as BA Jafar. The remnants of old Mujahids groups were amalgamated with RPF. RPF started recruiting more youths from Arakan and imparted military training to them in batches. Their Manifesto dated 25 May, 1978 was as follows:

"We, the devoted members of the Rohingya Patriotic Front, have had the proud privilege and pleasure of representing the views and aspirations of our 1500,000 Rohingya people of Arakan for the last 5 years. Much water has flown the Kaladan River since 1973, when this Front was born in a sanctuary within sacred homeland, after changing our continued emancipation movement's last nomenclature Rohingya Independence Force (RIF).

It was the horrid mass massacre of 100,000 of our innocent Rohingyas in 1942 followed by blatant acts of aggression and inhuman atrocities by the unscrupulous and deceitful nationalist Buddhists of Burma that constrained our forerunners to first organise an emancipation movement in 1947-48 which could not however, make any appreciable head way due to cunning,

oppressive and repressive measures even when Burma was given independence by the British Colonial Rulers on January 4, 1948. The Rohingya however, through thick and thin rather kept on dragging with their miserable life.

Time and tide rolled on but chauvinism, vilification, apartheid, campaign of terror, dragnet arrest and imprisonment, secret killing, deportation, expulsion, conversion to Buddhist cult, forced marriage, forced labour, wounding of religious feeling, raping of Rohingya womenfolk, settlements on Rohingya's land by Buddhist both from inside and outside, etc. etc. went on unabated till the last month of February, when the ruling Junta in pursuance of a pre-planned sinister design, again started a sham Immigration operation (deploying thousands of Burmese army and notorious Lun Htin), firstly from the town of Akyab, under the damn name: 'Nagamin ' (King Dragon) operation.

As the world knows fully well, we are an (indigenous) ethnic race of Burma. We have been living in Arakan for the last about 1365 years, where our ancestors first found their settlement during the years between 610 and 660 AD. As such it is our sacred motherland where we have our ancestral lands and our dead ones. These are no myths but stark historical facts, which could not be revealed so far to the outside world due to obvious reasons. We have thus a historical right over Arakan where from we are now being ruthlessly exterminated in defiance of world opinion, on the bizarre allegation of being illegal immigrants from Pakistan and Bangladesh.

From the very eve of independence of Burma in 1948 we in multitude of ways have been trying to ram home the truth of our ethnic entity but, alas! Nothing could prevail upon the implacable, inexorable, racist Burmese stalwarts. They do not seem to have read the writing on the wall nor they timely tried to realise the basic fact that 'violent delights have violent ends.' We have thus totally exhausted all our domestic remedies, as is

also clarified on our historic document, "Rohingyas' Outcry & Demands' (October 1976).

We are now being systematically exterminated from our homeland. The ultimate object of Burmese government appears to be to transform Arakan into one ethnic region and at the same time it is also intended thereby to Burmanise the entire original community over there.

There is no secret of the fact that this present racist and autocratic regime of General Ne Win, on the other hand, is also in the illusion of expansionism.

The murderer Burmese General is certainly making Himalayan blunder by setting his bloodthirsty hounds after the Muslims of Burma and particularly the Rohingyas. The General is knowingly undervaluing our potentiality. The sequence of events during this long period of his bloody rule from 1962, vividly indicate that the country has gone to the dogs in as much as of the facts that almost all minority nationals and true patriots have deliberately been robbed of their basic human rights and freedom.

So far as the Muslims of the country are concerned, it has by now, become abundantly clear that the Ne Win government is up and doing in liquidating Islam from the soil of Burma and Burmanising the whole of Arakan by obliterating the culture and religious belief of the two major communities. His fantastic self-imposed emancipation of the policy of ruling the country on the basis of 'Burmese way to Socialism' has imperceptibly brought the country to the brink of ruination which he now is trying to cover up by exterminating the Rohingyas from Arakan and hoodwinking the world community by demagogic, frenzied, mendacious, pernicious and vicious propaganda, particularly against the Rohingya, and in general against the Karens, Shans, Chins, Kachins, Kayahs, Mons, and communists.

How this racist autocratic, hard-core blood-thirsty military dictator can therefore, now escape the verdict of the world bodies? The verdict of the history too is inevitable. Thoughts and theories are not constant and are found to fluctuate in different times. Arakan is virtually separated from the rest of Burma. She also continuously maintained her independent entity for several centuries in the past. Is it also not a fact that Arakan is a Muslim majority region having millennia old relationship with that part of the Indian sub-continent, which is now called Bangladesh?

Let us ask the proud Ne Win and his aides whether Burma is a multi-national state or not. Is it also not a crystal clear fact that the Shans, Lathus, Pa-ohs, Was Numees, Lusus, Eikawas, etc. are of Chinese origin having their own dialects and culture? One who even knows a little of Burmese history and their constitution will naturally feel inclined to ask point blank the steersmen of the Burmese government as to whether the Muslim are amongst the few earliest settlers in Burma or not. The world now perfectly knows that the Muslims constitute the largest minority group in the country. But such a people who historically trace their origin from the beginning of the 7th century are being blatantly and illegally denied the fundamental human rights and freedom on the fantastic and unfounded allegation of being foreigners.

It is now on this fake basis alone that the Ne Win government in a most barbaric and ugliest way has accelerated the forcible expulsion of the Rohingyas from their ancestral home by pushing them across the border to Bangladesh.

Before February 1978 more than 500,000 of our people out of the total of 1,500,000 fled the country to escape persecutions. Ever since more than 250,000 have further been pushed across the border endangering world peace. Over 25,000 of them are already on their way through the jungles, dales and mountains. The number of persons died in improvised camps on

Bangladesh soil have now exceeded more than 500 (In total died 50,000: the writer).

The brutally persecuted ones are daily fleeing the country at the rate of three thousand to four thousands per day. Can such a people be called wanted as is mischievously and maliciously propagated through Burmese Press? The monsoon has now set in full swing and so, in these circumstances if inhuman atrocities by Burmese arm forces and the partisans, are not immediately halted, the whole community of ours will, in the span of a few days, completely uprooted from their ancestral land homes.

The Bangladesh government and the world Bodies have no doubt come to the assistance of these helpless and homeless refugees the majority of whom are children, women and old men. But in fact, none of these people ever like to be a burden on any alien country. So at this juncture, our ardent appeal to the world community is to assist us in going back immediately to our motherland and get us suitably rehabilitated under supervision of International Security Forces or in the alternative provide us with a sufficient material help so as to enable ourselves to go back early to our hearth and home and try to regain our inalienable usurped rights and freedom or die in harness. We are now willing to die to win back our fundamental rights and freedom and the whole conscientious world will be with us.

So, with a view to achieve the ultimate objective the Rohingya Patriotic Front announces in brief it policies and programme, which are:

(1) To act in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him);

(2) To revive our spiritual and fraternal relationship with the Ummah (Muslims peoples of the world) from whom we are long been isolated;

(3) To rebel against tyrants for 'rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God';

(4) To crusade against enemies of Islam and always unflinchingly support just cause of all suffering human beings;

(5) To always oppose injustices, apartheid, genocide crimes and anti-social activities;

(6) To organise ourselves both politically and militarily so as to be able to defend ourselves against any threat of violence;

(7) To preserve the solidarity, integrity, unity, faith, discipline amongst the members of the Front and our people both at home and abroad, at all cost.

(8) To overcome all difficulties ourselves without any interference from any quarter.

(9) To make supreme sacrifice in extricating ourselves from the grim ordeal of our life and the impasse;

(10) To build ourselves into a self reliant community through all possible means;

(11) To go on unwaveringly struggling with might, courage, fortitude, determination, resolution and sacrifice for the immediate restoration of all our fundamental human rights and freedom as true "Mujahideen";

(12) To fight to the last drop of our blood for the prompt and unconditional repatriation of the Rohingya people who had to flee the country since the pogrom of 1942, and get them rehabilitated under supervision of the international Security Force;

(13) To seek sympathy, co-operation and friendship of all our compatriots;

(14) To secure world opinion and support in order to achieve our Due Share;

(15) To pressurise the government of Burma through all possible means for the immediate and unconditional release of all our people and other Muslims of Burma so far imprisoned, arrested or put on mock trial on imaginary, false and wanton charges under Immigration Act, National Registration Act, etc.;

(16) To find ways and means for the trial and punishment of all those persons who perpetrated wrongs, injustices and atrocities on innocent Rohingya and other Burmese Muslims since 1942;

(17) To re-write and preserve the obliterated history of the Rohingya people, as history plays a very significant role in the culture, politics and general attitudes of a community;

(18) To patronise, in particular, the families of all our freedom fighter who accepted martyrdom in action or are imprisoned;

(19) To be always up and doing to revise the Rohingya image and endeavour to rise the morale of the Muslim brethren of the rest of Burma by leading active co-operation in all socio-cultural and religious activities;

(20) To serve the humanity with sublimity and, sincerity of purpose;

May Allah, the Merciful give us new vigour, strength and courage in our march forward! Ameen!

Date: 25th May 1978.

ROHINGYA PATRIOTIC FRONT
ARAKAN (BURMA)"

Rohingya Patriotic Front

Phase-2

Let the Bay waters be saved from going up in flames

Rohingyas' Outcry & Demand

By

Rohingya Patriotic Front

The voice of our people is the voice of the Almighty Allah, Our OUTCRY is, indeed, a heartfelt cry for:

1. Restoration of fundamental rights and freedom;
2. Right to freedom of religion, conscience, culture, peaceful assembly and thought;
3. Security of life, liberty of persons;
4. Lifting of restrictions on freedom of movement and residence within the border of the state;
5. Immunity from victimisation by arbitrary arrest, detention, mockery of trial, confiscation of property and unnecessary harassment of relatives;
6. Preservation of respect to private life and family life, home and correspondence;
7. Security of enjoyment of rights and freedom without discrimination on any ground such as religion language, race, sex, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with any national minority, property, birth or other status;

8. Equal treatment, behaviour, aid and assistance during natural calamities, [public emergency threatening life and property];
9. Freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinion and to receive and import information ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers;
10. Prohibition of modern anachronism, racism or racial discrimination, any assistance in the promotion of racist activities and racial hate propaganda, annulment of all forms of Racially discriminative law and decrees tending to create or perpetuate Racial Discrimination, segregation and Apartheid;
11. Effective curbing of Buddhists Nationalist Reactionary Forces' Propaganda and practice of discrimination, racism, genocide and all sorts of orgies against humanity;
12. Viability of honour, reputation and protection of rights by unbiased and independent courts;
13. Universal franchise and right to free contests in elections;
14. Substantive protection against prejudicial, misleading, motivated, unfounded and wanton propaganda by law enforcing Agencies and the general Burmese public, both in and out of the country against Muslims;
15. Effective remedies by way of compensation for violations of fundamental rights and freedom of all kinds;
16. Protection from kidnapping, rape, murder of Muslim girls and women;
17. Right type of education;
18. In-discrimination in state and Central government, Civil and defence service;
19. Opportunity to work, choice of employment, just and favourable remuneration and to joint unions and associations and protection against forced labour;

20. Political, social and economic securities;
21. Equal protection of law;
22. Promotion of the spirit of co-operation in social and cultural affairs, mutual understanding and coexistence amongst the members of the national communities;

In the welter of such lamentable and deplorable circumstances in Arakan we are constrained to raise our voice by placing this Brochure before the comity of Nations for an immediate and just solution of our burning problem and to forestall and arrest the already deteriorating situation with a view to preventing it from aggravation.

DEMANDS OF THE ROHINGYA PATRIOTIC FRONT

The Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF) both on behalf of its dedicated members and the Rohingya community all over, with all humanity and fervent solicitation, do hereby most confidently submit the DEMANDS, before the United Nations, the supreme forum of world opinion and as well as other world bodies, to call upon pressure and make explicit demands to the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, to immediately restore our various forfeited and usurped inalienable basic rights and also to categorically and expressively declare the full guarantee of all our fundamental freedom, on the basis of the unambiguous provisions of the UN charter, the Universal Declaration and the pacts on Human Rights, as well as of many Multilateral treatises demanding a respect for and the free exercise of the rights of man and human freedom for all.

Wherefore, we explicitly DEMAND that the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma:

1. SHOULD IMMEDIATELY STOP:

A. (1) Malignancy and blasphemy, prejudicial and misleading propaganda mischievous and harassment, ridiculing and manhandling criminal force and assault, wrongful confinement

in secret and to extort or to constrain to illegal act., disgracing and inhuman torture, arbitrary arrest and unlawful confinement - in jails and camps, causing voluntary hurt and damaging merchandise, terrorising, expulsion and deportation, waylaying and murder.

(2) Illegal persecution and detention on false allegations and imaginary charges, wrongful restraint and arbitrary obstruction in free movement within the country, carrying out all designs to destroy socio-cultural and economic backbone, modern anachronism, spoliation and usurp action of homes and lands, arbitrary and discriminative levy of agricultural produce (RICE), looting of horticultural products and livestock.

(3) Exploitation and political oppression, criminal trespass and blackmailing, illegal and forcible deprivation of land and other properties, voluntarily injuring feeling and defamation, looting and burning of houses and shop, offences relating to the religion, wanton shooting and drowning by government employment and miscreants.

(4) Forcible assimilation and conversion, unlawfully compelling to labour under duress, abolishing and cancelling of cultural and educational institutions, retrenching and removal - from government services and nationalised organisations; depopulating settlements, seizing National Registration Cards (NRC) and other basic documents like Identity and ration Cards and land revenue records.

(5) Arbitrary abridgement and curtailment of liberty, economic and social segregation, genocide and extermination of the Rohingyas.

B -: Outraging the modesty, kidnapping and raping by criminal force and forced marriages forced conversion of Rohingya girls and women.

C -: Perpetration of wrong and injustice by personnel of Central Immigration and Manpower Department, Army, Relief

Department, Regular and Irregulars and local Militia; Party Unit officials, Township People's Councillors, Policemen, Security staff: Officers of the Co-operative Societies government Shops and stores, Port & Customs and Health department: Some People's Judges and Magistrates of Township and some other local organs of the state power in collaboration with organised anti-Rohingya social elements raised mostly from Magh Buddhist new-comers.

2. SHOULD SPEEDILY DECLARE:

A. Recalling, particularly all Rohingyas and Burmese Muslim Refugees, in general, who were evacuated from the country during the 2nd world war in 1942 and rehabilitate them in their original places without any interference with their fundamental rights and freedoms,

B. Permitting unconditional return of 500,000 of the Rohingyas and the Burmese Muslims who fled the country to escape persecution or expelled or deported, irrespective of their places of birth and present residence; and rehabilitating them in their original places, with adequate compensation for the loss of their homes and untold suffering in alien lands, as natural born citizens of Burma.

C. Unconditionally releasing all the Rohingyas and the Burmese Muslim detainees and under-trial prisoners in Burma with satisfactory arrangements for their rehabilitation and compensation.

D. Releasing all the confiscated *waqf*, trust, private properties, private schools, *Madarasas*, *Moqtabs* and cultural institutions: reviving all abolished primary schools; lifting the ban on Rohingya language programme relayed from BSS and Muslim Press in Burma and permitting Muslims to go to perform ***Hajj*** and ***Umrah*** every year, under government supervision, irrespective of age and sex and also without any unnecessary formalities.

E. Withdrawing - Army, police, local Militia and all other such terrorising functionaries from Rohingya villages and majority areas.

3. SHOULD NOT:

Oppress and repress the Rohingyas and deny them scopes and facilities, in any manner in their free exercise of fundamental rights and basic freedom, as an indigenous race and citizens of Burma; neglect in protecting their lives, properties, liberty, dignities, culture and religion by rule of law, so as to enable them to exist peacefully with equality in every sphere of activity both inside and outside the country, without any violation, violence and racism.

4. SHOULD DO AWAY WITH:

All the post Independence settlements of the Buddhists from inside and outside Arakan on Rohingya's land and restore the same with proper compensation to the original Rohingya, enabling them thereby to get themselves rehabilitated peacefully and build the country's economy.

5. SHOULD BE SAGACIOUS ENOUGH:

To immediately set upon the principle of parity, in all spheres of affairs in Arakan; and to allow proper representation of the Rohingyas in legislature, judiciary and executive functions; Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Local Militia etc. and also create without prejudice, scope and opportunity in the country up to the village level for participating in the only Political Party (BSPP), after removing the Rohingya stooges, puppets, figureheads and sycophants.

6. SHOULD EXPEDITIOUSLY:

On the line of the indigenous races of the minority groups like Kachin, Shan etc. raise, in the first instance, a Rohingya local militia and as Regiment under the central command for

maintenance of the peace and order: introduce Rule of law; create confidence in the minds of the persecuted Rohingyas.

7. SHOULD MAKE EARLY PROVISIONS:

To impart, to the Rohingya students, religious instructions in primary and secondary schools and that no language should be forced on the Muslims, anywhere in Burma, against their will or to the detriment of Muslim culture and integrity.

8. SHOULD PROMPTLY:

Give positive guarantee of complete freedom of religion, culture, commercial and industrial pursuits, choice of trade and education- with maximum facilities for establishing various inter-connected institutions and performing all ritual functions to the Rohingyas and other Muslims of Burma in general.

9. SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CONSTITUTE:

A high-powered Tribunal to find out impartially tries and punishes the perpetrators of atrocious crimes against the Rohingyas since 1942.

Rohingya Patriotic Front

Phase -3

"RPF Activities" (1973-1987)

Shin Ma Pru or Shahpuridip Island was formerly inhabited by the Magh when Chittagong was under Arakan empire. After the fall of Chittagong to Mughuls, Magh began to migrate to Arakan proper and Muslims from Mrohaung began to migrate to Shinmapru Island after the massacre of Shah Shuja along with other bearded Muslims. Gradually, the island was totally transformed to a Muslim land and was known as Shahpuridip. Haji Nabi Hussain, a Rohingya rich man, father of the United Hotel owner, Badiur Rahman and Dr. Habiur Rahman, adviser to the Sultanate of Qatar had donated a beautiful mosque at the centre of the island. One day after the Fajr prayer, Anwar met Dr. Mohammed Yunus at the Mosque of Shahpuridip. He could not believe his eyes.

In March 1975 some drunken Magh youths had a quarrel with the drivers and helpers of the motor vehicles at Buthidaung. Many drivers and helpers were beaten by the Magh youths. The authorities did not take action though they complained. They called a strike though there existed no fundamental rights to call a strike. Then the BSPP unit of Maungdaw ordered to arrest many Muslim elders including Anwar, though Anwar had no motor vehicle.

At the dead of the fateful night of March 26, 1975 some police officers went to arrest Anwar taking Tin Maung, as their guide. Anwar escaped the arrest and went into hiding. The Magh police officers were no more interested to arrest Anwar. But Tin Maung was very curious to arrest Anwar. He had sued Anwar's father for his misbehaviour during his search for Anwar at his house. He took a section of police every now and then on his

own initiative and did not spare Mosques and Madarasas searching Anwar not to say about the houses of Anwar relatives. So poor Anwar had no choice except to flee the country. He had to live eleven months in Shahparirdip in fear of Tin Maung.

Anwar was astonished to see Dr. Yunus, who was a brilliant medical officer with name and fame. He left his pregnant wife with two kids. He came to awake the sleeping Mujahid movement with high hope and feeling for the distressed Rohingya people. Before his arrival there were some graduates, who tried to get nomination, and then to contest against the BSPP township representatives' election and the BSPP ordered to arrest them with election act, escaped to Bangladesh. Dr. Yunus met with them and had meeting with B.A. Jafar. At that time B.A. Jafar had good relation with Haji Mahmud, Saleh Saheb, Moulvi Shafique etc. They always discussed for the restoration of the RPF movement. Though RPF was formed in 1973, it was passive since the surrender of Jafar Sani. Many people tried to gear up the movement.

According to Mr. Ashraf Alam, a delegation of Rohingyas led by Moulana Abdul Kuddose of Zibyin Khali and Hafez Habi Ullah came to RPF office in order to discuss future-armed movement of Rohingyas. RPF leadership welcomed them and told them that they should bring ten members for training along with their arms and ammunition or money to purchase them. They agreed but they came only after three months with empty hands.

According to Haji Mahmud, in a cool early morning of 1975 at about 7 a.m, Haji Mahmud with Haji Zahir and Shuna Ali met Maulana Abdul Kuddose of Zibyin Khali, Hafez Habiullah and Master Abdul Gaffar (with an ex-Mujahid commander). They told Haji and party about their disappointment of not reaching any decision for the resistant movement of Rohingyas. And they were going back home with full of frustration. Haji requested them to stay for the night. They all met and passed the whole

night discussing the issue. They met for three consecutive nights but still far away from any concrete decision. Then they changed their meeting place. From the mass meeting, B.A. Jafar took Mahmud and Osman Joher to a separate room and took oath for the continuation of the Rohingya resistance movement under the banner of RPF. The meeting resolved to appoint an Amir of the movement by the consensus of the three eminent scholars of Arakan.

With the consensus of the three, one came and gave mandate in writing to head the movement of RPF, to B.A. Jafar. Then they resolved to go underground. On 6 August 1975 a group led by Nurul Islam and Dr. Yunus went to border. Another group led by Ashraf and Anam joined the first group on 10th August 1975. A group of about 50 to 60 led by Mohammed Iqbal on 15th October 1975 joined them. After 15 August 1975 they all went under ground. Master Shabbir Hussain gave them full military training. Saleh Ahmed, Abul Hashim Saheb and Abu Siddique Saheb provided them with some arms and ammunition. Saleh Saheb was also very helpful for the rations and other necessities of the Mujahids, and helped the movement from the starting to his last.

For months it was still unknown to the parents and guardians of the Young Mujahids where they were. There were rumours that they were taken by the government authorities. Some said they were at Gasjania. If so it might be known to Mr. Saleh Saheb, the Chairman of the Naikang Chari Union. So Mr. Shuna Ali was sent to Saleh Saheb to collect information about the youths. Shuna Ali brought Jafar and Dr. Yunus together with Saleh Saheb. They held three consecutive meetings for the future of R.P.F and the Rohingya people.

The followings are the Executive Committee of RPF elected in the year 1975:

1.	Jafar Habib	President
2.	Nurul Islam	Foreign Secretary

3. Dr. Mohammed Yunus
4. Shabbir Hussein
5. Prof. Mohammed Zakaria
6. Enam Ullah
7. Molovi Mohammed Kabir

Responsibility to write a constitution was given to Mr. Nurul Islam, Shabbir Hussain, Habibur Rahman, Abdus Samad and Abdul Rashid. Discussion was made with Advocate Moulana Shafique Saheb. Then they approached Advocate Shamsuddin Ahmed. After one year Rohingya Outcry and Demands was written. Mr. Imam Hussain, a Rohingya engineer living in USA who came during the Rohingya Exodus of 1978, wrote genocide in Burma against the Muslims. He came to help the distressed Rohingya refugees. He worked with RPF for sometimes. But returned without satisfaction. They drafted a constitution, which was adopted at the Congress of RPF.

In 1977 disunity began among the leaders of RPF. Many members of the executive body of RPF were complaining against BA Jafar saying that he lacked qualities of a leader. He was not active or progressive. He failed to consult with all members but always whispered with a few closed members. They approached Haji Fazal Ahmed, Moulana Shafique Ahmed and Haji Mahmud for arbitration. They met with all the members of the Executive Committee of RPF for seven days and nights. The elders tried for reconciliation but the majority of the members of the Executive Committee did not want BA Jafar's leadership. The decision of the elders to work under the leadership of BA Jafar was opposed by all members of the RPF Executive Committee except Master Shabbir Hussain. Meanwhile, Rohingya refugees began to arrive in 1978, and the executive body of RPF decided to work under the collective leadership.

The longest meeting of Rohingyas was held from 1st January 1978 to 10th February 1978. With the persuasion of the Rohingya elders they agreed to form an "Adhoc Committee" with the following members:

1. Mr. Jafar Habib President
2. Mr. Nurul Islam Foreign Secretary
3. Dr. Mohammed Yunus Organising Secretary
4. Mr. Shabir Hussein Publication and Information
5. Prof. Mohammed Zakaria Member
6. Habibur Rahman Member
7. Ashraf Alam Member
8. Enam Ullah Member
9. Molvi Kabir Member
10. Rashid Ahmed (Karate)Member
11. Abdur Rahman (Now in Dubai)Member

Refugee Exodus of 1978

"The first state visit of a Bangladesh head of state to Burma took place from 20th to 23rd July, 1977. In the first official meeting between President Ziaur Rahman and Burma's strongman Ne Win, Zia expressed his admiration for Ne Win for being the most durable leader in the entire region and wanted to know the secret of his success. Ne Win in his reply said that his government was based on the military, which staffed not only every sector of the administrative apparatus but the management of the nationalised part of the economy. He said that the civilian who ran the government previously did not prove satisfactory and in a country like Burma it was the army, which was organised and disciplined, best suited to govern the country. The civilian bureaucrats easily manipulated the politicians who were elected to run the government, he said. He added that he would be glad to share his thoughts with this matter.

"Later the two leaders met privately for two hours without any one being present. Zia emerged from the meeting very satisfied with the way Ne Win had taken him into confidence and talked freely about many things. Although President Zia obviously felt the two leaders of neighbouring countries have had established a good rapport, the Burmese side had taken that they had nothing to fear in pushing out Rohingyas from Arakan to Bangladesh.

"In order to prepare the justification for a large-scale eviction of these Muslims from Arakan, the state controlled Burmese press began to publish articles and news despatches in 1977-78 alleging the Rohingyas as the illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Thereafter, Burmese authorities launched a combined operation of army, police, lunhtin and immigration personnel code named "Naga Min Operation" (The King dragon operation). Teams of officials, accompanied by police and army visited homesteads ostensibly to weed out illegal residents. Soon reports began to trickle out from the area that these teams were engaged in pressure tactics to make whole families leave the land of their ancestors for Bangladesh." The article of Sayyid Anwarul Karim, (Bangladesh Ambassador), 10-8-97, The Independent Daily.

Terrified by the ruthlessness of the operation and total uncertainty of the security of their life, property, honour and dignity large number of Muslims started leaving their homes and trudged across hilly areas, rivers, creeks, valleys and dales towards Bangladesh. On their way they were robbed. Many were drowned. As soon as they left their homes, the local Maghs started pillaging their houses, sometimes putting them on fire and carried away their cattle. Within a few months the number of refugees was nearly 300,000.

The murdering madness of 'Burmanisation'

'The plights of the refugees from Burma continue to get wide coverage in the leading newspapers of France according to delayed reports received in Dacca.

'The prestigious French weekly, 'Le Nouvel Observateur,' in its issue of May 19, 1978 carried a story from its correspondent, Francois Hauter, under the caption, 'Massacre in Burma'. The article gave most vivid details of the massacre perpetrated by the Burmese army on the refugees. Francois Hauter, in his article, wrote that on April 23, when he was in a refugee's camp at TAMPRU on the Burmese side, "thirty Burmese soldiers appeared at the top of the hill which overlook the camp. Everything happened very fast. They loaded their machine guns, opened fire and aimed into the crowd. The refugee is flung themselves towards the rivers, those who fell were trampled. Some who carried invalids sunk into the mud." The article continued: ... "Men, women, children and old people crossed the river in chaos. This time the Bengali soldiers shocked by the massacre they had just witnessed gave up trying to turn them away. Next to me, an old man, hit by four bullets, would be in agony for twelve hours. Near him, another wounded his right knee in pieces. One stops the flow of blood with leaves. More than one hundred dead. Impossible to establish the number of wounded. The refugees group together again, pressing close against each other by thousands."

'Commenting on the plights of Rohingya, Francois Hauter continued: "the Rohingyas of the Arakan province had have for the past several months lived in the throes of a genocide that has no equal except in Cambodia." (The Bangladesh Times, Monday, June 5, 1978).

Repatriation Agreement

A bilateral agreement was signed between the two countries without the representation of the refugees. And 200,000 people returned home while 40,000 died in refugee camps according to UNHCR reports and the rest diffused into Bangladesh society or left for the Middle East countries. Unfortunately the contents of the bilateral agreement was not made public leaving the Rohingya in total uncertainty of their future in Burma.

"In this connection I may recall that the Rohingya Muslim also were forced to leave their hearths and homes once before in 1978, when 300,000 of them took shelter in Bangladesh. .....more than 200,000 of those people were ultimately taken back by the Burmese Government by the end of 1979 while the rest of refugee went to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and some other countries. In fact the repatriation arrangements were made under my supervision as Minister for Home Affairs of late President Ziaur Rahman's Government", Foreign Minister Mr. A. S. M Mostafizur Rahman's speeches in the Jatiya Sangsad and Yale University, U.S.A, on 15 January, 1992 and 26 September 1992 respectively.

In the words of, Prof. Mohammed Shamsul Huq, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, the sudden influx of refugees into Bangladesh in huge numbers created an enormous problem for the Bangladesh Government in terms of providing (a) accommodation, (b) food, (c) water, and (d) sanitation. Besides the resource-constraints, the most serious difficulty faced by Bangladesh initially was the lack of experience in coping with 200,000 refugees. Even after external assistance in cash and kind started coming, the management of as many as 13 camps was a colossal operation.

The Government of Bangladesh, felt that the sooner the refugees could be repatriated to their respective homes in Burma, the better it would be for all concerned. Efforts were intensified at varies levels for speedy implementation of the agreement signed between Bangladesh and Burma on 9 July 1978, that is, within three months from the beginning of the exodus of Burmese refugees to Bangladesh and while the exodus was still continuing. By 29 December 1979, the repatriation operation was virtually completed. (Mohammed Shamsul Huq, 'Bangladesh in International Politics').

The situation was exacerbated by the lack of development projects and planning to integrate the refugees who returned in 1978 and 1979, many of whom remain land-less and without documentation. Throughout the period of military rule there was efforts to assimilate the Rohingyas and access to the Burmese education system was very limited. A clear indication of the neglect of northern Arakan is found in health surveys conducted by UNICEF and UNHCR since 1993. In an August 1994 report published by UNHCR, called "Report on Health related issues Project Area (Arakan State): it was found that Buthidaung and Maungdaw had the lowest ratio of hospital bed per 10,000 inhabitants in Burma (1.1 and 1.2 respectively, compared to an average in Arakan state of 2.99 beds per 10,000 people and a national average 6.57). The same report also found that the number of rural health centres per head was also dramatically less than in other parts of Burma, in fact in Maungdaw it was half the national average. Unsurprisingly, infant mortality rates were also the highest in Burma, at 114 and 213 deaths, per 1,000 births for Maungdaw and Buthidaung respectively.

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Phase-4

The Last days of RPF

Emergence of ARIF

The RPF was popular among the Rohingyas inside and outside Arakan. But resentment began to arise among the leaders of RPF as its leaders failed to effectively deal the 1978 refugee influx to Bangladesh. They accused each other. The executive members such as Nurul Islam, Dr. Yunus, Zakaria, Molvi Kabir filed complaints against BA Jafar to Rohingya elders. BA Jafar also complained about them saying that they were not obeying him and he had many difficulties to implement the three doctrines of faith, discipline and unity. The E.C members complained that BA Jafar was passive and lacked the qualities of a leader, indulge in nepotism, giving special favours to some people and failing to consult with the E.C members together. The E.C observed that he was always whispering with some favourite persons. According to Salim Foyas, Molvi Kabir once told BA Jafar that he would never succeed with his inner cabinet of owls.

According to Mr. Ashraf Alam, the first Congress of RPF was held on 27-28-29 August 1978. Nurul Islam, Dr. Mohammed Yunus, Habibur Rahman, Rashid Ahmed, Abdur Rahim and Ashraf Alam left RPF in protest to BA Jafar's unilateral selection of the delegates of Party Congress. Molovi Shafique Ahmed, Haji Mahmud and party arrived at the time of Ifthari. The Ifthari was served with rice and vegetable. For Sehri a cow was slaughtered which RPF members of Saudia through Salim donated. They tried for reconciliation for two days and nights. But failed. Mr. Nurul Islam, Dr. Yunus, Rashid, Habib and others took leave and bid farewell to RPF. Only B.A. Jafar and

Shabbir remained as E.C. of RPF. The Congress elected the following E.C members of RPF.

1.	Mohammed Jafar Habib	President
2.	Mostafa Jabbar (Master Abdul Gaffar)	V-President
3.	Shabbir Hussein	Foreign Affairs
4.	Prof. Mohammed Zakaria	Chief of Staff
5.	Mohammed Iqbal	Publicity
6.	Mohammed Ali	Office Affairs
7.	Abdul Gani	Member

The executive body of RPF decided to send a delegation to Saudi Arabia to raise funds for RPF. Master Abdul Gaffar and Master Shabbir Hussain went to Saudi Arabia. They met engineer Jamal, the representative of RPF to Saudi Arabia. With the help of Jamal and others they organised the Rohingya community residing in Saudi Arabia. They received generous donations from them, which were sent to the RPF headquarters at the western border of Burma. Some statement of Mr. Shabbir Hussain was published in a Saudi daily, which he claimed to be the first publication about Rohingya in foreign media though the memorandum of Cassim and Anwar were published in a Kuwait daily and a weekly of Karachi (Al-Yakeen) in 1967 and were widely circulated. Master Shabbir was lucky enough to get fund through the World Muslim Congress (based in Karachi) for the social welfare of Rohingya. Shabbir went to Karachi to receive the money.

