

MODERNIZATION AND THE SECULAR STATE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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IN HIS PREFACE TO A VOLUME OF ESSAYS ON MODERNIZATION—HOW it occurs and how it can be accelerated—Myron Weiner frankly admits that the term “modernization,” though popularly used, is indeed an elusive one. Generally used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to refer to the “growth of rationality and secularism and to the process by which men broke away from the constraints and tyrannical regimes as well as the constraints of superstition,” the term, Myron Weiner writes, is often used today simply as “another word for economic growth or as a mere palatable synonym for still another elusive concept, ‘Westernization.’”¹

MODERNIZATION

One, of course, could and should always strive for a working distinction, however simplistic, between *modernization* and *Westernization*. The latter is basically a geographical concept; the former can be understood as a sociological process of change, e.g. “the process by which a society replaces institutions, ideas and practices that it regards as no longer appropriate.”² Be that as it may, no two terms perhaps are more susceptible to confusion, since modernization, it would seem, is the inevitable concomitant of *Westernization*. A case in point, this study would argue, is the phenomenon of the “secular state”³—a concept Western in origin and derived from the liberal democratic tradition of the West, and in Southeast Asia the very visible manifestation of what is popularly termed “modernization.”

This is a rather strange fact if one considers that secularism in the political sphere divorces religion from politics and hence its offshot, the “sec-

¹ Myron Weiner (ed.), *Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth* (U.S.A.: Voice of America Forum Lectures, 1966), p. i (Preface). He adds: “Because the term is so loosely used, it is tempting to drop it entirely and to speak more precisely of changes occurring in individual attitudes, in social behaviours, in economics and politics. But scholars persist in using the term not only because it is a part of popular speech, but also because they recognize that these many changes are related to one another—that many countries in the developing world are today experiencing a comprehensive process of change which Europe and America once experienced and which is more than the sum of many small changes.”

² Cf. Knight Biggerstaff, “Modernization and Early Modern China,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXV, No. 4 (August, 1966), 609. The writer cites in his article the criteria of modernization which were developed at a meeting of scholars in Hakone, Japan, in 1960.

³ This study adopts for its own the working definition of the secular state as proposed by Donald Eugene Smith in his book, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 3-8.

ular state," could hardly be expected to thrive in a region where the interaction of religion and politics has been most manifest: Southeast Asia. Religion in this part of the world, observes Lucien Pye, "is unquestionably the strongest cohesive force" and is "the basic ingredient in the sense of national identity in many of the Southeast Asian societies."⁴ Thus it is not surprising to find constitutional references to religion in almost all the charters of the various Southeast Asian nation-states. Constitution-wise, religion is accorded a special role in the predominantly Buddhist countries of Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and even in the not quite predominantly Muslim state of Malaysia.⁵

Thus the charter of the Union of Burma declares: "Buddhism being the religion professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union shall be the State religion" (Chapter II, #20) and that being such the Union Government shall "promote and maintain Buddhism for its welfare and advancement" (#21 A).⁶ Cambodia expressly states, "Buddhism is the religion of the State" (Title II, Art. 8) and so does Laos: "Buddhism shall be the established religion. The king shall be its high protector" (Sec. I, Art. 7). The newly-promulgated Thai constitution of June 20, 1968 asserts: "The King is Buddhist and the Defender of the Faith" (Division 2, section 6) while below the border, Malaysia declares: "Islam is the religion of the Federation" (Part 1, 3, #1). And for her part, the city-state of Singapore avows her responsibility "constantly to care for the interests of the racial and religious minorities . . ." (Part II, 89, # 1).

THE SECULAR STATE

In Southeast Asia, it would seem, the odds are stacked against the concept and practice of the secular state. For the secular state, to follow the working definition of Donald Eugene Smith, is "a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, *is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek to promote or interfere with religion* (underscoring supplied)."⁷ Judged against the strict criteria of such a secular

⁴ Lucien W. Pye, *Southeast Asia's Political Systems* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 36. But one should not forget that religion likewise has been both a "binding and dividing force in the evolution of Asian nationalism." Cf. K.M.A. Kennedy, *Asian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1968), pp. 95-99. The emergence of present-day India and Pakistan is the classic proof for such a fact.

