

©Narinjara News 2005&2006
 Arakanpost, Issue-11 (Nov., 2005) & Issue-12, Jan., 2006



Article
The Arakanese Student and Youth Movements
 Series-9, Part-1
The People's Republic of Arakan and Her Concept
 by Shwe Lu Maung alias Shahnawaz Khan, Ph.D. (Wales, UK)

Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee put up the concept of the *People's Republic of Arakan* before the people of Burma in 1964. It gained instant popularity in Arakan and curiosity in Burma. The Burmese has heard of the Rakhaing's demand for a Rakhaing State, but the *People's Republic of Arakan* was a brand new concept to them. Even in Arakan, only about 15% of the population were familiar with the term and concept.

Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee was the founding Chairman of the Arakan Communist Party. He projected the People's Republic of Arakan on the political silver screen of Burma when General Ne Win's Revolutionary Government invited him and his party for a negotiation for cease-fire and peace. It was in 1963-64, two years after General Ne Win seized power from the hand of parliamentary Prime Minister U Nu. The military dictator emphasized that he wanted peace and national unity in order to transform Burma into a socialist republic. The citizens of Akyab trusted him to present the concept of the People's Republic of Arakan to the audience and he delivered his historic speech at a gathering of ten thousand people in the Mroona Cinema Hall at Akyab. The Cinema hall had a capacity of only six hundred. Most of the people were outside, on the streets in the neighborhood, listening to his powerful voice coming out from about one hundred loudspeakers. Later, I was told that it was all the loudspeakers available in Akyab at that time. It was such a wonderful moment.

I was very fortunate to meet him face to face and ask him the concept of the *People's Republic of Arakan* in 1964-67. His concept has great impact on my political thoughts. How does the concept of the People's Republic of Arakan differ from the late Kithi Hla Aung's concept of the *Union of the Republics of Burma*? How does it differ from the concept of Hlopauk Thit Kyaw's *New Democracy*? How does it differ from U Nu's *Independence Movement, Arakan*? How does it differ from my concept of the *Decolonization of Burma*? How does it differ from the concept of the *Federation of Thawantshanti* that I mentioned in

my earlier communication? I shall attempt to present my answer to these questions, to the readers, in this communication. (Note: Rakhaing stands for the Arakan Native Unity League, or Rakhaingpray Tarunthar Nyuntar in Aghweshok).

Background Scenario:
 When I discuss the concept of the *People's Republic of Arakan* in comparison with other Rakhaing political philosophy I will lay the foundation of my view on the following political philosophy and realities of life in Arakan and Burma.

1. Political Philosophy:
 I maintain that "Man is by nature a political animal", accepting the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who wrote the famous book "Politics", in 350 B.C. You can read it online at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>. As a political philosopher, I borrow from Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Rights* that you can read online at <http://www.constitution.org/jrl/3020a.htm>. In this communication I will try to discuss the concept of The People's Republic of Arakan in the frame of the following philosophy of Rousseau's *The Social Contract*.

01. "There will always be a great difference between submitting a multitude and ruling a society. Even if scattered individuals were successively enslaved by one man, however numerous they might be, I still see no more than a master and his slaves, and certainly not a people and its ruler; I see what may be termed an aggregation, but not an association: there is an *yet another public good not only possible, but necessary*." (Book 1, Chapter 5).

02. "The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem of which the *Social Contract* provides the solution. (Book 1, Chapter 6).

20 **ARAKANPOST**



The Arakanese Student and Youth Movements
 Series-9:
The People's Republic of Arakan and Her Concept
 SHWE LU MAUNG ALIAS SHAHNAWAZ KHAN, PH.D. (WALES, UK)

Continued from Previous Issue-11

Kyaw Zan Rhee and the British Education:
 Among the Rakhaing political leaders who shape our political thoughts and paths Kyaw Zan Rhee stands tall and prominent, and he will remain so such for the ages to come. Born in 1921 to Mr. And Mrs. Nya Tun Aung at Lamarkery village of Mumbra Township, he is a middle school graduate (i.e. the completion of Seventh Standard) of the British Education system. The middle school graduate in the days of British administration was considered as a significant achievement because it was the first time the Burmese were introduced to the modern education system. There were two kinds of the middle school graduates vernacular and English medium graduate. My parents were also the middle school graduates, my mother in vernacular system and my father in English medium system. After the graduation my mother went for primary school teacher training and my father continued in the Sowebo Technical School to become a graduate in Land Survey and Land Revenue. Therefore, in those days middle school graduation opened the door to the vocational and technical schools. Although just a middle school graduate, my father's English proficiency, in both written and spoken, was much superior to my present English. Incidentally, my mother's Burmese was superb, with deep knowledge in Pali and classic Burmese literature. That was the General Secretary of the Red Flag Burmese Communist Party, who translated the two volumes of Karl Marx's *Capital* into Burmese was only a matriculate (i.e. a sixth standard graduate). Seventy per cent of today's

Burmese political vocabularies was invented or innovated by him. Similarly, U Thant, who distinguished himself as the Secretary General of the United Nations (1962-1971), had an intermediate education, which is the equivalent of the British A-Level or American High School graduation. After I earned my doctorate degree, I came to greatly appreciate and value the educational standard of the British Burma and I felt so stupid that we abolished such an effective education system, by branding it as colonial. I was a junior faculty from 1968 to 1974, at Rangoon and Mandalay Universities. In the last thirty years (1970-2000), I met more than two thousand university graduates from Burma. Their basic knowledge in Burmese and English is poor and inferior to the Seventh Standard of the British colonial education system. It really is a national disgrace for the Burmese, especially in their military ranks. Fortunately, I was in the last batch to be graduated with an Honours Degree in old British system from Rangoon University in 1966.

