



UNDER THREE FLAGS

KAZI ANWARUL HUQUE

UNDER THREE FLAGS

REMINISCENCES
OF
A PUBLIC SERVANT



K. A. Huque

Under Three Flags : K. A. Huque I. F. Publications : 1321. I. F. Library, 954. First Edition : September, 1986. Bhadra, 1393. Zilhaj, 1406. Publisher : M. Ruhul Amin, Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, Dhaka-2. Printer : Abco Press Limited, 6-7. Aulad Hossain Lane, Dhaka-1. Binder : Nannu Khan 42, Narinda Road, Dhaka.

Price : 100·00

U. S. Dollar : 10·00

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

These reminiscences seek to depict important events which took place in the Subcontinent over a time-span of two generations, seen through the eyes of a Senior Public Servant, who participated at a high level of administration in the Bengali speaking region, for the best part of fifty years. Arranged in sequence of events, an attempt has also been made to analyse some of the important events which set the course of history as it unfolded itself in course of time. A pen picture of contemporary society has been added in appropriate places in some of the chapters, in relation to the changes that were coming over the society.

Beginning his career during the British period as a high official in the Indian Police Service in the early thirties and serving for more than fifty years, Kazi Anwarul Huque had attained the highest position in the public administration. He also served as a Minister for ten years in two different political regimes—Ayub Khan of Pakistan and Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh. He thus served during three significant periods of history of the Subcontinent—British, Pakistani and Bangladeshi and therefore the title of his 'Reminiscences' "Under Three Flags".

The text extends over 40 chapters. Arranged chronologically, the title of each gives the clue to its contents, bringing the text up to 1981, to the end of the regime of General Ziaur Rahman.

The author thought it fit to go back over a period of time to pick up the threads necessary to put the story in the perspective of history. As for example, a short account of the early episode of the revolutionary movements in India was necessary to understand its development at a later stage. Similarly, the background of the nationalist movement was necessary to understand its subsequent development into communal lines, giving rise to the two nation theory and partition of the sub-continent. Informations on such matters were collected from the elder members of the society having personal knowledge, and official records the author came across in course of his service life.

The first chapter begins with a short account of the family, the microcosm of society, where the seed of change was planted towards the end of the last century. The story is largely concerned with the change that was coming over the traditional Muslim society which was trying to resist change, and ultimately was caught unprepared in the task of adaptation with the changing conditions of the world at large. The cultural lag came out in bold relief soon after partition in 1947, when their leaders took over the responsibilities of political management of their country.

The government during the Pakistan era was faced with the problem of change and adaptation of the public administration from the old established pattern that was built up to serve the purpose of the colonial rulers, into a system devoted to the welfare of the people. An attempt has been made to delineate the misconceptions that prevailed about the purpose of the administration and the dilemma the government had to face to respond to the growing demands of the people of an independent country.

Right from the beginning of independence, internal politics was dominated by the problem of national integration. The centrifugal forces which gave rise to the problem were aggravated by the growing economic disparity between the two regions of the country. The chief problem confronting the people was their poverty. Independence raised high expectations for improvement of economic condition of the people. Whatever prospects were there to improve the quality of life, were frustrated by the rapid rise of unproductive military expenditure, caused by strained relations with India. It soon became the prime concern of the government of Pakistan. The problem is analysed to show how it led to the rise of militarism, leading to destruction of democracy, and ultimate break up of the country.

The Bengali Muslim society had to pass through the trauma of living under three different flags in less than a generation, each time the change causing widespread suffering and disruption. After 190 years of British colonial rule, it passed into the status of neo-colonialism of Pakistan in 1947, before Bangladesh came into existence after liberation war of 1971. An attempt has been made to highlight important aspects of this transition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Writing a memoir over 600 pages long in the evening of his life by one who never had any pretensions to Literary merit was no easy task. However, my difficulties were eased to a large extent by the encouragement I received from all around—colleagues, friends and relatives. Their assistance in the form of discussion and critique, research for references, editing of the manuscript and lastly, but not the least, secretarial services were invaluable in helping me complete the task. Of the many who have thus helped I would like to mention here specially Shamsia Ghaznavi, F. K. Ghaznavi, J. R. Khan, A. R. Khan, Collette Khan, Robert C. Terry, Jr. Bruce Curry, Nuruddin Ahmad and Professor, Dr. M. Abdul Aziz of Dhaka University. My wife and children were a constant source of encouragement and support without which the book perhaps would never have the light of day. To all I owe a debt of gratitude,

My gratitude is also due to the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh for prompt acceptance of manuscript for publication of the book.

K. A. Huque

**Dedicated to the service of those who wish to learn
from the mistakes of their progenitor and are devoted
to the task of building a new society.**

K. A. Huque

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UNDER THREE FLAGS

Glossary of Non-English words and phrases used in the text.

“A”

- Allah-hu-Akbar**— An expression in Arabic language which means “Allah the Greatest”.
- Ali Brothers**— The late Muhammad Ali, Shawkat Ali, two brothers who were the leaders of the Khilafat movement which was initiated in India soon after the conclusion of the First World War, to safeguard the institution of the Sultan of Turkey, venerated by the Muslims as the Caliph, against the possible move particularly on the part of the British Govt. for its dismemberment.
- A.I.C.C.**— All India Congress Committee, the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress.
- Azad (Kashmir)**— The term literally means “Independent” ; it is applied to designate that part of the former state of Kashmir, which is under the control of Pakistan, ever since the partition of the subcontinent.

“B”

- Bada**— Swampy forests in the southern fringe of gangetic delta—its local name—generally known as the “Sundarbans”.
- “Bandemateram”**—An expression in Sanskrit language, which means “Salutation to the Mother” (country).

Bankim Chandra (Chatterji)— A famous Bengali author considered the father of Hindu (Indian) nationalism. He coined the expression “Bandematarm”, in order to excite patriotic fervour.

Basic Democracies— A devise of local government, combining the functions of electoral College for the election of the head of the state (the President), and the members of the Legislature, introduced in Pakistan (1960) by its military ruler, General Ayub Khan.

“D”

Dacoity— An aggravated form of robbery, in which five or more offenders take part ; crime against property with violence.

Dadajan— Grandfather (on the father’s side).

Darbar— Receptions held by the Royalty, Viceroy and Governors to renew allegiance of the subjects to the Ruler.

“F”

(The) Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.) An administrative division of the former British India, now a constituent state of Pakistan, comprising the hilly areas in the N.W. bordering Afghanistan, inhabited by the Pathan tribesmen.

“H”

Hadis (or Hadith) Body of Traditions relating to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, now considered as a guide to good life.

Hindustan— “The land of the Hindus”—a name given to the Sub-Continent by the Muslim Conquerers.

Haji— A Muslim who participated in the annual religious ceremony held at Macca, called the “Haji”.

“I”

I.N.A.or the Indian National Army— A contingent of Armed forces, organised in 1942-43 by the Japanese with the prisoners of war after the surrender of the allied forces in Malaysia and Singapore, in course of the Second World War. They collaborated with the Japanese Army in the conquest of Burma and advanced towards the Eastern frontier of India for her liberation from the British rule. Indian Revolutionary leader, Subhas Chandra Bose was their supreme commander, called “NETAJI”.

I.C.S.— Indian Civil Service—the name of the administrative service introduced by the British Regime in India in 1854.

Imam— Muslim priest, who leads the prayer in mosques.

“K”

Kumar— Son of a Prince ; also denote children of rich landowners enjoying the title of Raja under the British Regime in India.

Khilafat Movement—The name given to the movement initiated by the Muslims of India to protect the institution of the Caliph as the head of the Muslim congregation, against the possible move by the British for its dismemberment, after the defeat of the Turks in the First World War.

“L”

The Lucknow Pact— An agreement concluded in 1916 at Lucknow, a place in Northern India, between the Indian National

Congress and All India Muslim League, to ensure adequate representation of the Muslims in the legislature. The agreement provided for separate electorates for the Hindus and the Muslims for the election of members to the legislature in the system of responsible government which was introduced in India after the first World War.

“M”

- Madrasas—** Traditional Religious Schools of the Muslims.
- Mukhtiar—** Junior lawyers entitled to practice law in the lower courts trying criminal cases.
- Mufussal—** A term which denote the country side, away from the principal urban centres.
- Mantra—** Hindu religious lessons.
- Marwari—** Originally an inhabitant of the ancient province of Marwar, now included in the State of Rajasthan in India, who are highly skilled in business enterprise. They are the richest class of people in India.
- Maidan—** Open field reserved for sports and recreation.

“P”

- Puthis—** Collection of folk lore and similar stories in Bangali language.
- Pacts (Lucknow)—** See under Lucknow Pact.
- PAK—** Abbreviation of the term Pakistan such as PAK Army, meaning Pakistan Army. (The literal meaning of the term is pure).

“R”

R. Padma— Local name of the R. Ganges flowing through Bangladesh.

“S”

- Sanyasi—** A Hindu ascetic.
- Sundarbans—** Forests in gangetic deltas—(see under Bada)
- Swadeshi (movement)—** Literally, the term indicate anything concerning one's own country. Specifically, the term connotes a movement started in India early in this century to encourage use of country made goods and boycott those manufactured in the U.K. and imported into India, in retaliation against unpopular measures adopted by the alien rulers.
- Simon Commi-
sion—** The Statutory Commission appointed by the British Govt. in 1927/28 to review progress of constitutional Reforms introduced in 1919/20, known as the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, and made recommendations for future development of constitutional government.
- Satyagraha—** Literally meaning “dedication to truth” ; the term was used by Gandhi to denote the movement of passive resistance to compel the British Raj to transfer power to the Indians.
- Samities—** Associations set up by a group of persons in pursuit of common objective.
- Shantiniketan—** The name of the residential area adjacent to “Viswabharti”, an institution established by Poet Tagore (see Viswabharati, under ‘V’) in India.
- Swaraj—** Self government ; Democratic rule.

“T”

- Tabliq—** A Muslim religious mission devoted to indoctrination and preaching Islam.
- Tafsir—** Explanation or elaboration of religious texts.
- Tanzim—** A Muslim religious association devoted to the uplift of the Muslims.

“U”

- Union Boards—** Smallest elected body—a local government unit in former province of Bengal under British India.
- Ulemes—** Muslim theologians.
- Viswabharati—** Name of the Institution established by Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore at a place called Bolepore, about 150 miles from Calcutta, devoted to teaching and cultural development.

“Y”

- Yajna—** Hindu religious practice for initiation.

“Z”

- Zamindar—** Landlord ; Landowning gentry of India.

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55	2nd line	poslitical	political
64	10th line	annual	annul
95	16th line	1937	1934
97	21st line	there	their
„	3rd	gentiy	gentry
„	17th line	mainstary	mainstay
„	13th „	anywhere	anywhere
„	4th line	bult	built
„	last line	fror	for
99	4th line	framous	famous
101	14th line	bluk	bulk
105	13th line	sustoncence	sustenance
106	4th line	bobbers	robbers
114	18th line	accommodation	acomodation
119	9th line	ensured	ensued
120	17th line	party	partly
123	3rd line	snothins	nothing
129	14th line	destinies	desting
130	26th line	milion	milien
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„	15th line	Asam	Assam
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154	First line	sacle	scale
155	6th „	Da—mage	Damage
„	11th „	repaied	repaired
156	First line	opend	opened
160	2nd & 3rd line	detained preson	detained in prison
161	21st line	to Japanese	to a Japanese
163	last	gaps	Japs
166	6th line	he	the
168	First line	tide war	tide of war
171	20th line	accommodated	acomodated
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195	7th line	'a'	"at"

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221	2nd line	gruevancer	grievances
232	8th line	fsesst all	forestall
241	4th line	asasination	assasination
257	11th line	area	era
265	11th line	comittee	committee
„	16th line	clam	claim
277	5th line	in	it
279	16th line	lare	large
281	6th line	case	excess
„	5th line	iliving	living
301	4th line	No	Not
303	204th line	with	within
309	4th line	'As'	'A'
310	3rd line	'he'	'the'
314	16th line	'one'	'done'
324	2nd line	'then'	'when'
„	3rd line	'would'	'wound'
„	6th line	'is'	'its'
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347	First line	'dack'	'deck'
350	7th line	'were'	'was'
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354	8th line	'at'	'in'
355	8th line	'paining'	painting
„	18th line	'hunrry'	'hury'
376	9th line	'akings violent'	'taking a violent
384	8th line	'was'	'were'
„	10th line	officie	office
388	13th line	imprecticable	impracticable
389	5th line	menpower	manpower
„	6th line	callep	called
390	11th „	made	make
„	6th „	ocould	could
391	3rd „	wall	well
„	10 h „	reforme	reform
„	14th „	parception	perception.

Page	Line	Error	Correction
„	14th „	imposed	imposed
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„	10th line	sutibale	suitable
393	2nd line	livaing	having
394	7th line	havily	heavily
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„	13th line	whithe	with
398	5th „	of	and
401	11th „	vest	vaste
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405	2nd line	end	and
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409	8th line	seen	seem
418	10th line	law	low
429	17 line	so	to
431	4th line	we	was
441	16th line	tested	tasted
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448	19th line	national	natural.
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455	2nd line	noth's	month's
456	9th line	India	Indian
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495	Last line	inteching	itching
497	7th line	hands	bands
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544	11th line	he	the
551	3rd line	steppage	stoppage
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556	4th line	was	war
559	5th line	traing	training
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560	8th line	Spontaneous	Spontaneous
562	9th line	portions	formations
„	8th line	hideous	hideout
563	4th line	defeated	defected
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608	10th „	acquisscence	acquiescence
612	6th „	talk	task
614	9th „	then	than
615	5th „	(1968—)	(1969—)
617	17 „	hands	bands
„	11th „	morml	normal

CHAPTER I

Ancestry—Beginning of English Education in the Family—Early Life—A Reverie on The River Ganges

In my recollections of childhood, the memories of my grand-parents stand out above any other. My father was their only child, and as he had joined government services, his parents had come to live with him ever since. This was about the time I was born. My grand-parents took complete charge of my up bringing, which was a significant result of living in the joint family system. Till the time I joined a secondary school, I can hardly recall finding myself under the care of my mother except for the time when we took our meals. So, I think it fit to begin the writing of my reminiscences with an account of what I heard from my grand-father about the contemporary society and their way of living.

My grand-father, Kazi Ataul Haque, was born about the year 1844, in a middle class family, known at the time as the '*Kazis*' of Godaipur, in the district of Khulna. Their home was in a hamlet called Melek Puraikathi situated on the banks of the river Kapotakshi. He was the youngest of the four brothers. As was the usual custom in those days, he lived in a joint family. The family income came from a small landed property held jointly. The eldest brother was the head of the family and was held in high esteem. From stories of their early life I could gather that they had a fairly secure and comfortable life, living in traditional rural surroundings.

Education of the middle class families in those days mainly consisted of vernacular language and religious teachings. No trace of English

was yet to be found anywhere except in the district towns. My grand-father was well versed in Bengali language. This helped him to break away from the extended family when it became necessary to do so in order to take up an independent profession. Then he had to live separately away from the traditional household, where he was born and brought up.

Inevitably, the number of the members of the family was increasing. However, the sudden death of the eldest brother at the early age of forty-five deprived the family of the traditional bond that held them together so strongly. A division of the family property among the co-sharers, would have been inadequate to provide for the subsistence of all the members. The old traditional bond was also strong enough to prevent the family from disrupting, in spite of the growing stress and tension of changing social and economic conditions. Recalling the incident many years later my grand-father expressed regrets that it was the end of the good old days. However, something happened in the life of my grand-father which impelled him to seek fields afar and pastures anew.

Being the youngest of the four brothers, Dadajan (as we called him) had very little to do in the management of the family property. The responsibility of such a job belonged to the elders. He had acquired a taste for reading books to pass the time. Books in those days were a rare commodity in the village. The only ones available were handwritten manuscripts of religious texts such as 'Hadis', the 'Tafsir' and some stories written in the traditional style known as the 'Punthis'. They were never-the-less treasured as valuable possessions by the owners. Occasionally some printed materials reached the village brought by the travellers coming from the district towns. These were eagerly sought after by the connoisseurs, but were soon lost. Pamphlets issued by Christian missionaries were in circulation, but they did not attract much notice. Dadajan recalled that it was

not until the eighteen eighties (i.e., after the birth of his only son), that printed papers were first seen in the village.

In was round this time that grand-father came into contact with a progressive Hindu family living in the neighbourhood across the River Kopotakshi. They were known as the 'Roys' of the twin villages of Raruli-Katpara. They also had contacts with Calcutta, where some of their young men went to study in the English medium schools. This link with Calcutta brought printed literature from the city. Close friendship developed and Dadajan used to visit the Roys' from time to time, to browse through the books and periodicals, a contact which he maintained till the time he had to move out to the town of Khulna to practice law years later. Other than the literary materials available at the Roys', he had no other source of reading materials and information about the outside world.

He developed a particular friendship with one of the younger members of the Roy family, namely Prafulla Chandra Roy, a pioneer in the field of science in this country, who had gone to England for higher studies and had obtained a doctorate degree for his research in Chemistry. He became a teacher of the Calcutta University soon after his return.

On his return from England, Dr. Roy had to face a hostile circle of relatives who were opposed to the idea of travelling abroad, an act forbidden by the Hindu scriptures. Crossing the sea was decreed to be sacrilegious act defiling the purity of the caste. When he came to the village home he was asked to undergo the prescribed penance to regain his caste purity. The Penance was to lump a piece of cow-dung or gulp a quantity of bull's urine, before he could be permitted to enter the sacred precinct of the ancestral home. Dr. Roy of course refused to comply and was content to put up in the out houses, reserved for the common guests. On the other hand, to be sure, there were many who looked upon the young scientist returned from U.K. with respect and admiration. On his part, Dr. Roy had no hesitation

to forgive his orthodox relatives and continued to cherish his love for his village home without any feeling of bitterness. His reputation as a scientist and a teacher soon began to spread among the intelligentsia and the question of his penance was soon forgotten.

Dr. Roy, as he was known among his friends and admirers was fond of his village and used to come there on vacation whenever he found an opportunity. Dadajan recalled with delight his occasional meetings with Dr. Roy, bringing fresh tidings and experience from the metropolis. Occasionally, discussions centered round the probable impact of English education on the morals of the students. There was still a lurking suspicion about the purpose behind English education, as the Christian missionaries were actively involved in it. Exhortations of Dr. Roy particularly his own example and conduct, did a lot to remove the prejudice that was still in the minds of those anxious to protect the traditional way of life. An ardent believer in traditional values himself, Dr. Roy's modern education at home and abroad, did nothing to change his visible way of life. This was very significant.

In the year 1882, when he was about thirty-eight years old, grandfather was blessed with a son. His name was Kazi Imdadul Haque. The birth of a son while on the threshold of middle age, placed on his shoulders new responsibilities which he had not anticipated. Education of a son in the traditional manner was not much of a problem. But having sensed the wind of change, and actuated by a desire to bring him up fit for a better life, Dadajan began to look round for ways and means to provide him with modern education. In course of his later meetings with Dr. Roy, he was able to gather the requisite information about available facilities for new education and the opportunities that lay ahead. Encouraged by his able friend he made up his mind to admit his son in Khulna Zilla School in due course.

Prejudice against English education in Muslim society was at last disappearing, and was replaced by a growing sense of regret for missed

opportunities and envy against the members of the Hindu intelligentsia, who were obtaining increasing number of important positions for themselves in government and the professions. Fortunately, nobody raised objections against the avowed intention of grand-father to send his son to an English School. However he received very little encouragement by way of financial support from the family. The nearest school was situated in the District Town of Khulna which was more than a day's journey from home under the best of conditions. Where, and how to live in Khulna town? No one from the family had done it yet. How to meet the expenses of a separate household while living away from home? The joint property was already under strain to provide enough means for a reasonable standard of living to the co-sharers. Would the parents be able to provide the means to meet the cost of education of a child living in Khulna Township? These were the facts of life which had to be faced and faced realistically before a way could be found to send his son to an English high school.

The only way to gather the requisite resources to meet the expenses of living away from home was to earn an income through some work in Khulna town. Any form of business, so called, was ruled out. However, Dadajan had an asset in his good knowledge of vernacular language, and the gift of the gab. So, he decided to try his luck in the up coming profession of law, as a Mukhtiar. But he had to pass a public examination to qualify himself for the profession. He was already on the wrong side of forty; not the best time of life to sit for an examination. However, with determination and dint of hard work, he managed to clear his examinations and soon settled down building up his profession as a Mukhtiar.

The mukhtiar were doing good business with their clients in the criminal courts. Since the enactment of the Police Act. V, in 1861 the government stepped up pressure to enforce and maintain law and

order in the countryside ; a task which was left largely to the local agencies such as the village panchayts and the land lords. The greater part of the district was covered with dense tropical forests called the **Bada** areas, better known as the Sundarbans. The settled areas merged imperceptibly with the forest where the civil administration had little control. The large estates were breaking up, and landed property was passing into the hands of money lenders, and the unscrupulous cut throat employees, gnawing at the assets of the ancient families every where. With the progressive stabilisation of civil administration and the new system of judiciary established by the British, litigation multiplied, providing good business for the village touts and the practioners of law.

Dadajan was able to establish his practice and earn sufficient income as a Mukhtiar by the time his son was old enough to go to school. He shifted his family from Godaipur to Khulna town accordingly, and the son was admitted to the Zilla School. He passed his Entrance examination in 1896 at the age of fourteen, went for higher studies to Calcutta Madrasa, and graduated in 1900, from the Presidency College. Thus began the migration of the family from village to town a process never to be reversed.

Education of Muslim students admitted to Calcutta Presidency College was subsidised from the Mohsin Trust Funds. This was a great attraction for the Muslim students all over the province. Most of them (they were not many) lived in a mess situated at a place called Baitakkhana Road which provided an appropriate, though humble social and academic setting for the Muslim undergraduates of the new generation. Among the contemporaries of my father were such people, as Abdul Khaliq, Khabiruddin Ahmed, Tasaddque Ahmed, Abdur Rahman Khan whom we found occupying high positions in the education department when we were in school. Such an association of students in their college life in common pursuit of new learning, develo-

ped among the participants abiding friendship, which my father cherished as long as he lived

After his graduation, father served for a number of years in casual jobs in the Education Department. He obtained B.T. degree from Dhaka Teachers' Training College, in which he obtained the 1st place, and was appointed substantively to the provincial education service in 1914. He was posted as the Asst. Inspector of schools for Mohamedan Education with head quarters at Mymensingh, a post he held for about two years. Dadajan had given up his practice and came along with grand-mother to live with the family of their son, the remaining years of their life. Father had to tour throughout Dhaka Division and remained absent from home for days on end. Besides the stretch of railways from Narayanganj to Bahadurabad, means of transportation were the country boats and bullock carts and more often than not he had to travel on foot. Such slow means of travel compelled the touring officers to stay away from home for long periods of time. This was a part of service life even when I joined the Indian Police Service years later as an Assistant Superintendent of Police.

Towards the end of our stay at Mymensingh, I was admitted to the Zilla school in 1916. I was seven years old. My recollections of this period are hazy. I remember the drill master, a lively young man. It was great fun participating in massed drill on wide-open school compound. I made some friends, among whom was Hafizur Rahman, who later joined the civil service, and also served as the Finance Minister to the Government of East Pakistan. Although he was several years my senior, it was an enduring friendship. We had occasions to meet throughout our service life. Before the year was out, father was transferred from Mymensingh to Dhaka.

After a brief spell in Dhaka, father was transferred to Calcutta as the headmaster of the Guru Training School. This was early in 1917. The

prospect of living in Calcutta, created a lot of excitement. The interest was heightened by stories of Calcutta related by the visitors who came to bid farewell. What a city of palaces, having broad metalled roads lined by footpath for pedestrians : Electric tram cars like railway trains, running up and down the streets : Europeans and rich people living in palatial houses. Above all, there was a zoological garden, where one could observe from close quarters, every kind of animal and bird found on earth ! All such stories made me feel as if I was about to step into a new world.

And indeed it was. The school and the head master's quarters were located in a spacious double storied building, having a tank on one side and extensive compound all round. It was situated on the Convent Road in Entally area. The training school and the practicing junior school, together with accommodation for nearly sixty trainees in two hostels, one for the Hindus, and the other for the Muslims, were all located on the same premises. Our quarters consisting of bright spacious rooms and outhouses overlooking the tank was a comfortable residence for a family even in those good old days. Myself and the next brother were admitted in the junior school located in the adjacent portion of the same building.

So, our school life began in pleasant surroundings without any hardship. We did not have to cross a road to go from residence to school. Extensive open areas of the compound provided plenty of space for playgrounds. My father virtually presided over a small community of teachers and students, and was served by a host of servants looking after the premises.

My brother and I were placed in the charge of a tutor, Muhammad Laskar Biswas, a young teacher, who resided on the preciencts of the hostels. Through the care and affection which he bestowed on his wards, he soon assumed the position of an elder brother. It was in his company that we went round many places of interest in the city, and

before long got acquainted with the ways of getting round the labyrinthine paths of the metropolis. On a bright Sunday morning, father took us to the Alipore Zoological gardens. The sight of so many different animals and birds whose small pictures were the only view I had so far, was a source of great joy and excitement. I do not know how others feel like visiting a zoo ; I must confess I have never lost interest in such excursions. After retirement from active life, I had the good fortune of renewing my interest in wild animals in company of my youngest son Habib by visiting the Whipsnade zoo and the Safari park in the U.K. where he was working.

There are events which stand out as mile-stones in the memory of my childhood. One such incident took place on a Sunday morning, when grand-father was reading a news paper. Unlike the usual run of its kind consisting of a few sheets of printed pages, that morning it had an illustrated supplement, containing pictures of gun toting soldiers in a scenario of utter destruction. Grand-father explained they were pictures of battlefields in Europe, where a war was raging for three years. The pictures and stories of warfare aroused abiding interest in news papers. I began browsing through them whenever I found a chance.

Father acquired a talent for literary pursuits early in life. He was writing feature articles and short stories in various journals and periodicals. For some time he edited a monthly journal called the "Shikshok" (the Teacher) devoted to educational subjects. He also produced a number of text books prescribed for schools and madrasas. One of his later writings was a Bengali fiction known under the title 'Abdullah,' portraying contemporary middle class Muslim society, is well known to this day. His literary pursuits attracted a wide circle of friends who used to visit our house. A notable visitor was the poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. Demobilised from the 49th Bengal Regiment, which he joined during the war, he lost no time establishing contacts with the literary circles in Calcutta. A tall handsome youth he was about to

make his debut as a poet. This was before he composed his poem "the Rebel" which made him famous as a rising poet of great promise. What impressed me more was his singing of Tagore songs which were the best rendering of its kind I had heard yet. Tagore songs were gaining popularity overcoming the indifference of the classical school of music and their connoisseurs. Father was also fond of Tagore songs and could sing with distinction.

But, let me go back to the initial years, to maintain the sequence of events I want to relate. The first year or so passed as smoothly as one can desire. A spacious comfortable house to live in a society of enlightened people, amenities of the greatest city in the East, all combined to provide an idyllic setting of a life, fulfilling much of our expectations. Then came a bolt from the blue.

So long, father was enjoying good health and lived an active life. I hardly ever saw him sick or sorry. There was very little suspicion of any serious malady afflicting him. Early in 1918, as bad luck would have it, he developed renal obstructions caused by stones in his kidney. Surgical operation was the only treatment. He had to undergo no less than three major surgical operations and confined to hospital best part of six months. Fortunately for him and the family, the services of a skilled British surgeon saved his life and he survived long enough to enable the family to fend for themselves, when the inevitable had happened. Soon after his discharge from hospital we went for a change at a resort in Behar called Jagadishpur. This was a real change indeed. Accustomed to the hot humid climate of East Bengal, the cool dry air of early autumn and the rolling land-*scape* of Behar was a delightful experience. We went on long walk along the village paths, had occasional picnic in the patches of sal forests which abound. Evenings were spent listening to stories related by the grand-parents and a devoted old servant, who had a flare for narrating stories. My mother, brought up in the seclusion of an orthodox home discovered a new

world of light and fresh air, which she had never known before : Nobody to scold her for transgressing sacred customs when she discarded her veil for a while ! The house had a large compound and a tank. My grand-mother would venture out within the compound for a stroll, but could not be persuaded to step out on the public road. Mother had little hesitation to enjoy her newfound freedom. We returned home after about a month.

It was about this time, that my parents became acquainted with a remarkable lady, namely Mrs. Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. My father had no occasion to meet her—she did not discard her veil ; but he became closely associated in her venture of establishing a school for Muslim girls ; my mother providing the line of communication between father and Mrs. Hossain. The place which appeared to be her residence, was not far from the place we were living. I had some recollections of meeting her while accompanying mother on her periodic visits, carrying papers and messages from father. Still a young lad, I was not debarred from the presence of women yet, but the position was to change shortly. A few months later while accompanying mother to drop her at the Girls' school on my way to attend the weekly Scout rally, I was made to sit in the waiting room for men. I was told I had grown up and had put on uniform of a 'volunteer'. So I was not to be admitted inside the house !

Formal schooling for Muslim girls as it is provided to-day was still almost unknown. Mrs. R.S. Hossain's project was a pioneering venture. The institution was named Salkawat Memorial Girls' School in remembrance of her departed husband, whom she had lost early in life.

Although she realised the growing necessity for schooling for girls, her deep understanding of contemporary society enabled her to comprehend that she had to organise and run the school in a manner which would not offend the prevailing sensibilities of the people around her. Thus she achieved remarkable success in her endeavour and truly hel-

ped build a bridge between the old and the new. The school continued to grow and prosper year after year and in due course became a Girls' high school. It was taken over by the government soon after the death of the founder.

The war was over at last. On an appointed day, peace celebrations took place with festoons and illuminations all over the city. All sections of citizens participated in the celebrations. We spent several hours in the evening watching the lights and fire work display from the fort.

The Boy Scout movement was just about getting under way, and I joined the 1st Troop of Scouts. It was organised in two separate Associations ; one for the boys of European extraction ; the other for the Indians. Occasionally, joint rallies were held on special occasions. One such occasion was the visit of Sir Baden Powell, the Chief Scout in 1920, in which I happened to participate.

There were only six troops of Scouts located in different parts of the city when I joined. The seventh troops was organised soon after with the boys of Calcutta Madrasa. A young barrister, namely Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy, became the first Scoutmaster of the newly organised Seventh Troop, whose members were exclusively Muslims. Khaki shorts were the prescribed uniform. There was a controversy among the faculty members of the Madrasa over wearing shorts exposing the knees. As a compromise, three quarter length shorts were approved. There was a furore over the incident among the other scout troops. Some of my scout friends asked me when I was going to follow suit. Thanks to the intervention of Mr. Suhrawardy, the objections against wearing shorts when attending scout rallies, were withdrawn shortly after.

Games and athletic sports for the students were not well organised yet. Extra-mural activities, social exchange and gatherings outside

school hours were almost unknown. The only such occasion was the Darbar Day sports, held in commemoration of Delhi Durbar for King George V, on the 11th of December every year as far as I can recall. The Boy Scout movement therefore removed an important lacuna in the academic life of the young people and spread rapidly among the educational institutions of the city. By the time we left Calcutta in 1921, there were about sixteen troops of scouts all over the city. The movement received official patronage. The governor of the province happened to visit combined rallies on special occasions and address the scouts.

An important activity of scouting was the annual camp held for a week during the Easter holidays. The camp was held in the countryside about a day's journey by train from Calcutta. All the troops sent their contingents, but their number was still small. I happened to attend two such camps—one held at a place called Mihijam near the Behar border, and the other at Girhidi, a well known health resort. The total number attending the camps was about a hundred. Living accommodation for the campers was provided in a number of adjacent houses, but we all had to sit together in a common dining tent for all our meals. It was probably the obligation of communal dining which prevented a large number of boys from participating in the annual camps. However those who were fortunate enough to participate, enjoyed their camp life immensely as did I.