⁵ Cf. Amos J. Peasles, *Asia, Australia, Oceania*, Vol. II of *Constitution of Nations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), for all pertinent constitutional references, with the exception of the Thai charter.

⁶ The coup government of General Ne Win neither repealed nor suspended the Constitution; technically it would appear still to exist, but in practice it operates only in those areas where the new government has not taken specific actions. And for all practical purposes, Ne Win's Burma is a secular state.

⁷ Smith, *loc. cit.*

state, the aforementioned countries with their favored-religion clauses have already disqualified themselves.

But this would be a premature judgment. For, *de facto*, every South-east Asian country in practice adheres (or vows to adhere in its charter) to the other criteria of a secular state, i.e., it "guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion. It deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion."⁸

A CHARTER SURVEY

And thus the Burmese charter enumerates among the fundamental rights (Chapter II): "#13—All citizens irrespective of birth, religion, sex or race are equal before the law; that is to say, there shall be no discrimination between one citizen or class of citizens and another." "#20—All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practice religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this Charter." Cambodia declares likewise in the article quoted previously (Title II, Art. 8): "Freedom of conscience shall be absolute. Freedom of religion is similarly guaranteed subject only to such restrictions as are necessary so that public order may not be disturbed."

Indonesia is explicit (Chapter XI, Art. 29, #2): "The State shall guarantee freedom to every resident to adhere to his respective religion and to perform his religious duties in conformity with that religion and that faith." Laos in its preamble implicitly affirms the same sentiments: "This Constitution recognizes as fundamental principles the rights of the people of Laos, especially their equality before the law, the legal protection of their means of life, their freedom of conscience and other democratic liberties as defined by law." Despite the official profession of Islam as the State religion, Malaysia gives a saving clause: "but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation." The Philippines is quite explicit (Article 3, #7): "No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights."

The Thai charter in Division III (the Right and Freedom of the Thais) states: "#24—Every person, regardless of race or religion, is equally protected by the Constitution" and "#26—Every person has complete freedom of practising his religion and his religious duties according to his faith as long as they are not contrary to his civil duties."⁹ North Vietnam is likewise explicit (Chapter III, Art. 26): "Citizens of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam enjoy freedom of religious belief; they may practice or not practice a religion." No explicit mention is made in the charter of

⁸ *Ibid.* This would constitute the most basic of all the criteria.

⁹ Translated from the Thai original by Ruangvos Kalvichitr, a Thai student at the Loyola House of Studies.

South Vietnam but the fact of religious freedom is well-known and implicitly safeguarded in such a declaration: "The Republic of Vietnam accepts and respects the principles of international law, subject to the reservation that these principles do not conflict with national sovereignty and the present struggle of the nation."

It is well to remember, moreover, that all the Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of the two Vietnams, are duly accredited members of the United Nations and as such adhere to the U.N. Charter avowing among others, its purpose of "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. . . ."¹⁰ And it is well to remember likewise that the two Vietnams are in full accord with the spirit of this charter; their applications for U.N. membership have been pending since 1951. But the clearest and most marked indication of the secularist triumph over historical religious traditions in the political system of a country is seen in an overwhelmingly Christian (93%) Philippines and an overwhelmingly Muslim (90%) Indonesia. The secular state that emerged in the Philippines repudiates a tradition of some three hundred years or so of Church-State union under the Spanish regime; and that in Indonesia, the rejection of an official Islamic State in the tradition of neighboring Malaysia and Pakistan.¹¹

Not every Southeast Asian nation can pass the strict criteria of a secular state proposed in this study, but it is clearly no overstatement to conclude that in this area of the world the drift of political institutions is toward the realization of the "secular state." And the secular state as such, this study contends, is the inevitable and concomitant feature of modernization, the "process by which a society replaces institutions, ideas and practices that it regards as no longer appropriate,"¹² thus in the Philippines the rejection of the Spanish-fostered Church-State union provided for by the Malolos Constitution of 1899 and further confirmed by the Commonwealth Constitution of 1935.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. Appendix C, Charter of the United Nations, in Diosdado Macapagal's *The Philippines Turns East* (Quezon City: Mac Publishing House, 1966), pp. 284-309.