After their return to their base at Burmese western border, B.A Jafar proceeded for Saudi Arabia. The Rohingya people residing there welcomed him. World leading personalities and leaders of oppressed Muslims of Mindanao, Philippine was among those whom B.A. Jafar met in K.S.A. When the activities of RPF became passive, Mr. Shabbir went to Saudia for his personal earning, leaving his family with Abdus

Samad. However, BA Jafar invited Shabbir and sent him back to the base at the request of many RPF members considering Mr. Shabbir's contribution towards RPF.

The second Congress of RPF was held on 31st December 1980 to 2nd January 1981. In July 1982 Haji Mahmud became the chairman of Supreme Council of RPF. According to Haji Mahmud, sometime in July 1982, Saleh Saheb requested Haji Mahmud, the Chairman of the Congress to go to the base, as there was possibility of bloodshed among the RPF members. Then Haji Saheb went to the base and held the Congress meeting inviting all the members both from inside and outside Arakan. Haji Saheb was in-charge of Buthidaung.

The RPF broke into two and one faction led by Shabbir Hussain and other by BA Jafar. Meanwhile, the RSO had also a dispute that led to fall apart. One part was under the leadership of Moulvi Saiful Islam while the other was by Mr. Nurul Islam. On 30 June 1986 both Nurul Islam and Shabbir Hussain agreed to form a united force. Many observed that the merger had been made due to financial restraint, which hope that a united force may draw favourable attention of donors. Both RPF and RSO (Nurul Islam) founded ARIF (Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front) on 30 June 1986 with Mr. Shabbir Hussain as Chairman and Nurul Islam as vice-chairman, but later Nurul Islam became chairman and Shabbir as vice chairman.

While the members of RPF had steadily made progress, the leadership has met an ugly turn. BA Jafar was removed from the presidency and his deputy Shabbir Hussain alias U Maung Tin took the leadership. Some faithful commanders of BA Jafar tried to regain it. But were over powered. On his return from abroad, BA Jafar made another attempt to reorganise the RPF faction with his loyal followers and made Dalil Ahmed Commander in Chief but his enemies disarmed him. BA Jafar again organised Moulvi Kabir, Salimuz Zaman, Saleh Saheb and other prominent figures. Before his dream came true, he breathed his

last on November 6, 1987 (May Allah grant eternal peace to his departed soul) of liver ailment which he nurtured from jaundice because his restless struggle for his poor Rohingya nation. BA Jafar is widely popular among the Rohingya. And he remained in Rohingya struggle till last days. He had patience and perseverance. He could not foresee his early end, as he was so deeply involved and blinded by the Rohingya cause. Mr. Shabbir Hussain also suffered from liver ailment and died on 26 January 1998 while still struggling in the ARIF in the capacity of vice-chairman. (May Allah grant eternal peace to his departed soul).

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Chapter-25

Arakan Historical Society (AHS)

Chittagong, Bangladesh

Established 1975 C.E

In 1942 militant Maghs carried out a massacre against the unarmed Muslims throughout Arakan. As many as 100,000 Muslims were killed and some 80,000 were forced to flee to East Bengal which was then under the British rule. Many of them took shelter in the refugee camps of Chittagong and Rangpur. After the re-entry of British to Burma a limited number of refugee went back to Burma in 1945-46. But they were not rehabilitated on their own residences.

Soon after the Independence of Burma in 1948, the brutality of Burma Territorial Force (BTF) rendered thousands of Rohingyas homeless and nearly 50,000 had fled to the then East Pakistan. About thirty thousand Rohingyas had taken shelter in Teknaf and Ukhiya of East Pakistan. Abdul Matalab Munshi, Master Habibullah, Master Waziullah, Master Mohammadul Hasson, Haji Omar Meah, Abdu Jabbar Dobashi, Ashraf Zaman, Habibuz Zaman, Hakim Molvi Siddique Saheb and other Rohingya elders had again to face the Maghs, this time not in Burma but at Teknaf of East Pakistan. They were successful to put-down the Maghs of their high handiness over the local people of Teknaf.

During the month of July and August 1959, Bo Htin Gyaw carried out a reign of terror in North Arakan. Thousands of Rohingyas from 24 villages in Maungdaw North and 8 villages in Buthidaung North were rounded, tortured and pushed into

East Pakistan. Abdul Mutalab Munshi and other Rohingya elders at Teknaf sent a telegram to President Ayub Khan of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan government protested the refugee drive out policy by Burmese forces.

The Rohingya living along the border organised Muhajirin-e-Arakan and elected Moulana Muzaffar Ahmed Arakani as their President. As a President of the said organisation, he wrote the plight and aspirations of the Rohingya refugees to UNO as well as to government and non-government groups of Burma and Pakistan. Muhajirin-e-Arakan was in fact in close touch with the Mujahid Party of North. It played the role of spokesman for the Mujahid of North led by Mr. Abbas. The Mujahid of South was under the command of Kassim Raja. The supporters of Kassim Raja convened a Muslim Conference of Arakan. Master Saleh Ahmed, a native of Undung village of Maungdaw Township was selected as the President of the Arakan Muslim Conference and Master Zahiruddin Ahmed was selected the Secretary General. Mr. Nazir a native of Alisangyaw Kayandan, who was also the adviser of Kassim Raja, was vice President and Molvi Nazir Ahmed of Buggona, Maungdaw was the Joint Secretary of the Conference.

Mr. Zahiruddin wrote many open letters to Prime Minister U Nu demanding an autonomous Muslim state. He also wrote several times to the Secretary General of UNO and other world bodies about the atrocities of Burmese army towards the Rohingyas. His booklet, "Stop Genocide" with regard to the persecutions of Muslims of Arakan is a very popular one.

The office of Master Saleh Ahmed of Undung, the president of the Arakan Muslim Conference, was at Nahar Building of Mazir Ghat, Chittagong, East Pakistan. It was a gathering place for Rohingyas. Another important place for Rohingyas was the office of Master Dalilul Rahman, at Mazir Ghat too. Master Dalilul Rahman was a fluent speaker of eight different languages and he was a unique Rohingya. Near Mazir Ghat, a

colony of Rohingyas was developed at west Madarbari. Master Habibullah, Waziullah and many others resided there. The residence and office of Ezhar Chowdhury at East Madarbari was also not less popular for the Rohingyas.

When Master Saleh Ahmed and Bodiur Rahman bought the Pakistan Hotel of Kassim Raja, the Rohingyas started meeting at the United Hotel. The chief of RIF, GR Sultan while in exile often used to visit United Hotel. However, at the time of BA Jafar, many RIF members while in exile used 38-Bandal Road as their resting-place. The uprooted Rohingya always felt to have an organisation of their own to speak for the Rohingyas. The word "Muhajir" became allergic after the liberation of Bangladesh. Ultimately, Arakan Historical Society was born to the ideas of the Rohingya elders of Chittagong.

The formation of A.H.S:

The trend of inflow of peoples, once upon a time, into Arakan (also known as Rohang) took a reverse turn from the forties of the century. Since then, the influx of the Arakanese, mostly Rohingya Muslims, into Bangladesh continue unabated through different routes. The uprooted Rohingya always felt to have an organisation of their own to ventilate their guineas.

In the early 1975, some Rohingya philanthropists in Bangladesh took to the formation of a body for studying and apprising of the past history of Arakan to it's present plight with a view to surfacing it's blissful and happy by-gone and other welfare activities. Hajee M.A Kalam, Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed and Hajee Fazal Ahmed were commissioned for the noble task, with the assistance of Hajee Zahir Ahmed and Mr. Shuna Ali.

The three gentlemen invited all Rohingyas residing mainly in Chittagong for suggestion and their participation. The first meeting of A.H.S. was thus, held on 20th September 1975

at No. 20, Islam Colony, Asadgonj, Chittagong. Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed presided the meeting. In the meeting, the name of the Society as "**Arakan Historical Society**", in short "**A.H.S**" was proposed and all the attending members unanimously accepted the name. The meeting resolved to form an 11 member Executive Committee of A.H.S. Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed was elected as the President, Hajee Fazal Ahmed Vice-President, Mohammed Eliyas as General Secretary and Haji M.A Kalam as Treasurer of the Society. Master Wazi Ullah was Executive Secretary of A.H.S. Master Mahmudul Hassan, Advocate Shamsuddin Ahmed, Alhaj Ezar Chowdhury, Haji Zahir Ahmed, Hajee Saleh Ahmed, Hajee Abul Hussein, Hajee Sayeddur Rahman, Hajee Ahmed Kabir, Master Habib Ullah, Master Shuna Ali, Hajee Abul Faiz, Hajee Mohammed Osman, Mr. Abdul Rashid, Mr. Mohammed Yunus, Hajee Osman Joher, Master Ahmed, Mr. Sajjad Hussein, Mr. Sirajul Mustafa, Mvi. Mohammed Ismail, Hajee Zakaria, Mr. Saifulmuluk Chowdhury, Moulana Muzaffer Ahmed and etc. were active members of A.H.S.

Performance of A.H.S during 1978 Refugee Exodus

The notorious ***Naga Min*** operation started on 6th February 1978 in Akyab, the capital of Arakan. The operation reached at Buthidaung and Maungdaw in March 1978. As a result thousands of Rohingyas were uprooted from their hearths and homes. They assembled at Tombru, a village of Burma-Bangladesh border. They tried time and again to cross into the Bangladesh, but the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) did not allow them to cross the border. The BDR pushed-back some refugees who crossed the border. In this situation the Arakan Historical Society (A.H.S) with the co-operation of the Cox's Bazar Association formed a team to study the problem of the Rohingya refugees who assembled along the Bangladesh-Burma border. The team comprised of Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed, President of A.H.S, Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, the then

General Secretary of Cox's Bazar Association, Hajee M.A Kalam, Treasurer of A.H.S and others. On April 23, 1978 they reached Tombru-Gumdom border area of Bangladesh to observe the physical position of Rohingya refugees. Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed, Hajee M.A Kalam, Hajee Zahir Ahmed accompanied by French Reporter Francois Hauter and some other associates went to the refugees' makeshift camps and talked to the refugees who were cooking their food. Some villagers informed them to leave the place because some Burmese armies were marching towards them. About thirty soldiers appeared at the top of the hill, which over looked the camp. Everything happened very fast. They loaded their machine guns, open fired and aimed into the crowd. The refugees flung themselves towards the river, those who fled were trampled. Some who carried invalids sunk into the mud. Men, women, children, old people crossed the river in chaos. This time the Bangladesh soldiers shocked by the massacre they had just witnessed gave up trying to turn them away. More than one died and a number of them wounded. In response the Bangladesh Border guards (BDR) opened fire on Burmese solders and they fled the area. On this day alone about 18,000 Rohingya refugees crossed into Bangladesh.

During ***Naga Min*** operation, A.H.S had convened two public meetings in Chittagong. **On 9th May 1978**, a public meeting in co-operation with Chittagong Citizens Committee in Aid of Arakanese Refugees was held at **Amir Market**. It was presided by Janab A.M Musa, an eminent businessman in the chair. Al-Haj Advocate Sirajul Islam Chowdhaury and Barrister Sultan Ahmed Chowdhury attended the meeting as chief guest and special guest. At the meeting Barrister Sultan Ahmed urged the then President Ziaur Rahman to grant urgent shelter to the Rohingya refugees, considering the historical fact that they were also refugees in India and Burma during the war of liberation in 1971. Amongst who spoke in the meeting were Advocate Shafique Ahmed, President of the Arakan Historical Society,

Chittagong, Mr. Abu Mohammed Hussain, Rtd. District & Session Judge, Mr. Ahmed Ullah Chowdhury, Mr. A.F.M. Hassan and Advocate Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, Joint-Secretary of the Citizens Committee. The meeting in a resolution adopted unanimously urged the Govt. of Bangladesh to move the Security Council to take up the issue with the Govt. of Burma for settling the problem. It also urged upon the UN Secretary General and other big powers to intervene in the matter of suppression of human rights of the Arakanese Muslims.

On 12th May 1978, a mammoth public meeting was held at historic **Laldighi Maidan, Chittagong** under the auspices of Chittagong Citizens Committee in Aid of Arakanese Refugees in-collaboration with Arakan Historical Society, Chittagong. The meeting condemned the Govt. of Burma for the in human atrocities meted out to the Arakanese Muslims forcing them to take shelter in Bangladesh. The meeting was presided over by Al-Haj Md. Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, Ex. M.N.A, the president of the Citizens Committee. The meeting was addressed amongst others by Barrister Sultan Ahmed Chowdhury, General Secretary of the Citizens Committee who observed that the Independence Act of Burma casts an obligation on the Burmese Govt to treat people living within Burmese territory as citizens of that country and it is purely barbaric to evict the people living in that country for more than thousand years. He urged President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh to pursue a strong policy in this respect, which he assured that eight cores people of Bangladesh would support as a rock.

Advocate Moulana Shafique Ahmed, President of the Arakan Historical Society gave historical background of Rohingya Muslims of Arakan and asserted that they are very much citizens of Burma by all definitions having a glorious past of more than thousand years and any conspiracy against them will not be allowed to go unchallenged. Advocate Amirul Kabir Chowdhury, Joint-Secretary of the Citizens Committee in his

speech appealed to the world conscience in support of the down trodden humanity. He also appealed to all sections of local people to contribute liberally to help the distressed Arakanese refugees.

Master Zahiruddin Ahmed, Mr. Abu Md. Hussain, Rtd. District & Session Judge, Al-Haj Sultan Ahme (Ex. MNA), President Chittagong District Bar Association, Mr. Nurul Kabir Chowdhury, Labour leader, Mr. A.F.M Hassaan, Moulana Mohamed Shamsuddin, Moulana Abdul Goni, Mr. Ashraf Khan, Mr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed Khan and Advocate Dilwar Hussain also addressed the meeting.

In a resolution the meeting urged upon the Govt. of Bangladesh to take effective steps and move the UN Security Council and to take up the issue with the Govt. of Burma for settling the problem immediately. It also urged upon the Secretary General UNO and big powers to intervene in the matter of suppression of human rights of the Arakanese Muslims. The meeting also pledged its support to just cause of Rohingya Muslims of Arakan.

Registration of A.H.S

In 1986 some goons were disturbing the Rohingya businessmen in Chittagong. There were also rumours of driving out Rohingyas soon. So the Rohingyas were gathering and pondering about their future. They felt the importance of a society to speak for them. A local paper reported that Rohingyas were organising new societies with new names to move against Bengalis. So all the Rohingya businessmen agreed to organised Arakan Historical Society and duly registered it in October 1989 under Act XXI of 1860 Society Act.

Eid Reunion Meeting on 3rd July 1987

The Society also had held an **Eid Reunion Meeting on 3rd July 1987**, at Chittagong Press Club, Jamal Khan Road, Chittagong with Janab Advocate Shafique Ahmed, President of

the Society in the chair. About 200 members from all walks of life attended the Eid Reunion meeting. Many dignitaries of Chittagong were invited. The District Session Judge Bazulul Rahaman was chief guest. Amongst others who spoke on the occasion were Moulana Shafique Ahmed, Professor Dr. Moin-Uddin Ahmed Khan, professor of Islamic History and Culture, Chittagong University, Advocate Abu Saleh, President of the Chittagong Bar Association, Janab Azizur Rahaman, Ex. MNA, Rtd. District and Session Judge Janab Abu Hussain Siddique, Rtd. District and Session Judge Janab Abu Mohamed Hussain and Janab Sirajul Islam.

The Chief guest Janab Bazulul Rahaman said that the Arakanese Muslims are our brothers. It is our duty to help them at time of their sorrow and distress. He also thanked Dr. Muin-Uddin Ahmed Khan for his proposal to open a research cell for study of history of Arakan and urged the Executive Committee of A.H.S to take initiative in this regard. The President at his speech stated the plight of Rohingyas at home and aboard and sought immediate help from the people. Professor Dr. Moin-Uddin Ahmed Khan said, "We inherit culture and civilisation from Rohang and the people of this Bangladesh used to go to Rohang to earn money with the slogan of 'the money of Rohang is as biggest as ***Borona***'. He recited the old saying as ***Bo-ung Bo-ung! Taw Ba Ghe-yay Rohang! Rohang-ur Tiya Borona fun! Tur Maa Ray Haw day Naw hunday fun!***" He also recalled the historical linkage and contribution of the people of Arakan that has made in the field of Islam and civilisation. Advocate Abu Saleh Chowdhury urged the people to stand behind the Rohingyas at any event they need help.

The performance of A.H.S. in 1992 to 1994

In their drive to organise the Rohingyas in Bangladesh, AHS held the general meeting on 6-2-92 and elected an eleven member working committee. Three sub-committees were formed to achieve the desired goal rapidly and smoothly. Thus,

sub-committee A) was to bring unity of the different groups operating for Rohingyas cause; B) was to prepare memorandums and contact international forums and C) was to revitalise the organisational activities.

Accordingly, sub-committee A) had held talks with different organisations, on several occasions. Unfortunately their activities could not bring any immediate positive result.

Sub-committee B) had prepared a memorandum dated 14-1-92 and forwarded it to the Muslim World League, highlighting the plight of Rohingyas. The league had kindly given due consideration on AHS memorandum and the resolution No. 17 dated 23-7-1412 Hijiri had been taken for the Rohingyas.

In view of mass exodus of Rohingyas from Arakan during 1991-1992 and their subsequent taking shelter in Cox's Bazar Area, AHS had decided, on 8-2-92 E.C meeting to undertake refugee relief programme immediately. A sub-committee was formed headed by Haji M.A. Kalam. Haji Zahir Ahmed, Mir Ahmed, Sajjad Hussain and Shuna Ali were the members of the Sub-committee.

The committee had constructed a relief camp, an education centre, a prayer house and distributed rice, pulse, salt, chillies, etc.. to freshly arriving refugees. At the initiative of Haji Mahmud, the opening ceremony of the AHS relief camp at Moricha, P.S. Ukhiya was inaugurated by Cox's Bazar D.C. Mr. Dauduzaman on 16th February 1992 and consignment of relief goods donated by the UCBL, United Commercial Bank Ltd., was handed over to the visiting commissioner. The team including the deputy commissioner visited various refugee settlements and asked Haji M.A. Kalam to provide more mosques cum education centres in the refugee camps.

Haji M.A. Kalam, the founder member of AHS and the then vice-chairman of the United Commercial Bank Ltd.,

received Tk. 500,000 for refugees from their Bank. Besides, a number of philantrophists gave donations to the AHS for carrying out relief programme. Among them, Haji. M.A. Kalam donated 50,000/-, Mr. Abdul Rashid from Jeddah donated Taka 65,000/- and Mr. Habibur Rahman from Singapore 20,000. A.H.S. had expressed their profound gratitude for the generous donation made by different individuals and organisations.

The United Nations under Secretary General Mr. Jan K. Eliason had paid a visit to Bangladesh and Burma. During his stay, AHS took steps to inform him the situation he might come across during his visit to Burma.

AHS had forwarded a memorandum dated 12th April 1992 to Bangladesh authorities, diplomatic missions and OIC, which might be helpful in defusing the tension arising out of the Rohingya refugee influx.

It contained five demands viz. a) The repatriation should be purely on voluntary basis, b) The indigenous ethnic status of Rohingya should be recognised by the Burmese government, c) The rights of Rohingyas should be guaranteed, d) All black laws should be revoked and the victims of these laws should be properly compensated and e) UN agencies stationed in Arakan to monitor and oversee the situation there till a true civil government is established in Burma.

During their tenure, the AHS had also held a press conference on Rohingya situation, seminars, prize giving ceremony and religious functions on different occasions.

Activities of A.H.S. in 1995-96

The annual general meeting of the A.H.S. on 25th December 1994 elected Abul Kalam (LLB) as President and Ashraf Alam as general secretary. Since assumption of duty as Executive Committee (E.C) members total 26 regular and special meetings of E.C with advisors were held from time to time. They had held a prize distributing ceremony to member

students who passed S.S.C. examinations held in 1994-95 academic year on 27 January 1995.

The Arakan Historical Society (A.H.S) had successfully held a seminar on 31 December 1995 at Chittagong Zilla Parishad Hall, Chittagong with the co-operation of Chittagong University. The subject of the Seminar was "The arrival of Muslims in Arakan and Rohingyas." A paper was presented by Prof. Mohammed Ali Chowdhury, assistant Professor, department of history and a Ph.D. research scholar of 'Arakan - Bengal Relation' under Chittagong University.

Chief guest was Prof. Dr. Abdul Karim, Ex-Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University and an eminent historian of the sub-continent. Historians who participated as discussants were Dr. Prof. S.B. Qanungo, Dr. Shabbir Ahmed, Dr. Ekhalsur Kabir and Prof. N.M. Habibullah, elite and prominent persons from Chittagong who attended the seminar as special guests were, advocate Badiul Alam, Salauddin Kashem Khan, Principal Azmat Ullah, Advocate Shamsuddin Ahmed Mirza, Principal Prashentu Shan Gupta, Dr. Nazurul Hossain and many other guests, members, patrons and students attended the seminar.

Prof. Mohammed Ali Chowdhury who presented the keynote paper in the Seminar said, "Arab Muslims first came into contact with Arakan through trade and commerce during 8th Century AD and since then Islam started spreading in the region." He also said that in collaboration with the Muslim traders and adventurers, some Muslim saints played the dominant role to preach and consoled Islam in Arakan. Prof. Mohammed Ali Chowdhury further said that the history of Rohingyas reveals that they developed a nation from different stocks of people who concentrated in a common geographical location.

The Chief guest Ex. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Abdul Karim stated: " Arakanese Rohingya Muslims are the aborigines of Arakan. They have a more than 1200 years old history,

tradition, culture and civilisation of their own expressed in their shrines, cemeteries, sanctuaries, social and cultural institutions found scattered even today in every nook and corner of Arakan." He also said that in the glorious past Arakan was a centre of education, civilisation and business. The Rohingyas have got language, culture and a heritage, and above all the 20 lacs Rohingyas formed a homogenous group in Arakan. This is eyesore to the ruling military juntas of Burma and this is the reason why they have been trying to expel the Rohingyas, men, women and children. It is also true that initially the Muslims did not enter into Arakan in their own interest, rather the rulers of Arakan invited them. The founder of Mrauk-U Empire and his successor invited the Muslims to exploit their economic resources because their own people could not do it or did not know how to do it.

He further said that the successive ruling military juntas of Burma in 1978 and in 1991-92 uprooted several lacs of Rohingyas, men, women and children from their homeland Arakan and took shelter in Bangladesh. This is a man-made problem, created by the Burmese ruling juntas. It is their deliberate policy to denationalise the Rohingyas and their oppression and suppression compelled the Rohingyas to leave the country. So, expulsion of Rohingyas from Arakan alleging them as an alien or illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh is unjustified.

In his speech, Prof Dr. S.B. Qanungo urged A.H.S. to establish a cultural centre for the research work to highlight the true history of Rohingyas and Arakan to counter the efforts of removing the Rohingyas from the history of Arakan. Principal P.S. Gupta said that the arrival of Muslims in Arakan was over one thousand years, whereas, that of Burmese was only two hundred years. It is funny to brand indigenous Rohingyas as aliens by newcomer, the Burmese.

Other historians who participated in the Seminar as discussants also expressed their view that no Rohingya could be expelled from their homeland Arakan with that lame-excuse. In conclusion, Janab Abul Kalam, President of the Society, sought co-operation of the historians to write true history of Rohingya and Arakan through Research Projects of the Arakan Historical Society.

The E.C members of the 1995-96 had published the annual Magazine of Arakan Historical Society. During their tenure, the A.H.S had also held religious and social functions on different occasions. They had awarded stipends to many students. They had also rendered financial help to poor members, for self-employment, medical treatment, marriage etc. The society has established a library in A.H.S. office premises. The general meeting of the A.H.S. on 26 December 1996 elected Janab Al-Haj M.A. Waheed as President, Haji M.A. Kalam and Moulana Shafique Ahmed as Vice Presidents and Abul Kalam (LLB) as General Secretary.

The installation ceremony of the Arakan Historical Society (A.H.S) for the year 1999-2000 was held on 1st May 1999 (Saturday) at 10:00 a.m. at Conference Room, M/S United Overseas Trading (BD) Ltd., (Ex-Grindlays Bank Building), Sadarghat Road, Chittagong. Haji M.A. Kalam and Mr. Noor Kamal were elected as President and General Secretary respectively with 13 other executive members.

Who's who in A.H.S.

Haji M.A. Kalam

Haji M.A. Kalam, son of Master Hashim a native of Kunnia para village of Maungdaw township, a student of State High School Maungdaw was residing at his uncle Maulana Siddique Saheb, (the then President of Maungdaw township Jamiatul Ulama), house at Faizi Para of Maungdaw town proper. He was always disturbed by police surveillance. Haji M.A. Kalam crossed to Shahpuridip. Later he settled at Chittagong. Having engaged in import of second hand cloths from Japan and London he becomes a Rohingya Tycoon.

Haji M.A.Kalam (53) the present president of A.H.S. is now trying to establish A.H.S. units in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Dubai etc. among the Rohingya community to uplift education, health, economic and living standard of the Rohingyas. He established M.A Kalam College at Naikhong Chari where 70% of the attending students are Rohingyas. He is also granting stipends and scholarships to the poor students of schools, colleges and Madarasas. He is creating jobs for the jobless Rohingyas by establishing mills and factories. He is planning for a free health centre for Rohingyas. He also plans to implement more economic development projects for the Rohingya people living overseas through the Arakan Historical Society. Haji M.A Kalam wants to promote the Rohingya new generation as the community demands. It is his opinion that if the Rohingya community has abundant of technicians, industrialists, economists, businessmen, scholars in various fields, lawyers, physicians, engineers, financiers etc. the Burmese government would revert its policy and invite us as they are inviting even the foreign investors. We will be far better than the foreigners in

building our own country. This is the dream of Haji M.A Kalam. He wants to turn his dream into reality through A.H.S with the co-operation of Rohingya elders in particular and each and every individual of Rohingya community in general.

Sufi Abu Mohammed Waheed :

Janab Al-Haj Sufi A.M. Waheed is the youngest son of Sufi Abdul Hakim, Head master of Sikdarpara Middle School and was born at Shujapara village of Maungdaw Township in the year 1926. He took his primary education from Muslim National Institute, Mandalay, Burma. He obtained his high school certificate from the University of Rangoon in the year 1941.

In 1944, Sufi Abu Mohd. Waheed went to Aligarh Muslim University of India for higher education, where he experienced a unique love of Muslim fraternity mingled with the misery and suffering of the Muslims of Bengal during the great famine.

Sufi Abu Mohd. Waheed, who joined the then East Pakistan Engineering services in the year 1952, was promoted to the post of the Electrical Adviser and Chief Electric Inspector and Chairman, Electricity Licensing Board, Government of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, after its independence, in the year 1973 for the administration of the electricity act of 1910 and rules and regulations framed there under, and to advise the government for the all round development of electricity in its generation, transmission and distribution throughout the country.

In the year 1975, during his service period, he had establish Waheed Electricians Welfare Foundation to help the electricians community when they are in distress to award scholarship to the meritorious children of the electricians for the

diploma engineering courses and to educate and train the children of the needy and deprived people in general.

In 1984, after his retirement, Sufi Abu Mohd. Waheed settled down at Chittagong, where he had a house at 18-P, Katalgonj Residential area; and established a Charitable institution for the welfare of the children of needy and deprived people and started a Furkania Madarasa-0-Parshala and training centre for the 'Tukai' (street children) and other working children, at Chandgaon R/A as per section a, b, c of the memorandum 3 of the 'Foundation'. He also promises to donate two rooms, when a new building is constructed, for the Arakan Historical Society to use as a library and office.

Moulana Mohammad Shafiqueue Ahmed Advocate

B.A (Hons) M.A.L.L.B

Moulana Mohammed Shafiqueue is son of Moulana Abdul Kader of Taungbazar, Buthidaung township of Arakan State, Burma and was born in September 1930. He passed Alim Examination from Madarasah Darul Ulum, Chittagong in 1st division and placed in the 4th position in order of merit under Central Madarasah Examination Board, Calcutta. He passed Fazil examination from Calcutta Madarasa Alia in 1946 in 1st division and placed in the 4th position in order of merit under the above mentioned Board. He passed Kamil Examination (Mamtazul Muhaddethin) from Madarasa Alia Dhaka under the Dhaka University in 1948 and was placed in the 1st class, 2nd position in order of merit.

He passed Intermediate from Islamic Intermediate College, now Moshin College, Chittagong in 1950 in the First division and was placed in the 5th position in order of merit. He passed B.A.(Hons) in Political Science in 1953 from the university of Dhaka and was placed in the 2nd class. He passed M.A. in Political Science in 1955 from the above University.

Passed LL.B Preliminary Examination in 1958 and Final in 1962.

He served as Principal, Madarasa Alia Darul Ulum, Chittagong from 18-4-59 to Feb. 1965. Joined Chittagong Bar on 27-4-1965 and worked as A.P.P. and A.G.P. from 1968 to 1972 and from 15th December 1979 for three years. He is now practicing in the High Court Division of the Supreme Court from 23-10-83. He is also working as legal Adviser to former M/S Muslim Commercial Bank and Standard Bank now Rupali Bank, Chittagong till this day. He was C.D.A.'s conducting Lawyer of criminal cases under Building construction Act, 1952. He has been working as legal Adviser and case conducting lawyer for M/S. General Electric Manufacturing Company Ltd. from 1980.

He was elected Vice-President of Chittagong District Bar Association for the year 1981. He was also elected senior Vice-President of Chittagong Bar Association for the year 1984. He is associated with various welfare and literary organisation including Arakan Historical Society.

Al-Haj Master Hasson Ali (1898-1985)

Al-Haj Master Hasson Ali was the third son of Mali Chan Rwa Thugri of Kaliabanga village of Maungdaw was born on 26th June 1898. His grandfather was Ali, Kyetangri. He passed class seven in 1914 and was appointed Head Master of Kaliabanga Primary School. In 1944/45 he was arrested by the British Administration alleging his link with Japanese invading forces. He was found innocent and awarded contract on road constructions works. During Peace Committee period he was an active participant for the cause of Muslims of Arakan. He was a good friend of Mr. Omrah Meah, the president of the Peace Committee of North Arakan. He was also an active member in establishing the High School of Maungdaw.

During 1942 communal riot he saved the Magh villages of Nwa Ron-daung and Barbil. Maghs were allowed free passages to Buthidaung. But the Magh Burma Territorial Force (BTF) tried to kill him. In 1952 he shifted his house from Kaliabanga to Faizi Para of Maungdaw town proper. He became a successful businessman. He played an important role in Rohingya Unity Organisations of Maungdaw. He was an E.C Committee member while Mr. Shansul Alam Chowdhury and Master Bodiur Rahman were President and Secretary respectively of the said organisation since 1957 to 1965. In 1978, during Naga Min operation, he crossed to Bangladesh and lived with his sons who migrated in 1966. He was a strong supporter of AHS. His son Haji Fazal Ahmed was a founder member of A.H.S. He died on 3rd July 1985 in Chittagong. Haji Mohammed Osman and Haji Sultan Ahmed were his third and fourth sons.

Haji Fazal Ahmed

Haji Fazal Ahmed, eldest son of Master Al-haj Hasson Ali was born on 13th February 1928 at Kaliabanga village of Maungdaw Township. He studied his primary education at Kaliabanga Primary School and Sikdarpara Anglo-Vernacular Muslim School. In 1944 Haji Fazal Ahmed joined Aligrah Muslim University School and passed matriculation in 1948. He studied from 1948 to 1952 at Dhaka College and left for Rangoon to join Grindlays Bank. He returned to Maungdaw, Arakan in 1956. From 1957 to 1960, he served as General Secretary of Maungdaw Merchant Association and was also Vice-President of Rohingya Youth League of Maungdaw Township. He was also an Executive Committee member of Maungdaw AFPFL party.

In 1964, the revolutionary government of General Ne Win nationalised all business establishments, big or small, ranging from grocery and rice shops to big departmental stores. In 1966, Haji Fazal Ahmed migrated to the then East Pakistan. First he stayed at Teknaf. In 1970 he shifted to Chittagong. He was a

successful businessman. He is a founder member of Arakan Historical Society. He was the Vice-President of the Society from 1975 to 1992. From 1992 he is an advisor and a member of Election Commission of the A.H.S. Now he is passing his old age with his family in Chittagong

Master Waziullah

Between the mouth of the Naf River and the Shahpuridip, there was a village called Badr Mokkan or Gula, at the grand seashore of the majestic Bay of Bengal. It was a business centre between Arakan and Chittagong. After the Independence of Burma many Rohingya Muslim families of Arakan migrated to this village due to the intolerable atrocities of the Burma Territorial Force (BTF). The family of Molvi Abdur Rahman of Chiradan village of Maungdaw was one of them. He was an old man and there was none in the village to call him by his name. But in a sunny mid day a saintly voice was calling, 'Abdur Rahman' Abdur Rahman. Poor Abdur Rahman with great trouble got up and went out to see who was calling him. A saintly dressed man told him that he was leaving as the new one was coming and told him to go and meet the new one at Shahpuridip Bazar Mosque at Asr prayer. The saint was on quick march toward south to the sea. Poor Abdur Rahman was watching the saint till disappeared into the sea. At Asr prayer Molvi Abdur Rahman met Fokir Molvi Abdul Jabbar Saheb of Bawli Bazar, Maungdaw Township, at the mosque of Shapuridip Bazar, who led the Asr prayer as the saint told him.

