

The Failure of Woke Identity Politics

A Burmese Egoist Anarchist Analysis

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Contents

The Woke's Perfidy and Saviour Complex	3
Wokeness vs. Social Justice	7
Wokeism and Western Colonialism in the name of Postcolonialism and Decolonialism	8
Woke Appropriation on Religions	9
Class-Based Intersectionality	10
Woke Politics in Burma	10
Summing up	12

“I can’t believe what you say because I see what you do.”

– James Baldwin

I have written about how the far-left anarchist circles in Burma have been absorbed by the woke left, identity politics, political correctness, western-backed educational institutions, and the cancel culture. As a result, the Maoists, social democrats, and western-backed NGOs and CSO organisations essentially dominate the majority of the left-wing movements in Burma. The anarchists in Burma failed to educate themselves about the distinctions between social democracy and anarchism instead of resisting the importance of class struggle. Most even utilised the three arrows symbol to denote their anarchism and believed that anti-FA was the same as anarchism. We are currently striving to cure ourselves of the “woke identity politics” plague while avoiding becoming class reductionists as well. However, this piece below is only my brief evaluation of the woke identity politics left; it does not represent any collective responsibility for the groups I’m affiliated with.

When the whole social democrats and anti-fascist political groups are in favour of woke politics, I always disagree and debated with them several times since 2018. Since I was raised in a family where I could see the antithesis of the typical identity politics narrative (oppressor and oppressed), I saw the blind spot most of them didn’t see.

I informed some Burmese lefties during the Slavoj Zizek and Jordan Peterson debate that despite their philosophical differences, both guys oppose identity politics, cancellation culture, and political correctness. Many rich Burmese “Marxists” and “leftists” who are studying subjects such as philosophy, anthropology, social science, human rights, gender studies, and so on at western universities who support wokeism, cancel culture, political correctness, and identity politics disagreed with me on a number of different occasions. Most of them are only concerned with praising Slavoj Zizek and criticising Jordan Peterson.

The most privileged students who can afford to study things like philosophy, anthropology, social science, human rights, gender studies, and other things are negatively impacted by this celebrity culture. Since there are no jobs in the area, the majority of individuals in Myanmar—including those from the upper middle class—cannot even pursue these studies. As a result, those courses have become exclusively accessible to the wealthiest Burmese students.

Regardless, the recent articles that are written by Slavoj Zizek proved that they failed to read the books through the eyes of the original thinkers. By now, they should be aware of their intellectual limitations for not being prophetic when it comes to the political and socio-economic realities.

The Woke’s Perfidy and Saviour Complex

As an ex-Muslim and ex-Buddhist atheist who drew a lot of my inspiration from local organic rationalist and left-wing figures, I was disappointed with the entire worldwide mainstream leftist movement. I was also dissatisfied when I saw them defending a religion that is antithesis to all the progressive political values and social justice values.

I have seen that a lot of religious fundamentalists such as Islamists share their anti-Israel views with the woke left for different reasons. Both of them don’t think from the class politics, but on the fear-mongering against the Israeli population. The Islamists are anti-Israel based on their

anti-semitism which is deeply rooted in the religious teachings. The woke left refused to accept this and dragged the whole anti-zionist movement into some moralistic opposition against Israel. They failed to distinguish between the denunciation of the illegal occupation of an apartheid state and the eradication of the whole Israeli population from the region. The genuine human rights activists are against the human rights violation of the Israeli apartheid far-right groups but the Islamists are just against Jews based on their anti-semitism. The woke left failed to understand the differences of these two means since they focus only on the end.

To make it more clear, let me quote Leila Khaled who is a longtime active leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and a feminist Marxist.

” Hamas believes that Palestine is a sacred place that belongs to the Muslims, and this contradicts our thoughts, the PFLP’s. But now the discussion is not about ideology, it’s about liberation. Anyone who fights Israel is on the same trench as we are.”

Even the Palestinian left-wing nationalist groups such as Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) acknowledge the fact that Hamas are no different from Trump kind of right-wing, yet the identity politics left will never accept these apparent facts.