The next event which I shall now relate concerns a long boat trip covering almost two months we spent on the R. Padma, in the cold weather of 1920-21. As related earlier, father had considerable experience of travelling by country boats in the rivers of East Bengal while on his round of official tours as the Assistant Inspector of Schools. Facilities for such touring were ensured by the comfortable houseboats available in Dhaka on hire. After spending more than three years in Calcutta, his longing for a river cruise returned. An excursion was

organised starting from Goalando, the railway terminal on the Ganges. The interest in such a trip was enhanced by including a visit to Elachipur, the ancestral home of my mother's parents which she had not seen yet.

A spacious houseboat was hired from Dhaka which we boarded at Goalando on arrival by train from Calcutta. A smaller country boat provided for two servants and the kitchen. The first port of call was Elachipur, situated on the confluence of the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. The greater part of the village was diluviated by erosion from two sides ; but enough still remained to recall old memories. The arrival of a house boat was a rare event in a river side village, and the introduction of the inmates soon attracted old relatives and acquaintances. We went to pay a visit to mother's uncle, living in another village a few miles inland from the river. She was carried in a planquin ; others had to walk all the way. The visit took the best part of the day. We returned to our boat in the evening.

From Elachipur we set our course upstream making slow progress against the current and the prevailing wind. The purpose was to live on the river, enjoy the cool sunny weather that prevailed in this season, get close to the peaceful rural life in the country side and forget the din and bustle of the city for a while. We gazed and gazed at R. Padma struck with wonder. What a mighty river she was ! The wide expanse of running water, miles after miles of snow white sand, occasional patches of greenery basking under a clear blue winter sky created an illusion of a different world. Besides numerous countryboats, modern river steamers were plying up and down the river every day providing regular means of communication to the villagers all along the banks. The sand bars on the river attract migratory ducks which arrive in this season. Occasional duck shooting provided added zest to our excursions, as well as variety for the table.

The daily round of shopping to buy provisions for the kitchen brought us in close contact with the village life. Customers were welcome at the doorsteps of humble farmer's household. Selling to the consumer directly was preferable to selling to the wholesale dealers for obvious reasons. Fresh vegetables, chicken and eggs were available from farmers. One had to search for fresh milk, which was in short supply. Fish could be purchased on the river directly from fishermen's boats. This was the first time I came in close contact with village. It created an abiding interest in rural Bengal, an interest, which later on helped a great deal to adjust myself to service life, a mission in which I had to spend many years in the rural districts of Bengal.

We travelled up the river till we reached the Hardinge Bridge. There we stopped three days to allow the boatmen to rest. They were towing the houseboat upstream all the way. The bridge, a great work of engineering, against a back drop of rural Bengal was indeed a fascinating sight. Then we sailed down the river with sails aloft for the first time, covering in one day distances which took three to four days towing upstream. Sailing past Goalando, our starting point, we travelled as far down as the Sundrabans south of Barisal District, where an old friend of my father the late Kamruddin Ahmad was the Colonisation Officer. We were taken round patches of forests supposed to abound with chital deer, but could not get any.

Returning to Barisal, we dismissed the boat and left by steamer and train for Calcutta about the middle of January 1921. Our school classes had started early in the month, and we lagged behind in our lessons. The tutor imposed extra hours of study to make up for the lost time cutting into our leisure hours—an anticlimax to the dreamy world of holiday on the Ganges.

The population of Calcutta including the adjacent suburbs was about 13 million. We were living in a suburban area off the Lower circular Road, a relatively quiet place, with very little traffic and somewhat away

from the din and bustle of the city proper. Our daily life was confined largely with the activities of small community of students and teachers living on the premises of the combined institution. As young boys in the junior classes, we had little contact with the city life outside, except occasional visits to relatives and attending fairs and exhibitions. Once in a while father would take us to a cinema or on a stroll through the Eden Gardens, which we used to enjoy immensely. The biggest gardens, we were told—were the Botanical Gardens, with its legendary banyan tree. But that was far way in the District of Howrah across the river Hoogly. We had no opportunity to see the place during our four years stay in Calcutta.

Before long I discovered that inspite of the large population and busy life, the Metropolis can be a very lonely place to live. This hard fact I realised during the annual vacation, when the hostels were closed and everybody went home. The headmaster's quarters in which we lived, was the only wing of the school buildings, which remained occupied. Others who had to stay put, were the two guards and a few servants of the hostels who had nowhere to go. It assumed the look of a ghostly deserted place.

When the school was in session, class attendance at the scheduled hours was an exacting task, and holiday appeared to be a sweet delightful respite. Within a few days of the long vacation, an air of loneliness descended on us. I longed for an end of the vacation, and the return of the students and teachers who made up and sustained our community life.

The period of our stay in Calcutta was about to come to an end. After spending more than four years, father was transferred back to Dhaka in July 1921, as the Secretary of the newly established Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education. Early in his career father spent the best years of his life in Dhaka working as a teacher, where he had made many friends. My mother's parents and their relatives were

all residents of the same place. So our posting to Dhaka was almost like returning home from abroad.

My younger brother and I were admitted to Dhaka Collegiate School. The headmaster, the late Tasadduq Ahmad, a distinguished educationist was an old friend of my father. The school life in Dhaka turned out to be much more stimulating than that in the junior school in Calcutta. There, the school was an adjunct to the Guru Training School, with a handful of students in each class and ended in class six. Dhaka Collegiate School was a much bigger institution in every way. One of the oldest of its kind, it had a very fine record of achievement of its students in the University Examinations as well as in athletic games. We were reminded, that during the incumbency of one of its illustrious headmasters, late Ratnamani Gupta, students from this school topped the list of successful candidates in the University Entrance Examinations for six consecutive years. A plaque in his memory at one side of the entrance to the old school buildings, bears testimony to this unique achievement to this day.

The school team also dominated the field of athletic games in the inter-school tournaments. At least once in the course of my five years of student life, the school teams managed to secure all the trophies of the year.

School life and work was becoming more and more demanding. The teachers were indeed a keen set of persons. In a sound academic environment, the teachers and the taught took their task seriously as was evident from the fact there were very few failures in the annual promotion examinations. Drop outs were almost unknown.

As I moved up in the hierarchy of classes, school life became more and more engaging and pervasive. From the middle of 1921, when I entered the Collegiate school till I passed out in 1926, was a period of peace and tranquility in the country. The school was the centre of our

activities. Thanks to the initiative of the headmaster and the dedication of a group of young teachers, extra-mural programmes were regular, including athletic games and cultural activities. They provided full scope to attract those who wished to participate. The school premises appeared more lively after classes were dissolved than when they were in session. As usual, the onlookers outnumbered those who could participate. But that is a part of the game.

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY AND SCHOOL LIFE IN DHAKA— BEGINNING OF POLITICAL AGITATION

One peculiar aspect of our society began to attract my attention. There were very few Muslim boys in my class. In a total roll of over thirty boys, only five were Muslims. The rest were all Hindus. Such was also the position as far as the teachers were concerned. The headmaster was a Muslim, the first ever since the inception of the school over eighty years ago. Besides the teachers of Arabic and Persian languages, there were only three Muslim teachers ; the rest were all Hindus. There were about ten other high schools in the town, where the proportion of Muslim teachers and students was even worse. There was a separate high school for the Muslim boys, where those of other denominations were not admitted. On the play grounds Muslim boys were hardly seen. Away from class rooms in my round of daily life, I was living in a society which was exclusively Muslim. With the passage of time as the demands of schooling increased while moving up to the higher classes, I found myself increasingly under the influence of Hindu teachers and fellow students in my academic life ; yet my sense of belonging remained entirely with the Muslim society. The mutual exclusiveness of the two, that is, the academic world and the society, increased further, when a few years later I was admitted in the Dhaka University and assigned to the Salimullah Muslim Hall. Far from helping to integrate, modern education supposed to be secular both in its concept and contents, progressively increased the hiatus and decreased the possibilities of an understanding on the political plane between the two great communities of India.

The mutual exclusiveness of the two communities—the Muslims and the Hindus on the social plane, did not seem to affect materially their daily life as citizens, living peacefully under the care and protection of the government. That the rulers were an alien people did not seem to bother anybody. The general impression was that the Britishers, who ruled over the country, were good people ; they bestowed peace and order, and they were governing the country with an even handed justice. It appeared, that was all the people expected from the government. No one questioned as yet the legitimacy of the British power to rule over India. An eminent lawyer—a Hindu—once declared that the British were destined to rule in India for the next four hundred years. This was shortly before the First World War.

Now, going back to my recollections, we settled down in Dhaka, and got adjusted to the social and academic life in no time. A new movement soon began to draw my attention. Crowds began to assemble in parks and maidan to listen to speakers with wrapt attention and respond to the shouts of “Alla-hu-Akbar” and “Bandemataram”. The first of the two was a familiar expression heard time without number in the mosque and at home ; but the other was an entirely new slogan. After the meeting was over, the assembled crowd often formed themselves into a procession and moved along the roads through the town. The slogans were interjected with expressions such as “Long live so and so”, among which oft repeated were the names Mahatma Gandhi, and the Ali brothers,—names I had never heard before. The expression “Long live” so and so was familiar, but only with reference to the King Emperor while singing in chorus the Anthem at the conclusion of ceremonial occasions. This new activity attracted my curiosity, and after attending a big gathering on the Armanitola Maidan near our house in company of grandfather, I asked him what was it all about. He paused for a while and replied that he would tell me after returning home.

Grandfather told us a fascinating story of the "Khilafat" and how the Sultanate of Turkey became the embodiment of this time honoured institution. The present Sultan was ill advised to cast his lot with the Germans and go to war against the British and their allies. The Victors, i.e., the British government were planning dismemberment of the Turkish Empire and reduce the Khilfat to the position of a dependency. The institution was the symbol of unity of the Muslim world. Hence the agitation was launched to prevent the British government from doing harm to the Caliph and maintain his status.

The story also brought out another development in the battle fields of Turkey, which ultimately became more important than the Caliph. It was the emergence of Mustafa Kamal, the Commander of the armed forces, as the leader of the young Turks who would soon dominate the Scenario. The institutions of the Sultan and the Chaliphate were both abolished by the Turks after a short time but the leadership and exploits of Mustafa Kamal remained a source of inspiration to the Muslims all over the world.

Thus ended the short lived Khilafat movement, which curiously enough, brought the two communities, the Muslims and the Hindus on a political platform for a while in pursuit of a joint endeavour under the leadership of no less a person than Mahatma Gandhi, an occurrence never to be repeated. What made the Mahatma cast his lot with the Khilafat, remains a mystery to this day.

Father discovered the social and academic climate in Dhaka congenial and more to his liking, than what he could find in Khulna town. So, he made up his mind to build a house, and settle down in Dhaka. The house at Khulna was sold off. A piece of land was purchased at Eskaton on the outskirts of Ramna. A house was built, where we moved about the beginning of 1924. Grandfather died soon after.

The elections to the Provincial legislature held in 1924, created a lot of stir in the usually quiet life of a mufassal town. This was the

second election to be held in the province. The first elections were held three years ago, when we were still in Calcutta. It did not attract my notice. Placards, meetings and canvassing for votes heralded the occasion. There were a lot of activities in preparation of the polling day but nothing like the hysteria seen now. The elections passed off peacefully. The only note-worthy result as far as I can recall, was the defeat of an influential member of the Nawab family, by a candidate belonging to the rising business community of the town. Such an outcome I was told was the consequence of dissension in The Nawab family dissipating their influence on the electorate, or perhaps the Nawabs were going out of favour under the new dispensations !

Speculation about the appointment of ministers began to fill the columns of newspapers and discussions among the elders. The name of late A.K. Fazlul Haq was mentioned with a lot of enthusiasm. His selection by the Governor as a minister met with general approval, at least in our circle of relatives and friends. Out of three ministers appointed, two were Muslims, which was an added reason for general approval. But the euphoria was short lived. The Swaraj (Congress) party in the Legislature under the leadership of C.R. Das, managed to manoeuvre voting on the salary bill for the ministers in such a way, that the measure was defeated by the margin of one vote. The upshot was technically an expression of no confidence in the ministry. After hanging on for a while in the hope of taking a second chance, the ministry quit office.

It soon became known that voting on such an important bill was manipulated by the opposition with the help of handsome bribes and all sorts of unlawful pressure tactics. As the reforms were far short of expectations of the opposition, the Swaraj (Congress) Party entered the legislature with the avowed purpose of making the constitutional government unworkable. But they found themselves in a minority. The other members of the legislature were elected with the implied mandate

to implement the Reforms, not to wreck it. Hence no honest means were available to the Swraj Party to achieve their purpose. They thought it fit to take recourse to bribery and corruption to defeat the ministry. An account of an eye-witness describing the manner in which the Late C.R. Das the leader of the Swraj Party managed to get the minister's salary bill defeated in the provincial legislature, is given by a journalist namely Kanji Dwarakadas in his book, "India's fight for freedom 1913-1937".

The constitutional reforms, generally known as the 'Diarchy' were introduced in pursuance of a declaration by the British Government to enlist the support of the Indians when hard pressed by the enemy during the First World War. The declaration promised to undertake progressive realisation of responsible Government in India, as an integral part of the British Empire. The declaration seems to have satisfied most people in India at the time it was made. No one questioned the wisdom of India remaining an integral part of the Empire. But the measure of responsible government conceded, left much to be desired. The Congress party rejected it. The Muslims as yet unorganised and backward had no alternative but to accept what was given. But there were indirect results borne out of the Reforms which were progressive in time and far reaching in effect. Democratic form of government as the ultimate aim of Reforms, was accepted in principle, however piecemeal it may be in the process. It admitted political parties as a necessary constituent, together with right to organise and defend political objective. Direct elections to the legislature and parliamentary form of government were innovations introduced for the first time in India. "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" ; but how the new order was to be implemented and worked out was entirely the responsibility of the Indians themselves.

Experiments with representative government thus had a very unhappy beginning. "End justifies the means" became the philosophy and vitiated progressively the political life all over the country.

An account relating to an incident will show to what extent unlawful pressure tactics could be employed to defeat the minister's salary bill. One of the members of the council, namely the late Ala Buksh Sarker, elected from Dhaka town constituency, refused to fall in line with the opposition to vote against the bill. So, they entered into a conspiracy with his domestic servant to lock him up in his residence to prevent him from attending the Legislative Council on the appointed day. The servant was promised a handsome reward if he successfully carried out the plan. Council sessions used to be held from 3 p.m. in the afternoon. When Mr. Ala Buksh went to visit the water-closet of his residence before leaving for the Council Chamber, he was locked up from outside by the servant. He could not come out until he was rescued by his friends after all was over. The servant absconded and presumably got his reward for his wicked action. It came to light soon after, that some of the influential persons of Dhaka were involved in the conspiracy to prevent Mr. Fazlul Haq forming the Ministry ; otherwise a domestic servant in those days, could not be induced by bribery alone to commit such an outrageous act against his master.

An unusual incident took place in Dhaka, round about the time of our arrival and engaged public interest nearly for twenty years. It could almost match a story taken out of the Arabian nights. A Sanyasi, or an ascetic arrived Dhaka, and took up his abode in a corner of the river-side embankment. Sanyasis were not an unusual sight in those days. They used to attract attention of those seeking blessings from holy men for the gift of a son or the salvation of their soul. But this particular Sanyasi soon claimed to be the Kumar, or the heir to the Estate of Bhawal, a big piece of landed property in Dhaka District with its headquarters at Joydebpur. The Kumar had disappeared from Dar-

jeeling about 12 years ago under mysterious circumstances. As it was supposed to be dead after a short spell of illness, the body was taken to the cremation ground for disposal. A sudden strike of thunder storm compelled the funeral party to take shelter in a near by village, delaying the cremation. Returning to the bier, they found the body had disappeared. The conjecture was that some wild animals must have taken the corpse away and devoured it. The funeral party returned home. News of the disappearance of the body was suppressed ; but it was known to more than one person and the implications were revealed in due course.

The claim of the Sanyasi appeared credible as old memories were revived. The disappearance of the body from the cremation ground became the talk of the town. The Kumar in his account of this period related that he was rescued by a Naga Sanyasi and taken to his Asram. The Naga nursed him back to health. He accepted the Sanyasi as his Guru, who then gave him the option of returning home forth with or to postpone his return for 12 years. He took the second option.

Some of his relatives and old friends after a long talk centering on common recollections accepted his claim to be genuine, and recognised him to be the Kumar. Among those who refused to recognise him was his wife and her associates who had control over the property.

A civil suit was instituted in the court of law on behalf of the Sanyasi now known as the Sanyasi Kumar of Bhawal. The judge who tried the case gave a verdict upholding the claims of the Kumar as the heir. The opposite party, in this case the 'Court of Wards' appealed to the High Court against the judgement of the lower court. The High Court upheld the judgement and dismissed the appeal. The case went up to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Kumar ultimately won his case. These judicial proceedings took the best part of twenty years to complete, and left no room for doubt about the identity of the Sanyasi Kumar of Bhawal.

But the climax was yet to come. It was a sensational case, and many people were watching the progress of the court proceedings with keen interest. The judgement of the Privy Council was announced and published in the morning news papers. The Kumar was in Calcutta. Some of his friends hastened to his residence to offer him their congratulations. They were told that the Kumar had breathed his last a few hours ago.

The hearing of this recorded case took place at all levels of judicial proceedings, both here at home and in the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER III

ACADEMIC LIFE IN THE DHAKA INTERMEDIATE COLLEGE—COMMUNAL DISCORD—CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, THE DIARCHY AND THEIR IMPACT—DHAKA UNIVERSITY

I appeared in the matriculation examination (i.e., the S.S.C.) early in March 1926. Soon after, I went to Calcutta to see my father, who was under going medical treatment. His health was deteriorating and hoping against hope, he wished to try Unani medicine. I was called to his bedside. He asked about my performance in the examination. He was a bit concerned over leaving me to myself on the eve of my examination. Once again he reminded me of the importance of acquiring a good knowledge of English language, which was the medium of instruction for higher education and the only passport to a good career. That was the last benediction I received from my father. He died soon after.

Death of my father upset my career planning. Abandoning my original plan to be an engineer, I had to look for a short cut to a career in order to become an earning member of the family as early as possible. Annual intake into government services was increasing in number during the mid twenties in order to increase Indian participation in administration, and increasing activities of government following constitutional reforms. Special facilities were provided under the new dispensation for reserving a good proportion of posts exclusively for the Muslims. Thus I selected the arts course for higher education in preparation for the competitive examinations, a device introduced a short time ago for entry into superior services of government.

Dhaka Intermediate College at that time was a mere shadow of its former self, the Dhaka College, one of the oldest institutions for higher

education in the province. The under-graduate section along with most of the buildings and assets of the old college had been taken over by the Dhaka University, which had been established a few years ago. This left the two-year higher secondary course with the truncated Intermediate College as the link between the school and the new university. I took admission in this college.

The transition from school to college did not create much of a problem. The course of study in different subjects were more or less a continuation of those I was doing in school except for Economics, which I selected for higher studies. The college provided much better facilities for athletic games and cultural pursuits. The Principal, an old member of the Indian Education Service, himself was an accomplished vocalist who could sing Tagore songs with distinction. I started playing tennis, and learning to play the sitar while still in school. With the facilities now available, I was able to improve my tennis and participate in cultural activities with my sitar. There were quite a few students who could sing and were keen to improve their talent. Renowned musicians of the city were occasionally invited to take part in college functions, which were always well attended. Both the teachers and the students took keen interest in such activities.

Professor Kazi Abdul Wadood, an old friend of my father, was teaching Bengali literature. He was a keen exponent of Tagore and had a flare for teaching poetry. The prescribed text book was the first collection from the works of the poet, selected on the basis of preference of his admirers, titled "The Choyonika". A better matching of a teacher and his subject could not be imagined. His teaching of Bengali poetry created an abiding interest in the works of the great poet which I still cherish as a precious possession.

The gathering cloud of communal discord began to disturb the usual tranquil social and political climate of the town. Occasional fracas were not unknown but such fracas, as often took place between the parties

of the same community as they were between different communities, i.e., the Muslims and the Hindus. There was no attempts to magnify such incidents into communal disputes. But for reasons yet unknown, disputes between the Muslims and the Hindus began to assume serious proportions. Quarrel between children playing in the streets, disputes over drawing water from the street hydrants and such trivial incidents in which normally the neighbours should intervene to reconcile and patch up, began to flare up into open riots. Both the communities were becoming more and more intolerant of each other on such old issues as music before mosques and the killing of cows. Problems were not new. They were in existence for ages since the Muslims and the Hindus began to live as neighbours ; but they were able to resolve them by mutual accommodation. But now they began to bedevil the relationship between the two communities.

One such communal riot took place soon after I was admitted in the college, the first of its kind in my life time. I was told by elderly neighbours not to stay away from the Muslim quarters, where we were living. I soon came to realise that the two communities were living in distinctly separate zones of the town. Living in mixed quarters was progressively becoming more and more risky. It was at the border regions inhabited by different communities that most of the fracas and rioting took place. Those living in areas inhabited predominantly by the other community, were the victims and began to suffer heavily. Those who could move out, began to migrate to safer zones.

I tried to ascertain what was the cause of such animosity. Living in close contact with Hindu friends since I went to school, issues of communal nature had hardly ever been raised. True, on the social plane, contact between the members of the two communities were not frequent ; but we were able to live our own way of life without treading on each others toes.

It soon came to light that communal riots had taken place in Calcutta over an incident of a Hindu religious procession insisting on playing music while passing by a mosque. News was circulated in Muslim quarters that the Hindus had gone prepared for a fight ; the Muslims were taken unawares and suffered heavy casualties. Just the contrary stories circulated in the Hindu quarters of the town. Feelings became strained and soon clashes between the members of the two communities on some pretext or other, signalled the beginning of communal riots in different parts of the town. The District administration soon got the leaders of the two communities together in order to devise ways and means to cool down the temper and stop fighting. Parley went on for days before normal life in the city could be restored.

Our college reopened along with other institutions after the forced closure as soon as the all clear was announced by the District authorities. The old lively atmosphere of the campus had disappeared. Suspicion and a fear complex began to haunt the relationship between the members of the two communities. Mention of the riots were confined to groups of students of the same denomination. Everybody avoided mention of such incidents in public. Academic classes were resumed ; students attended their classes ; teachers delivered lectures as before ; but the frankness and confidence in the relationship that distinguish academic life, failed to return. The extra-mural activities were suspended for a while. Many of us began to regret the depressing atmosphere and longed for the return of the good old days. Time is a great healer, and the memories of the dark days of the riots began to fade. But the life on the college campus was never the same again. It began to deteriorate with the lapse of time.

The incident may appear casual to those who could not perceive the emerging forces which were rearing their heads in the shape of political aspirations. This was evident from the manner such incidents were reported in the press, reflecting largely the sectional interest of the

communities trying to get ascendancy over each other in their struggle for power and influence.

The news papers were all published from Calcutta ; there were none in Dhaka. Broadly speaking they were divided into two schools of thought. The Anglo-Indian press, which was the mouth-piece of the ruling power and the British business community and the Indian press. The Indian press was again divided sharply on communal line. The latter would join hands to disagree and criticise some policy or measure sponsored by government, but on the question of the relationship between the government and the two communities and between themselves, they were poles apart. Journalism and the newspaper industry were already well established among the Hindu community, who had been dabbling in such profession more than fifty years. The Muslims who were late starters on almost everything modern, found themselves left far behind. There were very few newspapers and journals in the hands of the Muslims. Those that were in existence had a very limited clientele, and circulation was almost entirely confined to the members of the same community.

The news about communal disturbances were published with banner headlines in the newspapers. Factual reporting were not given as much prominence as vitriolic comments and recriminations. The rival community was blamed in every case, occasionally with exaggerated account of oppressions committed on the other. Leading persons were often blamed for encouragement and complicity. The police were blamed for inactivity by both the parties. The impression which I want to convey is, that the manner of reporting generally had the effect of inflaming rather than pacifying communal passion and hatred against each other. This unhappy tendency continued year after year. Such a powerful agency for influencing public opinion as the press, which could be used to remove misunderstanding and possibly reconcile the two warring communities, unhappily went into action in a manner

which aggravated tension and reduced the possibility of a rapprochement more and more.

The Anglo-Indian press had all along been a strong supporter of government as was self-evident. On communal affairs they maintained a neutral position. But their influence in such affairs was minimal. People more often allowed themselves to be swayed by the news and views of their partisan press than their good sense.

Since the introduction of constitutional reforms soon after the war, political activities began to escalate, as never before. The press as a powerful agency for moulding and projecting public opinion began to play an increasingly important role in the life of the people. In the absence of an established press and a team of experienced journalists, the Muslim community was handicapped in their struggle against their adversary. Hectic efforts were set afoot to arrange publication of at least one Bengali and one English newspaper of the high standard which could serve as the mouthpiece of the Muslims. These news papers came out by and by ; but they had to wait a long time before they could match their contemporaries in their strategy and influence.

It was not only in the field of journalism and the press that the Muslims were trailing behind the Hindus. There was hardly any organised political party which could represent the aspirations of the community. Here again the Indian National Congress had been active for more than a generation. By and large it was an organisation of the Hindu intelligentsia. Since the elections to the legislative bodies created under the reforms, the Congress assumed the status of a political party claiming allegiance of all sections of the people irrespective of creed or community. It is true, some Muslims joined the Congress, but they were very small in number. The Muslims generally refused to acknowledge the leadership of the Indian National Congress, and their political creed. On the other hand there was no organisation which could take over the political leadership of the Muslims and claim to speak on behalf of that

community. An old association, the Anjuman, could never go beyond submitting petitions for redress of local grievances. The name of the Muslim League was hardly mentioned yet. I did not hear the existence of this body until I joined the University.

Political activities of the Muslims, restricted as they were, centered round important personages who were close to the government. Most of them belonged to the class of landed gentry. It was their influence as owners of large estates of landed property and their close contact with government, which placed them in the forefront of politics and were accepted as leaders of the community. The rising members in the professions were still too young and far behind in the rank, to be acknowledged as leaders. They could participate in politics only as followers of those in leading positions. The only exception was perhaps Mr. A.K. Fazlul Huque, as far as I could recollect ; but he too belonged to a family of landed gentry having substantial property of his own in his native district of Barisal, which must have helped him a great deal to achieve his leadership in politics. High property qualification for voters restricted franchise, keeping the masses of the people from participation in politics.

The constitutional reforms in the form of Diarchy placed a lot of responsibilities but transferred very little power to the elected legislature and the ministers. The reforms, however, ushered in the opportunity for organised political activities in the shape of agitation and mass movement by political parties. What could not be achieved within the elected legislature could be agitated outside for fulfilment by propaganda and publicity. It opened up the way for political organisation to establish contact with the masses and mobilise them to press for transferring more and more power to the people. The leaders of the allied powers had declared time and again during the war that they were fighting against the Germans "to make the world safe for democracy", a strategy, by which they sought to enlist support of the people all over

the world. Public men, writers, poets, philosophers every where joined hands upholding democratic values, and liberation of the people held under subjugation. The Nobel Lauriate Tagore, the rebel poet Qazi Nazrul Islam and host of others joined the foray to awaken the people and agitate for the political liberation of the country.

A better climate could not be obtained for political agitation and propaganda. The Indian National Congress in their annual conventions began to formulate and press their demands for real and substantial transfer of power in the shape of democratic government for the people. The cue was taken up in the nationalist press and on the public forum by the members of the new intelligentsia schooled in the British traditions of a democratic society. The British government was blamed openly for the breach of the solemn promise they made during the war to introduce responsible government in India. No one could disagree, much less oppose such a demand irrespective of his creed or political persuasion. It began to catch the imagination of the people like wild fire. The Congress had stolen the thunder in the field of political agitation. It could count among its members, Indians of almost all class and denominations giving the Congress a credibility not enjoyed by any other political organisation at home or abroad. No other political organisation could yet match the Congress in Indian politics. Since the termination of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, agitations remained peaceful and within the bounds of law. But time was changing, and the ground was being prepared for a revolutionary movement to take over before long. Soon the legitimacy of the British to rule over India without the consent of the people, began to be questioned.

As the struggle for political liberation began to get into its strides, internal dissensions and divisions among the people began to raise their heads creating hindrances in the way of its progress. That the Muslims and the Hindus were two distinct and separate communities, was fully understood by all concerned. Social and cultural life was lived in a large

measure within the bounds of the respective communities. The rigorous caste system sanctified by Hindu religion, created a barrier against integration of the communities which was never to be resolved. The economic life was regulated by impersonal market forces against which no one could complain. The relationship between the subjects were regulated by a code of law imposed by the rulers and applied uniformly by an able and impartial judiciary. Political and administrative powers were exercised by the alien rulers according to the prescribed rules of procedure for the conduct of public business. There was very little interference on the part of the government in the daily life of the people. Real power was held by the British officials, or by their agents to be exercised on their behalf. This was done with commendable prudence and wisdom. As subjects of an alien government, the Muslims and the Hindus were living peacefully as they wished without much ado.

The status quo at last began to change with the rising aspirations of the new intelligentsia, demanding increasing association of the people in the conduct of the government. It had begun with the appointment of Indians in the governor-general's council and the larger and larger number of Indians in the government services, which had become necessary since the last quarter of the 19th century. The art of government had to be modernised to keep abreast with the progressive application of science and technology in industry and trade, opening up the country by railways and steam ships, together with the extension of learned professions. All these combined to bring about economic and social transformation of the country never known before. The process of change accelerated with the passage of time.

Appointments in higher government jobs and entry into learned professions demanded English education of a high standard, in which the Muslims were left far behind compared with the Hindus. The Indian civil service (the I.C.S.) known as the steel frame of the British administration in India was constituted in 1854. It had its first Indian candidate

selected for appointment as early as 1863. He was late Satyendra Nath Thakur, the elder brother of the famous Bengali poet. The first Bengali Muslim to get into the I.C.S. was to take place sixty years later. Hindus were holding increasing number of govt. jobs all down the line. Dwelling on the subject in his memoirs, the late justice Syed Amir Ali quoting official figures has shown that out of a total number of 2007 gazetted officers in service round about 1880 A.D., 1080 were Christians, 850 were Hindus and only 77 were Muslims. The government of the time was run entirely by the bureaucracy, where the government officials were the defacto rulers.

This tremendous disparity in the participation of the members of the two communities in the public life of the country was noticed with increasing concern and dismay by some thoughtful members of the Muslim community even before the close of last century. Among those who have left records of their observations are Syed Amir Ali (mentioned), Nawab Abdul Latif and Sir Syed Ahmed.

Justice Syed Amir Ali recorded the following observations regarding the conditions of the contemporary society. "The spirit of individualism noticeable in many Muslims of India is by no means peculiar to them. Among the Hindus, caste is very largely a corrective to the disruptive failing ; while the new religious and political conceptions that are working among them, tend gradually to draw together without blending tribes and castes, which until now, were most antipathetic to each other. Among the Muslims, there is so far nothing similar to counteract the egotistical and centrifugal tendencies ; on the contrary, it receives encouragement from outside and as a consequence Muslim society today is in a deplorable state of disintegration. There is little community of thought, or intelligent comprehension of the general good. The prosecution of individual objects and the promotion of coterie interests occupy the thoughts of most of the prominent men" (p.297).

Sir Syed diagnosed the causes of disintegration due to inability of the Muslims to keep abreast with the changing conditions of society. They were left far behind in the area of new opportunities, while they lost their vested interests since the British conquest. The only way to regain their rightful place in society was to adopt modern education in earnest as the Hindus had done years ago, and cooperate with the government for obtaining what they wanted and had missed as they failed to sense the wind of change.

With his deep insight into the political realities of the time, he could foresee the dangers to the Muslim community getting submerged by the Hindu majority (of over four to one), in a representative form of Government, which was the ultimate goal of political evolution. Under such a system, he realised that the Muslims would be placed in the position of a permanent minority and ruled for ever by the Hindu majority, thus endangering their culture and way of life. It was therefore necessary to devise appropriate safeguards which would protect the interest of the Muslims. He advised the members of his community to forsake politics for the time being and devote themselves to education, so as to make up the lost time as far as possible. In pursuance of this policy he advised the Muslims to dissociate themselves from the Indian National Congress convened in 1885 under the inspiration of a retired British Civilian.