Molvi Abdur Rahman was the father of Late Master Habib Ullah and Master Waziullah. Master Waziullah was born on 11th December 1919 and was matriculated before the Second World War. He was an interpreter for Major Anthony Irwin, the author of "Burmese Outpost". He wrote about Waziullah in his book and one of his letters to the author was also published. Major Irwin also mentioned about Abdus Salam Dubashi of Buthidaung, portraying him like a Sheik of Arabia. As an

interpreter of British officers, Waziullah was very helpful to the local Rohingyas. Once a British officer, while interrogating a suspected Japanese agent, was at the point of taking drastic action even the man had seen Japanese and asked the man about it. Waziullah was the interpreter. He felt the answer would be affirmative. As he wanted to save the man he told the man in Rohingya that the officer was asking him whether he could jump from the top of the mountain. The old man replied "no". The old man was freed as the British officer thought that the man had not seen any Japanese. After the World War II, Waziullah joined Calcutta University where he met many future leaders of the sub-continent including Banghabandu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The two brothers played important role to normalize the supremacy of Magh feudal class at Teknaf. He was also the General Secretary of the Mujahid Council of Jafar Kawal.

Mr. Waziullah went back to Burma in 1958. The Immigration of Burma tried to deport him. Mr. Sultan Mahmood the then Health Minister of Burma's intervention saved Waziullah from the deportation. During the Mayu Frontier Administration he was a Psycho-Officer with Rashid Ba Maung. But he was dismissed and Rashid Ba Maung was appointed as the head of Mayu Ray (Police). He was also a member of Rohingya Independent Force (RIF). After the liberation war of Bangladesh he came back to Bangladesh. He served as an Executive Secretary of Arakan Historical Society (A.H.S) in 1978. He died on 21st June 1988. (May Allah grant eternal peace to his departed soul).

Master Abdul Gaffar

Master Abdul Gaffar, a man of great determination, hailed from Ngakura village of Maungdaw Township. He was uncle of ex-MP Mr. Rashid of Kazirbil and brother in law of Mr. Sultan Ahmed and M.A. Gaffar shaheb, ex-parliamentary secretary. During the Second World War he was a Police officer. After the independence of Burma he became a government junior

assistant teacher. There was an interesting tale about him while he was at Rangoon Teacher Training college with his nephew, Rashid. U Ba Pwa, the principal of the Teacher training college was leaving for the United States. Every race studying at the Institute was staging drama at the function held in honour of U Ba Pwa. Master Gaffar enlisted a part to be played by them though they were only two Muslims of Arakan. He played the role of a rich man and his nephew Rashid as his attendant. He sat on a big chair while his attendant was at his feet. He was addressing the audience in Burmese that he was the happiest man in the world. Wealth, money, honey, prosperity and everything was under his feet. He could do whatever he likes he could take whatever he wishes as he has money. While he was at the zenith of happiness his nephew went inside and brought a letter for him. It was about his wife's sudden death. With full of grief and sorrow he addressed the audience that he was now the unhappiest man of the world. After a while he shook his head and told the audience, "Don't worry, I will ask U Ba Pwa to parcel an American madam for me". Then the two concluded their short play amidst applause and laughters with a song; U Ba Pwa - Wa - Wa our beloved master - U Ba Pwa - wa - wa etc. . The next day while they went to see off U Ba Pwa at Mingladon Airport, U Ba Pwa after shaking hand with Gaffar, said that " I will never forget to parcel an American young girl for you".

Mr. Abdul Gaffar was interested in the life history of the great warrior king emperor, Salaudddin Ayubi. Whenever he got the chance he would narrate the story of Gazi Salauddin. He claimed King Richard was the son of Salauddin. He believed that his mother was temporarily married to Salauddin during the Palestinian war. He might have read it in the numerous books written on Salauddin in Urdu. During the later period of British Burma the Rohingya people got educated mainly in Urdu. There were many Urdu teachers who were jobless after the independence of Burma. But a Rohingya education officer, Mr. Faizi, the elder brother of Mr. Zahiruddin Ahmed and Sufi

Waheed Saheb, appointed them all again. After the 2nd World War Mr. Faizi was the officer in charge at the office of the Director of Education, Burma. He gave job to U Ba Pwa and also appointed U Sein Hla Aung as a senior assistance teacher when they were jobless. After the return of U Ba Pwa from the United States he became the Deputy Director of Education while Mr. Faizi was only District Education officer. It was naked discrimination only because he was a Rohingya Muslim of Arakan.

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Chapter-26

The Democratic Uprising of Burma (1988)

'Fighting for liberties'

"All men are God's people, and the one loved most by Him is the one who serves His people best," the saying of the prophet.

In 1988, Burma experienced a large scale civil unrest when millions of people, with students in the forefront, staged peaceful demonstrations in Rangoon, Mandalay and forty other cities, including Akyab, Buthidaung, Maungdaw, for an end to 26 years of one party rule by the military dominated Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP) and the government of dictator, General Ne Win. Led by students from universities and colleges demonstrators demanded resignation of military government, dissolution of BSPP and an interim government to be headed by a civilian until a parliamentary democracy could be introduced. They also demanded the restoration of long restricted civil and political liberties, including the rights to freedom of expression and association. The violent measures to suppress the demonstrators during the first half of 1988 resulted in thousands of deaths. Some peaceful demonstrators were deliberately killed while others arrested in street clashes and injured or died in jam packed trucks due to suffocation or in detention centres. Security forces failed to halt the demonstrations and on 23 July 1988 General Ne Win had to resign and Gen. Sein Lwin the butcher of 7th July 1962 students strike, was appointed as the Chairman of the BSPP and President of the government. Despite the blood bath the students and the people stood against the newly installed government resulting in the removal of Sein Lwin after 17 days in power. A week later Dr. Maung Maung was appointed as a new civilian President by the army. Dr.

Maung Maung revised the 1974 constitution, drawn by the BSPP, giving room for a multi-party system, terminated all members of armed forces from the membership of the ruling BSPP, and formed an Election Commission for the election of multi party system of government. The students and public were not satisfied with the reform, which may be the great error for not getting democratic system of government till now, and stood firmly by their original demands for the dissolution of the BSPP and formation of a neutral interim government. On August 8,1988 (8888) they mounted massive demonstration and on 23 August they took over all BSPP offices. The government employees joined the movement, which led to civil disobedience in the country.

Thus, the civil administration was taken over by the People's committees formed by students, monks and pro-democracy activists. The crisis deepened further as the entire police force and a good number of the civil servants, service men from Navy, Air Force and Infantry joined the people. Then the government was non-functional and street demonstrations were continuing for political reforms. Major anti-government demonstrations and riots also broke out in the jails of Akyab, Moulmein and Insein. On 26 and 27 August as many as 300 inmates including many political detainees were reported to have been killed at the Insein Central Jail, as a result of arson and many inmates could escape. At the same time, there was looting of food damping and commodities from warehouses. General Ne Win and his cronies to destroy the image of popular pro-democracy movement systematically created the anarchy.

Gen. Aung San, father of the Burmese nation made a public speech on July 15, 1947 calling the people to get ready for Burma's independence which was followed by a similar popular message given by his only daughter Aung San Suu Kyi after a gap of 41 year, one month and thirteen days. Although both the father and the daughter emphasised the importance of discipline, unity, patience and self-sacrifices, the condition under which

they addressed the masses was different. Gen. Aung San liberated Burma from British colonial rule while Aung San Suu Kyi called for the people to oust a government ruled by militarism.

When Aung San Suu Kyi was delivering her speech a vast crowd of close to one million people assembled on the open ground to the west of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. Many carried portraits of Gen. Aung San, who is as much a hero, if not more, to the Burmese as is George Washington to the Americans or Winston Churchill to the British.

The number of demonstrators steadily grew up and they knew only that Aung San Suu Kyi was the daughter of Gen. Aung San, an epitome enough for her to lead the nation facing challenges with the autocratic regime. From the beginning to their last breath, the student community particularly in a mass upsurge against the Burmese autocratic regime, held aloft the portraits of Gen. Aung San. During the bloody crack down, the security forces not only shot at the demonstrators but their bullets pierced the banners bearing the portraits of Gen. Aung San.

During the early part of her stay, Aung San Suu Kyi was taking care of her mother in Rangoon hospital. Since the age of 15 she had spent a large part of her life abroad, while keeping regular visits to Rangoon. As the political drama unfolded during the summer and autumn of 1988, showing signs of hope that at last the country will emerge from twenty-six years of international isolation during the debilitating military dictatorship, Aung San Suu Kyi an inherent patriot for national cause, got herself involved in the political ride. In her speech on August 25, she told the crowd:

"I would like to explain the part I have played in this movement. This is needed because a fair number of people are not very well acquainted with my personal history. A number of people are saying that since I had spent most of my life abroad and am

married to a foreigner, I could not be familiar with the ramifications of this country's politics."..."I wish to speak very frankly and openly. It is true that I have lived abroad. It is also true that I am married to a foreigner. These facts have never, and will never, lessen my love and devotion for my country by any measure or degree.

"People have been saying that I know nothing of Burmese politics. The trouble is that I know too much. My family knows better than anyhow complex and devious Burmese politics can be and how much my father had to suffer on this account. He expended much physical and mental effort in the cause of Burma's politics without personal gain. That is why my father said that once Burma's independence was gained he would not want to take part on the kind of power politics that would follow.

"Since my father has such desire, I too, have always wanted to place myself at a distance from this kind of politics. Some might ask why, if I wished to stay out of politics, should I now involve in this movement. The answer is that the present crisis is the concern of the entire nation. I could not as my father's daughter, remain indifferent to all that was going on. This national crisis, could in fact, be called the second struggle for national independence." (Freedom from Fear, page 193.)

Aung San Suu Kyı's lack of indifference quickly propelled her into the vanguard of opposition politics. Her popularity grew enormously. And it was not just among the Burmese. Foreign diplomats and journalists who met her, often for the first time, came away impressed by her calm intelligence and commitment. Perhaps unfairly for someone, who had been propelled so rapidly into public life, Aung San Suu Kyi was already being talked about as the best hope for a democratic Burma.

On 13 May 1988 a mass uprising arose in Maungdaw against the government. The government's para-military, Lun Htin and Police fired upon the mass killing two and injuring many.

"Communal frictions and old grudges were forgotten and maybe for the first time ever, all national and political groups across the country joined together for a common cause. In Arakan State in the west, where tension between Buddhists and Muslims have long been prevalent, these two religious groups now marched hand in hand chanting anti-government slogans. The yellow banner of Buddhism fluttered beside Islam's green flag with the crescent moon". (Bertil Lintners "Outrage" pages 156-157.)

Forty one years after Mr. Omrah Meah's mass meeting against the joining of AFPFL, on that very place a mass general meeting was held jointly by Rakhine and Muslims, Buddhist monks and Muslim Molvies, convened at the high school football ground of Sikdarpara or Kayandan village on 29 Aug 1988. Tens of thousands of people attended the meeting chaired by both Rakhines and Rohingyas. The tears of happiness rolled down from many for achieving the unity of the two ethnic races after the bloodshed of 1942.

U Ba Ohn, a Rakhine writer and politician started his speech in Urdu language, to the astonishment of all thronged there. He told that, "when the cloud sheds water the world witnessed but when the eyes shed tears no one witness." No one had cared our tears, which we shed for 26 years. Then again he recited a line from Urdu verses, which means "The arrow which went out of the bow-never come back". What had happened in 1942, it would never come back.

In the mass meeting, the Phongyi and the Imam Shab of Akyab Jame Mosque, Moulana Ziabul Haque spoke about the unity of the Arakanese people. Then a local Moulvi spoke on behalf of the local Muslim, in excellent Burmese. In his conclusion he said that, "The unity of the human family, and the proclamation by Islam that the best of men in the sight of God are those who are most useful to the family. The Prophet of Islam says "All men are God's people, and the one loved most by Him is the one who serves His people best." "Thus, the achievement of

democracy or the rule of people is appreciated not only by the people but by angels too".

Mra Raza Lin a school teacher of Rathedaung, also spoke about democracy. Dr. Tun Aung, one of the leaders of local strike committee declared that the 13 May mass uprising of Maungdaw, was the beginning of the democratic movement of Burma. The meeting ended with the slogans, songs and echoes of democracy.

Aung San Suu Kyi delivered a speech in Burmese to a mass rally on the open ground west of the great Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon on 26 August 1988: "Reverend monks and people! This public rally is aimed at informing the whole world of the will of people. Therefore, at this mass rally the people should be disciplined and united to demonstrate the very fact that they are a people who can be disciplined and united. Our purpose is to show that the entire people entertain the keenest desire for the multi-party democratic system of government."

"It is the students who have paved the way to situation where it is possible to hold such a rally. The occasion has been made possible because the students and even more had spearheaded the recent demonstrations because they have shown their willingness to sacrifice their lives. I therefore request you all to observe a minute's silence in order to show our deepest respect for those students who have lost their lives and, even more, in order to share the merit of their deeds among all of us.....what I wish to say is that at this time there is a certain amount of dissension between the people and the army. This rift can lead to future danger. My father created the present armed forces of Burma. It is not simply a matter of words to say that my father built up the armed forces. It is a fact. There are papers written in my father's own hand where he lays out in detail how the army should be organised and built up. So what objective did my father have for the armed forces? Let me read to you one of them:

"*The armed forces are meant for this nation and this people, and it should be such a force having the honour and respect of the people. If instead the armed forces should come to be hated by the people, then the aims with which this army has been built up would have been in vain.*"

"Let me speak frankly; I feel strong attachment for the armed forces. Not only were they built up by my father, as a child I was cared for by his soldiers. At the same time I am also aware of the great love and affection which the people have for my father. I am grateful for this love and affection. I would therefore not wish to see any splits and struggles between the army, which my father built up, and the people who love my father so much. .....May I appeal to the armed forces to become a force in which the people can place their trust and reliance..... For their part the people should try to forget what has already taken place, and, I would like to appeal to them not to lose their affection for the army .... Let us resolve to march forward in unity toward our cherished goal.....If a people or a nation can reach their objective by disciplined and peaceful means, it would be a most honoured and admirable achievement.....

"The students are most able. They have already demonstrated their physical courage. I believe that they will now go on to demonstrate their moral and mental ability. May I appeal to the students to continue to march forward with the same kind of unity and resolve?.....The main objective is ..... to have government that can bring about a strong and prosperous Union of Burma..... that the one-party system should be dismantled that a multi-party system of government should be established, and we call for free and fair elections to be arranged as quickly as possible. These are our demands." (Freedom from Fear, pages 192 to 198).

U Nu declared that he was still the legally elected Prime Minister of Burma and his government was legitimate as the

1947 constitution had never been dissolved. Before the people could understand the political significance of his move the Association of Former military commanders denounced U Nu as an opportunist trying to rebuild monarchy. Actually these military commanders were frightened because of the 1962 coup and also were responsible for killing students in 1962,1967,1970 and 1974.

Several thousands demonstrators have been killed by army and police between March and August 1988 in Rangoon and throughout the country. Most of the demonstrators were peaceful, however and most of them are thought to have been victims of deliberate killings by the army personnel in disregard of law.

"In the early morning of 18th September 1988, Dr. Maung Maung was summoned to Ne Win's Ady Road residence and was told that he would be "ousted" that day. Gen. Saw Maung was the next visitor at Ady Road. The law and order situation was sufficiently at stake, so a coup could be made." (Outrage, page-185, by Bertil Lintner). Thus, the SLORC was formed. The students, monks and people, with anger and frustration resisted the military take-over. Serious street battles took place at Rangoon and other cities on 18th, 19th and 20th September. Like lightning the army unit appeared shooting the crowds. They bayoneted the people, shot Red Cross workers as they attempted to aid the wounded. The pavement turned red. They opened fire in front of Rangoon General Hospital, killing doctors and nurses. By the first week of October the resistance was crushed, leaving behind thousands dead. Massive arrests and summary executions further subdued the pro-democracy movement. A large number of students fled across the border into the neighbouring countries. The strike leaders of the government employees were sacked en masse. In the second week of October 1988, the administration was restored. The SLORC had announced that free and fair multi-party elections

would be held. On September 27 the SLORC promulgated a 'Political Parties Registration Law'.

Together with other leaders Daw Suu Kyi formed a political party and decided to carry out the duty entrusted upon her by history. The three main opposition leaders set up a political party, the National League for Democracy (NLD). Aung Gyi was elected Chairman, Tin U vice Chairman and Aung San Suu Kyi General Secretary. The trio-who became known as "Aung-Suu-Tin," said, " the basic objective of this organisation is to achieve a genuinely democratic government. "They also announced that they would be willing to participate in the promised election by the SLORC. U Aung Gyi quitted the NLD. More than 200 political parties had registered in anticipation of the election to be held on 27 the May 1990. The Muslims of Arakan were also allowed to register their political parties. But the election commission did not accept any party having the name Rohingya. Just before the holding of General election in May 1990, a Muslim candidate Kyaw Hla Aung alias Kasim of National Democratic Party for Human Rights (NDPH) from one of the constituencies in Akyab was arrested on false charges of inciting jail breaking in Akyab during the pro-democracy uprising. He was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by SLORC. One Kyaw Soe Aung of the Student Youth Party for the Development of Mayu (Arakan) was sentenced to 11 years. Anwar of that party was sentenced to 20 years alleging his link with his brother Nurul Islam, the chief of Rohingya rebel group.

The arrest of Kyaw Hla Aung before the election was intended to prevent the Muslims from winning both the seats in Akyab. Muslims won one seat in Akyab and 4 seats of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. The Rakhine League for Democracy won 11 seats whereas the NLD won 9 seats, the remaining one seat went to Khami and Mro.

Though the NLD won 82% of the seats throughout Burma, the SLORC refused to honour the result of the election. Throughout

the history of the military dictatorship, promises have been made only to be broken. Belief in these promises has result many losses. Many believe that if force had been used victory might have been achieved.

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Chapter-27

Rohingya Solidarity Organisation

In the chequered history of the Rohingyas many liberation movements appeared and struggled against the tyranny of the Burman chauvinists but failed to achieve their goal. At long last taking lessons from the past history, the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation has embarked on the field of Jehad-e-fi Sabilillah with a renewed Islamic vigour and inspiration of the life and movement of our beloved Holy Prophet (Swallahu Alaihi Wa sallim) against all forms of tyranny and injustice and has resolved to continue its struggle till a peaceful, just and equitable society is established in Arakan.

Objective, Policy and Program:

The objective of R.S.O is to establish a *Rohingya Autonomous State* because it believes that the inalienable rights of the Rohingyas can only be restored and enforcement of an Islamic way of Life among the Muslim community can only be achieved through establishing such an autonomous state. The Rohingya Muslims are a peaceful and peace loving people. History has proved that they never indulged in injustice and tyranny. It has always been the Rohingyas who have been victimised by various forces in Arakan. The R.S.O believes in the peaceful coexistence of different communities irrespective of colour, creed, language, ethnicity and religion. It supports the struggle of the oppressed communities against racism and hegemonies. The R.S.O. has undertaken the following programs to achieve its objectives.

1. Dawah and Tarbiyah: The organisation is building a manpower equipped with all necessary basic human qualities and imbued with faith through rendering Islamic Dawah and Training.

2. Socio-economic and Education Program: Subjected to colonisation for more than 200 years the Rohingyas are made socially degenerated, economically crippled and politically liquidated. The organisation has been undertaking all feasible social welfare programs to uplift the standard of the people educationally, socially and economically so that they may exist a viable community.

3. Jihad-e-fi Sabilillah: The Rohingya Muslims by now totally exhausted all the possible available domestic remedies through various channels because everything falls upon the deaf ears of the intransigent racist regime. Having no recourse left, the Rohingyas are ultimately compelled to wage Jihad against tyranny. In fact, Jihad becomes an obligatory Islamic duty for all the Muslims of Arakan under the prevailing circumstances. The R.S.O., in the name of Allah, has started the preparation of Jihad and, Insha Allah, shall gather the whole nation under its platform and confront the forces of tyranny till just and lasting solution is achieved.

Rohingya Solidarity Organisation was formed in 1982. But after four years of formation, R.S.O. was divided into two factions one led by Nurul Islam and the other by Dr. Mohammad Yunus. Nurul Islam group of RSO joined with Shabbir faction of RPF and renamed as ARIF (Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front) in 1987. Rohingya National Council (RNC) was convened between 20-22 August 1987 with the representatives of Rohingya people. The RNC dissolved they then existing Rohingya Patriotic Front (RPF) (Shabbir group) and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) (Nurul Islam group). All these parties have since merged into the Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF).

In 1995, RSO was again divided into Dr. Mohammed Yunus group and Prof. Mohammed Zakaria group. But all two factions of RSO and the ARIF merged into one body and named it, Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) on 11 December 1998.

Nurul Islam was elected as President and Dr. Mohammed Yunus and Maulana Saiful Islam as vice presidents and Prof. Mohammed Zakaria as general secretary of ARNO.

Dr. Mohammad Yunus was born in 1945 at Bagguna village of Maungdaw Township. He is the third son of Master Ali Ahmed, the Head Master of State Primary School. He matriculated from Maungdaw State high School in 1961 and took M.B.B.S degree from Rangoon Medical University in 1969. He served as Township Medical Officer in many Townships of Burma and Arakan. He joined RPF movement in 1975. He was Vice-President of RSO while Nurul Islam was President. In 1986 RSO was split into two groups, one was led by Nurul Islam and another was led by Dr. Mohammed Yunus though Maulana Saiful Islam was its president for some time. Under his leadership, the RSO was known to many quarters and earns reputation. In 1994, it led guerrilla warfare in Arakan, but was not successful. Dr. Mohammed Yunus took initiative to form a Rohingya National Alliance in 1996, which subsequently led to creation of ARNO wherein he was the vice-president. He is the author of "A History of Arakan- Past & Present" and many booklets on Rohingya issue.

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Chapter-28

The Manifesto of Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front

The Manifesto of Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) was published in 1987 is as follows:

The people of Arakan have long been trying to identify themselves with the Burmese on the basis of equality and justice. But they have been thoroughly neglected, hated and kept in segregated condition in every respect. The Rohingya have been knowingly and deliberately branded as aliens, saboteurs, insurgents, traitors, miscreants and separatists simply to perpetuate barbarism.

In fact the Rohingyas are peace loving and law-abiding people. As loyal and responsible citizens they have contributed many remarkable services to the mental and material well being of the people of Burma. Their contributions to Independence movement are also historical.

The government is always against any practice of equality, solidarity and freedom in Arakan. The regime totally jackboot the fundamental rights and freedom of Rohingyas. All their appeals and representations to redress their grievances have been turned down. Instead, the only response they receive from the government is action of genocide, oppression, suppression and extermination. To profess Islam is regarded as a crime. The present military regime, which was nationally and internationally condemned for its massive human rights violation, is transforming the country into anarchism. Since 1988 the military or the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has gunned down thousands of people across the nations who are peacefully demanding for the restoration of democracy. Many leaders, students and democratic workers

were arrested and tortured. The leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was among those put under home arrest on 20th July 1989. The SLORC opposed transfer of power to NLD, which won 82% of the seats in a New National Assembly. They claimed they have the absolute freedom of action in coping with emergency situation in the same way as a "field commander has in the battle field". They need not be accountable to anyone or country's basic law or constitution.

The domestic remedies of Rohingya are completely exhausted. How long to remain equable where the persecution of Rohingyas remains unvarying! After all there is limitation in human patience, tolerance and forbearance. As there is no other recourse left, the Rohingya in their self-defence embarked in Jihad for their rights of self-determination.

The Policies and Programs of ARIF

Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) declare:

That: they adhere to the teachings of the Holy Qur-an and Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him). They are committed to hold fast aloft the banner of Islam, and to preservation and growth of Islamic culture among the Rohingya people without prejudice to the presentation and growth of other religious and indigenous culture in Arakan.

That: armed struggle is the only means to emancipate Rohingya people and affirm with abiding determination to continue until inalienable rights to self-determination is achieved:

That: Rohingya people are an integral part of the Islamic Ummah as well as part of the third world and of the oppressed colonised community everywhere in the world;

That: the Rohingya masses whether in the homeland or in the places of refuge comprise one national front. Effective measures

would be taken for the repatriation and rehabilitation of those Rohingyas who have been expelled and have fled the country to escape persecution;

That: they will organise, inspire and activate the entire Rohingya community. They will undertake all means of forging consciousness and training the individual Rohingya in order to acquaint him profoundly with his homeland, and are preparing him for Jihad, as well as for the sacrifice of his property and life;

That: economic deprivation, exploitation and injustice would be removed and social justice would be established in Arakan;

That: they uphold the principle of peaceful coexistence among all sister communities in Arakan and aspire to struggle to gather in full co-operation against tyrannical rule;

That: they support the just struggles of all the revolutionary forces of Burma and eagerly desire to fight together against the common enemy;

That: the Muslim brethren of the rest of Burma are also oppressed and repressed because of their faith. They will lend co-operation to raise their morale in their national activities;

That: they will undertake social-welfare activities, educational and religious programs among the Rohingya people;

That: they will rewrite and preserve Rohingya`s obliterated history and revive Rohingya's image the world over and ;

That they appeal for all out support of the peoples and governments of the world and the world bodies including United Nations Organisation (UNO), Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and all humanitarian and Islamic Organisations. And that they accept all kinds of assistance without strings and conditions.

Nurul Islam - Nurul Islam was born at Kyauk Chaung village of Maungdaw Township in 1948. He was the second son of Haji Omar Hamza, a native of Myothugyi village of Maungdaw Township. He was matriculated from Maungdaw State High School in 1968 and took B.A (Law) in 1972 and LLB degree in 1973 from Rangoon University. He was an active young member of Rohingya Independent Force (RIF), during his high school days, which was formed in 1964. In his university life he was fortunate enough to meet with Mr. M.A. Habibullah a lecturer of the department of Political Science and Modern History of the Rangoon University and Mr. Bani Amin alias Kyaw Zaw Aung, (Divisional Inspector General of Police). Both of them were Rohingyas. He learned basic politics from them. He was also in touch with Mr. Sultan Ahmed, Parliamentary Secretary of Burma. He joined RPF movement in 1974. He was the foreign Secretary and vice-president of RPF (Rohingya Patriotic Front). In 1982 he was elected as the president of RSO and in 1987 he was elected as the President of Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) and in 1998 he was elected as the President of ARNO (Arakan Rohingya National Organisation).

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Chapter-29

The Rohingya refugee problem

Rohingya the scapegoat of Ne Win

On 8 June 1988, Aung Gyi, the former brigadier general who had written to Ne Win about the economic crisis in Burma in July 1987, wrote another open letter to the old strongman. Aung Gyi estimated that 282 people had been slaughtered in March. A large number had died at "the White Bridge" but many were Muslims who had been rounded up on the 18th. Most of the Muslims died after being beaten in Insein Jail and a controversy arose when relatives found out that they had been cremated in contravention of Islamic laws and Muslim belief.

In 1967, the authorities managed to divert attention from internal social and economic woes by instigating attacks on the Chinese community in Rangoon. For reasons which seemed very similar, there were widespread anti-Muslim riots in Moulmein, Martaban and some towns in the Irrawaddy delta region south west of Rangoon in June and July 1984 when there were new shortages of goods and local prices went up. Mobs stormed Muslims' living quarters, looted houses and shops and burnt down a number of mosques. The Muslims became convenient scapegoats once again.

During the first wave of anti-government demonstrations in March 1988, hundreds of Muslims had been rounded up and sent away to Insein Jail. The majority of them were ordinary innocent people who had been caught up in the turbulent events of 18th.

When the meeting at the main campus began again in June, nearly all the leaflets, which were distributed, had been hand-written. A notable exception was a stencilled series of leaflets, attacking the Muslims and purportedly issued by "Nationalistic Buddhists of Burma." The leaflets warned that an organised gang of Indian Muslims in our native lands " was planning to seduce Buddhist Burmese women in order to produce more Muslims". "The Nationalistic Buddhists" claimed that they had discovered a secret document, signed by "Muslim League", which promised a monthly allowance of Kyats 1,000 to any Muslim who could make a Buddhist woman pregnant. If the woman in question was a university graduate, the allowance would be Kyat 2000 and a record reward of kyat 50,000 was promised for daughters of army officers. The leaflets exhorted the public to boycott Muslim shops and the final slogan was "All Muslims leave our country!" It was all nonsense, the army created it to divert the public attention from them by making Muslims scapegoats.

Communal frictions were expected in the beginning of July when the Muslims were about to celebrate Eidul Adhah. The US embassy in Rangoon even issued statement warning its nationals not to travel up-country during the time. The Muslims feared that the authorities might try to stir up communal trouble. So they refrained from doing any Kurbani, or animal sacrifices in 1988.

While the situation remained calm in the capital, communal unrest soon broke out in some provincial towns. The Buddhist zealots dismantled the only mosque of Taungup, in Arakan State. All the Muslims were driven out of the town. Then a violent attack was made against the Muslims of Taung Gyi, the capital of Shan State. The Buddhists slaughtered the Imam and Muezzin of the Mosque. All the shops belonging to Muslims were looted and destroyed. All the Muslims had left the town. A few days later, more communal violence breakout in Prome, 290

Km north of Rangoon. Muslim homes and shops were attacked, looted and brunt down.

In July 1990, shortly after the election, the SLORC announced that the elected representatives would be forming not a parliament but a National Convention, which would write a new constitution under which new elections would be held. (SLORC Announcement No. 1/90, July 1990). The Convention was not convened until January 1993 and is still deliberating though with only a handful of elected representatives out of a total of 800 members. The rest were appointed by the SLORC to intensify military rule in Burma. The government's failure to hand over power provoked demonstrations by monks and students towards the end of 1990, and even political prisoners in Insein Jail went on hunger strikes in protest. In response to these demonstrations the army in Mandalay killed two monks and a student. In Insein Jail the hunger strikers were tortured and later the leaders were moved to prison labour camps far from their homes, making family visits almost impossible. The government needed a scapegoat, a distraction and common enemy to unite a disillusioned and angry populace. They chose the Rohingyas.

On 21 December 1991, the Burmese forces crossed the international boundary, attacked a Bangladesh border out post, killed some soldiers and carried away all arms and ammunition. As the tension mounted along the border following the unprovoked attack the SLORC regime geared up barbarous atrocities upon the Rohingya Muslims by uprooting their villages, levelling down mosques and Madarasas, indulging in mass arrest, beating, torture, killing, gang rape, slave labour, total restricting of movement and forcible eviction. Both the countries massed troops along the border creating a war like situation. At the start of 1991, Burmese government increased the numbers of army deployed in northern Arakan. Before the rain started, in May 1991, some 10,000 refugees had already arrived in Bangladesh. While some had been arrested, other avoided arrest by hiding in towns or living in villages. At the

end of the rainy season in November 1991, the trickle became a flood, and by March 1992 there were over 270,000 refugees scattered in camps along the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf road in Bangladesh. The refugees told harrowing tales of summary executions, rape and other forms of torture, which they had witnessed or personally endured at the hands of the military. In most cases, the abuses took place in the context of forced labour. The Rohingyas were being forced to work as porters, build new army barracks, new roads and bridges, dig fish and prawn ponds and cut bamboo for the military.

Predictably, the SLORC first denied there were any problems in Arakan state at all, then claimed that all those who were leaving were illegal Bangladeshis who had come to find seasonal work in Burma, and now that the work was finished, they were returning home. They also consistently denied the scale of the problem, saying in February 1992 that only 4,000 people had left Burma at a time when the Bangladesh authorities and aid workers in the area were counting over 250,000 arrivals.

However, none of these reasons justified the military build-up in Maungdaw and Buthidaung and for this the SLORC gave another reason: Rohingya insurgents. These insurgents, they claimed, were stirring up the local population and making them leave and then telling lies to the international press in order to encourage Muslim countries to support the rebels.

In 1992, Human Rights Watch (Asia) found that SLORC had embarked upon a policy of "ridding the country of ethnic Rohingyas by any possible means". Many of the refugees, for instance, claimed that military personnel ordered the Rohingyas to "go home" [Bangladesh] and confiscated their identity cards. Similarly the military expropriated the land, houses, and livestock of Rohingya and distributed them to non-Muslim Rakhine. This practice still continues.

Refugees are recognised by the international community as being worthy of and when necessary, entitled to, protection from

the causes of their flight. Consequently, states are at a minimum, obligated and obliged to respect the principle of non refoulment or non rejection; that is, states are constrained from forcing back refugees to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened. Similarly, states are obligated to ensure that the fundamental human rights of refugees and asylum seekers are respected.