¹¹ For the comparative statistics of the religious and ethnic composition of SEA countries, cf. Lucien Pye's chart, *op. cit.*, p. 37. For pertinent studies on the Philippines and Indonesia, cf. Cesar Adib Majul, *The Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Philippine Revolution* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1967) and Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun* (The Hague and Bandung: W. Hoeve, Ltd., 1958). For introductory studies on the various SEA countries referred to in this study, cf. George McTurnan Kahin (ed.), *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia* (2d ed.; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

¹² Biggerstaff, *loc. cit.*

¹³ The Malolos Constitution expressly declared: "The State recognizes the freedom and equality of religious worships, as well as the separation of the Church and the State" (Title III, Article 5). And the Commonwealth Constitution (which serves for the present-day Republic as well): "No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and no religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights" (Article III, Section 7). Cf. Appendices 2 and 4, Vicente Albano Pacis, *Philippine Government and Politics* (Quezon City: Alemar & Phoenix, 1967).

What remains therefore is to ask why this is so. The Malolos Congress debates on the "religious question" (whether or not Catholicism was to be the State religion as proposed by Calderon) brought to the fore the fact that the Filipinos as a people, though up in arms against Catholic Spain, were not anti-Catholic but merely anti-clerical. But one of the basic contentions of those who argued against a state religion was that the unity of Church and State in the Philippines, in all the years of the Spanish Occupation, did not further the progress of the Philippines but on the contrary hindered it.¹⁴ Whether or not religion itself was the primary cause (the Catholic religion in this case) or the involvement of religion—institutionalized religion—with politics was the impediment to progress, could of course be debated.

RELIGION AND MODERNIZATION

The rationale may be gleaned in part from the following observation of Gunnar Myrdal on the role of religion and development in this part of the globe.

Religion is, of course, crucial, but not the interpretation of old scriptures and the lofty philosophies and theologies developed over centuries of speculation. It is, indeed, amazing how much Western, as well as South Asian, writers think they are saying about the peoples in the region when they refer loosely to the impact of Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam, which they think of as general concepts and often as intellectualized and abstruse. Religion should be studied for what it really is: a ritualized and stratified complex of highly emotional beliefs and valuations that give that sanction of sacredness, taboo and immutability to inherited institutional arrangements, modes of living, and attitudes.¹⁵

Understood in this realistic and comprehensive sense, Myrdal continues, religion acts as a tremendous force for social inertia:

. . . The writer knows of no instance in present-day South Asia where religion has induced social change. Least of all does it foster realization of the modernization ideals—though, of course, appeals to religious principles on the "higher" level can be used for, as well as against, those ideals, while cruder religious conceptions can be exploited to incite people to resistance or to demonstrations, riots, and lynchings. From a planning point of view, this inertia related to religion, like other obstacles, must be overcome by policies for inducing changes, formulated in a plan for development. But the religiously sanctioned beliefs and valuations not only act as obstacles among the people to getting the plan accepted and effectuated but also as inhibitions in the planners themselves insofar as they share them, or are afraid to counteract them.¹⁶

THE BURMESE CASE-STUDY

It would certainly be quite interesting and profitable to make comparative case studies of the secular state as it currently exists in such professedly

¹⁴ Cf. Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *Malolos: The Crisis of the Republic* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1960), pp. 297-306, and Majul, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-59.

¹⁵ Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol. I (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), p. 103.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.

“secular states” as the Philippines, Indonesia, and Burma where indeed the interaction between religion and politics has been most markedly manifest. This study will limit its attention to Buddhist Burma where the transition into a “secular state” has been most recent and highly dramatic. As Donald Eugene Smith observes:

The case of Burma provides illustrations of a wide spectrum of religio-political phenomenon: the breakdown of an effective Buddhist ecclesiastical hierarchy under the impact of foreign rule, the role of religion in Burmese nationalism, the interaction of Buddhism and modern political ideologies, the uses of religion in democratic politics, the political role of the Buddhist monks, the unique leadership of a politician in promoting religious revival, and the contrasting role of a military regime. Burma has indeed passed through a remarkable cycle: from General Aung San’s secular state (1948) to Premier Nu’s religion (1961), and back to a secularistic orientation following General Ne Win’s coup (1962).¹⁷

It would seem that Burma as a case-study readily confirms and substantiates Gunnar Myrdal’s candid observations on the role of religion as a “tremendous force for social inertia” that must somehow “be overcome by policies for inducing changes, formulated in a plan for development.”¹⁸ For again, to quote the eminent Swedish observer of the Asian scene:

Even Islam and Buddhism, which at the rarefied “higher level” are so rational and free from iconism and magic, have, in the forms in which they actually influence life and social relations, become demonological and permeated by taboos, magic and mysticism. In particular, social and economic stratification is accorded the sanction of religion. The attitudes, institutions, and modes of living and working that make up and are reflected in this stratification do constitute very real inhibitions and obstacles to planning and the execution of plans.