This was the genesis of the Aligarh movement, started under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed, which gave the Muslims a new sense of direction and purpose. The process ultimately enabled the Muslims to demand a separate electorate and the reservation of seats in the elected bodies as well as reservation of a quota in the government services in proportion to their population. Soon the demands were accepted by the British Government. Thus the political status of the Muslims as a cultural minority whose special interests deserved protection, received recognition by the paramount power. It is noteworthy that the inno-

vation of separate electorate was negotiated between the leaders of the Muslim community and the British Government at the first instance before it was accepted by the Congress representing the Hindus, by what is known as the Lucknow Pact, in 1916.

The elections to the Legislature under the Diarchy were on the basis of separate electorate with a prescribed number of seats for the Muslims, the Hindus and the Europeans. The only exceptions were the special constituencies, such as the Universities and the Land holders constituencies which had joint electorate. The Europeans were given a weightage far in excess of their number. The principle of reserving a quota for the Muslims was also accepted in the recruitment policy of the Government. This improved the proportion of Muslim officers in the services over a period of time.

It was widely believed by the intelligentsia of the town, that the Dhaka University was established as a concession to the Muslims of East Bengal to assuage their wounded feelings following the annulment of the partition of Bengal. The Hindus, who were in a minority, opposed partition tooth and nail. They started violent agitation for its annulment. The British Government gave an assurance that the partition was a settled fact which was not to be countermanded. The Muslims who far outnumbered the Hindus in the new province opposed annulment. But the agitation ultimately had its way and partition was annulled a few years later in 1911. This was the result of a sustained action by a section of the people. It was a revolutionary movement, the first of its kind to succeed in British India and it produced far reaching effect on the minds of the people.

Fact can be stranger than fiction. Even such a beneficial measure as the establishment of a University at Dhaka was not accepted without dissent. While the Muslim leaders without exception hailed the decision as a progressive measure in every way, strangely enough, the Hindu intelligentsia opposed the decision. In February, 1912, a delegation

under the leadership of Sir Rash Behari Ghosh, a prominent lawyer of Calcutta, waited on the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, to convey their opposition on the ground that "creation of a separate university at Dhaka would be in the nature of an internal partition" (of Bengal), and requested the government to desist from implementing of such a scheme. What a plea ! Fortunately their petition was rejected by the government.

As early as 1912 a decision was taken by the government to establish a teaching cum residential University at Dhaka. The outbreak of war in 1914, delayed implementation. The university materialised soon after the war was over. The Dhaka College, established early in the British regime had become a centre of higher education in this part of the country. The euphoria produced by the status of a provincial Capital which Dhaka enjoyed during the short lived partition of Bengal, gave the college further boost. The new University took over the undergraduate section of the college, together with all the facilities, relegating the higher secondary section to the newly created Intermediate College. The new government buildings constructed to accommodate the provincial secretariate offices, and a number of residential houses in Ramna rendered surplus after the annulment of partition, were all made over to the new University. Some of the teachers of the college joined the University on deputation. The University was fortunate enough to attract a number of brilliant scholars of the new generation as teachers, among whom were such persons as Dr. P.C. Wren, Prof. S.N. Bose, Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Prof. A.F. Rahman and others. A new feature was the creation of the department of Arabic and Islamic studies, giving the Islamic learning a modern form elevating it to the University status. Dr. P.J. Hartog former registrar of London University was appointed Vice Chancellor. So, the new university thus got off to a good start.

Organised in the form of a residential University it was divided into three Halls, one for the Muslims, one for the Hindus and the other for the students of all denominations, which in practice, turned out to be

the second Hall for the non-Muslims. Students admitted to the University were assigned to one or the other Hall, according to their religious denomination. While teaching remained the common service for all according to the subject of study, the social and corporate life was largely confined to the respective Halls. The University Central Students Union, by and large occupied a secondary place in comparison with the activities centered round the respective Halls. Thus the life in the University became almost a reflection of the society outside, where the two communities were living more or less a segregated life. This was inevitable, due to the restrictions imposed by the caste system prohibiting the Hindus inter-dining with the members of other communities which was still observed meticulously.

While the Dhaka Hall and the Jagannath Hall had their separate buildings for resident students and teachers, the Muslim Hall was housed on the first floor within the precincts of the University main building (now the medical college and hospital). Its new premises was under construction. The Hall moved into its new quarters a year after I joined.

Having obtained admission in the University, I took a honours course in Economics along with History and English literature as subsidiary subjects. Academic discipline of politics did not attain the status of a separate subject yet ; it was a part of the department of Economics at the under graduate level. There were about thirty students, the largest group among the honours classes, out of whom only about five or six were Muslims, again showing a disparity in secular education at the higher level which still prevailed. There was a also girl student in our class.

In marked contrast with the communal tension that vitiated social life at large, the University provided a climate of amity and understanding which the academic community cherished and tried their best to maintain. It kept alive the hope that integration of the two communi-

ties, the Muslims and the Hindus into a broad pattern of national life was still possible. The organisation of the Halls on communal lines did not create much difficulty in the way of maintaining a sound academic life among the teachers and the students. The University dominated the entire new town known as the Ramna area. Besides a few residential houses of the high officials of the district, the rest of the built up area belonged to the University. The old Government House, built during the era of partition (now occupied by the Ministry of Defence) was made over to the Intermediate College, where I spent the second year of the higher secondary stage in 1927/1928. Old Ramna virtually assumed the picture of a University Town. A better environment for a healthy academic life could not be obtained.

My four years in the University was a time of hard work at studies, together with a happy blending of social and cultural life, which only a residential institution could provide. Classes were regular without exception ; games in the afternoon and occasional session of debates and cultural activities kept us engaged in the evening. With my interest in tennis and football, and proficiency in playing the sitar I had the good fortune to participate in those extramural activities in full measure. Regular participation of teachers and students in such programmes created a pleasant and stimulating social and academic life in the University.

This was a time of growing interest in continental literature among the students. Works of French, Italian, Scandinavian and Russian authors were read and discussed with great interest. Besides the University library, such books were available from private sources to those interested in such literature.

Political turmoil in the country disturbed the serene academic life from time to time. Soon after the Congress launched the civil disobedience movement early in 1930 as a protest against the inequitable manner in which the British Government proceeded to deal with constitu-

tional reforms, the local Congress committee called on the educational institutions to suspend class and press the students to participate in the agitation. Obstructions by way of picketing succeeded disrupting examinations and University classes for the time being. Although sympathy for the object of the movement was widespread, attempts to disturb academic life did not elicit much response. Thanks to the combined efforts of the teachers and the students, normal session of classes were resumed before long.

Communal tension soon assumed a pernicious role disturbing peace and tranquility of the society. Such disputes leading to breach of law and order began to occur in many parts of the country. It was notable that an incident in one part of the country inflamed the passion of the people elsewhere, leaving a trail of bitterness in its wake. A resume of the issues involved in this problem is perhaps necessary to put them in a historical frame of reference.

Since the establishment of British suzerainty over India, communal riots had taken place from time to time, but records of history indicate they were few and far between. The incidents which sparked off such troubles seem to have been the same ever since. The causes usually were the insistence of Hindu religious processions playing music before mosque against the objections of the Muslims, and the sacrifice of cow by the Muslims, an act which the Hindus resented deeply on religious grounds. However a general spirit of accommodation seems to have enabled the two communities to live side by side without much trouble.

The Aligarh movement initiated by Sir Syed Ahmed was aimed at building up a sense of cohesion and instil political consciousness among the Muslims. A similar movement was at work among the Hindu intelligentsia too. Started much earlier, it was calculated to instil a spirit of nationalism, which was essentially Hindu in character. The two movements, basically political in their content thus began to

grow on parallel lines, yet to converge towards a common destiny or perhaps never to unite at all! There was hardly any occasion yet for a united endeavour by the Muslims and the Hindus in order to attain a common objective. When the anti-partition, and the Swadeshi movements were initiated by the Hindus in Bengal directed against the British, the Muslims by and large stood apart as spectators. Fortunately they did not disturb communal harmony for the time being.

The clash of interest began to take shape by and by along with the increasing prospects for participation of the Indians in a responsible form of government. While no one could oppose coming of the new era enabling the people to govern themselves, the hard fact which attracted the notice of the Muslim leaders was that the institutional device for implementation of democracy would inevitably vest absolute power in the hands of the majority, relegating the Muslims to the position of a permanent and ineffective minority. The division of the people of India into two different communities each having its distinct way of life, one holding the position of the absolute majority, the other a permanent minority, began to assume a political overtone. The Muslims found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They could not possibly refuse or resist coming of democracy and transfer of power to the Indians which was inevitable ; on the other hand the institutional device for the exercise of such powers would place them in a helpless position of a minority, in opposition to the numerical majority of the Hindus of almost four to one.

As a safeguard against this rule by brute majority, the Muslims demanded a separate electorate with reservation of seats in the legislatures so that they could elect their quota of representatives without interference from others. As the bureaucracy was still the repository of real powers, the Muslims also wanted reservation of a quota of appointments in the government services. After a great deal of efforts the British government was persuaded to concede the demands of the

Muslims namely, separate electorate and reservation of seats, and a quota for the Muslims for appointment in the services.

The political settlements cleared the way for the post-war constitutional reforms, known as the Diarchy. Unfortunately, the Congress rejected the reforms as inadequate and unsatisfactory, not in keeping with the solemn promise made by the British Government, and refused to collaborate in its implementation. Hence, the efficacy of the political settlement between the two communities could not be tested in practice yet.

A different issue then presented itself which induced the two communities to make a common cause against the British. It was the movement initiated by the Muslims in 1919-20, for the protection of the time honoured institution of the Caliph. The latter was threatened by the defeat of the Turks in the first world war against the inroads of the victors, the British. Simultaneously the Congress started their non-co-operation movement against the same power under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi as a sequel to the rejection of the constitutional reforms. Although the purpose of the two movements were altogether different, the leaders of the two communities agreed to join hands to launch a united agitation against the common adversary, the British, in order to press for the realisation of their respective demands. As could be expected, such an alliance of convenience, where motivation as well as objectives were different, could not proceed very far. The agitation succeeded in causing some embarrassment to the government on the eve of introduction of Reforms, but failed to induce the British to modify their policy at home and abroad. The wind was taken out of the sail of the Khilafat movement when the institution of the Caliph was abolished by the Turks themselves, and Turkey was declared a Republic. The non-co-operation movement was also suspended by Mahatma Gandhi, not long after it was

launched when it failed to operate within the bounds of non-violence prescribed by the leader.

This was the first time the two communities thought it fit to make a common front and launch an agitation unitedly against the ruling power. It was also the last of such endeavours not to be repeated again. Henceforth, the political aspirations of the two communities began to diverge both in their objective as well as their strategy, a divergence which began to increase with the lapse of time.

CHAPTER IV

PARTING OF THE WAYS : THE HINDU-MUSLIM RIFT TAKES A POLITICAL OVERTONE.

In the historic struggle for liberation of the subcontinent three parties, who were mutually antagonistic, took the field ; (a) the Hindus, represented by the Congress (b) the Muslims, and lastly (c) the Imperial Power, the British. The Hindus, better equipped in every way for the struggle and conscious of their political advantage, began to step up their agitation for the advancement of democracy and the transfer of power as early as possible. They had everything to gain, and very little to lose in the process of change. The Muslims, apprehensive of their status as a minority in a caste ridden society began to ponder over what built in safeguards could be devised and maintained to protect their interest in a democratic set up, against the possible onslaught of Hindu majority. They were equally vocal along with the Hindus in their demand for responsible government ; at the same time wanted to lay down certain basic conditions in any constitution for India, to make it acceptable to the Muslims. But the key to the solution of the problem was held by the British rulers, whose overriding desire was to maintain their power over India as long as possible. They turned their attention to the old imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'.

As luck would have it, the political conditions prevailing in the country, were more or less what the rulers could desire. In the early days of British conquest they managed to enlist the collaboration of the Hindus to eliminate the Muslims from all positions of vantage and consolidate their power. Without the active collaboration of the Hindus, the East India Trading Company could not possibly have

established their hegemony in India. This phase in the history of the communal issue was undoubtedly the beginning of the tension which began to grow and embitter the relationship between the two communities. As political consciousness began to develop among the Hindus following their early exposure to western learning and culture, the British Government thought it fit to lean more and more on the Muslims in course of time to maintain the desired balance of political forces in the country. The concessions to the Muslim demands for a separate electorate and reservation of seats were obviously the results of this new policy. The wheel of political fortune thus turned a complete cycle after the British conquest of India.

The short lived alliance of the two communities to make a common cause against the British, having fizzled out after the fiasco of the Khilafat and suspension of the non-co-operation movement, political activities began to assume more and more a communal overtone. Organisations set up for social and cultural purposes in the country were almost exclusively on communal lines. Some of them had their ramifications all over the country. Among those which had a profound influence over the Hindus was the "Mahasabha" which had a strong organisation and branches all over India. Originally set up as an organisation devoted to reform Hindu society, it began to drift into politics for the avowed purpose of safeguarding the interests of their community and resist the inclination of the Congress leaders to make concessions to arrive at a political settlement with the Muslims. But the activity of the Hindu communal organisations which filled the Muslims with grave misgivings, was their special mission set up for proselytisation i.e., to convert those who had embraced other religion back to Hinduism. This was a measure unheard of in the annals of Hindu society, and was obviously directed against the Muslim converts, who constituted a large section of their community. Generally known as the "Suddhi", the protagonists of the movement approached a

Rajput clan known as the Malkana Rajputs who had embraced Islam some time ago, for their reconversion to Hinduism. Another organisation known as the "Sangathan" came into existence to organise the young generation for indoctrination and their mobilisation to safeguard the interests of the Hindu community, by building up pressure against the demand of the Muslims for constitutional safeguards. The "Suddhi" and the "Sangathan" were denounced by the Muslims, which aggravated the existing rift between the two communities.

Muslim reaction against the organised communal activities of Hindu Mahasabha, was a counter movement which began in 1923 in the shape of the "Tabligh" and the "Tanzim", started to organise and indoctrinate the Muslims. On the political front, the All India Muslim League which had remained moribund for some time, was reconvened in 1924 at Lahore to revive its activities under the leadership of Mr. M.A. Jinnah.

The upshot of the drift of political activities into communal lines inevitably was mounting tension, leading to outbreaks of communal disturbances on an unprecedented scale all over the country. A communal riot of serious proportions broke out in Calcutta in 1923 over the old dispute involving a Hindu procession insisting on playing music in front of a mosque. The provocation was all the more serious as the sponsors of the procession were the Arya Samaj who started the Suddhi and the Sangathan movements directed against the Muslims. The incident seems to have signalled the beginning of a series of communal disturbances, which vitiated the political climate of the country throughout the decade. It was followed by serious clashes in Kohat in the N.W.F.P., and in Lucknow the following year. Mahatma Gandhi, who was naturally filled with sorrow over such unhappy turn of events, decided in his own characteristic manner to undertake a fast for 21 days as penance. Such action on his part, supposed to produce a sobering effect on the errant parties,

failed to achieve the desired result, as was evident from the fact, that only a few days after the commencement of his fast, a serious communal riot broke out at Shahjahanpur in North India. This incident was followed by riots at Allahabad, Jabbalpur and in the outskirts of Calcutta. There was no dearth of effort on the part of the leaders to restore communal amity, but clashes continued to take place in different parts of the country and began to spread in 1925 and 1926 to such places as Dehli, Aligarh, Sholapore, Calcutta and even in the interior of the Province of Bengal. Hundreds of people were killed, countless injured, looting and arson destroyed vast amount of property. The Statutory Commission sent out by the British Government in 1928, to study and recommend constitutional reforms reported that every year since 1923, communal riots had taken place on an extensive scale and yet shown no sign of abating. The report listed 123 such riots in course of the last five years, of which no less than 31 occurred during the year 1927.

The Lucknow pact which was concluded with high hopes for communal accord, ultimately proved infructuous to provide a basis for political understanding between the two communities. While the Muslims came to realise more and more that the safeguards provided therein turned out to be inadequate, the Hindus began to look at it as a hindrance in the way of progress towards democracy.

The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, which ushered in Parliamentary form of Government in India, contemplated the introduction of democracy in stages. The first stage was the Diarchy, in which some of the departments of provincial government were transferred to the elected ministers. A review of the reforms was to take place after ten years in order to determine the next step in the progressive realisation of responsible government in India. As the time approached for Review, the principal political organisations like the Congress, the Muslim League, the All India Liberal Federation agreed to join hands along with others to draft a "Swaraj" constitution for India, ostensibly to formulate united

demands of the people to be presented to the Statutory Commission for Reforms. An all parties conference was convened in Delhi early in 1928, which appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Matilal Nehru to prepare a draft. After a great deal of discussion and wrangling, the committee was able to prepare a draft to be presented to the All Parties Convention for acceptance before the end of the year. The provisions of the Lucknow Pact on the basis of which an accord on communal issue was reached in 1916 was watered down a great deal, which in the end the Muslims were unable to accept. When the All Parties Convention at last assembled in Calcutta in December, '28, Mr. M.A. Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim group, came up with new demands in the form of amendments to be incorporated in the original draft. The amendments were all rejected by the convention. Besides the Muslims, other minority groups like the Sikhs, the non-Brahmins, as well as the Christians expressed their reservations on the ground of inadequacy of safeguards provided in the relevant provisions of the draft.

After a lot of acrimonious debates and discussions Mr. Jinnah along with his associates left the convention in protest.

The convention was adjourned never to meet again. The draft, known henceforth as the "Nehru Constitution", called for immediate grant of responsible government in the form of Dominion Status, on which all the parties were in complete agreement. Unfortunately, its acceptance in the convention was prevented by disagreements on the detailed provisions concerning the minorities which could not be resolved.

The annual session of the Congress which met at Lahore in December 1929, declared complete independence to be the objective and amended the party constitution accordingly. It declared further, that the Nehru constitution which laid down Dominion Status as their aim had lapsed in view of the new objectives set by the Congress. It tried to by-pass the communal issue by saying that the Congress believed that "in an

independent India, communal question can only be solved on strictly national lines." But the communal issue could not be shelved in such a casual manner. Due to persistent pressure from the Muslims, the Sikhs and other minority groups, the Congress was ultimately obliged to recognise and declare that no solution of the communal problem would be acceptable to the Congress, which does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned. Thus, on the one hand in the first part of the declaration, the Congress thought it fit to absolve itself from past commitments on communal issues, on the other hand, the second part gave the minorities an opening in the future negotiations to step up their demands for safeguards more and more. They brought about a crisis of confidence on the eve of political changes, diverting attention from the main issue of transfer of power, to the side issue of communal settlement in the negotiations for the impending constitutional Reforms.

The Constitution Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon, appointed by the British Parliament to study and recommend further Reforms arrived in India early in 1928. All efforts to draft a set of agreed demands of all parties for constitutional reform having failed, Mr. Jinnah got busy to formulate a set of demands for incorporation in the future constitution to safeguard the interests of the Muslims of India. This was the genesis of Mr. Jinnah's famous "Fourteen Points". A meeting of the Muslim League convened in Delhi in March 1929, rejected the Nehru constitution and endorsed the demands of the Muslims based on the Fourteen Points formulated by Mr. Jinnah. The repudiation of Nehru's constitution by the Congress and declaration of complete independence as their objective, together with their new approach to the communal problem swept the political check-board clean of past understanding and agreements. Thus opened the doors for fresh negotiations for the settlement of outstanding problems. In these negotiations Mr. Jinnah emerged as the undisputed leader of the Muslims of India.

CHAPTER V

MILITANT NATIONALISM—THE WAHABIS—SECRET SOCIETIES—RISE OF REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATIONS—FIRST PARTITION OF BENGAL—SWADESHI MOVEMENT.

So far I have left out of my account the emergence of a new spirit of militant nationalism, simmering under the surface of an apparent tranquil life of the country. In order to put my story in the perspectives of current history I must now revert to an earlier phase, which brought about a parallel movement of a revolutionary character, destined to have a profound impact on the course of events relating to the impending struggle for freedom. The subjects which I took up for higher studies in the university, also helped to attract my attention to the genesis and progress of the movement, which I watched with keen interest. The profession of a Policeman in the British Regime I was destined to adopt, put me in confrontation with the movement in its later stages. I could watch the progress of the movement from a position of a vantage, which I could do with a great deal of sympathy and understanding.

The concept of nationalism was unknown when the British established their hegemony over India. As a country, India was known to the world outside throughout the historical epoch. But the geographical unit to which the term was applied, comprised too large an area to enable the people inhabiting the region to become integrated into a nation. In recognition of this fact, India has been described as a Subcontinent, a term which correctly convey the idea of the geographical condition which prevail in this part of the world. The people living in this sub-continent belonged to different race, culture and religion which provided the basis for their community life. Diversity of language,

vast distance and barriers of mountains and forests, kept them apart. They were ruled by many potentates, often belonging to a different race and culture, and frequently at war with one another. This lack of unity made them easy prey to an organised foreign power hailing from a distant land, as we found ourselves living as subjects under the British rulers.

British conquest of India followed by the establishment of a strong central government, having control over the entire subcontinent, at last began to present a picture of a country united under one government for the first time in history. But the people still remained as divided among themselves as before. It was the improvement of communication and transport made possible by modern science and technology, which ultimately managed to knit together different parts of the country into an organised entity, overcoming timeless physical barriers. The English language introduced by the rulers for conducting business and administration of the country as well as for imparting higher education soon assumed the position of lingua franca, removing the sense of isolation which had kept the people divided since time immemorial. It is true, in the past also, a large part of India was brought under the control of one government by the conquerors from time to time ; but the physical barriers prevented integration of the country which modern means of communication and transport at last made possible under the British regime.

It is admitted all round that in the Indian subcontinent, nationalism is the outgrowth of exposure to western education and culture. The political theories of the West and the history of revolutionary movements in Europe and America were studied and discussed eagerly among the rising generation of intelligentsia. The new learning imbued the recipients with the spirit of nationalism, and it soon began to develop its inevitable urge for freedom from foreign rule. The culmination of the growing spirit of nationalism is the aspiration for political liberation.

Hence a conflict between the ruler and the ruled was becoming inevitable.

The same history also told the story how liberation movements were organised and conducted ; the strategy and tactics by which the objectives were achieved, together with stories of heroism of the patriots, whose memory is highly respected and cherished by the countrymen. It provided new inspirations for emulation in the coming struggle for freedom. The older generation thought it fit to adopt the milder course of constitutional agitation and gradual attainment of responsible government, while those among the youthful aspirants began to think on revolutionary lines for attaining freedom by the force of arms. The militant nationalism soon caught the imagination of the people, and once begun, it was not to relent until full freedom was attained.

The western education by itself may not have been enough to generate the spirit of militant nationalism had it not been supported and nourished by the discovery of ancient Indian history and culture. This was also a product of modern education and search for knowledge. The methodology of research learned from western scholarship, enabled the scholars to present the past in modern idiom, helping a great deal to create a new interest and understanding of ancient Indian civilisation. It virtually set in motion a movement for the revival of ancient culture, which the people can truly call their own. This revivalist thrust, initially gave an exclusively Hindu character to the nationalist movement, increasing the hiatus between the two communities and closed the door to an united political movement against the alien rulers.

Memory of past greatness can bind people together and create a basis for nationalism more solid than anything else can provide. It can also divide the people for similar reasons where different cultural groups are in conflict with one another for supremacy. Unfortunately, this growing consciousness of history produced divergent effects on the minds of the people belonging to the two major communities. Historical

incidents of the past which reflect glory upon one, often tend to cast humiliation on the other. The spirit of nationalism which began to actuate the Hindu intelligentsia, soon assumed the character of revivalism, highlighting ancient Hindu philosophy and culture. Their historical projections in fiction and poetry settled on heroes and examples, who achieved their greatness in opposition to the Muslims, now cast in the role of the villain. The hero and the villain of the piece were taken from the two rival communities in eternal conflict with each other which was never to be resolved.

It was a time when no movement could attract the attention of the people, much less to induce them to subscribe, unless actuated by religious motivation. Early revolts were led by persons who were held in esteem for their religious persuasions. The Sanyasi movement epitomised by Bankimchandra in his works, the Faraidi movement of Haji Shariatullah directed against the oppressive rulers and landlords, were initiated by people respected for their religious background. The society was in such a state of disintegration that nothing could provide a sense of belonging to the people except their religious affiliation. We shall return to this point while giving an account of the rise and activities of the secret societies among the Hindus devoted to revolutionary movement which began towards the end of the 19th and early in the present century.

Even before the revivalist movement began to generate a new spirit of nationalism among the Hindus, the ancient grudge of the Muslims against the British who ousted them from power, began to crystallise into a movement to recover their lost freedom, and drive the British power out of Hindustan. Known as the 'Wahabi' movement, it began as early as 1820-21 under the inspiration and leadership of Shah Syed Ahmad Brailvi. Started as an endeavour for religious revival in Islam, it soon took a political turn for the recovery of lost independence of the Muslims, and regain their former power in India. The magnitude and

persistence of the movement are indicated by the fact, that even after the death of the founder ten years later in a battle against the Sikhs, his followers, henceforth known as the 'Wahabis', carried on a relentless struggle against the British for nearly a generation which spread across the country from Bengal in the east to the fastnesses of the Punjab, and the frontier in the West. Muslims from all over India volunteered to join the movement, keeping a large part of the British armed forces engaged for their suppression a long time. The movement also generated active discontent against the British rulers, which brought about the Sipoys' revolt of 1857.

Although it may appear out of place mentioning a movement which took place over a hundred years ago. I thought it fit to invite attention to the Wahabis, because it had the attributes of a nationalist movement for regaining freedom from the aliens, at a time when the British power in India remained unchallenged from any other quarters. While less important events found their appropriate place, the Wahabi movement was blacked out from the text books on history. But it lingered in the memory of the Muslims and handed down in the form of stories of their exploits which I gathered from my elders.

In the point in time it is perhaps significant, that no sooner the Wahabis were suppressed than a militant nationalism began to raise its head in the other community, the Hindus in a similar garb, keeping the Muslims out, as the former had done to keep the Hindus out because of the religious overtone of the movement, which was necessary to draw the people into its folds. I shall try to relate the causes and consequence of this divergence as I proceed with my story.

Nationalism is a spirit born in the minds of men. It presupposes a group of people living on a piece of territory in their possession and united in their desire to have a government of their own choice. Patriotism is its driving force. This is the political content of nationalism. Internally, they may be divided on other grounds. In pursuit of their

livelihood they are in competition with one another, or profess different faith, but politically they must be united to be called a nation. This political factor is the essence of nationalism, which manifests itself in the determination of the people to set up a government of their own choice.

It was an era when nationalism was making a tremendous headway in Europe and America. British conquest of the sub-continent brought the country in close contact with the West. The exposure of the intelligentsia to the science and humanities of the West, prepared the ground for the rise of nationalism in India. This new spirit began to manifest itself in many ways ; in fiction, in drama, poetry, in the press, as well as in the expression of political aspirations in many forms and devices. The published history of this period is replete with accounts of those events. What perhaps escaped adequate notice and proper evaluation is the course of the militant type of nationalism which began to raise its head towards the end of the last century, and continued to work until full freedom was achieved by the people. I would now try to recount in brief the genesis and progress of militant nationalism up to the time of my graduation.

Militant activities directed against the established power has got to be organised in secret so as to avoid the vigilance of the authorities, until it is strong enough for confrontation. The new spirit of nationalism now began to take shape in the form of secret societies, which began to grow among the youngsters in schools, clubs, gymnasiums and study groups. The earliest of them which I could trace, was a society organised by a group of young men, belonging to the Tagore family, and was called the "Hindoo Melā". There is a mention of this society in the auto-biography of poet Rabindranath. Describing the activities of the society he wrote, this was the beginning of the movement to uphold the Indian subcontinent as the homeland and inculcate a spirit of patriotism in the hearts of the people. Patriotic songs and

poems were composed and recited in the meetings, and discussions used to be held on the affairs of the country. The proceedings of the meeting slowly but surely began to generate a suppressed feeling of resentment against the alien rule. But any overt expression of resentment was yet a far cry. Hence they did not attract adverse notice of the authorities. The administration was not yet organised in such a comprehensive manner as to enable it oversee the activities of the citizens, which did not present open threat to peace and order. Never-the-less, apprehension of courting dislike of the authorities, induced the sponsors of these societies to maintain secrecy of their activities, a device, which in its turn also heightened the impact of its proceedings in the minds of the participants.

Those societies provided a forum for holding seminars and discussions on national affairs. They were addressed occasionally by leaders of high standing like Rajnarayan Bose, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Paul and others. Thus we hear, Surendra Nath giving a series of lectures on the life and works of the Italian patriot Mazzini, who, with the help the secret societies called the carbonaris organised by his associates, the young Italy, put up strong resistance against Austrian rule over their country in the 19th century. Such lectures produced a profound impact on the receptive minds of the young listeners, to whom a new world of ideas was opened up for speculation concerning the status of the country, and the rights and obligation of the citizens. These secret societies continued to grow in a sporadic manner over a period of nearly thirty years, before they could be organised into a revolutionary movement. Their chief effect was more or less psychological, inculcating a spirit of patriotism and prepare the minds of the new generation of Hindu intelligentsia for militant nationalism.

I could not trace any official records of those secret societies. Perhaps there was none. They did not attract the notice of the Press yet, although it was becoming an important agency for recording and

expressing the popular moods. However, I had an opportunity of getting a first hand account of those secret societies from a teacher of the Collegiate School,—our arts teacher, Lalit Babu. A doyen in the corps of teachers, he claimed to be a student of Pandit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, a name held in high esteem in academic circle. He was on the verge of retirement when I was his student. He used to tell us stories of the secret meetings which he attended, where writings of famous authors on freedom movement such as 'Anandamath' of Bankim Chandra, teachings of philosophers like Vivekananda were read and discussed, along with lessons from the Hindu scripture the 'Geeta' was given by scholars well versed in the subject. The reading of the "Geeta", besides giving an aura of reverence, produced a sense of belonging among the members of the society. By and by it inculcated a sense of dedication to militant nationalism, which would soon manifest itself in the struggle for freedom against the alien rulers.

Political aspirations thus began to polarise round two different paths ; one of them was the course of gradualism, whose adherents began to gather round the Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, and similar organisations demanding more and more facilities for participation in the administration of the country, having yet a distant vision of Home Rule. This policy was followed by the Congress for over twenty years since inception. The Muslims preferred to have their own organisation in pursuance of the Aligarh movement mentioned before. Their policy was dictated by the anxiety for protection against rule by the Hindu majority under a representative form of Government, which was taken to be the ultimate aim. The Congress, claiming to be an all India organisation, kept its doors open to every Indian irrespective of his religion, caste or creed. They succeeded in attracting people of all denominations. Simultaneous with this conservative outlook on politics, radical ideas were taking shape in the gatherings round the secret societies, based on the teachings of Bankim Chandra and Swami Vivekananda.

Thanks to their teachings, the political creed of the radicals soon assumed the overtone of Hindu philosophy, sanctified by their scriptures and were animated by appropriate rituals to give inspiration and strength to the members. Hence militant nationalism assumed the form of an outgrowth of Hindu Revivalism, from which the Muslims had to be excluded. On the other side, radicalism disappeared completely from Muslim politics since the suppression of the 'Wahabis' and coming of the Aligarh movement.

The spirit of nationalism must attain its militant form in order to obtain due recognition both at home and abroad. In India it sprouted under the impact of British rule and exposure to western learning and culture. The tender sprout was nursed by youths in schools, and secret societies ; fostered and embellished by writers, philosophers and poets by their fervant outpourings in fiction, song and poetry until it developed into a full-scale struggle, as if in the way of poetic justice to settle accounts with the western rulers.

Round about 1901-1902, one of the secret societies began to organise and expand its activities under the direction and control of a group of dedicated and competent persons imbued with revolutionary aspirations. The society was named ANUSILAN SAMITI. Initially, it was more or less like any other society mentioned before, devoted to training in physical culture, listening to lecture and discussions on national affairs, indoctrination of youths in the tenets of classical Hinduism and so forth ; but the difference in this case was in the quality of persons who took over the leadership and management of the affairs of the society. The organisation and direction of the activities were entrusted to such persons as C.R. Das, Arabinda Ghosh, Surendra Nath Thakur, Pramatha Mitra, Barin Ghosh, Abinash Bhattacharjee, who in due course became outstanding figures in different fields of liberation movement. The members of the Samity were young students, who were given training in military drill and various forms of physical exercise. They also receiv-

ed instructions in moral precepts and patriotism in regular classes and discussion groups, conducted by such eminent people as the Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. Bipin Chandra Pal, Gurudas Banerjee (a president of the Congress) and others. Association of people prominent in public life and literary circles, helped a great deal to attract youthful members to join the Samity in large numbers.