At the beginning of the Rohingya exodus, the Bangladesh government allowed the refugees to seek temporary asylum in Bangladesh, though it opposed the involvement of UNHCR and NGOs. For a short time, Bangladeshi public opinion was largely sympathetic to the Rohingya's plight - but both the public and the government's attitude quickly changed. In December 1991, a Bangladeshi paper quoted a government official as saying, "Our hands are already full with many issues. We don't like to have a new problem. The sooner we get rid of the Rohingya refugee problem the better." In mid February 1992, Bangladesh allowed UNHCR to assume formal role in the relief operation as a result of deteriorating health conditions in the camps and increasing international pressure.

On April 28, 1992, the Bangladesh government and the SLORC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under which Burma agreed to accept the return of those refugees who could establish bonafide evidence of their residence in Burma. The agreement lacked mechanism for monitoring the safety of returnees. UNHCR's role in the process was not clearly delineated. The MOU did not mention any role for UNHCR in Burma. At that time refugees were still arriving in Bangladesh at the rate of about 1500 per day.

On September 22,1992 the first repatriation took place. UNHCR was notified only after the repatriation had taken place. Prior to and following the repatriations, the refugees held large protest demonstrations. They demanded a halt to the repatriations, saying that they were involuntary, and that the refugees were not

in favour of returning to Burma. In the course of these demonstrations, 15 refugees were killed and hundred of others wounded; 119 refugees were arrested. Bangladesh subsequently blocked UNHCR's and private relief groups' access to the camps.

On October 8, 1992, UNHCR and Bangladesh agreed that UNHCR would play a role in verifying the voluntary nature of the return movements. According to a UNHCR situation report, 84 percent of the repatriations in November and December 1992, occurred without UNHCR supervisions. Bangladesh authorities responded by beating and arresting refugee leaders. The methods used by the Bangladesh government to return the refugees prompted UNHCR to withdraw from the repatriation program on December 22, 1992.

On 23 December 1992, the UNHCR in a statement in Geneva accused the Bangladesh government of forcing Rohingya refugees to return to their homeland. The UNHCR has been denied free and unhindered access to the refugee camps and it is therefore unable to carry out its protection, and adding that Prof. Ogata was "deeply concerned about the deterioration in security in the camps, including beatings, violence, demonstrations, indiscriminate police firing and other incidents that have resulted in loss of lives." Now the refugees are eye-sores of the host nation. The leaders of the refugees are arrested by branding them terrorists.

Over two thousand refugees were arrested for their refusal to go back to Arakan when the situation inside Arakan was more than worse. The Bangladesh government was keen for better friendship with Burmese military junta at the cost of Rohingya refugees. They are faithfully using the name of Burma as "Myanmar" though it is rarely used in other countries.

United States on 24 December 1992 condemned the Bangladesh government for what it said was forcing the Rohingya refugees to go back to their homeland, and accused the Bangladesh

government of refusing UNHCR an effective role in protecting the refugees. The US government claimed to have received "credible reports" indicating that Bangladesh was coercing Rohingya refugees to return to Burma and that the government of Bangladesh was denying the UNHCR staff free access to the Rohingya refugee camps, thereby preventing the UNHCR from fulfilling its international mandate to protect refugees.

The statement, made by spokesman Richard Boucher, went on to say "United States government calls upon the government of Bangladesh to restrain from coerced repatriation and to negotiate with the UNHCR as soon as possible for an effective protection role for the UNHCR."

To underscore Dhaka's determination, Foreign Secretary Riaz Rahman told envoys from different countries that the voluntary repatriation of the refugees would continue even without the presence of UNHCR. He described the statements from the U.S government and the UNHCR Chief Sadako Ogata as "UN-called for" for which, in diplomatic parlance, means interference in a country's internal affairs. He was also annoyed for the U.S. government was not condemning the Burmese government who actually was refusing the UNHCR's involvement at that time.

British Home Minister Kenneth Clarke on arrival in Dhaka on 29 December 1992 said, "Britain wants Burma to let the UNHCR supervise the repatriation process. We want Burma to agree to it. We hope Bangladesh is with us that Burma accepts that UNHCR supervision. We all want to see the refugees to go back safely."

Clarke's message was that there was strong western impression that Dhaka was not doing enough to force Burma into the acceptance of UNHCR to monitor the refugee rehabilitation in Arakan, from where they had fled nearly two years ago to escape rape, torture, arrest, forced unpaid labour and forfeiture of properties and farmlands.

All those Rohingya businessmen illegally arrested by the SLORC during the so-called "Phithaya Operation" were sentenced to 3 to 4 years imprisonment with hard labour without proper trial, were removed from Akyab jail to the front line of the army operation to engage in pottering and clearing mines or road construction projects. Under the Pyithaya "(prosperous country)" operation millions of dollars worth of currency and goods were confiscated illegally by the SLORC. The Pyithaya operation was one of the main causes of the 1991/92 exodus of Rohingya to Bangladesh. In early February 1992, the Lun Htin forces at Purma, while crossing the Naf River to Bangladesh had killed 20 refugees. To curtail it the SLORC arrested six refugees alleging that they had attempted to loot arms from Lun Htin. Actually, the Lun Htin had looted their belongings. One Mr. Mohammed Eliyas, writer U Thaw Ka and U Maung Ko, all NLD leaders were beaten to death while in custody. One Rohingya parliament member, Mr. Fazal Ahmed was arrested and beaten nearly to death and jailed for five years. U Ba Maung alias Nurul Amin ex-chairman of Kayandan village was sent to life imprisonment together with other seven of the same village for alleged murder of a Burmese police sergeant. Eight persons from Godora village of Maungdaw north were sentenced to death by fabricated false murder charge. Actually some Rakhine Maghs in revenge committed the murder to their old quarrel with some Chakmas who were murdered by them. 16 persons including two Molvies from the Quansarabil of the Maungdaw Township were put in jail cell since 1988 democracy uprising, charged with assaulting to the police. Rohingya educated and elite were being arrested and hunted down on false and imaginary charges. Many Muslim elite had gone into hiding to escape the persecutions.

The Na-sa-ka personnel take the law in their own hands and indulge in every kind of atrocities towards Rohingyas. They are empowered to do whatever they like for the cleansing of Rohingyas from the surface of Arakan. They also even exercise

the judicial powers. Cases can not be decided without reference to the Chief of the Na-sa-ka.

In late January 1993, Dhaka suspended the repatriation program, saying it would discuss the program in future with UNHCR. Shortly thereafter, UNHCR agreed to take part again in the repatriation process. During the next few months, the rate of repatriation declined significantly. Dhaka reportedly continued pressuring refugees to repatriate. Such pressure included threats of imprisonment for minor violations of camp rules; imprisonment could be avoided by volunteering to repatriate. The government did, however, release several hundred detained refugees, and stopped blocking NGO's from carrying out their relief activities. Never the less, tension between refugees and local people remained high. The local people began to hate them.

In late April, the police clashed with demonstrators protesting against the Rohingya's continued presence in Bangladesh; 26 local people were injured. On May 12, 1993, Bangladesh and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the criteria and modalities for the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees. According to the MOU, Bangladesh was to move refugees identified as volunteers to one of several transit camps where UNHCR was to conduct "independent interview" with the prospective returnees for "certifying the voluntary nature of the repatriation." The MOU also granted UNHCR full daytime access to the refugee camps and transit centres.

But repatriation continued through repeated beating of refugees. When refugees told UNHCR that they were not willing to return to Burma, Bangladesh officials kept them in the transit camps and forced to live in substandard conditions. Fifty families were living under open sky after saying no at UNHCR interview. Another means of coercing refugees to return and preventing organised dissent was through the broad powers of arrest that camp officials enjoy. For example 119 refugees arrested for

taking part in the demonstration in September 1992 remained in jail for more than eighteen months. They had been singled out, arrested and sentenced to jail for acting as spokespersons for the refugees. Despite the problems in the camps, most refugees opted to remain in Bangladesh and face the human rights abuse in the camps rather than return to a far more uncertain fate in Burma.

The Agreement between Burma and UNHCR

An agreement between Burma and UNHCR was finally signed on November 5, 1993. By then, over 50,000 refugees had been repatriated under the bilateral agreement. While some had been repatriated through UNHCR procedures of individual interviews with the right not to be returned if they had valid reason to fear persecution in Burma, the vast majority were forcibly returned with no UNHCR supervision. After the agreement was signed there was a delay of four months before UNHCR stationed 4 staff in Rangoon and six in Arakan. In January and February 1994 senior UNHCR staff, including Werner Blattar the Asia and Pacific Director went to Burma, and returned to tell NGOs in Bangladesh that the situation had considerably improved. UNHCR survey revealed that only 27 percent of the refugees wanted to return. The slow rate of the repatriation angered the Bangladesh government, which was increasingly eager to see the refugees go back as their presence had caused considerable unrest locally and national elections were due. Bangladesh accused the UNHCR of holding up the repatriation and threatened not to renew their MOU.

Burmese officials, like many other governments considered acceptance of a UNHCR presence to be an admission of guilt. The only UN access which had been granted was a mission in December 1992, by the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma, and he had to rely on government translators when speaking to individuals. In the end, it was international pressure, notably

from China and Malaysia that persuaded the SLORC to accept a limited UNHCR presence.

A massive cyclone hit the region on May 2 and 3, 1994, killing some 200 people in Bangladesh and leaving 10,000 refugees without shelter. Four days before this, many bombs exploded in the centre of Maungdaw town. Suspected RSO sympathisers were taken later at night from their homes for questioning. Almost all were tortured and killed. The UNHCR made no mention of the bomb attack, arrest, killings in any of its public information, something it would normally do when events impede or otherwise effect its operations.

From May 1994, north Arakan had become a new killing field. At SLORC death camps of Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships, Muslims were tortured, shot or slaughtered, more chilling is that the people were made to dig their own grave before being killed or buried alive. One Ko Ba Tun alias Noor Mohammed son of a Police superintendent was arrested by the SLORC forces along with 170 Rohingya and they all were buried after torture. By now thousands more have been gunned down or slaughtered and many have gone into hiding in Bangladesh.

SLORC forces are among the worst offenders against the international norms and humanitarian law in recent times. Literally all of the egregious war crimes are everyday occurrences in the course of the SLORC war against the ethnic groups. Violence occurs against innocent persons and prisoners taken in combat, surrendered personnel and the civilian population alike. For example surrendered RSO commander Shabbir and 22 of his followers were buried alive in violation of the Geneva Convention and customary humanitarian law. UNHCR never mentioned about the surrender of Shabbir with his men, though they witnessed it as their presence was the only demand reportedly made by Shabbir.

As far as the repatriation was concerned the effects of the bombs were immediately forgotten when the cyclone struck. In Bangladesh all of the refugee camps were devastated, leaving half the refugees without any shelter. The repatriation resumed in June and the UNHCR conducted a survey of refugees in one camp, Kutupalong and found only one-fourth wanted to return. Three refugees were beaten to the point of hospitalisation for anti-repatriation activities. A second round of interviews in the same camp found 97 percent were willing to return.

On 24 July 1994, the SLORC troops had uprooted the Rohingya village of Nalapara in Minbya Township. About 2000 Muslims of the village were brought to the Nagkhura village of Maungdaw north adjacent to Nila village of Bangladesh. More Rohingya villagers in Mrohaung, Kyauktaw Township had been ordered to quit their villages since then. Thousands of them were herded into boat and carried to Maungdaw north and south starting a fresh drive to Bangladesh.

At the beginning of the August 1994, the UNHCR started to register all refugees for repatriation. Of the 176,297 persons only 8903 were undecided. NGO's in Bangladesh were doubtful of UNHCR's claims and felt that most of the refugees did not understand the implications of the registration, and most did not know that they were permitted, by right, to say no to the repatriation and apply for asylum. In an attempt to dispel the misgivings of the NGOs about the situation in Arakan, a team from Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF) France and Holland visited Rangoon for the first time. They were not permitted to go to Arakan State, which did little to raise their confidence regarding safety of returnees. At the same time, in Bangladesh, camp authorities resumed coercion in the form of threats of beatings and aggressive messages relayed over loudspeakers in the camp.

NGOs expressed their concern to donor governments and the European Union sent a mission to Arakan State in October

1994. The subsequent E.U report expressed concern about the difficulties of monitoring the returnees. A similar mission proposed by US State Department was rejected by the SLORC in March 1995. The repatriation had been stopped at the time because Burma had closed the border after an outbreak of bubonic plague in India.

On November 17, 1994 there was communal violence in Akyab, in which Rakhine Magh students attacked the houses and shops of Muslims. The attacks continued for three days, and mosques were attacked. The authorities responded only belatedly when the Rakhine Maghs surrounded the office of the vice-consul of Bangladesh and threw stones. As the local authorities did not responded to the complaint, the Vice-Counsel had to inform the Ambassador of Bangladesh in Rangoon, who complained of the matter to the SLORC. The SLORC promptly sent back the Arakan State Commander who was attending the meeting of SLORC to stop the riot against Muslims and Bangladesh's office. At least two Muslims were killed, one of them a pregnant woman and several others were wounded. This time also UNHCR failed to mention the event in its report.

Meanwhile, the UNHCR in Rangoon and in Geneva remained firm to complete the repatriation by June 1996 - a clearly unrealistic dead line. In February 1995, MSF Holland conducted a survey in all camps in Bangladesh. 84 percent said that they were not informed by the UNHCR of their rights to say no. The repatriation from Bangladesh does appear to herald a new, pragmatic approach by the UNHCR in which a speedy return is valued over the above protection concerns, often due to pressure from the host government. A document of UNHCR in 1994, notes that "monitoring would be delicate as complacence could compromise our credibility while zealous orthodoxy could spoil UNHCR's chances of remaining involved in Arakan." The document went on to state, "Evidently we cannot concern ourselves with issues of human rights with our focus remaining on elements of execution".

(UNHCR, "Note on conditions of safety' in Arakan relating to mass repatriation of Rohingyas" no date.)

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Chapter - 30

Continuing Discrimination

On the Burmese side, the SLORC, having unwillingly handling the return of the refugees, appears to have decided that it would not accept more than 200,000 people. In 1978 as well, the then Burmese regime set a limit of 200,000 for acceptance leaving some 50,000 Rohingyas to integrate locally in Bangladesh. Having done so, however, the current government has insisted to UNHCR officials and diplomats in Rangoon that more people were returned to Burma than actually left from Arakan state in 1978 .

At the time when the agreement was made to accept the Rohingyas back into Burma, the SLORC was under considerable pressure from its Asian Muslim neighbours and from China. Accepting them back was a pragmatic move by the SLORC to try to secure membership in the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Rohingya refugees were certainly not welcomed back with open arms, and as the former Home Minister Mya Thinn makes it clear that the attitude of the highest authorities in the government towards Rohingyas has not changed. Those who have returned find that the worst physical abuses and the discrimination against the Rohingyas has been even further institutionalised and is now enforced by the presence of military barracks in every village tract. Muslims from other areas of Arakan State have been forcibly relocated into the northern Arakan area, while in the most prosperous areas the government has established what it calls "model villages" populated by Rakhine and other Buddhist minority groups.

"Lt.Gen. Mya Thinn, Home Minister, recalled that the Muslim population of Rakhine State were not recognised as citizens of Myanmar under the existing naturalisation regulations and they were not even registered as so-called foreign residents Consequently, the Minister added, their status situation did not permit them to travel in the country ... They are also not allowed to serve in the state positions and are barred from attending higher educational institutions" quoted by Special Rapporteur Professor Yakota Feb. 1996.

Returning Rohingyas and those who did not leave Burma continue to face discrimination and persecution by the government because of their ethnicity. In a country where even recognised citizens face daily abuse of their rights, the Rohingyas are doubly at risk. They are discriminated against in their ability to travel freely within the country and access to government services, health, education and employment are restricted. Rohingyas are vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and even killing by the Nasaka or the military if they are suspected of being supporters of the rebels, or democratic movement such as members of NLD. For example, Maungdaw Township NLD secretary Mohammed Elias (a) U Maung Nyo and Vice President Mohammed Kaloo (a) U Win Myint were tortured to death by the Burmese Military Intelligence(MIS) . Forced labour for Rohingyas is such that often Rohingyas are left with no time to earn a living for their families. On top of this there has been a marked increase in arbitrary taxation of Rohingya families since the refugees returned to Burma.

According to statements made at the July 1994 Relief Co-ordination meeting by Stephano Severe, the head of UNHCR's sub-office in Cox's Bazaar, the shift to mass repatriation was instituted "following a determination that situation in Myanmar is conducive and congenial for the refugees to return." A number of observers question the statement that the situation in Burma is "conducive and congenial for the refugees to return".

SLORC remains in power, and widespread and brutal human rights abuse continues.

According to the U.S State Department Report, "Burma Human Rights Practices", "The Burmese authorities took only limited steps to correct long-standing serious human rights violations." The State Department describes forced labour conditions as "inhumane" and when coupled with the "forced resettlement of civilians resulted in hundreds of deaths due to disease, harsh treatment, and over work."

The 1993 report by UN Special Rapporteur to Burma, Yozo Yokata, similarly found that "forced relocation and forced pottering has led to a systematic pattern of torture (including rape), cruel inhuman, and degrading treatment, disappearance for arbitrary execution of Muslim and other..... by the Myanmar authorities." The December 1994 Human Rights Watch (Asia) report documents egregious human rights abuses continued to be associated with the government mass forced labour projects.

There are other reasons for Rohingyas. The pre-eminent concern that the refugees expressed was that Burmese military forces would rape female returnees. In the 1994 report of Yozo Yokata stated that among other "atrocities," rape was "being committed consistently and on a wide scale by the soldiers of the Myanmar army against innocent villagers (particularly those belonging to ethnic minorities)." The 1994-state department report on Burma similarly notes " a constant pattern of reports alleging rapes of ethnic minority women in border areas by Burmese soldiers."

Refugees expressed related concerns about the Burmese government compulsory three-month training course for Rohingyas girls conducted in military bases. 15 to 18 years old girls were separated from their families, and kept them under the control of military forces where there was risk of possible rape and molestation.

In late December Molvi Zeaul Hakim, an Imam (religious leader) was told by the local Chairman that the military had instructed a number of fathers in the area to take their daughters to the military camp for vocational training. He was informed that his daughter would need to remain in a military camp for approximately 6 months for this training. As this instruction was contrary to his religious practices, he went to the camp without his daughter. He explained why he did not bring his daughter. He was brutally dealt and had his beard and head shaved off.

Many observers question UNHCR's ability to protect the returnees. UNHCR has failed to ensure safety of the Rohingya in Bangladesh, despite the fact that the government of Bangladesh is heavily dependent upon foreign aid. In Burma, UNHCR has no substantive means of redressing abuses that occur, nor does UNHCR have effective means to sanction the Burmese government.

International aid to the Rohingya is disbursed largely to a SLORC agency, the Immigration and Manpower Department, an agency dominated by military officials. As a consequence, the Rohingya returnees find themselves dependent upon, and constantly in contact with the military that was responsible for the abuses that caused the Rohingyas to flee in the first place.

The repatriation is further flawed because the process in Arakan State is not transparent. With the exception of the 1993 visit of the Special Rapporteur, who was allowed to interview only three returnees, and only with SLORC translators, no human rights monitors have been allowed to visit to Arakan State to assess the welfare of returnees. There has been similar lack of confidence building among the refugees. Several organisations have proposed that refugees representatives should be allowed to visit Arakan to assess the situation. However, no such provision has been made.

According to the statements made by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, "the two main

functions of UNHCR are to provide international protection to refugees and to seek durable solutions to their problems," Unfortunately these objectives have not been realised with the Rohingya Refugees, Relief Operation. The refugees have not been adequately protected and a durable solution is not likely to evolve under the present repatriation and reintegration scheme. As a consequence, the lives and welfare of three hundred thousand refugees are endangered.

The present repatriation scheme has created a situation in which the Rohingya refugees are imperilled no matter where they are. In Burma, human rights abuses continue unabated, while in Bangladesh, the Rohingya are subjected to ill treatment and pressure to repatriate. The entire equation has created a situation in which the refugees are effectively denied full protection, the rights to seek asylum, and the right to voluntary repatriation.

In providing adequate protection and assistance, the UNHCR is constrained by the government of the country in which it operates. UNHCR's shift to mass repatriation is on its realisation that they will be better off in Burma than if they continue to stay in Bangladesh. However, returned refugees are subjected to intensify abuses in Burma where UNHCR has less opportunity to assist them.

The return of the Rohingya is even more disquieting because the same regime that persecuted the Rohingya is now, in conjunction with UNHCR, facilitating their return. To expect that the SLORC would respect the rights of the returnees is naive. Similarly, it is unreasonable to expect any durable solution to Rohingya exodus out of the efforts of UNHCR except the removal of the Rohingya from Bangladesh.

High Commissioner Ogata has noted UNHCR's specific obligations to women in all of UNHCR's activities including protection, assistance, and durable solutions. Special attention needs to be focused upon the safety and physical integrity of returning refugee women.

The UNHCR presence in Arakan cannot effectively ensure the safety of the returnees, it has been unable to protect them even in Bangladesh. Indeed it seems unlikely that any organisation could ensure the safety of the returnees, given the SLORC's record.

A UNHCR official in Dhaka told Curt Lambrecht the author of "The return of Rohingya Refugees to Burma" in July 1994 that UNHCR cannot adequately monitor human rights abuses in Burma and that "it is very hard to see exactly what the human rights situation is." The UNHCR official added, "It is easier to come by information about abuses [that take place in Arakan] outside of Arakan." When asked about the possibility of future refugee influx into Bangladesh, the official said." I think they will be back."

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Chapter- 31

Burmese Rohingya Association in Japan (BRAJ)

Burmese Rohingya Association in Japan (BRAJ), was formed at Omiya City, Saitama Ken, Japan, on 16th August 1994. It is an International Organisation of overseas Rohingyas working for the restoration of democracy in Burma and the rights of the Rohingya people.

Mr. Salim Ullah, a native of No. 5 ward of Maungdaw Town, had organised the Rohingyas and formed (BRAJ). He had served as chairman of it for several years. In 1996-97 he was only a member of BRAJ. But he was elected as patron (Nayaka) of BRAJ in 19997-98. In 1999 he was elected a chairman of BRAJ. He is also serving as an executive member of the "People's Forum on Burma" which was formed by honourable Watanabe Sfnsfi. The main objective of BRAJ is to restore democracy in Burma and to get equal rights for Rohingyas.

On January 20, 1999, BRAJ participated in the demonstration in protest against the visit of military delegation headed by Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence Brig. Kyaw Win, which complied to cancel their visit to Osaka.

On 23 May 1999, they organised demonstration against the Burmese Embassy's stage show, resulting the removal of the Ambassador by the Burmese government.

BRAJ Members elected its Executive Committee Members for 1999 at the annual meeting as follows: -

(1).	Mr. Salim Ullah	Chairman
(2).	Mr. Fayazur Rahman	Vice-Chairman
(3).	Mr. Nyi Nyi Htwe	Secretary
(4).	Mr. Aung Tin	Joint Secretary
(5).	Mr. Zaw Win	Chief in Finance
(6).	Mr. Shahed	Auditor
(7).	Mr. Maung Maung Aye	Chief Organiser
(8).	Mr. Khin Maung Htwe	Joint Organiser
(9).	Mr. Maung Tin Shwe	Information Co-ordinator
(10).	Mr. Farid Ahmed	Religious Organiser
(11).	Mr. Nurul Islam	V-Religious Organiser

The Declaration of BRAJ

The 6th anniversary of the BRAJ was held on 1st January 1999 at Asia Bunka Kaikan (ABK) in Komagome, Tokyo, Japan. It was attended by more than (20) BRAJ's members living in Japan. It deliberated on various issues covering Political and Socio-economic crisis in Burma, the deteriorating situation of the Rohingyas and other Burmese people both at home and abroad. The heart-rending condition of the Burmese refugee including the Rohingyas and helplessness and hardship of the Rohingya and other Burmese people in alien lands, was the main topic of the meeting.

The meeting discussed with due emphasis the condition of the Burmese Rohingya and other Burmese nationals living in Japan. All the participants expressed that to collectively help solve the problem and difficulties being faced by Rohingyas and other Burmese nationals in Japan, and to carry on the social welfare activities among them.

Accordingly, the BRAJ is going to declare the following objectives: -

(A) To struggle together with all the nationalities of the country, in order to end the MILITARY DICTATORSHIP in Burma and to restore DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS and FREEDOM with the equality and SELF DETERMINATION of all national groups of the country and to reconstruct and rebuild the BURMA UNION on the basis of genuine FEDERALISM.

(B) To work hand in hand with all other Burmese political groups and their representatives in the matter of Burma Affairs.

(C) To strengthen friendship and co-operation with all Burmese nationalities in Japan.

(D) To develop and strengthen friendship with Japanese people.

(E) To organise and consolidate the unity of the Rohingyas in Japan.

(F) To under take social welfare activities among the Rohingya people living in Japan.

(G) To collectively solve problems and difficulties of the Rohingya people living in Japan.

(H) To co-operate and work together with Rohingya political forces in matter of Rohingya Affairs.

Executive Committee (BRAJ)

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Chapter-32

The 1996 Rohingya refugees Influx

In February and March 1996, Human Rights Watch(Asia) interviewed twenty Rohingyas who arrived in Bangladesh, at the beginning of the new influx. It was found that forced labour, lack of freedom of movement, and the "forcible disappearance" of family members were the main reasons for leaving Burma. In most of the cases, the perpetrators were said to be members of a military unit, the Border Administration Force, known as in Burmese acronym, Nasaka.

One 24 year old woman from Rathidaung told that she had been taken from her house by five soldiers to the nearby army camp of fifty soldiers, where she was gang raped all night, before being returned to her house at dawn. This had happened for five nights before she and her husband fled, leaving their five-year-old son behind. Another woman from Maungdaw township, who had come with her six children after her husband has been taken away to work as a porter over a year ago, but had not returned.

Many of the new arrivals complained of excessive forced labour. A man from northern Rathidaung said that he had been repatriated to Burma after severe beating by the Bangladeshi officer in charge of the Dumdumia camp in December 1993. Two weeks before he left, he had been taken along with about sixty other men in a boat to Ponnagyun where he had to work for ten days building a prawn pond for the army. A forty-one year old man from Buthidaung said that he had been taken by boat along with forty other men and forced to work on the Kyauktaw - Mrauk-Oo road for fifteen days, then they were taken to work on a road near Seindaung waterfall for ten days. He was allowed only ten days rest before being taken for two

days to work as porter carrying cans of gasoline for the army. He left for Bangladesh as soon as he got back home.

A fifteen year old boy said he had to work cutting bamboo, cleaning the latrines and cooking in the Nasaka camp, as well as working as a porter carrying the army supplies. He had been to Bangladesh in 1992, and returned to Burma only to find that forced labour requirements were harsher than before.Two other men left as they were hunted down and accused of working for RSO. Both of them were subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment while in detention.

Despite these atrocities, the UNHCR representatives in Bangladesh insisted that the new arrivals are economic migrants, in violation of UNHCR policy. A UNHCR senior legal advisor for Asia, visited Burma for a month in February and Bangladesh for two weeks in May-June and told Human Rights Watch that he found categorically that forced labour does not take more than four days a month for each family. He also looked into the cases of twelve new arrivals in Bangladesh in detail and found that the refugees' stories "were not credible," citing inconsistencies in their stories and saying that they did not correspond with the current situation in Maungdaw. Without access to the Arakan State themselves whom they should believe, the UNHCR or the refugees?

The UNHCR position having been secured after long and hard negotiation, with presence in Arakan, did not acknowledge the abuses and difficulties in reintegration. At the same time, Bangladesh is not ready to accept the new arrivals as refugees. Those who attempt to stay in the camps are liable to arrest and pushback. UNHCR did not call on the Bangladesh government to grant them access to new arrivals and to those held in detention. Indeed, access to the new arrivals by both the UNHCR and NGOs was severely restricted. Moreover, UNHCR was concerned that food given to the new arrivals would create a "pull factor" and the UNHCR resident representative in Dhaka

was reported as saying, "If we give food to this group, we will attract 50,000 more the next day."

Since late May 1996 there have been no new arrivals. This was due in part to the rainy season, also as the Nasaka prevented people from leaving. Around 2000 people were rounded up and loaded in army trucks and taken back to their villages. The UNHCR was assisting the government by providing trucks to transport people who were about to cross the river back to their villages, sometimes fleeing villagers were beaten to force them onto the truck. The UNHCR was telling people that if they left they would face arrest in Bangladesh.

By immediately classifying the new arrivals as economic migrants Bangladesh pushed them back in clear violation of Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. There was also report of the severe physical abuse of new arrivals and the alleged rape of a twelve-year-old girl by three BDR personnel.

Noted journalist Alistair Lyon reported from Teknaf that was published in the "Sun" of Malaysia on Wednesday June 5, 1996 states that, "Amidst green fields in sight of the Bay of Bengal, Jafar Ahmed explained why life in Burma has become unbearable. 'Twenty days before we left our village of Inn Chaung, the military took me for forced labour,' he said, 'They said it was for ten days, but they kept me for 16. They tax us and force us to give donations such as logs, for their requirements. If we can't pay they take us to a Nasaka (border force) camp and torture us." Ahmed, a 40-year-old labourer, said he had once spent 24 hours with his legs held in wooden stocks at a Nasaka camp.

"The military government has long denied reports of ill treatment of minority Muslims, or Rohingyas, in its impoverished northern province of Rakhine. Now Ahmed, his wife and three children are part of a group of six families sheltered in a hut on a Bangladeshi peninsula separated from

their homeland by the broad Naf River. They arrived in April after paying 500 Kyats (about RM 9.25) or seven times a day labour's wage, including bribes to border troops to look the other way.

"The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 5,500 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh since March, while other relief agencies say there may be up to 10,000. The influx is something of an embarrassment for the UNHCR, trying to meet its target of repatriating the last 50,000 of 250,000 Rohingyas who fled to Bangladesh in 1991 and 1992. The UN agency, keen to anchor the 200,000 returnees to their villages and head off any fresh exodus, fears that any move to help the new comers would urge others to follow.

"'If we give food to this group, we will attract 50,000 more the next day,' UNHCR representative Canh Nguyen said in Dhaka." We don't want to create a 'pull factor'. "Yet the hardship cited by Ahmed and other new arrivals appears identical to those claimed by their fellow Rohingyas who were accepted as refugees after the original mass flight.

"Bangladesh at first unwilling to admit the existence of any new comers, now says they are illegal immigrants fleeing poverty, not persecution, and must be deported". "UN officials say economic conditions for Rohingyas, mostly uneducated farm workers, have worsened after a cyclone in November cut rice output by 20%. Rangoon helped push up prices by demanding the same rice tax as before".

"This two-way traffic of influx and repatriation has created an odd situation', said Dick Van der Tang representative of Medicines San Frontiers.

"We are afraid that if everyone classifies them as economic migrants, we'll lose sight of the context the reasons for their poverty and the whole human rights situation in Burma."

"The UNHCR, yet to define its policy on the newcomers, hopes that its staff stationed in Burma's neglected Arakan province can intercede with its military rulers to ease the plight of Rohingyas and encourage them to stay.

'We have organised an information campaign asking people to return to their villages of origin and contacted the authorities to provide transport,' Tang said. He argued that compulsory labour, while an issue of great concern to the UNHCR, did not count as persecution of Rohingyas because it was prevalent in Burma. At the same time, Tang said, Rohingyas are not recognised as full citizens, but only as residents? And they do not have freedom of movement, needing permission from the military authorities if they want to leave their home villages.

"The 50,000 remaining refugees live under UNHCR protection in camps run by Bangladesh officials. They may not work, or leave the camps without permits but are relatively secure."

"The new arrivals must seek shelter where they can and are vulnerable to summary deportation and abuse. In April, an attempt by a river patrol of the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) to force a boat-full of Rohingyas back across the river ended in disaster. The boatman jumped overboard in the dark, the drifting boat capsized after getting tangled in fishing nets and five women and 10 children drowned."

"Anjuma, a 12-year old Rohingya girl who arrived in the second week of last month (May 1996), told Reuters, she had been gang raped by three BDR soldiers who had previously ordered her family and six others staying in a village near here (Teknaf) to return to Burma. An examination by a doctor working for an international relief agency appeared to confirm sexual assault. Major Lal Mohammed at BDR headquarters here said a military investigation is under-way. The Sun."

The letters of Mr. Can Nguyen Tang, published in The Independent Bangladesh on 17 and 27 June 1996 state that,

"until now, UNHCR does not officially have access to new arrivals, especially those in the custody of security forces awaiting to be "pushed back" to their country of origin. UNHCR requested access to new arrivals to ascertain the reason of their flight to Bangladesh and whether the process of law has been respected with regard to their push-back."

Human Rights groups and individuals have expressed concern over the plight of Rohingya as well. In a letter of congratulation on Sheik Hasina's election victory and on her assumption of the office of the Prime Minister, AFK Jilani wrote that they expect a just and peaceful solution of Rohingya problem under her charismatic leadership. They also expect she would help to rescue 45 million Burmese people, who are groaning under the military boots and extend a helping hand to Suu Kyi, who is a mother and a daughter of the Father of a Nation like her, in restoring democracy in Burma.

