

PAKISTAN MILITARY ELITE

**NAZI-STYLE
GENOCIDE IN
EAST BENGAL**

GIRILAL JAIN

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PREFACE

This monograph is being published in the expectation that it will provoke scholars to examine the sadly neglected subject of the value system of the Pakistani military elite and other related issues.

No Indian can claim to be a disinterested observer of the crimes of the Pakistan army in East Bengal. Most of us feel deeply involved with the cause of the long-suffering people of East Bengal. Even otherwise we cannot be unconcerned with the consequences of the Pakistan army's ghastly actions for our country.

Six million refugees, who have either run away from the reign of terror in East Bengal or been forcibly expelled by the Pakistan army after having been subjected to the worst forms of humiliation and torture, have already taken shelter in India at the time of writing and the influx continues. One can only speculate on the "final" figure, if there is going to be any finality about it. This has inevitably placed an intolerable strain on the social, economic and political fabric of India.

The point has repeatedly been made by the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and other leaders. But it is not sufficiently appreciated either at home or abroad that the rise of extremism, which threatens to undermine democratic institutions first in West Bengal and then all over the country, is largely the result of the unsolved refugee problem. Over four million persons

migrated to West Bengal from East Bengal in the last 20 years or so, that is before the present flood, and India's inability to absorb them in gainful employment on account of the shortage of land and the slow rate of industrial growth has embittered them and their children to such an extent that they do not feel that they have a stake in the system. One can easily imagine the consequences if the refugees who have now poured into the State as a result of the reign of terror in East Bengal do not go back.

It is also not sufficiently appreciated that the adjoining States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura cannot and will not absorb many evacuees partly because their resources are limited and partly because the local people are deeply apprehensive of being inundated by Bangali-speaking people. There is a history behind it, a history of the assertion of the local people against the domination of the better educated Bengalis who not long ago controlled the professions and the services in these States. One can regret that the feeling of being one nation is still not strong enough in India to override regionalism and provincialism. But one cannot run away from reality.

There are limits to what the Government of India can do to relieve pressure on West Bengal by dispersing the refugees to other less overcrowded States like Madhya Pradesh. There is not much scope for gainful employment there and the East Bengali refugees themselves do not wish to go to non-Bengali-speaking States.

All in all, unless New Delhi can manage, with the co-operation and support of the international community if possible and without it if necessary, to send back the evacuees to their country, India will face an insoluble

crisis of the gravest kind. The crisis can only be eased—it cannot be resolved—if the international community relieves India of the financial burden of looking after the refugees.

But in spite of it all we have tried our best to examine the issues objectively. If the reader finds that emotion has been allowed to influence the tone, he should bear with us because important issues, which have a vital bearing on the future of the whole of South Asia, are involved.

Relevant articles which have been written for *The Times of India* in recent months are included in this monograph in view of their relevance.

New Delhi,
June 21, 1971.

GIRILAL JAIN

INTRODUCTION

It will be at once dishonest and pointless to gloss over the point that other armies, including the Indian army, have from time to time acted harshly against their own people in defence of law and order and national unity. But there is no other instance in the post-war period where military reprisals have been so completely out of proportion to the nature and magnitude of the threat or provocation as in the case of the Pakistan army's actions in East Bengal. In fact, the Pakistani troops have conducted a pre-planned campaign of murder, arson and rape and deliberately uprooted a whole minority community whose only crime has been that it professes a different faith.

The example of the Nigerian federal army suppressing the Biafran revolt has been and continues to be cited in connection with the ghastly crimes of the Pakistani military machine in East Bengal. But the comparison is wholly inapt. While Biafran leaders made a unilateral declaration of independence after having rejected an eminently reasonable compromise solution offered by the federal authorities, the Awami League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman repeatedly reaffirmed its faith in the unity of Pakistan. Before the military crack-down on March 25, 1971, it was prepared to accept a solution which would have left considerable powers in the hands of the Central Government under President Yahya

Khan till an arrangement acceptable to all principal parties—the army, the Awami League and Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party—had been worked out.

Having captured 167 out of East Bengal's 169 seat the Awami League commanded majority in the 300-member Constituent Assembly. But it was realistic enough not to insist on its right to form a government in Islamabad. It would have been content if it had been allowed to manage the affairs of East Bengal.

The Pakistan Government's case is that the Awami League had been captured by the extremists who were determined to disrupt the unity of the country; that the Sheikh himself was indulging in treasonable activities and that an armed revolt was planned for the early hours of March 26. The last charge has been made not directly but indirectly through newspaper correspondents.

But the Pakistan Government has not so far produced a shred of evidence to substantiate its charges. On the contrary, the conclusion is irresistible that the army hawks in Islamabad conspired with Mr. Bhutto first to get the Constituent Assembly postponed and then to unleash a reign of terror.

Facts speak for themselves. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would not have been arrested at his residence on the night of March 25 if he was planning to lead an armed insurrection; the armed resistance by members of the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles, policemen and other para-military organisations in the province would not have been so chaotic if they had set up a unified command and were ready to act as soon as the call came; and the Awami League leaders would not have run helter-

skelter if they had not been taken completely by surprise by the turn of events. On the other hand, Islamabad rushed troops to East Bengal when President Yahya Khan was engaged in discussions with the Sheikh in Dacca between March 16 and March 25; the former abruptly called off the talks when apparently an agreement had been reached with the latter on the formation of popular governments in the provinces and the army was armed with detailed lists of people to be eliminated when it acted on the night of March 25.

But even if it is assumed that a militant group in the Awami League was thinking in terms of an independent Bangla Desh even before the army crackdown on March 25, can that be said to justify the savage reprisals against ordinary citizens, the attempt to exterminate the East Bengali intelligentsia, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of members of the minority community and the expulsion of millions of others, the campaign of rape and arson and the mindless burning down of whole localities in Dacca, the industrial town of Narayanganj, Chittagong and scores of the other towns and of entire villages all over the province?

It is equally, if not more, remarkable that instead of being repelled by the unpleasant task which the hawkish Generals in Islamabad may be said to have imposed on them, the Pakistan army officers and men have relished it. The account, the only one of its kind, by Anthony Mascarenhas, a leading Pakistani journalist, in the June 13, 1971, issue of *The Sunday Times*, London, provides a most eloquent endorsement of this statement. It is a unique document and should be carefully studied by all

students of South Asian affairs.

A few words about Mascarenhas would not be out of place here. He belongs to a leading Goan Christian family and has lived in Pakistan ever since partition. I first came to know him in 1961 when I was posted in Karachi as correspondent of *The Times of India*. He was already a leading journalist then and was specially close to the Establishment. I cannot say my memory of him is particularly pleasant because I found him more dogmatic and committed to the official viewpoint on the issues of Kashmir and the treatment of minorities in India and New Delhi's difficulties with Peking than some liberal Pakistani Muslim journalists. Unlike them, he did not see much virtue and strength in India's democratic institutions.

I renewed my acquaintance with him on my return in May 1964 after a two-year stint in London, to New Delhi where he was then posted as correspondent of *The Morning News*, Karachi and Dacca, and found him as implacable in his hostility towards India and as firm in his loyalty to the Ayub regime as in Karachi in 1961.

When therefore I read his piece in the May 2, 1971, issue in *The Sunday Times*, London, virtually exonerating the Pakistan army of its terrible crimes and accusing the Awami League of having organised the massacre of non-Bengali Muslims, who had migrated to East Bengal from the Indian State of Bihar at the time of partition, and of having planned an armed insurrection for the early hours of March 26, I was not at all surprised. I said to myself that the Pakistan Government had rightly chosen one of its firmest and ablest supporters among the country's

journalists to do a public relations job for it in the western world.

But apparently Mascarenhas could not stomach what he saw during ten terrible days last April in East Bengal and his conscience revolted. But he had first to arrange a safe exit for his family and himself before he could tell the unvarnished truth. This he has done since.

Mascarenhas accompanied Major Rathore, the C-2 Ops of the 9th Division, on his murderous mission to villages south of Comilla. When the Major and his men threatened to shoot a man just because he was trying to run away, Mascarenhas expressed concern. He was told the person concerned had to be shot because he might be a Hindu or he might be a rebel, or a student or an Awami Leaguer. When Mascarenhas asked why they were picking on the Hindus, he was told in a most casual manner that since they had tried to destroy Pakistan the army was taking advantage of the excellent opportunity provided by the fighting to finish them off.

The Pakistan army officers were, of course, not short of reasons for terrorising and killing the East Bengali Muslims either. Mascarenhas quotes Col. Naim, of the 9th Division Headquarters, as having told him in Comilla that the Hindus had completely undermined the Muslim masses with their money. They had bled the province white. Money, food and produce had flowed across the border to India. In some cases they had made up more than one-half of the teaching staff in the colleges and schools. It had reached the point where Bangali culture was in fact Hindu culture. It was therefore necessary to restore the land to the people and the people to their faith.

In a similar vein Major Bashir, SSO of the 9th Division at Comilla, expounded for the benefit of Mascarenhas that this was a war between the pure and the impure. The people in East Bengal might have Muslim names and call themselves Muslims. But they were Hindus at heart.

All this is of course utter nonsense. Well-off Hindus left East Bengal a long time back with the result that mostly the poor remained there. In any case, how could they "undermine the Muslims with their money" and bleed them white at the same time? Above all, it is common knowledge that the East Bengali Muslims are as orthodox as their West Pakistani co-religionists though they love their language which they share with the Bengalis in India, Hindus and Muslims. Yet the officers in question were not concocting excuses because this is the kind of poisonous stuff on which they have been brought up all these years.

To cap it all, Mascarenhas narrates how fellow officers ragged Azmat, because he was the only officer in the group who had not made a "kill", and a casual talk between two other officers on their exploits.

Rathore : How many did you get ?

Iftikhar smiled bashfully.

Rathore : Come on, how many did you get ?

Iftikhar : Only twelve. And by God we were lucky to get them. We would have lost those, too, if I had not sent my men from the back.

These then are the men who lead the Pakistan armed forces. It is about time that the international community wakes up to the unpleasant truth that the Pakistan army

has acted in and not out of character in East Bengal and faces up to the grim implications of this harsh reality for peace and stability in South Asia.

A FALSE COMPARISON

There are several reasons why not a single attempt has been made to-date to analyse the value system of the Pakistani military elite and to find out whether or not it is in some ways comparable with the Nazified German and the pre-war Japanese military machine.

To begin with, the cold war has led the great powers to woo Pakistan's dominant military-bureaucratic complex and ignore its composition and ideological complexion. The process began in the early 'fifties when the United States was looking for allies against the Soviet Union and has continued since. The Chinese, for instance, began cultivating Karachi soon after it had signed the mutual security pact with Washington and joined the West-sponsored SEATO and the Baghdad pact in 1954 and 1955 because in spite of its professions of friendship with India, Peking was looking for a counterweight against it. The Russians, too, moved into the act in the early 'sixties as soon as Karachi's disillusionment with Washington provided them an opening. Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto first made his mark when as Minister for Oil and Natural Resources in President Ayub Khan's Government he signed an agreement for the exploration of oil and other mineral resources with Moscow allegedly in defiance of the American administration in 1961.

By the time I went to Pakistan as correspondent of *The Times of India* in 1961 the more discerning members

of the local U.S. Embassy were fully aware that the ruling Punjabi-Pathan elite in Rawalpindi—the capital had shifted there from Karachi—was deliberately discriminating against East Bengal in respect of allocation of resources [for economic development and employment in the services. Yet their Government not only failed to adjust its aid policy accordingly but held up Pakistan as an example for other developing countries. Even otherwise respectable academics went along the official line apparently in deference to the so-called national interest.

The great powers have by and large pursued a policy of maintaining a balance between India and Pakistan with the result that they have not been inclined to look too closely, except perhaps for intelligence purposes, into the character of the Pakistani ruling elite. More often than not they have tended to view even internal developments in that country in the light of its disputes with India, specially over Kashmir.

This point is notable because it has predisposed them in favour of Pakistan. They have generally endorsed the two-nation theory in utter disregard of its dangerous consequences for India's attempt to weld various religious communities into one polity and therefore taken the stand that Pakistan has better claims over Kashmir than New Delhi. The Soviet Union has, however, been a notable exception. It is tragic that the great powers should have looked at East Bengal people's struggle for justice and equality in the framework of Indo-Pakistani conflicts.