The Anusilan Samity organised its activities on two fronts ; a) an open front, and (b) the other an under cover front. The open front was engaged in activities mentioned above consisting of those on which the students are normally engaged outside school hours. The other i.e. the under cover activities were confined to an inner circle of members, an elderly group, working in secrecy for planning revolutionary activities directed against the ruling power. Some members of this group advocated secret work among the Indian element of the armed forces to undermine their loyalty with a view to rise in revolt in an armed conflict against the ruling power at an opportune point of time ; while others placed their faith in acts of terrorism directed against important officials, to paralyse the machinery of the Government, with a view to compel the ruling power to come to terms with the leaders of the people. All of them agreed that independence can be obtained only by the force of arms, and the revolutionary path was the only way to attain freedom. Collection of arms and funds became imperative for the progress and implementation of their revolutionary programme.

They approached some rich people, known for their sympathy with their activities for donations but failed to collect sufficient funds. So, they took recourse to committing robberies to collect money to meet the expenses of their enterprise. This was the origin of what came to be termed as political robberies for obtaining funds, which became a regular feature of their activities. Other members began to look for sources for supply of arms and explosives to mount terrorist campaign mentioned before.

The secret societies had their prescribed procedure and rituals for initiation which were supposed to instil loyalty and commitment of the members. Due to the ambitious programme and anticipated clash with the authorities, the Samity as a measure for indoctrination formulated an elaborate form of rituals for initiation of members in the inner circle, selected to be the active revolutionaries. They were designed in the form of ancient Hindu religious rites of YAJNA, along with citation of vedic 'mantras' or lessons. They were often taken to the Kali Temples to give full religious significance to the procedure for initiation. There were several kinds of vows administered, depending on the status of membership to be conferred on the candidates. In this way a hierarchy of highly dedicated members was built up, engaged in the organisation and direction of revolutionary movement.

In order to expand its activities, the Samity began to extend a network of the organisation down to the District and the sub-divisional levels in the interior of the province, depending on the availability of workers of the right type. Initially this was a slow process ; but soon an unpopular measure taken by the government provided the cause of action which the Samity could utilise with success and in full measure for accelerating recruitment, as well as extension of its activities.

A clash between the ruler and the ruled is inevitable when the former attempts to impose an unpopular measure against the wishes of a large section of the people. The occasion was the first partition of Bengal at the time of the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon who sponsored the measure in 1905. A part of the area of Bengal Presidency consisting of the three administrative divisions of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong were separated and tagged on to the Province of Assam constituting the new Province of East Bengal and Assam, and rest of the area consisting of the Presidency and Burdwan Divisions and the areas known as Behar, Orissa and Chotanagpur together, became the new Province of Bengal. The redistribution of the territories of the Provinces done for the osten-

sible purpose of better administration, had important political implications. The Bengali Hindu elements in the population who were in the position of majority in relation to the other communities in the Province as originally constituted, were reduced to the position of a minority ; whereas the Muslims, who were a minority almost every where, found themselves in the position of majority in the newly constituted province of East Bengal and Assam. The new dispensation while giving an edge to the Muslims of this area, thus went against the interests of the Bengali Hindus who found themselves reduced to the status of minority in both the Provinces.

With the announcement of the scheme of partition, the Hindus of Bengal were quick to realise its political implications and went all out opposing the measure in every possible manner. From July 1905, when the scheme was announced, a vigorous campaign was launched in the press and by holding public meetings all over the country opposing partition of the Province, and imploring the government to desist from implementing such a scheme. Poet Rabindranath Tagore composed his famous song "Sonar Bangla" (golden Bengal) on that occasion, to provide inspiration to the movement to revoke partition and restore unity of the Bengali speaking people, which was sung for the first time in a public meeting organised in the Calcutta Town Hall on the 7th of August, 1905. However, the government refused to listen and the partition of Bengal came into effect in Oct. 1905, according to plan.

The partition of Bengal was calculated to affect the Hindus and the Muslims in different ways. The former thought it would be harmful to the interests of the Hindus ; whereas the Muslims found it to be beneficial to themselves. Unfortunately, Muslims did not as yet have a central organisation, who could provide leadership to safeguard the interests of the community at such a crucial point of time. Some Muslim leaders were initially carried away by the current of anti-partition agitations ; but they soon relented,—at least most of them gave up their

association with the agitation. It was at this time that the All India Muslim League came into being at Dhaka in 1906, but it would still be many years before it could take over the leadership of the Muslim community. Thus, it so happened that the measure while it conferred benefits to a community least able to defend their interest, it came as a provocation to the other community, organised and politically motivated to agitate and press for its annulment.

Having failed to achieve their purpose by the old method of petition and representations, the Hindu nationalists set about to devise other means to compel the government to annual partition and restore the desired unity of the Bengali speaking people. Active resistance against the government to compel to do or abstain from a course of action was out of question yet. Hence the only way open to the unarmed subjects was to apply pressure on the authorities by passive resistance, within the bounds of the law. They decided to launch a campaign to boycott British goods in retaliation, to put pressure on the government to rescind their decision. Calcutta was the principal market for selling British textile goods which was the most important item of exports from Britain to India. It was estimated that boycott of British textiles, if it succeeded would threaten their economic interest in such a manner that the government would be compelled to come to terms with their adverseries.

The initial stage of the agitation had already built up a cadre of political workers and an organisation for propaganda and publicity. Now they were pressed into service to induce the people to boycott British goods, chiefly textiles. Several decades of political activities, peaceful as they were, brought about an awakening among the people and made them conscious of their interests and rights as citizens. No longer were they going to accept imposition of an unpopular measure in silent resignation.

The agitation against partition of Bengal which brought about boycott of British textiles as a tactical measure, soon developed into a much wider movement for use of goods made in India in preference to imports. This transformation of the agitation into a general movement to patronise home made goods came to be known as the "Swadeshi" movement, fostering a deliberate intention to promote national interest. It was a turning point in the political transformation of the people. This was clearly an expression of the spirit of patriotism which the "Swadeshi" movement was able to inculcate. At the same time it extended the new spirit from the limited circle of intelligentsia to the masses of the people. An appeal to patronise country made goods in preference to foreign goods in order to safeguard the interests of the country was easily understood by every body, and elicited ready response. It soon attracted the notice of the leaders of all shades of opinion, and got the active support of the industrialists all over the country. The political climate was charged with rising expectations and the progress of the "Swadeshi" movement brought about increasing response from larger and larger sections of the people. In the estimation of contemporary observers, the "Swadeshi" agitation was the beginning of the movement for liberation from foreign rule, and set the pattern of the struggle for freedom. It also brought to the surface the peculiar features of the social and political conditions obtaining in the country, which ultimately gave shape to the political aspirations of the people. The movement benefited local industries a great deal and encouraged establishment of new industries by ensuring an assured market and protection against competition from foreign countries. Thus the "Swadeshi" movement with its drive for patronage of country made goods became closely linked with the economy which is a pre-condition for industrialisation of any new country.

As the "Swadeshi" movement got into its strides it began, to hurt British interests by reducing sale of imported goods, particularly in

Bengal. The government was put under pressure by the vested interests to take countervailing measures to stop the boycott and restore normal course of business. Measures to check boycott of foreign goods, inevitably took the form of repressive action, which progressively alienated the people from the government. At the same time it enhanced the popularity of locally produced goods and built up a cadre of political workers. As often happens, repressive measures on the part of the government began to produce its inevitable response to meet force with force. Militant nationalism which was raising its head in the secret societies out of view of the authorities, at last found its *raison d'être* and set about to organise retaliatory action in the form of terrorist attacks against oppressive officials. This was the genesis of the terrorist movement which began to embarrass the government in ever increasing measure with the progress of the "Swadeshi" movement.

The launching of the "Swadeshi" movement was the master stroke releasing the latent forces which the spirit of nationalism was building up in the country. Its militant aspect, which was growing slowly in a sporadic manner around the secret societies over the time span of a generation, at last struck root with the establishment of the Anusilan Samity mentioned before. The Samity now took up the challenge to face the repressive measures let loose by the government against the "Swadeshi" movement, in the form of organised terrorist attacks against concerned officials in retaliation. Preparations for revolutionary work began, albeit slowly, since its inception in 1901-02. It began in the shape of recruitment and training of members, collection of arms, explosives and funds to be used in the revolutionary uprising contemplated by the society. But, in the absence of clear and immediate objective, progress on the revolutionary front was yet slow and difficult. The "Swadeshi" movement at last provided the inspiration and the repressive measures furnished the provocation to the members of the Samity to take up the challenge in earnest and put the militant spirit to work.

The political climate helped the Samity a great deal to open its branches, step up recruitment of members, and expand its activities in other parts of the country. Its branches were organised in such a way that each could work as a self contained independent unit. One of the important branches was opened in Dhaka under the leadership of Pulin Das, who turned out to be an important leader of the Samity.

After training and indoctrination of members, the Samity stepped up its endeavour to collect arms and explosives, to be used to kill oppressive officials. Political dacoities committed by the members increased in number and frequency for collection of funds. Secret agents managed to infiltrate into the shops of European arms dealers of Calcutta. They collected a large quantity of arms and ammunition and delivered to the Samity. Contact was established with some Afghans for smuggling of arms from the frontier region. Members having knowledge of chemistry discovered the art of manufacturing explosives with the help of which bombs were made to execute their plan of terrorism.

It is impossible to obtain a comprehensive account of their early activities as the work was conducted in secret and no records are available. With the progress of their activities and overt acts in the shape of attacks on officials with fire arms and bombs, the police soon got on their trail. Investigation disclosed the source of their activities and the persons involved, but no sooner one lot of terrorists were nabbed by the police, than a fresh lot came forward to take their place to continue the struggle and keep up revolutionary pressure on their adversary, the government. A large number of important officials, both British and Indian, as well as police informers were murdered ; a conspiracy to assassinate the governor was detected and foiled by timely action of the police. Several small factories for the manufacture of bombs were discovered in the outskirts of Calcutta and put out of action.

Contemporary accounts of this period as well as the recollections of our elders who were still amongst us when we were in school,

made up a picture of almost an undeclared war which the clash between the "Swadeshi" and the terrorist movements on the one side and the British government on the other, produced in the minds of the people. While the victims of attacks by the terrorists did elicit sympathy, those who ventured to take part in such daring revolutionary enterprise, began to excite a lot of admiration in the people. The legitimacy of the British rule in India at last came to be questioned, and the fear of the British Lion began to erode in the minds of the people. Those who died in action, or on the gallows following prosecutions were paid the homage due to martyrs and patriots all round. It would perhaps be no exaggeration to say that the Swadeshi and the terrorist movements had done more in a decade to awaken and prepare the people for their struggle for freedom, than what had been achieved in the previous hundred years.

Thanks to the pressure of "Swadeshi" on British commerce and threat of terrorism, the government at last thought it fit to relent and appease the sentiments of the Bengali Hindus. The partition was annuled at the end of 1911, six years after it was put into effect. The province of Bengal was reconstituted uniting the areas having predominantly Bengali speaking inhabitants, and the rest of the territories in the East and the west were attached to the Provinces of Assam and Behar. It may not be out of place to mention that the wishes of the Muslims had little to do with rearranging the boundaries of the Provinces as they were not in a position yet to press their demand in an effective manner.

The annulment of partition brought down the tempo of agitation against the government for the time being ; but the spirit of freedom which it generated was not to be quenched until the country was liberated from foreign rule. The activities of the terrorists were by no means terminated as was evident from the fact, in less than two years a bomb was thrown at Lord Hardinge the Governor-General, causing serious injuries to his person, and loss of life of one of his aids. The declara-

tion of war in Europe in 1914 gave the pretext to the government to assume extraordinary powers under the Defence of India Rules, with the help of which the Police began to pick up suspects from all over the country and put them in detention without trial as a preventive measures. Such action disrupted the revolutionary societies and put a stop to their activities within the country for the time being.

The leader of the conspiracy who organised the bomb attack on the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge was a Bengali youth, Rash Behari Bose. He managed to escape and became an exile in Japan where he settled down. He again reappeared at Singapore thirty years later with the Japanese army, to organise the Indian National Army—the I.N.A., as they were known after the surrender of the Allied forces during the second World War. Subhas Bose, after his escape from India took over the command of the I.N.A. under the famous designation of “Netaji” or the Supreme commander. The story of the ‘Netaji’, and the I.N.A. will be told here after.

CHAPTER VI

FIRST WORLD WAR : A WATERSHED IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The first World War marked a watershed in the relationship between the British rulers and their Indian subjects, and also between the two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. Up to this time the supremacy of the British rule in India remained unchallenged. Although some British publicmen and statesmen made passing comment from time to time describing the transitory character of Empires, no end of the British rule was in sight yet. An eminent Indian lawyer and a politician made a remark shortly before the first World War that the British rule in India was destined to last the next four hundred years. The "Swadeshi" movement was not motivated to challenge the established power ; rather it was directed against a measure unpopular among the Hindus and press the government to rescind partition and restore unity of the Bengali speaking people. The nascent spirit of nationalism was limited to a small section of the intelligentsia, and was still groping in the confines of secret societies and party caucuses to find expression. The political activities took the form of constitutional agitations and parley with the rulers to obtain a share in the management of the administration. The Congress was taking the leading part in such activities until the Muslim League came in to sponsor the limited interest of the Muslims. The League and the Congress often used to hold their annual session at the same place to facilitate consultations on national affairs. One important outcome of such cooperation was the conclusion of the Lucknow Pact in 1916, which was hailed at the time as a historic event, clearing the way for communal accord in the political life of the people.

The Home Government in Britain, hard pressed by the war in Europe was anxious to appease the Indians in order to maintain a facade of unity.

of the Empire and enlist the cooperation of the Indians, was ready to make some concessions in the shape of responsible government in India after the war. The historic announcement of Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India in August 1917 on this subject, was reported to have been made impromptu, in answer to a question in the House of commons. The relevant portion of his reply is as follows : quote.

“The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India is in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of Responsible government in India as an integral part of British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken in this direction as soon as possible.”

Following the announcement, Mr. Montagu paid a visit to India towards the end of the year (1917) for consultations with the Viceroy, and the representatives of the Indians. A rapprochement between the League and the Congress seemed to be bright, when they decided to lead a joint delegation and presented their agreed proposals for Reforms to the Secretary of State. The annual session of the Congress held in Calcutta soon after, endorsed the Congress-League scheme of Reforms and pressed for its early implementation. This was indeed the high water-mark of accord, not only between the Congress and the League on national affairs, but also the good will which those course of events generated between the Indians and their rulers. How such good will between the ruler and the ruled began to wither and the two communities began to drift apart, will form the main theme of the next part of the story.

The World War I was indeed a turning point in the history of the Subcontinent. The history of the post war era was no longer a history of British rule. The next episode was an era of struggle for freedom from alien rule.

CHAPTER VII

THE KHILAFAT AND NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT
—EMERGENCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI AS THE UNDIS-
PUTED LEADER OF THE CONGRESS—

—A NEW WAVE OF TERRORISM IN A REVOLUTIONARY
FORM.

War time declaration of the British Cabinet in Parliament on the subject of progressive realisation of democratic government in India, followed by Montague-Chelmsford Reforms were mentioned before. A general amnesty to the political prisoners was declared with a view to foster a favourable climate for the implementation of the constitutional Reforms. Those held in preventive custody and some of those convicted of political offences were released from detention as a gesture of good will.

The Reforms called the Diarchy, failed to satisfy anybody within the country. While some of the leaders agreed with reluctance to participate and implement the Reforms, the Congress rejected them wholesale as unacceptable. The latter hastened to organise agitation in protest against the new measures throughout the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who now emerged as the undisputed leader of the Indian National Congress. He devised the new political strategy of passive resistance in the form of Non-cooperation, with a view to paralyse the machinery of government. He was joined in this endeavour by the protagonists of the Khilafat movement, the Muslims of India, who were agitating against the British move for dismemberment of Turkey mentioned before. This was virtually a revival of the old "Swadeshi" movement, but in a much better organised and comprehensive manner and with a distinct political philosophy of its own, propound-

ed by its leader. Where as the "Swadeshi" agitation was more or less confined within the limits of Bengali speaking people of Eastern India, the new movement of Non-violent Non-Cooperation was organised throughout the Indian Subcontinent. A large number of old revolutionaries released recently from detention joined up, which helped the movement to make a good start under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Shortly before launching of the Non-cooperation movement, a serious incident in the Punjab in April 1919, in which more than 200 persons lost their life, created a deep sense of resentment throughout the country. The military opened fire on a peaceful meeting organised at Jalianwallabagh to protest against what came to be known as the Rowlatt bill, designed to furnish the executive with extraordinary powers to deal with anti-government activities of all sorts. The Non-Cooperation movement launched the following year by Gandhi, as a protest against the unsatisfactory measures of self-government conceded in the post war reforms, attracted the provisions of the new law, enabling the government to apply repressive measures in a much more severe and wider scale. Reports of arrests, lathi charge and firing on demonstrators began to fill the columns of the newspapers almost every day. As the tempo of passive resistance was building up, the Congress announced the launching of a civil disobedience movement in protest against the reign of terror let loose by the government on political workers. Before the end of the year 1921, it was estimated that nearly 40,000 volunteers and workers participating in the movement were arrested and cast into prison. Such repressive measures brought out violent reaction in some places, in which angry mobs turned against the police and committed acts of arson and murder. Sudden outburst of violence seems to have unnerved Mahatma Gandhi, who expected the movement to proceed in a non-violent manner according to his plan and direction. He advised the Congress committee to call a halt, and accordingly the movement

was suspended until further instructions were issued. The sudden volte-face of the Congress came as a surprise to everybody, and disrupted the movement hardly a year after it was started. The government lost no time to do all that lay in its power to prevent recurrence of organised agitation. Both the Congress and the Khilafat committee were declared unlawful organisations and their offices were put under lock. Mahatma Gandhi along with top leaders of the Congress and the Khilafat were prosecuted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Mahatma Gandhi was sentenced to six years simple imprisonment in March 1922. Thus ended the first round of experiment in passive resistance as a weapon for obtaining political emancipation.

As happened in the past, repressive measures on the part of government brought about the usual response to meet force with force in the shape of revival of terrorism. We have seen how it began during the "Swadeshi" movement. The government managed to suppress it by severe repressive measures, soon after the outbreak of the war. It remained dormant during the non-cooperation movement, which attracted many of the old revolutionaries who were released from prison as a measure of general amnesty granted by the government.

Severe repressive measures at last drove the anti-government movement under-cover, and pushed the revolutionaries to resume their terrorist activities in retaliation. The old Anusilan Samity was now joined by other revolutionary organisations, most important of whom was the "Jugantar" party which came into being around a group of persons who sponsored and brought out a weekly paper of the same name i.e., "Jugantar". They were strong protagonists of the "Swadeshi" movement and indirectly encouraged terrorism with the help of their publications. They took some time to reorganise and mount their terrorist activities, because they were now opposed by an adversary,—namely the administration, who were now armed with much wider powers to deal with them, than those they possessed fifteen years ago during the Swadeshi

movements. It followed more or less the old line we described before. A new aspect of the revolutionary activities was its extension to other parts of the country, which did not respond in the same way during the "Swadeshi" era, when it was confined largely to the Bengali speaking areas.

The sudden suspension of the civil disobedience programme by the Congress, and the arrest and detention of a large number of its leaders, virtually brought the movement to a halt at a time when it was building up its tempo in many parts of the country. It caused a great deal of frustration among the protagonists of the movement and alienated the revolutionary groups who decided to revive and go ahead with their own programme of terrorism. It soon became almost a cult in the struggle for freedom, its magnitude depending on the leadership in different parts of the country. The non-cooperation movement failed to revive and the revolutionaries took over the task of continuing the struggle. The failure of passive resistance gave a new dimension to the idea of armed revolution as the only means for liberation of the country from the yoke of foreign rule.

Official reports concerning the revolutionary movements which I came across in my service life much later, indicated a running link between recrudescence of terrorist activities and appearance of seditious publications in the news papers and the periodicals. It usually took the form of eulogy, extolling the heroic deeds of the terrorists and paying homage to the memory of the patriots. These were supplemented by booklets printed and distributed in secret, instigating armed uprisings against the alien government. A spate of seditious articles was noticed appearing in the nationalist press, as well as publications in circulation concerning the life and activities of revolutionaries during the "Swadeshi" movement. A few such booklets were given to me by some Hindu friends to read and return. It was also a fact that appearance of seditious publication were by no means the outcome of fancy or accident.

There were growing indications of attempts to encourage and coordinate the activities of different groups engaged in resistance movement against the government, in which the Hindu nationalist press was becoming more and more involved. Important public men, as well as political organisations, such as the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha were now lending their moral, as well as financial support to keep up the pressure, which the revolutionaries were in a position to mount against the British to compel them to come to terms. V.D. Savarker, a top ranking leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, was a confirmed revolutionary since his youth. C.R. Das, Subhas Bose were in touch with the terrorists, whom the latter often consulted for advice and guidance.

During the annual meeting of the Bengal provincial conference of the Congress held in Chittagong early in April 1922, the revolutionaries who got together on the occasion prepared their next plan of action in secret. The old Anusilan and the Yugantar Samities which were dormant for several years were revived. Next year a new revolutionary organisation was set up at Chittagong under the leadership of a young teacher named Surja Senalias Master Da, affiliated to the Yugantar Party. This was followed by a campaign in the press extolling the contributions made by the revolutionaries in the freedom movement. The same party indulged in a number of political dacoities to collect funds. Their first target was assassination of the Police Commissioner of Calcutta, Mr. Charles Tegart, the leading official engaged in directing police action against the terrorists. Early in 1924, one Gopinath Shaha, was deputed for the purpose. In the moment of excitement he mistook another European, Mr. Day to be his quarry, and shot him dead. Following this incident, Police discovered several workshops set up in secret to manufacture bombs in the outskirts of Calcutta, and put them out of action.

Recrudescence of terrorism compelled the government to arm the executive with extensive powers similar to those enacted during the

war under the Defence of India Act, which was annulled after the termination of the war. Large scale arrests and detention of suspects followed, in which, Subhash Bose was also arrested and put in detention without trial. Such drastic measures brought the activities of the terrorists under control for the time being.

The next four years were a period of comparative lull on the revolutionary front. The government thought it fit to release the detentions who were in prison for the best part of three years towards the end of 1928. The law itself, which armed the executive with drastic powers, (the Criminal Law Amendment Act and Ordinance of 1925), was allowed to lapse in 1930 when its term expired.

The terrorists who were released from prison were hailed as patriots and were given a fitting ovation when they returned home. They soon got busy the following year to prepare their next plan of action. There were plenty of willing recruits to take part in the contemplated insurrection. Their chief limitation was the supply of arms and ammunition. So, they decided to mount attacks and loot police armouries simultaneously in several districts to collect as much arms and ammunition as possible.

The name of Surja Sen alias Master Da, who emerged as an important leader of the revolutionaries has been mentioned before. With his able associates, namely Gonesh Ghosh and Ananta Singh, they organised the famous raid on the two armouries in Chittagong. A printed leaflet issued in the name of Indian Republican Army was found in circulation in Chittagong, the day before the raid took place, asking the people to rise in revolt against the oppressive rule of the alien government. Soon after this event, the attack on the two armouries of Chittagong took place at night following the 18th of April, 1930. The raid was planned with meticulous care and executed by such a daring and devoted team of youths, that they achieved complete success, without facing much resistance from the guards who were in charge of the armouries. Some

of the sentries were shot dead but the raiding party managed to get away without serious casualties.

Simultaneously, another party attacked the central telegraph office, and destroyed the apparatus, cutting Chittagong off from communication with the rest of the country. The first news of the incident was sent to Calcutta with the help of wireless sent from a ship anchored at Chittagong port.

The raiding parties collected a lot of rifles, revolvers and a Lewis gun from the auxiliary forces armoury ; but in their hurry and excitement, they forgot to collect the ammunition which was stocked in a separate room. This fatal omission which rendered the weapons useless was not discovered until it was too late to return and look for the ammunition.

A team of more than fifty young revolutionaries took part in the raid on the armouries. After the raid they took shelter in the hills and jungle in the outskirts of Chittagong town. It appears they had no plan what to do next after ransacking the armouries. No arrangements were made for their post raid shelter, nor even supply of food and water. The police with the help of a contingent of Eastern Frontier Rifles, soon got on their trail. The first clash took place round about the Jalalabad Hills, in which both sides suffered casualties. It was now an unequal fight, and could not be sustained for long. Some of the survivors along with Surja Sen managed to escape from the first engagement with the armed forces. A few were arrested while trying to escape. The rest were hunted relentlessly, leading to more clashes until all the survivors were rounded up, prosecuted and convicted. Surja Sen, after evading vigilance of the police nearly three years, was at last arrested and sentenced to death in 1933.

The daring raid on Chittagong armouries emboldened the younger section of the revolutionaries. Recruits in large numbers came to

join the various terrorist groups, and there was a sudden spurt in their activities. A few months later, a second attempt was made on the life of the Police Commissioner with a bomb thrown at his car, but he escaped unhurt. He retired from service and left India shortly after the incident. Mr. Lowman the I.G. of Police, and Mr. Hodson, S.P., Dhaka, while on a visit to the Mitford Hospital were shot with a pistol by a student named Benoy Bose. Mr. Lowman died, but Mr. Hodson survived. In December '30, the same year a daring raid was made by three armed terrorists inside Calcutta Writers Buildings killing the I.G. of Prisons. All the three attackers attempted to commit suicide. One of them was the same Benoy Bose who had shot the two police officers a few months ago in Dhaka. He along with another died of self inflicted injuries. The third youth, namely Dinesh Gupta survived. He was tried and sentenced to death. This youth, the son of a post master of Dhaka, was a student in the same class with me in Dhaka Collegiate School for two years. He disappeared from class IX. The next I heard of him was after the raid on the writers' Buildings. Benoy Bose was also a student in the same school in a senior class.

These incidents were followed by other outrages in different parts of the province. A district magistrate of Comilla was shot dead in his own bungalow by two girls; the district and session judge who tried and convicted Dinesh Gupta, was shot dead in his court room at Alipore; three district magistrates were successively murdered in Midnapore. A number of police officers also lost their life in the hands of the terrorists. Attempts were made to assassinate two governors of Bengal and various other officials. An attempt was made to blow up the special train of the Viceroy with a bomb near Delhi but no one was hurt.

The terrorist outrages which began early in 1930, continued the following years until 1933. More than 200 such incidents were reported such as murders, attempts to murder, bomb outrages, political

dacoities, and armed raids. In the light of past experience, the government was compelled to reenact Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, empowering the executive to arrest and detain suspects, and special tribunals for trial of such cases. More than 2000 were taken into custody for their suspected involvement with terrorism, and detained indefinitely in jail, detention camps and village homes.

Simultaneously other developments were taking place in the political arena, which diverted the attention of the people and the politicians in particular, to fresh rounds of negotiations for constitutional reforms. What impact the terrorist movement could produce on the policy of the British government towards India is difficult to assess. Within the the country, the outbreak of militancy in opposition to British rule undoubtedly quickened the growing spirit of nationalism and exploded the myth of governing India with the consent of the governed, claimed by the rulers. They also went a long way to erode the morale of the British officers who traditionally came out with their mission to discharge the "White man's burden". The outburst of terrorism coincided with the visit of the Simon Commission sent out by the British Parliament to study and recommend further progress on constitutional reforms. It so happened that in course of the visit of Sir John Simon, the leader of the Commission to the Legislative Assembly to watch the proceedings of the central legislature, two terrorists threw a bomb in the chamber to register their protest against an unpopular measure to arm the executive with extraordinary powers. So, there were plenty of materials for the commission to gather at first hand to enable them to make an objective assessment of the political situation obtaining in the country.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIMON COMMISSION AND THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE—CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE BY THE CONGRESS.

I was Compelled to digress from the account of my university life to delineate the various currents and cross currents which began to agitate the minds of the people, because we were on the threshold of impending changes calculated to produce far reaching effects on our society. On the one side, the growing spirit of nationalism was crying out for political liberation. Simultaneously, the Muslim community was agitated over their position in the emerging political life where they apprehended getting submerged as a minority under the rule of a vastly bigger Hindu majority, a community with whom their integration was becoming impossible. Traditional relationship, understanding and agreements were being undermined creating a climate of uncertainty and tension. One consequence of this tension was outburst of communal violence between the Muslims and the Hindus, and the other mentioned before, was the emergence of terrorism as an expression of militant nationalism.

The prelude to the recurrence of countrywide political agitation was the manner of the appointment of the Simon Commission. The commission was constituted with seven British members, with Sir John Simon as the Chairman. Indians had no place in the commission. Absence of the Indians from such an important deliberative body was tantamount to their exclusion from constitution making and was deeply resented by almost all the political parties in India. It was decided unanimously to boycott the Commission in protest. The Commission received a hostile reception on their arrival at Bombay in February 1928. This

was repeated in other places visited by them in course of their initial round of tour of the country. Lala Lajpat Roy, an important leader of the Congress was injured seriously while leading a demonstration in protest against the visit of the Commission in Lahore. He died shortly after and the injury sustained in course of the agitation was held responsible for hastening his death.

In an attempt to reconcile the Indians, the government decided to hold a Round Table Conference with the representatives of the British Government and the Indian leaders, before finalising the provisions of the new constitution for India. At the same time, Dominion Status was held out to be the goal of constitutional reforms. These announcements from the side of the British Government raised hopes for a settlement. All the parties expressed their willingness to participate in the negotiations. But the parley that followed failed to work out the details acceptable to the Congress. They rejected the fresh offers and decided to launch a countrywide civil disobedience movement in protest against the intransigence of the British Government over the negotiations for constitutional reforms. The agitation and the programme of passive resistance that followed were of much greater magnitude than ever seen before. Combined with the activities of the terrorists they created a very serious situation for the administration. Some high-lights of the incidents will be recalled as we proceed.

The Simon Commission went ahead with their allotted task, and the report was issued in June 1930. It recommended a federal type of constitution for India, autonomy for the provinces with reserve powers for the governors but no responsible government at the centre or the national level. As could be expected, the recommendations were not acceptable to any political party. They were rejected wholesale by a resolution passed in the Legislative Assembly. But the doors were still open to continue negotiations in the Round Table Conference proclaimed earlier.

As the next step in the process of constitution making, the government announced holding the first Round Table Conference (R.T.C.) in November 1930, with its venue in London. The conference was attended by representatives from British Parliamentary Parties, the Indian States and about 50 leading politicians nominated from British India. The Congress was not represented as they refused to participate. Among those who attended were such eminent leaders as Messrs. M.A. Jinnah, Tejbahadur Sapru, Sastry, Moulana Muhammad Ali, and A. K. Fazlul Huq from Bengal. The Muslim delegation to the conference was outspoken in their demand for adequate safeguards for the protection of their interests as a minority and they made this a condition for their support to any proposal for Reforms. These safeguards in the form of separate electorates and the reservation of seats evolved through a succession of constitutional reforms extending over two decades, were to be maintained. Mr. Jinnah's Fourteen Points raised fresh issues for consideration.

The proceedings of the first R.T.C. cleared some grounds for the next round of Reforms. The policy of the British Government enunciated by the Prime Minister in his concluding speech indicated considerable advance over the recommendations of Simon Commission. The absence of Congress obviously prevented conclusion of the discussions. Doors were left open for further negotiations. The next move from government as well as the Congress were eagerly awaited.