The emphasis here is that the Seventh Standard or a middle school graduate of the British system is an educated person, not just a semi-educated person. Accordingly, we have to give due recognition to Kyaw Zan Rhee's educational background. I here would like to denounce the people who look down at Kyaw Zan Rhee as an uneducated or semi-educated hulk. (Note: I was very much sad and disappointed when the Rangoon University students disgraced the Burmese soldiers with the sarcastic quip, "Can three of you combined together pass the Seventh Standard?" on the night of the 7th of July 1962. In 1969, one soldier from that night told me that they were very angry at the students due to such an insult

21 **ARAKANPOST**

The Arakanese Student and Youth Movements
Series-9: The People's Republic of Arakan and Her concept
Part-I

Shwe Lu Maung *alias* Shahnawaz Khan, Ph.D. (Wales, UK)

Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee put up the concept of the *People's Republic of Arakan* before the people of Burma in 1964. It gained instant popularity in Arakan and curiosity in Burma. The Burmese has heard of the Rakhaing's demand for a Rakhaing State, but the *People's Republic of Arakan* was a brand new concept to them.

Even in Arakan, only about 15% of the population were familiar with the term and concept.

Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee was the founding Chairman of the Arakan Communist Party. He projected the People's Republic of Arakan on the political silver screen of Burma when General Ne Win's Revolutionary Government invited him and his party for a negotiation for cease-fire and peace. It was in 1963-64, two years after General Ne Win seized power from the hand of parliamentary Prime Minister U Nu. The military dictator emphasized that he wanted peace and national unity in order to transform Burma into a socialist republic. The citizens of Akyab invited him to present the concept of the People's Republic of Arakan to the audience and he delivered his historic speech to a gathering of ten thousand people in the Mroma Cinema Hall at Akyab. The Cinema hall has a capacity of only six hundred. Most of the people were outside, on the streets in the neighborhood, listening to his powerful voice coming out from about one hundred loudspeakers. Later, I was told that it was all the loudspeakers available in Akyab at that time. It was such a wonderful moment.

I was very fortunate to meet him face to face and ask him the concept of *the People's Republic of Arakan* in 1966-67. His concept has great impact on my political thoughts. How does the concept of the People's Republic of Arakan differ from Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung's concept of *the Union of the Republics of Burma*? How does it differ from the concept of Bonpauk Tha Kyaw's *New Democracy*¹? How does it differ from U Seinda's *Independent Sovereign Arakan*? How does it differ from *Ratanya's Rakhine State*? How does it differ from my concept of *the Decolonization of Burma*? How does it differ from the concept of *the Federation of Thuwannabhum*i that I mentioned in my earlier communication? I shall attempt to present my answer to these questions, to the readers, in this communication. (Note: Ratanya stands for the Arakan Natives Unity League, or Rakhinepray Tairunthar Nyinyut're Aphwechok).

Background Scenarios. When I discuss the concept of *the People's Republic of Arakan* in comparison with other Rakhing political philosophy I will lay the foundation of my views on the following political philosophy and realities of life in Arakan and Burma.

1. Political Philosophy. I maintain that "Man is by nature a political animal", accepting the philosophy of Aristotle (384-322 BCE), who wrote his famous book "*Politics*", in 350 BCE. You can read it online at <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>. As a political animal, I cherish Jean Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Rights* that you can read online at <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>. In this communication I will try to discuss the concept of The Peoples's Republic of Arakan in the frame of the following philosophy of Rousseau's *The Social Contract*.

(1). "*There will always be a great difference between subduing a multitude and ruling a society. Even if scattered individuals were successively enslaved by one man, however numerous they might be, I still see no more than a master and his slaves, and certainly not a people and its ruler; I see what may be termed an aggregation, but not an association; there is as yet neither public good nor body politic.*" (Book 1, Chapter 5).

(2). "*The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.*"

This is the fundamental problem of which the Social Contract provides the solution. (Book 1, Chapter 6).

(3). *"The passage from the state of nature to the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is forced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations."* (Book 1, Chapter 8).

The above excerpts are extracted from *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Rights* by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1762), translated by G.D. H. Coles, (public domain) at <http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon.htm>. Hutchins, Robert, ed; Cole, G. D. H., trans. *Great Books of the Western World: Montesquieu and Rousseau*. Britannica, 1952: pp.319-320. According to Hutchins, Robert, (ed; Cole, G. D. H., trans. *Great Books of the Western World: Montesquieu and Rousseau*. Britannica, 1952: pp.319-320, http://www.class.uidaho.edu/eng258_1/rousseau/JJRBio.htm) Rousseau, a French deist philosopher and writer, was undoubtedly one of the most influential men of not only the Enlightenment, but the Romantic period as well. His ideas on religion, education, politics, society, and human nature, drawing from Enlightenment principles, were some of the major impetuses behind the entire Romantic movement. He is credited with furnishing most of the momentum for the conception of the "noble savage" ideal, and has at different times and for different reasons been called the father of capitalism, nationalism, fascism, communism, and socialism. Microsoft Encarta 97 Encyclopedia CD-ROM mentioned that **Rousseau, Jean Jacques** (1712-78) was a French philosopher, social and political theorist, musician, botanist, and one of the most eloquent writers of the Age of Enlightenment. *The Social Contract* is a political classic that every student of political science and politician study in their life.

