

THE **GUARDIAN**
BURMA'S NATIONAL MAGAZINE

VOL. IX, No. 2.

FEBRUARY 1962.



THE MAYU FRONTIER ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

by
THA HTU

ABOARD the I.W.T. boat "WEYLWIN", a group of gay and youthful officers were headed for a new administrative area, called the Mayu Frontier Administrative Area (MFAA), which had come into effect from May 1, 1961.

These young officers had attended a number of basic training classes in military tactics, civil administration, law and politics in order to take over their respective charges in the MFAA. They understood the rigid task of responsibility, which was bestowed upon them by the authority concerned. As the boat left the Cheroghya Creek in the vicinity of Akyab, and while she was paddling along the narrow canal between Kaladan and Mayu Rivers, a long range of green hills appeared before them. It was the Mayu Range, where the young officers would be assuming their respective charges under the new administration.

The most characteristic of the Mayu Peninsula is, it is green fields with lovely hills and forests. It is some ninety miles long and twenty miles wide at its northern end, whence it tapers to a point just short of Akyab island. Down its centre runs the Mayu Range, a razorshape, from one to two thousand feet high, almost precipitous but jungle covered. The lower slopes, in a tangle of broken spurs, approach to within a thousand yards or so of the sea on one side and the Mayu River on the other. The narrow strips of flat ground on each side are split by innumerable streams, which serve the people of the area for irrigation as well as transport.

The Mayu Frontier Administrative Area comprises the Maungdaw-Buthidaung sub-division and the western part of Rathedaung township, in the Akyab district. The border of East Pakistan is marked off by the Naaf River on the west and a series of Hills on the north-west.

To have an intimate knowledge of a place, one must know the people who actually live there and must also be acquainted with their ways of life, their history, customs and usages, their problems and difficulties, their happiness and sorrows.

As regards population of the new administrative area, the census of 1911 reveals that there were 131,134 in Maungdaw with 230 persons per square mile and 63,679 in Buthidaung with about 80 persons per square mile. Of these, the bulk of the inhabitants were Chittagonian immigrants (Bengali Muslims) from the opposite border. They were seasonal labourers, arriving here during every open season and returning

The Mayu Frontier Administration came into existence on May 1, 1961. In July, only after two months of the new administration, over 290 Mujahid insurgents surrendered to the Vice Chief of Staff at Maungdaw. Close on its heels, in November, another 200 Mujahid insurgents surrendered bringing in two of their own leaders whom they had captured earlier. Peace and prosperity in the Mayu Frontier District, under the new administration, is once more assured.

to their country on the close of the season. But in course of time, these Chittagonians found the place ideal for their economic stability and made it their permanent home. According to an authority, there was a section of bona fide Muslim residents of Arakan living in a certain part of the area. They were the descendants of slaves, captured by the Arakanese and the Burmese in their wars with neighbours. The Arakanese kings in former times had extended their kingdom as far as Dacca and Murshidabad in Bengal. We may find most of the Muslim inhabitants with admixture of slaves and Chittagonian immigrants in the MFAA. However, the present generation of the aforesaid

predominating Muslims are claimed to be the descendants of the sea-faring Arab traders, whose connection with the Arakanese kingdom has been known since the 11th century A.D. Now they themselves have assumed the new name of "Rawengya".

Owing to the Second World War and as the result of Mujahid insurgent activities, the recent estimation of the Arakanese indigenous races living in the MFAA would be less than 18% among 5 lakhs of present population there.

Endowed by rich gifts of nature Burma has naturally become an agricultural country and the entire economy of the people in the MFAA is therefore dependent on agriculture alone.

The living standard of the people in this area is lagging far behind most other parts of Burma. They do not know how to introduce the improved type of agricultural implements, how to use synthetic manures and how to increase their yields. Moreover, they have the problems of Mujahid insurgents, their rice smuggled across the border, penetration of Pakistani illegal immigrants in their locality, etc.