As I became aware of such situations, I became unable to collaborate anymore with some of my fellow members of the advocacy organisations I formed (around 2015), especially when several major woke leftist groups, Islamists, and Trotskyist groups all started to share this trait of dehumanising and blaming Christopher Hitchens, Salman Rushdie, and Charlie Hebdo for their political opinions. From that time on, since I was not theoretically knowledgeable given my limited English (at that time), I only felt embarrassment when I identified as a socialist. As a result, I discontinued all of my engagement in support of the causes of the Rohingya and Palestinians about 2017, and instead I concentrated on helping the religious revivalists and reformist organisations in Burma. I just tried my best to distance myself from all the leftists, Islamists, and all forms of fundamentalists, including Buddhist nationalists from Burma.

A few of my former colleagues from Middle Eastern nations like Albania, Egypt, and others who had similar sentiments followed my lead. Some even gave up their political activism in an effort to assimilate into their own community. Even though I was able to maintain an interest in revitalising the suppressed Buddhist reformist initiatives in Burma that are oppressed by Theravada Buddhist establishment, the government and the state, I nevertheless did the same when it comes to politics.

I discovered a naturally occurring, secular kind of Buddhism in Burma that was presented by the revolutionary monk ”Shin Ukkaha” and was comparable to the Navayana school of Buddhism developed by Dr. Ambedkar. Shin Ukkaha has left a legacy for a number of reformist Buddhist sects in Burma that have persevered despite Theravada Buddhism’s numerous oppressions. Something of which I’m proud is that I’m partly responsible for their persistence. Even though the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has seized all of the books and recordings of these reformist secular Buddhist sects, which are against Theravada-state Buddhism, it took me a few years to get in touch with those who managed to keep the original records. ”Shin Ukkaha” was boycotted by almost the whole Burmese Theravada monk population and was marginalised. However, ”Shin Ukkaha,” the monk who brought communism (Marxism-Leninism) and Browderism from India to Burma and is still influential amongst the Burmese left-wing circle, the whole left-wing politicians and progressives backed him up. So instead of arresting him, the government

around 1960s only censored a few books that were too critical of their dogmas and other religions. I managed to dig up all of his writings and even some audio recordings. I collect all of them and develop them into an application for the progressives in our age to rebel against the Theravada state of Buddhism. However, on the other hand, Ashin Nyar Na, a monk in a blue robe who has withdrawn being a Theravada monk and started his own secular/anarchistic Buddhism, which focuses more on mutual aid and cooperative values, was sent to jail for at least 3-5 decades of his life. All of his books, his monasteries, and his audio and video recordings were instructed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture to be seized and destroyed. Moreover, the publication of his books is considered illegal in Burma. However, I managed to collect all of his books and recordings and maintain a relationship with him. I also developed an application that shows all of his books, audio recordings, and video recordings to challenge the Theravada state of Buddhism.

Slavoj Zizek's "Refugees, Terror, and Other Troubles with the Neighbours: Against the Double Blackmail" caught my eye shortly after I landed in Australia in 2019. I skimmed a portion of the book and was taken aback by his remarks on Islamophobia, the Sulman Rushdie case, and other left-wing ex-Muslim allies I respect. Since I was actively participating in this religious reformist revivalist work under the banner of the "Burmese Atheists" organisation, I also have some friends from nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and so on. The majority of atheists in developed nations are liberal but not left-wing. Since there are many organic rationalist philosophers who based their atheism on social justice and egalitarianism rather than only science, the majority of these atheists from nations like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, especially those who identify as rationalists, lean left. Some of them informed me of Maryam Namazie, an Iranian feminist activist who identified as a Marxist atheist. Her work really amazed me. By that point, I had already noticed that many of the role models I once looked up to had been moved to the right by the woke left. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Masih Alinejad, Christopher Hitchens, and others could serve as some instances.

Recently, Slavoj Zizek presented an example of how the woke are ineffective in defending against the true enemies of social justice and equality, such as the alt-right, religious fanatics, and others. In one of his most recent writings, "Wokeness Is Here to Stay", he stated:

"Nearly a decade ago, the ex-Muslim activist Maryam Namazie was invited by London's Goldsmiths College to lecture on the topic "Apostasy, Blasphemy, and Free Expression in the Age of ISIS." Her talk, which focused on Islamic oppression of women, was repeatedly and rudely disrupted by Muslim students. Did Namazie find allies in the college's Feminist Society? No. The feminists sided with the Goldsmiths Islamic Society. This unexpected solidarity is ultimately grounded in the similarity in form of the two discourses: Wokeness operates as a secularised religious dogma, with all the contradictions this implies."