2. Reality of Life in Arakan. Reality of life is always bitter. Everyone would agree with this universal saying. A political system must be formulated with the principles that will help overcome the bitter realities of life. The examples are taken from the real life of my family and my clan.

(1). Eighty per cent of my schoolmates left school before or just after finishing the middle school or the 7th Standard. They left school to help their parents who were the small farmers, farm laborers, fishermen, mountain gardeners, or small time traders. They left the school to earn a few Kyats to help their parents, and to ward off the starvation of their younger brothers and sisters. Such was poverty in our Rakhaing land and we all know that the poverty is growing deeper and deeper everyday. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan free our Rakhaing farmers and laborers from poverty, and starvation, and allow their children to complete high school education?*

(2). In my childhood, between 1950 and 1957, I saw with my own eyes that the Burmese soldiers arrested many farmers and brought them to Munbra and kept them in their cantonment. Time to time they were tied to the mango trees behind our house. Our house was just across the road in front of the cantonment at the government quarter. My father, U Maung Tha Pru, who was the Inspector of Land Records and Land Nationalization (ILR&LN), used to go and see the detainees. As the ILR&LN, who looked after the entire Munbra Township, he made his tours across the township once a

month and he knew every village headman and many farmers in person. My father used to take his official records and showed them to the Captain, the commander of the Munbra Cantonment. In that way, he was successful in releasing many farmers and villagers who were arrested as the insurgent-suspect. Later, it became a regular practice of the army commander to call my father and check the background of his detainees. Today, I understand that the army commander was a good person who was trying to do his job with due justice. I appreciate that army commander. My father retired as the Superintendent of Land Records at Kyaukprou District in 1964.

Such arrests and detentions are termed as the *improper imprisonment* by the present military junta. We must know that the improper imprisonment is not just a matter of today's affairs. I have seen it with my own eyes since 1950. I have learned such improper imprisonment of our Rakhaing people in the history books as well as from my parents and grandparents. I have mentioned the improper imprisonment of our Rakhaing Buddha Maha Mrat Muni by the Bama people in the previous article in Arakanpost. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan make our land free of such improper imprisonment?*

(3). When I was five years old the Rakhaing insurgents attacked Munbra in 1951. Our house was just across road from the army cantonment and our family was caught in the crossfire. The famous dawn-raid of the insurgents lasted about two hours before they retreated with seven deaths. They also left behind three deaths from the government side. The dead bodies of one soldier and two policemen were displayed to the public. We, the school children were lined in queue to see the dead bodies with the teaching that they were killed by the insurgents and that we must annihilate the insurgents. This practice was very common in my childhood. I saw many dead bodies of the insurgents, government soldiers and policemen. I still see their blue-black faces with the dried blood that oozed out from their mouths, and they keep haunting me in my nightmares. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan make me free of such nightmares?*

(4). I learned that the leader of the Rakhaing insurgents who attacked Munbra in 1950 was a cousin of mine! As a matter of fact, he visited our house a day before the attack. My parents were not at home when he came. My brothers and I had never seen him before. When we told our parents about the strange visitor my parents were very puzzled from our description of his physical features. My father asked my mother, "Could it be him?" He was a nephew of my mother. Later, we learned that it was he and that he came to warn and ask us to move out from the government quarter. He was killed in the combat in the same year. He was a commander of Pyithu Yebaw and Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung was the Commander in Chief of the Rakhaing Pyithu Yebaw. The People's Militia known as Pyithu Yebaw was the irregular army that was kept under the central command of Bo Pho Kun, a trusted man of Bogyoke Aung San. The plan was that Aung San would lead Pyithu Yebaw and fight for Burma's Independence if the British failed to free Burma through the parliamentary process. In 1953, my uncle, my father's elder brother was killed by the White Flag Communist insurgents. In 1966-1967, I joined Bo Gri's party and became a guerrilla in revolutionary terms or an insurgent in the government's vocabulary. At that time my brother Shwe Kyaw was captain (Bogyi) in Burma Navy and my university friends Ako Tha Tun Aung and Ako Ni Lay Maung were the newly commissioned officers. It was a war of brother-against-brother, friend-against-friend. How sad I was and how sad I still am. Similarly, how sad were my parents and my brothers. My school friend, Ako Aung Hla Pru joined the police force after he graduated

from high school and was killed in combat against the insurgents in 1970. His police patrol was ambushed by Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee's Red Flag Communists. Whom shall I blame? Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee or the military junta? In the same time frame, my school friend Ako Maung Aye (Peking Pran Maung Aye or Peking-Trained Maung Aye) was killed in combat. Ako Muang Aye was a student leader and I met him last when he, as a delegate of the Rakhaing Students Union, attended the 1961 Conference of All Burma Students Union, that was held at the Rangoon University Students Union Building. Yes, it was the building dynamited by General Ne Win at the night of the 7th July 1962. Peking Pran Maung Aye was a famous White Flag Communist leader in our land. My university friend, Pin Chen or Lieutenant Pin Chen, was killed at Gnaphey-Seduttra, when his outpost was attacked by the White Flag Communists in 1967. Such is the picture of our civil war in Burma. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan make Burma free of the civil war?*