It is also well known that leaders of rich industrialised nations have often believed that democracy is not suitable for developing countries and that strong military

men are better equipped to lead them in their transition from medieval backwardness into modernity than allegedly corrupt and inefficient politicians.

Above all, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, the belief continues to persist that the Pakistan army and its officer corps are very similar to their Indian counterparts because both inherit and practise the British tradition. This is a dangerous myth which deserves to be disposed of.

The Pakistan army was not very akin to the Indian army even in the early years of independence for two reasons. First, as Mr. Stephen Cohen has noted in a rare article on the Pakistan army in the October-December 1964 issue of *India Quarterly* (published by the Indian Council of World Affairs, Sapru House, New Delhi), there were far fewer senior Muslim officers in the Indian Army at the time of partition than Hindus. This means that even in the beginning the Pakistani army did not possess a sufficiently large number of senior officers trained by the British to impart to it the traditions of the Indian army.

Secondly, Major-General Fazeel Maqsoom Khan, author of the officially-inspired and only history of the Pakistan army entitled *The Story of the Pakistan Army* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1963), has himself admitted that there was not a single purely Muslim regiment at the time of partition. His explanation is that the British did not trust the Muslims. This is on the face of it an absurd proposition. But whatever the explanation for the practice, the result was that the Pakistan army has been organised more or less as a new fighting force.

However even if it is assumed that the Pakistan

army inherited the organisation and professional ethics of the parent body, it began to develop along altogether different lines soon afterwards. The process began with its intervention in Kashmir in October 1947.

It should be noted that unlike the Indian army, the Pakistan army did not in the beginning move into Kashmir openly and in regular formations. A large number of its officers and men were given special leave and asked to lead and join the Pathan raiders. The consequences of this action have not been studied. But we know that the Rawalpindi conspiracy in 1950 was led by Major-General Akbar Khan, who had played a prominent role in the Kashmir operations, and that it was the result of the frustration and indiscipline that these had bred.

The conspiracy was, of course, easily smashed. But it also marked the end of civilian control over the armed forces. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, who was not only the Prime Minister but also the inheritor of the late Mr. M.A. Jinnah's mantle, was assassinated soon afterwards in circumstances which have not been cleared since and the military-bureaucratic complex emerged dominant in the wake of this dramatic event.

The pretence of popular democratic rule on the Westminster model was kept up till at least April 1953 when the Governor-General, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, dismissed the Prime Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin, when he still enjoyed a majority in the National Assembly. But no one could be in doubt that after Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan's death effective power had passed into the hands of the bureaucratic-military elite.

Bureaucracy can be said to have remained the senior

partner till October 1958 when General Ayub Khan ordered the then President, Mr. Iskander Mirza, out of Pakistan and inaugurated direct military rule which continues till today. But bureaucracy had no legitimacy except the one provided by the bayonets of the soldiers and it took good care to see to it that it did not incur the displeasure of the Generals. This was fully reflected in defence allocations which accounted for 60 per cent and more of the Central budget.

It is hardly necessary to make the point that the Indian army operated in an entirely different milieu. No General could dare question Mr. Nehru's judgement or action. This was not only because the late Prime Minister enjoyed great moral authority but also because the Indian army was imbued with the principle of civilian control. It has never deviated from it even when it has felt that its advice and needs have not received proper attention.

There are several other equally important differences between the two armies. The Indian army, for example, is national while the Pakistan army is sectional. While the first has discarded the British-built myth of martial and non-martial races and recruited from all over the country, the later has practised rigorously the discrimination implicit in the British concept.

The atmosphere in which the two armies have grown up is also starkly different. While the dominant Indian leadership has preached and practised secularism and emphasised the concept of composite national culture to which all communities have contributed, the Pakistani elite has never tired of advocating religion as the basis of nationalism and *jehad* (religious war) as the means of

defending the State and the nation.

The Dawn, Pakistan's leading English-language daily, for instance, carried verses from the Quarn during the war with India. One of these on September 13, 1965, read :

O Prophet ! Urge the believer to fight ! If there be of you twenty steadfast, they shall overcome two hundred—and if there be of you a hundred, they shall overcome a thousand of those who disbelieve because they are a people who do not understand.

It is well known that the Quarn contains verses which preach peace and respect for the faith of others. But these hardly find mention in Pakistan's inflammatory anti-India and anti-Hindu crusade.

Officers and men of the Pakistan forces are exposed to intensive indoctrination. The subjects include *jehad*, Pakistan and its ideology and the ideal soldier. Surely professional ethics cannot prosper in such an atmosphere.

COMPARISON WITH PRE-WAR JAPAN

Even after the Pakistani army has revealed its sinister face in East Bengal, the great powers appear to be determined to shirk comparison with Nazi racialism and pre-war Japanese militarism. They in fact are exerting pressure on India to make sure that it does not resort to the use of force despite the intolerable strains the influx of six million refugees with more to follow has placed on the country's social, economic and political fabric. One cannot help inferring that the great powers are showing the same kind of blindness as they displayed in the case of Nazi Germany for six years and militarist Japan even longer. They seem to have learnt nothing from history.

*In order to make a proper comparison between the pre-war Japanese and the present Pakistani army it is necessary to quote some observations which so eminent a student of military affairs as Professor Samuel P. Huntington has made about the former in his well-known work *The Soldier and the State* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts).*

According to him, the national ideology served the military and the military served the ideology. There was no tension between military values and political values. Consequently Japan had the most political army in the world. Given the nature of the national ideology and its strong association with the feudal tradition, it made the Japanese officer corps the major military

body in the world most lacking in professional spirit.

Japan had the form, the external shell, of military professionalism, but not the substance. The Japanese military mind remained dominated by the popular ideology.

Professor Huntington adds that the professional military ethic draws a distinction between the military virtues and the warrior virtues. For the Japanese, however, the ideal officer was a warrior—a fighter engaging in violence himself rather than a manager directing the employment of violence by others. Officer indoctrination in the Japanese military forces stressed the importance of courage under fire far more than scientific accomplishment.

The professional military mind tends to focus upon the balance of material strength between opposing nations. Japanese military thought, however, minimised the role of material factors. Spirit alone was decisive.

The Japanese military officers did not at all object to war with the United States because, despite its incomparably greater resources, its spirit was thought to be weaker than theirs. The Japanese military mind was thus subjective rather than objective.

In contrast to the professional military view that war is generally undesirable and that it is the last resort of national policy, the Japanese feudal warrior tended to praise violence and glorify war as an end in itself.

Students of Pakistani affairs will readily agree that there exists the same relationship between the military and the national ideology in that country as in Japan in the pre-war period. Even a casual perusal of the former

President, Field Marshal Ayub Khan's speeches should convince any fair-minded person that the Pakistani defence forces look upon themselves as the embodiment of the so-called Islamic ideology which they believe the Pakistan State has been established to uphold.

The ideology is of course not interpreted in terms of positive ideals. It is interpreted in terms of opposition to and hatred of India. The reason for this emphasis on what one writer has called "negative identity" are rooted in one thousand years of history. But the relevant point is that "there is no tension between military values and political values" in Pakistan as there was none in pre-war Japan.

It is not just a matter of speculation and inference that the Pakistani armed forces have only the form and not the substance of military professionalism and that the Pakistani military mind is dominated by the popular ideology which can be summed up in one phrase—burning hatred of India and the desire to destroy it. Three instances may be quoted to prove that the Pakistani military officers have not paid the necessary attention to the balance of material strength between them and the opposing Indian army.

First, if the official historian of the Pakistan army, Major-General Fazal Maqueen Khan, is to be taken at his word, and there is no good reason to doubt it, they wanted to continue the Kashmir war in 1948 in spite of the much greater strength of the Indian army.

Major-General Khan writes in his *The Story of the Pakistan Army*: "India was thus brought to her knees by the first fully calculated counter-stroke and within a

short time asked for a cease-fire. To the army's horror, Pakistan during her greatest hour of triumph in Kashmir agreed to accept the cease-fire. . . . It is difficult to understand why Pakistan let that opportunity pass. . . . It was a risk worth taking."

The warrior-officers wanted to continue the war in spite of the heavy odds against them because their minds were so dominated by the ideology of *Jehad* against India that they were incapable of taking a cold look at the balance of forces.

Secondly, it appears from Mr. Khan's account that the Pakistan army was itching for a fight with India in 1950 despite the fact that it was hardly in a position to do so. He writes: "In accordance with the policy of appeasement towards India prevalent in those days, no open or bold deployment of the Pakistan army was carried out. A minimum number of troops, just enough to infuse confidence in the population of the border areas, was deployed there."

Finally, it is common knowledge that younger Pakistani officers were opposed to the cease-fire in 1965 though their main armoured thrust had ended in a disaster and they were beginning to run short of ammunition while India had drawn upon only a small percentage of its stocks. They echoed Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's cry for a thousand-year war with India partly because they were unable to comprehend that they had not won smashing victories and partly because they were inspired by the spirit of *Jehad*. What better proof can there be to show that the Pakistani military mind is subjective rather than objective?

Russell Brines has noted in his authoritative book *The Indo-Pakistani Conflict* (Pall Mall Press, London) that by the closing phase of the 1965 war the Pakistanis were getting hurt and senior officers were frightened. The Pakistan army was short of supplies; it was running out of ammunition and it had lost heavily in equipment and trained men and officers. According to him, the Indian forces had reached within striking distance of the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir's nerve-centre at Muzaffarabad. If it failed to take advantage of this opportunity it was perhaps due to increasing control by political leaders who were responding to fresh U.N. appeals for peace.

Since we do not have access to Pakistan's indoctrination courses for its military officers, we cannot quote them to prove that these emphasise the importance of physical courage and stamina far more than scientific accomplishment. But in an article "Arms and Politics in Pakistan" in *India Quarterly* (October-December 1964) Mr. Stephen Ochan quoted a senior British officer to say that the Pakistanis have a "terrible inferiority complex" vis-a-vis the Indians on mental things but "they make up for it by having a superiority complex in physical things" and want to bash the Indians at the first opportunity.

The Pakistani elite does not glorify war as an end in itself. It does so in the name of religion. But the result is the same. The incessant talk of *Jehad* creates an atmosphere in which war comes to be regarded not as the last but as the first resort of national policy.

Though the evidence is by no means conclusive, various reports that have emanated from Islamabad in recent years suggest that the younger officers trained in Pakistani

military establishments are even more hawkish and subjective in their attitudes than the Generals who were trained by the British either at Sandhurst or Dehra Dun. While some of the latter are objective and realistic, the former as a class are bigoted and ruthless.

Pakistan obviously does not possess pre-war Japan's industrial resources and its armed forces are neither as large nor as efficient as that of the latter. It cannot therefore constitute as great a threat to world peace by itself. But Islamabad can no more be trusted to follow a rational policy than Tokyo in those days. The great powers, which have in one way or another strengthened Islamabad's war machine and potential in the past, may not find it pleasant to accept the conclusion that they have unwittingly harmed the cause of peace and sanity in the region. But they should at least look at Islamabad afresh in the light of the mass massacre, arson and rape in East Bengal. They owe it to themselves, if no one else, to explain how a "professional" army could have sunk to this level. Even Japan's crimes during the war pale into insignificance against the performance of Gen. Yahya Khan's "soldiers".

RACISM AND BIGOTRY

It is only appropriate that Maj-Gen. Fazal Maqееm Khan should have opened his *'The Story of the Pakistan Army'* on a racist and religious note because these two elements largely determine its character. Add to it the contempt for politicians of all hues and the picture is complete.

The officers and *jawans* of the Pakistan Army, Maj-Gen. Khan writes, can trace their origins to the Aryans, Scythians, Semetics and Turks who came as invaders and stayed on to make the Indian sub-continent their home.

"They were the men who fought Alexander the Great; who under the banner of Mohammad Bin Qasim established the first Muslim stronghold in India. They campaigned with Mahmud Ghaznavi and Mohammad Ghori, and in the days of the great Moghul Emperors helped to conquer and stabilise the whole of the sub-continent . . . In the last centuries they followed leaders like Sayyid Ahmad Brelvi who tried to revive Muslim fortunes . . ."