I wholeheartedly concur with the statement made in the piece that "The woke are a relatively privileged minority of a minority." When I first discovered Maryam Namazie, I was informed about this incidence. The same thing happened to me when I sought out local feminists in my nation to help my mother, who was being forced into a forced conversion. When interviewed by the media, the majority of local feminists publicly denied such incidents occurring in Burma and stated in private that they didn't want to be accused of being racists. I felt sorry for Maryam Namazie since I've had a similar situation. Just as James Baldwin once said "I can't believe what

you say, because I see what you do.” I also feel the same against the woke after witnessing a lot of betray from the woke left against the genuine far-left activists and the actual oppressed people.

Such feminists are dominant in Burma. Burma doesn't have any grassroots Muslim women's collective organisations, grassroots Buddhist women's collective organisations, or grassroots Bikkhuni women's collective organisations for such reasons. The last Bikkhuni who dared to announce herself as a Bikkhuni was sentenced to jail by the Myanmar government, and the Theravada Buddhist establishment. However, no feminists or no woke left had assisted or showed solidarity for her. Woke feminists who are radicalised by western academia and the salary-paid full time activists self-claiming feminists (liberal communists according to Zizek) from the NGO/CSO are radical when they interact with male feminists who are willing to stand down to avoid being denounced as "manels", but are too silent in the face of religious fundamentalists and conservatives who won't bother to stand up against them. The same goes for self-claiming religious progressives too.

The statues of the individuals who held slaves or passively acknowledged the role of slavery was destroyed by the Black Lives Matter movement and certain woke liberals. Even Abraham Lincoln was not immune to them. However, when they were unable to do the same against the religious leaders who not only support the idea of slavery but even exploit slave women as objects of sex. Sura (Chapter) 23 was revealed during Prophet Muhammad's life in Mecca before his hijrah, or emigration, from his home city to Medina in AD 622. During the early years of his ministry, he never waged war on anyone, so these were times of peace, although he suffered from a measure of persecution. The Quran in Sura 23:5–6 says:

[Most certainly true believers]... guard their private parts scrupulously, 6 except with regard to their wives and those who are legally in their possession, for in that case they shall not be blameworthy.

The key words are "those who are legally in their possession." Slave women, or milk al-yameen, are referred to in the Qur'an as "Those whom your right hand possess" or "ma malakat aymanukum"; they are those taken as captives during conquests and subsequently became slaves, or those who were descendants of slaves. You may read more about this on Islam Online, which is an Islamic source.

Imam Ali, whom I personally respect for his anti-authoritarian struggles against Abu Bakr (not me, apparently), the first Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate. However, the official translation of a well-authentic religious primary source such as Sahih al-Bukhari 4350 clearly states that

The Prophet (ﷺ) sent 'Ali to Khalid to bring the Khumus (of the booty), and I hated 'Ali, and 'Ali had taken a bath (after a sexual act with a slave girl from the Khumus). I said to Khalid, "Don't you see this (i.e., 'Ali)?" When we reached the Prophet (ﷺ), I mentioned that to him. He said, "O Buraida! Do you hate 'Ali?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Do you hate him, for he deserves more than that from the Khumus?"

Here, I'm not sharing anti-Islam or anti-Muslim bigotry. As someone who came from a Muslim-dominant family, most of my beloved people are Muslims. And also, as a non-white person working in Australia, most of the people with whom I interact most of the time are either migrant workers or immigrants, of whom the majority are Muslims. One has to educate

themselves to understand enough that there is a significant line between critical analysis, blasphemy and racism.

Just since Islam is the religion I am most familiar with, I am writing about it here. Christian oppression of people from third-world nations, such as South Asia and Africa, disgusts me since it is a colonial and genocidal religion. I don't have enough sources to quote, though, because I don't know enough about Christianity. Additionally, the variations of Buddhism that I have come across have very little to do with slavery. So, to demand that I denounce Buddhism in the same way, especially when it comes to sexual abuse of women, would be too foolish and childish. This demand that all religions be condemned in the same articles is comparable to the claims made by white supremacists during the "Black lives matter" movement that "All lives matter." Such kind of demands exist out of the white guilt, Eurocentric knowledge and the saviour complexity against the refugee population and communities that happens to be Muslim majority.