(5) My mother, Daw San Win, was a primary school teacher. She graduated from Akyab Primary School Teacher Training Institute of British Burma in 1929. She was in the second batch of the lady teachers' graduation. Thus, she was one of the foremost lady primary school teachers in Burma. When she retired in 1961, her monthly pension pay was only K35.00 per month. It was only about US\$7.00, in the currency exchange rate of that time, and it is merely 2.75 cent in the today's exchange rate at K1270 for one US dollar (see <http://www.narinjara.com> for the exchange rate). Could she survive with that money? Definitely not!

Similarly, my father graduated from Shwebo Land Survey Training Institute in the year 1932. After the graduation he became a Land Survey Clerk and he constructed all the theodolite survey stations in Akyab District of Arakan, under the supervision of a British Superintendent of Land Records, whom our family knew as Mr. Brooke. Theodolite is *"an instrument for the measurement of horizontal and vertical angles, used in surveying. It consists of a small telescope mounted so as to move on two graduated circles, one horizontal and the other vertical, while its axes pass through the centre of the circles"*(<http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/encyclopaedia/hutchinson/m0016842.html>).

He and Mr. Brooke traveled across Arakan and made the topographical maps that were used by the Allied Forces in their re-occupation of Arakan in 1944. There was not a single mountain peak that my father had not climbed, including the dangerous Mount of Five Hundred Ducks. When he retired as the Superintendent of Land Records in 1964, he got a monthly pension pay of K 150.00 or US\$25.00, in the value of that period. Could he survive with such an amount of money? Definitely not!

My parents educated their children at the university level. With all our education we, four of their children, could not look after two old parents. With my Ph.D. degree I earned K325.00 or US\$46.00 per month in 1976. The US dollar value given here is in the official rate. If we work it out in the street value, i.e. K20.00 for one US dollar of the given time, it will be only \$16.25. It was barely sufficient for myself alone, living in a 10 by 8 feet single room apartment, with shared shower and toilet, at Rangoon. This is a typical picture of a middle class working family in Arakan and Burma, with a long history of struggle. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan improve living standard of the middle class working family like us?*

(7). In disgust and anger, not only that I abandoned Burma, but also I quit the Burmese religion, Buddhism. How painful it was! But, no pain no gain. Now I am a free

man and super power as a citizen of the United States of America. Similar, my brother Major Shwe Kyaw (Burma Navy), M.Sc., FGS (London), a very well trained and qualified geologist, oceanographer, and experienced naval officer, also left Burma, not to look back again. Now he is an Australian and all his children are Australians. We are just two examples of how Arakan and Burma lost their educated scientists and professionals in modern days. I can list many cases of such brain drains. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan stop such brain drains and guarantee intellectual freedom³?*

(8) What about the lost generation of 1988? This is very recent and the world is aware of this. The editorial board of this journal, Arakanpost, is a typical example of the lost generation. I do not need to elaborate the case. There are more than one million heads of the lost generation, strayed around the world. Some are in the jails, some in the refugee camps, but most of them are simply on the streets, starving. *Will the People's Republic of Arakan be able to rehabilitate the lost generation?*

In the light of the above theories and realities I will try to examine the concept of *the People's Republic of Arakan*.

Kyaw Zan Rhee and the British Education. Among the Rakhaing political leaders who shape our political thoughts and paths Kyaw Zan Rhee stands tall and prominent, and he will remain as such for the ages to come. Born in 1921 to Mr. And Mrs. Nyo Tun Aung at Lamarkray village of Munbra Township, he is a middle school graduate (i.e. the completion of Seventh Standard) of the British Education system. The middle school graduate in the days of British administration was considered as a significant achievement because it was the first time the Burmese were introduced to the modern education system. There were two kinds of the middle school graduates vernacular and English medium graduate. My parents were also the middle school graduates, my mother in vernacular system and my father in English medium system. After the graduation my mother went for primary school teacher training and my father continued to the Shwebo Technical School to become a graduate in Land Survey and Land Records. Therefore, in those days middle school graduation opened the door to the vocational and technical schools. Although just a middle school graduate, my father's English proficiency, in both written and spoken, was much superior to my present English. Similarly, my mother's Burmese was superb, with deep knowledge in Pali and classic Burmese literature. Thakin Soe, the General Secretary of the Red Flag Burmese Communist Party, who translated the two volumes of Karl Marx's *Capital* into Burmese was only a matriculate (i.e. a tenth standard graduate). Seventy per cent of today's Burmese political vocabularies was invented or innovated by him. Similarly, U Thant, who distinguished himself as the Secretary General of the United Nations (1962-1971), had an Intermediate education, which is the equivalent of the British A Level or American General Education Certificate (i.e. American High School graduation). After I earned my doctorate degree, I came to greatly appreciate and value the educational standard of the British Burma and I felt so stupid that we abolished such an effective education system, by branding it as colonial. I was a junior faculty from 1968 to 1977 at Rangoon and Mandalay Universities. In the last thirty years (1970-2000), I met more than two thousand university graduates from Burma. Their basic knowledge in Burmese and English is poor and inferior to the Seventh Standard of the British colonial education system. It really is a national disgrace for the Burmese, especially to their military rulers.