There could not be much place for the East Bengalis in an army which traces its origin to men who fought under Mohammad Bin Qasim and there was not. General Ayub Khan found them unfit for recruitment when he was posted there as the General Officer Commanding soon after partition and has said so in so many words in his

autobiography *"Friends Not Masters"*. Later in 1954 he wrote :

"East Bengalis . . . probably belong to the very original Indian races. It is no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan, they had not known any real freedom or sovereignty. They have in turn been ruled either by the caste Hindus, Mughals, Pathans or the British. In addition they have been and still are under considerable cultural and linguistic influence. As such they have all the inhibitions of down-trodden races and have not yet found it possible psychologically to adjust to the requirements of their new-born freedom."

The Pakistani military elite has resolved the obvious contradiction between its belief in its racial superiority and its adherence to Islam with its accent on universalism and equality among the believers by convincing itself that the East Bengalis are not good Muslims and that their Islamic faith has been undermined by their love for their Sanskrit-based language and culture. The result is that while it hates all East Bengalis for having had the audacity to seek justice and equality, it has made the Hindus there the principal target of its campaign of rape, arson and murder. It has done to them what it has always wanted to do to the whole of India but has felt powerless to attempt.

In view of the presence of six million East Bangali refugees, most of them Hindus, in India and the ruthless suppression of the Awami League which did not choose but was forced to adopt the secessionist platform, it should not be necessary to make these points regarding the Pakistani military elite's racialism and religious bigotry.

But unfortunately it seems that the international community is either not sensitive to the racist-communalist character of the rulers in Islamabad or wishes to shirk this issue which lies at the heart of East Bengal's tragedy and the Indo-Pakistani conflict.

However much one may be appalled at the silence of the Arabs and other Afro-Asian governments at this colossal crime in East Bengal, one can at least understand the factors behind it. The Arabs are doubtless influenced by the "religious" consideration. Even if they do not regard the East Bangali Muslims as a lesser breed, they feel closer to the people in West Pakistan and they do not want the biggest Muslim State to disintegrate. Moreover they and most other Afro-Asian nations are neither haunted by memories of Nazism and Japanese militarism nor do they find anything very repugnant about such doctrines. But how is one to explain the apathy of peoples and governments who in the 'forties made immense sacrifices in fighting the twin evils of Nazism and Japanese militarism? Why can they not recognise that the men in Islamabad are practising both these abhorrent doctrines with a vengeance and that there can be no lasting compromise with such dangerous men?

It is also as much of an illusion to believe that the military junta will ever transfer power voluntarily to the elected representatives of the people as to think that it will get over its racialism and religious bigotry. No one who has followed West Pakistani writings and propaganda in the last two decades can share this make-believe.

President Ayub Khan spoke for the entire military elite when he poured ridicule on all politicians and said:

"Self-seeking leaders have ravaged the country or tried to barter it for personal gain . . . Weak and irresolute governments have looked on with masterly inactivity and cowardice and allowed things to drift and deteriorate and discipline go to pieces . . . Politicians have started a free-for-all type of fighting in which no holds are barred . . . There has been no limit to their baseness, chicanery, deceit and degradation . . ."

This harsh judgment may have been justified when it was made. But the pertinent point is that the 1958 coup confirmed the self-assumed paternalistic role of the armed forces as the sole guardians of the security, well-being and "unity" of Pakistan and they have never since thought in terms of giving up this position.

President Yahya Khan's action in going through with the elections last December does not detract one bit from the validity of this proposition. In fact all available evidence shows that this exercise was intended at best to bring into existence an arrangement whereby the military command would have remained the supreme arbiter between rival parties—no party was expected to win a majority or even a near majority—and at worst to demonstrate once again that Western-style democracy is not suited to the genius of Pakistan. In any case, when the results did not conform to the army leadership's calculations, it began to plan a ruthless disposal of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Awami League.

It should be obvious that the Generals used Mr. Bhutto in their battle against the Sheikh because he was more than willing to oblige, partly because of his own overweening ambitions and partly because of his dislike of the

Sheikh and other East Bengali leaders who had no stomach for his one thousand-year crusade against India. But the result could not have been very different if Mr. Bhutto was either not there or his services were not available. The Generals would have in any case acted to dispose of the spectre of the democracy which had been haunting them in the shape of the Sheikh since last December.

The point is often made that a military dictatorship is bound to run into conflict with the growing intelligentsia. This is true. But the West Pakistani intelligentsia succeeded in forcing Field Marshal Ayub Khan to step down in March 1969 principally because it received massive support from the East Bengali nationalists. Since the two have parted company in the ghastliest possible circumstances, the military has little to fear from the West Pakistani intelligentsia. This is one reason why it can now afford to treat Mr. Bhutto with scant respect.

It is possible that the position of Gen. Yahya Khan and other hawks, who are responsible for the genocide in East Bengal, will become untenable if members of the World Bank consortium stick to their present stand that they will not give aid unless Islamabad produces a political settlement with the genuine representatives of the East Bengali people (this means Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) and if in course of time this cripples the economy. But it will be naive to ignore the possibility that they may well be succeeded by another group of military men who will be equally averse to civilian rule.

The Pakistan army has been entrenched in power for almost two decades and it will not make way for civilians unless it suffers a major debacle on the battlefield. It was

perhaps not involved in Mr. Ghulam Mohammad's decision to dismiss Khwaja Nazimuddin as Prime Minister in 1953. But it gained from this move in that Gen. Ayub Khan, then Commander-in-Chief of the Army, emerged as a member of the triumvirate that ruled Pakistan. The triumvirate was replaced by a duumvirate consisting of Mr. Iskander Mirza and Gen. Ayub Khan when Mr. Ghulam Mohammad was incapacitated in 1955. The General finally led the coup in 1958.

The Pakistani armed forces have ever since looked upon themselves as the sole guardians of the country; its officers have been politicised; by and large they have been influenced not by liberal or leftist ideologies but by the kind of revivalism and fanaticism which Maulana Maudoodi and Mr. Bhutto represent between themselves and there is nothing in their tradition or training which can persuade them to hand over power to democratically elected civilians now or at some later date.

Finally, the world community will do well to take note of the siege psychology of the Pakistani military men. As a Western journalist wrote recently, they find "something intoxicating in retreating into a ferocious isolation. The more the infidel world protests, the more epic the lonely struggle becomes. The leaders of West Pakistan may even prefer to bring down everything in glorious destruction than undergo the humiliation of admitting they were wrong."

BHUTTO-ARMY ALLIANCE

There is nothing to substantiate an earlier report that younger army generals carried out a palace coup on the eve of the first general election in Pakistan last week and reduced President Yahya Khan to a figurehead.¹

President Yahya Khan has in fact claimed that he is in command and that no one can snatch power from him unless he is ready to transfer it to a popularly elected government after the proposed Constituent Assembly has successfully completed its deliberations within the 120 days he has fixed for the purpose.

This may indeed be the case. Unlike President Ayub Khan, President Yahya Khan has not given up the office of Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army. Since he has maintained direct control over the military machine, he may have been in a position to scotch any trouble that may have arisen in Rawalpindi.

But this cannot dispose of all speculation regarding his position. Since it is difficult to believe that the army leadership as a whole is ready to hand over power it is possible that opposition to his plans exists in its ranks. He is apparently sincere and he has so far proved strong enough to have his way. But the real test is yet to come.

Military-bureaucratic elites are as a rule reluctant to

1. This article appeared in *The Times of India* on December 16, 1970. Subsequent events have fully confirmed the analysis.

surrender power to civilians. In most Afro-Asian-Latin American countries they have a paternalistic attitude towards the people whom they regard unfit for self-rule. In Pakistan the problem is greatly complicated by the fact that the people of East Bengal, who are grossly underprivileged, deeply aggrieved and culturally, linguistically and ethnically quite different from their fellow countrymen in the Western wing, constitute a majority and that they have voted solidly for the nationalistic Awami League.

Whatever President Yahya Khan's personal preferences, it is not too far-fetched to think that the army leadership as a whole does not view with equanimity the prospect of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman becoming Prime Minister and dominating the country's political life with the help of a solid and unshakable majority in the Central legislature.

The Punjabi-Pathan elite which has ruled Pakistan since the assassination of Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan in 1950 has generally been contemptuous and distrustful of the people of East Bengal. (President Ayub Khan, for example, could not resist the temptation of giving expression to it in his autobiography *Friends not Masters*.)

This elite may put up with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for some time as it did with Mr. Suhrawardy. But it is useful to recall that Mr. Ghulam Mohammad summarily dismissed Mr. Nazimuddin, a respected East Pakistani leader, as Prime Minister when he still enjoyed a majority in the Central legislature, that he suspended and finally dissolved the provincial legislature in East Bengal after the first election there in 1954 and that President Ayub Khan

framed the Sheikh on treason charges and preferred to hand over power to General Yahya Khan in March 1969 than to negotiate seriously with the East Pakistani leader on his demand for the fullest measure of autonomy.

It is indeed doubtful whether President Yahya Khan would have been allowed to hold the general election if the intelligentsia, specially the student community, in West Pakistan itself had not become restive and had not found in Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto a leader capable of articulating its demands and of organising it. The Ayub regime was overwhelmed by the joint assault of West Pakistani radicalism and East Bengali nationalism and it is the same pressure which has persuaded General Yahya Khan and his colleagues to hold the elections.

But it does not follow that the military-bureaucratic elite is reconciled to the loss of power and that it will not play on the sharp differences that exist between Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Bhutto and try to win over the latter to its side.

Mr. Bhutto may not be willing to make a deal with President Yahya Khan. The latter too may not be inclined that way. He may on present evidence prefer to come to terms with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But Mr. Bhutto may be ready to play along if President Yahya Khan loses ground and a different leadership becomes dominant within the military establishment.

It cannot be said that the student revolt led by Mr. Bhutto in West Pakistan in the winter of 1968-69 had nothing to do with the dissatisfaction with the military-bureaucratic rule and the demand for a return to parliamentary democracy. But it is self-evident that President

Ayub Khan's decline began with his failure to seize Kashmir in 1965 and subsequent acceptance of the cease-fire and the Tashkent declaration, that Mr. Bhutto became a hero of the student community by virtue of his defiance of the United States, his role in the establishment of the Peking-Jakarta-Rawalpindi axis, his opposition to the cease-fire at the time of the Indo-Pakistan war and the Tashkent agreement and finally his dismissal as Foreign Minister by President Ayub Khan, and that older politicians like Mian Mumtaz Daulatana and Mr. G.M. Syed, who have consistently espoused the cause of parliamentary democracy, have not cut much ice with the radical section of the intelligentsia.

Apart from President Ayub Khan's alleged subservience to the two super-powers, his "cool" attitude towards China and his "softness" towards India, three other issues figured prominently in the assault on his regime. These were the concentration of wealth in the top 22 business families, the enormous fortunes the Ayub family had accumulated and the widespread corruption in the civil service.

The implication is that a Nassar-type army leader can take care of all these constituents of West Pakistani radicalism provided that the intelligentsia there is not deeply committed to parliamentary democracy. He can revive and intensify the hate campaign against India, renew the pledge to "liberate" the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir, draw closer to China in defiance of the United States and the Soviet Union, break up the holding of the top 22 families, expand the role of the public sector in the country's economy and nationalise banking, insu-

rance and import-export trade. The model exists and can be copied with necessary modifications.

It cannot be seriously disputed that such a plank will be popular with the radicalised section of the intelligentsia and that Mr. Bhutto may well be willing to go along with it though he may have to forgo his ambition to emerge as the top boss in Pakistan.

We do not know whether a Nassar-type leader exists in the top echelons of the military establishment in Pakistan and whether he can mobilise sufficient support. But not much importance need be attached to the view that the Pakistani army is still led by Sandhurst types and that even middle-level officers of the rank of brigadiers and colonels cannot be too sympathetic to the cause of radicalism in view of their background as members of the landed gentry.

The reverse is in fact the case. The British tradition has proved so weak in the Pakistan army that it has consistently intervened in the country's political life in the last two decades. Also no serious political scientist or sociologist can now subscribe to the view that radicalism does not prosper among children of the landed gentry. Even a cursory look at the social backgrounds of many leading communists and sympathisers in this country will, for example, help to establish the contrary proposition. Mr. Bhutto himself comes from one of the country's leading landlord families of Sind. His father was Kingdome by the British and he himself was educated in the United States and Britain.

Radicalism in West Pakistan may not serve as an ally of democracy. In historical terms its main functions are

to weaken regional ties, forge larger loyalties and legitimise the intelligentsia's inevitable struggle against the orthodox and obscurantist ulema. The results of the first general election show that it is effectively performing these roles.