So, the woke left is too far from being radical; they're hypocritical at their core and reactionary in their tactics. Just as Noam Chomsky once said "Woke culture is a recipe for tyranny", woke culture focuses too much on cancelling people with whom they tend to disagree, even their allies. However, I disagree with Noam Chomsky to an extent when he said, "Destroying books and all sorts of things is getting picked on by some sectors of the left, and it's wrong in principle. It's tactically idiotic, and it's a gift to the far-right".

My argument is that the woke left needs to establish a line on what should be demolished if they are too fixated on demolishing sculptures and texts that support slavery or implicitly support it. If they are too radical and not hypocritical, religious texts and idolatrous personalities who supported slavery or were complicit in it should likewise be banned. In practise, though, the woke left lacks the guts to defend its beliefs in front of a greater mob—religious zealots. Bullies tend to have this basic nature; they prefer to pick on people who are weaker than them and won't even dare to defend themselves when confronted by someone who is more powerful.

Wokeness vs. Social Justice

"The supposedly liberal 'wokeness' and cancel culture have little to do with awakening to what's going on in the world and trying to change it; it's just noise for the sake of noise, while the status quo is carefully preserved. The usual liberal-conservative reproach to the so-called woke cancel culture is that it is too radical: Its partisans want to destroy all statues, cleanse our museums, and rewrite our entire past. In short, they want to deprive us of our entire collective memory and purify our everyday language into a flat, heavily censored jargon".

This is what Slavoj Zizek wrote in one of his articles, "The difference between woke and a true awakening". Here is where things differ: Just as Slavoj Zizek's anti-woke politics are distinct from the alt-right, so are my anti-woke political views from those of other anti-woke right-wing figures. But many woke leftists, particularly those who oppose imperialism, share political beliefs with the alt-right. That's also interesting especially when it comes to Ukraine-Russia war, and some other previous wars such as Syria and so on.

I disagree with the woke left because, in my experience, I knew inside out that they don't pay attention to the minorities among minorities who are the genuine victims. They have a saviour complex and are superficial enough. They desire to see themselves as a member of the majority

who are in charge of freeing the oppressed minority. However, they seek to be the movement's vanguard and insist that the oppressed minority follow their leadership rather than letting the oppressed minority take the initiative. Slavoj Žižek also discussed them in one of his articles, "Nobody has to be vile". If I remember correctly, Slavoj Žižek used those sorts of people as "liberal communists" and he clearly stated that "liberal communists are the enemy of every true progressive struggle today".

As someone who believes in "Liberty", I agree with Noam Chomsky when he says

"Goebbels was in favour of free speech for views he liked. So was Stalin. If you're really in favour of free speech, then you're in favour of freedom of speech for precisely the views you despise. Otherwise, you're not in favour of free speech."

I continue to directly engage with local Shia Muslims despite the fact that I personally disagree with and find Islam repugnant from a social justice standpoint, such as women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and so on. I provided my technical expertise to help them create websites and applications. It's because I want to promote freedom of speech for people who are oppressed, even among the minority, in a country with a majority of Buddhists and a majority of Sunni Muslims. Similar to certain racist Buddhists who refuse to lend their homes to Muslims, some Sunni Muslims in Myanmar even refuse to rent their homes to Shia Muslims.

It's either white or black, good or wrong, oppressor or oppressed, according to the woke left. The entire world is not so easy or simple to comprehend. I don't think it's legitimate for third parties to have the right to discriminate against Pakistani Sunni Muslims when it comes to the genocide committed against the Ahmadiyya in that country. Similarly, I don't believe it's appropriate for third parties to carry the rights to be racist towards Chinese people in general when it comes to the genocide of Uyghurs in China. Similar to the Rohingya exodus in Burma, I do not believe it is appropriate for outsiders to racist against Bamar people.

As I mentioned earlier, even among Buddhists in Burma, there are a lot of Burmese Buddhist revivalists movements, that are being oppressed by the means of being arrested, their properties being seized, being sent to mental asylum, and being censored. So, that would be childish and naïve to think that all sorts of Buddhists are homogenous and monolith in Burma. Even among Muslim population in Burma, some Sunni Muslim revivalists were bullied by the deobandi movement as well. The translated Quran version of Sheikh Tin Myint, a Sunni Muslim reformer, was buried by some deobandi Islamist and Sheikh Tin Myint was marginalised by these sects too. So even though both Buddhists and Sunni Muslims generally have the record of the discrimination against the minority communities, it's just a generalisation. That wouldn't be more wrong to accuse that every one of the members from these communities will be guilty. It's just not that simple.