Fortunately, I was in the last batch to be graduated with an Honours Degree in old British system from Rangoon University in 1966.

The emphasis here is that the Seventh Standard or a middle school graduate of the British system is an educated person, not just a semi-educated person. Accordingly, we have to give due recognition to Kyaw Zan Rhee's educational background. I here would like to denounce the people who look down at Kyaw Zan Rhee as an uneducated or semi-educated hillbilly. (**Note:** I was very much sad and disappointed when the Rangoon University students disgraced the Burmese soldiers with the sarcastic question, "Can three of you combined together pass the Seventh Standard?" on the night of the 7th of July 1962. In 1969, one soldier from that night told me that they were very angry at the students due to such an insult and when they got the order to shoot they shot the students down dead with anger. According to the student sources more than one hundred students were killed inside the Rangoon University campus at that night. When we denounce the military dictatorship it does not mean that we have to disrespect the soldiers of the Burmese Armed Forces. I was also greatly dismayed when the Burmese pro-democracy activists and foreign journalists showed disrespect to Sr. General Saw Maung due to his lack of formal education. Although he was only a middle school graduate he climbed up the ladder through the formal military training at various levels and graduated from the Commissioned Officer Training Academy. When we denounce his brutal suppression of the 1988-uprising it does not mean that we have to disrespect a commissioned officer of the Burmese Armed Forces. In politics, respect to the opponents is vital in order to achieve understanding, cooperation, and peaceful settlement of the discord. Such lack of respect is one of the major factors that make the Burmese politics a total failure).

Kyaw Zan Rhee's Revolution and Politics. At the age of 14, he became a follower of U Seinda who was a very famous Buddhist monk and revolutionary leader. Very interestingly, Venerable U Seinda, a *ngay-pru*, was a communist. A *ngay-pru* is a Bikkhu who enters into monkhood since he was a child or in the teens without ever taking a chance to touch a woman. The Venerable Bikkhu believes in communism as much as he believes in Nibban! There many Burmese who believe that communism is compatible with Buddha's Dhamma. The Burmese communists also accept Nibban, but they believe that entry to monkhood must be regulated by law in order to eliminate the social and economical parasites.

Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee told me that he, as a young boy, followed U Seinda. In 1942, under the leadership of U Seinda, he was a resistance fighter against the Japanese occupation. During the resistance against the Japanese, which is known as the Fascist Revolution, he worked closely with Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung and also met Thakin Soe. Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee's revolutionary life constitutes another important evidence that collaborates the fact that the Rakhaing's revolution against the Japanese rule was totally independent of General Aung San and Burma Independence Army (BIA). When the British reoccupied Arakan in 1944 he joined Thakin Soe's Red Flag Communist Party and made ready to revolt against the British occupation. Red Comrade Kyaw Zan Rhee became a prominent revolutionary leader during the Burmese civil war that broke out soon after her independence in 1948. Thakin Soe's headquarter was inside Arakan; the Rakhaing Red Comrades and villagers gave him good protection. Very soon, the infantile disorder of the Burmese Communists gave birth to a Rakhaing-Bama racial tension inside the Red Flag Communist Party. The major issue was the

question of *an Arakan Republic* inside *the Union of the Soviet Republics of Burma*. Thakin Soe ridiculed the Rakhaing Red Comrades with the notion that there shall be 135 Soviet Republics in Burma and Arakan has to be divided into many parts to accommodate the Chin Soviet Republic, Khmee Soviet Republic, Kaman Soviet Republic, Dinnat Soviet Republic, and etc. Please note that the military government's official classification of the 135 Burmese National races was originated by Thakin Soe. The racial tension intensified and finally the Rakhaing Red Comrades under the leadership of Kyaw Zan Rhee split off and formed the Arakan Communist Party (ACP) in 1958. The new party was a hybrid of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China. Its constitution and doctrine were mainly of the Soviet style but led by a Chairman in the Chinese fashion. In contrast, Thakin Soe was *the General Secretary* of the Red Flag Communist Party of Burma that was fashioned in the Soviet Russian style. Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee led the party until he was defeated and forced to surrender in 1980. A faction of the ACP survived under the leadership of Red Comrade Shwe Tha. My good friend Red Comrade Oo Khin Maung belongs to Shwe Tha's faction. I would like to emphasize here that the Red Comrades are not the Trotskyites. Some European and American professors of political science classify Thakin Soe and the Red Comrades of Burma as the Trotskyites. The journalists follow their classification. In my experience, Thakin Soe and the Red Comrades are the Stalinists, if I may contrast. They identify themselves as the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist. I witnessed the ACP's celebration of Stalin's birthday at its headquarter in December 1966. Joseph Stalin was born on the 21st December, 1879. In the ACP's primary school reader's textbook it is clearly written as follow.

Trotsky is a traitor.
U Seinda is a traitor.
Kra Hla Aung is a traitor.