Such observations became demonstrably vivid in U Nu’s Burma.

During his inaugural address at the AFPFL (Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League) convention of January, 1946, Thakin Aung San had openly declared: “We must draw a clear line between politics and religion, because the two are not one and the same thing. If we mix religion with politics, then we offend the spirit of religion itself.” And while conceding that Buddhism could become the “greatest philosophy in the world” if its ritual could be eliminated, he had gone on to condemn the exploitation, injustice, superstition, and priestcraft frequently associated with religion. But the Aung San secularist-nationalist tradition that had outshone the earliest nationalist-religious U Ottama-Saya San tradition and was dominant in 1948 when independence was achieved, was virtually relegated to the

¹⁷ Donald Eugene Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. vii.

¹⁸ Myrdal, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²⁰ Smith, *Burma, op. cit.*, p. 158.

background with Aung San's assassination in 1947 and the subsequent ascendancy of U Nu.²¹

For U Nu, unlike his secularist confrere Aung San, was a deeply religious man; and on the eve of independence he would give public expression to his "profoundly religious approach to the responsibilities of political power" by stating: "I have just returned from my religious observance at the Myathabeik Pagoda Hill. I made a solemn prayer while I was there that if by any chance I misuse my powers as premier for my personal gain in any respect, may I go headfirst to the lowest hell of Maha Avici."²² And U Nu's religiosity would only deepen with the experience of public life.

Subsequent activities confirmed the strength and authenticity of U Nu's piety. Writes Smith:

By July, 1948 the country appeared to be disintegrating under the pressure of the insurrections. To counter this threat, the prime minister knelt before an image of the Lord Buddha, and although a married man, made a solemn vow that he would lead a life of celibacy from that day until death, and prayed by virtue of this vow the menace of the insurgents would disappear. According to his testimony at a press conference reported in the October 26, 1958 issue of the *New Times of Burma*, he had never committed a breach of that vow. Stepping down from the premiership in October, 1958, U Nu divested himself from all personal possessions (these were later sold at auction and the proceeds used for charity), renounced the secular world, put on the yellow robes of the monk and spent a week in the monastery. Nu has become a monk seven times in his life, including a six-week period shortly before the 1960 election campaign. Held in "protective custody" after the coup of March, 1962, it was natural for U Nu to request a Buddha image, which was provided by the army authorities (*Guardian*, March 7, 1962).²³

Not surprisingly, the Burmese Government, under U Nu's initiative and encouragement, became increasingly involved in religious affairs. The reasons frequently given were that: (1) The promotion of Buddhism has traditionally been one of the chief functions of government in Burma; (2) The Government must encourage the revival of Buddhism because of its decline during the sixty years of foreign rule; (3) The Government's promotion of religion will help to end lawlessness and disorder in the country and strengthen the nation's moral fibre; (4) The Government has a positive duty to promote the people's welfare in future existence as well as in this life; (5) The revival of Buddhism is the most effective way to counteract Communist ideology.²⁴

The Buddhist revival movement was to give birth to the Buddha Sasana Council in 1950, a separate body not directly responsible to the

²¹ For further studies on Burma, cf. John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958); Maurice Collins, *First and Last in Burma* (London: Faber & Faber, 1956); Frank N. Trager, *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

²² Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

government, which could devote itself exclusively to the promotion and propagation of the *Dhamma*. U Nu's government sponsored the Sixth Great Buddhist Council held at Rangoon in May, 1954, an event considered by observers the most dramatic evidence of the government's determination to Theravada Buddhism in Burma and in the world.²⁵ There was a marked official government involvement in varied religious ceremonies, the building of pagodas and public veneration of relics, the sponsoring of spirit worship (actually a pre-Buddhist religious practice). And in November, 1961, some 60,000 sand pagodas were ordered simultaneously built "to avert impending dangers and to achieve complete peace and tranquility in the Union."²⁶ Through its educational system, the government stepped up its promotion of Buddhism by the use of Buddhist monasteries as state primary schools and the instruction of Buddhism in state schools and universities.