The Mujahid insurgents are the main source of all the troubles in the MFAA. To trace out the source of the Mujahid activities, one will have some idea from the following excerpt of the news item, published in the *STATESMAN* of Calcutta, dated 23-7-51:—

...Though the total population involved does not seem to exceed 10,000, Burmese troops who have been despatched to quell the rising are stated to have met with considerable resistance. The villagers, who were armed with modern weapons, appeared to have a large quantity of ammunition.

The demand, which the Burmese suspect as "foreign

inspired", is for a merger with East Pakistan. The Burmese are aware that a majority of the inhabitants in the area north-west of Akyab are Muslims who, linguistically, culturally and racially, have kinship with the Muslims across the border.

All the same, it is claimed they lived peacefully up to two years ago. Now they operate under the party label of "MUJAHIDS", waging a *jehid* against the Burmese Government.

At one time, the area was so peaceful that only one police station, manned by a dozen constables sufficed for it. Now a battalion operates in it to curb lawless elements....

The rebels, like other lawless elements, are said to be taking advantage of Central weakness, as well as of an ill-defined border in this region.

Burmese who allege that there has been some infiltration from East Pakistan, are likely to seek Pakistani assistance in guarding the border against the entry of undesirable elements.

The leaders of the Mujahid party are mostly former habitual offenders and dacoits. Among them one Cassim and his followers were the most notorious in the narrow coastal belt of Mayu Peninsula. He and his gang committed innumerable robberies, rapes and other atrocities. No question how many thousand tons of paddy and rice they smuggled across the border. Thus Cassim reigned supreme in his domains with a gold crown, weighing 30 ticals. Besides, he had a harem of 40 young wives or concubines.

A reward of Ks. 10,000 had been proclaimed by the Union Government for the capture of Cassim, dead or alive. Now his H. Q. has been smashed by the Burma Army. He and his rank fled across the border to Pakistan. Cassim, the saviour of Arakanese Muslims, is now under the protection of Pakistan Government. He is contented there with his countless booty.

LET US EVOLVE WITH HONOUR

by

Maung Lu Pain

What is the meaning of our thermonuclear juncture?

There are two answers, depending on which side of the picture:

On one side the possibilities of absolute war,

On the other the possibilities of universal law.

Man today is an aboriginal child at best

And more a taker still than a giver, thus failing the test;

Twentieth-century man unfortunately still is less than life-size

For twentieth-century science, to save himself he must higher rise.

Men can go to any heaven by any way they choose—

Strengthen the U. N., everybody will gain and nobody lose.

War-lovers must all peace-lovers become,

Nobody must 'bury' nobody, in sum.

The crisis of our times is truly great

Because every strategy or tactic is based on hate.

The U. N. must now talk and RULE, or be a burnt-out case.

Disarm for PEACE! Compromise without loss of face!

—o—

Although Cassim's stronghold had been captured by the Army, his scattered forces remained in the area. After a few months of respite they repeated the same lawless activities.

However, in July, 1961, some 290 Mujahid insurgents with their leader Rabi Ullah surrendered to the Army authority. Thus the Mujahid Party of the southern zone is now in total extinction.

The rest of the Mujahid insurgents in the other zones are also likely to surrender in time.

The Mujahid surrendered persons are now given a new settlement within the jurisdiction of "ZEDIPYINMYO", one of the township headquarters under the MFAA. I availed of an opportunity to visit Zedipyinmyo, which is situated on the Kyaungdawn rivulet between fertile Mayu

River and romantic Mayu Hills. This is also a Burma Army Station, where the company commander Lt. Sein Winn got much credit for his success in bringing 290 Mujahids to the light.

The office of the Township Officer has been erected close to the Army Camp, where the young and energetic Lt. Aye Myint is functioning as the Township Officer.

It is hoped that all the nefarious activities of insurgents and other undesirable elements in the Mayu Frontier Administrative Area will be wiped out in the near future by dint of the new administrators, and all law-abiding inhabitants, irrespective of caste and creed, living in this area, will soon prosper, and that their life and property will be well protected.

—o—