I read the above teachings with my own eyes at their headquarter. I was a member of a high level delegation, led by Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung, to meet Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee. Although we arrived at their headquarter one day after Stalin's birthday the celebration was still going on. A Red Comrade School Master educated me with their communist education system, took me to their school and gave some text books of English, Mathematics, History and Burmese and asked for my opinion on the text books. I told him they were good. It was an honest answer. These textbooks were written by the party cadres.

Greatly amused with *the traitors*, I showed the teaching to my President Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung who led the Arakan National United Party at the time. He looked at it without any expression and said, "I have seen it many times." Then, I learned that the above propaganda were written on big posters that were nailed to the trees almost everywhere in the revolutionary area in late fifties and early sixties, when the revolution was still steaming strongly.

Chairman, Bo Gri, and I. In the revolutionary area, Red Comrade Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee is simply known as *Chairman* whilst Bo Gri Kra Hla Aung was commonly called *Bo Gri* or Guerrilla Commander-in-Chief. Kra Hla Aung was the Commander-in-Chief of the Rakhaing guerrilla forces during the 1944-45 resistance

against the Japanese occupation of Arakan and Burma. In this communication, I will be using these simple and common titles for them.

Chairman, born in 1921, is eleven years younger than Bo Gri who was born in 1910. Both of them belong to the rural agricultural community of British Arakan. Bo Gri was trained in the military science by the Japanese in 1941. I have given a concise account of his life in the Series-3 (Arakanpost Issue 4, May 2004). Chairman got his military training in the field when the Rakhaing people revolted against the occupied Japanese forces in 1944. Bo Gri did not believe in communism or proletarian dictatorship, whereas Chairman was a communist, but he did not believe that proletarian dictatorship is crucial for the establishment of a proletarian society. In other words, he is in favor of a plural system that will accommodate multiparty politics. Chairman accepts Bo Gri as an excellent military commander with a power to make decisive decision, but he believes that Bo Gri lacks discipline in the political organization because he is so liberal in politics. Bo Gri respects Chairman as a good political organizer, but considers that he is too rigid and conservative in political thoughts and tactics. When we had the *Phadu Summit* of Bo Gri and Chairman in 1966-67, at the Small Phadu Island in the Crescent Bay of Arakan, I was greatly encouraged to see that the two leaders wanted to unite the parties and the forces. I was too young (only 21), inexperienced, and new in the revolution at that time. If I were matured with experience, I believe I could have contributed for their unity that would make a breakthrough in our revolution. We did reach a general agreement that the two parties, Arakan Communist Party and Arakan National United Party should form a united front. There were no philosophical, ideological, tactical, or technical difficulties that would stop the unity. Lack of resources and security was the only culprit of the failure that made a united front just a dream. We were under constant attack not only by the forces of the military junta but also by the Burmese Communist Party (White Flag). Please note that both are led by the Bama nationals. The guerrillas who came and attacked us were the full-blooded Rakhaings, but they attacked us under the direction of their Bama leaders. On the top of that, the Burmese Communist Party (Kyuakdaw Township) handed down death sentence to Bo Gri and his Central Committee, including myself, on the charges of treason and collaboration with the capitalist-imperialist Americans. It was our party's policy that we must seek for US-Western recognition of our struggle and solicit for their aid. On this basis, Burmese Communist Party planned to kill us. Bo Gri had a twenty-million-dollar revolutionary project at that time, i.e. in 1966. It would require five hundred millions in 1990; now, in 2005, I would need one billion dollars for that project. The project is a detailed plan of establishment of *The Union of the Republics of Burma*, after overthrowing the military junta. In Bo Gri's words, it is *Thamada Prayhtaungsu Mranmar Naignan*. In the earlier article, Series-3, Arakanpost (Issue-4, May 2004) I translated it as the Union of Burmese Republics, but *The Union of the Republics of Burma* is a better translation.

Very briefly, Bo Gri laid down his plan before Chairman in the Phadu Summit. Chairman said, "I have no objection to it, but it sounds very romantic to me. Where will you get the resources and logistics?"

Bo Gri, "That is why I came to you. I have a source where from I can get 500 assorted weapons. I am in need of money for that, and I want you to contribute the money."

Chairman, "Please let me know who the source is and who is going to lead the mission to get the arms."

Bo Gri, "My party's Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw will lead the mission. Shwe Lu Maung will assist him with the foreign contact. But, I cannot disclose my source."

Chairman, "If you cannot disclose the source it is OK, but I would like to include two of my men in the mission. I agree that Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw should lead the mission."

Bo Gri, "The presence of the communists in the mission could jeopardize the mission. I want you to trust me and contribute the money".

Chairman, "Money is not a problem. I can even arrange gold if you want. But, I must have my men in the mission."

Bo Gri, "I trust you and your men. The mission is going outside the country and the presence of communist cadres will jeopardize the journey and the mission. I must do it with my own men only."

The negotiation ended bluntly. Nevertheless, Chairman gave us K5000.00 (five thousand Kyats) for the journey, but did not give money for the arms. In private, he told me, "Comrade, I knew Bo Gri since I was fourteen years old. I have worked with him since 1942. I know him very well. I cannot count on him with such an important mission. His command is very loose due his liberalism." I did not know what to say. Later, Chairman asked Bo Gri to leave me at his headquarter, until the mission returned from abroad. He was also concerned that I was young and inexperienced.