The R.T.C. opened a new chapter in the negotiations between the British and the Indian leaders. This was the first time the Home Government and British public along with leaders from India could get together in an officially sponsored conference in the U.K. to discuss the problem of future relationship between Britain and India. It also provided an opportunity to project the political realities in the country which had to be taken into account while framing the new constitution for India. On the first question, basic issue was the quantum of power the rulers were

prepared to transfer to the people. The declaration of the Home Government in Parliament as their war time commitments could be taken as the governing principle. There was a serious divergence of opinion between the two sides on the speed in which power was to be transferred to the elected government in India. The Congress and the Home Government had failed to arrive at an understanding yet. Internally, adjustment of the relationship between the two major communities, the Hindus and the Muslims was the chief problem to be resolved. Other minority groups were also moving in the same line. It became apparent that a constitution providing for rule by a simple majority, as prevail in the western democracies was not going to work under the political conditions in India. Hence a lot of time had to be spent on the problem concerning the minorities in order to devise safeguards for protecting their interests. The discussions in the R.T.C. brought out various aspects of the problem and drew the attention of those engaged in constitution making to this important issue.

It was about this time, when the R.T.C. was discussing constitutional problems, that a young student of Cambridge, namely Choudhury Rahmat Ali, formulated his scheme for a separate national state for the Muslims of India comprising the provinces of the Punjab, Kashmir, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan, to be called "Pakistan". He communicated his scheme to the Muslim members of the R.T.C. assembled in London, but no one took it seriously. The idea of a separate Muslim state comprising the Muslim majority areas in north-west India, had been originally mooted by the poet-philosopher, Sir Muhammad Iqbal in his presidential address to the annual session of the Muslim League held in Allahabad in 1930. He called it Muslim India within India ; but Rahmat Ali took it a step further, demanding altogether a separate state for the Muslims, independent of India.

When the delegations were discussing constitutional problems in the U.K., terrorism and civil disobedience were getting into their strides

and proceeding with unabated vigour in India. The revolutionary movement after its baptism of fire in the days of the "Swadeshi" agitations, had become a potent force in the political life of the country. The two movements, one non-violent, the other violent, combined to create a very serious situation. Measures for their suppression were adopted by government, and enforced with equal ferocity and determination. Repressive laws, whose terms had expired or repealed a short time ago, were reenacted to arm the executive with drastic powers to deal with the agitation. Scores of persons were killed and wounded due to firing by the police on the "Satyagrahis", as the demonstrators called themselves. Nearly seventy-five thousand were arrested and imprisoned. Almost all the important leaders of the Congress were arrested and detained in prison.

A new aspect of the measures taken by the government was stationing of military forces in different parts of the country. These forces could be called out to assist the civil authorities to deal with anti-government activities. A contingent of British army was stationed in Dhaka on this occasion. This was a measure which was of more than passing significance. Temporary structures were put up for the garrison close to the university area. The British contingent stationed in Dhaka belonged to a regiment of the same name, who took part in the battle of Plassy under the command of Robert Clive. The temporary structures put up for their accommodation were named the "Plassy Barracks" in commemoration of the famous battle in which their forebearers took part and laid the foundation of British Empire in India.

Both sides began to feel the strain of protracted struggle and they were getting into a mood to reopen negotiations. After their return from the R.T.C. some of the politicians of the moderate group under the leadership of Mr. Sapru got in touch with the Congress leaders in prison with a view to induce them to resume negotiations. As a gesture of approval, the government released the members of the Congress Commi-

tree from prison. This was followed by an interview between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, in an effort to resolve the crisis. An agreement was reached between the parties and the historic Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed which cleared the way for the Congress to participate in the next i.e., the second Round Table Conference. The working committee nominated Mahatma Gandhi to represent the Congress. After overcoming many a last minute hitch, in which both sides displayed a commendable spirit of accommodation, the Mahatma sailed for London at the end of August 1931, to take part in the next round of talks in the R.T.C.

One important outcome of the policy now adopted concerning representation was the exclusion of Nationalist Muslims from the contingent of Congress delegation. This was the beginning of the end of the Congress claim to represent the Muslims in their negotiations with the British government. Although the nationalist Muslims hung on to the Congress, politically they ceased to be of any consequence.

With the background of the first R.T.C. in his mind, Mahatma Gandhi wanted to work out a solution of the communal issue, before leaving India for London for the second round of talks. The resolution on complete independence passed by the Lahore session of the Congress in 1929, made an attempt to relegate the communal problem to the position of an issue which could be resolved on national lines only after the country won independence. Such a decision created an impression that the Congress might repudiate past undertakings and agreements on this important political issue of vital interest to the Muslims. Hence it aggravated the suspicion of the Muslims regarding the intentions of the Congress, and goaded them to take an uncompromising stand at the first round of the R.T.C. They insisted on a satisfactory settlement of the communal problem as a precondition of their support for any form of constitutional reform. The subsequent declaration by the Congress that no solution of the problem would be acceptable without the agreement of the parties concerned,

kept the doors open for a negotiated settlement. But the Mahatma still failed to bring about a settlement. The failure of the leaders to arrive at a settlement in India left no option but to raise the issue in the R.T.C.

The transfer of power to a representative government in India was a question on which the Home Government had to take the final decision. As could be expected, the British Government wanted to hold on to their overseas possessions as long as possible. On the other hand the emerging spirit of nationalism among the people of the dependencies demanding their political rights and privileges, could be ignored by the rulers only at the risk of chaos and confusion, which was detrimental to everybody. The problem was not whether more power should be transferred or not ; the question was how soon the transfer of power should be completed. The turmoil in India over the last twenty years made it clear that the aspiration of the Indians for liberation could not be suppressed for long. Consequently, the strategy of the British government was designed to delay the transfer of power as far as possible.

The communal discord on constitution making provided a handle to delay the process. As happened on the previous occasion, the second R.T.C. again bogged down with the unfinished negotiations on the communal issue ; consequently the basic question of transfer of power was relegated to the background.

As mentioned before, some last minute hitch delayed Mahatma Gandhi's departure from India. Others had already arrived London. The delegates from the Muslim, the Depressed classes, Anglo-Indians and the European communities concluded an agreement on similar lines in which the Muslims were seeking protection of their communal interests. On his arrival Mr. Gandhi tried to turn the attention of the delegates to the question of constitution making and persuade them not to allow communal discord to detract the conference from its principal task. But it was all in vain. The Prime Minister announced that the inability to

solve the communal question was preventing progress on constitution making. There was no alternative but to ask the British Government to make an award as they thought fit in their judgement. A formal request was made to the British Prime Minister accordingly. Thus ended the second round of the R.T.C.

If we look back into the history of the communal issue, we shall find that right from the beginning, the discussions on such questions took place between the ruling power and the Muslim leaders at the first instance. This was how the question of separate electorates and reservation of seats for the Muslims were settled on the eve of Morley-Minto Reforms. The Congress was not a party to this agreement. The terms of the agreement were later ratified by the Congress in what came to be known as the Lucknow Pact, which paved the way for the post war Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919-1920.

The task of finding a settlement of the dispute more than twenty years after the negotiations began, had to be given to the British Government, as the parties failed to come to an agreement. Whether together they could run a representative government still remained an open question. The leaders of the two communities had moved away from the position in which the Lucknow Pact was concluded. The growing spirit of nationalism had taken the Hindus a long way towards integration. It was only a question of time for them to be the masters of an independent state. As the time for transfer of power drew near, the Hindu leaders began to realise the advantage they enjoyed in the political arena by virtue of their numerical majority, which they were reluctant to compromise. The old apprehension of the Muslims increased hand in hand with the euphoria of the Hindus fired by the vision of independence. The spirit of accommodation which initially motivated them to come to terms on the communal issue was now disappearing. This was evident from a conversation between Mahatma Gandhi and the Agha Khan in course of an informal talk in London on the

eve of the R.T.C. Let me quote from the memoris of the Agha Khan :

“.....” I (the Agha Khan) opened it (the conversation) by saying to Mahatmaji that, were he now to show himself a real father to India’s Muslims, they would respond by helping him to the utmost of their ability, in his struggle for India’s independence.

Mahatmaji turned to face me, “I cannot in truth say, he observed, that I have any feelings of paternal love for Muslims. But if you put the matter on grounds of political necessity. I am ready to discuss it in a cooperative spirit. I cannot indulge in any form of sentiment.

“This was a cold douche at the outset ; and the chilly effect of it pervaded the rest of our conversation. I felt that whereas I had given prompt and ready evidence of a genuine emotional attachment and kinship, there had been no similar response from the Mahatmaji.”

“This unfortunate initial misunderstanding over words had more than a passing effect. For it left the impression which persisted not only that night, but throughout the Round Table Conference, that our attempts to reach a Muslim-Hindu entente were purely political and lacked the stabilising emotional ties of long fellow-citizenship, and of admiration of one another’s civilisation and culture. Thus there could be no cordiality about any entente we might achieve ; we were driven back to cold politics, with none of the inspiring warmth of emotional understanding to suffuse and strengthen our discussions.

“Always the arguments returned to certain basic points of difference : was India a nation or two nations ? Was Islam merely a religious minority, or were Muslims in those areas in which they were in a majority to have and to hold special political rights and responsibilities ? The Congress attitude seemed to us doctrinaire and unrealistic. They held stubbornly to their one nation theory, which we knew to be historically insupportable. We maintained that before the coming of the British Raj the various regions of the Indian subcontinent had never

been one country, that the Raj had created an artificial and transient unity, and that when the Raj went, that unity could not be preserved and the diverse peoples with their profound racial and religious differences, could not remain fellow-sleepers for all time, but that they would awake and go their separate ways. However close, therefore, we might come to agreement on points of detail, this ultimate disagreement on points of principle could not be bridged.

“Mahatma sought to impose a first and fundamental condition : that the Muslims should before they asked for any guarantees for themselves, accept Congress’s interpretation of Swaraj-self government—as their goal. To which Mr. Jinnah very rightly answered that since the Mahatma was not imposing this condition on the other Hindu members of the various delegations attending the Round Table, why should he impose it on the Muslims ? Here was another heavy handicap.

“Our conditions were the same throughout : very few powers at the centre, except in respect of defence and external affairs ; all other powers to be transferred, and especially to those provinces in which there were Muslim majorities—the Punjab, Bengal, Sind, Beluchistan, and the North-West Frontier. We were adamant because we knew that the majority of the Muslims who lived in Bengal and the Punjab were adamant.

“Mahatma Gandhi fully recognised the importance of having us in his camp. Who knows ?—perhaps he might have seen his way to accept our view-point ; but Pandit Malaviya and the Hindu Mahasabha exerted great pressure against us, deploying arguments based on abstract political doctrines and principles which—as the partition of 1947 proved—were totally unrelated to the realities of India.

“As time went on the hair-splitting became finer and finer, the arguments more and more abstract: a nation could not hand over unspecified powers to its provinces ; there was no constitutional way of putting a limit on the devices by which a majority could be turned into a minority

—fascinating academic issues, but with little or no connection with the real facts and figure of Indian life.”

The second R.T.C. concluded about the middle of December '31. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India towards the end of the month.

Although the civil disobedience was suspended following Gandhi-Irwin Pact early in the year, terrorism continued as was evident from the assassination of a number of high officials mentioned before. Consequently, repressive measures were stepped up against the suspected terrorists, and those who continued to keep up civil resistance. With all the drastic powers with which the executive was armed to deal with them, a veritable reign of terror was let loose by the government in the country. On his return, Mahatma Gandhi sent a strong note of protest to the Viceroy against the repressive measures which elicited a stern refusal from him to relent, saying as the Congress failed to comply with their undertaking to stop civil resistance, the administration was justified in taking such action as they thought fit for their suppression. This was the signal for the resumption of the movement which was suspended partly for the time being on the eve of Gandhi's departure for the R.T.C.

The reaction of the administration was as quick, as it was severe. Early in January '32, Gandhi, along with some other leaders were arrested and sent to prison. Others were already languishing in jail. The call for its suspension while its tempo was rising to unprecedented heights, disrupted the movement and demoralised the participants. Its resumption when most of the leaders were in prison failed to elicit much response. The movement continued in a desultory manner, without causing much headache to the administration, who were able to snatch the initiative and regain control over the situation.

The communal award announced by the British Prime Minister with a view to break the deadlock over constitution making, maintained the separate electorate for the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Europeans

and virtually sought to extend the same to the Hindu Depressed Classes. The proposed innovation in effect marked out the Depressed Classes as a separate community which was totally unacceptable to Mahatma Gandhi. In his characteristic way he announced his decision to undertake a fast unto death in protest, unless it was given up. Following a hectic parley to save his life, a compromise was reached, known as the Poona Pact, and accepted by the British government, thus clearing the way for the next round of constitutional reforms.

After this incident, Mahatma Gandhi began to lose his interest in the civil disobedience movement, and he made up his mind to devote himself to social work for the uplift of the Depressed Classes, whom he henceforth called the Harijans. In view of his withdrawal from civil disobedience, he was released from detention. Consistent with his declared intention, henceforth he devoted himself to the emancipation of the Harijans. The civil disobedience movement after languishing for a while was virtually given up by the end of the year 1933. Terrorism was also successfully brought under control at the same time.

CHAPTER IX

GRADUATION FROM DHAKA UNIVERSITY—ENTRY IN TO THE INDIAN POLICE SERVICE—SARDAH POLICE TRAINING COLLEGE—A PEEP INTO THE COUNTRY-SIDE OF RAJSHAHI DISTRICT

My four years in University from 1928 to 1932 were crowded with the stirring events in the country described in the foregoing chapter. I cleared my B.A. examination early in 1931. After graduation I found that the prospects of getting into government service which was my ambition, had become much more difficult than it was five years ago when I had selected my course of study to prepare myself for competitive examination. It was the beginning of the "great depression", with progressive recession in the economy and growing unemployment all round. In the previous year, the intake into the Indian Civil Service from the examination held in India was only three officers. The Indian Police Service took only one from Bengal. The next year, the Federal Public Service Commission announced two vacancies in the Police service for Bengal. I managed to secure the top place among the candidates who took the competitive examination held in September '32. My appointment was notified a few months later and I joined the Sardah Police Training College on the 20th of February 1933. Second in the examination was my friend and fellow student at the University, A.K.M. Hafizuddin, who joined shortly after.

Those recruited in Britain for the Bengal cadre of the Indian Police were sent to Sardah for training. There were three British officers in our batch, who joined a few months before. In addition, three officers of the previous year made up the inmates of the officers mess. We had to spend eighteen month in Sardah to complete our institutional training.

An important part of our training was the orientation of Indian officers in the English way of life. The establishment was organised and run like a British regimental mess. Everybody was keen to adapt himself to the daily routine and the manner of living expected from the inmates of the mess. The members of staff and servants were also trained for this purpose. However, this part of the job was not much of a problem. Rulers usually set the pattern of living for others around them to emulate and the British Raj was no exception. Imitation of their way of life was taken as a mark of distinction. It was not difficult to acquire a veneer of westernisation which apparently was what was wanted.

Dinner was a sort of formal affair except on Thursdays and Sundays. All of us had to put on a special type of dress, called the mess kit, a tight fitting uncomfortable attire worn with wellington boots and box spurs. At the end of the dinner a toast was proposed invoking blessings on the King Emperor. Every Wednesday was set apart as the guest night when the Principal along with his wife came to dinner at the mess. Occasionally, officers from Rajshahi came to dinner on guest nights.

A great deal of emphasis was laid on horseback riding for the officers. Each of us had a horse of our own purchased with a grant from government. Proficiency in riding was considered to be an attribute of a good executive officer. The I.C.S. probationers who failed to pass their riding test in the U.K. were sent to Sardah for further training and passing the test. Seven of them came to Sardah the day I arrived and stayed for two weeks to take and pass the riding test. After a few weeks of initial hard work and practice in the riding school, I began to enjoy riding my horse and it became a source of great pleasure for the rest of my days at Sardah. But the distinctive part of sporting life at Sardah was the facilities available for playing polo. There were twenty horses in the college stable for training the cadet subinspectors of police and most of them were trained for polo by the riding master. The spacious

parade ground by the riverside made a full size field where we used to play polo twice a week, on Thursdays and Sundays.

Settlement Training was made a part of our curriculum. Land revenue was the principal source of income for the Provincial Government in those days. Agriculture being the principal occupation of the people, the preparation and maintenance of the record of rights, equitable assessment and the collection of land revenue were of vital importance for the welfare of the society. The basis of land administration was laid by the Settlement operations which was supposed to cover the entire Province once in thirty years. We had to undergo two months Settlement Training held in Rangpore District in the cold weather of 1933-34. The joint camp was held at Saidpur for the initial briefing and the work on actual operations was done at Fulchari Ghat by the side of R. Jamuna. It was towards the end of the camp at Fulchari, that we experienced the shock of a severe earthquake which devastated large areas of N. Behar in January 1937. The Settlement camp was a very useful part of our training enabling us to gather first hand knowledge of life in rural Bengal where we were destined to work during the greater part of our service life.

Soon after our return to Sardah from the settlement camp we had an interesting course of lectures on the terrorist movement and manner of their control, given by a senior British officer specially deputed from the Central Intelligence Branch, Calcutta. I had given earlier an account of the genesis and progress of this movement from the point of view of a citizen, who could observe with sympathy, without getting involved. The lectures brought out the way in which it was seen and dealt with by the administration. They covered more or less the same ground but described it from an entirely different angle as could be expected. The political dacoities were characterised as crime committed by unemployed youths who had no ostensible means of subsistence ; the Swadeshi movement was inspired by local interest groups ; terrorism was

indulged in by misguided young Hindus and all those activities were confined to a small group of middle class deviationists, with whom the vast majority of the people had no connection or sympathy. He went on to confirm his observations by quoting from the declaration of some former terrorists one of whom was a famous revolutionary, Barin Ghosh, brother of Arobindo Ghosh. He returned home after serving a long prison term and declared that terrorism will not help liberation of the country. Mr. Gandhi's civil disobedience was called off after causing immense loss and suffering to the people without achieving any result. He at last found the right way to render much needed service to the people by his new found social uplift work among the depressed classes, where the government could do nothing. He was released from custody. The rest of the detainees would be released as soon as the situation permitted. The government had at last learned the right way to deal with them and he went on to elaborate the various measures by which both terrorism and civil disobedience were brought under control. There was little apprehension in his mind about the recurrence of any such trouble. The fact that British Imperialism was now confronted with the rising spirit of nationalism in India, the old die hard British bureaucrats were reluctant to admit. Never-the-less, there were indications of a change in outlook among those who could observe with an open mind. One of the British officers in my batch, Maxted by name, a reflective type of youth was however not impressed by the opinion of the speaker. A few days later while strolling on the riverside in the evening as we often did, he put a straight and a leading question to me—why the rulers failed to see the “writing on the wall” and he continued to say that the rising tide of nationalism was going to push colonial rule out of existence—it was only a matter of time. He came from Wales, and had a religious bent of mind. A few years later, he embraced Islam, left police service and joined a Tablig Mission. I met him only once after his conversion.

Life at Sardah P.T.C. was full of activities which kept us engaged throughout the day. Early rising and morning parade involved some hard physical effort, but enough time was allowed for rest and recreation. The daily routine was designed to enable the British recruits to adjust themselves to the conditions in which they had to work in India, and the Indian officers to the colonial way of life.

My tenure at Sardah was coming to an end. After eighteen months in the P.T.C. I was posted to Rajshahi District Head quarters to complete the rest of my training in the District Police Office, Circle Inspectors Office, and the Police Station. The S.P., Ray Bahadur B.N. Banerjee, a staunch Brahmin, was a very capable officer, who took a lot of interest in my training and I derived much benefit from his advice and guidance. I got married the following October 1934, when I went home during the Puja holidays.

More than six months' posting at Rajshahi enabled me to visit many parts of the District in course of my tour of duty. I came in contact with some big zamindars, holding extensive landed property in this part of the Province. The zemindars of Natore, Puthia, Dighapati, Dhubalhati, Balihar were all known to be rich and prosperous land lords, having large impressive palaces on their estates to live in. Contrary to my expectations their palaces looked more like relics of an ancient regime than residences of rich landlords living in affluence. The compound usually covering large areas were mostly unkempt and overgrown with weed and jungle ; the walls were discoloured with moss and lichen ; furniture, mostly massive antique type, hardly ever polished ; magnificent orchards planted by the ancestors, now full of undergrowth without any effort for renewal, all making up a gloomy and forelorn picture, recalling the glory and affluence of the ancient families which were the things of the past. There was hardly a sign of anything new coming up to indicate the use of wealth, which they were supposed to possess. One might ask where all the wealth of the country were going?

The only sign of life was the host of servants and retainers loitering all over the place hardly concerned with anything.

The land owning gentry, called the zamindars were basically collectors of rents derived from land. A part of their collections they paid to the government as land revenues. Such dues, payable to government were fixed in perpetuity early in the British Regime under a permanent settlement. A lot of social services were rendered by the zamindars in their estates. They were responsible for establishing schools, dispensaries, mosques and temples throughout the country. Most of the educational institutions outside the District towns were endowed by this class of landed gentry and prosperous farmers. However, they rarely, if ever engaged themselves in agriculture or any other productive work anywhere in their estate. Those were the jobs for the farmers and artisans. While high class artisans obtained some patronage from the landlords, the farmers had to fend for themselves for their agricultural practices without any outside aid. Traditional technique and knowledge were the mainstay of the farmers. The activities of the Department of Agriculture maintained by government rarely extended beyond the limits of their office and government farms. Irrigation works constructed and maintained in ancient times by the joint efforts of farmers and landlords mentioned by R.C. Dutt in his book "Economic History of India", completely disappeared from this area.

I paid a visit to the house of a farmer along with the Superintendent of Police to supervise a case of dacoity. He was the joint owner of a large agricultural holding which he cultivated with the help of relatives and hired labour. This was a collection of houses, which together looked more like a small hamlet than a household unit. The main residential house and the mosque were built with brick and mortar, the rest were all built with bamboo matting and thatched roof. The entire premises were suffering from inadequate care and maintenance. The return from the joint property was becoming insufficient for maintaining

their standard of living. It appeared as if they were all living on the bounties of their forebearers without any prospect of growth or renewal. Nowhere could any sign of prosperity or enterprise be seen.

Almost all the landlords had migrated to Calcutta or some holy place of their choice, leaving the management of their estates to hired managers. The Collection of rent from the tenants was their only interest in the property. There was no enterprise for the development of resources which could augment their legitimate return from their inherited property. A large part of the surplus products from land was thus taken out of their well-spring, without giving anything back for its sustenance and growth.

Could this be a reason for the deterioration of village economy? We read about extortions of money lenders impoverishing the farmers, who had no alternative but to go them to obtain much needed loan to sustain agricultural operations. Sub-division and fragmentation of holdings were reducing individual farmers to near subsistence level. Altogether they conjured up a dismal picture of village economy since they were opened up for exploitation from outside, at the same time deprived progressively of much needed resources for their rehabilitation.

The production of silk cocoons and yarn was old industries in the western parts of Rajshahi District. Raising cocoons was done as a part time occupation for Muslim farmers and Santal families. The Hindus would not touch them as unclean work. But weaving was confined largely among the Hindu weavers who constituted a separate caste, mostly in Murshidabad District across the River Ganges. The entire business was organised and controlled by silk merchants from Calcutta. The better quality silk yarns were exported to Benaras, a place famous for manufacturing high class silk saris.

Naogaon, a sub-division of the district was the centre of ganja (marijuana) cultivation in India. Production and processing was done by a

cooperative society under the close supervision of the Excise department of government. Produced under licence, ganja was sold through licensed shops throughout India. The drug was consumed by Hindu mendicants in their religious practices, but it was rarely seen in use elsewhere. The farmers engaged in ganja cultivation were relatively better off than others and the commodity was a source of prosperity for Naogaon Town.

The manager of the ganja cooperative society was a member of the Bengal Civil Service. In answer to my query to ascertain the reason for the relative prosperity of ganja cultivations, I was informed that the cooperative society was managing the functions of finance and marketing which protected the producers from the extortions of the money lenders and the wholesale dealers, leaving the entire surplus from sale proceeds in the hands of the farmers. If the cooperatives could help the ganja cultivator to protect themselves from exploitations by stronger partners in business, why couldn't such devices be utilised for helping the farmers in general? There was a no answer.

Besides a number of rice mills operating near the railway stations the only unit of modern industry was the Gopalpur Sugar mills. It was set up by a group of Marwari businessmen. While on a tour of visit to the mills I was informed that before it could be set up, the sponsors had to work for a number of years in persuading the farmers who had their land near the railway stations to undertake the cultivation of sugar cane of prescribed varieties to feed the mill. Fortunately, this was facilitated by another enterprise by an European family of planters—the Reneques—who had lost their indigo business years ago. Sugarcane cultivation was already in existence in this area including parts of Kush-tia and Jessore districts for the manufacture of gur, i.e., raw sugar. Crushing of cane for extracting juice was done by a crude device made by the village blacksmiths. It was very inefficient in operation. A member of the Reneque family invented an improved design of cane

crushing machine and boiling pans which could be easily operated and maintained in the area. They established two factories, one at Kushtia, the other at Bagatipara in Rajshahi district and soon built up a thriving business by hiring out cane crushers and accessories of improved design. The greater efficiency of the new cane crushers increased the income of farmers making gur, and encouraged the extension of sugar-cane cultivation, within a short time. It was no mean achievement considering the communication and transport difficulties besetting the country at that time.

Equally impressive was the manner in which the farmers were organised to supply sugar cane and received payment of their dues. The mill established contacts with farmers having their land within easy reach of the railways because that was the only means for transporting in bulk the cane required. They were organised in groups based around each railway station where wagons were loaded. Purchases were recorded individually in the form of a muster roll. On the appointed day they assembled at the railway station to receive payments. An officer of the mill travelling by a scheduled train, carried with him cash made up in separate packets containing the dues to be paid to each individual farmer. These were doled out as the train pulled up at each station. I happened to watch the procedure while travelling by the same train from which payments were made. No one bothered about receipts or thumb impressions in acknowledgement of receipt or payment. There was no complain of fraud or corruption. The whole business was based on mutual trust and good will, without which neither the mill nor the farmers could survive.

The business of gur manufacture and the sugar mill operating side by side, provided a form of healthy competition, helping to maintain the price of sugar cane at an economic level. There was never any question of banning gur production in order to ensure an adequate supply of cane to the mill. Both businesses continued to prosper side by side.

CHAPTER X

Service life in Serajgange Subdivision and Bankura District—Glimpses of rural Bengal

After completing the practical training at Rajshahi I was posted to Serajgange as the Subdivisional Police Officer. Situated on the right bank of the River Brahmaputra, the place was being eroded by the river. The best part of the new town including the police officer's residential quarters were engulfed by the river. I had to hire a house for my residence surrounded by jute godowns in the old quarters of the town. It had no electricity, or piped water supply. The road leading to the house was not metalled. In short, amenities of urban life were almost non-existent.

The main duty of the Subdivisional Police Officer (S.D.P.O.) were inspecting the police stations, supervising investigation of important cases of crime and maintaining contact with the Union Boards and the leading persons in the Subdivision. A lot of importance was given to the job of holding meetings with the Union Boards and leading men for the purpose of ensuring cooperation between the police and the public in the task of maintaining law and order. The other objective was to remind the people that the administration was constantly vigilant to sustain its authority against any challenge from internal disorder.

The administrative apparatus was very thinly spread out, providing the minimum of public service to the people. There was no government school outside the district head quarters. Public health services were almost non-existent. The post office was the only link with the central government. The task of the Provincial government was confined mainly to policing in order to maintain law and order, as well as collect-

ing government revenue, registration of documents and the judiciary. The area covered by an average police station was about the same as at present ; but the strength of the police force stationed there was much less than now. Besides a short stretch of railway connecting Serajganeg and the main line at Iswardi, modern facilities for transportation were non-existent. Bicycle was the fastest means of travel and during the monsoons the country boat was the only means of transportation available. The occasional visits of high officials attracted a lot of attention and were supposed to have considerable political significance. The British Government had no political party in India to maintain contact with the people. The superior officers were supposed to perform this task. The Divisional Commissioners and the District Magistrates used to hold darbars on various occasions for the same purpose. They represented the King Emperor within their jurisdiction and were vested with a wide range of discretionary powers in the administration of their units. Looking back over the years I can realise that, while holding meetings with the Union Boards and the village elders I was performing a task similar to those I was called upon to do many years after, as a minister, addressing public meetings to explain government policy and calling support for the ruling regime.

Touring in the country-side in those days was a bone shaking job. Unmetalled earthen tracks were the kind of roads, which connected important centres of population. They were fit for horse and bullock drawn carts, transporting both men and materials from place to place. Touring officers had to carry almost everything with their entourage, beds, kitchen wares, and rations for meals, Even the drinking water had to be carried for safety against infection from water-borne disease which afflicted the country-side in a seasonal cycle. Rest houses were very few. All that was available to spend the night was a small room set apart on the premises of the police station called the inspection room. Sometimes the out house of a village headman provided the shelter.

A subdivisional police officer was expected to be on tour between sixteen and twenty days in a month in the performance of his task, which imposed a lot of hard work.

Touring by house boat in the rainy season was much slower in speed, but a more comfortable form of travel. All the necessary items of daily use could be carried from home in the boat, which could also be used as living quarters. The monsoon rains caused a mild flood which brought my houseboat close to the varanda of my house. At the height of the monsoon inundation a boat could travel across the country in many places over the paddy fields and low lying areas. The villages were perched on relatively high ground; so normal monsoons created little problem for the villagers. With the increase of population they were being pushed down to lower and lower grounds thus compelling them to face the problems of flooding almost every year. The innundated waterways connected many parts of the region thus facilitating transport by country-boats.

The subdivisional magistrate and all the government officials were Indians. At Pabna, the head quarters of the district, both the district magistrate and the superintendent of police were also Indians. Here was an example of how the Empire in India was maintained and run by the Indians acting as the agents of the British rulers. The civil disobedience movement compelled the government to post some troops at strategic points as mentioned before, to deal with emergencies, but rarely if ever were they called out to aid the civil administration. Even during such disturbances as occurred in recent past, the civil administration was able to maintain the safety and integrity of the Empire, which appeared to be as secure as ever.

There were only two Europeans in the station; one was the head of the local Christian mission, the other was the manager of the River Steamer Company. Their presence was hardly, if ever noticed by the people.

Contact of officials with the local people on a social level was rare, except on occasions when collaboration between between the two was called for. Such an occasion was the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of Late King George V. The King Emperor having completed twenty-five years of reign, the occasion was celebrated with programme of festivities all over the country. The anti-British agitations of the Congress which had just ended did not cast a shadow on the celebrations.

As an aftermath of the civil disobedience, more than two thousand suspected terrorists were still in detention without trial. Some of them were on parole having their movement restricted within the limits of a village. They were held in detention in rural police stations, living in huts hired or constructed within the precincts of the station and paid a monthly allowance of twenty rupees for their sustenance. Years of hardship seemed to have little effect on their morale. Most of them were looking forward to the next round of the struggle and waiting to join up.

The family of Poet Rabindranath had extensive landed property in the Shahzadpur Police Station. There was an ancient office-cum-residential building in the village belonging to the Tagore estate, which was visited by the poet in his youth. Some of the old residents had recollections of the poets visit which they used to relate to the visitors. One of his short stories captioned "the Post Master" was conceived round the village post office adjacent to the premises which were built by a British planter long ago. The famous poet had already assumed the character of a legend in his life time. His association with the place cast a halo of eminence on the old building. Partition of the property following the death of the poet's father, allotted the Shahzadpur portion of the property to his brother Gogonendra Nath Thakur, the famous artist. Rabindranath had not visited Shahzadpur since.

Serajgange was an important centre of jute trade, as it remains to this day. The entire trade was in the hands of the British and the Mar-

warri business firms having their head offices in Calcutta and U.K. They not only dictated the price, but practically determined their respective shares in the business on the basis of a "gentlemen's agreement"; which virtually gave them the advantages of an "oligopoly" at the expenses of the farmers and the local agents. Besides acting as their agents and middlemen, local people had very little to do with the business. The Marwaris went a step further. They used to advance loan to the farmers on condition of supplying stipulated quantity of jute in return. Such business involved great risks but it seemed to work, as was apparent from the fact that it continued year after year enabling the marwari to procure jute at the lowest possible price. An old Circle Officer once told me that a farmer who entered in such a business once, could never get out of the clutches of the marwari, and in return only got just enough to keep himself alive. The whole business was such an esoteric affair, that it was almost impossible for a new comer to get into the jute business.