The task has not been as difficult as most people had thought. Though the West Punjabi elite has more or less monopolised power and wealth its feeling of separate identity in linguistic and cultural terms has been quite weak. Two paragraphs may be quoted from Mr. C. Shackle's pioneering article "Punjabi in Lahore" in the July 1970 issue of *Modern Asian Studies* (Cambridge University Press):

"As a legacy of British educational policy, Sindhi and Pashto both had a fairly sizable place in the local educational curricula alongside Urdu in the schools and as full degree subjects in the local universities. In West Punjab, on the other hand, Punjabi vanished as a university subject with the departure of the Sikhs with whom Punjabi was most closely identified and this was soon followed by the abolition of its independent Board of Studies. In the schools, Urdu was the only language to be officially employed along-side English The overall position was confirmed by the National Commission on Education in 1959 and has not been altered subsequently in any significant way

"The cultural tradition which found its home in this new state was fundamentally that of the Muslim elite of U.P., closely associated first with Persian and subsequently with Urdu, which had later expanded into the Punjab with Hali and his successors, of whom the most important

by far was Iqbal whose work is so intimately associated with the ideology (or ideologies!) of Pakistan."

This is not to rule out the alternative and more hopeful scenario. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Bhutto may decide to co-operate on a give-and-take basis and the army leadership may go a long way towards meeting East Bengal's legitimate demand for autonomy. Since India has an enormous stake in the success of the democratic experiment and the preservation of Pakistan's unity we must hope that leading Pakistanis in key positions will act with discretion, patience and a sense of responsibility. But it will be naive at this stage to take too optimistic a view of the likely course of developments across the border.

* * *

We have no direct knowledge of what has been happening behind the scene in Islamabad since the Awami League won a majority in the elections to the Constituent Assembly last December, apparently to the surprise and chagrin of the ruling elite.² But the indications are that the military junta in the country has been locked in fierce in-fighting.

In spite of all that President Yahya Khan has done in recent weeks, it was possible to take the charitable view till last Saturday³ that he first delayed the convening of the Constituent Assembly and then postponed the opening session in Dacca only to give Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and

2. *The Times of India*, March 10, 1971.

3. *Ibid.*, March 6, 1971.

Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto time to sort out their differences. But his own broadcast on that day shows that he acted under other compulsions as well.

President Yahya Khan has said that his decision to put off the session originally scheduled for March 3 was taken to "preserve the Assembly itself." He has not elucidated this cryptic remark. But the implication clearly is that he was then under strong pressure from a fairly strong section in the military junta to dissolve the Constituent Assembly.⁴

No other interpretation can be put on President Yahya Khan's statement because on his own showing the promotion of dialogue between the leaders of the two wings was only the second of his two objectives and it was independent of the first objective of preserving the Assembly. In plain words this means that the threat to the existence of the Constituent Assembly did not arise only from the lack of understanding between the Sheikh and Mr. Bhutto and the latter's decision to boycott its session.

It needs to be recalled that the Pakistan Government showed signs of being divided when the hijacked Indian plane landed at Lahore on January 30. It first wanted to return the aircraft to New Delhi and then allowed it to be blown up by the two hijackers who were, on all accounts, weak characters and could have been easily disarmed. In fact a warning that they would be denied Pakistani citizenship and put on trial would have sufficed to persuade

4. It is now widely believed that President Yahya Khan was given a virtual ultimatum by the hawks on February 22, 1971.

them to leave the plane. It will be ridiculous for anyone to suggest that the hijackers would have acted the way they did without support from highly influential persons in Islamabad.

But if the plan of those who encouraged the hijackers to destroy the plane was to provoke trouble with India and use that as a pretext to compel President Yahya Khan to delay the convening of the Assembly, it did not quite succeed. He was able to avoid a crisis in Indo-Pakistan relations and to announce on February 13 that the Assembly would meet on March 3 largely because New Delhi acted with restraint. Mr. Bhutto then moved into the centre of the stage with consequences that are now all too evident.

It is impossible to cite evidence to prove conclusively that the same group which was behind the destruction of the Indian plane led Mr. Bhutto to boycott the Assembly. It is plausible that he took this critical decision completely on his own. But how was he in a position to hold out ugly threats to other West Pakistan members who were inclined to go to Dacca to attend the opening session of the Assembly? Why did nobody remind him that martial law was in force and that the penalty for intimidating other members of the National Assembly would be heavy? Surely, he could not have been speaking only for himself when he said that members who decided to go to Dacca should buy one-way tickets because they would not be allowed to return to the western wing.⁵

5. According to the Awami League leader, Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed, Maj-Gen. Umar backed Mr. Bhutto's moves and threats.

By the same logic, Mr. Bhutto's present *volte face* and President Yahya Khan's decision to convene the Assembly on March 25 can be interpreted to imply a shift in the power balance in Islamabad, this time in favour of the moderate elements.

But this is not so. Instead it appears that there is a stalemate. If it was not so, President Yahya Khan should not have attempted simultaneously to strengthen the machinery for enforcing martial law and to assuage Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by fixing a new date for the first session of the Constituent Assembly. That he has not succeeded either in cowing down the people or in assuaging the Sheikh is a different issue.

Current developments in East Pakistan have provided ammunition to the hardliners as well as the moderates in Islamabad. While the former can argue that the elections have united the East Bengalis, including civil servants and policemen, behind the Awami League and that there is no other way to maintain the integrity of Pakistan than through force, the latter can point out that Mr. Bhutto's antics have queered the pitch for the Sheikh, aroused the anger and hostility of the people against the armed forces and made reconciliation between the two wings well nigh impossible. It is not surprising therefore that Islamabad appears to be wavering at the moment.

It is possible that the hardliners are just biding their time and that they will get rid of President Yahya Khan himself if he does not play their game. But even they must be baffled. They did not realise that East Bengali nationalism had been aroused to such a pitch that Government employees, including police officers, would ignore the

martial law administration and obey the Sheikh and that even the Chief Justice of the Dacca High Court would refuse to swear in the newly appointed Governor, Lt.-Gen. Tikka Khan.

The East Bengali people, on their part, have almost reached the point of no return. The latest blood bath has strengthened their feeling of alienation from the western wing and of separateness as nothing else could. The troops have behaved as an army of occupation and the people regard them as such. It speaks for the lack of international confidence in the ability of Islamabad to manage the situation that British and West German nationals and U.N. experts have started pulling out of East Pakistan. But Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is still interested in maintaining the unity of Pakistan and he may be able to carry his people with him if Islamabad has the good sense to send the troops back to the barracks and open a dialogue with the Awami League leader.

It is obvious that President Yahya Khan would not have ordered the elections to the Constituent Assembly if he had the foresight to realise that the Awami League would be able to transform it into a referendum on its six-point autonomy programme, sweep the polls in East Bengal and thus win a majority on its own. He seems to have calculated that he would be able to impose his will on a fragmented Assembly. Otherwise he would have exercised his powers under martial law to give the country a constitution and then hold elections under it.

Since the election in December, he has been locked in a struggle with the hawks in Islamabad. If he had the authority he would have in all probability liked to form

an interim Government with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the Prime Minister and set aside the 120-day limit that he had arbitrarily fixed for the completion of the constitution making process. When he described the Sheikh as the future Prime Minister of Pakistan, it appeared that he was thinking in those terms. But he did not make a concrete move in that direction probably because he was not in a position to do so.

This assessment is based on the assumption that President Yahya Khan has been committed to a change-over to a democratic set-up. This assumption may not be wholly accurate. But so far there is not much evidence to contradict it. He has wavered in recent weeks. But the explanation for it lies, as suggested earlier, in the factional in-fighting in Islamabad.

It is not a case of wisdom by hindsight to say that the formation of an interim Government would have gone a long way to reassure the East Bengali people and the Awami League leaders that Islamabad was not trying to perpetuate West Punjab's hegemony and that it would have persuaded them to water down their six-point programme to some extent. Similarly the waving of the 120-day time-limit would have ensured that the constitution-making process would be suitably prolonged to give the Sheikh and Mr. Bhutto time to work out an acceptable compromise solution.

Mr. Bhutto has deliberately made it appear that there can be no meeting ground between him and the Sheikh. But this is not so. Mr. Bhutto has himself conceded four out of the six points in the Sheikh's programme including East Bengal's right to raise a militia for its

security. The dispute thus is limited to two subjects—the Central Government's right to levy taxes and control foreign trade. This can be resolved if the constitution provides that the income from taxes and the foreign exchange earnings of each wing would be spent more or less exclusively there.

But in reality the West Punjabi elite—Mr. Bhutto is its spokesman despite his Sindhi origin—has not been reconciled either to East Bengal's autonomy or to its right to be the senior partner at the Centre. From the very start it has, therefore, been interested less in working out a compromise solution than in frustrating East Bengali aspirations. It is now face to face with the consequences of its actions.

* * *

The contradictory reports have emanated from Islamabad in the last few days.⁶ While one of them suggests that President Yahya Khan is planning to proclaim an interim constitution granting a substantial measure of autonomy to the five provinces and to guarantee the parliamentary privileges of those Awami Leaguers who are willing to accept the idea of Pakistan as a nation, the other says that the military regime may persuade him to step down in order to improve its image which has been badly tarnished by the carnage in East Bengal.

Though it is difficult to assess the veracity of these reports and anticipate the course of events in Pakistan,

6. *The Times of India*, May 12, 1971.

there will be no cause for surprise if either of these developments takes place.

There are three reasons why President Yahya Khan may be asked to go.

First, it is immaterial whether or not he took up a hawkish position in the critical weeks, before March 25 when he ordered, or at least acquiesced in the massacre of thousands of unarmed and unsuspecting people in Dacca, Chittagong and other army strongholds in East Bengal. He cannot disown responsibility for the crimes that have been committed in his name.

Secondly, even if Islamabad's claims regarding the military situation in East Bengal are taken at their face value, it will need the co-operation of at least a section of the East Bengali people, intelligentsia and political leadership to re-establish some kind of administration there. This means that an effort will have to be made fairly soon to win over some of the Awami Leaguers and that Islamabad will need someone other than General Yahya Khan to do so for the simple reason that the East Bengalis hold him guilty of treachery and distrust him profoundly.

Thirdly, General Yahya Khan has proved most inept as a politician. Instead of giving the country a constitution and holding elections under it, he ordered elections to a Constituent Assembly, little realising that this might release uncontrollable passions. At no point in his discussions with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman did he spell out what he was prepared to concede or define the limits beyond which he could not go.

The compulsions for a conciliatory gesture to the

people of East Bengal are equally clear. The most pressing of these is economic.

Since there is no evidence so far that either China or West Pakistan's other friends like Saudi Arabia and Iran are willing to extend substantial credits to Islamabad to help it tide over the financial crisis caused by the loss of East Bengal's exports, the sharp rise in military expenditure and the delay in aid by members of the World Bank consortium, it has no choice but to try to woo the latter.

Washington's role is of critical importance in this affair and the indications are that it has taken a fairly tough line. It has made it known that there can be no resumption of aid until the military regime in Pakistan fulfils certain conditions which include a political settlement of the conflict in East Bengal.⁷ The Soviet Government has also been making the same point in its communications to Islamabad.

There is some evidence to suggest that Islamabad recognises this compulsion. That is why it has not adopted a defiant posture towards members of the consortium and has in fact sent special emissaries to them. It has even admitted a select group of Western journalists into East Bengal with a view to persuading the world through them that while its troops have put down the "secessionists" they have not engaged in a genocide.

The military regime has failed to convince the international community, specially the two super-powers, that India has been principally responsible for the crisis in

7. This view has not been borne by subsequent events. The U.S. has in fact continued military supplies to Pakistan on the plea that these help it to maintain influence in Islamabad.

East Bengal. Neither Washington nor Moscow has given the least credence to its anti-Indian propaganda. In fact they realise that New Delhi has acted with great restraint in spite of the flood of refugees, which has imposed an impossible burden on its economy and administration. After all India went to war with Pakistan in 1965 under a provocation which cannot be said to have been more serious than the present one.

Thus while it is difficult to say for certain whether a sufficiently influential group in the military establishment in Islamabad favours a change of leadership or a gesture of reconciliation towards East Bengal or both the need for some such move in West Pakistan's own interest cannot be seriously disputed.