He further wrote that, a durable solution is not evolved under the Rohingya refugee repatriation agreement and the SLORC. As a consequence, a new influx of Rohingya refugees was taking place. Due to massive human rights violations, they were crossing the border. Many Rohingyas were drowned during push-in and pushback.

Rohingya are discriminated by the SLORC in the name of "Bangalee-Kalas". The term "Kala" is applied to mean the people of sub-continent, and carries sarcasm, contempt and hatred. They treat them worse than animals. A New Berlin Wall is erected for Rohingya by not allowing freedom of movement to them. Exaction of forced labour from Rohingyas now turned into the shape of ugly slave labour. The SLORC regards them as alien, though Rohingyas were declared as an indigenous ethnic race of Burma by the previous elected democratic government with Rohingya members and secretaries in parliament and minister in the cabinet. Rohingya Refugees representatives must be able to settle the problem once for all.

The letter of Mr. Jilani was published on 16-7-1996 in Bangladesh - the Independent and Weekly Dhaka Courier on 12-7-96 and urged the international community and the host country of the Rohingya refugees, the new government of Bangladesh, in particular to mount effective pressure on SLORC to open a serious dialogue with Rohingya leaders and achieve a just peace, a decent reconciliation and a perfect democracy in Burma.

The letter of Shikandar Ali Bhuyah, Ferangi Bazar, Chittagong published in The Independent Daily of Dhaka on 5-6-96 is as follows: "I read your editorial of May 23, 1996 on Rohingya refugee repatriation. Please allow me to write that as a regular reader of the Independent I could learn a lot about Burma from the editorial.

"Given the past records and the outcome of the issue, I wonder how you, having facilities with multiple information network, could opine that the problems could be best settled between Bangladesh and the oppressive SLORC.

"In fact 10,000 Rohingya refugees have entered Bangladesh territory since March 1996 and as many as 7 to 10,000 have been forced to return to Arakan. Many refugees, particularly the elderly and small children died due to malnutrition and exposure to rugged weather, while 50 ill fated refugees lost their lives in a boat capsize on 20th April, 1996 during push back operation. Besides not less than 15,000 Rohingyas have been roaming along the coastal belt of Naf river on Arakan side who would cross over to Bangladesh any time.

"As you know and reported in the past, Rohingya have been subjected to prolonged and intensified oppressive measures in Arakan where security of life is consistently threatened in addition to food shortage, eviction, forced labour etc., and this has further heightened in the past few months. Having left unprotected there the Rohingya have again been pouring into Bangladesh while 50,000 approximately are awaiting

repatriation to Arakan. They are in no way economic migrants as termed by the UNHCR in Geneva concluded from a biased report believed to be given by their inept officials in Arakan.

"You would agree that the ruling junta having precedence of high human right violations in Burma, is solely responsible for the fresh out flow of Rohingyas from Arakan. As such making the Rohingya rebels, and international NGOs scapegoat is quite unfair and is far from truth.

"The crux of the problem is that the Rohingya do not have a comprehensive durable solution in Arakan because of past mishandling of the case by Bangladesh which went ahead to solve the issue giving priority to good neighbouring relations from which the SLORC had rightly reaped benefit of exercising Rohingya elimination programs.

"Repatriation push-back may be done but the issue will remain seething with frequent refugee outflow under the shadow of friendship of Bangladesh with a hostile regime in Myanmar." 5-6-96, The Independence Daily of Dhaka.

Similarly on Saturday, July 6, 1996 - Gulf News reported from Manama, Bahrain, that the out going Bangladeshi Ambassador Akhterul Alam says that raping, looting and torturing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma were in no way less than the suffering of Bosnian Muslims. But the world community ignores the plight of the Rohingya only because they are poor. He said the oppressive military regime managed to hide its human rights violations by keeping the world media out from Burma where bulk of the Rohingya Muslims live.

He attributed this situation to the lack of an international news agency for Muslims to project their problems in the correct perspective.

On 19 April 1996, some 15 Rohingyas were drowned in the Naf river while they were pushed back by the BDR without the order of the magistrate or the higher authorities and met the miserable

death. Alas! Not a single soul ever expressed sympathy for them because they were poor and illiterate. The UNHCR or any human rights organisation never objected the act of the BDR. The Bangladesh government also failed to take action against the BDR for their cruel act.

Some of the 70,000 ethnic refugees living along the Thai-Burma border say a Bosnia type situation exist, with Burmese troops raping, torturing and killing at will in their drive to control the country.

"The vast majority of the Burmese people have expressed their desire in terms of democratic rule," Mr. Kristoff of the US National Security Council said, "The longer that desire is suppressed, the greater the opportunity for instability."

"The military regime in Burma is violating basic human rights and the deterioration of the rule of law, there increases the threat from its drug trade", US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said.

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Chapter-33

Rohingya! The burden of Sisyphus

On this caption the Independent Daily wrote editorials twice. The exodus of Muslims from Arakan to Bengal is not a new issue. There existed the exodus of Muslims of Arakan to Bengal from the beginning of the history. It is indeed the legacy of history for Bengal to bear the burden of refugees from Arakan. In 1404 AC the king of Arakan, Narameikhla (1401-1434), was forced to flee to Gaur, the capital of the Bengal Sultanate. The Sultan welcomed the refugee king and in 1430 the Sultan of Bengal restored him to the throne of Arakan.

In 1660 A.C., the Mogul Prince Shah Shuja fled to Arakan. This important event brought a new wave of Muslim migration to the kingdom of Arakan. Shah Shuja, his family members, his sons and daughters and everyone wearing beard had been beheaded by the king of Arakan for his lust for his daughter and his wish to grasp the Prince's riches.

In 1665 to 1666 a large Mughal force conquered Sandwip, Chittagong and Ramu. During their retreat to Mrohaung, the local Muslims attacked Magh army units. From the Kaladan to Naf River the whole Mayu valley became pure Muslim area since 1666.

After the death of Shah Shuja, the Muslim Kaman unit played a decisive role as king makers of Arakan. Fresh Afghan mercenaries from North India were continually reinforcing these units. From 1666 until 1710 the political role of Arakan was completely in their hands. Ten kings were crowned and dethroned by them. In 1710 Sanda Wizaya succeeded in gaining upper hand over them, forcing most of the Kamans to go into

exile to Rambree. The two last kings of Arakan, Sanda Thaditha and Thamada were the descendants of Kamans. Their descendants live in Rambree, Chaduba, Kyaukpyu, Myebon, Sandoway and in a few villages near Akyab and they bear the same name to this very day. Their language is Arakanese and their customs are similar to that of Magh in every thing except religion, Islam.

Since 1710 A.C things went out of control. There was disturbance all over Arakan. As a result two sided migration took place: the Buddhists (Maghs) going eastward and the Muslims (Rohingya) northward in the land between Sankhu (sangu) River in Chittagong and Saindaung Range (east of the Mayu River) and Akyab became almost depopulated. Subsequent Muslim refugees came from the eastern side of Kaladan River and settled down there. They are still known as Rohingyas. Their language is an admixture of Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Maghi.

In 1875 when Burmese King Bodaw conquered Arakan, many people crossed to Bengal. Captain Cox settled some of them in a place, which was later known as Cox's Bazar. When the British occupied Arakan in 1825, the people who migrated to Bengal 40-years before started to return to their former home land, Arakan.

In 1942 militant Maghs equipped with firearms supplied by the nationalist Burmans carried out a massacre against the innocent, illiterate, poor and unarmed Muslims throughout Arakan. As many as 100,000 Muslims were killed and some 80,000 were forced to flee to East Bengal which was then under the British rule. During this pogrom the militant Rakhine Maghs destroyed some 307 Muslim villages.

Soon after the Independence of Burma in 1948, Burma Territorial Force (BTF) rampaged towards Muslim villages. The memory of BTF period and their brutality still shudders the conscience of every living Rohingya till today. Thousands of

Rohingyas were made homeless and nearly 50,000 had fled to the then East Pakistan.

In 1958, during the Caretaker government of Gen. Ne Win, his army had driven out the Rohingya Muslims from 27-villages of northern Maungdaw. They were accepted back only when Pakistan government had strongly protested.

In 1978, the Ne Win's BSPP government driving out 300,000 across the border to Bangladesh carried out the Naga Min operation. Under an agreement without condition to restore the rights of Rohingya, that the Bangladesh government repatriated some 200,000 refugees to Arakan while according to UNHCR estimate 40,000 died in Bangladesh camps, the rest diffused into Bangladesh society. Still, the SLORC insisted that more people were returned to Burma than actually left from Arakan State in 1978 (Human Rights Watch Asia Sept. 1996, Vol.8 No.(c) page 20 f.n. 48).

The SLORC which came into power after suppressing 1988 democratic uprising resulting in killing about 3000 and detaining hundreds of pro-democracy activists reactivated Rohingya extermination as a result 300,000 Rohingya had to flee again to Bangladesh in 1991/92. Their repatriation began since 22nd September 1992 following an agreement between Bangladesh and Burma on 29 April 1992.

Meanwhile, unabated infiltration of Rohingyas from Arakan to Bangladesh continued alongside the repatriation and push-back, making the whole thing look like the burden of Sisyphus. Unfortunately the new arrivals have been pushed back when detected. Bangladesh though not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol should fulfil its obligations with regard to the non-refoulement of the Rohingya refugees.

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Chapter-34

Islam in Burma

(Based on SLORC Publication)

(Thasana Yongwa Htoonzepho' pages 65 to 73)

The early advent of Islam:

Muslims arrived and settled in Burma in ones, twos or groups since last 1000 years. According to history, Islam came to Burma through sea-borne Sufis and merchants. Historical documents for the advent of Islam in Burma are as follows:

Arab traders arrived at Myeik (Mergui) in 14th century through Sumatra, Java and Malay peninsula(Khin Maung Gyi's Burmese translation of Morris Collis' "Into Hidden Burma" P.211).

From 700 AD to 1500 AD. the Arab, Persian and Roman traders reached Burmese and Chinese coasts with their ships for trades. Many Arab ships were wrecked near Rambree Island while Arakan was ruled by the king Mahataing Sanda (788-810) and the crews and traders of those ships were Muslims and they were sent to Arakan proper and settled in villages.

The same accidents of shipwreck were also prevalent in other ports of Burma, such as Kyaukpyu, Bassein, Syriam, Muttama, Myeik in the earlier time. The stories of the Muslim soldiers, traders and sailors can also be found in some religious histories of Mon and Burmese.

The Dargahs (shrines) which are dotted at the long coast of Burma witness to these facts. (Saya Po Chay's "The biography of early Muslim written in reference to the British-Burma Gazetteers of 1879", Page 16).

In the 8th Century at the time of Pikthon, the king of Pagan, Arab traders used to visit Thaton and Muttama in their journey to and from East Indies Islands, Madagasaka and China (U Kyi B.A.(Hons)(Hist.) 'The essential of Burmese History p.156-157).

While Tabinshwehti fought Hanthawaddy in 1535 A.D. the Pathi and Panthay Muslims fought against him ("Glass-Palace Chronicles vol-2 p.186). The written historical documents of the historical compilers also indicate that the settlement of Muslims began since last 1200 years.

Between 8th and 15th century, the Arabs and Persian trading ships controlled the whole seaways of eastern countries. The Arab and the Persian traders settled in all business centres of Burma.

In 1660 Shah Shuja took refuge in Arakan at the time of Sanda Thudama (1652-1684). Some misunderstanding arose between the Magh Raja and the Mughal Prince and as a result the king massacred Shah Shuja, his family members and many Muslims. Some remaining Muslim archers and Kaman became the king makers of Arakan.

Sanda Wizaya (1710-1731) succeeded in suppressing the Kamans. He deported them to Rambree and Tharagon village of Akyab. There are also indigenous Arakanese, who profess Islam around Akyab, Kyaukpyu and Sandoway in addition to the Kaman Muslims. (*The junta intentionally omitted the Muslims of north Arakan*).

The Muslim captives of the Tabinshwethi's campaign to Pegu (A.D. 1539), king of Taungu's campaign to Pegu (A.D 1599), Tabinshwethi's campaign to Mrohaung (A.D. 1547), Sanay

Min's officer's campaign to Sandoway (A.D. 1707), Anackfalon Min's campaign to Syrian in 1613, were sent and settled at Myedu of Shwebo dist. Pinya and Kambalu of Saigine Dist, Lakpan of Kyaukse and Yindaw of Ramethin Dist.

In the stone inscription, written by Bo Minhla Kyawhtin (1801), at the time of King Bodaw, it is stated that 'the migrated Muslims from Arakan numbering over 3000 at the time of Ava Sanay Min (1698-1714) were sent and settled at the following places:

(1) Taungu (2) Ramethin (3) Nyunyan (4) Yindaw (5) Meiktila (6) Pintalay (7) Tafahswe (8) Bawdi (9) Thazi (10) Maydu (11) Seputtara (12) Deparan.

There are 171 mosques in Rangoon alone and all together 2266 mosques, 759 Islamic religious schools throughout Burma. The junta shows the figures of the Muslim population too small because of its racist policy. Their motto is to swallow the entire Muslim community in big signboards are displayed in every office of the Immigration and Manpower department, reading, "Nation could not disappear when the earth swallows it, but could disappear when the people swallow it" (that is to swallow minorities by the majority).

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Chapter-35

Violence Against the Muslims of Burma

The following are some excerpts from an anti-Muslim pamphlet in Burmese, distributed in Rangoon prior to October 1996:

"Burmese citizen beware"

"..... Malaysia and Indonesia were once Buddhist countries in history, but unfortunately the Muslims used (their) methods (to expend their religion) so successfully that they have become Muslim countries; Buddhism has disappeared from these countries.....Bear in mind that the four social causes of the SLORC must be accomplished....."

Burma has a long and unfortunate history of violence against the Muslim community of Burma. It is common practice of successive ruling juntas to create an issue and make the Muslim scapegoat whenever it faces strong dissension from the masses, and it did try to do the same in October, 1996 and in 1988 by distributing leaflets that could lead to communal riots in Burma. With precedents to communal violence set in the past, the SLORC have found it expedient on numerous occasions to exploit Muslim people to divide the public and distract attention from other political and social issues.

"In January 1992, 700 Muslim youths died of suffocation after being herded into warehouses. SLORC troops has opened fire inside a mosque, killing 200 Muslims at prayer. Muslim women were being gang raped and left to bleed to death, while their crying children were thrown on the roadside, "Page 72, "Burma the Next Killing Fields?" by Alan Clement.

Two vivid examples of the SLORC's real attitude towards Muslims have come to light in 1997. During an offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU) in Karen State in February and March 1997, Muslims were specially targeted for

persecution. Also in December 1996, the SLORC army had driven out the Muslims from the village of Nawbu, Kyaikdon, Pharklawine and Mekkatihla, in Karen State, at gunpoint compelling them to become refugees with Karen people in Thailand. It may be mentioned that Nawbu is a 700-year-old Muslim village with 4,000 families with big Jamme-mosque of Kyaikdon, which was blasted by six dynamites and levelled to the ground, while setting the other places of worship ablaze.

Following Mahamyatmoni Buddha image crisis the angry Buddhist monks started anti-SLORC demonstration in Mandalay (the second largest city in Burma) on 15 March 1997, which was manipulated by SLORC agents who directed the unruly mob, as it has been an usual practice of SLORC administration, against the Muslims. Consequently 18 ancient mosques were completely demolished or destroyed while several copies of Holy Quran and religious books were burnt into ashes. Soon the onslaughts spread to the other areas. On March 26, 1997, hundreds of saffron-robed Buddhist militant monks broke away and attacked 4 mosques in Pegu, before the very eyes of the policemen and armed forces. The Muslim lives become insecure across the country and are counting their days in utter dismay. The anti-Muslim forces are up and doing to create communal riots in Arakan, where a number of mosques and places of worships have been destroyed by the SLORC, including the historic Sandi Khan mosque built in 1430 A.D and the rubbles used to pave roads between new military base camps in the area.

"The SLORC has used religious persecution as a means of "Burmanising" local population in rural areas, particularly amongst ethnic groups which have significant Muslim and Christian populations.

In cities they have been accused of inciting communal violence in order to deflect public attention from other political and economic problems. Much of this persecution has historically

targeted Muslims. It is estimated that in 1997 alone, over 40 mosques have been destroyed with incidences of looting, by SLORC troops or soldiers looked on. "Report Card: SLORC's Progress as a Member of ASEAN", November 1997, Page 9.

Incidents involving monks and Muslims took place in Mon Ywa, Moulmein, Kyauk Pyu, Magwe Division, and Rangoon between 15 and 28 March. In the English language newspaper of Thailand, 'The Nation,' a picture was published of monks attacking a mosque while Burmese security troops looked on, doing nothing to stop the destruction.

In Burma today there are estimated seven millions Muslims, most damage was done in anti-Muslim riots in central Burma and during the vicious offensives in Karen state earlier in 1997, SLORC continues to target Muslims with violence.

ABSDF also reported on Sept. 15 (1997) that "monks in monasteries all over Burma have been receiving anonymous letters exhorting monks to defend Buddhism against Muslim destruction. Letters suggest that the role of monks is to organise and lead Burmese citizens in attacks against Muslims. "Report Card: SLORC's Progress as a Member of ASEAN," November 1997, Page.10.

Both in 1978 and in 1991, the Burmese army launched campaigns aimed at forcing the Muslim population out of Burma. The SLORC has often tried to stir up religious and racial tensions in Burma in order to divide the population and divert attention from other political and economic concerns. In 1988, the SLORC provoked anti-Muslim riots in Taungyi, Prome and many other places during the pro-democracy movement. In May 1996, anti-Muslim literature widely believed to have been written by the SLORC was distributed in four towns in Shan State, leading to communal violence.

Muslim organisations from Burma have rise the question as to why the SLORC did not take action during the riots; and why

predominantly Muslim countries in ASEAN continue to support the SLORC, even allowing the SLORC to join ASEAN, given the SLORC's persecution of Muslims in Burma.

Cities where the violence was carryout in 1997

Mandalay:

Events in Mandalay sparked the nation-wide unrest that occurred in March 1997. It originated from a Muslim youth who tried to take the hand of a Buddhist against her will. The case had been settled to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned. the matter was fuelled to deflect attention from the real sources of crisis: long simmering conflict between the SLORC and Mandalay Sangha (monks). Monks in Mandalay had been organising to protest over a period of months, following increasing pressure on the Sangha.

The background in Mandalay was that monks accused the SLORC of trying to find sacred rubies which was believed to have the bearer the power to defeat any enemy. The rubies were said to be hidden in one of six monasteries, possibly inside the Maha Myatmuni Buddha statue itself. All of these monasteries were broken into by the SLORC. Demonstrations commenced reportedly the evening of 15 and 16 March.

In the evening of 16 March, persons said to be Military Intelligence dressed as monks led the monks to a nearby mosque. Some monks joined the Military Intelligence in the attack. Some fake monks were seen wearing army shirts under their robes.

On March 16, 1997 beginning at about 3:30 PM a mob of about 1000-1500 Buddhist monks and others shouted anti-Muslim slogans without any kind of provocation on the part of the Muslims. They at first targeted the mosques for attack, followed by ransacking Muslim shops, houses and transportation vehicles near mosques damaging, destroying, looting and trampling, burning the religious books, in Kaingdan area of Mandalay.

The manner and method of the violence was clearly pre-planned with the knowledge of the authorities. In spite of request of the victims of violence, the law enforcing agencies looked on with folded arms and allowed the rampage to continue for six hours, by which time four mosques and 90-100 houses and shops of Muslims had been destroyed and looted.

On 17 and 18 March, because of the SLORC's role of onlookers, the acts of destruction's and looting continued. By the 18 March, 14 mosques and about 400 Muslim houses and shops have been looted and destroyed.

The government has the responsibility to protect the lives and properties of all citizens. Law enforcing agencies can not play the role of onlookers while crimes are committed. When the students of the Rangoon Institute of Technology started an agitation of protest within two hours the authorities controlled the situation with tanks armoured cars with full military mobilisation. But they remained quite silent where the religious edifices of a minority community are destroyed for three longest days.

Prome:

In 1988, anti-Muslim riots also broke out in Prome, allegedly instigated by the government. During the night of 24 March 1997, three mosques in the town of Prome were attacked by hundreds of monks. During the attacks on the Surati mosque, the Kharkahr mosque, and nearly 10,000 soldiers stood near the mosques and did nothing to prevent it. Sources in Prome also said that some of those involved in the attacks were put in jail. But all were released the next day or two days after the arrest. Muslims in Prome believed that the government is behind the riots. Many Muslim families left the area to stay with relatives in Rangoon as they did during 1988 anti-Muslim riots.

Rangoon :

In October 1996, anti-Muslim leaflets were distributed in Rangoon, urging Buddhists to boycott Muslims stores and not to marry Muslims. The leaflets accused Muslims of wanting to expand their territory like other Southeast Asian countries, where Buddhism once flourished but has been forsaken for Islam. Similar leaflets were repeatedly distributed in 1966 in Mandalay and Kalaw.

At 4 p.m. on 22nd March 1997, about 40 monks came out of the SLORC army control, Kaba Aye pagoda. At around 8.p.m. army officers and soldier came to the Kanbe Mosque in Yankin Township and told the Muslims that they would provide security. Thus, Muslims locked the Mosque and returned to their homes. During the night, the Buddhist monks attacked the mosque. The troops arrived at the mosque just after the attack was finished. Lt. Gen. Myo Nyunt, Minister for Religious Affairs, held a meeting with the leaders of six Muslim organisations and accused the NLD of behind the attacks and said that the aim of NLD destructionists was to prevent the ASEAN countries from granting Burma membership.

By March 24, 1997 in Rangoon, mosques in the following areas had already been attacked:

1. Kanbe; 2. No.7 quarter in South Okkalapa township; 3. Warton street; 4. Ahlone; 5. Mayangone; 6. Pazundaung; 7. At 48th Street.

Neither monks could identify themselves as belonging to specific monasteries nor civilians had participated in these attacks. Almost all of the attacks occurred only after 10:00 at night. A senior monk at Myenigone monastery in Rangoon told the people that no monks from any monastery were participating in these attacks, and that he was ashamed of it.

On the 24th and 25th, the mosque near the Pazundaung Post office was also attacked for the second time. The Muslim

religious school at 48 Street and the religious school at Thakaeta Township were attacked. Three food shops of Muslims were destroyed. On 26 March 1997 in Thuwana Township, anti Muslim pamphlets urging people to destroy Muslim homes and abuse Muslim women were distributed.

The conclusion of the Muslim people was that these "monks" are not ordinary monks, but well trained persons wearing robes. The monks arrested by SLORC were the real monks.

Other Places:

Mosques in other places including Moulmein, Arakan State, Taungdwingyi, Pakkoku and in Pegu division are also reported to have been attacked by the Buddhists.

Duplaya District, Karen State:

The Muslim population in Karen State numbers in the thousands, with Muslims engaging in a range of profession from farming to shop keeping. Many Muslims refer to themselves as Black Karen and consider Karen State as their homeland.

Though the relations, between Muslims and Buddhists and Christians have been generally good, the SLORC began to stir up anti-Muslim feelings. In August 1996, a letter came from Dammaya town to some people in Kyaikdon, Karen State inciting anti-Muslim violence. It was written in good Burmese and was unsigned. The villagers believed that SLORC officials had written it and that the Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army (DKBA), had been distributing copies.

In February 1997's SLORC offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU), the SLORC attacked the Muslim community directly. SLORC forces razed mosques and destroyed copies of Koran and drove Muslims out of Karen State. Warning to convert into Buddhism was given to the Muslims.

"Villages where Mosques were destroyed by SLORC"

Kyaikdon - Mosque and Islamic School destroyed, Muslim expelled unless they become Buddhists.

Gaw Bay - Mosque destroyed.

Naw Bu - Mosque destroyed, Muslim villagers were expelled.

Day Nga Yin - Mosque destroyed.

Kaninbu - Mosque and Muslim school destroyed.

Pa Glaw Ni - All valuables inside the Mosque looted and placed in the Buddhist Temples. The wooden mosque was then dismantled and the SLORC forces sold the wood.

The SLORC forces killed many Muslims. In Kyo Ta villages, SLORC soldiers blindfolded two Muslim villagers and chopped their necks. In Ti Dah Blu villages, 2 Muslim villagers were also killed. The SLORC army ordered Muslims to eat pork and convert to Buddhism. In the Karen State, the Muslims have been told that they cannot become citizens of Burma unless they profess Buddhism. They have been ordered to leave Karen State and to return to India, although they have no relation in that country.

The SLORC has also refused to acknowledge the Burmese citizenship of Muslim refugees, with reports claiming that Burmese Muslim refugees in Thailand would not be received back by Burma unless they converted to Buddhism.(ALTSEAN NOV. 97 issue). On 1st February 1988, the Muslim Mosque at Aziz Garden, Kokhine, Rangoon was seized by the SLORC together with the "Home for Muslim old aged" to use as offices.

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Chapter - 36

Arakan: A Silent Killing Field

In the fateful morning of June 23, 1993, 5 Rohingyas were lined up on the bank of Mingalagyi creek outside the village of Dargadale (Kyauk-layga) and shot one by one by Na-Sa-Ka forces (Frontier Security Force), the functionaries of the present SLORC military government, belonging to Frangfru (Pinpru) Na-Sa-Ka camp, 6 miles north of Maungdaw township in Arakan state of Burma.

The victims were as follows:

(1) Fayas Ahmed (32), son of Abdul Gaffer (2) Mohammed (32), son of Abul Hussein (3) Abdul Rahim (22), son of Gulam Sharif (4) Nagu (26), son of Abdul Kader (5) Kala Matiya (20), son of Sayed Karim belonged to Franfru village and the above four belonged to Dargadale village.

At the death of the silent night of 27th June 1993 at about 3:00 a.m. Na-Sa-Ka forces of the same camp killed the remaining five persons who were earlier detained along with those killed on 23 June 1993. They were:

1. Zahir Ahmed (26), son of Abdul Hakim, Dargadil, Maungdaw.
2. Abdul Hashim (27), son of Mohammed Hussein, Frangfru, Maungdaw.
3. Showkat (25), son of Nesu Maje, Frangfru, Maungdaw.

4. Nur Ali (35), son of Mohammed Ismail, Dargadale, Maungdaw.
5. Nuru (30), son of Nagu, Dargadale, Maungdaw.

The crops were taken to the nearby Mingalagyi Bazar and told the frightened people that anyone found doing anything against the military government should meet the same penalty.

The victims along with 10 others including 3 women had been arrested earlier on fabricated allegations. Neither any court proceedings or hearing against the victims were done nor they were given the rights of defence and appeal. They were subjected to severe torture before being killed. The 3 women were subjected to rape.

SLORC/SPDC is one of the cruellest and most abusive regimes in the world, which had killed thousands of people across the nation while detaining many, more in torturing cells since 1988. The Rohingyas in Arakan, have been the victims of profound perpetual intolerable group persecution and driven out of their homeland, are worst affected group in Burma. Rohingyas are now a people in danger.

This killing is a crime against humanity and is a clear violation of Article 9-3 of the International Convenient on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the resolution approved by the 40th Session of the UN General Assembly. This is also against the recommendations set in the principles on the Effective Prevention and investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary or Summary Execution. In Burma today, the officials are not accountable to their acts against the Rohingyas. The Na-Sa-Ka is empowered to do whatever they like to erase the Rohingyas from the soil of Arakan.

Despite the facts that Burma had ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1956, acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 and to the four Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 which set minimum humane standards of conduct in all situation of the armed conflict. The junta has no respect for international norms.

In July 1991, about 500 Rohingya businessmen were arrested under the so-called, "Phithaya Operation". Their all belongings were confiscated. They were tortured with all the methods of torture, including helicopter and motorbike ridings. Some of them including a newly married Rohingya youth of Seikipara, Akyab was dead.

They were sentenced to 3 to 4 years' imprisonment with hard labour without proper trial and rights of defence and appeal. They were taken to the frontline of the military operation to engage in pottering, or to use them as human shield and cleansing mines or road construction projects.

In early February 1992, the Lun Htin forces at Purma, while crossing the Naf River to Bangladesh had killed 20 refugees. To curtail it the SLORC officials arrested six refugees alleging that they had attempted to loot arms from the Lon Htin. Actually, the Lon Htin had looted the refugee's belongings. Eight persons from Godora village of Maungdaw North were sentenced to death though they were innocent. Some Rakhine Maghs in revenge committed the murder to their old dispute with some Chakmas.

On the fateful night of the 12 June 1992, Mr. Mohammed Elias (alias) U Maung Nyo, Secretary of the Maungdaw Township NLD was abducted and was died at the cell of Military Intelligent Service Camp after 11 days of brutal MIS torture headed by Major Htay Myint. All his teeth were broken before his death.

From May 1994, North Arakan had become a new killing field. At SLORC death camps of Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships, Rohingyas were tortured, shot or slaughtered, more chilling is that the people were to dig their own grave before being killed or buried alive. Alleging as RSO sympathisers, Rohingyas were taken late at night from their homes and were tortured to death or buried alive.

Under the pretext of looking for insurgents random killing in the villages is a regular routine action of the SLORC brute forces. About 60,000 troops have been deployed in North Arakan who used hundreds and thousands of Rohingyas as human shields. Thousands of porters were carried to unknown places in the jungles most of whom have never come back.

Under false and imaginary charges thousands of Rohingyas had been gunned down and slaughtered. They were forced, at gunpoint, to kill each other by slaughtering or by striking with spades on the heads. There are instances that the brother had to kill his own brother, and both the father and son were killed together before the very eyes of the family members. At least 300 Rohingyas were buried in the mass graves in the townships of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. A few of them were given bellow.

1. Kaloo (a) U Win Myint, the Vice-President of Maungdaw Township NLD (National League for Democracy)
2. U Ba Tun (a) Noor Mohammed, a geologist S/O Ali Hussein, a retired Police Officer, Fayazi Para, Maungdaw.
3. Rashid S/O Khalil, Seikderpara, Maungdaw.
4. Norul Haque, Seikderpara, Maungdaw.
5. Noor Hussein S/O Abdul Amin, Seikderpara, Maungdaw.
6. Mohammed Rafique S/O Molovi Mohammed Amin, Seikderpara, Maungdaw.

7. Shukkur S/O Kasim, Karipara, Maungdaw, a Head Clerk of TLORC.
8. Mohammed Elias S/O Hajee Ahmedul Rahman, Fayazipara, Maungdaw.
9. Mohammed Ullah S/O Kaseem Ali, Fayazipara, Maungdaw.
10. Fazal Ahmed, Fayazipara, Maungdaw.
11. Yasin S/O Fayas Ahmed, Fayazipara, Maungdaw.
12. Hafez Hakim S/O Shafu Mistri, Zantula, Maungdaw.
13. Habibur Rahman S/O Molovi Siddique, Gadusara, Maungdaw.
14. Nayeem (a) Shwe Htoon S/O U Chit Maung (NLD President of Buthidaung Township).
15. Amir Hakim S/O Ahmed Meah, Taungbazar, Buthidaung.
16. Jamal Hussein S/O Nazir Hussein, Shweza, Maungdaw.
17. Moulana Deen Mohammed, Sabrang, Buthidaung.
18. Mohammed Ayub and his son, Sabaran, Buthidaung.
19. Mohammed Anowar S/O Abu Bakker, Sabrang, Buthidaung.
20. Moulana Mohammed Ali S/O Hajee Ashraf Ali, Inden Madarasa's Principal.
21. Moulana Habibur Rahman, Mayrulla Para, Maungdaw.
22. Hafez Mohammed Rafique S/O Mohammed Islam, Nganchaung Village, Maungdaw.
23. Mohammed Jamil S/O Abdul Razaak, Nganchaung Village, Maungdaw.
24. Mohammed Yahaya S/O Master Shafi Ullah, Nganchaung Village, Maungdaw.

25. Hafez Mohammed Ullah S/O Master Mustafiz, Nganchaung Village, Maungdaw.
26. Saleh Ahmed S/O Bukunia, Fawkhali Village, Maungdaw.
27. Sha Alam S/O Sharit Ullah, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.
28. Kaseem S/O Sultan, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.
29. Sayed Alam S/O Sur Mohammed, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.
30. Bashir Ahmed S/O Kalil, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.
31. Noor Mohammed S/O Mohammed Hussein, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.
32. Abdullah S/O Abdul Salam, Myothugyi, Maungdaw.

In the first week of May, 1996, a group of wood cutters while cutting a big tree at Chawdhury valley in the west of Taimaung Hali village, spotted a pile of skeletons in what is believed to be a mass grave and informed the local Chairman of the matter. They estimated that not less than three hundred human remains were in the grave. On learning the information army personnel removed the skulls and bones to unknown places.

Earlier on 24 March 1994, the Na-Sa-Ka brute forces stationed at Roingadaung, Maungdaw, arrested some fishermen from the Naf River, and took them to their camp. After torturing five days all were killed by shooting. They were:

1. Rostom Ali (35) S/O Feran Ali, Shuja Para, Maungdaw.
2. Mohammed Shah (27) S/O Feta Ali, Shuja Para, Maungdaw.
3. Zafar Ahmed (22) S/O Kala Meah, Shuja Para, Maungdaw.
4. Abu Jamal (35) S/O Feran Ali, Shuja Para, Maungdaw.