Wokeism and Western Colonialism in the name of Postcolonialism and Decolonialism

"Postcolonialism is the invention of rich Indian guys who wanted to make a good career in the west by playing on the guilt of white liberals".

It is quote by Slavoj Žižek and that's completely true in the sense of Burmese postcolonial and decolonial academics circle. Many wealthy, privileged and rich people from the Burmese community who come from military families are utilising their status as people of colour to advance academically and have begun to rebrand as "activists," "progressives," and "humanists." That is an insult to all the individuals and families who gave their lives since the 1960s in order to resist against the military junta.

One of the example for this is, Pyae Moe Thet War who has BA in Literary Studies and Creative Writing from Bard College at Simon's Rock, an MA in English from University College London, and an MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia, authored her book "You've changed: Fake Accents, Feminism and other comedies from Myanmar", she used a lot of postcolonial claim to be marginalised by the white population. And most of the white woke left apparently bought her story. However, she came from the super-rich oligarch family with military ties.

Woke Appropriation on Religions

Both religious feminism and the LGBTQ faith are progressive. They do not, however, discuss the connection between religious extremism and totalitarianism. Some postcolonial scholars from the west began to identify as Christian feminists, Muslim feminists, etc. They asserted that their very existence serves as a remedy for the Islamophobia held by right-wing Christian nationalists. They might be true for Eurocentric politics. If these Muslim feminists visit the Taliban and begin lecturing the Taliban commanders about their Islam, will they be able to survive longer than a year? That is how fundamentalism and political power interact.

It's simple for those postcolonial academics to declare themselves Muslim feminists or other religious feminists and begin lecturing about their brand of Islam or whatever religion they practise, but if they live under the Taliban or other religious fundamentalist organisations, it won't be the same. When they are not protected by secularism, they will be exposed to blasphemy laws. When the majority of the population is not secularised or open-minded enough, they will face mob rule. A lot of our comrades from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Burma have faced such kind of situations. To name a few will include Avijit Roy, a left-wing ex-Muslim atheist/rationalist blogger who was murdered in Dhaka. Similarly, Asif Mohiuddin who is an ex-Muslim atheist/rationalist and feminist blogger was also murdered just outside his own home for blasphemy. For those postcolonial academics who claimed to be religious progressives living in the countries with secularism to protect them will never have to deal with such kind of realities. At the end of the day, most atheists and rationalists, unlike the Eurocentric left thought, are not demanding the religions to be eradicated, instead demanding or defending the secularism as the minimum program in order to eradicate the blasphemy laws.

Just as C.L.R. James, a Black Marxist who opposed European colonialism, once remarked, "I denounce European colonialism, but I respect the learning and profound discoveries of Western civilisation." As a third-world Asian who was born and nurtured in Asia, I adore my Burmese and Indian/Bangladeshi cultures. However, I concur with Iranian Marxist Mansoor Hekmat that the establishment of a secular society should be our minimum plan for creating a socialist society in which all forms of tyranny will be reduced. Anti-western civilisation mindset in the name of "post colonialism" and "decolonialism" is a gift to the alt-right since they can easily hijack the

whole movement in the name of “anti-imperialism” by hiding their hatred against the western representative democracy.

Class-Based Intersectionality

I’m willing to work with any Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, and so forth as long as they at least recognise secularism. I don’t think religion will ever end. That cannot be completed right away. I disagree with cult-like Marxists who accept Karl Marx’s assertion that the only way to eradicate religions is through class conflict seriously. It’s not quite that simple. Even though I don’t have detailed plan to eradicate religions, I agree with what Christopher Hitchens once said as a minimum program.

”First, I’ve said repeatedly that religions cannot be taken away from people; they are their favourite toy, and they will remain so, as Freud said, as long as we’re afraid of death. Second, I hope I’ve made it clear that I’m perfectly happy for people to have these toys, to play with them at home, to hug them to themselves, and so on, and to share them with other people who come around and play with the toys. So, that’s absolutely fine. They are not meant to make me play with these toys. I will not play with the toys. Don’t bring the toys to my house. Don’t say my children must play with these toys.”