It is also a matter of speculation whether Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's demand for transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people before June 30 is in some way connected with the debate in the ruling group in Islamabad. The most unscrupulous and the most dynamic of West Pakistan's political leaders, he is quite capable of acting in concert with both General Yahya Khan and an anti-Yahya Khan faction in the military establishment, if there is one, depending on his appreciation of their relative strength.

Mr. Bhutto is an extremely ambitious person who has convinced himself that the mantle of the late Mr. Jinnah has fallen on him. He is by no means a creature of the military establishment though he enjoys the support of some of its members. They backed him in 1966 when he defied President Ayub Khan on the question of the Tashkent Agreement, in 1968 when he led the revolt

against the regime and in March this year when he wrecked the newly elected Constituent Assembly by his decision to boycott its abortive session in Dacca.

It is indeed possible that he is trying to take advantage of the situation created by the outlawing of the Awami League on the one hand and the grave embarrassment of the military leadership on the other. But he is also a realist who knows that power in West Pakistan still grows out of the barrel of a gun.

Two other explanations are possible for his present stance. First, the intelligentsia which acted as the spearhead of his People's Party may be feeling restive at the prospect of an indefinite continuation of military rule, the denial of civil liberties and the threat of economic collapse. Secondly, he and his colleagues may be calculating that the promise of limited autonomy may help to win over to their side those Awami League members of the National Assembly who have no heart for a prolonged guerilla warfare. A recent statement by Mr. Ghulam Mustafa, Mr. Bhutto's confidant and Secretary-General of the Punjab unit of the People's Party, is significant in this context.

He has said that Awami Leaguers should be allowed to retain their membership of the National Assembly in spite of the ban on their party and allowed to function as independents or join other organisations so long as they subscribe to the concept of one Pakistan.

There is some reason to believe that the military regime is also thinking along these lines. According to reports from Islamabad, it hopes that as many as 100 out of the 167 Awami Leaguers elected to the National

Assembly may respond to an offer which guarantees their parliamentary rights and holds out the promise of a degree of autonomy for East Bengal.

What is the basis for this hope is not at all clear. For all the world knows this may be nothing more than wishful thinking on the part of those who have shown themselves to be wholly insensitive to the depth of the East Bengali people's sense of grievance and alienation. They have misjudged the East Bengali reaction to their moves in the past and they may be doing so once again. The point however is that some move in that direction can be anticipated in the none-too-distant future.⁸

This is not to rule out the possibility that the military regime may be able to maintain its facade of unity, that it may seek to run East Bengal as a vast concentration⁹ camp with the help of the non-Bengali population, that it may continue to squeeze out the minority community and that it may draw a blank even if it makes a conciliatory gesture towards the so-called moderate elements in the outlawed Awami League. But there are certain compulsions which may make it difficult for it to hold on to its present terroistic methods for long.

It will not be long before the great powers know whether the military regime has any intention of seeking a political settlement in East Bengal. If it turns out that it does not propose to do so, they shall owe it to the

8. President Yahya Khan outlined exactly such a programme in this 30-minute broadcast on June 28, 1971.

9. This is exactly what is being attempted.

people of East Bengal and this country to act decisively.¹⁰ India cannot bear the strain of resettling millions of refugees and will be fully justified in doing all it can to protect its own interests.

BIRTH OF A NATION

Pakistan might not have been saved as one country even if General Yahya Khan had agreed to end martial law and transfer power to the elected representatives of the people, to begin with, at the provincial level.¹ But hopefully some kind of confederal solution might have emerged. East Bengal might have been content with something less than complete sovereignty and agreed to a fairly high degree of economic co-operation.

But in instituting a reign of terror in a most treacherous manner—General Yahya Khan did not even warn Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that his demands were totally unacceptable and that unless he climbed down the consequences would be grave—the hard-faced men in Islamabad have not only made sure that East Pakistan will break away in course of time but also sowed the seeds of a major, perhaps an unmanageable, political crisis in West Pakistan as well.

No one can say how long the West Pakistani troops will take to put down the active and, in the case of the East Pakistan Rifles, armed resistance and whether they will fully succeed in this miserable enterprise. But assuming that they do, how does the military junta propose to rule over the 75 million people who have shown beyond a shadow of doubt that they are a nation?

The legitimacy of governmental authority is as vital in

10. After President Yahya Khan's broadcast the hope of a peaceful settlement has clearly disappeared.

1. *The Times of India*, Delhi, March 29, 1971.

empires as in nation-States in our day. The British empire in India, for instance, could not survive for long once the intelligentsia and the people began to challenge its legitimacy. The imperial authority was effective only so long as the elite as well as the masses respected it and believed, rightly or wrongly, that it brought certain advantages to them in spite of its exploitative character.

Since it cannot be disputed that Pakistan is an empire and not a nation State and that the people in East Bengal no longer recognise the legitimacy of Islamabad's authority, it follows that the latter cannot restore the *status quo ante*, however much force it might use and that it cannot hold down a sullen and embittered populace by the force of arms without making itself bankrupt in the process.

It is difficult to say whether East Bengal will become another Viet Nam or Algeria. But the question is not as pertinent as some believe it to be. The same is true of the other question whether the Gandhian techniques of non-violent struggle can avail against a heartless military machine.

The crux of the matter is that the East Bengalis have become a nation and that Gen. Tikka Khan's legions can only strengthen their resolve to assert their identity. Since no empire today can be run for the benefit of the imperial power without the co-operation of a large section of the colonial people in question, East Bengal will in future be a big drag on West Pakistan. It is therefore only a matter of time before Islamabad reconciles itself to the loss of East Bengal.

Since the rise of nationalism in East Bengal has been a long-drawn-out process, it will be arbitrary to fix a

point when it can be said to have become mature. All that can be said is that the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, the overthrow of the Ayub regime in March 1969 and the general election in December 1970 have been the most significant milestones in the province's march towards nationhood.

The Muslims in united Bengal in the years before partition were so pre-occupied with the problem of asserting themselves vis-a-vis fellow Hindu Bengalis that they failed to acquire a feeling of separate identity vis-a-vis their co-religionists in other parts of the country. Some of their leaders like Mr. Suhrawardy developed grave misgivings about partition at the last minute. But even then they could not think in terms of an independent East Bengal. Their failure was neither accidental nor personal. It reflected the lack of self-awareness and self-confidence among the East Bengali Muslim leadership and intelligentsia.

The East Bengalis began to acquire a sense of separate cultural identity in the early 'fifties when the Pakistan Government tried to impose Urdu on them. In the first general election in 1954 they swept aside the Muslim League, the only political symbol of one Pakistan, though itself a relic of pre-partition politics, and returned a united front of local parties to power. But men like the late Mr. Fazlul Huq thought more in terms of renewing links with India than in those of complete sovereignty.

East Bengali nationalism showed signs of a new self-awareness at the time of the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965. It was common knowledge by then that West Punjab had all along grossly exploited East Bengal, diverted its foreign

exchange earnings, denied it its proper share in the services and foreign aid and treated it as a captive market. But the local leadership still felt cowed down. The 1965 war for the first time convinced it that the Pakistan military machine was not as formidable as it had appeared to them. It was only then that East Bengali leaders began to speak in a different and more confident voice. The Sheikh formulated and announced his six-point autonomy programme in 1966.

It is, however, significant that the struggle against the autocratic Ayub regime in the winter of 1968 began not in East Bengal but in West Pakistan under the leadership of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The student community in Dacca jumped into the fray only when it had good reasons to believe that the self-appointed Field Marshal had lost the will to rule and that the military junta, too, was by no means united behind him. But its intervention was decisive. It not only brought down the Ayub regime but also convinced at least a fairly strong and influential section of the ruling military-bureaucratic elite in Islamabad that it could no longer run the country in the old fashion. That alone can explain Gen. Yahya Khan's decision to hold elections at all.

The rest is a familiar story. The people in East Bengal converted the general election last December into a referendum on the issue of the six-point programme and gave the Sheikh the kind of mandate no democratic leader has ever received. No one can deny that by doing so the East Bengali people announced their arrival on the world scene as a nation.

During the entire subsequent crisis Mr. Bhutto has

acted as the spokesman and agent of the hawks in the military establishment. But he must be a very short-sighted man indeed if he does not know that once a people become a nation, any attempt to destroy their resistance can only steel their determination to assert their independence and that in the process of denying the East Bengali people their due he has also made sure that there will be no change-over to democratic rule in West Pakistan as well.

Mr. Bhutto owed his electoral success last December to his role not only as a champion of the anti-Indian sentiment in West Punjab but also as an opponent of military rule. By identifying himself with the enemies of East Bengal's autonomy, he has, albeit unwittingly, negated his second role. This cannot but reduce his stature and compromise his position in West Pakistan itself.

West Punjabi chauvinism has lacked credibility in the eyes of large sections of Pathans, Baluchis and Sindhis in the past whenever it has sought legitimacy in terms of hatred of India. It cannot become any more acceptable to them now that it seeks to justify itself in terms of bitter opposition to the legitimate aspirations of their co-religionists in East Bengal.

The predominantly West Punjabi rulers in Islamabad thus face a triple crisis. East Bengal is in revolt; the Baluchis and the Sindhis are bound to resent strongly the indefinite postponement of the promise of at least limited self-rule and the intelligentsia in West Punjab itself cannot possibly reconcile itself for long to the denial of civil liberties. Its disillusionment will be complete when it

realises that a war on the people of East Bengal is a drain on the resources of West Pakistan and that the anti-Indian hysteria is an exercise in futility.

There can be honest differences of opinion on whether the emergence of a semi-independent East Bengal in a confederal set-up would have been such a traumatic experience for West Pakistan that it might have found it difficult to hold together. But what West Pakistan faces now is a far graver crisis.

The two-nation theory on which Pakistan is based is dead as an ideology and Pakistan cannot therefore survive for long as a physical reality. Whatever Mr. Bhutto and his ilk may say, the present wave of terror in East Bengal represents the last gasp of a dying empire whose rulers have never realised what they were up against, much less shown the capacity and wisdom to transform their empire into a multi-nation State.

* * *

There is not the slightest evidence so far to show that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto will be able to agree on a constitution for Pakistan during the session of the Constituent Assembly which opens in Dacca on March 3.² In fact the West Pakistan leader has threatened to boycott the Assembly unless he receives a prior assurance from the Sheikh that his party will heed the views of the Pakistan People's Party.

The two leaders have good reason to sort out their differences inasmuch as both are keen to end the military-bureaucratic rule and preserve the unity of the

country. But their ideas of what will make for a united Pakistan are so divergent that it is hard to think of a compromise solution. Mr. Bhutto's threat heavily underscores this point.

This is, however, by no means the crux of the matter. In spite of all their differences, political and temperamental, the Sheikh and Mr. Bhutto could perhaps hammer out an agreed constitution if they were free agents. The trouble is that their freedom of action is strictly circumscribed.

To say that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is a prisoner of his own electoral success is not to denigrate him in any way. But it is obvious that he cannot but be inhibited by the fear that he will be disowned by his people if he fails to live up to their expectations. They want a constitution which concedes them the substance of independence and they will not be satisfied with anything less. The chances, in fact, are that they will move towards secession and complete independence with or without the Sheikh, if he fails to win the six points for them this time.

Mr. Bhutto, on the other hand, has become, perhaps unwittingly, the spokesman of West Punjab which is as determined as ever to retain its hegemony over the whole of Pakistan in the name of unity, Islam and "threat" from India. He, too, will run into serious difficulties if he agrees to whittle down the powers of the Central Government which for all practical purposes has served as an instrument of West Punjab all these years.

East Bengali nationalism is partly the product of popular grievances against the West Punjab-dominated Central Government . . . the gap between the per capita

2. *The Times of India*, Delhi, February 17, 1971.

incomes of the two parts of the country has steadily increased in the last two decades to reach the frightening figure of 40 per cent.

East Bengali nationalism has been stimulated by two other developments in recent years—the Indo-Pakistani war in 1965 and the rise of radicalism in West Pakistan leading to the overthrow of President Ayub Khan last March. It is noteworthy that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formulated the six-point programme after the war.

The Indo-Pakistani war was a landmark in the relations between the two wings. It convinced the East Bengalis that the Pakistan Government was reckless, that it did not care if it jeopardised their security in the attempt to seize Kashmir, that it was by itself in no position to deter an Indian attack on their part of the country and that New Delhi was so well disposed towards them that it would not take advantage of their state of defencelessness.