Commenting on the over-all results of the government's promotion of Buddhism, Smith writes: "The cost of the government's religious involvement has been high in terms of: the unintentional encouragement of intolerant communalistic forces which are disruptive of national unity, the increased political power of the *Sangha*, the promotion of non-rational religious practices at the expense of scientific progress, and the general lack of serious interest in economic development."²⁷ Smith's appraisal is especially telling in the light of Gunnar Myrdal's observation that "religion acts as a tremendous force for social inertia."

One recalls that Burma began its independent-state existence as a "secular state" with a strongly Marxist government. It adopted a constitution which struck a compromise between secularism and an official religion, when it stated in Section 21: (1) The State recognizes the special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union; (2) The State also recognizes Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Animism as some of the religions existing in the Union at the date of the coming into operation of the Constitution. But by August, 1961, Burma was constitutionally committed to the promotion of Buddhism as the state religion by the promulgation of the Third Amendment which described in precise Pali terminology the scope of the government's new responsibilities in the field of religion. "Buddhism being the state religion of the Union, the Union Government shall:

- (a) promote and maintain Buddhism for its welfare and advancement in its three aspects, namely *pariyatti sasana* (study of the teaching of the Buddha), *patipatti sasana* (practice of the Teachings), and *pativedha sasana* (enlightenment);

²⁵ Theravada Buddhists accept the historicity and validity of five previous Councils: the first three in India, the fourth in Ceylon, and the fifth in Burma. During the Fifth Great Council convened in Mandalay by King Mindon in 1871, the Tripitaka texts were inscribed in 729 marble slabs. Cf. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 157, also pp. 3-37 (Chapter I: *Buddhism and the State in Old Burma*).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

- (b) honor the *Tiratana*, namely, the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha;
- (c) protect the said religion in its three aspects and the *Tiratana* from all dangers including insult and false representation, made by words either spoken or written, or by other means.

The State Religion Promotion Bill provided moreover that: Buddhist scripture would be taught to Buddhist students in all state schools; government servants were to be granted leave to take examinations in Buddhist scriptures conducted by the Buddha Sasana Council or other state agencies; on Buddhist Sabbath days the state broadcasting system would be closed, and no liquor would be sold or served in any shop, restaurant, or public place in a hotel; Buddhist scripture classes would be opened in prisons, and all state public libraries would be provided with a complete set of the Tripitaka Pali texts and commentaries.²⁸

U Nu's religiosity, it seemed, caused his own downfall. The Third Amendment caused resentment among the non-Buddhist Burmese sectors and the Fourth Amendment (seeking to safeguard the religious minorities) provoked similar resentment from the Buddhists. Thus "religious factors were of considerable significance in the deteriorating situation which according to the military, necessitated the take-over."²⁹ After General Ne Win's coup of March 2, 1962, and the formation of a government by the Revolutionary Council, official policy regarding religion came full circle. Aung San's vision of Burma as a secular state was a reality again. No one religion would be overemphasized at the expense of another.

The coup was widely interpreted as "a repudiation of U Nu's revivalism and medievalism in favor of a modern scientific approach to Burma's problems" and, in the light of this study's topic, a "coup for modernization" and all the modernizing goals Burma had in mind. Articulate public reaction to General Ne Win's coup was favorable. A reader wrote in the *Guardian* issue of March 16, 1962: "Whatever be the causes of the coup d'etat in Burma, with the establishment of a military government, an era of giving effect to her administration by telling metamorphical stories and ostentatious display of piety and worship of *nats* (spirits) has at last come to an end."³⁰ Four days after the coup, the old practice of Sunday and half-Saturday holidays was restored and the ban of liquor on Buddhist Sabbath days was lifted; a week later, the ban on cow slaughter was repealed; six weeks later, the Buddhist Sasana Council was abolished.