After working about eighteen months at Serajgange I was transferred to the head quarters of Bankura district as the assistant superintendent. This district was usually deficit in the production of food grains, and was afflicted by chronic famine conditions. The previous season had been a particularly a bad year. The resultant economic hardship brought about an outbreak of dacoities all over the district. Along with the the usual relief operations, the government thought it fit to step up preventive action against crime. A special team was set up with officers drafted from other districts to deal with the situation. I was placed in charge of the operations.

From time immemorial, the villages were practically left to themselves to make arrangements for protection of their life and property against the inroads of thugs and bobbers. Collective action and social control by the rural community were enough to ensure a measure of safety of life and property. There was no law enforcing agency within a days journey almost anywhere. Breach of peace of serious nature

usually happened when powerful landlords indulged in fighting over possession of property in dispute. Regular police force had to step in and take over control to deal with such situations.

In the northern and western regions of India villages were usually laid out with houses in close proximity of one another in such a manner that any attempt to attack from outside, could be resisted by the combined force of the villagers. A tacit understanding prevailed to turn out and assist one another in case of danger. Gangs of robbers if they dared to attack any village could not get away without a fight and strong resistance. Organised resistance was the only safety against the enemy.

Villages in Bengal presented a somewhat different picture. Individual households were scattered and isolated from one another, and practically open on all sides, Organised resistance against attacking gangs of dacoits were a rarity if ever it happened. The victims were usually the members of the money-lending classes the artisans, or the traders. In the absence of banking facilities, assets were kept in the form of cash or gold, which were the chief targets of the robbers. The big farmers were the other victims, when any of them acquired the reputation of being rich. The vast majority of the farmers were so poor that they hardly attracted the notice of robbers, and had little concern with the organised resistance for their protection. But in a year of scarcity, even a small barn containing some quantity of paddy became an object of looting. This was the condition that prevailed in Bankura district, when I was posted in the cold weather of 1936-37, to step up preventive measures against crime with violence.

Sustained police action against the gangs of criminals prowling in the countryside, combined with relief operations to mitigate distress were able to put down the outbreak of crime against property. Effective control over fire arms which prevailed in the country since the enforcement of the Arms Act fifty years ago, deprived the criminals the use of fire arms in the commission of crime. Armed patrols by the police

were never challenged by the criminals, who had no offensive weapon other than clubs, daggers and axes. So the police could snatch the initiative whenever they were in earnest to do so. Hence resistance was not difficult, where ever the villagers could organise to protect themselves against robbers and looters. A devise known as the village defence parties were in existence for long, but were rarely active except at the initiative of the police in times of emergency. The same devise still remained at the disposal of local administration ; but now possession of unlicensed fire arms by the criminals has rendered their task much more difficult. Possession of modern automatic weapons has emboldened the criminals to a degree never known before, because, it always gives a tremendous advantage to the aggressor and demoralise the victims of attack. This is a serious problem confronting the law enforcing agencies. Recovery of unlicensed fire arms from the possession of the lawless elements has become an important task of the police.

After spending eighteen months in a riverine area like Serajgange with its lush green fields and busy village life, the landscape of Bankura presented a rather bleak picture of the unproductive land and subdued village life. The river beds were almost all dry,—one had to dig into sandbeds to draw water. Wells were the only source of water in Bankura town, as elsewhere. Women had to walk long distances to draw a pale of water. Scarcity of monsoon rain caused disaster, as had happened last season. The relief operations were the biggest industry in the northern half of the district that year.

In the south, the Bishnupur sub-division fared much better than the north. Some signs of prosperity were noticed in the western parts of the district, bordering Behar, where coal mining provided a stable source of income to the owners and employment for the miners. In the north, the Damodar was the only perennial river. The villages close to the river banks were better off than other places. It was note worthy how the green colour in the fields intensified as one apprao-

ched the river travelling north, and correspondingly decreased as I travelled away from the river.

The dry landscape made it possible to build and maintain a net work of roads which facilitated transport by motor car and buses. Travelling in the countryside in the cold weather in this region was a pleasant pastime and I enjoyed touring in course of my work.

The only amenity at the district head quarters was the station club, which was patronised by almost everyone entitled to join. The Assistant Engineer of the P.W.D. was a man from Comilla district. When he came to know that I hailed from neighbouring Dhaka, he started to relate his tale of woe of two years posting in such a dry and bleak place, and how he was longing to return to East Bengal, where the cool moist air was the breath of his life. As the hot summer approached in the month of March I could appreciate the depth of his feelings.

My tenure of posting at Bankura was going to be over soon. Before leaving the place I went to see the Tata Iron and Steel Mills at Jamshedpur situated about forty-five miles west of Bankura. It was a staggering sight to see the magnitude of the operations and the ingenuity with which the industry was conceived and constructed. Except for a few top level technicians almost all the employees were Indians, hailing from different parts of the country. It was reported to be the biggest in the British Empire and ranked third among the steel mills of the world at that time. What a magnificent achievement of the Tatas.

CHAPTER XI

Constitutional Reforms under the Govt. of India Act 1935— Their impact on the relationship between the Muslim and the Hind Communities.

Early in 1937, public interest centered on the elections for the provincial Legislature under the Government of India Act, 1935. I was still stationed in Bankura. The Diarchy was replaced by provincial autonomy, placing all the Provincial subjects under the control of the council of ministers. The official block ceased to exist. Although the property qualification was maintained for those who voted, franchise was extended to cover a large portion of the adult population including women. Almost the entire literate section of the people became voters.

The civil Disobedience movement had been called off some time back and the Congress had decided to revive their parliamentary wing, the Swaraj Party, to participate in the elections in earnest. Preparations by all political parties for the elections began several months in advance bringing the candidates and party workers in close contact with the people for the first time. The publicity and the canvassing for votes, preceding the elections created a degree of interest and enthusiasm for popular government which had never been seen before. Precautionary measures had to be taken by the police to prevent the clash between the supporters of rival candidates. This took me on a tour of duty to supervise the police arrangements. On the whole a cheerful spirit prevailed throughout and the elections passed off peacefully. I believe the factor which helped to maintain the congenial spirit in the election campaign was the separate electorate, keeping the two commu-

nities apart in the choice of their candidates, thus preventing the clash of interests. A joint electorate system would have been disastrous considering the communal tension that prevailed. Having observed the reality of the political situation, I became convinced more and more that whatever might be the merits in theory, a joint electorate was unworkable in this country.

Politically, the two communities were drifting apart. It was a fact of life that the coexistence of the two great religions over six hundred years in India had failed to bring about an adjustment of relationship among their adherents—the Hindus and the Muslims, which could bring about their political integration, when time arrived to establish an independent nation state. The Hindus began to approach the communal issue with a sense of complacency, hoping that the problem would solve itself as soon as India became independent from alien rule. After all in a democratic form of government the decision would ultimately rest with the Hindu majority. In their view, the communal problem was the outcome of alien rule over the country. It would disappear, as soon as the British left India. On the other hand, the Muslims were getting more and more apprehensive about finding themselves living under the arbitrary rule of a Hindu majority, which had little sympathy and less understanding of their culture and way of life. In this conflicting approach to this vital question, current political theories came to the aid of the Hindu view of Indian politics, which refused to admit religion as a valid ground for determining political issues. Even Pandit Nehru once went to the extent of declaring that the communalism of the Hindus as such, was tantamount to Indian nationalism, because they formed three quarters of the inhabitants of India.

As could be expected, the Muslims could not subscribe to such views in dealing with important political issues affecting their status in their home land in future. They considered themselves to be a separate community having their own code of personal laws, customs and ins-

tutions. Unless they could be safeguarded, the very existence of the Muslims as a community, would be in jeopardy. In such an eventuality if it ever happened, the Muslims would be reduced to the position of a depressed class in the larger Indian society, as they were considered virtually untouchables by the caste Hindus in their social dealings with the Muslims. A solid block of over seventy million people, their separate entity as a cultural minority called for political accommodation in the framework of constitutional reforms. This demand was conceded by the British Government, and also recognised by the Congress, albeit with reluctance. The attempt on the part of the Congress now to denounce their past commitments only added complications to the unhappy communal relationship that prevailed. The prospect of further transfer of power to the Indians, brought the issue to the forefront of politics after the provincial elections.

The elections for the Central Legislature took place in 1935, two years before the Provincial elections were held under the reformed constitution. With its restricted franchise and limited powers, elections for the Central Legislature did not attract much attention. The Congress was the only group which contested the elections on party tickets. The Muslim League did not appear as a party in the House yet. The Muslim members called themselves Independents and formed a separate group under the leadership of Mr. M.A. Jinnah. There were a few non-Muslims also in this group of Independents. What was significant in the composition of the Central Legislature was, that the Muslims were not yet politically organised on an all India basis. The League, the only political organisation of the Muslims having an all India character was still an upper class organisation, with little influence over provincial politics or contact with the masses.

The Provincial elections of 1937 brought politics much closer to the people. In the elections the Congress as a party stood head and shoulders above all other political organisations. They secured an

absolute majority in the legislatures of six provinces, and constituted the largest single block in the rest. The Muslim candidates who contested the elections with the Congress party tickets made a poor show as might have been expected. In spite of all their efforts, the Congress failed to enlist the support of the Muslim voters.

Political activities of the Muslims were confined largely to the Provinces. Important leaders with local influence organised their own groups of followers into political parties in the Provinces. The League was only one among several parties which had their candidates in the elections. Important leaders still remained outside the fold of the League. Mr. Fazlul Haq organised his "Krisak Proja Party" in Bengal. In the Panjab, Main Fazli Husain set up the Unionist Party. Both of them were non-denominational in character. Voting took place more on the basis of personalities than on that of parties.

The nominees of the League made a poor show in the elections in such provinces as Bengal, the Panjab, and the N.W. Frontier Province, where the Muslims were in a majority. However, the League achieved much better results in the Muslim minority provinces, where the necessity of a common front was more keenly felt than where they were numerically in a better position. This was particularly noticable in the United Provinces in the north, where the Muslims constituted only about 16% of the population, but used to play a much bigger role in the public life of the Province.

Due to the multiplicity of parties, separate electorate, and the local level politicians dominating the country side, it was apprehended by most observers that no single party would be able to command a clear majority in the house ; so the Provincial ministries would have to be formed on the basis of a coalition of two or more parties, in order to command the support of the majority of the members. It was taken for granted that in such a coalition, members from the two principal parties, the Congress and the League representing the two major commu-

nities would participate to make the ministries truly representative in character. Such a belief, shared universally by almost everyone concerned, provided a basis for a settlement of the communal issue by negotiations within the framework of the Indian Union.

There was a tacit understanding between the Congress and the League in the United Provinces and Bombay, that in case of success in the ensuing elections, two nominees of the League would be included in the Provincial councils of ministers. The sweeping success of the Congress in the elections giving them absolute majority in six provinces, including Bombay and U.P., at last prevailed upon the Congress leadership to forget their past commitments and change their mind. They thought it fit to impose rigid conditions for inclusion of the nominees of the League in the Congress ministry, which virtually amounted to their acceptance of the Congress creed and their dissociation from the League on the communal issue. As could be expected, such conditions were unacceptable to the League, fundamentally opposed as they were to their doctrine, on the basis of which Muslims were seeking an accommodation with the Congress on the communal issue. The new demand of the Congress came as a great disappointment to the Muslims, and all hopes for a settlement between the two were dashed to the ground. The League declined to accept such ignoble demands and refused to participate in the Congress ministry under such conditions.

The unhappy ending of the parley for ministry making in the U.P. following the elections of 1937, marked the end of an era of negotiations for a political settlement between the Congress and the League which had begun two decades ago with the conclusion of the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

Before proceeding to the next phase of this question, it would be useful to recapitulate in brief the course of events leading up to this point to put the issue in its proper context.

The necessity for an agreement between the two major communities at the relevant time on the question of their respective status in the political life of the country developed out of the imperatives of history, which could not be ignored. The constituent elements of the population were still far from being integrated into a nation ; the communal character of their existence was a fact of life which no one could ignore. So long as an outside power ruled over the country and the people had no voice and little participation in their government, the question of fresh political adjustment between the communities hardly arose. Stable conditions of society brought about an adjustment, which prevailed over a long period of coexistence and both the communities willy-nilly had to accept under the alien rule. This position began to change with the introduction of a responsible form of government at a time when the society was undergoing change all over the world. The governments were playing an active part in this process. What gave rise to the necessity of having a prior understanding among different communities, was the question of a device to regulate the use of absolute power on decision making, which was vested in the majority. The League wanted some built-in device in the constitution which would safeguard their group interest. The Congress having earlier agreed to concede such a demand, now refused to have anything to do with it.

Having failed to persuade the Congress to come to a settlement, the political strategy of the Muslim League now turned into a struggle for power, the only way left to obtain a rightful place for the Muslims in an independent country. For this purpose it was necessary for the League to acquire a status which would enable it to speak with one voice on behalf of the entire Muslim community of India, in the same way the Congress had obtained recognition of its right to speak on behalf of the Hindus. In this task Jinnah proved himself to be the undisputed leader of the Muslims. He very quickly and successfully transformed the League into a mass organisation which could command the con-

fidence of almost the entire Muslim community of India. The campaign started with his presidential address at the annual meeting of the League held in Lucknow soon after the Provincial elections. He denounced the stand taken by the Congress rejecting the offer of the League to collaborate in the ministry making. The history of negotiations with the Congress exposed their ever growing tendency to ride rough-shod over the claims of the minorities who could no longer expect justice and fair play from such a ruling majority. The only protection against the arbitrary rule of communal majority was for the Muslims to organise themselves politically on all India basis under the leadership of the League, the only organisation who could take up the challenge of the Congress. Thus the negotiations between the League and the Congress for mutual accommodation at last turned into a struggle for power, with all the attendant consequences,—mutual suspicion, bargaining and recourse to force for settling political issues.

There was no doubt that the Congress was pursuing a policy based on their own concept of democracy and nationalism, ignoring the claim of the Muslims for equitable status in the emerging political life of the country. The concern of the Congress leadership for their political doctrine developed almost to a point of secular orthodoxy, turning a blind eye to the realities that prevailed on the ground. Top ranking Congress leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, wanted to reconstruct Indian Society in their own image, ignoring the diversity that prevailed in the larger Indian society. Any other point of view failed to attract their attention. That, in politics, concessions were possible without abandoning broad principals to tide over the uncertainties of transition, did not strike the Congress leadership as necessary. They expected to carry all before them by the sheer weight of their absolute majority.

Mr. Jinnah's address to the annual conference of the League held at Lucknow containing a brilliant analysis of the problems faced by the community, and his appeal to unite under the banner of the League as

the initial step in the new strategy for the liberation of the Muslims, made a profound impact on the leaders who assembled at Lucknow in 1937 from all parts of India. Those who were still outside the League, came forward to join it. The League launched a comprehensive programme of propaganda and mass contact, to arouse political consciousness of Muslims and build up a spirit of solidarity under the leadership of the League.

It was during this conference at Lucknow, that Mr. A.K. Fazlul Haq acquired by popular acclamation the famous adage "Sher-e-Bangla", The Tiger of Bengal, following his fighting speech upholding the claim of the Muslims.

This was a timely move on the part of the League. Because of the frustration among Muslims over the unsuccessful negotiations with the Congress, they were looking to their leaders with growing impatience for a new approach to the solution of the communal issue. The organisation of the League began to expand and its membership increased rapidly all over India, following the new policy announced in the Lucknow conference of 1937. The Muslims in general soon learnt to look at their political problem from a wider all-India perspective, while the League at last emerged as the only organisation which could provide leadership to safeguard the interests of Muslims. This was the master-stroke in the process of achieving political unification of the Muslims having far reaching implications for the future of both the community and the country.

The next move on the part of the League was the demand for their recognition as the only representative organisation of the Muslims, with whom any political issue concerning the community could be discussed for a settlement. Although the Congress was reluctant to concede such a preemptive claim, in practice there was no alternative open to them except negotiation with the League on all communal issues. To ensure de facto recognition of their demand, the League imposed their

condition that the Congress delegation for negotiations must not include any Muslim member, thereby repudiating any claim of the Nationalist Muslims to have anything to do with communal issues. Fortunately no other Muslim political organisation stood in the way, thereby confirming the status of the League as the only representative body of the Muslims having all India standing.

Some Hindu historians and politicians tried to ascribe the rapid upsurge of political consciousness of the Muslims, to the appeal Mr. Jinnah made to their religious sentiments, which had played such an important part in rousing the Muslims in the past. This is a travesty of truth. An appeal to the religious sentiments could be made only by those who are recognised as religious preceptors, and not by others. Mr. Jinnah had no such pretensions. The part played by religion in building up the sense of belonging among the Muslims, which is the basis of community life, was no more than what religion had done to the Hindus. In this vast subcontinent inhabited by people of diverse origin and culture, religion provided the only bond of unity since time immemorial. Religion provided the code of law and rule of conduct which sustained the society, as well as inculcate a set of norms and values, which marked off one community from another. As mentioned earlier, it was essentially Hindu revivalism arising out of the impact between their ancient culture and western learning which instilled in their mind the spirit of nationalism leading to the demand for liberation from the alien rule and have a government of their own choice. This is the essence of Hindu nationalism. There was no more religious element in the appeal of Mr. Jinnah to rouse the political consciousness of the Muslims than that contained in the writings of Bankim Chandra, or the message of Swami Vivekananda which had initiated the era of Hindu nationalism. It is true that the Mullahs in the countryside responded to the call of the League in the same way as others had done ; but should the response of the mullahs give rise to any suspicion of religious

motivation ? The validity of the above argument can be demonstrated by the fact that the principal organisation of the Muslim theologians in India, the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, failed to respond like others. They collaborated with the Congress and opposed the partition of India. The power struggle that ensued leading ultimately to the partition of the Sub-continent, was purely a political phenomenon which kindled the spirit of nationalism with all its attendant consequences. It ultimately induced the Muslims to demand a separate homeland where they could have a government of their choice ; at the same time it encouraged the Congress to make no compromise with their version of nationalism in order to come to terms with the Muslims.

CHAPTER XII

Service in Tangail and Rangpur Districts (1937-1939)

Life in contemporary Rural Society

Soon after the provincial elections of 1937 I left Bankura on transfer to Tangail. Modern means of transport did not reach the place yet. The nearest railway station was Mymensingh, the district headquarters sixty miles away. Construction of Tangail-Mymensingh highway had just began. No one knew when it was scheduled to be completed. Motor buses and trucks could ply with difficulty along the field alignment of the road in the dry season about five months in the year. The boneshaking journey over the rough terrain of the country, took the best part of eight hours to travel from Tangail to Mymensingh. The rest of the year the journey took nearly twentyfour hours, travelling partly by unmetalled road, river steamer, and by rail between Jagannathganj and Mymensingh.

Though an isolated place, the township itself was relatively better off than many other subdivisional stations. Electric power supply was available for about four hours in the evening, a rare luxury indeed in the country-side. Fertile land and prosperous agriculture brought about the highest density of rural population in the place, exceeding a thousand per square mile. The southern areas were famous for growing the best variety of jute which induced several European business houses to open their office in jute purchase centres there.

The prosperity of agriculture inevitably brought affluence to the landlords and money lenders. Masonry built houses could be seen in many villages belonging to such people and also prosperous farmers.

Most of the large estates I came across in other places, happened to belong to Hindu zamindars. In Tangail I found a welcome change, where there were a number of Muslim landlords, having some standing in the public life of the country. The zamindars of Karatia, Dilduar, Dhanbari besides the Hindu zamindars of Santosh were dominant in this part of the country.

There were thriving cottage industries, among which handloom weaving and manufacture of bell metal utensils were noteworthy ; products of both the industries were exported to other places in large quantities.

Happily, some progress in childrens' education could be seen. A prosperous village usually had a primary school for children. Besides the well-to-do families, the urge for education was largely confined to the commercial classes and craftsmen. They had to be literate to enable them to conduct their business efficiently. I noticed that even the village grocer, usually a Hindu, could write letters and keep his account books. Often he worked as a part time teacher in a village school. Among the Muslims, the Imam of the mosque was a literate man. What surprised me was that often he was found to be a native of Noakhali district. I could not understand why a local man could not be found for such an important job.

Some girls also attended the village schools. I was agreeably surprised to see some Muslim girls attending schools. The prosperous farmers were becoming conscious of the necessity to make their daughters literate in order to get them married into educated families. This made them bold enough to send their daughters to the village school. The ordinary farmers had little interest in the education of their children. Unfortunately, even the limited facilities which could be provided by the district School Board for elementary education, were not fully utilised yet. This problem has persisted ever since.

Tangail township and its neighbourhood were well served with high schools and the classes were well attended. Secondary education was eagerly sought after everywhere. There was also a girls high school which was still a rare occurrence outside district headquarters. My sister was admitted to this school. A note worthy center for education was coming up at Karatia, five miles east of Tangail under the patronage of one of the local zamindars mentioned above. There was a college, a high school and a madrasa with hostel facilities, which attracted students from distant places. I was told that the cost of education per student at Karatia was the cheapest in the Province. The zamindar Wajed Ali Khan Panni, a staunch nationalist all his life, had converted his estate into a public trust assigning the greater part of the income to charity. The college and the school were receiving regular assistance from the trust. He died shortly before my posting to Tangail.

Facilities for education provided by government did not extend beyond the district headquarters yet. Except two or three subdivisions like Bhola and Peiozpur, the Zila school in the District and a college at the Divisional headquarters were all the institutions provided and maintained by government. Schools for girls were even fewer in number. By far the vast majority of the students were educated in schools and colleges maintained by private endowment. Karatia schools and the college therefore provided much needed facilities for education in the remote country-side, where public service provided by the government was almost unknown. Welfare work undertaken by the zamindars and other rich people were the principal source of social service providing school and religious institutions. Grants-in-aid from government were available to assist the private institutions, which helped to encourage local initiative. High schools could be found in remote parts of the Province wherever local initiative and resources were forthcoming.

Public health services were unknown in the rural areas. Besides a small hospital at the subdivisional headquarters in charge of an assistant surgeon, a compounder and a male nurse, there was nothing in the shape of health services. The supply of medicine was scanty and hospital facilities were hopelessly poor. Hence there was an universal prejudice against the government hospital and very few patients came for treatment. Most of the time and energy of the assistant surgeon were spent on medico-legal work and issuing health certificates. There was a charitable hospital at Nagarpore about thirty miles south of Tangail established by a rich banker which had a good reputation and thus attracted a large number of patients. A small team of doctors and nurses were running the hospital with a sense of dedication which earned them the gratitude of hundreds of grateful patients round the countryside. I was agreeably surprised with what I could see in the shape of social service rendered by this institution.

The indigenous system of medicine was both popular and cheap. So also was homeopathy. Those who could afford it had access to such health services as could be arranged with the help of private practitioners of medicine.

Rural Bengal had its peculiar problems of health. Epidemic diseases were seasonal. The spring came with an outbreak of small pox which apparently ascribed the disease the same name as that of the season, "VASANTA". Preventive medicine was available and widely accepted. Still there were sceptics who refused to get vaccinated, particularly women in seclusion who remained susceptible to infection and spread the disease. Thousands died each year from the small pox epidemic throughout the country. The end of the monsoons brought an outbreak of cholera, followed by malaria at the beginning of the cold weather. While measures for protection against cholera were known and possible to adopt, there were none against malaria. It so happened from time to time that the entire police force of the town were afflicted with

malarial fever, and none was available for the normal work of the town police. Before the year was out I had a severe attack of malaria fever. Local treatment failed to prevent a relapse. So, I had to take leave and come to Dhaka for proper treatment. My doctor recommended a change of climate. I went to Hazaribagh with my family for a change. I enjoyed my leave immensely which helped my recovery a great deal.

On expiry of leave I was posted to Rangpur after being promoted to a senior status, as the Additional Superintendent of Police, early in April 1938.

The Rangpur District Magistrate, Khan Bahadur Abdul Majid was a member of the Provincial service. He was selected out of turn for promotion because of his meritorious work. The police superintendent, H.N. Sircar was four years my senior. This was his first charge of a district. A remarkable man working with us was the military intelligence officer, Captain John Hunt. Years later he was the leader of the British Everest Expedition who successfully scaled the highest mountain in 1952 His interest in mountaineering had already taken him round several expeditions, which he related with the help of beautiful photographs of the mountains of Kashmir. He was a Brigadier when he led the Everest expedition. The Police chief, H.N. Sircar, became the Inspector General of Police of W. Bengal, soon after partition.

Posting at the district headquarters provided me with access to official reports compiled at the highest level of government on the political condition in the country. So far my source of information were the news papers, whose reportings often took a partisan line on public affairs depending on their political affiliation. The nationalist press invariably were in the opposition who rarely, if ever, found anything satisfactory in the performance of the government. At the opposite pole was the Anglo-Indian press, having a great deal of influence on government. The official reports were factual and brief, giving a wide coverage of the political trends and happenings in the country.

A spirit of self-criticism generally pervaded the style of reporting which helped a great deal to maintain uniformity of approach to public policy. Even more interesting were the periodical reports produced by the Central Intelligence Branch (I.B.) giving up to date accounts of the revolutionary movements. Reading these reports one could not but get the impression that the I.B. was already on the trail of most of the terrorists, closely watching their movements. The fact that arrest and detention of about 2,500 suspects successfully brought the movement under control confirmed that the suspects were correctly identified and nabbed. Secret service work thus attained a high standard of effectiveness which demoralised the revolutionaries. It was thus evident that in spite of all the rituals of initiations and indoctrination, betrayals could not be prevented. The number of renegades increased whenever there was a rapid intake in the cadre. The success of preventive measures began to demoralise the members and increased apostasy. The devotion to their task on the part of the officers and men of the security services was indeed remarkable ; at the same time it speaks a lot on the competence of the British rulers who could deal with a difficult situation with the help of the civil administration and within the bounds of the rule of law.

Although it was possible to bring under control revolutionary upsurge for the third time within the time span of a generation, the dimensions of the movement were increasing with every fresh outburst. The Congress had accepted office and formed Provincial Cabinets in six Provinces in the mean time, when a large number of revolutionaries were still in prison. Recalling that the last outburst of terrorism starting with the Chittagong Armoury Raid began soon after the general amnesty and repeal of anti-terrorist legislations, the British government thought it fit to be cautious in their policy and go slow on releasing them from detention. It was a time of far reaching change and unrest. The necessity of maintaining a climate of political conditions which

would allow the constitutional reforms to settle down and take root, called for a policy which would help maintain a balance of opposing forces. Whether a general amnesty would help usher in a new era of political understanding or, a jail delivery of terrorists would create fresh troubles for the popular government, no one could foretell. To be consistent with their avowed policy, the Congress demanded the release of political prisoners but did not make it a precondition of participating in the new government. They began to play it down after forming provincial ministries. It was realised increasingly that the revolutionaries were becoming a source of trouble for any government, whether alien or indigenous. A general dissatisfaction with the established order pervaded their outlook on society. Impatient for change they hardly knew what they were asking for. Any kind of an authority was an anathema. Most of them were turning anarchists. Having joined the movement while still in their teens, they gave up their studies early in life. After indulging in secret and highly exciting activities few could return to take up the unfinished part of their education to qualify for a career. Recovering freedom from alien rulers by the force of arms was their only purpose in life, and they plunged into the struggle with a deep sense of dedication. The excitement and risks of a life lived under cover, being continuously hunted by the police and the long period of isolation increased the difficulties for their return and adjustment and made many of them misfits in society. The longer they persisted in such endeavour, more difficult it became to return to the humdrum sort of traditional life. The solitary life in prison for those convicted, only aggravated the problem of their rehabilitation.

A specific case I came across in Birbhum illustrated the predicament of ex-revolutionaries and their rehabilitation. One of the accused in the Chittagong Armoury Raid case was released about the middle of 1943, after serving a long term of imprisonment. He was sent to Suri, the headquarters of Birbhum district to be on parole for a while.

His parents came along with him to look after their only son. I was the police superintendent of the district. His father came to see me and consult about the problem of rehabilitation of his son. Separated from the family when still in his teens, he could not complete his secondary education. Reluctant to take up further studies he could not make up his mind what to do for a living. They had some land where he could settle ; but agriculture had little attraction for a restless youth like him. No matter how much admiration was bestowed on the heroic exploits of the terrorists, no one would touch them even with a pair of tong when they came out seeking employment for their livelihood. The Calcutta corporation which was under the control of the Congress employed some exterrorists as primary school teachers, the lowest paid job going. Few could be provided with better jobs. Having given up their studies early in their youth, their educational attainments were so poor. The only assurance I could give this unhappy father was that government would not stand in the way, if his son wanted to engage himself to earn his livelihood. He appeared satisfied. I thought, that was all he expected from me.

Patriots who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom, invariably found an honourable place in the memory of their countrymen. Those who survived increasingly created a rehabilitation problem. Some of them joined the Communist Party of India after independence swelling the ranks of the new lot of dissidents.

CHAPTER XIII

Service in the Districts of Dhaka and Comilla Congress repudiates past commitments on communal issues—final breach between the Congress and the Muslim League Out-break of war in Europe—League adopts the Lahore Resolution in 1940—The beginning of the Pakistan movement—Initial impact of declaration of war on Indian Politics—Japan enters war against the allies—Advance of Japanese army towards the Eastern frontier of India.

I spent the best part of the year 1938 & 39 at Rangpur. Among the local gentry whom I could still recall was Khan Bahadur Abdur Rauf, the Chairman of the District Board. After his elections he gave a reception where a number of artists delighted the guests with their musical performance. Among the local talents were two young brothers, namely Bimal Das and Kamal Das, who were outstanding vocalists. Music was patronised by the local zamindars. The Raja of Tajhat, himself a vocalist of no mean achievement, used to gather round him a number of artists to celebrate religious festivals every year. The Rangpur Carmichael College was a remarkable institution having residential accommodation for a large number of students. Served by a team of competent teachers, it attracted students from all over the Rajshahi Division. The college was established on the initiative of a former District Magistrate late J.N. Gupta early in this century. He was responsible for many other items of public works, for which his memory was cherished by the grateful people of Rangpur District.

Far reaching changes were taking place in the political field during this period. Political concepts and ideas were in a state of ferment in

the minds of the leaders. After fifty years of struggle the Congress had at last thought it fit to bury the hatchet and come to terms with the British rulers to form a council of ministers, where they could command the majority in the Provincial legislature. Success in the Provincial elections indicating the firm hold they had obtained on the Hindu majority, at last induced the Congress leadership to reappraise their position and the new role they had assumed in the political affairs of the country.

In spite of the fragmentation of their society into numerous castes, creeds and sects, a large measure of political integration of the Hindus was at last achieved under the leadership of the Congress. It was evident that the extent of success in the elections even surprised the Congress high command. They realised that there was no further need for a compromise on the broad political issues which they were advocating. Control over the political destinies of the country was at last coming within their grasp. That was enough to give them a new sense of direction and purpose.

The Congress high command now set their mind to consolidate their position in the government of the country and to take up their programme of work for implementation. Their preoccupation with the administration compelled them to skip the annual session of the Congress, so that they could devote themselves to their new task of managing the Provincial government without interruption.

Never-the-less, the communal issue remained unresolved. An opportunity which came at the time of ministry making in the United Provinces for collaboration between the Congress and the League on the basis of a pre-election entente, was imprudently rejected by the Congress when they found that they had obtained an absolute majority in the house. Consequently they decided that a further approach to the League for participation in the ministry was unnecessary. This was the signal for the parting of ways between the League and the Congress.

The former came to the conclusion that an understanding with the Congress was no longer possible.

The necessity for a political understanding with the League was based on the assumption that the age old internal divisions in the form of caste and creed, kept the Hindus divided to an extent that management of parliamentary government would not be feasible without collaboration with the Muslims. The result of the elections at last removed such apprehension from the minds of the Congress leaders. Political integration of the Hindu community had at last been achieved in a measure so that it was no longer necessary for the Congress to seek the collaboration of Muslims except on their own terms. Conscious of their new found power, Congress now thought it fit to change their approach to the communal issue, so as to eliminate its impact on national affairs as far as possible. They denounced any reference to the communal problem, repeating their new concept that it was an internal affair, which must await independence of the country for a solution. So it became clear to the Muslims, that the terms of the current agreement could hold good only so long as the British, who gave the award, ruled over the country. Realisation of such hard facts upset the old ideas and calculations and compelled the Muslims for an agonising reappraisal of the whole issue.