The character of the leadership in East Pakistan is as important as the fact of East Bengali nationalism. It is significant that Pakistan's rulers have miserably failed to discredit Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as an Indian agent. The rise of East Bengali nationalism has frustrated all their attempts to build Pakistani nationalism on the basis of the fear and hatred of India. This cannot but have major repercussions on the future set-up in Pakistan and its relations with India.

If Pakistan is not and cannot become a nation as distinct from a State, the ruling elite has, broadly speaking, two alternatives. It can either try to perpetuate the *status quo*, continue to rule East Bengal as a colony and deny the

democratic aspirations of the people of the western wing or accept the proposition that Pakistan can best survive as a confederation. It does not have a third option.

The first alternative is bound to fail in the long run. East Bengal cannot be held down by force indefinitely. But it will be naive for anyone to suggest that Islamabad cannot dissolve the Constituent Assembly if it fails to produce an agreed constitution within 120 days, suppress the demonstrations that are bound to follow in the eastern wing, ban the Awami League and arrest its leaders.³

Though it is often said that the terrain in East Bengal is ideally suited for guerilla warfare, it is highly doubtful whether an armed solution is open to the nationalists there. They are unarmed; they have no organisation which can lead a guerilla struggle. If they are prudent they will also know that non-violent movements have succeeded more often than violent ones.⁴ Either way it will be years before Islamabad is compelled to concede their demands.

The second alternative—a confederal solution—is obviously logical. But it is more or less certain that

3. It has to be admitted that we could not anticipate at that point that the Pakistan army will let loose a reign of terror, mass massacre, arson and rape and that it would drive out the entire minority community. This failure was the result of a lack of proper appreciation of the value system of the Pakistan army elite.

4. The Nazi style actions of the Pakistan army closed the option of the non-violent struggle for the East Bengalis and the crossing over of the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles and the police to the side of the freedom movement has made an armed struggle possible.

neither the present ruling elite nor the radical intelligentsia in West Pakistan as represented by Mr. Bhutto will accept it in the near future. They are not yet prepared to face up to the fact that Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory has turned out to be a hoax not so much because India has demonstrated that it is possible to weld Hindus and Muslims into one coherent political community as because the religious bond between Pakistan's two wings has not proved as strong and durable as he imagined it would be.

Similarly, the Pakistani rulers have two alternatives in connection with their India policy. They can either continue to follow the present approach of trying to define Pakistan's identity in anti-Indian terms and to involve external powers in the affairs of the sub-continent or they can come to terms with the fact that the sub-continent possess a certain unity in spite of major religious, cultural and linguistic differences.

The first approach is likely to prove as unproductive in future as it has proved in the past. Pakistan's failure to seize Kashmir is only symbolic of the futility of this policy. From Islamabad's point of view, an even more pertinent point is that instead of being a factor for unity, Kashmir has become a divisive issue in Pakistan's domestic politics. This position cannot be reversed, however hard Mr. Bhutto may try, because the East Bengalis have, in emotional terms, opted out of the old framework. In fact, a campaign to stir up passions against India on this or any other issue can only further alienate East Bengal and frustrate his desire to put an end to military rule.

It is self-evident that the second alternative can greatly

benefit both countries and enable Pakistan to ease, if not resolve, tensions between its two wings. But it cannot prove acceptable to the men in Islamabad because it involves the repudiation of all that they have said and believed all these years. They are in a blind alley from which there can be no early or easy exit. The West Pakistani leaders and intellectuals do not tire of proclaiming that India is not yet reconciled to partition. They have a case inasmuch as certain political organisations in this country still talk in terms of "Akhand Bharat". But this view cannot stand the test of scrutiny. The reverse is in fact true. It is the Pakistanis who are not reconciled to partition though they do not know it.

The reasons for this are obvious enough. The Indian Islam in the name of which Mr. Jinnah campaigned for Pakistan cannot turn its face away from this country. It cannot merge itself either with Turkish or Arab Islam. Pakistan's rulers first championed pan-Islamism and then joined the Baghdad Pact partly out of psychological compulsions. But unfortunately for them, neither has worked. The secularisation of life and politics in adjoining Muslim countries and the triumph of Western-style nationalism there have complicated the problem for West Pakistan and added to its feeling of isolation. It is a measure of the desperation of its leaders that they have finally turned to China for friendship and support.

* * *

Ever since the overthrow of Field Marshal Ayub Khan in March 1969 the central issue in Pakistan has been the ability or inability of the two wings to share power on a

mutually acceptable basis."

The prospects of mutual accommodation between the dominant West Punjab and under-privileged East Bengal were not particularly bright even before the century's worst natural disaster hit the latter about three weeks ago. The cyclone has made them bleak because the people in East Pakistan are more convinced than ever before that they cannot expect a fair deal from the predominantly West Punjabi rulers in Islamabad.

East Pakistan's estrangement from the Central Government is not a new development. The East Bengalis have felt aggrieved against the Centre ever since the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 on one score or another. But the present disaster has demonstrated as nothing else could the more or less alien nature of the regime in Islamabad.

Even those who are well disposed towards the ruling elite in Pakistan are now compelled to admit that successive regime in Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad have failed to take adequate measures to protect the people in the densely populated delta against floods and cyclones, that lack of resources is not the only explanation for this failure, that over 60 per cent of the lives which have been lost could have been saved if the authorities had heeded the danger signals from Washington and activated the contingency plan for warning and evacuating the people and that Islamabad took an unconscionably long time to send relief to the survivors. This may or may not have been the result of bureaucratic red-tapism. The pertinent

point is that almost to a man the East Bengalis have drawn the conclusion that Islamabad is indifferent to their suffering.

The elected representatives of the people of East Pakistan will in the new context find it virtually impossible to make concessions on the question of the fullest measure of autonomy for the province. This is specially true of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He has no choice but to press relentlessly the Awami League's six-point programme even if this nullifies the chances of his heading a coalition government.

The Awami League programme will reduce Pakistan to a confederation. It stipulates that the federal government should deal with only two subjects—defence and foreign affairs—and that all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating States. It calls for two separate though freely convertible currencies for the two wings, a separate Reserve Bank and separate fiscal and monetary policies for East Pakistan, two foreign exchange accounts and a separate militia or para-military force for East Pakistan.

It is obvious that no Central Government in Islamabad will ever accede to them. But they give expression to the accumulated bitterness of the intelligentsia and the people of East Bengal.

It is still too early to say that East Bengal's political consciousness has moved beyond the stage of sub-nationalism. But it will not be wholly surprising if it is discovered in course of time that the natural disaster and the election of 1970 paved the way for the rise of a full-fledged East Bengali nationalism.

Developments in East Bengal in the present century fall into two distinct periods—one before and the other after partition. Up to 1947 the Muslim intelligentsia in Bengal was so resentful of Hindu domination in the various walks of life that its feeling of identity based on language and culture was overshadowed by communalism. The contrast between the responses of the Muslim intelligentsia in the North-West Frontier Province and Kashmir on the one hand and Bengal on the other in undivided India is notable in the context.

Partition changed the picture because it ended the East Bengali Muslim intelligentsia's preoccupation with Hindu domination and thus prepared the ground for the rise of the feeling of separate identity. The process has understandably been gradual. But it has been unmistakable.

The first phase based on language can be traced back to 1948 when an agitation in favour of Bengali as one of the two national languages of Pakistan spread rapidly throughout the eastern wing. In March 1948 the provincial Chief Minister, Khwaja Nazimuddin, accepted the demands of the student action committee but the Central Government refused to budge. It continued to insist that Urdu alone could be the national language of Pakistan—it termed Bengali as a non-Muslim or even an anti-Muslim language—and tried in 1952 to impose the Arabic script on the East Bengali people. The agitation then took an explosive form; several students were killed in police firings and Karachi was compelled to withdraw its proposal. Since then the East Bengali intelligentsia has asserted its linguistic and cultural

identity and has refused to be browbeaten so much so that Dacca Radio has for some years given considerable prominence to Rabindra Sangeet. Respect for Tagore has become part of East Bengal's defiance of Islamabad.

It is difficult to fix a date for the opening of the second phase. But it is indisputable that it found its consummation in 1954 when in the first election to the provincial legislature the East Bengali people repudiated the Muslim League which managed to secure only 10 out of 309 seats. This was a significant development because it marked the demise in Bengal of the only political organisation which could mediate between the two wings. The army and the bureaucracy have held them together. But that is a different matter.

In the 'fifties East Bengal could not throw up a political party which was capable of resisting the machinations of the Central Government and of ensuring popular rule for the province. It also remains to be seen whether the Awami League can play such a role in the future. But this does not detract from the fact that Pakistan does not and 'cannot produce a truly national party.

The third phase can be said to have opened in the late 'fifties when the East Bengali intelligentsia became intensely aware that the Central Government's policies had helped to promote economic growth in the western wing at the cost of the eastern wing and that the latter suffered on account of its poor representation—in fact it was virtually not represented—in the higher echelons of the administration and the military officer corps.

Various factors have been responsible for the more

rapid economic growth of West Pakistan. Traders and merchants who left India after partition and developed into entrepreneurs have settled in and around Karachi. The Central Government has been located in the western wing and this has inevitably influenced its policies. Its foreign trade policies have also favoured the western wing.

The overvaluation of the rupee and export duties have adversely affected the producers of exports—East Pakistan accounted for most of the exports in the 'fifties and it still earns 50 per cent of the foreign exchange—and benefitted the importers and the manufacturers. Since most of them come mostly from West Pakistan the profits have gone to that region. The Central Government's expenditure on the armed forces—it accounts for 60 per cent of the national budget—and on replacement works under the Indus Waters Agreement with India have also facilitated development in West Pakistan.

East Pakistan has not received its share of the massive aid Pakistan has secured in the past two decades—a substantial amount in the form of grants from the United States under the mutual security pact in addition to the loans which total up to \$ 5 billion. At the same time there has been an outflow of capital from the east to the west.

Mr. Kalim Siddiqui has summed up the result in a recent article in *The Guardian*, London (November 16, 1970). He writes :

"Much of the relative prosperity of West Pakistan and particularly of its urban centres, has been built up on

the surplus of East Pakistan's jute-based foreign trade being transferred to pay for industrialisation in the western wing. The annual transfer of resources from east to west is about Rs. 250 million. The cumulative loss to the area since 1947, and in particular since the army rule began under Ayub Khan's hegemony in 1958, is stupendous.

Strictly speaking one phase has overlapped the other. The Muslim League, for instance, began to lose its popularity as the language agitation spread in 1948 and the demand for limiting the powers of the Central Government figured in the United Front's election manifesto in 1954. But the division is convenient inasmuch as it helps to bring into sharp relief certain aspects of the rise of East Bengali nationalism.

President Ayub Khan tried the carrot and the stick approach but it proved unproductive. He took steps to increase the recruitment of the East Bengalis into the civil service. But he could not satisfy the intelligentsia because he was not prepared to meet their demand in respect of the armed forces. Similarly though he increased the plan allocations for East Bengal, he could not eliminate the bureaucratic delays and other obstacles with the result that the gap in the per capita incomes of the two wings increased rather than decreased during his regime. After his fall there has been a massive flight of capital from East Pakistan because the West Pakistan entrepreneurs no longer feel secure there.

HELPING BANGLA DESH

Pakistan lies buried, as the Prime Minister of Bangla Desh has said aptly, under a mountain of corpses. Nothing can bring it back to life.¹

In fact Pakistan was never a nation in the true sense of the word. One part of it has all along run the other part, and that too the more populous, as a colony. According to East Bengali economists, resources to the tune of nearly £3,000 million have been transferred from there to West Pakistan since 1947.

The tragedy is that the Yahya regime does not realise that a colony can be a profitable proposition only so long as the subject people lack national self-awareness. The people of East Bengal have become a nation and are willing to pay the price of independence.

The martial law administration can in theory turn Bangla Desh into a vast concentration camp but it will not be able to do so in practice. All the odds are against it. The economy of West Pakistan will be under increasing strain unless the Western powers, specially the United States, bail it out; this is highly unlikely. The West Pakistan army cannot possibly master the logistical problems posed by East Bengal's separation from West Pakistan by over 2,500 miles of sea on the one hand and by the nature of its terrain, which is criss-crossed by in-

numerable streams, on the other. It cannot pour in enough men to hold down the district and taluka towns, control the highways, ports and airstrips and seal the long, sprawling border with India. It is inconceivable that it can administer the countryside.