5. Rahim Ullah (35) S/O of Abul Kasim, Hatsurrata, Maungdaw.
6. Rashid Ahmed (22) S/O Sayeed Akbar, Hatsurrata, Maungdaw.
7. Abu Tahir (37) S/O Mohammed Hussein, Hatsurrata, Maungdaw.
8. Mohammed Rafique (17) S/O Mohammed Aboo, Akyab.

Travel restriction on Muslims of Arakan, which was imposed since military rule, has been further tighten. It is easier to travel from their villages to Bangladesh then to travel within Arakan State. One needs from Kyats 3,000 to 5,000 to get the pass to go to Akyab where he can stay for two weeks. A Rakhine needs only Kyats 200 to reach Akyab from Maungdaw. Besides, taking permission after posing a lengthy process, intimidation and money extortion along the way is carried out with added momentum. Due to movement restriction many patients had died, as they were unable to visit doctors in Akyab or Rangoon. U Ba Than (a) Abu Taher, a veterinary assistance of the health department, had to die at Akyab for refusing him to proceeding Rangoon on the ground of he being a Rohingya.

The former leaders of the Soviet Union, Germany and the United State, Mikhail Gorbachev, Helmut Kohl and George Bush marked the tenth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in Berlin on November 9, 1999. The three were leaders of their respective countries in 1989 when the Berlin Wall fell. Though the Berlin Wall was fell ten years ago, a New Berlin Wall is erected for the Rohingyas of Arakan. Rohingyas are not allowed to travel to Rangoon.

For a Rohingya, to travel to Rangoon has become a far dream, and the way is totally shut down after the entry of Burma in to ASEAN fold. There are occasional attempts of travelling from Akyab to Rangoon with fishing boat but when the

authority find a Rohingya he will be killed by the authority. The son-in-law of Molovi Ziaul Haque, the Imam of Akyab Mosques, was one of the victims who were killed in the high sea by the Burmese Navel Forces. Moulovi Ziaul Haque was also arrested, tortured and jailed for 3 years.

In November 1997, 17 Rohingya youths from north Arakan were carried by two Rakhine agents of Taungup with their boat. On reaching Taungup, the agents went to look for safe passage for their passengers, a boatman reported arrival of Rohingyas to the authorities. The Rohingyas were arrested and sent them to the jail on 23rd Nov 1997. On 29th Nov 1997 the army took them and it is believed that they were killed as the Burmese army used to do so since they are in power. The unfortunate youths were as follows:

1. Mohammed Saleh S/O Mohammed Salim, Ward No. 2, Buthidaung.
2. Deen Mohammed S/O Mohammed Hussein, Buthidaung.
3. Abu Talef S/O Fauzi Rahman, Buthidaung.
4. Nabi Hussein S/O Abdur Rahman, Ali Aung, Buthidaung.
5. Sultan Ahmed S/O Hafez Ahmed, Ward No. 3, Buthidaung.
6. Mohammed Ali (a) Nagu S/O Kasim, Buthidaung.
7. Kamal Hussein S/O Obaidul Haque, Buthidaung.
8. Mohammed (a) Baser, Maungdaw.
9. Maung Hla Myint (a) Ismail S/O Kadir Hussein, Maungdaw.
10. Zakir Ahmed S/O Shuna Ali, Maungdaw.
11. Mauktullah S/O Altas, Maungdaw.
12. Noor Alam S/O Amir Hussein, Maungdaw.
13. Abdu Salam S/O Nurur Islam,

14. Abdul Ahwal S/O Abdur Rahim, Kyauktaw.
15. Yunus S/O Maung Tha Pru, Kyauktaw.
16. Ismail S/O Mokgul Ahmed, Akyab.
17. Mohammed Tayub S/O Ahmed, Akyab.

On 16 March 1999, Burma's Infantry Regiment No. 234 stationed at Pomali village of Buthidaung Township conscripted a group of Rohingyas for cutting canes on the upper reaches of the Saingdaung Waterfall. While cutting the canes one Abul Kalam (35) S/O of Kalu got imbalance. At this, one soldier became furious and stabbed Abul Kalam.

It may be mentioned here that the Burmese forces have the practices of kicking down from the hilltop and lashing the Rohingya labourers who failed to carry the load or finishing the assigned work in time. Those fell sick due to exhaustion or exposure to rough weather in jungle did not get medicine. As a result many die.

One primary teacher by the name of Khaleque was arrested at Taungyi in August 1994, was brought to Akyab and was killed by the MIS. When Sayedul Amin of Purma village was not found at home, his son and brother-in-law Khairul S/O Sayed Abbas were taken by the Na-Sa-Ka Major and were stabbed to death. Their biddies were thrown into the Naf River.

On 3rd May 1996, one Lalu was taken from Ward No. 5, Maungdaw. Similarly Badiur Rahman (45), Gudam Para, Buthidaung, was taken away from his house on 29th April 1996 by MIS of Buthidaung. They never come back

On June 23, 1996, a Rohingya of Sambania village of Maungdaw South was shot dead at the Maungdaw creek by the Na-Sa-Ka of Shuja Para. The Na Sa Ka of Shuja Para has been reported as notorious and use to extort money from Muslims and beat them if they could not please the Na-Sa-Ka.

The No. 6 Area Commander, Maj Naigne Oo, the notorious chairman of Pyithaya operation, arrested one Kala Meah of Ganiapara of Shuja village tract of Maungdaw on 10th August 1996, on fabricated allegation. A ransom of Ks. 200,000 was demanded. Later his relatives went with Ks. 80,000for to get release of Kala Meah. But the death body of Kala Meah was returned on 17th August 1996, which bore marks of grievous injuries.

On 10 August 1996, one young Rohingya girl, Shuna Banu (17) was on her way to Merollah village from Sitafurikka along the Long Beach of the Bay of Bengal with her brother, a young boy of 15 years age. On the way they were intercepted by 5 or 6 Na-Sa-Ka and detained them. Then started indecent behaviour with the young girl. When protested by her brother, the Na-Sa-Ka shot him and killed on the spot. They raped Shuna Banu one after another. After fulfilling their lust, the Na-Sa-Ka strangled Shuna Banu to death.

Some Na-Sa-Ka posted at Baddail, Fadoungsa out-post opened fire at the fishing boat in the Naf river on 8 February, eve of Eid day, 1997, killing one Shah Alam (28) son of Nazir Hussein of Shuja Para, Maungdaw township, Arakan State. The Na-Sa-Ka forces seized the boat and detained the fishermen along with the dead body. On 10 February 1997, the dead body of Shah Alam was handed over to his relatives with a warning that any undesirable moves in this connection would receive severe punishment. The rest fishermen were detained for two more days and warned that the incident should not be disclosed to any one.

Again, one religious leader namely, Moulana Abul Hussein (78) of Zoomkhara (Thabyitaw) village was arrested by MIS in the first week of February 1997 for unknown reason. He was tortured severely, as a result of which he succumbed to his injuries on 10 February 1997. Moulana Abul Hussein was the Principal of Zoomkhara Islamia Madarasa.

Military intelligence unit No. 18 detained one Amir Hussein S/O Gulal Kabir (18), hailing from West Ward of Buthidaung proper on 12 February 1997 and sent to the Na-Sa-Ka Headquarter at Kawarbil under Maungdaw Township. The Na-Sa-Ka forces mauled him to near by jungle and killed him.

Amir Hussein was repatriated from Bangladesh to Burma on January 12, 1997. He was a refugee in Moosoni refugee camp.

On 31st November 1997, one Dolya, a resident of ward No. 2, Kharipara was returning home after taking medical treatment at Akyab. For his over stay at Akyab, the Na-Sa-Ka of Buthidaung jetty started beating as a result Dolya died. He was buried word No. 2, Kharipara graveyard on 1st December 1997.

In another incident seven convicts escaped from Buthidaung jail on 27 November 1997. One was shot dead. Another three of them reported to be under serious condition.

Na Sa Ka Landmines

While the Ottawa Declaration, adopted on October 5, 1996, wrapping up a 3 day International Conference for global ban on landmines, there had been a series of landmines explosions along Burma-Bangladesh border killing many people including 3 Bangladesh border security personnel and wild animals.

To clean up landmines for the security of the citizens of the two countries, flag meetings between the BDR and Na Sa Ka were held thrice in 1988. So far no step has yet been taken to remove the landmines though Na Sa Ka had conceded that the landmines were laid by them and would be removed soon. The UN Secretary General has urged upon the world disarmament negotiators to ban the use of anti personal landmines in pursuance with the Ottawa declaration, 1977, where a treaty was drafted for total ban in production, transportation and sale of

such mines in the world for the sake of establishing peace and restoration of ethical values. The convention, agreed to by 122 countries in December 1997, now has the requisite 40 ratification to become binding international law.

On 23/24 January 1998, two people were killed and eight others injured in two separate Na Sa Ka landmines explosions in Burma-Bangladesh border area. A landmine exploded near Pillar No. 43 at Chakdala border point while a group of seven people were going home. One woman was killed on the spot while six others were injured. In another blast Mohammed Kalu, 65, was killed and Saker Ahmed, injured while felling trees in deep forest near the zero point in border area.

On 30 January 1998, another landmine blast claimed six persons killed in deep forest near the zero point. It is reported that 19 Bangladeshi woodcutters and three Rohingyas were killed from January 20 to February 12, 1998.

As the people of frontier live on woodcutting and products from it, they are having hard days, as there are death traps everywhere along the 131-mile Bangladesh-Burma land border. On 15 April 1999, a landmine exploded between Pillar No. 51 and 52 of the border. Ali Ahmed (2) S/O Siddique Ahmed and Baitta hailing from Dharmarchara under Naikongchari Police Station of Bandarban district in Chittagong Hill-tracts sustained grievous injuries. Ali Ahmed was found lying in a pool of blood with his leg ripped off from the body. Both the victims were brought to a hospital for treatment.

According to Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, the adoption of the landmine treaty is a major victory for peace. Landmines have been the scourges of humankind for decades. It is one of those weapons of war, which has brought more death, misery and suffering to the civilians rather than actual armed combatants of conflict.

The landmine treaty has become internationally binding more quickly than any major treaty in history. Global production is down dramatically, global exports have been reduced to trickle, more than 10 million anti-personal mines have already destroyed and new use appears to be on the wane.

The growing danger of landmines has become an international issue today, in view of its devastating impact upon humanity. In recognition of its global importance the Narway-based Nobel Peace Committee has awarded Peace Prize to Jody Williams, an outspoken campaigner of the US-based International Campaign to Ban landmines in 1977, jointly along with the US organisation itself. Jody Williams received dlrs, 500,000 cheque. She was co-ordinator of the International Campaign Ban landmines. Vietnam War Veterans of America Foundation-Staffs, finances and houses the campaign. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee has also awarded dlrs, 500,400 to the 1,000 members International Campaign to Ban landmines.

Princess Diana also dedicated in the world-wide campaign for banning of anti-personnel mines. She had travelled to Bosnia and African countries to see by her the devastation of war, including the consequences of indiscriminate use of landmines and also to console the suffering victims. She could not get the Peace Prize as Nobel Committee forbade conferment of the award posthumously.

Another international personality, Queen Noor, widow of King Hussein of Jordan, has come forward to further the global fight against landmines. In October 1999 Queen Noor visited Cambodia as the flag bearer for the international campaign against landmines.

Bangladesh had signed the landmine treaty on 7 May 1997. But Burma has makes the Burma-Bangladesh border areas a 'death trap' by lying of landmines ignoring the landmine treaty. Landmines continue to be a threat to the wild lives and common people of both sides of the Burma-Bangladesh borders have

killed more than 50 people and maimed hundreds. The mines also killed 25 or more elephants. Burmese army also planted landmines at Burma-India and Thai-Burma borders and occurred frequent explosion resulting many people killed and injured. The irony is that the Na Sa Ka of Burmese junta fails to clean up landmines in spite of repeated request by the Bangladesh border security forces.

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Chapter-37

Burma's Entry into ASEAN

Burma marked its entry into ASEAN by organising a street clean-up campaign at week-end near Rangoon. Meanwhile, a cell in the capital's main jail was being prepared to accommodate what had been described as " a very important person". The cell was reported to be equipped with a western style bathroom. This had led people to believe that it was meant for Suu Kyi. But other sources suggested that the Rangoon junta's plan to arrest Suu Kyi be stopped by ASEAN intervention.

At Akyab the Magh Rakhine youth intensified the harassment of Rohingyas. They took money from the Rohingya telling them it was the fees for ASEAN entry. In Burma proper a rumour was circulated that the daughter of the President Suharto of Indonesia was going to build the biggest mosque in Mandalay as a gift for Burmese accession to ASEAN which provoked the monks of Mandalay. The movement of the Muslims of Arakan has been more restricted.

The ASEAN decision to postpone the induction of Cambodia made the human rights groups accuse ASEAN of applying double standards. "When it is convenient, as in the case of Cambodia, ASEAN is prepared to interfere in the affairs of another country," the Burma Solidarity Group, Malaysia declared in a statement. "When it is not convenient, as in the case of Burma..... ASEAN does nothing to embarrass or jeopardising the illegal and illegitimate regime there"

The regional grouping has urged the junta to start a dialogue with the democracy leader. So far, however the generals have disregarded all such proposals.

Thirty-three NGOs in a memorandum to Malaysia's Foreign Ministry urged the government to reconsider its support for Burma's application to the ASEAN. "We are convinced that SLORC has no intention of implementing genuine changes in Burma after eight bloody years in power," said a spokesman of the NGOs, Ahmed Azam Abdul Rahman.

The protest came after Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmed Badawi's confirmation of formal application of Burma to become an ASEAN member. Ahmed Azam accused the SLORC of using its ASEAN membership to legitimise its' "heinous crimes". Clearly the notorious SLORC is using the guarantee of ASEAN membership as a license to further perpetuate violations and abuses against over 47 million neighbours in Burma," Ahmed Azam said.

Earlier Ahmed Azam expressed his view in November 22, 1996 issue of the Asia Week as - "ASEAN has opportunity to give its neighbour invaluable assistance. At the next ASEAN (informal) summit in Jarkata at the end of November, member countries can propose to SLORC a condition to full membership that is fundamental and pragmatic for the people of Burma. The condition: a genuine tripartite dialogue between SLORC, the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the ethnic nationalities. The dialogue can be mediated by ASEAN itself or by one ASEAN member with the co-operation of others. These will eventually lead to a peaceful and prosperous Burma, and a better record for ASEAN."

On March 29, 1997 Mr. Ahmed Azam Abdur Rahman, Secretary General of Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM) in a press conference to highlight the plight of the Rohingya and razing of Mosques in Burma, urged the Malaysian government to seek Burmese co-operation to resolve the plight

of 10,000 Rohingya refugees in Malaysia. He said if the SLORC could provide the Rohingya citizenship papers, they could seek employment in Malaysia. He hoped that the government could use its influence to advise Burma to recognise the Rohingya as their citizens.

The Malaysian government raised the issue of deportation of 10,000 Rohingyas with SLORC Deputy Prime Minister Vice-Admiral Maung Maung Khin during his visit to Kuala Lumpur in the last week of March 1997. Maung Maung Khin responded that they were ready to take them back if their nationality can be proven. The Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmed Bedawi told Maung Maung Khin, "if they admit that they are from Burma, have friend and can speak Burmese, surely they are Burma citizens. They don't have documents which were destroyed by the agents who brought them into Malaysia." In fact SLORC is still rejecting the Rohingya peoples birthright to nationality.

Human Rights Watch Asia Vol. 8 No.9(c) 13 September 1996 issue, in page 56 recommended that the ASEAN should make Burma's full membership in ASEAN on condition that the Rohingya problem should be solved by the SLORC first.

It further recommended that the ASEAN government should conduct a fact-finding mission to both Arakan and the refugee camps in Bangladesh to assess the condition of Rohingya refugees and make recommendation to the Burmese government to ensure that the rights of Muslim minority are respected.

Malaysian economic success has given the country a degree of independence and room to manoeuvre internationally. With his own economic house in order, Dr. Mahatir Mohammed has been able to lecture other world leaders, in areas such as ASEAN, the inclusion of Burma, on issues like human rights, and democracy and so on.

ASEAN insists that its policy of "Constructive engagement" with Burma's Generals would keep that country on the path toward democratic and free-market reform. The decision to admit Burma was partly an effort to keep the resources rich nation out of the Chinese orbit. That may explain why US officials did not act especially perturbed when ASEAN announced its decision on Burma, despite Washington's anti-SLORC rhetoric; with Burma inside the tent, free-trade policies will continue in Rangoon and gradually ASEAN's influence will start to kick in. At least that is the theory.

It has already evoked a lot of sympathy over the exodus of Rohingya refugees from some of the ASEAN countries, notably Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, which expressed concern over the treatment of its Muslim minority by the junta.

Washington publicly says that accepting Burma into fold of ASEAN gives the junta the legitimacy to continue or even worsen its despotic ways. Military dictatorship of SLORC has been prevailing over the country since 1988 instead of popular support for Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for democracy (NLD).

Mr. Fan Yew Teng, the executive Director of CEN PEACE said "It was a shame that Malaysia is pretending to be ignorant of the atrocities perpetuated by the Burmese gangsters against ordinary Muslims for at least 35 years. "SLORC is trying to transform Arakan into a purely Burmanised Buddhist Arakan. How can the government be unaware of this fact?" he asked.

"We believe that the ASEAN governments should encourage the Burmese government to initiate dialogue with the representatives of the Rohingya people, as SLORC has done with other ethnic minorities, and the Honourable Foreign Minister of Indonesia Mr. Ali Alatas and the Honourable Foreign Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Abdullah Ahmed Badawi should play the role of mediators between the SLORC and the representatives of Rohingyas, as they had done in the case of

Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippines government".

Nur Misuri, the chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and chief government negotiator Manuel Yan signed the peace accord in the middle of September 1996, as Philippines President Fidel Ramos and Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, the chief architect of the peace accord, watched at the Malacanang presidential palace. It was indeed a big diplomatic success of Ali Alatas after the Vietnamese troops withdrawal from Cambodia. Being a good neighbour of Mindanao, Indonesia had rendered a great diplomatic service to achieve the accord.

Their neighbours with the backing of Islamic countries settle the problem of Moros. But the problem of Rohingya is still to be settled with the help of their neighbours, for which Bangladesh has to bear the brunt of continuos Rohingya refugee problem.

After the entry of Burma to the fold of ASEAN the currency crisis affected some ASEAN members, especially, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. In July, Mahatir accused the US based financier George Soros, of mounting an attack on Malaysia's currency, for his stand on the entry of Burma into ASEAN and for turning down the request of Soros. But few had paid much attention to the sickest currency of Asia, Burma. In just over a month Burma's Kyat had fallen on the black market from 170 to the dollar to 250-300.

ASEAN liberals led by Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim were trying to devise a tougher line of "constructive intervention" towards Burma. While the visiting Philippine President himself conducted official talks with Khin Nyunt and Senior General Than Shwe, two high ranking Filipinos - Foreign Minister Domingo Siazon and Senator Alberto Romulo slipped out to an un-official lunch with Daw Suu Kyi at the Philippine Embassy residence.

According to Tin Oo, the vice-chairman of NLD, Foreign Minister Siazon and Senator Romulo sounded out Daw Suu Kyi over lunch about issues her party would raise during a future dialogue. Changing the name of the country back to Burma is among the easy questions. Such decisions require a referendum. On the more difficult question of the NLD's 1990 election victory, the party said it would never give up its demand that the duly elected National Assembly be convened, but indicated that the length of its term was negotiable. "Let's find areas of agreement," urged Tin Oo. Let's don't resort to arms. We have been doing that for 50 years, and we must not repeat that vicious cycle". As for an eventual power sharing arrangement between military and civilian politician, "that is a question which can only be answered through dialogue," said Tin Oo.

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Chapter-38

The 1997 Influx of Rohingyas

While about 22,000 Rohingya refugees are still in refugee camps in Bangladesh, thousands of Rohingya are leaving their homes from Arakan and infiltrating into Bangladesh amidst tight and tough measures taken by Bangladesh authorities, for shelter and to escape persecution. Bangladesh has been bearing the burden of the Rohingya refugees since long ago when she has her own thousands of problems, like the burden of Sisyphus. The influx of 1978 and 1991-1992 are worth mentioning. Bangladesh tried to repatriate Rohingya refugees to their homeland in Arakan amidst her social, economic, political and ecological compulsion only through bilateral agreement. However, she never addressed the more fundamental and long term problem faced by the Rohingyas in Arakan. Nor did she deal with the crux of the problem, which is entrenched, in a long brutal policy of political, economic, social and cultural repression and religious persecution on the part of the Burmese regime. Given the past records and the outcome of the issue how could the problem be settled between Bangladesh and the oppressive SLORC. In fact, the Rohingyas do not have a comprehensive durable solution in Arakan because of past mishandling of the case by Bangladesh which went ahead to solve the issue, without the representatives of the victims of persecution, giving priority to good neighbourly relations and border trade agreements from which the SLORC had reaped benefit of exercising Rohingya culmination programs. Mr. Salauddin Qader Chowdhury, Ex-Minister of Health and one of the best parliamentarians of Bangladesh describes the agreement:

"The Myanmar delegation has gone back to Rangoon having 'learnt nothing and forgotten nothing' they went back with diplomatic victory. They have been successful in projecting to the world that they had agreed to take back the refugees under conditions that Bangladesh has scrambled to agree. This agreement has laid the onus of sending back the refugees on Bangladesh without any corresponding on the part of Burmese authorities of ensuring the security of the Rohingyas in Arakan. Burma has not even been obliged to take any measure under the term of the agreement for a permanent settlement on the issue of citizenship for the Rohingya nor was it committed to prevent the recurrence of persecution". (Holiday).

While Bangladesh is putting the blame on Rohingya refugees for not opting to return citing granted food and shelter in refugee camps, she herself was seriously concerned over the lack of willingness and co-operation from the Burmese to settle the years old stranded refugees. The Rohingya refugees reluctance to return was heightened by the arrival of some 10,000 to 20,000 Rohingyas to Bangladesh in the first six months of 1997 who described increased forced labour, heavy taxation of Muslims and some instances of rape. Unlike 250,000 or more Rohingya refugees who came to Bangladesh in 1991 and 1992, these new arrivals are largely living in local villages rather than in designated refugee camps for fear of push back. This influx was almost an exact repeat of events of the first six months of 1996.

The UNHCR and NGOs are not permitted to interview the new refugees, although in 1996 the UNHCR was able to interview some 600 new arrivals. Those who have relatives or close friends in the refugee camps sometimes try and live in the camps, sharing the food rations of their relatives which lead to an increase in the numbers of malnourished children coming to their supplementary feeding centres. However, in many cases in 1996 and 1997, the Bangladesh authorities in the camps rooted out new arrivals from the camps and they had been charged with illegal entry. By October 1996, there were about 900 Rohingyas

in Cox's Bazaar jail, a facility built to house only one hundred. That overcrowding led to the death of four inmates in September 1996. Neither the UNHCR nor any other international body was permitted access to those detained.

Arrest of new arrivals continued in 1997. Those who do not enter the camps have hidden in jungle areas or in the slums around Cox's Bazaar, while some have travelled further afield in Bangladesh or abroad - India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or Malaysia. When Malaysia conducted a crackdown on illegal workers in March 1997, 8,000 Rohingyas were detained. Having found inhospitable condition at the Bangladesh-Burma border, many decided to move in a bee line as far as Mombai, India where there were reports of kidnappings, rape and looting by goons. Some had fallen prey while crossing border with Pakistan.

Most try to eke out a living by sending their children to beg in the streets, working in the rice fields, or taking other jobs. Rohingyas generally received 40 takas per day as opposed to the local rate of 100 to 120 takas, which created hostility towards the newcomers from local labourers. Four Rohingya women who arrived by boat in June 1997 told the BBC that they were robbed and then raped by some local Bangladeshi men on arrival near Teknaf. Some reported that the local authorities have sometimes given the newcomers food in turn for their departure from the area while the unlucky ones have been forcibly pushed-back into Burma.

Col. Wali Ullah, was quoted in the press as saying that several families who had tried to enter Bangladesh were immediately deported. He added all boats crossing the Naf River were also being checked by troops. Lt. Colonel Khaled Reza, a commander of BDR said, "if caught, we are pushing the infiltrators back or sending them to jails". In Cox's Bazaar, Police Superintendent Matiur Rahman said that more than 2,000

newly arrived Rohingyas had been sent back to Myanmar " in the last few months"

Extreme poverty among the Muslims in Arakan led the World Food Programme to conduct a malnutrition survey in late 1996. The result of this survey was not made public. In addition in mid - 1997 the whole of Burma suffered rampant inflation, with the value of the Kyat falling from $1=120 Kyats, in January to $1 380 Kyats in June, 1997. In Arakan the rice price increased to 60 Kyats per kilo in June 1997 compared to 20 Kyats in June 1996; when an average wage for a day labourer was only 50 Kyats. While the rice price increased the SLORC refused local traders to import rice from Bangladesh. The UNHCR and WFP negotiated with the local military commander to overturn this decision in June, but there were no reports of a change in this policy. Some of the newcomers said that they had fled because of starvation, a claim that is supported by evidence of the situation in Arakan. This had led the Bangladesh government to brand the newcomers as economic migrants, not genuine refugees. Even if it was the reason for flight, what about other abuses such as denial of a nationality, forced labour and relocation, arbitrary taxation, denial of freedom of movement, confiscation of land and property which lead them to leave their hearths and homes!

The majority of Rohingya in Arakan are subjected to the discriminatory laws and practices. That is, the laws and practices "lead to consequences of prejudicial nature for the person concerned, for example, serious restriction on his rights to earn his livelihood, his right to practice his religion or his access to education and health facilities "which " produce, in the minds of the person concerned, a feeling of apprehension and insecurity as regards his future existence."

Thus the cycle of exodus does not end. Following factors need immediate review to assess the situation in Arakan.

Citizenship Status: Rohingyas in Burma continue to be non-citizens under the prevailing law, which was designed to exclude them as an ethnic group and make naturalisation virtually impossible. Deprivation of citizenship has resulted in deprivation of fundamental rights, to which all persons, citizens and non-citizens alike, are due. The withholding of citizenship has become a mechanism for discrimination and persecution on the basis of ethnicity. Thus, Rohingya are doubly at risk in a country where citizens face abuses such as forced labour, forced relocation, and denial of freedom of speech, association and assembly on a daily basis.

Burma's practice is contrary to prevailing international norms enjoining states to reduce statelessness as well as the universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 15 stipulates that "no one shall arbitrarily be deprived of his nationality;" The Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Burma acceded in 1992, obliges states to provide children who would otherwise remain stateless with the right to acquire a nationality (For a full discussion of citizenship in Burma, see, Human Rights Watch/ Asia, "Ending the cycle..." pp.24-29).

Forced labour: Since most of the Rohingyas are unskilled labourers, one day of work without pay can mean one day without food for the whole family. The availability of work depends very much on the agricultural cycle, and during the dry season, there tends to be very little work. In the past, Rohingyas would have travelled to find work in towns or in areas where work was available, but since 1991 their freedom of movement has been severely restricted by the SLORC. They thus have very few sources of income to begin with, since the dry season also happens to be best time for construction work when forced labour demands are most intense, so the burden on the Rohingyas is very acute. The Rohingyas have to build houses for Burmese or Arakanese families whom the government had relocated to the area.

Forced relocation: The SLORC appears to be working on a program of relocating all Muslims in Arakan from outside Maungdaw and Buthidaung and "bringing Burmese or Arakanese Magha families into so-called "model villages " in the wealthiest parts of Maungdaw and Buthidaung. Many of the new refugees of 1997 were from Kyauktaw and Minbya townships.

Confiscation of land and Property: In addition to having to work for the government for no pay, the lands of the Rohingyas had been confiscated by the authorities, leaving them with no means of livelihood.

Arbitrary Taxation: Taxation in Burma is notoriously arbitrary. Tenants must pay a percentage or quota of the harvest that the farmer must sell to the government at a price fixed by the government. In Arakan State the rice tax is calculated as a percentage of the land acreage available to the farmers, rather than on the basis of the yield of the land. The calculation has a discriminatory impact on Rohingyas, who for the most part have access to only the poorest quality land where yields are much less than for good land.

In addition to the land tax, Rohingyas have also been subject to increasing new forms of taxation since 1992. Every family has to pay 100 kyats per week as a security tax but it is exempted for Rakhine Buddhists. Every family has to pay a chilli tax, regardless of whether they grow it or not. The fishing fee only applies to the Rohingyas. The owner of a cow must pay kyat 80, goat 30 kyats and a fowl or duck ten kyats. Finally, Rohingyas have to pay for permits to travel from their village to the next or to the market to sell whatever produce they may have. Once at the market the military would come and take whatever they wanted without paying for it. There is also the tax of crossing bridges and seashores.

Freedom of Movement: All the new arrivals in Bangladesh mentioned the lack of freedom of movement as a major factor in

forcing them to leave Burma. Indeed some noted that it was considered easier to travel from their villages to Bangladesh than it was to travel within Arakan State. Rohingyas are not allowed to travel anywhere beyond their village boundaries without getting prior permission. Requests to travel must be made to the village council, which then passes on the request to the nearest Nasaka base, or to the township LORC. The IMPD, police, Lunhtin, military intelligence and customs all have to agree to the request. There are agents who go between the travellers and officers and one needs from 2000 to 3000 kyats to get the pass to go to Akyab where he can stay for 2 weeks. A Rakhine needs only 200 kyats to reach Sittwe (Akyab) from Maungdaw.

For a Muslim to go to Rangoon has become a distant dream and the way is totally shut down. Even students who were earlier allowed to fly to Rangoon from Akyab are not allowed now. Seven students who got admission to study diploma course in Rangoon for 1997-98 academic year were turned back in Akyab by the authorities. They were told that no Muslims whoever he may be would be allowed to travel to Rangoon. After the entry of Burma into ASEAN, freedom of movement for the Rohingya Muslims of Arakan is further tightened. Before the entry of Burma into ASEAN, some Muslims were able to travel to Rangoon only after giving 180,000 kyats as bribe to army officers. The rate of a normal ticket is just over 600 kyats. Being unable to travel within Arakan State, it is extremely difficult for land-less Rohingyas to find work during the dry season, when there is very little agricultural work available.

ASEAN Gate

Travel restriction on Muslims of Arakan, which was imposed long ago, has been further tightened recently. Especially severe restriction is put on while travelling between Maungdaw and Akyab. Beside the need to take permission after passing a lengthy process which is very costly to get, intimidation and

money extortion along the way is now carried out with added momentum. The latest method of harassment and brutal dealing is carried out at Akyab jetty. Dubbed as "ASEAN Gate" all the Muslim passengers are herded to enter the ASEAN gate, after disembarkation from the steamer or boats onto the jetty in Akyab, which is specially erected for the Rohingya passengers while non-Muslims are allowed to go through the usual gate. It is in total disregarding of the ASEAN and in fact ridicule to it.

Rohingya were kept inside the ASEAN gate for about two hours sitting. They are physically humiliated, and their money extorted, before being released. They have to surrender as much money as demanded by the combined authorities that are posted at the jetty, especially to harass the Muslim Rohingyas. The Muslims at ASEAN Gate have to buy anti-Muslim propaganda magazines, to pay donations for building pagodas, and buy lottery tickets, which are mostly expired. During the whole ordeal the Muslims need to sit in the mood of great attention. Any move to relieve discomfort results in beating whether one may be an old man or a pregnant woman. After suffering all kinds of inhuman treatment the Rohingyas are allowed to go in-groups to Akyab town.

The reason for erecting ASEAN gate may be to prove that ASEAN could do nothing to relieve the suffering of the Muslims, in spite of the entry of Burma in to it. They may also like to remove from the minds of Muslims any imaginary anaphora that might be enjoyed by Muslims after Burma's inclusion in ASEAN.

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Chapter-39

The situation of Rohingyas in Bangladesh camps

Although the government of Bangladesh had planned to close the two remaining camps housing Rohingyas at the end of June 1997, delays in the repatriation process have compelled Bangladesh official to kept the camps open. Over 21,000 are still living in these camps. The SLORC delayed the process until 15th July 1997, when they agreed to receive only those of the 21,000 refugees who had been given clearance by them by a 15 August deadline. The 14,000 refugees yet have apparently not been permitted to return by the SLORC, who have been told by the government of Bangladesh that they cannot remain in Bangladesh.

According to reports, on 20th July 1997 the Bangladesh security forces forcibly returned 187 refugees from Nayapara camp across the Naaf River to Burma. Apparently no one volunteered for repatriation, so the authorities picked mostly women and children to be sent back. The police entered Nayapara camp on 19 July to search for refugees cleared for return, but some of the refugees resisted by throwing stones. The police responded by throwing tear gas. A group of refugees singled out for return was locked in a building overnight the day before the repatriation. The next day the authorities reportedly forced this group of refugees on to awaiting buses, beating some of them and separating families in the process. Many of the men whose families were returned had hidden outside the camps and so were not sent back at the same time. Refugees who were ill or disabled were also forced to return with no medical supervision.

