

Appendix B

There is no exact number for the Muslim population of Arakan relative to Burma's total population. According to the census of 1931, the Muslim population in the Maungdaw and Buthidaung regions numbered 130,524. Many of these were not properly speaking Arakan Rohingya Muslims, but Chittagongs who arrived with the annual immigration of cheap labor brought to Burma by landowners and merchants. Many settled in Arakan. The events of World War II and its aftermath saw numerous changes in the makeup of Arakan's population and there is no clear data on this score. Arakan Muslims claim a population of between 300,000 and 500,000 apparently cited by them for polemical purposes, but not based on either facts or a census since no census was taken. Western sources too sometimes cite similar high numbers whose origin is unclear (see Yegar, *The Muslims of Burma*, 95).

At the end of February 1949, the British Embassy in Rangoon estimated the number of all Muslims in Arakan at between 200,000 and 250,000, of which only 100,000 to 120,000 lived in the Maungdaw–Buthidaung region (DO 142/453 and FO 371/75660, Feb. 28, 1949). This was written with the intention of expressing a strange if not ludicrous worry of the British high commissioner in Pakistan to the effect that the rebellion in Arakan could bring a possible outflow of up to half a million Muslim refugees to Chittagong (DO 142/453, February 12, 1949). P. Murray in the review cited above places the estimate of Muslims in Arakan at 100,000 to 120,000 (FO 371/75660, Jan. 26, 1949). The Akyab reporter of *The Scotsman* in a communiqué of 18 May 1949 estimated the number of Muslims in Arakan at 130,000, stating that 80,000 of them were Pakistani citizens (DO 142/453, May 18, 1949); whereas in 1991 an estimate was published that put the number of Rohingya Arakan Muslims at one to two million! Along with a comment that many of these Rohingya lived in exile, the reporter added that these numbers must be treated with caution (Smith, *Burma*, 30). A similar assessment claimed that today's Rohingya constitute a third of the inhabitants of Arakan, or two million people; See Matthews 1995: 297. Tonia K. Devon ("Burma's Muslim Minority: Out of the Shadows?," 27) cites Muslim leaders in Arakan who claim that the Muslims constitute approximately 650,000 out of 1.4 million total Muslim population of Arakan.

Similar numbers are accepted by others as well. Their claim is that the estimated

numbers in Arakan are 1.7 million inhabitants of which 600,000 are Muslims (Anand, "Bangladesh: Refugees from Burma," 1100–1101). Occasionally estimates are published with totally unsubstantiated numbers. See, for example, *Asian Recorder*, vol. 38, no. 36 (September 2–8, 1992): 22556 which determined that there are 3 million Muslims living in Arakan! There is another unfounded exaggeration in Ahsan ("Burma's Iron Hands towards Ethnic Minorities: The Rohingya Plight," 311), according to which there are approximately 2 million Rohingya of which approximately half—or 1 million—live in exile and the rest in Arakan.