What the Muslim League sought was accommodation within a political union of the subcontinent. This would have provided opportunities for Muslim participation in national life and the maintenance of their identity as a community. This was necessary under the peculiar social and political milieu in which they were placed. This was the crux of the problem which the Congress refused to recognise. Negotiations to arrive at an agreement in the end proved unfruitful. Thus they were compelled to find other means to achieve their objective. The outbreak of war in Europe in September, 1939, with its attendant uncertainties of the future, quickened the process of thought to find a way for the liberation of the Muslims of the subcontinent.

India was supposed to have attained a measure of unity in diversity, which could lead to political integration. But to maintain such an unity, the diverse elements had to be accommodated within the ambit of a greater Indian society ; otherwise such an amorphous unity could not be sustained. Less than two hundred years of British rule over India as a single administrative unit created an illusion of political unification in their mind, which induced the Congress high command to turn a blind eye to the aspirations of the Muslims in the hour of euphoria created by their grasp of power. Under such circumstances and for strong reasons, when a determined minority wanted to break away from the larger group, it could no longer be prevented. The Muslim League at last found the only way out of the impasse was the creation of a separate home-land for themselves. The struggle for power which ensued with the coming of responsible government, accelerated the process of separatism and ultimately impelled the league to demand a separate home land for the Muslims of India where they could have a government of their own choice. This demand was voiced in no uncertain terms in the resolution adopted by the League in their annual session held at Lahore in March 1940. It may be recalled that the Congress had adopted their "Independence Resolution" at the same place eleven years ago, in 1929. The two resolutions set the course for the future political development of the subcontinent.

Early in September, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany following the invasion of Poland by the latter. The first impact of the outbreak of the war was the sudden increase in the price of imported goods, particularly medicines. Life saving drugs began to disappear from the market and could be obtained only by special arrangement between the doctor and the drug stores. The shortage persisted for many years even after the war was over.

Anxious enquiries for the latest news of the war became the talk of the town. Those who possessed a radio, a rare luxury in those days,

were besieged by their friends for news particularly to know what the Germans were saying in their broadcasts. Fighting on the front started on a low key. After the defeat and occupation of Poland by the Germans and the Russians, it reached a stalemate for a while. The Germans were universally condemned for their unprovoked invasion of Poland. But the fact that the other half of Poland was occupied by the Russians at the same time, escaped much criticism for unaccountable reasons.

The outbreak of war in Europe involving Britain gave rise to political complications in India. The Viceroy thought it fit to declare war on Germany by proclamation, without consulting the elected legislatures where popular ministries were in power. To begin with, there was a lot of good will and sympathy for Britain in her hour of peril. But the profession of sympathy did not make Congress and the League oblivious to the opportunity for political bargaining. The League pledged its support on condition that no constitutional changes should be made without their agreement. The Congress demanded from Britain the declaration of complete independence for India as the price of their support in the war, and meaningful implementation of such a pledge forthwith. Such an assurance was not forthcoming. The Viceroy's declaration having failed to satisfy them, the Congress ministries in eight out of the eleven provinces all resigned their office in protest. Only the non-Congress ministries in Bengal, Sind and the Punjab pledged their support and continued in office after the Viceroy's announcement. Popular governments were suspended following the resignation of Congress ministries and the governors took over the administration in those provinces.

Following the resignation of the Congress ministries, the League called upon the Muslims to observe the occasion on the 22nd of December 1939, as the 'Day of Deliverance'. This was obviously done in response to the rejection of their offer to cooperate with the Congress two years ago, when provincial ministries were formed. Thus the breach

between the two principal political parties began to widen with the lapse of time. Ruefully Pandit Nehru wrote to Jinnah "our sense of value and objectives in life and politics differ so greatly". Pandit Nehru perhaps forgot, it was the Congress rejection (under his inspiration) of the Muslim League's offer to cooperate in ministry making only two years ago, which has set them on divergent paths of politics leading to such an impasse.

I left Rangpur on transfer to Dhaka before the end of the year (1939). This was rather an unusual posting. Indian officers were not usually sent to their home district. So it turned out to be a stop gap arrangement and in less than four months I was on my way to Comilla to join there as the Additional Superintendent of Police.

Though my stay in Dhaka was brief, never-the-less it was a very pleasant and rewarding experience. The best part of my early youth had been spent there pursuing my studies from my school days up to the University. Although most of my contemporaries had left in pursuit of their calling, many of my old friends and relatives were still there to welcome my arrival. Touring in the district revived many old memories which never faded. I was fortunate enough to renew my acquaintance with many old faces and places.

Comilla was a fine little place. Social life was more lively than what I had found elsewhere. Unlike the Dhaka club where the admission of Indians was restricted, the Comilla station club was open to the local gentry which reduced the segregation of the officials from the local people. The Muslim society was enlivened by the presence of a number of zamindars who had obtained modern education both among men and women. My wife came in touch with a society of women still in seclusion, who had exposure to modern social life. This helped remove the problem of loneliness, which the wives of government officers had to face while moving from place to place at short intervals. Still, the social life of the Muslims and the Hindus revolved round their respective communi-

ties and no one seemed to bother how to remove or reduce mutual exclusiveness between the two. The hiatus began to cast its shadow on economic activities as it began to develop on modern lines. Some enterprising Hindu families opened two Banks in Comilla. The Comilla Union Bank and the Comilla Banking Corporation were the only institutions of their kind in the district. They were the two pioneers in providing banking facilities in the countryside where economic life was controlled largely by big business houses from Calcutta, Dhaka and Chittagong, places where banking facilities were confined. The two Banks soon began to exercise considerable influence on the course of business, and could make or ruin a businessman at their discretion, a power which they did not hesitate to exercise. Their preference for customers became a source of friction, against which there was no remedy. The restricted nature of Banking facilities available made their powers even more pervasive in the business circle. I soon became aware of this problem faced by some Muslim traders who were compelled to go to the Bankers of Chittagong to obtain accommodation, that was not available near their homes.

The late Mr. Zakir Hussin was the superintendent of Police when I joined my post at Comilla. He left the District soon after and was succeeded by Mr. J.N. Roy, a famous football player in his youth. He was better known for his prowess in soccer than his status as a police officer. I soon realised this was a great asset, enhancing his prestige in public life and he was skilfully able to build upon this ability.

My posting at Comilla covered the best part of three years from April 1970 to December 1972. This was my longest period of posting at one station in my service life in India. Far reaching changes in politics and the approach of warfare close to the eastern frontier of the country covered those eventful years and dominated my service life at Comilla.

As mentioned before, the split between the Muslim League and the Congress was virtually complete by the end of the year 1939. The

out break of war seemed to have accelerated the process. The League in their annual session held in March 1940, at Lahore, formulated their demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims in the form of a resolution, which came to be known as the "Pakistan Resolution". Let me quote from the relevent portion of the resolution :—

“Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following principle viz, the geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments, as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute ‘independent states’, in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign”.

The resolution thus contemplated more than one territorial unit forming Muslim majority areas, which would constitute independent states as it ultimately turned out to be after the liberation of Bangladesh.

The resolution was the culmination of a process of political evolution which began with the adoption by the Congress their “Independence Resolution” in 1929 at Lahore. Negotiations for mutual accommodation of the two communities to live together within the framework of a political union at last failed and progressively increased the hiatus between the two, until a break became inevitable.

The “Lahore Resolution” at last provided an ideology and a clear political objective which successfully united the entire Muslim population of India under the leadership of the League ; at the same time it generated the political will and the drive for its attainment. The Muslims by virtue of their community of interest could now claim to be a separate nation when they demanded a homeland of their own, where they could have a government of their choice. Such a claim made in one voice by a large group of people eighty million strong, having close cultural

affinity and marked off from the other on similar grounds, truly gave a revolutionary turn to Muslim politics. The struggle for power at last obtained its clear objective, elevating the Muslim League to the same status and importance as the Congress, almost overnight. The call for independence animated the Muslims in the same manner as the Hindus, but the struggle now assumed new dimensions ; one was for the liquidation of the colonial power, the other was the liberation of the Muslims from the rule of the non-Muslims.

As could be expected, while the Lahore resolution was hailed by one side as the pathway to liberation, it was condemned by the other side as nothing short of a move towards treason.

This was a crucial point of time which called for coolheaded reassessment and a move towards conciliation ; but as fate would have it, both sides chose the war path.

The relationship between the two communities, none too happy as it was, began to get strained further. A communal riot of a serious nature broke out in Raipura police station of Dhaka across the River Meghna separating the two districts of Dhaka and Comilla. Following some disputes with the Hindu money lenders and land owners who were a small minority, the Muslim mobs attacked the Hindu villages, destroying much of their property by loot and arson extending over several days, forcing the Hindus to flee enmasse. The Additional District Magistrate, Mr. Hatch Barnwell, who was deputed with a small police force to suppress the riots, was seriously injured in a fracas. Reinforcements of police soon arrived at the scene of the riots and brought the situation under control. The seriousness of the riots can be judged by the fact that over one thousand criminal cases of looting, arson and assault were registered by the police covering the incidents. Many of the victims were able to return to their villages after the riots were suppressed ; but the Police drive against the accuseds of so many criminal cases created another problem of exodus and tension. Some of the absconders

were traced. They were found hiding across the river. Thus they were arrested inside Comilla district. This caused considerable worries for us. The members of the two communities began to lose confidence in each other and it was no longer possible to restore normal conditions. It was still difficult to perceive the shape of things to come, and how society was moving towards a civil war.

After the occupation of Poland by the Germans and the Russians, there was a brief lull in the war in Europe. Fighting flared up again in April when the German army over ran Denmark, Norway, Holland and Belgium in quick succession. The British forces were compelled to evacuate mainland Europe through Dunkirk at the beginning of June '40. Then the Germans over ran France. Italy joined Germany and declared war on Britain and France about the middle of the same month.

This was the hour of grave peril for Britain. Successful prosecution of the war was now their chief concern. All other considerations had to be postponed until she was able to retrieve her position. Resignation of the Congress ministries in the Provinces who had refused to cooperate, naturally came as a relief both to the British rulers and those concerned with administration. Preparations for the war could now proceed without let or hindrance. Still, the prospect of an understanding with the Congress was not dismissed. Both sides could not but realise the dangers which the war had brought ; yet each wanted to utilise the same in the process of bargasining. Doors for negotiation remained open with a view to find a way out of the impasse if possible, but no one was in a mood to relent yet.

The Forward Block, the left wing of the Congress under the leadership of Subhas Bose called upon the Congress to utilise the opportunity presented by Britain's preoccupation with her war in Europe, to declare open revolt by launching civil disobedience on a mass scale in protest against the refusal of the British to accept the demands of the Congress.

Other leaders, however, thought it fit to pause for a while to make an over all assessment of the situation before their next move.

The annual session of the Congress held at Ramgarh in March 1940, provided the occasion for formulating the policy towards the war. They confirmed their earlier decision, demanding the declaration of India as an independent country as the only requirement for their support. The session reaffirmed that the Congress could not collaborate in a war unless her own freedom could be ensured forthwith. Their demand virtually amounted to declaration of independence, a provisional government and an elected constituent assembly, which could formulate a constitution for India after the war.

Almost simultaneously the All India Muslim League in their annual session held in the same month at Lahore as mentioned before, had announced their demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims. The two announcements, containing the respective demands of the Congress and the League at last set the course of the political destiny of the subcontinent.

The Forward Block of the Congress, impatient for a show down, openly embarked on their campaign of civil disobedience soon after the Ramgarh session of the congress was over. Their leader Subhas Bose along with many of his compatiots were promptly arrested and imprisoned. Mahatma Gandhi, and the main body of Congress members were still undecided and kept themselves away from the campaign initiated by Subhas Bose. They were hoping agains thope that a compromise with the rulers was still possible, and the chaos and confusion which would inevitably engulf the country in case of an open revolt against the government, could be avoided. The resolution adopted by the Muslims League in their annual session at Lahore demanding independent homelnd was also causing a lot of concern to the Congressmen. This was evident from their reactions reported in contemporary newspapers. A response from the Viceroy was eagerly awaited.

Early in August '40, the Viceroy made an announcement, in which he repeated his first offer of full Dominion Status after the war. He added further his proposal to expand his executive council with Indian members, in lieu of provisional government and the setting up an advisory body to associate the Indians with the prosecution of war. As a gesture of good will to the League, he assured the Muslims they would not be forced to abide by a constitution to remain within the Indian Union, should they decide otherwise.

Having taken a definite stand on the question of independence and conditions for cooperation in the war, the Congress could not come to a compromise with the Viceroy without losing face, when the new offer fell short of what they had stipulated. The Congress thus had no option but to reject the offer. The Muslim League had taken a more flexible stand. Dominion Status had at last been assured with a definite date line, giving the substance of independence. As it turned out to be, power was ultimately transferred to two Dominion Governments after the war. It may be recalled that the first Governor General of India after liberation was Earl of Mountbatten, a British nobleman. The League could not agree to any interim arrangement without agreement on partition, which was the basic element in their future scheme of things. In this three cornered contest, so much depended on the pleasure of the power that be ; so, why antagonise the British government in their hour of peril when they could not possibly relinquish their responsibilities ? Two points which the League pressed for acceptance were, recognition of the League as the only representative body of the Muslims, and no constitutional changes without their agreement. Both the demands the rulers found acceptable, albeit indirectly. Formal acceptance was not called for. Hence the League thought it fit to be reticent concerning the Viceroy's declaration. But collaboration in the war was generally assured by their silence. Further steps were to be decided on merit of each case.

Having rejected the Viceroy's call for collaboration, the Congress had no alternative but to join the civil disobedience movement initiated by the Forward Block a short time ago. Mahatma Gandhi once again took over the leadership, but he refused to extend it in the form of an open revolt contemplated by Subhas Bose. The exigencies of war still weighed heavily in his mind and he did not want to bring down chaos and confusion in the country in the name of civil disobedience. So the net result of Gandhi's intervention was a down-grading in the tempo of the movement, making it only symbolic. He still did not give up hopes to come to a settlement with the British rulers on political issues. Hard pressed by the exigencies of war, Britain might still see the advantage of coming to terms with the Congress to obtain their support in their struggle against the Fascists who were opposed to the ideals of democracy cherished equally by the British and the Indians.

So, Mahatma Gandhi decided to launch a new variety of "Satyagraha" on a selective basis. Individually, volunteers would call upon their countrymen to refrain from assisting the government by shouting anti-war slogans in public places. Such action would transgress the Defence of India Act ; hence the offender would get himself arrested, which was the purpose of offering Satyagraha or self-sacrifice. The movement was nothing more than registering a protest. It took place in many parts of the country. I had to deal with a few cases in Comilla town. In one of these, the chairman of the Municipality was involved. He was an old congressman, who was highly respected by everybody. The unpleasant task of arresting such a man was, however, performed in a good spirit on both sides. As might have been expected such a stunt failed to make any impression either on the government or the public. Although the movement was allowed to continue and a large number of congressmen courted arrest in this way, it failed both to bring about a change in the policy of the government, or obstruct the

war efforts in any way. Gandhiji's apparent intention to mount moral pressure on the British rulers failed to achieve any result.

In the mean time, war in Europe took a serious turn. After overrunning western Europe, Hitler's armies invaded Russia in June '41, and made rapid thrust into Russian territory. The military advance of anti-democratic forces began to cause serious concern for all those who believed in a democratic way of life, but the die hard Imperialists refused to relent.

In the far east, an undeclared war had been raging between China and Japan for a number of years. The Japanese army had occupied Manchuria and blockaded the entire sea board of China. This prevented material assistance reaching the Chinese Nationalist government, who were compelled to flee the capital city and establish themselves at Chungking in the mountain fastness of the interior. Their only line of communication left open with the outside world was a road constructed recently over the mountainous countries from the Burma border to Kunming, nearly four hundred miles away inside China. This was called the Burma Road. A fleet of trucks transported essential goods and the munitions of war to the headquarters of the Chinese government at Chungking, who were waging a relentless guerilla war against the Japanese.

Since the fall of France in 1940, she had lost control over her colonial possessions in French Indo-China, a region which is now divided into three states namely Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia. In the power vacuum thus created, the Japanese army promptly came in without any opposition and occupied French Indo-china soon after the surrender of France in Europe. They built up a huge military base at Saigaon, the capital city. This was a prelude to further conquest in South East Asia, The Japanese obviously wanted to dominate the region. The colonial powers whose possessions were threatened were the French, the Dutch and the British. France and Holland were already under the occupa-

tion of the Germans, and now Britain was locked in a life and death struggle with the victors. The Japanese thus had a free hand in dealing with the countries of S.E. Asia, since they could subdue China. The military situation thus turned progressively against the British, hemmed in as they were by the Germans in the west and the Japanese in the East. Burma and India were threatened directly by the advancing Japanese army who now arrived almost within striking distance of the Indian border.

War clouds began to gather over the eastern horizon causing increasing concern to government and public in the country. The civil disobedience movement had almost petered out by the middle of the year 1941 and it ceased to attract much notice. A large number of volunteers, including prominent congressmen courted arrest and were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment. Its efficacy as a movement for obtaining political reforms at a time when the country was faced with the danger of external aggression began to be questioned. The government in a fresh endeavour to conciliate the Congress, released the Congress volunteers from prison. No sooner was this done than Japan entered the war against the allies with a massive air attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th of December '41. The air strike took the American Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour completely by surprise and they suffered severe damage by the attack. The Japanese armed forces were for a while dominant in the entire Pacific and Indian ocean region. The two most powerful battleships of the British navy, H.M.S. Repulse and the Prince of Wales were sent to resist the Japanese navy's advance towards Singapore. They were sunk in their first encounter with the Japanese in the South China sea. Japan over-ran Malaysia, Singapore and the principal Indonesian islands in quick succession, and began to advance into Burma early in 1942. When Rangoon fell in the first week of March, a Japanese attack on India became imminent.

The Congress thought it fit to adhere to their decentralized policy of non-cooperation with the prosecution of the war, unless their demands

were conceded. In a last attempt to conciliate the Congress and convince them that the policy of the British government was in complete accord with the political aspiration of the Indians, a senior member of the British cabinet namely Sir Stafford Cripps was sent to visit India with a view to conclude an agreement, so that the war against the common enemy could be waged with an united effort of all concerned. The mission proved a failure however, and Sir Stafford returned home without achieving any result after hectic negotiations spread over two weeks.

Since the occupation of Singapore by the Japanese army early in 1942, President Roosevelt of the U.S.A. had been pressing Prime Minister Churchill to come to a political settlement regarding India so that the government and the people could put up united resistance against the invading Japanese. The relevant correspondence on the subject released after the war was over, revealed that the Cripps Mission to India was perhaps the outcome of Roosevelt's pressure on Churchill. It also indicated a lurking suspicion on the part of the British government against the motives of the Congress, and their increasing reliance on the Muslims as a stable element for the conduct of the war. As the Japanese army advanced closer and closer to the borders of India, this reliance was revealed more and more and justified by their conduct. Congress propaganda for Non-cooperation had little effect, if any, on the people at large and preparations for the war were proceeding without interruption.

In the proposed terms for a political settlement, the inclusion of a clause which might enable the Muslim majority areas to secede from the Indian union, the Congress could not yet reconcile. On the other hand, the Congress demand for a constituent Assembly where the decision would rest on a majority voting, was totally opposed by the Muslims. Until solutions could be found to these two opposing demands, no agreement to the basic political issue was possible.

Although for tactical reasons it was considered necessary for the League to maintain an independent stand so far as their options were concerned, there was no reason for hesitating in cooperating with the government in conducting the war without reservations. This spirit of cooperation in its turn put moral pressure on the British rulers to concede to the demand for a separate homeland. Such a separate Muslim state was at last emerging as a distinct possibility.

The failure of the Cripps Mission was the signal for the final breach between the government and the Congress. The breakdown of negotiations strengthened the hands of the extremist elements in the Congress, who began to clamour for a campaign of civil disobedience on a mass scale to force the government to come to terms. The attitude of Gandhi towards the issue also began to change as could be made out from his writings and pronouncements. Hopes for a peaceful settlement were ultimately abandoned, and the Congress high command set their mind to formulate a new course and a programme of action in order to retain their initiative. It was a point in time when the country had arrived at the cross road of her political destiny. Mere non-cooperation would push them into the wilderness where nothing could be achieved. Unless the Congress could adopt a positive course of action, it ran the risk of losing its grasp on the course of events at this crucial juncture. Something had to be done to retrieve its position as the leading political organisation in the country.

The government had given a clear and positive statement of policy and called for cooperation of the people in the hour of such a grave danger confronting the country. Interim administrative arrangements and post-war policy regarding the political reforms did not fail to create a favourable impression on a large body of the intelligentsia. When the Japanese army was knocking at the doors, war against the enemy was the prime concern of every one. Reports of Japanese invasion of Malaya and Burma and their advance towards India were flashed

daily in the press and attracted everybody's attention. No matter what the idealists of the Gandian school of thought had to say about the efficacy of passive resistance, no one with an iota of common sense could have any doubts about its futility in war or the intentions of the Japanese. The atrocities committed by the Japanese army since their invasion of the main land of China, were common knowledge. The nationalist press were strident in condemning their invasion. This was recalled as the Japanese army advanced towards the Indian frontier. Indian refugees from Burma began to pour into East Bengal and Assam in thousands carrying tales of atrocities and suffering of the people in areas under Japanese attack and occupation. Entry of the United States of America in the war as an ally against the German-Japan axis, created a climate of optimism as regards the final outcome of the war. But still the immediate danger of Japanese invasion across the eastern frontier loomed large and created lot of apprehensions in East Bengal and Asam. All these developments created a favourable climate of public opinion for rendering full cooperation and support for the government. At the same time as the combined Indian, British and American military forces began to move into Eastern India towards the frontier to engage in battle with the enemy, the civil administration regained its confidence in its ability to deal effectively with recalcitrants, should they ever chose to create trouble.

While the Allied armies moved towards the eastern borders of India to oppose the Japanese, the 14th Indian Division established their headquarters at Comilla. This happened in about March-April 1942. I was still holding the post of Addl. Supdt of Police. The Mainamati Hills, five miles east of the Town were selected for army encampment. Hundreds of temporary huts were put up in a few weeks to accommodate the officers and men. The encampment was given the look of a cluster of villages as camouflage against air attack.

In course of the excavations necessary for the construction of the underground shelters and ammunition dumps, a number of archaeological relics of an ancient Buddhist civilisation were discovered at Mainamati and the adjacent grounds. Those discoveries filled an important gap in the history of this region. A museum has since been set up on the site for the preservation of the relics. I had the pleasure of inaugurating the museum later while serving as a Minister to the Government of Pakistan in the year 1967-68.

An immense amount of construction work had to be undertaken to provide logistic support and enable a modern Army to mount their military operation in this region. The construction of a number of strategic roads, a chain of military airfields, river jetties and harbours was begun and completed at break-neck speed all over the countryside. They began to come up like magic. Construction work on such a huge scale, as well as other work relating to supply and services, provided employment to thousands of villagers. This created an air of prosperity never known before. It encouraged most people to forget politics for the time being and devote themselves to war, which now became almost everybody's preoccupation. The only unhappy incident was the evacuation of a large number of villages to enable the army to construct defensive positions, causing a lot of hardship to the people affected. They literally disappeared into the neighbouring jungle. Those who managed to survive the initial shock of being rejected, perished in the famine caused by the "Denial Policy", which came hard on the heels of the mass evacuation of the villages.

In order to deprive the enemy of any advantage which they might derive from local resources, it was ordered to remove all the country boats and surplus food grains from specified areas. Daudkandi in Comilla district was selected as one of the collecting centres for the boats. Within a few weeks more than ten thousand boats were collected at this centre alone. Generous compensations were paid to those who surren-

dred their boats. But monetary compensations provided only temporary relief. Those who have any experience of the physical conditions that prevail in the Gangetic delta would realise that without their boats, the villagers could hardly move out of their houses during the monsoons which seriously disrupted economic life of the rural areas. Deprived of their only means of transportation and surplus stock of food grains, they combined to create the pre-conditions of the man-made famine, which devastated the greater part of Bengal the following year 1943. Nearly three million people died of hunger and privation, by far exceeding the casualties suffered in the battlefields in six years of warfare ! The magnitude of the calamity came to notice only when day after day, hundreds of deadbodies were found littered on the streets of Calcutta of those hungry people, who came to the city for a morsel of food. The harrowing scenes of abject suffering were ably depicted in some of the sketches of the artist Zainul Abedin, which made him famous almost overnight. Thus the "Denial Policy", as it was called, while it decimated the population in the country side had little to do with the enemy. On the other hand it wrecked the pattern of rural economy and compelled perpetuation of wartime controls and regulations of civil supplies long after the war was over.

As soon as the 14th Division of the Indian Army moved into their quarters at Mainamati, Comilla Town was declared a non-family area. I sent my family away to Dhaka to live with my father-in-law. My residence was taken over by the Army and I had to share one house with the Superintendent of Police. One British Army major was billeted with us in the same house.

The Congress leadership found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They had somewhat lost face since the rejection of their demand by the government. Few, if any, responded to the call of the Congress for non-cooperation. Civil disobedience of the kind they had been conducting over one year, neither hindered the war efforts of government, nor

created any impact on the people. Progressively, the Congress found itself pushed into limbo. They had to do something to retrieve their lost position in the political life of the country. At last Mahatma Gandhi formulated his proposition to activate the Congress and give it a new sense of direction and purpose.

CHAPTER XIV

Open breach between Government and the Congress—"Quit India" Movement, 1942—My posting to Birbhum District—visit to Santiniketan (1943-44)

Mahatma Gandhi had now set forth his new proposition concerning the issue of war and independence of India in the following manner: Since the Indians had no quarrel with Japan, the latter could have no purpose for invading India. The actual quarrel was between two military powers over their global interests, with which the Indians had no concern. It was the presence of the British power in India which provided the "casus belli" to the Japanese. The only way to save India from the horrors of war was for the British to quit India and leave the Indians to manage their own affairs as best as they can. "Leave India in the hands of God" as Gandhi put it. The Congressmen were told to set up provisional governments in their respective areas to administer public affairs in the interim period. However, Gandhi admitted that it might bring about anarchy in the country for a while ; but that was the only way in which a new Indian society could emerge. Once free, the Indians would be able to come to terms with the Japanese and tell them to leave the Indians alone and go home. If they still persisted in their invasion, the non-violent resistance, which the Indians were taught over a generation would enable them to drive the Japanese away and recover their freedom.

This was the sum and substance of the proposition which launched the "Quit India" movement. Having formulated both the rationale and the directives in the form of a resolution, the All India Congress Commi-

tee passed the resolution without dissent in their meeting held in Bombay on the 7th and 8th of August 1942. The resolution demanded the immediate termination of the British rule in India. If the British rulers refused to comply, the resolution sanctioned launching of a mass struggle on the basis of non-violent principles on as wide a scale as possible. It was characterised as a non-violent revolt with sufficient indications that violence was not ruled out if provoked. It also gave a war cry "Do or Die", indicating the spirit in which the campaign should be conducted.

This was virtually an open call for revolt against the established authority which no government could ignore. The following morning all the members of the All India Congress committee (AICC) were arrested and their papers were seized by the Police. The initial action was followed up by a hunt all over the country to nab almost all the important leaders of the Congress and send them to prison as a preventive measure.

The action taken by the government caused very little surprise. A large number of congressmen and their associates were equally determined to retaliate all over the country. They were expecting a showdown and were prepared for it. Although the directives could not be communicated by the A.I.C.C., the arrest of the top ranking leaders came as a grave provocation to the local units of the Congress to strike in any way they thought fit.

As could be expected, reaction against the arrest of Congress leaders began in the form of popular demonstrations, closure of shops and strikes in schools and colleges all over the country. To start with, they were non-violent in character. The government had ample powers under the Defence of India Act to deal with such incidents which threatened peace and order. Stern measures were taken to put down such incidents. But the situation began to deteriorate and took a serious turn within a few days. Outbreaks of mob violence in the form sabotage, arson and

murder became widespread which were directed chiefly against the means of communication and transport, public property and against the law enforcing agencies employed to suppress the 'revolt'. Such incidents accompanied with violence, started simultaneously in many parts of the country and on such a large scale that the upheaval could not have taken place on the spur of the moment without forethought and preparation. The railways, the telegraph lines, and postal services were the chief targets of attack to sabotage the means of communication and transport, in which the key installations were singled out for demolition, so that the maximum amount of disruption could be caused with the minimum of effort. It was apparent that the saboteurs could infiltrate the technical staff of those installations with whose connivance disruption of communications could be brought about on a wide scale within a matter of days.

The railway and telegraph services between Bengal and the rest of India were suspended for several weeks hampering the movement of war supplies and the police forces deputed to suppress the uprising. Hundreds of railway stations and post offices were destroyed or damaged ; in some of the isolated places the local Congress units set up their own local units of administration and began to run their own government. Conditions of anarchy prevailed for several weeks in many parts of Behar, the United Provinces and Bombay where the civil administration ceased to function.

The leaders of the Muslim League found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. If the Congress succeeded in coercing the government to come to terms, the interests of the Muslims would be in jeopardy. On the other hand if they came out actively in support of the administration to suppress the revolt, such a move would precipitate, a serious communal clash. Ultimately the League high command decided to remain neutral and directed the Muslims to keep themselves completely aloof from the agitation, and desist from any provocative activity against

the Congress in any manner. The Muslims generally remained peaceful throughout the trouble-some episode, which helped a great deal to consolidate their own position, and establish their case for partition as the only solution of the political tangle in the subcontinent.

As a sequel to the slogan "Quit India" given by Gandhi to the congressmen to chase the British out, the Muslim League in their annual session held in December, 1943 at Karachi coined a new slogan "Divide and Quit", in reply to the former.

Although some trouble was anticipated in the wake of the action taken against congressmen throughout the country, there is no doubt that the magnitude of the upheaval took the government by surprise. But the resources at the disposal of the government were quite adequate to deal with the situation. The civil administration with the assistance of the military forces where necessary, was able to put down the uprising within six to eight weeks. The lines of communication and transport which had been damaged, were also repaired and restored within the same period of time. Assistance of technical and engineering units from the armed forces was readily available to reinforce the civil staff in such work wherever required. The presence of additional army formations which were raised, or who had arrived from the allied countries since the beginning of the war, could be mobilised to aid the civil administration. This proved decisive in dealing with the situation. Preparations for war were in full swing in Comilla district when the trouble started. In spite of all the precautions that could be taken by us to prevent damage, the saboteurs were able to remove a section of the railway track between Comilla and Laksam in one night causing the derailment of a goods train. The damaged track was restored within less than a day. Although threats of sabotage were present for some time, no further incidents took place. Political demonstrations practically ceased throughout the country until the war was over.

Looking back over the years at this critical Indo-British episode, one cannot but wonder how the British government in India was able to deal with such serious civil strife while also locked in a life and death struggle, without the imposition of Martial Law in the country. The confidence of the civil administration in their ability to deal with it was derived from their proper understanding of the political issues involved which prevented alarm and enabled the government to restore law and order with the minimum use of force to put down the rebellion. Martial Law was not necessary.

My three years tenure at Comilla enabled me to come in contact with local units of administration. Police work brought me in close touch with the Union Boards, the basic unit in the hierarchy of local government. They were closely involved with rural society having the general task of maintaining law and order in the country side with the help of the village watchmen under their management and control. The Union Boards also provided a convenient channel of communication and contact points in the far flung areas, where they were still the only vestige of government. Predominantly an elected body, leading men were attracted to seek election to the Union Boards. Board membership became a mark of distinction. Their functions were so limited in scope, however, that they failed to develop into an agency who could mobilise the resources necessary for the development of rural society. As the government assumed new functions and responsibilities, separate agencies were set up for their performance by-passing the Union Boards, who began to stagnate with the passage of time. A comprehensive system of local government failed to develop in this country.