I always urged to my religious progressive friends to confront the fundamentalist elements and break their ties with the public. In my opinion, religious feminists should speak out against the patriarchal narrative of religious fundamentalists. The woke, however, are acting in the other way. They are triggered and acted in defensive way when some progressives pointed out the patriarchal underpinnings of their holy texts, but they stayed mute when fundamentalists revealed their literal interpretations of these patriarchal verses. In this way, populism and religious fanaticism will always find these woke religious people as their fortress against the genuine critical analysis of the actual progressives who dare to challenge to reform the religions.

If the populism of the religious fundamentalism is not challenged, it will be difficult to establish solidarity and the unity among workers from various religions.

Woke Politics in Burma

Even in Burma, identity politics have been imported by western NGOs and academia. Also, the CSOs, which are funded by the western imperialist camps (that tend to have a Democratic think tank kind of progressivism), play a role too.

In Burmese politics, the very first military junta since the 1960s tried their best to portray themselves as representatives of the Burmese ethnic group, which is the majority ethnic group in Burma. The Myanmar military junta has committed a lot of massacres, attempted genocides, and inhumane acts against several different ethnic groups, including the Burmese themselves.

However, with the identity politics imported from western politics, the concept of Bamar privilege (which I can confirm exists) has been installed. However, instead of viewing it in terms of actual existing material conditions, identity politics agents such as western-trained academia,

NGOs, and CSOs tried to implement race/ethnic reductionism. As a result, Burman ethnicity has become the dominant oppressor in Burma's politics. In a nutshell, the whiteness from the west is replaced by being Burmese in Burma. The role Christianity plays in the west has given to Buddhism in Burma.

Instead of considering the intersectional oppressions based on several factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, sex and gender, etc, the whole identity politics movement has erased the class struggle.

A third world country with full of people who are earning less than \$10 a day are being measured by the standards of the white progressive elitist political standards. Burmese people are politically incorrect to use the word "Kalar" which was already been appropriated by the Muslim and Indian descendants long before the independence. However, the discriminations the communities suffer still exists. It's still hard for people from Indian descendant and Muslim communities to apply for NRC citizenship cards without being forced to being identified as "Indians", "Pakistani", and so on, despite born and raised in Burma. Instead of fixing these situations, the woke left indoctrinated the youths to equate the "Kalar" world as the 'N' word from the west. As a result, "Kalar" word has been portrayed by the politically incorrect word for the non-Indian descents and the non-Muslim population to use. However, in Burmese language, 'Kalar' is a common word and it's used for multiple purposes.

This characteristic of woke identity politics that never goes to the root of the cause has spread to Burma and the whole Burma self-claiming leftists who are theoretically weak and morally corrupt has consumed it.

They consumed the essence of the litmus test politics from the western world. Taking people like Alexandria Ocasio Cortez as the radical left, they are totally ignorant of the far-left political parties internationally. Pyae Sone Kyaw and Aung Sett Kyaw Min, some woke leftists in Burma, once accused 'Libertarian Marxism Myanmar' page as right libertarian for actively staying against political correctness and identity politics. When reached out, it turns out that one of them was not aware of the far-left groups such as WSWS and others that are far-left but yet don't adopt identity politics and political correctness. Such behavior is common among these circles of rich privileged people who identify as leftists despite their social class of richer than upper middle class. It can be concluded that for these woke liberals, if one does not pledge allegiance to the identity politics and political correctness, these woke liberals won't think twice to accuse them as right-wing. This ignorance of knowledge on the various spectrum of left-wing political tendencies explains their shallow and superficial understandings of the global politics depositing having these privileges of going to best universities on the subjects related to these topics.

Even when the far-left local Burmese communists warned them about the political correctness, the woke left pushed back and cancel these individuals. So, most of these far-left communists who happened to be Burmese are forced to silence. Otherwise, they will get cancelled as Bamar chauvinists or racists.

Phyo Win Latt, a historian and a Marxist who used to work with 'Committee of Workers' International' is arguably one of the earliest historians or academic who wrote and published about Rohingya issues in Burma. Even though Dr. Zarni was vocal about Rohingya globally, he never interacted with Burmese grassroots communities. Around 2016, even humanists iNGO groups like Fortify Myanmar and its activists such as Nikki Diamond didn't even dare to talk about Rohingya issues while interacting with grassroots. However, when Phyo Win Latt, being a Trotskyist among the superficial woke left, challenged them with his class based politics and

anti-political correctness approach, he was cancelled by the whole iNGO, CSO and salaried professional activists.