After the refugees from Nayapara camp were taken by bus to the river, a group of refugees from the camp attacked security forces with canes, iron rods, and bows and arrows. They responded by firing shots and lobbing tear gas canisters. As a result, 15-20 people were injured, including several policemen. A group of refugees was arrested but still it is unknown about their fate.

There was no reported violence in Kutupalong camp. The second batch of the forcible returnees was herded on 22nd July from Kutupalong with no resistance. 212 refugees from this camp were returned. The same day the UNHCR protested to the government of Bangladesh, that they were not allowed to screen the refugees medically or interview them privately.

After these events refugees in the camps began to refuse to accept rations and medical care at health centres. Sit-in demonstrations also took place, protesting the events of 20 and 22 July. Demands included granting Rohingyas full Burmese citizenship, an end to human rights violations and other forms of persecution against Muslims in Burma, and the restoration of democracy. Many refugees became ill due to lack of food and medical care. Both the UNHCR and the government attempted to persuade refugees to accept food and to reassure them that they would not be returned against their will. Since 31 July refugees at Kutupalong camp began to take their rations, but many residents of Nayapara camp still refused to do so, where the atmosphere remained tense.

Representatives of UNHCR in Bangladesh and Burma met the officials of the Foreign Ministry and Relief and Disaster Management Ministry separately on 23 July 1997, and the Bangladesh government had decided to resume the repatriation of Rohingya refugees from 24 July 1997.

The UNHCR representatives during their meeting asked the authorities concerned to reintroduce the principles agreed upon earlier for the repatriation of the refugees. But the Bangladesh government reminded them that, as the country was not a

signatory to the Geneva Convention on Refugees 1951, the government had the right to ensure the repatriation of the refugees bilaterally, according to an official source.

The government, however, respected the Geneva Convention regarding the repatriation of the refugees and accepted most of the suggestions made by the UNHCR to ensure their voluntary repatriation, said the Secretary, Relief Ministry, Islamuddin Malik.

He said in accordance with the decision taken at the meeting the UNHCR representatives went to the repatriation site in Cox's Bazaar on 23rd July to see for themselves the situation there to ensure the voluntary repatriation of the refugees.

Acting representatives of UNHCR in Bangladesh Arun Salangram said that the government was now repatriating the refugees bilaterally and the government officials were not consulting the UNHCR officials who were working in the field. He said that the co-ordinator of the Bangladesh-Burma Repatriation Operation, Canh Nyuyan-Tang arrived in Dhaka on 23rd July 1997 to persuade the Bangladesh government to maintain the procedure of repatriation agreed upon between the parties earlier.

The two representatives of UNHCR jointly called on the Secretary, Relief Ministry and the Acting Secretary of the Foreign Ministry separately and appealed to the government to resume the procedure which was followed earlier for ensuring voluntary repatriation through joint supervision. He said that the Burmese authorities had agreed to ensure the rehabilitation of all the Rohingya refugees gradually.

He said that he had information that a total of 396 Rohingya refugees had so far been repatriated without any consultation with the UNHCR officials. The UNHCR had proposed to the Bangladesh government in March 1997 to rehabilitate 21,000 refugees in Bangladesh permanently as they were not taken back

by the Burmese authorities but the Ministry of Relief and rehabilitation turned down the proposal as Bangladesh was already providing shelter to 260,000 refugees of Pakistan and many others from Somalia.

The Secretary, Relief Ministry, Islamuddin Malik, said that the government had on principle decided not to provide permanent shelter to any of the refugees and the decision had already been communicated to the UNHCR. The UNHCR representative said that they were not pursuing the proposal of rehabilitating them permanently in Bangladesh any more. The government told UNHCR that the Rohingya refugees could be provided shelter by any third country or they should be repatriated to the country of their origin.

The government of Bangladesh announced that the repatriation process was suspended and that they would negotiate with the SLORC to extend the 15 August deadline for the return of the refugees. The government announced that it would co-operate with UNHCR and that no one would be sent back against his or her will. Repatriation would not be considered as a viable option by the authorities until and unless it had been independently determined that the human rights situation in the refugees' country of origin - (Burma) has undergone a fundamental improvement. This is far from the case in Burma, where the human rights situation remains extremely grave. While refugees may make an individual decision to return for whatever reason, repatriation should in no way be encouraged or promoted to refugees in the absence of an improvement, in the human rights circumstances in Burma. Until this time refugees should be given effective and durable protection.

While Rohingya refugees have been repatriated from Bangladeshi camps to Arakan State, other Rohingyas have fled into Bangladesh, because of human rights violations such as widespread forced labour. Some of these new arrivals were among the original quarter of a million people who fled in early

1990s, this indicates that repatriation may have been premature. It is also nearly impossible to make a simple disconnection in every case between economic hardship and human rights violations - many of those who have fled do not have enough to eat, but this is partly because forced unpaid labour under harsh conditions prevents them from earning a living. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to work. In Burma Rohingyas are jobless. In the charter of the United Nations, all members (Article 56) pledge for the achievement of higher standards of living, full employment and conditions, of economic and social progress and development. Universal respect for the observation of human rights (Article 55).

The United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) believes that the increasing influx of refugees' world-wide particularly after the end of the cold war can be tackled if the affected human beings are given a fair chance. This view was expressed by the leaders of the UNHCR mission in Bangladesh on the eve of UN Day scheduled for October 24. Bangladesh faces the problem of refugees as about 21,000 Rohingya refugees from Burma and more than 250,000 stranded Pakistanis and about 80 Somalians refugees are now living in the country.

UNHCR has been operating in Bangladesh since 1972. It has not only dealt with the Rohingya refugees during recent times, but also worked for the rehabilitation of the Bangladeshi who returned from India after the war of independence and the repatriation of Pakistani stranded in Bangladesh after the war.

Arun Sala-Ngram, the deputy UNHCR representative in Bangladesh, said that UNHCR came into being after the Second World War for the rehabilitation of the European refugees. But after the cold war, the refugee problem increased and now stood at 22 million including domestic refugees. He said that out of total of 250,000 Rohingya refugees, the UNHCR had already

successfully repatriated 230,000 refugees with the active help and support of the Bangladesh government. He said that though sometimes there were notes of discord between the government and UNHCR they were amicably settled and the UNHCR could successfully repatriate most of the refugees by maintaining the basic principle of the organisation, that is ensuring voluntary repatriation. He said that the differences of opinion on various issues were quite natural among the parties concerned. Though the refugee problem was a humanitarian one, it had got political and social dimension, he added. He said that the total expenditure of UNHCR which is raised through different donors agencies and countries for the Rohingya refugees was about US $ 6,425,601,626 from 1992 to 1997. The expenditure included cost of food, transport, water, sanitation, health, shelter, community services, education, crop production, livestock, legal aid and agency operational support.

Arun Sala-Ngarm said that UNHCR was facing challenges in connection with the repatriation of the 21,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The organisation was trying to send them back and rehabilitate them on their homeland. He said that UNHCR was continuing dialogue with the Burmese government to take back all refugees.

The other challenge, he said, was how UNHCR could step up its efforts to monitor and supervise the refugees who had returned to Burma, so that they did not have to leave the places where they had been rehabilitated. He said that now Burma had allowed UNHCR to supervise and monitor the rehabilitation programme in Arakan and there was no restriction on UNHCR in performing the job there now.

Speaking about the problems in the refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, Sala-Ngarm said that the law and order situation, conflict between the rival groups of the refugees and their leaders were the main causes of the tension there. He said one group of refugee wanted to maintain relations with the

Bangladesh government while other groups want to cease all links. Too many leaders among the refugees were the root cause of all troubles, he said, and added that UNHCR was concerned about the situation there.

He said that the 5,000 refugees who claimed to be genuine refugees because their reported persecution by the Burmese government should be given asylum under the international convention. He said that UNHCR was regularly maintaining contact with the Burmese authorities so that the rest of refugees would be taken back. Sala-Ngarm said that he had received reports that a few refugees who returned voluntarily had again entered Bangladesh. He said that the refugees who were found outside the camps should be sent back to the camps.

He said that the United Nations had undertaken various programmes, including food for work and other inceptive programs, in Burma to ensure that the refugees who had been rehabilitated did not feel that they were left out and got a sense of security so that they would not return to Bangladesh.

Addressing the inaugural session of a two-day national conference that began on 29 December, 1997 on "Refugees, migrants and stateless persons: in search of a national consensus" in Dhaka, Justice Habibur Rahman former Chief Adviser of the caretaker government of 1996, said the disadvantaged, the refugees and the stateless persons should be treated with compassion. He said the concern for the protection of life and human dignity should cover not only citizens but also refugees.

Justice Habibur Rahman said Bangladesh had been receiving migrant and stateless persons for the last 2000 years. People from Iran, Iraq and many other countries came and lived here. In the remote past there was no system of passport and visa, he said. At present not only a national consensus but also an international consensus was needed to deal with refugees and stateless persons with dignity.

Prof. A.K. Azad Chowdhury, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University presided over the function in which Prof. Chowdhury R. Abrar presented a paper. Abul Hasan Chowdhury, State Minister of Foreign Affairs was the special guest. In his speech Prof. Abrar made a plea for avoiding forcible repatriation of the 21,000 Rohingya refugees unless there was a meaningful change in the conditions in Burma that forced them to leave their homes. Forcible repatriation would be a violation of the customary international law, he said.

UNHCR representative Wilbert JEM Westesflier said that preventive measures against the refugee problem were welcomed. He hoped that the experience of Bangladeshi who had become refugees in 1971 would help to reach a proper understanding of the humanitarian aspect of the problem. Such an understanding would contribute towards arriving at a national consensus on the issue.

He said that the emphasis given on voluntary return of 21,000 Rohingya refugees, out of the 250,000 who had taken shelter in Bangladesh in the early 1990s did not mean that they would live in Bangladesh on a permanent basis. The govt. of Bangladesh and the local people of Cox's Bazaar should continue to be flexible to facilitate the process of repatriation.

He said that the local people had demonstrated remarkable generosity. The international community did not let Bangladesh down, but come up with assistance to support the refugees. He said some projects for the refugees, which might also benefit the local people, were being planned.

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Chapter- 40

The Military politics of Burma

Inhabiting a diamond-shape land in an area of 2,61,610 sq. miles, no one can properly convey the beautiful yet tragic complexity of Burma's population. There are no reliable census figures for Burma's population. The last nation-wide census was erroneous in its count of non-Burman ethnic groups. The SLORC through its 'Burmanization' policy encourages its soldiers to force ethnic minority women into marriage and religious conversion.

The Muslims of Arakan have always been identified as Burmese nationals by the then democratic governments and treated on the same lines as Burmans and shared equal rights. Similarly those Arakanese Buddhists, historically known as Maghs have been taken as one of the indigenous races of Burma. Following the militaries stepping into power, the regime accepted Maghs as ethnic race of Burma on purely religious ground. The Rohingya, being Muslims, have been elbowed out.

However, Sao Shwe Thaike, the first elected President of the Union of Burma was quoted as saying that "Muslims of Arakan certainly belong to one of the indigenous races of Burma .... if they do not belong to indigenous races of Burma, we also cannot be taken as indigenous races of Burma":

Once Prime Minister U Nu had expressed regrets for use of wrong terms like "Chittagonians" and directed that it should be either "Arakanese Muslim " or "Rohingya". The democratic government of Burma recognised Rohingya and their language was in the indigenous programme of the official Media of the

Union of Burma, the Burma Broadcasting Service, BBS, which aired Rohingya language twice weekly.

Burma became under military dictatorship when General Ne Win seized power from elected Prime Minister U Nu in 1962. He plunged this rich country to L.D.C status. First he ruled the country, in the name of Revolutionary Council government and later it was renamed as Socialist Republic. In 1988, Ne Win stepped down and State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) government has been formed. But as of the Nov. 15, 1997 SLORC's military generals reshaped the cabinet and declared it as "State Peace and Development Council" (SPDC).

Democracy fever swept Burma in 1988. Millions of people joined in a series of peaceful strikes and demonstrations demanding an end to military rule. The army surprised protests with hails of bullets and seized the power after killing 3000 unarmed demonstrators including students, female medical students, nurses and doctors, in fact the change in 1988 was a change of name for the military from BSPP to State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

The SLORC gave an election in May 1990. Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, won 82 % seats but was never allowed to take office. The SLORC arrested many elected, pro-democracy members of Parliament. Some escaped and formed the National Coalition government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). Under SLORC "Burma"has become "Myanmar" despite objection from the opposition.

The Rohingyas were not only permitted to vote but also to form political parties under SLORC sponsored elections. Two parties were prominent among the political parties of Rohingyas. They were the Students and Youth League for Mayu Development, and the National Democratic Party for Human Rights (NDPH). The NDPH won all four seats in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. The turn out in both Townships was average, at seventy percent of eligible voters.

Of the four NDPH elected members of Parliament, Fazal Ahmed of Maungdaw-2 constituency was arrested on 12 June 1992, accused of involvement in planting a bomb, with the NLD Maungdaw township Secretary Mohammed Ilyas (alias) U Maung Nyo. Both were severely tortured, resulting in the death of Mohammed Ileyas. Fazal Ahmed was given a five-year jail sentence.

In January 1993 the government, having failed to honour the results of the election, formed the "National Convention", to draft a new constitution. There is only one representative from Arakan State at the National Convention, U San Tha Aung, of Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organisation. U San Tha Aung gained 15,801 votes in the election.

The SLORC claims that all but one group has come into the legal fold. But the formidable Karen National Union and several smaller armies comprised of the Chin, Karenni, Naga, Shan, Rakhine and Rohingya groups, continue to engage in warfare against the SLORC regime.

Alexander the Great caught a pirate and asked him, "How dare you molest the sea? The pirate retorted, "How dare you molest the whole world? I have a small boat, so I'm called a thief and a pirate. You have a Navy. So you are called emperor". Here in Burma, SLORC takes the perversion one step further. They subjugate the whole country and for this they call themselves magnanimous leaders and the upholders of justice. While the NLD leads a non-violence "revolution of the spirits" it is labelled "subversive," essentially political terrorists by the junta.

George Orwell was a police officer of Burma during 1920s. Orwell's "1984" was similar to SLORC's regime. Thought-control, Brainwash, Newspeak, the Ministry of Truth, the Ministry of love, all of them exist to-day in Burma with the SLORC for the same reason - to deny life. George Orwell's "Animal Farm" is also similar to the military junta of Burma.

Almost every democratic nation in the world terms the SLORC's National Convention as "bogus, a ludicrous parody, a sham, and a fantastic deceit. It is also absurd and ridiculous." Outs of the 700 or so representatives, only about 100 were duly elected. The rest were all handpicked by SLORC. The Chairman of the convention is a SLORC general.

Since November 15, 1997, SLORC is no more. Its replacement is the sweeter sounding "State Peace and Development Council". That is not the only change. The same day senior General Than Shwe, SLORC's Chairman, announced the dissolution of the 21 member council, followed by the appointment of the 19 men SPDC. After all, the SLORC hierarchy remains intact in the new SPDC with Than Shwe as Chairman, hard-liner Gen. Maung Aye his vice Chairman and intelligence Chief Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt as Secretary-1.

Soon after the cosmetic change, the military rulers of Burma, on November 18 warned the opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi to stop political activities. The warning came two days after the meeting of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan with Than Shwe mutually agreed to send UN special envoy Mr. Alvaro de Soto during ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

However, the NLD rejected the junta's warning to stop political activities. In a statement on 19 November 1997, Daw Suu Kyi told that the government was to be blamed for avoiding a political dialogue since it has no desire to follow the right path of meaningful negotiation to solve existing political, economic and social problems.

The NLD has long called for a dialogue with Burma's military rulers. In July 1997, Khin Nyunt the most powerful and feared one in the junta invited NLD members for talks that excluded Daw Suu Kyi and her top two deputies, which prompted accusations that the government was trying to split the opposition leadership. Government media are continuously critisising Daw Suu Kyu as agent of the West.

If there is one thing the SPDC has inherited from SLORC, it is the military's determination to cling to power. The military rulers warned against "neo-colonialism" and their opponents called for democracy as the country celebrated its 50th anniversary of independence from Britain, the 4th January 1998.

Aung San Suu Kyi said that despite having reached its golden jubilee as an independent nation, Burma still lacks basic human rights and suffered from a deteriorating economy.

" To be able to stand proudly as citizens of a democratic nation, I would like to urge all people to help achieve democracy for our country", Daw Suu Kyi told the gathering in her compound.

In his Independence Day message, the chairman of the ruling military council, Gen. Than Shwe, called on people to defend national sovereignty and oppose attempts by neo-colonialists trying to destabilise the country.

"We must be vigilant against various wily schemes of some neo-colonists that frequently interfere in the internal affairs of others," said the message, which was read out at a flag-raising ceremony at Rangoon's People's Park.

Burma's leaders obliquely refer "neo-colonialists" to describe Western nations especially the United States, that seek to foster democracy in Burma as well as Burmese opposed to their rule who maintain contacts with the West.

In her speech, Daw Suu Kyi called for national reconciliation. "The main duty for us is to have a meaningful dialogue to solve all problems, " she said apparently referring to the so far unsuccessful efforts to promote talks between the military and Daw Suu Kyi's National league for Democracy.

The League held its Independence celebration on 4th January 1998 in a thatch-roofed auditorium at Daw Suu Kyi's lakeside home. Although access to her house has been blocked to the public for the past years, authorities allowed outsiders to enter

her compound on Sunday the 4th January 1998. Foreign dignitaries attending the function included United Nations officials and diplomats from the French, Italian, American, Philippine and Japanese embassies.

" I told our people this morning that actually we are in a dialogue with SLORC. I'll explain. Read SLORC's the New Light of Myanmar. They are talking to us. Are they not? Then we talked to them through our gatherings. SLORC videotaped the talks. The only problems is, we are talking back to back. What we need is someone to come and help them by saying, "come on boys, you face this way "and they will listen. They call us clowns, subversive, heaping insult upon insult. What's biting them is fear. Fear of revenge. Fear of persecution. Fear of losing face. Fear of losing their properties, their mansions, their cars, their motorcades all these privileges, it's the fear of losing power. These generals knew they have done wrong. They fear for their own families, for their sons and daughters. The past is the past. What is done is done. Burmese people are by nature compassionate and I think the people will forgive them, " said U Kyi Maung in conversations with Alan Clements.

The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is yet another nom-de-plume or nick name of the Revolutionary Council of Burma founded by General Ne Win after taking power from the elected government of Prime Minister U Nu by a coup d'etat on March 2, 1962. The international community has learned that the ruling SPDC, a legacy of General Ne Win's autocratic military rule, has shown a cynical contempt for the basic human rights of the Burmese people and has failed in complying with UN recommendations and resolutions. SLORC turned SPDC has remained to repress ethnic minorities while radical restriction on the rights to freedom on movement, expression and assembly are nakedly enforced. The more army's younger generation get involved in the state affairs, the lesser the chance for the country to return to a democratic or civilian

rule. The SPDC consists of four powerful generals from the SLORC and 15 younger regional commanders.

SLORC had cut deals with Burma's insurgents, and more recently with Khunsa, the world's most notorious heroin drug-lord. The plain truth is that these sorts of cease-fires cannot guarantee long-term peace. Meanwhile, heroin production has radically increased in Burma since SLORC seized power. The black money from drug trade then goes directly into generals' budget. Some of the finest land in Rangoon and Mandalay has been purchased by black money.

To assure ASEAN, the club of Asian economies, that its policy of "constructive engagement" would reap greater results than the more confrontational western approach, the junta's Secretary I Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, invited NLD chairman U Aung Shwe and two members of the party's executive committee in for a chat. Although the meeting was cordial, the general refused to recognise Daw Suu Kyi. That obduracy caused the NLD leadership to reject government's invitation to a second meeting on Sept. 16.

Instead of exacting reprisals, however, the junta started its adversaries by turning the other cheek: the NLD was allowed to convene a national party congress on September 27,1998. Daw Suu Kyi presided over the congress prompting spokesmen Lt. Colonel Hla Min to acknowledge, "There is no question that she is a political force".

"Now as for them allowing us public talks, this is yet another Orwellianism. At our public talks, there is SLORC's version of the two-way television system. There are SLORC MI men mingling with the crowds. We all know that Big Brother SLORC will be watching us close within an hour or so. The clan of the hideous spider is watching us right now. In fact, the more the SLORC observes and listens the more they will be able to trust us, because our intentions are sincere. After all our struggle for democracy doesn't exclude them, it includes them. The irony

is that they don't believe any of their television and newspaper themselves. They know it's all nonsense. We know that the whole country knows it. Everything they say and print is trash. It is rubbish. We have a Boy Scout version of Big Brother. In reality, I don't see SLORC as the enemy. I use strong words to describe my disdain for them because of their behaviour. I say, call a spade a spade. So much misery, suffering and wretchedness imposed upon the people of Burma and their genesis in the military's denial, to respect the will of the people as illustrated in the result of the election held under their auspices in 1990. They are completely uneducated in matters of democracy." U Kyi Maung ("The Voice of Hope" Pages 252-261).

Big Brother "SLORC" has shown repeatedly that they will use any means within their grasp to crush dissent and even the suspicion of dissent. They will snatch people in the middle of the night. Daw Suu said it before her arrest seven years ago, she says it now, we all say it - "Nothing has changed, let the world know under the regime we are prisoners in our own country." ("The Voice of Hope" Page 251).

George Orwell's "Animal Farm" is so similar to the military juntas of Burma. The oppositions used to interpret the Burmese words of SLORC - Nawata as the western pig, Tawata as the pig of the south, Mawata as the pig of the north and Rawata as the pig of the east, which resemble the ruling pigs of the "Animal Farms." (Maybe) that's why the SLORC changed its name as SPDC.

All the 30 colleges and universities of Burma have remained closed since students' protests in December 1996. This closure is the third in a decade. Over 20,000 college students of Burma have to stay home, working and waiting.

When demonstration erupted in June 1988, universities and educational institutions were shut down. It was not until three years later that the junta reopened them. But squeezing their

course of a full year work into half just to have students' graduate. Rallies in support of Aung San Suu Kyi led to another closure in 1994.

The reason for student dissatisfaction is simple. Since the very beginning of the army rule, education has become little more than a paper accreditation. Education has gone nowhere in the years of army rule, so hope for an improved life rests on change in the political system.

Burton Levin, former U.S. Ambassador to Burma once said, "The real tragedy of Burma is that it is a country of the educated ruled by the uneducated." Distrust of the educated is ingrained in those who hold power. In the now-dissolved SLORC, only four of the 21 generals who made up the junta had University Degrees. Eight did not finish high school. Saw Maung, the first chairman of SLORC, did not complete primary school, while his successor Gen. Than Shwe and his predecessor Ne Win have no college degrees.

In Burma the people with value sink to the bottom while the worthless rise to the top. Lack of education impoverishes society. Future teachers, traders and leaders have been idle and embittered for nearly two years. As long as they are kept at bay, the stalemate between the people and their rulers may never been settled. The students demand better education and better opportunities as much as they do democracy. If the universities re-open, those demands will once again resurface.

Many say the military's greatest concern is not volatile students, the NLD or moody monks, and certainly not criticism from the West, but rather a split within its own ranks. Whatever their differences, Maung Aye and Khin Nyunt need each other - and need Than Shwe for balance.

Although officially stepped down, Burma's former ruler Gen. Ne Win continues to cast a shadow over the ruling regime. Everyone hopes he can bring Khin Nyunt and Suu Kyi together.

By promoting a noble work of rapprochement between the NLD and the junta, Ne Win should turn to be a great statesman.

Junta and Drug Trade:

The unique business of Burma is how narco-barons and their associates are quietly taking over Burman's private sector. The regime may feel it has the upper hand on the traffickers and can force them to use their money "for the good of the country".

The well known narco-baron, Lo Hsing-han, helped junta Chief Khin Nyunt reach a swift cease-fire with the CPB's Kokang Chinese dominated Northern Bureau. The Kokang Chinese territory became Burma's Special Region No.1. Then CPB strongest portion, the tribal Wa, concluded a similar deal, establishing special Region 2 and 3. A third CPB component became special Region No.4 headed by two ex-Red Guards, in eastern Shan State.

The agreements stipulated that the insurgents would stop their attacks against the army and they were permitted to keep their weapons, administer their areas and do business. They were allowed to establish refineries producing No.4 heroin. They also participated in the country's newly liberalised economy. At least 60% of private business in Rangoon is ---- drug-related.

The Wa established in Rangoon, the Myanmar Kyone Groups. Group chairman is an insurgent colonel of Chinese folk, Kyaw Myint or Michael Hu Hwa, in full uniform in his office with assault rifles hanging on the wall and a pistol strapped to his hip.

Peace Myanmar group is founded in 1994 and owned by Yang Maoling, head of Kokang's ruling Yang Clan. Several heroin refineries run by Yang in Kokang are providing capital for the expansion of Peace Myanmar.

The real godfather of Kokang is Lo Hsing-Han. Lo founded the family's company Asia World with his son, Steven Law (Htun Myint Naing) as managing director. Asia World is engaged in Yangon port development and upgrading the highway between Mandalay and Muse.

In the north of Lashio the Kachin Defence Army (KDA) rules its own enclave. KDA trucks carry opium and heroin to the Indian border. Heroin refineries also operate in the Indian border area. After his arrival in Rangoon, Khun Sa started for new ventures, part of which is to be developed as an amusement park. Khun Sa is involved in two casino projects, both are joint ventures with Thai businessmen.

An ethnic Chinese educated in Mandalay, Kyaw Win has been closely associated with Thai Timber Tycoon since 1980. Choon and Kyaw Win operated logging ventures making a deal with Khun Sa. Gen. Maung Aye is reported to have close association with Kyaw Win.

Kyaw Win established May Flower Trading Company in 1991 and Myanmar May Flower Bank in 1994. Since Khun Sa's surrender, the bank has sudden growth. Kyaw Win owned Yangon Air Ways. His airlines network includes Lashio and Mergui. The narcotics agents now suspect Kyaw Win's involvement in the narcotic deals.

It seems to be that the junta is relying on narco-dollar to keep the economy in line. But the irony is that it becomes a habit that would be very hard to stop it and their existence may depend on it.

In just over a month Burma's Kyat had fallen on the black market from 170 to 250-300. Gross economic mismanagement and a vastly overvalued currency have brought the country's economy to the knees. More money was printed to buy up dollars and more FECs (foreign exchange certificates) in circulation. That was stealing people's money by the

government. In June 1996 the government announced that bank deposits would start paying interest on foreign-exchange accounts for the first time and it would abolish a 10% tax on withdrawals. People rushed to the bank to make deposits, while most depositors can't get their money, the government has spent it freely. Early in 1997, even more kyats were printed.

By July 1997, the FEC's began to fall on black market rate. When people rushed to buy gold, the government ordered to stop trading. Food prices have shot up, as the Kyats have become almost worthless. It is not only the Kyat that has collapsed, it is the entire scheme to liberalise the economy.

Gen.Khin Nyunt, the Secretary No.1 of the ruling SPDC disowned his son for marrying a Singaporean. The draft constitution drawn by National Convention to be enforced in the future bans a public figure marrying a foreigner, with a view to bar Daw Aung San Suu Kyi becoming the President or the Prime Minister.

Had the delegates done the same in 1975-76, there was a possibility that Ne Win would have awarded death penalty to the members of National Convention, because at that time U Ne Win married a foreigner. At that time Maung Pe Nge was sentenced to life imprisonment as he wrote in his book " paddy after paddy, wife after wife" reflecting U Ne Win's many marriages.

A new generation of officers has quietly come to power led by Secretary One, General Khin Nyunt in an obscure think-tank called the Office of Strategic Studies, or OSS. They are more sophisticated than their elders and may be more dangerous to the pro-democratic opposition group. It has an ambitious programme to rid the government of its most corrupt ministers, revitalise the country's economy, and improve junta's international image by creating professional lobbyist in Washington. They are dedicated to keeping the military in power, but with a more sophisticated approach.

Founded in 1994, the OSS has proved to be much more than other strategic-studies institutes and think tanks found elsewhere in the region. It has links with intelligence groups in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, China and Pakistan. It has strengthened Khin Nyunt's regional standing before and after Burma joined ASEAN in July 1997.

"The OSS advises the Foreign Ministry and tells the Information Ministry what to say. It directs ethnic affairs and Burma's drug policy, apart from keeping a watchful eye on opposition within and outside the country. It has even organised seminars in Rangoon to map out economic policies. In effect, it is the government." (Far Eastern Economic Review, May 7, 1998 by Bertil Lintner).

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Chapter-41

The Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)

Introduction:

The international community is well aware that the 3.5 million peace-loving Muslims of Arakan known as *"Rohingya"* have long been subjected to large-scale persecution, genocide, ethnic-cleansing, diabolical tyranny and extermination particularly by the successive Burmese autocratic regimes, the worst being the present State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) military regime. They are also made largest target of other widespread human right violations, including rape, summery execution, torture, slave labour, restriction on movement, forcible dispossession and seizure of their land, denial of their citizenship, compelling them to become stateless or refugees. As a result about 1.5 million of Rohingyas have been expelled or have to leave their ancestral homeland for their lives.

In the face of the rapidly deteriorating situation of the Rohingya threatening their very existence and daunting challenges thrown upon them by the military junta, all Rohingya organisations have strongly felt that the total unity of the Rohingya people is indispensable. Thus the three Rohingya organisations -- Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) led by Nurul Islam, Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) led by Dr. Mohammed Yunus and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) led by Professor Mohammed Zakaria -- having common outlook towards all national, political and ideological matters, have united together and merged into a single organisation

namely **Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO)** on 11th December, 1998 to serve the cause of their people.

Declaration of ARNO:

Having established this broad-based organisation with the unanimous and unflinching support of the Rohingya people to translate their hopes and aspirations so as to shape and charter their own destiny in accordance with their free will, hereby declare:

(1) **That** the struggle of the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) is to achieve the right of self-determination of the Rohingya people. This struggle is but a continuation of Rohingya people's long and heroic resistance movement. We the Rohingya people will remain steadfast and never lower or resistance till final victory.

(2) **That** the Burmese military junta has been indulging in religious persecution as a means of Barmanizing the country. Much of this persecution has historically targeted Muslims, however Christians and Hindus have also been subjected to harassment. We continued to the preservation and growth of Islamic culture among our people without prejudice to the preservation and growth of other religious and indigenous culture in our homeland.

(3) **That** the Muslim community in the rest of Burma are also oppressed and persecuted. In 1997 alone, over 40 mosques had been destroyed in organised campaigns of looting by the military and planned anti-Muslim riots in central Burma. The military has rejected to acknowledge the Burmese citizenship of the Muslim refugees in Thailand and refused to receive them back unless they are converted to Buddhism. We strongly condemn this act of religious persecution and bigotry and urge upon the international community to protect the rights of the racial and religious

minorities in Burma. We will try every possible course of action for their civil and political rights.

(4) **That** the Rohingya masses, whether in the homeland or in the places of refuge, comprise one national front They are an integral part of the Islamic Ummah as well as part of third world and of the oppressed colonised humanity everywhere in the world.

(5) **That** about half of our population has been expelled from the country in order to annihilate the Rohingya people. Many of these uprooted people are now taking shelter in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, other Middle-east countries and Malaysia. They are still hoping to return to their ancestral homeland of Arakan. Renewed flows of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh is continuing due to increased incidences of forced relocation, pervasive use of forced labour, torture, rape and other atrocities where the villagers are suffering famine. We will take all effective measures for their honourable repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration in Arakan. We are very much grateful to the peoples and Governments of the countries of their refuge for their great magnanimity, help and sympathy towards these unfortunate people with a request to help them continue a peaceful-living, on humanitarian grounds, until a congenial atmosphere is created for their safe return to their centuries-old motherland.

(6) **That** we will organise, inspire and activate the entire Rohingya people, irrespective of their present places of residence or refuge. We will undertake necessary steps to train and motivate the Rohingyas for improving their basic human qualities and consciousness.

(7) **That** we will undertake all programmes that may be needed from time to time for the uplift of the Rohingya people in socio-cultural, economic, educational and technical fields.

(8) **That** the military regime is trying to obliterate and erase Muslim entity in Arakan by distorting historical facts, destroying archaeological remains, mosques, madarassahs, shrines and graveyards in Arakan and Burma in order to wipe out the Islamic cultural heritage of Arakan. The regime is deliberately tampering with the actual figure of our people. They are engaged in statistical genocide in an efforts to make our people look few, small and insignificant as part of an evil design to deny us of our rights and prepare the minds of the peoples of the world for the appalling consequence of genocide. We shall leave no stone unturned to preserve Rohingya's history and cultural heritage and to maintain and reveal their actual population figure.

(9) **That** we will establish a welfare society based on equality, liberty, democracy, human rights and freedom for all people, without distinction as to race, colour and religion. Economic deprivation, exploitation, injustice and discrimination of any kind will be eradicated.

(10) **That** the military junta known as State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) is clinging on power by brutally suppressing country's opposition democratic forces and denying all the people of Burma their aspirations for human security, rights and freedom, democracy and economic development. The military is the root cause of all miseries and sufferings of the Burmese people. In fact, SPDC has become one of the most abusive regimes in Asia and is an illegitimate regime ruling the country against the will of the Burmese people. We are determined to continue struggle, hand in hand with other compatriots and country's democratic forces, to put this military regime to an end.