There can be no doubt therefore that the freedom struggle in Bangla Desh will succeed in the end, especially because the West Pakistani military machine has failed to decimate the leadership and the people in the countryside have been fully aroused. The only question is whether the price which they have to pay for their independence can be kept within reasonable limits. The answer to it will depend a great deal on what the great powers, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, do in the coming weeks.

It will be helpful if both make it plain that they will not extend any kind of aid to Pakistan so long as it does not concede the right of self-determination to the people of Bangla Desh and that they will assist India wholeheartedly in looking after the refugees who seek shelter in this country. But even this will not clinch the issue in the short run, particularly if General Yahya Khan and his colleagues are assured of Peking's support. The great powers will therefore have to do more than merely stop aid to Islamabad if they want to cut short the agony of the people of Bangla Desh.

To begin with, they can raise the issue in the Security Council. As Mr. Chester Bowles has rightly said, the genocide in Bangla Desh constitutes a threat to peace in Asia and the United Nations cannot shirk its duty in the matter without once again betraying its irrelevance.

¹ *The Times of India*, April 21, 1971.

The threat to peace arises on several counts. First, India cannot be a mute spectator to the massacre in East Bengal because its own people, especially in West Bengal, feel deeply involved with the fate of their kinsmen across the border. No development outside its frontiers has ever moved this country as recent events in Bangla Desh have.

This means that New Delhi cannot turn away refugees, deny sanctuary to the freedom fighters, prevent the use of its soil for raids on West Pakistani military installations and stop its own nationals from sending such assistance as they can mobilise to the people in Bangla Desh. Indeed, New Delhi itself may have to act more vigorously if the influx of refugees grows beyond manageable proportions because it cannot possibly sit idly by as its own entire north-eastern region is flooded by refugees and thrown into turmoil. Even as things are, West Bengal's problems are to a large extent a product of the uncontrolled migration of millions of people from East Bengal in the last two decades.

Secondly, the military junta may at some stage unleash a war against this country. The move will be suicidal. But those who rule West Pakistan today are desperate men. If they can plan and execute in cold blood a programme of genocide in Bangla Desh, they can do anything. Since New Delhi cannot take it for granted that they will not plunge what is left of Pakistan and this country into a disaster, it will have to take precautionary measures which may also add to the existing tensions.

Thirdly, the Chinese have taken up so ambivalent a position that no one can say what they will do in the all

too likely event of an aggravation of conflict between India and Pakistan. They do not appear to be wholly averse to the idea of acting in a manner which encourages the West Pakistan army to continue the massacre in Bangla Desh and to get into trouble with India. For over ten years now China has taken the view that Indo-Pakistan hostilities serve its national interests.

The great powers are generally prone to favour the *status quo* in so far as any change upsets the delicate world and regional power balance. But Washington and Moscow cannot but realise that it is impossible to restore the *status quo ante* in the case of Pakistan, that any attempt to do so will not only be extremely costly but futile, that it will needlessly prolong the conflict, inflict intolerable sufferings on millions of people in Bangla Desh, place an impossible burden on India and even lead to a war in which they themselves may get involved if the Chinese attack this country. It is therefore in their own interest to put the maximum pressure on West Pakistan to compel it to end the carnage in East Bengal.

The Indo-Pakistan sub-continent is one area where the U.S. and the Soviet Union have pursued parallel policies to ensure that China is not able to exploit the antagonism between the two neighbouring countries to create confusion and chaos here. If they fail to act speedily in the present crisis they will have destroyed their ability to influence the course of developments in this part of the world.

Three possibilities are open right now. First, the two super-powers in co-operation with other major powers like Britain and France can act decisively in the United Nations and outside to compel Islamabad to stop the

genocide in Bangla Desh and get out, with or without a face-saving formula. Secondly, the United Nations can censure the West Pakistani military regime and thus legitimise external support to freedom fighters. Lastly, the international community can turn its gaze away from the naked barbarism in Bangla Desh leaving India to do whatever it can to sustain the struggle and to help the victims.²

Since the third alternative will be most risky and burdensome for this country, the task of Indian diplomacy is to work for the first two. Hopefully, the chances are that at least in this case the super-powers will not act in a blatantly cynical manner and seek shelter behind the absurd concept of domestic jurisdiction. But the international community as a whole is a different proposition altogether. No one can ignore the staggering fact that with the exception of Sudan no other Afro-Asian nation has censured Islamabad even mildly and indirectly. Indonesia has in fact gone so far as to affirm its support for one Pakistan which does not exist.

Meanwhile New Delhi has to map out a course of action which will enable it to fulfil its moral obligation to the people of Bangla Desh and at the same time minimise the risk of a wider conflagration.

No two situations are exactly identical. But it is worth examining whether India can do for Bangla Desh what Tunisia and Morocco did for the Algerian freedom fighters in the 'fifties. The Algerian army, it may be recalled, was trained and equipped in these two countries.

2. The world community has chosen this dangerous course.

as the guerilla struggle continued within Algeria. It is also worth remembering that while the Soviet bloc countries did not recognise the Algerian Provisional Government because they did not wish to alienate France altogether, this did not inhibit them from extending aid to the freedom fighters. Some American organisations also helped them, though somewhat discreetly.

Having played hosts to Madame Binh, Foreign Minister of South Viet Nam's Provisional Revolutionary Government, and Al Fatah delegations, India need not fight shy of inviting Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed or some of his colleagues to New Delhi and helping them to go abroad to explain their case for recognition and support.

* * * *

In spite of the fact that it is militarily weaker than this country Pakistan may not rest content with carrying on a hate campaign against India; it may at some stage resort to war.³ The threat is not imminent. But the Indian government has to be prepared to meet it if and when it arises. The desperate men in Islamabad may very well try to plunge the whole sub-continent into chaos before they accept defeat in Bangla Desh.⁴

However, the military junta in West Pakistan will not have the nerve to try to cover up its failure in Bangla Desh by provoking a military conflict with India without

3. *The Times of India*, April 6, 1971.

4. It has done so by pushing out near six million refugees into India. This country will not sink under the weight of new burden. But its progress will certainly be greatly retarded and its political and economic institutions will be under a great strain for years unless the evacuees can go back to their homes.

the assurance of some support from China. While it is difficult to say what Peking will do, it is not entirely inconceivable that it may encourage Islamabad to engage in a fresh trial of strength with New Delhi.

The first report of the New China News Agency on the freedom struggle of the people of Bangla Desh is so cynically slanted in favour of Islamabad that it is hard to escape the conclusion that Peking has chosen to cast its lot with the military junta, at least for the moment.

This is surprising insofar as it makes nonsense of China's claim of being the champion of all wars of national liberation. It is also somewhat odd that instead of wanting to improve relations with a political strong and stable India Peking should prefer to side with Pakistan just when it is falling apart. The choice makes sense only in the context of China's long-standing policy of looking upon Pakistan as a counterweight against India and of keeping the sub-continent in a state of turmoil.

As at the time of the war in 1965, China may not come to the rescue of West Pakistan when the battle is in fact joined. But that may not prevent it from encouraging the military junta in Islamabad to provoke a fresh conflict with India.

India will have no choice but to meet such a challenge, whether West Pakistan decides to act alone or in co-operation with China. But it must be careful not to give Islamabad needlessly a propaganda advantage in the critical weeks ahead.

In concrete terms it means that while India cannot sit idly by as the West Pakistani troops pile horror upon horror in Bangla Desh, in planning active assistance to the

freedom fighters it needs to bear in mind that the international system is strongly disposed to favour the *status quo* and oppose secessionist movements and that it will be Islamabad's endeavour to discredit the freedom struggle in East Bengal by making it out that it is inspired and sustained by New Delhi.

Going by newspaper comments, one can easily be tempted to infer that the brutal behaviour of the occupation forces in Bangla Desh has shocked the world community to such an extent that it will not be taken in by Pakistan's propaganda campaign if India decides to recognise the provisional government of Bangla Desh and rush all forms of assistance to the freedom fighters. But this will be an exercise in self-deception.

The more pertinent fact is that with the exception of the Soviet Union and India, no other government has so far thought it necessary to condemn Islamabad for the massacre its troops are carrying out in cold blood in Bangla Desh. It will not be surprising therefore if the military junta gets a good deal of support, both direct and indirect, in case New Delhi is not careful in handling the question of recognition.

The attitude of the world community is of course likely to change as it becomes increasingly clear that the West Pakistani troops cannot terrorise the 75 million people of Bangla Desh, that the freedom fighters are in control of sizable areas, that these are inaccessible to West Pakistani murder squads and that the strength of the liberation forces is growing day by day. That will be the appropriate time for New Delhi to recognise the revolutionary regime.

In spite of its own desire and commitment to help the people of Bangla Desh and the pressure which is rapidly building up in the country in favour of an early recognition of the revolutionary set-up, New Delhi has to keep three points in mind.

First, it has to be careful lest Islamabad is able to exploit residual anti-Indian feelings among certain groups in Bangla Desh to divide the ranks of the freedom fighters. The men in Islamabad are in desperate need of finding some quislings in East Bengal and they can be depended upon not to spare any effort to convince the gullible that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is an "Indian stooge". The spilt in Maulana Bhasani's National Awami Party is a warning.

Secondly, it will be wrong for India to slur over the fact that the people in Bangla Desh have to bear the brunt of the struggle and that aid from a friendly country can at best facilitate their task. The Indian Government is already doing all it can to mobilise world opinion. It has also played some role in persuading Ceylon and Burma not to allow refuelling facilities to West Pakistan's military aircraft. In addition it can look after refugees and serve as a sanctuary for freedom fighters.

Thirdly, it will be some time before the freedom fighters are able to establish a central leadership and an effective chain of command which can co-ordinate the armed struggle throughout the length and breadth of Bangla Desh.

It is difficult to say whether such a leadership and chain of command exist at present. But it will be surprising if they do. This surmise is based on the fact that

during the three weeks or so of his *de facto* control of the administration in East Bengal, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could not have had the time to prepare for an armed struggle, that when the army struck on the fateful night of March 25, the task of active resistance passed on to the Bengali formations like the East Bengal Regiment, the East Pakistan Rifles, the police, the Ansars and the Mujahids, who had been trained by Islamabad in the use of small arms, and that these men acted spontaneously rather than in accordance with a carefully worked out plan.

If the Sheikh had anticipated the massive onslaught by the army, he would have issued secret instructions to his armed supporters to melt away into the countryside at the first sign of trouble and to conduct a war of attrition from there. The very fact that the men tried to take on the army in its strongholds in Dacca, Chittagong and Khulna indicates that they were responding to an immediate provocation and not implementing a well thought-out plan of action.

This means that it will be some time before the armed freedom fighters merge to form what can truly be called a liberation force and set up a government which not only speaks for the people of Bangla Desh but is in a position to hold and administer liberated areas. The example of the Chinese communist forces in the late 'twenties, that is, after the Shanghai massacre in 1927, is pertinent in this context.

It will be most tragic if the freedom struggle in Bangla Desh is needlessly prolonged. But there can be little doubt about its final outcome. Whatever the military

junta may do, time is running against it. In fact the more men and materials it pours into the marshes of Bangla Desh the more total will be the disaster it will face in the end. A prolonged war against the whole people will in fact strain the loyalty of its troops and may even jeopardise the survival of West Pakistan itself as one country.

The two arguments that are currently being advanced in favour of early recognition need not be taken too seriously. The struggle will not pass under the control of the East Bengali counterparts of the pro-Chinese Naxalites because the nationalist sentiment in Bangla Desh is very strong and the issue just now is that of freedom from an alien regime. Similarly, China cannot take the freedom movement under its wings even if it changes its line. The struggle in Bangla Desh bears comparison with the one in Algeria in the 'fifties and not the one in Viet Nam where a non-communist nationalist leadership has never struck roots at any time.

Thus there is no reason to fear that the war of independence in Bangla Desh can be converted, if it is prolonged, into a Chinese style communist-dominated "war of national liberation" to the detriment of India's long-term interests.

SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

It was only to be expected that the West Pakistan press would seize on the communal riots in Maharashtra and the intense soul searching in India to revive its charge of genocide against this country.¹ Several factors account for its deliberate distortions and exaggerations.

The only freedom the Pakistani press has enjoyed all these years is to misrepresent and malign India. It never misses an opportunity to slander this country. Perhaps one reason for this is the desire of the establishment in Pakistan to harm India's relations with other Muslim countries.