Synergy Social Harmony, a NGO funded research society, which was doing researches on ethnic groups and other ancient cultures in Burma. They're also working with a tiny of religious leaders who they get along. However, they only use these religious leaders to criticize the military junta (as a populist approach). As a NGO funded group, they never discussed the components and topics that are parts of the progressive values.

This NGO identity politics and false consciousness of superficial solidarity amongst the different communities is too far from the grassroots that they can barely challenge the religious fundamentalist elements such as 969 movements and deobandi movement.

Ei Thinzar Maung, a self-claiming left wing politician who was expelled from the Democratic Party for New Society and became a minister of NUG, even accepted a prize that took the credit from the spontaneous poor workers who started the first strike against the military coup in Yangon. Thinzar Shun Le Yi, a daughter of a Burmese military general, who studied in the west, also portrayed herself as a human right activist by critiquing the military coup while failing to recognize and take responsibility for the corrupted ways her family has seized the wealth.

Federalism and Democracy are the main two themes of current revolution. However, even when the federalism which is based on geopolitical considerations and communal consciousness is possible, the NGO, CSO and the so called third party left alternative groups such as BPLA are calling for the ethnicity based federalism. Race reductionism and ethnic reductionism has affected these woke movements so much that they start to denounce every single individual or groups who refused to accept their political positions are being denounced as racists or Bamar chauvinists.

This ethnic reductionism, race reductionism and religious reductionism is a threat to the class consciousness among the workers from different backgrounds. If all the political representations are based on identity, the workers will be divided between the identities such as race, religion, ethnicity and so on. However, unfortunately, apart from the mainstream populist leadership of Aung San Sui Kyi, NLD, and NUG members collectively, the woke left is the strongest left alternative in Burma at the moment.

Most of the people who thought of themselves as anarchists were actively taking part with these NGOs, CSO, and reformist parties. Zin Linn who self identified as social democrat is widely known as anarchist by most of the woke identity politics left and NGO/CSO activists for his involvement in antifa protests. Most of the woke left in Burma failed to recognize the differences between the antifa as a movement and the anarchism as an ideology.

Summing up

Slavoj Zizek seems to have reached the same conclusion as me when it comes to my disagreement with wokeism. "While criticising the PC cancelling culture, we should thus always bear in mind that we share their goals (for feminism, against racism, etc.), and that we criticise their inefficiency in reaching these goals. With advocates of the founding myths, the story is a different one: Their goals are unacceptable, and we hope they will fail to reach them".

The majority of these objectives, including feminism, anti-racism, anti-transphobia, anti-homophobia, anti-patriarchy, and anti-capitalism, are ones that I support. However, based on

my personal experience, I can say that the most of these woke leftists are far from radicals; they are exploiting these objectives to further their careers and are accustomed to the injustice, much like the majority of the bourgeoisie, regardless of their race, gender, or other characteristics. The woke left is not consistent to protect and seek these goals they claim to advocate. Instead they're using these values to buy the votes, to establish the moral superiority and to defend their idealism against the realities of the material conditions. Because of this, the woke left gives right-wing organisations ammunition to scaremonger about left-wing politics and compromise the socio-economic interests of the middle-class and working-class people by deviating the battle on the cultural issues. Even on the cultural issues, their tactics are pushing the middle-class and working-class people away from the left-wing politics out of their woke idealism of identity politics.

To conclude, I would like to quote Dr. Cornel West in his own words.

"I don't believe in cancelling anyone whatsoever, but I do, in fact, say that when we talk about "Wokeness", I'm not talking about just being woke, because you can be obsessed with 'Wokeness' and suffer from insomnia. I'm talking about being fortified. Are you a fighter in the long run? We don't want people to wake up and sprint and run out of gas, and the next thing you know, they end up well adjusted to the injustice, just like much of the bourgeoisie, no matter what colour they are—middle class folk that just cannot wait to be engaged in upward mobility in order to go mainstream and become a new star with all the spectacle and overlook what is happening on the ground with people who are suffering. That's not the model".

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Hein Htet Kyaw
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