(11) **That** Rohingyas are peace-loving people and believe in the principle of peaceful co-existence. It is irrefutable historical truth that the two sister communities of Arakan -- Rohingyas and Rakhine -- had lived together in perfect

amity for centuries. The ruling junta is playing the inherited "*devide and rule policy*" among them to weaken and enslave them forever, We would like to extend our hands of friendship and co-operation to our sister community and work hand in glove with them in the interest of all people of Arakan, including that of the highlanders distributed among different tribes -- such as Chin, Mro, Khami, Dainnet, Thet etc., -- so as to charter their future against the machination of the enemies.

(12) **That** since Burma's independence, the spirit of the Union of Burma or the principle of *"unity in diversity"* has been undermined resulting in fratricidal civil war of long 50 years continuing till today. We believe that Burma's diverse ethnic issues and problems can only be solved through a meaningful dialogue among the military junta, the democratic opposition forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and representatives of the different ethnic groups, including that of the Rohingya people. Over and above, peace can only be established in Burma when the country is transformed into a welfare state, based on federalism where equality, justice, humanity, fundamental human rights and freedom will perpetually prevailed the *right of self-determination* of all ethnic peoples in guaranteed. In this connection, we reiterate that *self-determination* of the Rohingya people is a *sine qua non* for a permanent solution of their long-standing problem.

(13) **That** Burma is a resourceful country. In spite of that Burma remains among the least developed and backward countries in the region. Educational institutes universities and colleges remain closed off and on, without certainty. Burma's education system is failing both students and teachers and the country has futile chances of producing skilled work force, The spread of AIDS and communicable disease are out of control and alarmingly affecting the Burmese people. Without the timely removal of the

autocratic military regime, the future of Burmese people will be doomed forever. In this connection, we reiterate to struggle together with the Burmese opposition and democratic forces to put this dastardly military rule to an end once and for all.

(14) **That** Bangladesh is our neighbourly country which practically shares the experience of tragedy besetting the Rohingya people. Having deep traditional and historical relationship in the bonds of Islamic fraternity and contiguity in geographical position, the people of Bangladesh have had the opportunity to closely view the historical process that led to the present position of the Rohingyas. Besides, the atrocities upon Rohingyas have a direct affect on her, particularly a huge number of Rohingyas have been taking refuge in Bangladesh over the decades to escape persecution at home. We are thankful to Bangladesh for providing food and shelter to our refugees, We, however, believe that Bangladesh, being a neighbourly Muslim country, has historical and moral obligation to endeavour for a permanent solution of the Rohingya problem.

(15) **That** we are concerned about the attitudes of the ASEAN countries towards Burmese military regime. We urged upon the ASEAN leaders to review their policy on Burma with the SPDC and to adopt a *new direction* for the welfare and in the interest of the Burmese people. Particularly, the ASEAN leaders should not allow the military to perpetuate their brutalities, deprivation, injustice and insult to Islam and Muslims and other minorities in Burma.

(16) **That** international community is well aware that landmines is one of the most dangerous and barbaric weapons which is serious threat to humanity. Although campaign to ban landmines has achieved unprecedented attention, landmines continue to be a threat to the wild lives and common people of both sides of the Burma-Bangladesh border, including

refugees resulting in the death and injuries. Now fears has gripped the bordering villages of both Arakan and Bangladesh. Burma military also planted landmines at the Burma-India border and occurred frequent explosion, died and injured many people. We condemn the SPDC for lying of landmines and making the border area a *"death trap"*. We urge upon the international community to pressurise the SPDC to immediately clean up landmines laid by its armed forces and stop further lying of the same.

(17) **That** it is well known that the Rohingya women and girls have borne the brunt of oppression by Burma's military regime. The soldiers and officers of that regime in systematic campaigns have most horrendously abused them. We salute the female Rohingya's courageous efforts to survive, even as refugees, widows and orphans. For the future, we support the rights of Rohingya women and girls to education, health and economic empowerment, in a new atmosphere of utmost respect and absolute safety and security.

(18) **That** as the dangerous narcotics flowing out of Burma with its military regime's full involvement poses a terrible hardship to all people of Asia and the world, we oppose this deadly trade. We will educate our youth of the dangers of drug (including AIDS infection) and firmly obstruct any such narcotics trafficking through our land.

(19) **That** we call for a halt to the present grievous ravaging of the forests of our homeland by greedy exploiters and the Burmese military regime. For our future generations' heritage we pledge to protect out environment, including forests, rivers, wetlands, Coastline Ocean. We shall save our land from unsustainable logging, killing of endangered species, all forms of pollution, and over-fishing, to preserve a green haven for our children and the world.

(20) **That** we reject and boycott against all multinational corporate investment with the Burmese military regime. In the future of our land, any investment and development must only be done with the wishes and welfare of our people in mind and with their full informed consent and oversight. Future development must be sustainable, appropriate, clean, and beneficial to the common people.

(21) **That** we appeal for all-out support of the international community, the Governments of the world and World bodies, including United Nations Organisation (UNO), Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), non-aligned Movement (NAM), South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), ASEAN, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), other humanitarian and human rights Organisations.

Dated 13th December 1998.

Sd/ (Nurul Islam)

President

Central Committee

Arakan Rohingya National Organisation,

Arakan (Burma).

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Chapter-42

Rohingya Autonomous State of North Arakan

The principal political effect of the "Peace Committee of North Arakan," was that it made the Muslims of Arakan autonomy conscious. The promise of British to create a Muslim national area doubled their desire for a Muslim state. Anthony Irwin writes in his "Burmese Outpost," "Their future is in our hands, we have a chance of making a happy people and a fair state out of Arakan. Any fairness, kindness will be repaid us one hundred fold. I would very often wonder whether the fairness and help that they have shown us will be repaid as fully as it would have been had the boot been on the other foot."

In order to bolster the tremendous sacrifice rendered to the British, they promised them that they would make North Arakan a "Muslim National Area," while taking over power of administration from the President of the Peace Committee of North Arakan, Mr. Omrah Meah, by the British. The demand of 'Muslim State' was put to Rees William Commission without good result.

"To form an autonomous Muslim State named North Arakan, comprising Buthidaung, Rathedaung and Maungdaw townships from the west of Kaladan River upto the eastern part of the Naf River that will remain under of the Union of Burma," was the demand of the Mujahid Party headed by Jafar Kawal, Abbas and Saleh Ahmed.

In 1949, Arakanese Magh communist leader Tun Aung Pru met Jafar Kawal and agreed to fight together until the fall of the

AFPFL's government with the understanding that Mujahid would take the western side of Kaladan River, whereas the rest of the Arakan would be under the control of Rakhine Communist.

At the end of April, 1954, a Mujahid Conference was held at Taungbru, Maungdaw Township which reiterated the demand of 'Autonomous state' of 4,000 sq. miles from the west bank of Kaladan to the east of Naf River. The government started negotiation with Kasim Raja. This time the government was in a mood to grant the Muslims a separate district which was turned down by the Mujahid saying, "An Autonomous State of North Arakan or nothing else."

In 1950, Moulana Muzaffar Ahmed, a leader of the "Anjuman-e-Muhajirin-e-Arakan" of the Rohingya refugee of Teknaf and Ukhiya of the then East Pakistan also demanded an autonomous state with the support of the Mujahid party of Abbas.

Also in 1950, the supporters of Kasim Raja convened a Muslim conference of Arakan. Zahirrudin Ahmed was elected as the Secretary General of the conference. Mr. Zahirrudin wrote many open letters to U Nu, the then Prime Minister of Burma demanding an autonomous Muslim state of North Arakan.

In response to the submission of constitution amendment bill with regard to grant "Rakhine Prayney"(Arakan State) in the parliament on February 22, 1956 by U Ba Mying of Rambree constituency, Mr. Abul Baser (Buthidaung-South) strongly opposed saying, "Mr. Speaker, there shall be communal riots if the state is granted. If the government would grant state, we request not to include Maungdaw and Buthidaung in the Rakhine State and keep it as a separate district under the direct control of the central government."

On 1 May 1961 the government created the Mayu frontier Administration area covering Maungdaw, Buthidaung and the western part of Rathidaung townships. It was military

administration not autonomous rule, but as it did not involve subordination to the Rakhine authorities the arrangement earned the support of Rohingya community.

In 1962 the government drafted a bill for Arakan statehood excluding Mayu area in the territory projected Arakan State. General Ne Win overthrew the democratically elected popular government on 2 March 1962. The revolutionary government of Ne Win cancelled the plan to grant statehood to Rakhine. But the Mayu Frontier Administration remained till it was put under the Ministry of Home Affairs in February 1, 1964.

In 1960, the Rohingya Jamiatul Ulema presented a memorandum to the inquiry committee, appointed by the then Prime Minister U Nu, to look into all the aspects of the Arakan question. It stated that the Muslims of that area were a separate racial group, which constituted an absolute majority, and demanded the creation of an autonomous region.

Mr. Sultan Mahmud, Health Minister in U Nu's government had demanded a Muslim State comprising the region from the Kaladan River to the Naf River. Muslim State was the platform of election campaigns of Mr. Sultan Mahmud and his colleagues in 1960 election. They won all five seats of North Arakan with the slogan of Muslim State. The coup d-etat of Gen. Ne Win shattered the demand of the "Muslim State" of North Arakan.

The demand of the Rohingya Independence Force RIF (1964-1973) was also an autonomous state of North Arakan within the Federal Union of Burma. The demand of the Rohingya Patriotic Front was "Due Share" with Burman, Shan, Kachin, Karen, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, Kayah and other ethnic minorities of the Union of Burma.

According to its manifesto, the objective of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) was to establish a Rohingya Autonomous State because they believe that the inalienable rights of the

Rohingyas can only be restored through establishing such an autonomous state.

The manifesto of Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF) explains that the Rohingya would struggle until their rights to self-determination is achieved.

According to its declaration, "the struggle of the Arakan Rohingya National Organisation (ARNO) is to achieve the right of self-determination of the Rohingya people. This struggle is but a continuation of Rohingya people's long and heroic resistance movement. Since Burmese independence, the spirit of the Union of Burma or the principal of "Unity in diversity" has been undermined resulting in fratricidal civil war of long 50 years continuing till today. Peace can only be established in Burma when the country is transformed into a welfare state, based on federalism where equality, justice, humanity, fundamental human rights and the rights of self-determination of all ethnic peoples is granted. Self-determination of the Rohingya people is a *sine qua non* for a permanent solution of their long standing problem".

Rohingya Homeland

Rohingyas inhabited in a contiguous area and therefore have a separate territory, which is the most crucial element in a national identity. The Rohingya population in North Arakan is united by ancient heritage. They have lived for many centuries within well-defined geographical boundaries, which demarcate their traditional Homeland. The group identity of the Muslim Rohingya people has grown over the past several centuries.

Despite systematic extermination of Rohingya population by means of genocidal actions and continuous persecution, the Rohingyas still predominate in the majestic Mayu valley between the Kaladan River and the Naf River. But the Rohingyas still claim that all those areas which have been inhabited by Muslims or at least that included within their

sphere of influence before the pogrom of 1942 are also counted in their Traditional Homeland.

The whole area of Rohingya homeland is inhabitable and economically viable. Marine and agricultural products are in abundance. The land is fertile and productive and still covered with tropical rain forests. Underneath the land and sea are vast quantities of mineral resources, including petroleum and gas.

It is surprising that, with the exception of a few, the Maghs are always lending support to the anti-Rohingya and de-Muslimization policies of the successive military governments of Burma. They have become instruments in the anti-Rohingya operations, oppressions and are feeling charm over the agonies and sub-human condition of the Rohingyas. They are scrambling to grab the lands and properties of the Rohingyas. They claim that Arakan belongs to them alone. Their idea is totalitarian domination of Arakan by the Magh extremist and to subvert the Rohingya politico-economic and socio-cultural identity by depriving them of not only their traditional source of livelihood but also their Islamic and indigenous culture, supplanting them with Buddhist culture. Now many parts of Arakan, including the border areas, have been depopulated to be replaced by the Buddhists of both inside and outside Burma, under the so-called human barrier policy. Holy places, historical monuments and relics have been replaced with monasteries, pagodas with a view also to changing the Muslim character of Arakan by making imaginary fictions as real history.

Today Rohingyas are reduced to the position of "stateless" in their own homeland. They have to face ideological assaults from all directions. In addition to rapid establishment of Buddhist settlements, demolition of mosques, religious sacrileges etc. have endangered further erosion of Rohingya identity and culture:

Article 5 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

The Rohingyas are a social group, characterised by objective elements of common language, who acquired a subjective, consciousness of oneness and have, in addition, enduring relationship to a defined territory. So, They constitute a PEOPLE in international law, having their right to self-determination.

The rights of all nations to self-determination are a key principle of international law. Unless it is observed in practice, no nation or ethnic groups and hence no individuals forming them can be free. That is why the realisation of the Right to self determination is an essential prerequisite and condition for securing people's fundamental rights and freedom Articles (1) and (2) of the International covenant on civil and political rights provide that all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that they may freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

In 1948, the UN General Assembly expressed concern over the "fate of minorities". In 1950, "the sub-commission for the protection of minorities" completed its draft to what was to become article 27 of the international convenient on Civil and Political Rights:

"Persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their groups, to enjoy their own culture, to progress and practice their own religion or to use their own language."

The Human Rights Committee has rejected a minimalist interpretation of Article 27 as imposing an obligation on state parties merely to refrain from activities interfering in the enjoyment of the rights under Article 27. It has emphasised the obligation of states to take positive measures to ensure the

survival and development of the cultures, language and religions of the minorities concerned. In a general comment on Article 27 adopted on 6th April 1994, the committee stated that the article "does recognise the existence of a 'right' and that: Positive measures by states may .... be necessary to protect the identity of a minority and the rights of the members. Accordingly, positive measures by states may also be necessary to protect the identity of the minority and rights of its members to enjoy and develop their culture and language and to practice their religion, in community with other members of the group."

The jurisprudence of the Human Rights Committee suggests that Article 27 can be of assistance in compelling states parties to recognise and secure the special relationship of indigenous people with their land, and to recognise the cultural importance and protect the enjoyment of indigenous economic activities.

A series of "views" pursuant to the *Optional Protocol* demonstrated how Article 27 might be invoked by indigenous people to secure a measure of autonomy in their traditional territories. In these decisions, the Human Rights Committee has confirmed the legitimacy of systems of special rights to ensure the cultural survival of indigenous collectivises.

In 1988, the UN Sub-commission for the Protection of Minorities called for more protection of minorities. Especially significant has been the recent experimentation with various forms of autonomy, devolution, or self-government for indigenous peoples and minorities in countries as diverse as Nicaragua, the Philippines, Norway and Bangladesh. Nur Misuari, the Chairman of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Philippines government negotiator Manuel Yan signed the peace accord in the middle of September 1996. With the signing in Bangladesh of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) agreement in February 1998, thousands of tribal insurgents, who spent a life of hit and run in a rough terrain and in the deep forest hope to start a new life. The refugees undergoing an

anguished life in India will have returned to their hearth and home, while arms surrender has taken place phase wise. The international community and human rights groups have appreciated the conclusion of the negotiated settlement on the issue, and some western countries have pledged funds for the development of the region. It is indeed a good outcome, which should be followed by the ruling junta of Burma in dealing with the case of Rohingyas.

With the beginning of the 20th Century the Rohingya have been oppressed, repressed and exterminated by the Burmese and Rakhine people, the worst by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). However, they have been existing through thick and thin, keeping no stone unturned exploring all venues for a lasting solution to their long-standing problem so as to live peacefully and honourably in their ancestral home land of Arakan with all human dignity and rights.

Unfortunately, the SLORC military regime has totally denied the Rohingya people's rights to exist in Arakan; the chief reason is that they are Muslims. Time and again they are driven across the border to Bangladesh like the forced exodus of 1978 and 1992.

With a view to protecting the legitimate rights of Rohingya Muslims of Arakan while upholding the principle of peaceful co-existence with other national groups it is imperative for Rohingya to exercise rights of self-determination within a Burmese federation. Rohingya's demand for a separate autonomous state in North Arakan is only means to keep secure their historical image and entity as Muslims and the only way to solve the Rohingya problem. The demand for the Rohingya autonomous state is, interalia, based on the following grounds:

1. They have lived for many centuries within a well defined geographical boundaries which demarcate their Traditional Homeland;

The Rohingyas inhabit in a contiguous area and therefore have a separate territory, which is the most crucial element in a national identity and an important characteristic for statehood. The group identity of the Rohingya people has grown over the past thousand of years, where they worked together, spoke to each other, founded their villages, towns and cities and educated their children.

2. Rohingyas have a history of glorious past. From 1430 to 1638, for more than two hundred years, the Muslims ruled Arakan. The system of government was of that of Muslim Sultanate as was current in those days. It was an independent Muslim kingdom in 14th and 15th centuries according to the "Time Atlas of the World History" edited in 1979 by Geoffrery Burraclough.

   From 1665 to 1710 Muslims were the king makers of Arakan. The political role of Arakan was completely in their hands. Ten kings were crowned and de-throned by them. There were Prime Ministers, Judicial Ministers, and Ministers, and judges who were Muslims in the court of Arakan. Since the fall of Chittagong in 1665 A.D north Arakan became a majority Muslims area, which became predominantly Muslim after 1710. According to Dr. Than Tun there were Rohingya kings in the Mayu valley who were the friends of kings of Ava the fact of which is proved by the Kyaukza (stone inscription) of 1442.

3. Rohingyas have a separate language; their language is an admixture of Bengali, Arabic, Persian and Maghi Rakhine.

4. Rohingyas constitute more than 90% of the population of North Arakan.

5. The Rohingyas are an indigenous people in Arakan or Burma with a distinct culture very different from that of other groups in Burma.

6. The Rohingya stand on the same footing as the other indigenous national groups such as, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karen, Kaya, Mon and Rakhine etc. having all the requisite qualifications to govern themselves.

7. Over and above a separate Autonomous state for the Rohingya is an issue for their survival; not just physical survival, but survival with their distinct identity. Establishing a Rohingya autonomous state can only restore the inalienable rights of the Rohingyas.

Appendix-1

Rohingyas are not British Era Settlers

Summery of the Facts

The article of Sayyid Anwarul Karim published in the Independent Daily on 10-8-97 is interesting and informative. But his view about Rohingyas as British settlers is quite contrary to the real facts. The following historical facts prove that the Rohingyas are indigenous people of Arakan. "Muslims arrived and settled since last 1000 to 1200 years in Burma" (The SLORC Publication ' Thasana Yongwa Htoonkazepo' p.65).

"Many Arab ships wrecked near Rambree Island of Arakan coast during the reign of Mahataing Sanda (788-810) and the crews and the traders of those ships were Muslims and they were sent to the Arakan proper and settled in villages, where the married local women.According to history, Islam came through the sea borne Sufis and merchants. These were testified by the *darghas* (shrines) which are dotted at the long coast of Arakan and Burma (British-Burma Gazetteers of 1879 page 16.) "The superior morality of those devout Muslims attracted large number of people towards Islam who embraced it enmasse" (The essential History of Burma by U Kyi P.160).

"In 1430 A.D. Jalaluddin Mohammad Shah, the king of Bengal, sent Gen. Wali Khan at the head of 50,000 soldiers to conquer Arakan. Wali Khan drove the Burman and took control of power over Arakan for himself, introduced Persian as the court language of Arakan and appointed Muslim judges (Qazis)". (Bangladesh District Gazetteers P.63).

"Jalaluddin sent a second army under Gen. Sandi Khan who overthrew Wali Khan and restored Sulayman Shah to the throne of Arakan in 1430 A.D. From 1430 to 1638 Arakan was a

Muslim state with a modern civilisation which resulted in renaissance" (Journal of Burma Research Society (JBRS) No.2. P.493).

"From 1430 A.D. Arakan was ruled by the Muslims" ("The Arrival of Islam in Burma" by Zaya Kyaw Tin U Ba Shin P.5). "Muslim kingdom of Arakan was independent in the 14th and 15th centuries" ("Time Atlas of the World History", edited in 1979 by Geoffrey Barraclough P.33).

It had been reported that all the children born to the Dutch of Arakanese mothers were being brought up as Muslims (JBRS No.2 P.86).

"The Mohammadans of Arakan were mostly the descendants of the slaves captured by Burmans and Arakanese kings in wars and were settled in Kyauktaw and Mrohaung Townships" (RB Smarts P.87).

"In addition to the Muslim prisoners and slaves brought to Arakan from Bengal and even from North India, many more came to serve as mercenaries in the Arakanese army usually as the king's body guards" (Siddiq Khan, op Cit: P.25).

Dr. Than Tun, the rector of Mandalay University and professor of history wrote that "The kings of Arakan had Muslim titles, The Muslim kings mentioned in the Kyaukza (stone plates or stones tablets inscriptions of 1442) might be Rohingyas from the Mayu valley of the eastern Naf River (and the western Kaladan River) who claimed their existence of over thousand years. Their existence might be from the time of 1202 C.E. when their co-religious Muslim conquered Bengal, that is 800 years. It was written in the Kyaukza of 1442 that there were some Muslim kings of Arakan who were very friendly with the kings of Ava". (Dr. Luce G.H., "Kyan (Chun)" Mru and Kumi (N.Arakan)," phases of pre-Pagan Burma languages and history, Oxford, SOAS, 1985-76-97). (Dr. Than Tun -Kalya Magazine - P.27-28, 1994, August).

In 1660 A.C. the Mogul Prince Shah Shuja fled to Arakan. This important event brought a new wave of Muslim immigrants to the kingdom of Arakan. Shah Shuja, his family members and everyone found wearing beard had been beheaded by the king of Arakan for his lust for his daughter and his wish to molest the prince's riches.

From 1665 to 1710 the Muslims of Arakan became the king makers of Arakan. In 1666 the Mughal army captured Chittagong and Ramu from the rule of Maghs. During their retreat to Mrohaung the Magh army units were attacked by the local Muslims. The Maghs migrated to Mrohaung side, east of the Kaladan, and the Muslims from the east of Kaladan migrated to the Mayu valley since 1710. Thus from the Kaladan to the Naf the whole Mayu valley became a purely Muslim area.

In 1785 when Burmese king Bodaw conquered Arakan many people crossed to Bengal. Captain Cox settled some of them in a place, which was later known as Cox's Bazaar.

At the time when British conquered Arakan in 1825, half of the population of Arakan was Muslims. Some of the people who migrated to Bengal 40 years ago due to political upheaval started to return to their former homes in Arakan. Hence, the population of Arakan increase rapidly and now Muslim constitute 90% of population in north Arakan.

Appendix: 2

The speech delivered by Brigadier Aung Gyi, Vice Chief of Staff

(8-7-61 - *Myanmar Alin*" page 5-6)

I want to speak a little in this arms laying down ceremony (at Maungdaw, July 4, 1961) of the resistance group who are fighting in the name of revolution since the independence of Burma.

Rohingya means

First and foremost, I want to say about the people of Mayu District. Pakistan is at the western side of this district. Both the people of the western sides of border are Muslims. The people of the west of the border are called Pakistani. The people of the east, who are in Burma, are called Rohingyas. I want to clear that it is not the only border where same people live in two countries; the same case is in Chinese border too. For example, in Kachin State there is Lesu in Burmese side, also there is Lesu in China too. As there is Eikaw in Burmese side and also in China side. As there is Lawa in Burmese side there is also Lawa in China. In this way as there is Shan in Burma, there is Thai in China side. They speak same language both inside Thailand and Burma. In this way the people of same religion are in Pakistan side and Rohingyas in Burma.

Resolve Decisively

In this meeting of all walks of people I want to say clearly. The people in our side may have relatives in that side. But they are Pakistanis. The people of the border must take decisive

decision. For example, when we have a look at Kachin State, some relatives of the Kachin are in China side, they are Chinese and those Kachin who are in Burma are Burmese. Some may be brother-in-laws. But the relative cannot naturally alter the nationalities of their respective countries. In this way the Rohingyas of our side must be faithful to the Union of Burma and the people of the western side of the border must be faithful to the government of Pakistan. I want to say the attending elders of the towns of Mayu District and comrades that there may be relatives, in-laws and children of the comrades in Pakistan. But you are the nationals of the Union of Burma. You must decide firmly to be faithful to the Union and your relatives must be faithful to the Pakistan though you are here. I request to do so and to explain it to all your near and dear ones.

An act of error

In this regard I want to say about a past history. Previously, as you know, the people of Burma regard this Rohingya people as Mujahids and Muslims who wanted to join with Pakistan. So people of this region thought, being Muslims, they should join with Pakistan. With this view they launched political movement, as Sudukstan of Germany, to join with Pakistan. As a matter of fact it is impossible and also against the nature. What had happened in Germany was happened before the Great War. It was no more after the War. The policy of Pakistan is very right. For example, in the case of Kyi-Kyun they did not demand it. When Pakistan is not even demanding Kyi Kyun they would never think about the Mayu District to join with East Pakistan. In this way the people of China cannot demand Kachin State to join with Yunan giving the reason that there are Kachin people in China's Yunan province. There is no such thing in this time. Some people of Burma proper failed to recognise the people of this region as indigenous. Some people of this part may have longed for Pakistan. These are all mistakes of some people of Burma and some people of this region.

Minority Race

So, today I will declare openly that from this very time we will regard (the people of) Mayu District as an indigenous race of the Union of Burma, I do declare it clearly. The people of this region must also regard themselves as an indigenous minority race of Burma. Then only this part of the country will be in peace and prosperous. You should forget our previous mistakes. For example, there may be the burning of the villages in operations. It may be due to unavoidable circumstances. If this happened please forget it. From this time you must regard yourselves as the people of the Union. "We must be faithful, the country is Union of Burma, we are a minority group of the Union". Then only this region will be in peace and prosperous. If there are people who do not understand it, I request the attending political parties, religious parties, Molvies, elders, ex-Mujahid comrades to try to change their minds and views. In future, as a minority race of the Union of Burma, in your efforts for peace, development, education and health, we will render full co-operation with you. This is the first thing I want to tell you.

Like real relatives

Secondly, I want to say about the programme of the development of this area by our army. As you know, the population of Mayu District is four to five lakhs. The occupation is only cultivation of narrow strip. The population is too much greater in comparison to lands for cultivation. Consumption is greater making the people automatically poor. You are poor. Most of the people of this area are poor. One cannot effort more than two or three longyis. We have approximate estimation for the development of this area as we feel your poverty as that of us as you are part and parcel of us. The economic development of this area will be carried out the Mayu Frontier Administration as if they are your real relatives, and you should corporate with

them. We will discharge our duty taking you as if you are our own relatives.

Economic Development

You and we the administrative officials may have different religions, different traditions. In a country, it is not a big issue to have different religions, different traditions and different languages. Such kind of differences does exist in America, England, Russia, China, India, and Pakistan and in every country. But they worked together. You should also work together for the development keeping aside our differences without taking it as big issue, as if we are real relatives. Frontier Administration is ready to work hard for your development.

The most important thing is the security of this area. Without the security it will be very difficult for development even though we work very hard. The first important thing is the security. The second important is also peace and security of the rural area of this region. For the security of the area, the Rohingya nationals, Rohingya leaders and Rohingya religious leaders should inform the army and government. If possible fight against the rebel. If possible, wage war joining with the army.

It is an Order

In this way when defence is carried out the strength of the remaining rebel forces will become weak and the rural area will be in peace. When there is peace we can effectively work for the development of this area. We can try our best for the economic development of this area in every angle. Which I am telling here is an order to the in charge army officers of the frontier Administration such as, Col. Soe Myint, Col. Ye Goung. In army such an instruction is an order. This is the difference between the political speech from the dais and the speech in army. In army such instruction is followed by the subordinate officers like an order. So when we tell or even before telling we

start to work. The Frontier Administration will work hard for the economic development of the people of this area.

We will support the culture and religious matters of this area. Well, from this time on ward, we will help, protect and defend the religion of this people, which I want you to believe it without any reservation.

APPENDIX- 3

Address Presented to His Excellency Thakin Nu, Prime Minister, Union of Burma, on his visit to Maungdaw on the 10th March 1950, by the Rohingya elders of North Arakan

The Rohingya elders of North Arakan submitted the following 22-points to His Excellency Thakin Nu, the Prime Minister of Union of Burma:

1. To withdraw the BTFs and UMPs and prejudicial police officers.
2. To dispatch to Maungdaw and Buthidaung at least two companies of Kachins, Chins or Gurkha Rifles to fight against the Insurgents – so-called Mujahids.
3. To raise Homeguards from our people to assist the military under military control for the suppression of Mujahids.
4. Immediate declare of a New District of the Rohingya populated area consisting of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathidaung townships with its Headquarters at Maungdaw.
5. The posting of an impartial Burmese, or Anglo-Burmese Deputy Commissioner and a District Superintendent of Police to this newly created District.
6. To enforce the Provisions of the Democratisation Act 1949 to this newly created District.
7. To replace all the Arakanese officials for the suppression of Mujahids of Maungdaw and Buthidaung by impartial Burmese or Anglo-Burmese officers for the time being.

8. To place this newly created District immediately under the direct control of the Commissioner of Arakan Division or the Government on the same line as Naga Hills District, Gangaw and Saw and Pauk Townships of the Pokkoku District.

9. Immediate official declaration of Muslims of north Arakan as Rohingyas.

10. Inclusion of all the Rohingyas, including the refugees now in Pakistan in the Electoral Rolls for the coming General Election.

11. Allotment of at least five seats for Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships in the Chamber of Deputies and two seats in the Chamber of Nationalities on the basis of population.

12. To provide proper and adequate educational facilities for the Rohingyas.

13. To take proper censuses under the supervision of an impartial Burmese and Anglo-Burmese officer.

14. Recruitment of loyal Muslims in Army, Navy, Police forces and civil services.

15. The Rohingyas may no longer be the victims of the differential treatment because of their religion.

16. To rehabilitate and repatriate the refugees immediately to be in time for general election.

17. To take drastic action against the unruly forces and officials according to law.

18. To try and release all the Muslim detainees.

19. An enquiry commission may immediately be appointed to inquire into the atrocities committed on the people.

20. To appoint a Rohingyas refugee and Relief officer to look after the refugees in Pakistan and another for refugees in Maungdaw and Buthidaung.

21. To put an immediate stop to the forced rations from the people which has been enforced for the last two years.

22. If the rest of Arakan is given a Separate State, the area comprising Maungdaw Buthidaung and Rathidaung Townships may be created a separate State on the same lines or be placed under direct control of the Union of Burma.

10th March 1950.

We ever remain loyal servants

of the Union of Burma,

The Rohingya Elders of North Arakan.



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ABBREVIATIONS

ABSDF:	All Burma Students Democratic Front
ABSU:	All Burma Students Union
AFPFL:	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League
AHS:	Arakan Historical Society
AIR:	Rohingya Independent Army
ARIF:	Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front
ARNO:	Arakan Rohingya National Organisation
BBS:	Burma Broadcasting Services
BIA:	Burma Independence Army
BSPP:	Burma Socialist Programme Party
CPB:	Communist Party of Burma
NDPH:	National Democratic Party for Human Rights
NLD:	National League For Democracy
R.C:	Revolutionary Council, founded by Ne Win, after the 1962 coup.
RNA:	Rohingya National Alliance Rohingya National Army
RIF:	Rohingya Independence Force
RPF:	Rohingya Patriotic Front
RSO:	Rohingya Solidarity Organisation
RUSU:	Rangoon University Students Union; founded on1931, crushed during the 7 July students' demonstration.
SLORC:	The State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC:	State Peace and Development Council

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THE ROHINGYAS OF ARAKAN

Their quest for justice

"The Rohingyas of Arakan – Their quest for justice" is originally intended to write with a view to give light on the history of Rohingya and other indigenous races of the Union of Burma not only because of the distorted facts and machination made by some writers, who were instrumental during the reign of military rulers but also because no adequate research has been made on the back ground of this particular race. Once a distortion or hypothesis is accepted without sufficient ground or due to lack of strong argument from any side, it later becomes a history. It is, for this reason felt that such a book on Rohingya is needed for the historians, researchers and interested quarters. It is hoped that the book would help uncover the truth and dispel misunderstanding that earlier took in those interested to know on Rohingya and Arakan.

What has been happening in the Union of Burma under the military rule is beyond one's belief. Denying rights of ethnic minorities is well practiced. And above all, the junta has been obliterating the history of once glorious people. Historical establishments, antiques, monument sites, etc. were destroyed. The ethnicity of Rohingya in Arakan has been questioned. The general populace in Burma has been led to believe that the Rohingyas, who resembles the Bengalees are aliens while the people have still the memory of how the Rohingya was treated as an indigenous race, their language broadcast in the BBS (Burma Broadcasting Service) and their culture promoted during of the democratic rule in Burma.

In ancient Burma, Mon-Khamar, Tibeto-Burma, Thai-Chinese came from the north-east and settled down there. With the passage of time many more new races emerged out of those mixed blood. Similarly, in Arakan Rakhine and Rohingyas have been born with the arrival of the Aryan people from the north-west and their inter-marriage with the locals through the evolution of history.