In its first policy declaration entitled *The Burmese Way to Socialism*, published less than two months after the military take-over, the Revolutionary Council recognized the right of everyone freely to profess and practice his religion. In another section, however, dealing with the orientation of the people's views as a necessary part of the program for transition to socialism,

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 281. For more on U Nu's successor, cf. Jesus V. Merritt, *Free Asia and Its Leaders* (Quezon City: Phoenix, 1965), pp. 4-10.

³⁰ Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-83.

it was asserted that attempts would be made to do away with "bogus acts of charity and social work for vainglorious show, bogus piety, and hypocritical religiosity. . . ." But every effort would be made to foster "bonafide belief and practice of personal morals as taught by ethics and traditions of every religion and culture."³¹ While there was no explicit rejection of the state religion provision, it was clear that Buddhism was not to be accorded a special recognition by the new regime.

And thus has Burma reverted to its status as a secular state that divorces religion from politics. Burma as a case-study of the interaction of religion and politics is indeed *sui generis*. As Donald Eugene Smith well observes: "In no other country has the mixing of religion and politics demonstrated so clearly about the usefulness and limitations of religion in relation to: the legitimacy of the political leadership, national integration, economic development, and the democratic process." And he adds: "In no other country has the role of government in the promotion of religion been expanded so earnestly and the inherent limits of that role been revealed so clearly. Finally, in no other country have we observed the full circle reversion to secular politics under an authoritarian military regime which has rejected religion as a source of legitimacy."³²

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the Burmese scene to illustrate the Southeast Asian nation-states' rationale in opting for the secular state. The Burma of U Nu seems to have confirmed Gunnar Myrdal's indictment of religion in this part of Asia as a "tremendous force for social inertia"³³ and thus a block to the nation-state's striving after its modernization goals. A summary survey of the Southeast Asian scene, however varied the religious-cultural

³¹ *The Burmese Way to Socialism* (Rangoon: Information Dept., 1962), quoted by Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 283-87.

³² Smith, *ibid.*, p. 307.

³³ Myrdal, *op. cit.*, p. 103. As Myrdal himself points out: "No religion on the higher level need be in conflict with the modernization ideals. But as religion is part and parcel of the whole complex of people's beliefs and valuations, their modes of living and working, and their institutions, it needs to be reformed in order to break down inhibitions and obstacles to development" (pp. 105-106). What Myrdal does indict is "popular religion" and this he stresses: "By characterizing popular religion as a force of inertia and irrationality that sanctifies the whole system of life and work, attitudes and institutions, we are, in fact, stressing an important aspect of underdevelopment, namely, the resistance of that system to planned, induced changes along the modernization ideal. This wider definition of popular religion by the social scientists is defensible on the ground that any narrower definition is arbitrary and does violence to reality." Cf. pp. 109-10. For Myrdal, the modernization ideals would be: rationality, development and planning for development, rise of productivity, rise of levels of living, social and economic equalization, improved institutions and attitudes, national consolidation, national independence, political democracy in a narrow sense, democracy at the grass roots, social discipline versus "democratic planning, derived value premises." Cf. pp. 57-69. The modernization ideal of: rationality would demand that policies should be founded on rational considerations, that superstitious beliefs and illogical reasoning should be eradicated.

setting, would seem to confirm this study's contention — so dramatically exemplified in Burma—that if the Southeast Asian nation-state is to be “modernized,” it has likewise to “secularize” itself. And in proportion to the efforts expended on the latter, will the modernization goal or goals be realized.³⁴

³⁴ Among the eight Hakone criteria of modernization cited by Biggerstaff, the fifth is especially relevant for the purpose of this study: “Widespread literary works accompanied by the spread of a *secular* and increasingly scientific orientation of the individual to his environment” (underscoring provided). Biggerstaff, *loc. cit.* In an emerging nation, Neil J. Smelser (*Modernization of Social Relations*, p. 120) observes, we may expect profound changes, e.g., in “the religious sphere, as secularized belief systems begin to replace traditionalistic religions.” Myron Weiner remarks however that while religion may not be a lubricant for modernization, it need not be an obstacle either. Weiner cites Milton Singer’s observation in his essay (*Modernization of Religious Beliefs*, pp. 59-70) that “the relation of ‘ascetic Protestantism’ to early industrialists, far from being a lonely exception, may turn out to be one of the many cases of mutual interaction and adaptation between religious and social change.” Weiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-7.