Frankly, he said to Bo Gri in the last meeting, "I am afraid that this young recruit would be lost. He will be very valuable to us. You should not send him in this mission, which is very vague. Please leave him with me until the mission returns."

Bo Gri replied, "No. I cannot. He is a very important part of the mission."

Some six months later, I came to realize what Bo Gri meant. I was the one who had to go into the foreign land across the border and meet the contact in 1977. I had a deputy to assist me. Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw (the eldest brother of Tun Shwe Maung and San Kyaw Tun) anchored himself inside Arakan and made all the arrangement to meet the contact. I was told only 24-hour ahead of the entry into the foreign land. The philosophy was that the party could not loose the Secretary. I was a Central Committee Member who can be substituted if necessary, without much impact on the party. Anyway, I was very proud of my mission, though it was highly risky. The credential I carried was so solid that *the Contact* received me as *the Ambassador of Arakan*. What an honor I had! He was impressed with my knowledge of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I must also give due credit to my English proficiency. I still believe that if I had the money at that time I could have opened the channel to the higher level (i.e. the base of the source, behind the curtain) and secured greater understanding for future cooperation. I had only three hundred Kyats in that important mission, which lasted forty days in a foreign and hostile land, amidst the major operation of Indian Army (paratroopers) in the region. How disappointing it was!

One more thing I would like to mention as a matter of business. Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw gave me a single-shooter pistol with two bullets, one for the enemy and one for myself, in case I happened to fall into the hands of undesirable elements. This was because I know the entire plan of *the Union of the Republics of Burma* and I could be forced, for example tortured, to expose the plan. It was the party's policy that I should not

fall into the hands of enemy, but rather die. How exciting it was, but I simply laughed at it at that time. Although it was about forty years ago, I still believe that Bo Gri's plan is still feasible and I keep working at it quietly, changing the details to keep it in harmony with the changing world and politics. My colleagues, including Chairman Kyaw Hlaing¹ (NUFA), asked me the details of the plan when I asked them to support me in my *Declaration of Independence of Arakan* in 1990. Following the example of Bo Gri, I declined to tell him. Why? It is fatal to expose the details of the plan, which maps the strategic moves. I can only tell the tactical moves of the given time and space. We must understand that the plan is not simply a military maneuver but a risky political manipulation. Only *one mastermind* has to handle it. (The same is true with my program of '*Decolonization of Burma*'). If so, why did Bo Gri trusted me with the plan? Because it was I who filled up the gaps in the plan, in which both Bo Gri and Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw lacked expertise. The plan was a product of the collaboration between the two veteran revolutionaries (Bo Gri and Secretary Tun Shwe Phaw) and a modern intellectual.

Agreements. In the above narration the reader will notice that Chairman, a communist, easily agreed with Bo Gri, who was a liberal democrat. The Chairman's objection to *the mission* was simply technical. How come? There were two major factors that contributed the agreement. (1). Bo Gri accepts the concept of *The People's Republic of Arakan*, which will eventually become a republic inside *The Union of the Republics of Burma*. (2) Chairman accepts *The Union of the Republics of Burma*, which would honor the existence of the proletarian movement. In many occasions Chairman emphasized that Arakan Communist Party fought against the fascist, imperialist, capitalist, colonialist, and military dictatorship. It did not fight against the proletarian, working people, peasants, intellectuals and common citizens. He and his party did not advocate for the one-party proletarian dictatorship, but favored a multiparty system with free economy, in which the proletarian movement would be free to exist. As a proletarian, he said, "I preferred to live among the proletarians without any borders. The national borders are simply the manipulations of the feudalists, imperialists, capitalists and colonialists. I want to see a proletarian world living in peace and harmony." Therefore, he concluded that to live along and among the proletarians, workers, and peasants of all Burma would be his pleasure. I believe him and I respect him for his noble words. It is a very simple communist philosophy that he does not look at the people in terms of race or religion, but see them in their basic common social structure as the peasants and workers. In my view, this leftist concept is in good harmony with liberal democracy, which Bo Gri and I cherish. In liberal democracy, we do not even categorize the social strata, but put everyone in the category of *citizens*. Since 1964, I was convinced of *the theory of ideological convergence*⁴ of the democracy and communism because both doctrines were based upon the common citizens. I was glad to see the Chairman and Bo Gri were converging.

Similarly, the concept of *The People's Republic of Arakan* is in harmony with Bonpauk Tha Kyaw's *New Democracy*. I understand that Bonpauk Tha Kyaw derived most of his *New Democracy* from Chairman Mao Zedong. I would like to refer the readers to *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung* at www.marxists.org. If you go to the Mao Zedong Reference Archive at the pull-down menu you will be taken to his selected works at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/index.htm>. (Mao Tse-Tung is