But behind all such cynical calculations lies the dismal fact about the total inability of the ruling elite to define their country's identity except in anti-India terms. Its situation is so desperate that men like General Ayub Khan and Mr. Z.A. Bhutto find it necessary to indulge in cheap denigration of the Hindus in order to justify Pakistan's right to exist.

The elite in West Pakistan does not tire of saying that India is not reconciled to Pakistan's existence and wishes to absorb it. The fact is that it is deeply unsure of itself. That is why except for a single statement by Mr. Jinnah, no Pakistani leader has ever said that their country has come to stay and that it is no longer necessary to explain its *raison d'être*.

1. *The Times of India*, June 18, 1970.

A perusal of the officially sponsored history of Pakistan's so-called freedom movement and scores of other books and memoirs on partition is highly instructive. Two contradictory themes run through them all. The writers argue that partition was unavoidable because the Muslims were "a separate nation" and at the same time make it out that it could have been averted if only the Congress leaders had been generous, accommodating and far-sighted. It does not occur to them that the second argument undermines the first. The truth is they just cannot make up their mind whether they are a nation or not.

The gnawing doubt compels the West Pakistani elite to magnify out of all proportion the difficulties of the Muslims in India. It has to convince itself and the mass of ordinary Pakistanis that, but for partition, they too would have faced persecution.

The problem of the search for national identity has been vastly complicated by the fact that the same religious fanaticism that helped to establish Pakistan has come to hamper the process of modernisation and nation-building. The observation does not relate to the future of the Hindu minority in East Pakistan which is in any case being squeezed out.² The issue is relevant to the Pakistani Muslims themselves on three counts.

First, since the *ulema* continue to treat minority sects like the Shia and Ahmediyas within the body of Islam itself as heretics, this will remain a politically exploitable issue so long as the country's existence

2. It has since been pushed out.

continues to be justified in religious terms.

Secondly, East Pakistan is strikingly different from the western wing. It is more liberal, less dogmatic and better rooted in pre-Islamic traditions. The West Pakistanis regard the people of the eastern wing as inferior Muslims and want them to learn Urdu and refashion their cultural mores and thought processes by eliminating such influences as are derived from the pre-Muslim era.³

No less a person than General Ayub Khan has written about them as follows: "East Bengalis, who constitute the bulk of the population, probably belong to the very original Indian races. It would be no exaggeration to say that up to the creation of Pakistan, they had not known any real freedom or sovereignty. They have been in turn ruled either by the caste Hindus, Moghuls, Pathans or the British. In addition, they have been and still are under considerable Hindu cultural and linguistic influence. As such they have all the inhibitions of downtrodden races and have not yet found it possible to adjust psychologically to the requirements of the new-born freedom." The East Pakistanis naturally resent all this.

Finally, it is becoming evident that the orthodox, backward looking and fanatical *ulema* will remain in a strong position so long as the educated elite itself accepts that the preservation of the Muslim way of life provides Pakistan's principal *raison d'être*. While it cannot define that way of life, Maulana Maudoodi and other *ulema*

3. This cultural genocide is now being attempted in the name of the Islamisation of the East Bengali Muslims.

can and that too in a language that appeals to the ordinary people.

The West Pakistani elite has so far circumvented its dilemma through the twin devices of the "Hate India" campaigns and military rule. While the former has at once legitimised its dominance and provided a facade behind which it has modernised itself to some extent, the latter has protected its power and position from the onslaught of the aggrieved East Bengalis, Sindhs, Baluchis and Pathans on the one hand and the *ulema* on the other. But these expedients have become inadequate over the years.

The first major change in the situation is that the bureaucratic-military rule has become intolerable for the intelligentsia. Its rejection of President Ayub Khan even in the absence of an alternative marked the culmination of an era in which the hegemony of the top bureaucracy and the military officer corps was generally acceptable. The establishment may and in all probability will impose its will on Pakistan from time to time. But it will be constantly under pressure to give way to an elected Government.

Similarly, the anti-Indian campaign was relevant so long as a trial of strength between the two countries had not taken place and East Pakistan was relatively quiescent. The 1965 war changed all that. It demonstrated that the hatred of India was an exercise in futility and it finally destroyed whatever legitimacy Rawalpindi's dominance over East Pakistan may have possessed earlier.

The second point is as pertinent as the first. East Pakistan rejected Urdu and the Muslim League in the

early 'fifties. But it could not assert its personality till the middle of 'sixties in full measure. It has done so since 1965 and in the process it has made it abundantly clear that it does not share the western wing's obsessive hatred of India.

Many Western writers have testified that the East Pakistanis are not concerned with the Kashmir issue and that they want good relations with India not only because they have been hard hit by Islamabad's stupid policy of trade boycott but also because of the pull of West Bengal with which they share a common language and culture. It means that if the West Pakistan elite continues to define its identity in anti-Indian terms, the East Bengalis are likely to define theirs in terms of hostility to the western wing.

Islamabad's response to the new situation is thoroughly confused and contradictory. This is best illustrated by the fact that President Yahya Khan should be trying to discredit the parties which can be his best allies in making the transition to democracy and preparing the ground for a genuine understanding and accommodation between the two wings.

President Yahya Khan has nothing to gain by insinuating that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Khan Wali Khan are receiving funds from India. He should know that his predecessor tried his best to destroy them and failed miserably. President Ayub Khan framed up Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on charges of conspiring with India to overthrow his regime. He had to withdraw the case and negotiate with the accused. President Yahya Khan should also know that only a coalition which is led

by the Sheikh and includes Khan Wali Khan can possibly produce a constitution and a government to which he can hand over charge. Why then does he choose to indulge in this type of character assassination?

It is possible that the predominantly Punjabi bureaucratic-military establishment is not reconciled to the prospect of loss of its monopoly of power and wants to create a situation in which no viable coalition can emerge in the proposed Constituent Assembly so that its failure to produce a constitution can be used as an excuse for perpetuating the *status quo*. But it is equally possible that President Yahya Khan has unthinkingly given expression to the widespread prejudice against East Pakistan and hatred for India in the western wing.

But whether he has acted purposefully or thoughtlessly, it is obvious that he and other members of his establishment have not fully grasped the self-evident propositions that East Pakistan can no longer be treated as a colony and that religion and hatred of India cannot bind the two wings together.

They cannot deny East Pakistan its share of power and wealth. They can at best delay the redressal of old wrongs. Similarly, they can harass this country by behaving as China's handmaids in the latter's complicated and ambitious designs for South and South-East Asia. But they cannot build their own except in co-operation with India. They have tried pan-Islamism and an alliance with the West and they have not spared any effort to involve the three Great Powers—America, Russia and China—in the affairs of the sub-continent. But all these devices have failed to resolve the central problem

of establishing Pakistan's own identity.

* * *

East Bengali nationalism and West Pakistani radicalism which overwhelmed the Ayub regime in March last year have emerged triumphant as a result of the first ever general election in that country.⁴

This lends extraordinary significance to the polls. The issue now is not just whether Pakistan can at last make the changeover to democracy but whether it can survive as one entity.

The threat to its survival is the result of two simultaneous developments. First, the weaknesses and unpopularity of the old order headed by the military-bureaucratic-business elite have been thoroughly exposed. The army leaders can still continue to rule with the help of martial law. But this course will lack legitimacy and produce serious tensions. Secondly, two formidable forces have arisen in the two wings and an adjustment between them on the basis of give-and-take may not be easy or even possible.

If instead of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, men like Khan Wali Khan, Mr. G.M. Syed and Mian Mumtaz Daulatana had come on top in West Pakistan, some of them could have possibly made a deal with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This arrangement may not have been acceptable to the ruling elite and it may not have lasted. But on the whole the Pakistani politicians would not have been so hemmed in as they are now.

Mr. Bhutto's unexpectedly massive victory in the

4. *The Times of India*, December 10, 1970.

western wing has produced a potentially explosive situation . . .

East Bengali nationalism as symbolised by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and West Pakistani radicalism as spear-headed by Mr. Bhutto acted as allies at the time of their assault on the Ayub regime in the winter of 1968-69. But the two movements ran along parallel lines. They met briefly as they converged on the Ayub Government and overwhelmed it. But immediately afterwards they parted company. This was illustrated by the Sheikh's decision to cold-shoulder Mr. Bhutto soon after President Ayub Khan's downfall and the latter's subsequent lack of interest in the former.

Mr. Bhutto may not be aware that, like the Sheikh, he too is leading what can develop into a nationalist movement. On the face of it he stands for a Pakistan where each linguistic and cultural group is given a share in power. He talks of equality and partnership and has not publicly opposed the Awami League's six-point programme which envisages the fullest measure of autonomy for East Bengal and a relatively weak Centre in control of only defence and foreign affairs . . .⁵

But the fact remains that in the process of undermining the undemocratic and generally pro-West old order, Mr. Bhutto has unleashed a powerful force which has successfully overcome regional loyalties in Sind and West Punjab and may not stop there. His party has not done well in the North-West Frontier Province. But it is not-

able that there too the regional appeal has not proved particularly strong. Khan Wali Khan's party's poor showing there speaks for itself.

It is commonsense that the kind of moderate non-xenophobic nationalism, which has arisen in East Bengal partly in fulfilment of the local people's distinct linguistic and cultural identity and partly as a protest against the exploitation and neglect by the predominantly West Punjabi ruling elite for more than two decades, could not defeat the forces of regionalism and authoritarianism in the western wing. It was necessary to stir strong passions and Mr. Bhutto has done so.

Mr. Bhutto faces the greatest challenge in the hour of his triumph. He must either compromise with the Sheikh and thus risk his popularity in the western wing or confront him and thereby pave the way for an eventual partition of Pakistan. Radicalism in Pakistan's context must either be subdued or developed into a full-fledged nationalism in course of time . . .

If the dominant feature of radical nationalism in West Pakistan must be irrational and intense hatred of the liberal West and India, it is obvious that Mr. Bhutto is ideally suited to lead it. His entire political career points in that direction. He negotiated an agreement regarding oil exploration with the Soviet Union in the face of opposition by the United States in 1961 when he was a relatively unimportant political figure and American influence was well entrenched in Rawalpindi. Subsequently, as Minister for Foreign Affairs he came to be identified with defiance of Washington, development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union, the establishment of what came to

5. Mr. Bhutto changed his stance in February 1971, and made moves which precipitated the civil war.

once his ascendancy among the Indian Muslims was assured with the help of the rapidly growing intelligentsia.

After partition, the *ulema* in Pakistan disgraced themselves by promoting riots against the Ahmediyas in Lahore and were easily put down by the army. President Ayub Khan ignored their protests when he reformed the Muslim marriage laws and they could not whip up an agitation against him. It could have easily been anticipated that the radical nationalism which Mr. Bhutto symbolises would prove for stranger in Pakistan than the *ulema*, however well they may have organised themselves.

By its very nature radical nationalism is turned at once against the West which has led the assault on traditional societies and the upholders of the old order—the *ulema*, the pro-West sections of the military-bureaucratic elite and business houses with western connections. Its West Pakistani variant must also be deeply hostile to India because this helps to define its identity in non-religious terms.

It is hardly necessary to make the point that the character of East Bengali nationalism is refreshingly and strikingly different. It is not xenophobic, except in its opposition to the region's exploitation by West Punjab. It wants normal relations with India not only because it will benefit greatly from the resumption of trade and other links with it but also because it bears no ill-will against this country. Similarly, East Bengali nationalism is not directed against the West.

Two factors account for this difference. East Bengal does not suffer from an identity crisis. Its language defines its identity. This became clear when the Central

Government tried to impose Urdu on it in the early 'fifties and was compelled to retrace its steps in the face of fierce resistance. East Bengal's social order has also not been disrupted to the same extent as that of West Pakistan because modern education and industrialisation have not spread there to the same extent.

It is not surprising therefore that East Bengal has not thrown up a counterpart of Mr. Bhutto. On a superficial view Maulana Bhasani can be said to fill the role. But the resemblance is deceptive in spite of the Maulana's hatred of the West and liking for China. He is essentially a populist peasant leader who is well rooted in his people's traditionalist culture.

To put it mildly, the two parties that have come on top in Pakistan's two wings are not natural allies. They represent different outlooks and policies and are exposed to different kinds of pressures from their constituents. They may co-operate to avoid the continuance of military rule which both of them abhor. But this can be only a marriage of convenience and it will be subject to great strain.*

6. As it happened, the marriage never took place.