the older version of the spelling). In principle, *New Democracy* is an alliance of the proletariat, the middle class, (the intelligentsia), and the national bourgeoisie in the national revolution against the rule of the imperialist-capitalists, in a *colonial and semi-colonial country*. In this respect of theory and practice *The People's Republic of Arakan* espouses *New Democracy*. In this context, please also consider V.I. Lenin's *Leftwing Communism: an Infantile Disorder* (1920), which can be read at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/lwc>. Chairman Mao calls it the democratic revolution, which will install a *national coalition government* of the three classes, namely, the proletariat, the middle class, and the national bourgeoisie. Thereupon, the proletarian revolution will begin in a democratic atmosphere to establish the rule of the proletarians. Then, *the state* will become a *Withering State* (See Mao Zedong's *Wither China* at http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm, and V.I. Lenin's *The State and Revolution, 1917-1918*, at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/>). In the light of this theory Bonpauk Tha Kyaw, a leftist thinker and political theoretician, abandoned armed revolution and took part in U Nu's parliamentary system. You may notice that General Ne Win's Burmese Way to Socialism (*ref: The Correlation of Man and His Environment*) also mentioned a form of the alliance of the three classes. However, his absolute military subordination of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie (i.e. middle class) placed his *Burmese Way to Socialism* outside the theory and practice of *New Democracy*. U Chit Hlaing (Ko Ko Maung), who was appointed by Ne Win as the Principal of the Central Institute of Political Science was the main brain behind the drafting of *The Correlation of Man and His Environment*. I respect U Chit Hlaing (Ko Ko Maung) as a novelist and philosopher, but he was not a politician. He did not know how to make it work. Please compare the philosophy of *New Democracy* with the *people's democracy* of the communist parties of India (both Marxist and Marxist-Leninist) and the Libertarianism of the Libertarian Party of America. To my great interest I also find out that there is a Bangladesh Libertarian Party, (visit <http://maxpages.com/bangladeshlp>). Can we compare it with Abraham Lincoln's *government of the people for the people by the people*?

The People's Republic of Arakan and *New Democracy* show that Chairman Kyaw Zan Rhee and Bonpauk Tha Kyaw are not left-wing communists, but moderates. *The People's Republic of Arakan* espouses *New Democracy* in its core. This philosophy of peaceful revolution is the core principle, namely *freedom of expression and freedom of association*, in liberal democracy that Bo Gri and I cherish.

(The Series-9 ends here. It will continue with the Series-10).

Notes.

1. Bonpauk Tha Kyaw. A famous Rakhaing leftist revolutionary leader who surrendered to Rangoon government in early 1950s and joined the parliament politics with his *Party for New Democracy*. The journalist Bertil Lintner, in his book *Outrage*, identified him as the Boone Phauk Tha Kyaw, meaning bomber thrower Tha Kyaw. I believe his Burmese guru must have given him this wrong impression. To be correct, it is Bon (drum) Pauk (hole busting) Tha Kyaw. The title Bonpauk or Drum-buster originated with his father. We were told that U Tha Kyaw's father was a recognized amateur drummer. In a festival, he was asked to play *Zidaw* as the professional *Zidaw* drummer was sick. *Zidaw* is the biggest Rakhaing drum and is also known as the royal drum. The most spectacular part of playing *Zidaw* is drumming it with the elbow in a very elegant fashion of leg, body and hand movements. At one point the amateur drummer hit *Zidaw* quite hard with his elbow that the drum busted leaving behind a big hole. From that occasion on he was known as Bonpauk or Drum-buster. His children were also known with title, thus we have his son, Bonpauk Tha Kyaw. It is a very common Rakhaing culture to give such sarcastic titles. We have Ngar Maung Nee or Fish Maung Nee who was a rich fish contractor in Akyab. His children are also known as

Ngar. We also have Nwa (Cattle), eg. Nwa Tha Tun Aung (see my previous article in Arakanpost Issue-10). His father was a cattle contractor. I met Bonpauk Tha kyaw in 1972, after publication of his book *New Democracy*, at Rangoon. He wrote the book during his ten years of imprisonment by General Ne Win. I saw him at Munbra when he stood as the candidate of his *Party for New Democracy* in the parliamentary election for the first time, in 1954. I was only a small kid at that time.

2. I told the outline of the plan to Chairman Kyaw Hlaing in 1992, when he became a party-less activist. He said, "I have no objection to your plan. Why didn't you tell me at that time." I replied, "If I told you at that time you were bound by your party's rules and regulations to discuss it with your NUFA's Board of Chairmen and Central Committee. Then, it would get exposed before I could do anything. It would be suicidal. How could I let it happen? I needed a soldier-politician like you. I cannot let your party's policy sabotage the plan. This is a radical plan, beyond the imagination of the romantic revolutionaries."

3. I would like to refer the reader to Andrei Sakharov (1921-1989) *for intellectual freedom*. In the words of the Nobel Peace Committee, he was a *spokesman for the conscience of mankind* (<http://www.aip.org/history/sakharov>). You can find abundance of information about him on the World Wide Web. A nuclear physicist, he was also recognized as the *father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb*. He won Nobel Peace Prize in 1975 for his human rights movement.

4. The theory of the East-West ideological convergence was the talk of the gatherings when I reached Rangoon University in 1960. The theory probably came into Burma after the WWII, following Pitirim Sorokin's *Russia and the United States* (Oxford University Press, 1942). But, I believe Nikita Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence, which he officially announced in 1962, generated new impetus in the discussion of East-West Convergence in my university days. In this regard Ismail Shariff's article, *Global Realignment In The New Millennium: Three Possible Scenarios*, *World Affairs* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Oct-Dec 1998), at http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/wa/wa_98shi01.html, is interested to read.