One such up coming new public agency was the Debt Settlement Boards, set up for the liquidation of rural indebtedness. The burden of debt of the peasantry was considered to be the chief obstacle in the way of agricultural development and welfare of the rural people. The cooperative credit societies set up early in the century having failed to

achieve its purpose, the new institution was devised to sacale down the accumulated debt within reasonable limits and arrange for repayment in easy instalments over a period of 15 to 20 years. These Boards started functioning in 1937-38, which attracted the attention of those interested in rural development. While providing some measure of relief against excessive exactions of the money lenders, the problem of providing adequate credit facilities to the farmers still defied solution. Agricultural extension work to propagate improved methods of farming was unknown. Bengal was still considered to be surplus in agricultural production. Looking at the lush green fields of paddy and jute in the wake of the monsoons, no one bothered about possible improvement of agriculture. For nearly half the year, most of the land remained fallow and unproductive. Irrigation for agriculture was yet unknown in this part of the country.

There was an experimental Government farm in the outskirts of Comilla town. The district agriculture officer who was recently posted lived on the farm. He was trained in Japan and had learnt the Japanese language. Perhaps this was the reason of his posting to Comilla when the Japanese army was advancing through Burma. On a visit to the farm I asked him, how agricultural productivity could be higher in Japan,—a mountainous island—than our alluvial plain supposed to be the most fertile in the world. He explained, that fertility of the soil was only one among several factors, which determine productivity. Scientific farm management, and particularly longer hours of summer sun-shine in the temperate zone produced higher yields. While education and training of our farmers in better methods of farming can improve agricultural production, shorter hours of sun shine in the tropics during the growing season of the plant, will keep the yield lower in our country than in the temperate climes which enjoy much longer hours of sun shine in summer. It was a shocking revelation, condemning the Tropics to eternal poverty. I only hoped that progress of science will find a way out of this "sun shine" problem.

Towards the end of the year (1942) I took leave for rest and recreation, and left Comilla. I arrived in Calcutta a few days before Christmas. On the Christmas eve Calcutta had the first aerial bomb attack by a group of Japanese bombers. We were staying with our uncle in the Park Circus area. No bombs landed anywhere near Park Circus, but the fear complex was the same everywhere. Damage and casualties were very small, but the raid created a great deal of pain and an exodus of lot of people from the city.

Travelling from Comilla to Calcutta by rail and river steamer no sign of damage could be seen. The communication and transport lines damaged by the uprising a few months ago were fully repaired and restored, and normal traffic had resumed. I reached Hazaribagh with my family before the end of December without any difficulty.

After a hectic year crowded with civil commotion and war hysteria at Comilla, the two month's holiday at Hazaribagh was a very pleasant change. Situated on a low plateau about 40 miles away from the nearest railway station, the place was cool and sunny throughout the cold weather. Away from the beaten track and far from the maddening crowd, Hazaribagh provided the conditions of an ideal holiday resort I could imagine.

At the end of my leave I was posted to Suri the headquarters of Birbhum district, early in March, 1943. This was my first independent charge of the police force of a district. My living quarters were in a thatched bungalow with thick mud walls built for insulation against the heat which usually reached 110°F during the day in summer. There was no electricity or municipal water-supply. A masonry well provided the supply for the household.

The "Annals of Rural Bengal" a book compiled by W.W. Hunter in 1868, gives an account of a serious uprising of the tribal people, the Santals, living in this district causing a lot of trouble in the last century. Since then they had been looked upon with suspicion by the district administration. They were left to themselves as far as possible. Suc-

cessful penetration of their society by Christian missioneries had opened a line of communication which did a lot to cool down their temper. Peaceful conditions had now prevailed for many years. The district had a consistently surplus production of paddy. This brought prosperity to the farmers. Situated outside the war zone, the area was untouched by the "Denial Policy" and the consequent famine which ravaged the rest of the Province. Construction of a number of military airfields and strategic roads had provided employment to the tribal people on a large scale, breaking down the barrier which had isolated them from their neighbours. At the same time, not being exposed to threats of invasion, a cheerful spirit prevailed all round. Many well-to-do people of Calcutta evacuated their families to Suri and other places in Birbhum district wherever accommodation was available. Bolepore and Santiniketan, the place where Poet Tagore built his famous institution "Viswabharati", were crowded with evacuees from Calcutta.

Birbhum district can claim to be an important place in the cultural history of Bengal. Two famous poets of the middle ages namely Joydeb and Chandi Das were born in this district. Kendubilla, the birth place of Joydeb and Nanoor, a village with which the name of Chandi Das is associated, are visited by many of their devotees every year. Their compositions have been given a high place among the scriptural literature by certain sects of the Hindu society.

Lastly, the establishment of "Viswabharati" by the Nobel Lauriate, Tagore, renewed the ancient glory of Birbhum.

Soon after joining my post at Suri, I paid a visit to Santiniketon. The poet had passed away less than three years ago. The institution had grown up under the inspiration of his towering genius, whose very presence infused it with life and light. It now appeared to be a mere shadow of its former self which I could still visualise. There was no second man who could endow it with a spark of that spell and charisma which the immortal poet could bestow in his lifetime. I was taken round the cam-

pus and the poets residence, the "Uttarayan", by an old resident, narrating some interesting episodes of the poets' life and association of some of his works with the various places we went round.

Equally interesting was meeting some of the celebrities who made their homes in the colony. One was a famous artist Mukul Dev, who had retired as the principal of Calcutta Arts School. Full of energy, he still devoted himself to his artistic work after retirement from government service. Myself and my wife had the pleasure of looking at some of his latest paintings which he had in this possession. The other celebrity whose works I had read, was Kanti Ghosh. He had translated Omar Khyyam into Bengali. He was a taciturn sort of a man who could not be drawn into discussions over his compositions. He however felt concerned about the war and the recent advance of the Japanese army close to the borders of Assam and East Bengal. The artist Mukul Dev, whom I met on several occasions, appeared to be quite unconcerned and never uttered a word about the war raging right on the borders of the country.

Poets and artists were not the only persons who formed the society of Santiniketan. There were others, down to earth sort of persons, who took care of the humdrum part of the task to make the institution a going concern. The principal of the College was A.K. Chanda, who spent a part of his student life in Dhaka while his brother was the Principal of Dhaka College. He was an old acquaintance of mine, whom I had met at his brothers place, years ago. He was kind enough to introduce me to the inner circle of Santiniketan, who usually preferred to maintain some sort of a distance from the commoners.

The Librarian of the Institution, Provat Kumar Mukherji, was a close associate of the poet for many years. His residence was close to the rest house I used to put up while visiting Bolepor. Occasionally I spent the evening listening to his stories of the poets life, narrating how his genius had developed hand in hand with the maturity of his

experience. A new side of the poet's work, not generally known which came to my knowledge was his concern for rural development. While on tours of his extensive estates for collection of rent, he devoted a lot of his time and attention to the problem of agriculture and cottage industries which were the mainstay of the rural economy. A new institution was set up under his direction at Surool, not far from Santiniketan devoted to the development of cottage industries, under the name "Sreeniketan", where arrangements were made for training and extension work, for the benefit of the villagers. This was perhaps the first institution of its kind devoted to the task of rural development in this country.

The anniversary of the poet's birthday which falls on the 25th of Baisakh according to the national calendar equivalent to the 8th or the 9th of May, was the occasion for the annual reunion of the alumni of the "Vishabharati". This was the time to meet many of the surviving celebrities of the Tagore family, who usually visit Santiniketan on this occasion. Most of them lived in Calcutta, visiting Santiniketan only occasionally. The place was becoming a colony of retired people ; but now it was full of evacuees from Calcutta to escape possible air attacks on the city.

We spent just about eighteen months at Suri and had a very pleasant time throughout the period. I was transferred to Alipore, the headquarters of the 24 Parghanna district as Addl. Supdt of Police in charge of civil defence in September 1944. This brought me face to face with the on going preparations for the war against the Japanese army.

The "Quit India" movement and the violent agitation which was launched by the Congress following the arrest of its leaders the previous year, were suppressed successfully within two months as mentioned before. I did not see any sign of such disturbances in Birbhum. Open political activities were practically suspended and I cannot recall any disturbance of peace and order throughout 1943 & 1944. Towards the middle of 1944, the allied forces were in a position to mount the counter-offensive against the enemy to drive the Japanese forces out of South East Asia.

CHAPTER XV

Exploits of Netaji Subhas Bose - and the Indian National Army, the INA - (1941-1945)

While the exigencies of war and stern action against the dissenting groups cast political activities in the doldrums, some other incidents created a lot of excitement among the Indians and a great deal of concern for the government. The outbreak of war initially divided the Congress leadership into two schools of thought. The rightist group under the leadership of Gandhi called for patience and advocated negotiated settlement with the British government for political emancipation and abstention from creating trouble in their hour of peril as far as possible. At the opposite pole, the Forward Block under the leadership of Subhas Bose believed, that the time of deliverance had at last arrived, which must not be frittered away in fruitless negotiations. The British rulers would never relinquish power voluntarily ; they would have to be compelled to quit India by force. Their pre-occupation with war in Europe provided the Indians with an opportunity to rise in revolt against the British government to drive them out of the country and regain freedom. He, therefore, wanted to launch civil disobedience on a country-wide scale to paralyse the administration and compel the rulers to come to terms with the Congress. An account of the negotiations between the Congress and the government leading up to the 'revolt' of August 1942 and their suppression have been related in the foregoing chapter.

The government watched the activities of the Forward Block with increasing concern after they had launched their civil resistance soon after

the Ramgarh congress in March 1940. Subhas Bose was put under arrest early in July 1940 under the Defence of India Rules and detained in prison without trial, thus removing the chief fire-brand from the political arena.

The main body of the Congress was not ready yet to precipitate a crisis. They were content with shouting anti-war slogans by individual 'satyagraha' volunteers and courting arrest as symbolic protest against an unresponsive government. The campaign soon languished and failed to elicit any response either from the government or the people. Early in December, Subhas Bose was released from detention. He remained inactive after returning home to Calcutta and appeared to lead a quiet life. The security forces maintained a close watch on his house, where he was seen up to the middle of the following month, that is January 1941. Then he suddenly became untraceable. His disappearance was not noticed by the authorities for over a week after he was last seen in his house. A country-wide hunt failed to trace him. A few months later it was reported that his voice had been heard over the German radio from Berlin while broadcasting anti-British propaganda directed towards India. The escapade of Subhas Bose, hoodwinking the vigilance of the security forces and his subsequent emergence in Berlin thrilled his many admirers, while it created a lot of dismay among the authorities.

The story of the escapade as related subsequently, indicate that Bose left his home at night by car, got into a railway train from a way-side station and travelled to the N.W. frontier with the intention to go to Germany. He travelled across Afghanistan into Russia, then he was conveyed by a Russian aeroplane to Berlin. To enable Bose to undertake such a long journey in secrecy, must have involved a lot of preparation and advance planning ; but no authentic information was ever available as to how this was done.

It was reported that after his arrival in Germany, he was allowed to contact the allied prisoners of war captured by the German army, in an attempt to win over and organise them to fight against the British power in India. How this could be done from Europe or N. Africa where the Germans were still holding important positions, was not related anywhere.

Bose's attempts to persuade the prisoners of war proved unsuccessful. This was evident from the fact that none of them were prosecuted after the war for collaboration with the enemy, as was done in some cases in India. Except for making an anti-British broadcast over the German radio, Bose achieved little by his escape to Berlin. After the German invasion of Russia a few months later in June '41, Subhas Bose's mission to Germany turned into a fiasco.

The outbreak of war in the Pacific region and the rapid advance of the Japanese armed forces through Malaysia, Singapore and Burma towards India, opened up a new vista before Bose for intervention in the war nearer home, which was his heart's desire. He was of no use to the Germans or in the European theatre for war. In compliance with his wishes the German government despatched him in a submarine, the only device by which the vigilance of the British navy could be beaten enroute. By prior arrangement, Bose was transferred to Japanese submarine somewhere in the Indian Ocean, which brought him to the Japanese occupied territories in the East Indies. He was taken to Tokyo to negotiate with the Japanese government. Subhas Bose broadcast a message to his country-men from Tokyo. He was received by the Japanese Prime Minister Tojo. What transpired in the talks, or whether any agreement was reached, was never revealed and remained a mystery. It was however given out that Japan pledged full independence to India after the end of the war.

From Tokyo, Subhas Bose travelled to Singapore early in July '43, where his arrival was eagerly awaited by a group of Indians preparing

for collaboration with the Japanese invading forces. The Japanese armed forces had occupied the place five months before and were advancing through Burma towards India at an incredible pace.

An old revolutionary from Bengal, namely Rash Behari Bose, who was living in exile, came to Singapore along with the Japanese army to organise the Indian prisoners of war, with a view to turn them against the British. It may be recalled that the same person was the leader of terrorist group in northern India, who made an attempt on the life of the Viceroy with a bomb in Delhi thirty years ago. The bomb had seriously injured Lord Hardinge and killed one of his aide's. The surrender of British armies in Malayasia and Singapore left a large number of prisoners of war with the victors. They were all trained soldiers. The victory of the Japanese army and their rapid advance towards India, encouraged him to organise an Indian contingent out of the prisoners of war and volunteers who could take part in the battle to drive the British out of India. If the Britishers could be defeated in Malaysia and Singapore so easily by the Japs, they could as well be driven out of India with the help of the defectors from the Indian Army. Participation of a contingent of India Armed forces in the final battle for the liberation of the motherland was the ambition of this old revolutionary.

It is perhaps redundant to mention that the scheme for the Indian National Army (I.N.A.) was formulated with the approval of the Japanese government. Rash Behari Bose, who had settled in Japan as an exile, was its architect. He gathered round him a small body of associates drawn from Indian residents of the occupied areas and established what was known as the Indian Independence League, with himself as the President. With a great deal of effort and persuasion, they were able to induce a large number of the prisoners of war to join the I.N.A.

The hardships of daily life which the prisoners of war had to endure, defy description. It could not be otherwise, when the very fabric of society collapsed under the impact of war and defeat. Reports of coer-

coin were not unfounded. The last hope of better treatment induced many of them to join the I.N.A. Finally, as was discovered later, the prospects of finding a way to return home motivated a lot of them to join. Still there were others who refused to join.

When Subhas Bose arrived in Singapore early in July '43 Rash Behari Bose, now an old man, handed over the charge of the organisation he had built up together with the I.N.A. to him. Rash Behari came to Singapore at the fag end of his life. There, he was confronted with a task which was beyond his ability to manage. He died soon after.

Subhas Chandra Bose must have thought he at last got the chance of his lifetime to lead an army of liberation to win the cherished freedom of his country. In the ceremony which conferred on him the office of the President of the Indian Independence League, he was hailed as the NETAJI'- the Leader-' a title by which he is known to this day. He announced his policy to set up a Provisional Government of independent India, and mobilise the I.N.A. to liberate the mother land from the alien rule.

As could be expected, the Provisional Government was nothing more than a paper organisation. Besides a few announcements and flag hoisting ceremonies, very little is known about its activities. The I. N.A. absorbed most of the time and energy of the Netaji who got himself involved in the task with heart and soul. In agreement with the Japanese command in Burma, a contingent of the I. N. A. was despatched along with the Jap army marshalled to invade India, through the Eastern borders of Assam and Bengal.

The allied armed forces of which the Indian army formed a part, were initially sent to Malaysia and Burma to fight the Japanese invaders. They were evidently not properly trained and equipped for jungle warfare in tropical forests, with which the entire region is covered. This is supposed to be the main reason why their resistance collapsed and they were so easily defeated by the Japs. Ravages of torpical diseases like

malaria rapidly reduced the strength and vitality of the soldiers. Without adequate measures to safeguard the health, the fighting qualities of the army were undermined. The INA suffered from similar deficiencies when they joined the Japanese invaders. The rank and file were particularly vulnerable and large number of soldiers were struck down with tropical diseases and dropped out of their units. It was the timely discovery of potent drugs against malaria and powerful insecticides like the D.D.T. and their use which made it possible for the allied armies when they returned, to fight in the feverish tropical jungles of Burma and such other places, without seriously endangering their health. In the field of medicine, the allies were much ahead of the Japs, giving the former a distinct edge over the later to maintain the fighting qualities of the army in the second phase of the war in South-East Asia. Long lines of communication without adequate facilities for mechanical transport, rendered the invading forces vulnerable to attacks from the allied army, who were strongly entrenched near their home bases all along the Indian borders. The Allies having learnt their lesson from their initial defeat three years ago, were now equipped and adequately prepared against such contingencies. They returned to fight and smash the combined Japanese and INA forces on the Eastern borders, when the attacks were launched in the cold weather of 1944-45. The defeat of the Japs soon turned into a rout. They were pushed back almost at the same speed they had advanced a few months earlier. They were cleared out of Burma and Malaysia by the middle of 1945, without any prospect of fighting back to regain their position.

Unlike what had been visualised by the Netaji, there was very little fighting between the INA and the allied armed forces. Many of the former, - I was told almost all - surrendered without a fight, when they found a chance to give themselves up at the border. As mentioned before, the intention to return home at the earliest opportunity was at the back of their mind when the prisoners of war joined the INA. After

their long trek through the feverish forests of Burma, most of them were suffering from disease and privation. They were unfit to stand up to the rigors of warfare. The remnants of the INA, still at Rangoon and Singapore were made prisoners of war for the second time when the Allied forces reoccupied the cities shortly after.

The Nataji made his way to Bangkok to avoid falling into the clutches of his enemies. While travelling by a Japanese plane from a station in Formosa to Tokyo, he met with an accident and died soon after from the injuries sustained by him. Thus ended the meteoric career of a patriot, and the Saga of the I.N.A.

CHAPTER XVI

Fresh approach to resolve political deadlock - Changes in the fortunes of war - My posting in Alipore in charge of Civil Defence - 1944-45.

I arrived Alipore on transfer, early in Oct. 1944.

Alipore is a suburb of Calcutta which has to share all the weal and woe of the Metropolis in the same measure. My residence was close to Calcutta Fort area, known as the St. Georges Gate. The landlord who lived in the ground floor of the apartment house was a friendly old Haji, who assured me that the proximity of the Fort need not cause any alarm, as the area was so strongly defended that the enemy aircraft could never approach the fort.

When I passed through Calcutta towards the end of December 1942, the city was under a pall of gloom and despondency. The invading Japanese army had conquered and occupied almost the entire south east Asian region in course of the year 1942. The British possessions in Malaysia and Singapore were over run so easily that it appeared as if nothing could stem the tide of the Japanese advance. Singapore, considered to be one of the strongest bastions of British defence protected by the biggest guns mounted in their batteries, surrendered without firing a shot. Amusing stories were told about the collapse of the defence of Singapore; that the big guns were manufactured in the United Kingdom, while the shells were made in the ordinance factory at Cossipore near Calcutta. When the time arrived to fire the guns, the shells would not fit. The guns never boomed!

The invading Japanese armies were rapidly advancing through Burma towards Assam and Bengal. It was thought that they would soon be in a position for an assault on the Indian territory. The city of Calcutta had its first aerial attack by Japanese bombers on the Christmas eve of 1942. Although the damage caused was very small, there was a great deal of panic and a lot of exodus from the city mentioned before.

The fortunes of war began to turn, however, by the middle of 1943. After their retreat and the initial shock of defeat, the allied armed forces were regrouped and reinforced adequately to mount a counter-offensive against the enemy. The flower of the Japanese army was decimated by casualties in the fighting as well as from disease and privation associated with jungle warfare launched without adequate logistic support. Moreover, the American counter-offensive in the Pacific region, which was mounting daily in volume and intensity against the long and vulnerable line of communication of the enemy, compelled the Japanese high command to withdraw the greater part of their air and naval units, which reduced their strength in the Indian theatre of war.

The discomfiture of the combined Japanese forces and the I.N.A. on the eastern frontier of India has been related in the foregoing chapter. Before launching their counter-attack, the allied high command organised and launched extensive guerilla attacks against the communication lines stretching between the Japanese fighting lines and their base, hundreds of miles away. The guerilla forces called the "Chindits" were dropped from air-craft by parachute far behind the enemy lines. They wrought havoc to their supply lines preventing stores and war munitions reaching the Jap forces operating far away from their bases. With practically no reserves and being isolated in the inhospitable jungle terrain of tropical Burma, the remnants of the Japanese army fell an easy prey to the counter attacks of the much better equipped allied forces.

When I arrived Alipore in October '44, the tide war had already begun to turn in favour of the allied powers. There was a growing sense of optimism everywhere. All doubts about the final outcome of the war were put at rest. The city which had witnessed panic in December '42, was rapidly returning to normal life and reaching a level of activity hardly known before. There was an air raid on the Calcutta docks in broad day light a short time before which killed and injured over six hundred people ; but it did not start any panic and most of the survivors returned to their tasks in a few days. That was the last air raid on Calcutta. Although there were a few more alerts, none of the enemy air craft could penetrate the air defences around Calcutta again.

The city as well as the suburbs looked as if they were under military occupation. The entire Maidan area surrounding the fort, had been converted into a huge military encampment. All round the area every other man was in uniform. Never-ending military convoys held up traffic for hours at a time. The requirements of supply and service gave a big boost to trade and commerce. The shops, restaurants, cinema houses, and the taxies were all doing brisk business. There was a sudden increase of population in the city. This, together with the necessity to support large military establishments, combined to put tremendous pressure on the municipal services, power supply and communication systems ; but they could take the extra load without causing serious breakdown. At times I wondered how this could be done.

After sun set, with their heavily shaded lights the city plunged into darkness. Constant movement of military vehicles made it very risky to venture out into the streets after dusk. Accidents multiplied with no prospects of detection. Necessities of life were in short supply and prices of almost every commodity began to escalate. Imported medicines had already disappeared from the market. Simple drugs locally manufactured began to appear as substitutes. The entire industrial

belt on the Hooghly river got a tremendous boost from the increasing demand for their products to meet the exigencies of war. Even small and cottage industries were doing good business where ever communications with the market could be maintained. Since the invasion of Russia by the German army, the communist Party of India declared it to be a 'peoples' war', calling for everybody's support in full measure. Thanks to their cooperation, there were no strikes or lockouts and peaceful conditions prevailed on the industrial front throughout the war.

My principal task was to ensure the collaboration of the police force with the war time agencies set up to organise passive defence against enemy air raids ; these were the Air Raid Precautions, or A.R.P. as they were called. Local schemes were prepared to deal with post raid contingencies, Their efficiency had to be tested by holding combined exercises once a week in different areas. Elaborate arrangements were made to control outbreaks of fire, carry out rescue work, to apply first aid to the injured and their removal to hospitals, all with a view to reducing damage by air raids as far as possible.

Our weekly meetings following these combined exercises, became an unofficial forum for exchange of latest information concerning the war on so many fronts. The advance and retreat of the Japanese forces on the Assam-Bengal front, the formatin of the I.N.A., and their ultimate surrender were monitored carefully and discussed amongst ourselves. Although the I.N.A. had ceased to exist by the time I joined Alipore, I had the opportunity to hear a lot of their stories in course of such encounters with the civil defence personnel who had plenty of time to devote on such a subject of current interest. In spite of the long standing dispute with the Congress and the stern measures taken by the government against thousands of congressmen in the wake of the August '42 disturbances, I was yet to come across any one who wished for the defeat of the allied powers either in S.E. Asia or in Europe. What was the rationale for the revolt, or what about Subhas Bose's hobnobbing

with the enemy? No one could tell. These were questions which have remained unanswered.

As the Japanese forces were pushed out of Burma, the A.R.P. establishment became redundant and they were disbanded soon after.

In the political arena, the Muslim lobby in Calcutta was agog with rising expectation. In spite of the occasional clash between Jinnah and Fazlul Haque, Bengal was supposed to be in safe hands and the provincial leadership was ready to abide by the policy of the League. The difference between the two leaders was mostly because of the tendency of the former to interfere in provincial affairs which was resented by Fazlul Haque rather than over any matter of policy.

The central leadership was more concerned about the Punjab and the N.W. Frontier Provinces, where the non-League elements were still predominant. In the Punjab the Unionist Party, and in the Frontier province, the Party of Khan Abdul Ghaffar, a close associate of the Congress were in control. So the League high command had to devote more time and attention on those areas still outside their fold to win them over on the side of the League.

The arrest and detention of almost all the important leaders of the Congress to suppress the uprisings of August '42, reduced the influence of the Congress in the political life of the country at a time when far reaching changes were in the offing as a result of the progress of the war. Whatever may have been the indirect influence of the political movements launched under the inspiration of the Congress in the course of the last twenty five years, their tangible results were rather poor. The Muslims could not be drawn into the fold of the Congress or into collaboration with their anti-British agitations. They were none the worse for it. Under the old agreement they managed to obtain a reasonably satisfactory status for their community in the prevailing political milieu so long as the British power ruled over India. The position changed radically, as the time for the termination of British rule drew near. A political settle-

ment was necessary to enable the two communities, the Muslims and the Hindus, to live peacefully in freedom. But this was not to be. The Muslims therefore saw the "writing on the wall" and set their mind to find a way out. Thus a break with the past became inevitable. The demand for partition of the country to give them an independent homeland was the result of this endeavour. But the opposition of the Congress representing the Hindus and the leanings of the British rulers to preserve the political unity of the subcontinent, were still formidable hurdles in the way of attaining such an objective.

The absence of the Congress leaders at such a crucial point of time from the political arena enabled the League to unite the entire Muslim community under its political leadership. Politically, it improved the position of the League and gave them the strength they needed to compel the British as well as the Congress to recognise their claim.

The proposal formulated by Sir Stafford Cripps with the blessings of the British Cabinet to resolve the political deadlock, virtually conceded the claim of the Congress for independence as well as the demand of the League to have a separate state for the Muslims. It was a compromise as far as the conflicting claims of the two sides could be accommodated. The last issue which remained unresolved, was whether there should be one or two states to be carved out of the Indian Empire. This vital issue had to be left in the hands of the leaders of the two communities to resolve. The die was thus cast for moulding the political destiny of the country. The Muslim Leagues while rejecting the proposal, made it clear that the terms the offer did not go far enough to satisfy their demands for a separate political entity for the Muslims to be independent and sovereign. Hence there was little scope to return to the old concept of keeping India undivided as one independent country.

Mahatma Gandhi at last realised that the only hope of resolving the deadlock and going ahead with his task of reconstruction, lay on a poli-

tical settlement with the League. He authorised Rajagopalachari, a senior member of the Congress to open negotiations with the League for the first time on the basis of partition. Thus a new chapter was opened in the negotiations between the League and the Congress for the settlement of the basic political issue. Soon the negotiations were taken over at the highest level between Jinnah and Gandhi. It was reported that discussions took place on the basis of an outline of a scheme for partition produced by Gandhi, but the talks were inconclusive. It seemed neither of the two leaders were sure enough how far they could go, or be able to carry their party caucus with them on this very sensitive issue. While the demand for Pakistan was becoming ever more strident among the Muslims, on the other side the Hindus were getting more and more impatient with the claim of the former. So, they thought it fit to postpone decision and bid for time. As could be expected the fresh move on the part of Gandhi brought forth widespread protests from most of the Congressmen and particularly the Hindu Mahasabha ; but the issue of partition as the only way to a settlement of the communal problem, had already reached the point of no return. Soon it became evident it was the only hurdle, which remained in the path to the liberation of the Subcontinent.

The industrial belt of Calcutta along the left bank of R. Hoogly was divided into a number of small municipalities administered by elected bodies. While touring in the area in course of my work I came in contact with the chairmen and members as well as the local gentry. The majority of the inhabitants living in the urban areas were Hindus. This was reflected in the composition of the municipal bodies. Rarely, if ever, I came across an elected Muslim member of the municipal council. The District Board was a unit of Local Government covering the entire district, a much wider region, presented a different picture. It was largely an elected body drawing its membership from both communities, roughly in proportion to their number in the voters list. Unlike the

legislative bodies, where elections were held on the basis of separate electorates for the Muslims and the Hindus, the elections to the Local Bodies, such as the Municipality and the District Board, were held on the basis of joint electorate. Never-the-less, voting in elections largely followed communal lines. The population of the district outside the industrial belt was predominantly Muslim. Hence they had an edge over the Hindu community in elections to the District Board. The Chairman was a Muslim, namely Khan Bahadur Jasimuddin. He had close contact with the official circles, giving him an advantage in vote gathering.

My encounter with the cross section of the intelligentsia, who filled the elected bodies gave me an opportunity to make an assessment of the general opinion about the sensitive political issue which agitated everyone's mind. Towards the end of 1944, when I joined my post at Alipore, a calm atmosphere prevailed on the political horizon. The ice was at last broken by the reopening of talks between messrs Jinnah and Gandhi. This was the signal for the renewal of political activities. As mentioned before it began at the initiative of Mr. Gandhi who reopened talks in an endeavour to reach a settlement on the basis of a scheme for partition sponsored by him.

But any scheme for partition as a basis of political settlement was still an anathema to the Hindus. Mention of partition by no less a personage than Mahatma Gandhi himself, who so long stoutly opposed it came to them as a shock and a surprise. It unleashed a storm of protest from the entire Hindu press and the intelligentsia as if the community was being let down by their leader, just as they were on the threshold of independence. A general impression seems to have grown among the Hindus that the non-cooperation of the Congress on the one side and the willing collaboration of the League on the other in the prosecution of the war, may have induced the British government to become sympathetic to the demand of the latter for the partition of India. It was also suggested that without some understanding with the British

government, the Muslim League could not possibly have taken such a bold stand, as demanding division of the country. Such a division fits with their general policy of divide and rule to serve the interests of the Imperialists. The scheme for the partition of India was the result of a deeply laid conspiracy to perpetuate the control of the western powers over this region. This was the line of arguments which formed the burden of protest against any compromise on the basic question of preserving the unity of the country. The members of the Hindu community with whom I had the chance to talk were outspoken in their approach to this sensitive issue. They blamed Gandhi for being too soft with the League to the extent of jeopardising the larger interests of the country.

Initially many of the Muslim leaders, although agreeing that the demand for a separate independent state was the best course for the Muslims to adopt, were still in doubt how far such a solution was even feasible. More than one source having contact with fairly high level of leadership in the League told me, that such a stand was taken to get the best possible deal for the Muslims in the process of bargaining. But the position began to change rapidly with the Passage of time.

The end of the war was at last in sight. The German army surrendered to the Allies early in May 1945, and the defeat of the Japanese was only a matter of time.

The negotiations between the League and the Congress having failed to bring about an agreement, the Viceroy Lord Wavell now thought it fit to take the initiative to find a way out of the deadlock. Early in the following year, 1945, he went to London to discuss with the Cabinet, the general plan of a settlement. Soon after his return all the members of the Congress working committee who had been in custody since the "Quit India" movement, were released from prison to prepare the grounds for the fresh round of negotiations

In a conference with the leaders of the political parties held in Simla, the Viceroy gave his plan for an interim government by reconstituting his executive council with the nominees of the parties according to an agreed formula, which will work under the existing constitution until a new one is framed. Although the Viceroy's plan was generally hailed, it ultimately failed to materialise because of disagreements among the leaders on various provisions of the scheme and it was ultimately abandoned.

A general election was held in Britain in 1945 soon after the surrender of the German army. Contrary to expectations of many observers, the Conservative Party who was in power under the leadership of Churchill during the war, was defeated in the elections and the Labour Party was returned to Parliament with an absolute majority for the first time in history. The Labour Party came to power with a clear mandate to grant independence to India. The new Prime Minister Mr. Attlee, lost no time to repeat his assurance to honour their pledge. The stage was thus set for the final round of negotiations to resolve the problem of the transfer of power to the Indian people.

It was announced that the elections to the Central and Provincial legislatures of India would be held in the ensuing cold weather of 1945-46. The last election to the central legislature was held in 1935, and to the Provinces in 1937. Hence the announcement of fresh elections, long overdue, served to clear the political horizon and set the Parties busy with preparations for the elections. In their manifesto the Congress announced it would contest the elections on the issue of Indian unity but they were wise enough to include a proviso saying that the terms did not imply compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in the Indian Union against their political will. The transfer of power was no longer in dispute. The Muslim League manifesto was based on the single issue of Pakistan.

I left Alipore on transfer to Barisal a few weeks before the elections. Publicity and propaganda launched by the parties soon got into full

swing. The prospect of having a separate and independent homeland whipped up tremendous enthusiasm among the Muslims. The doubts and indecision I had noticed among a good section of Muslim intelligentsia less than a year ago about the feasibility of partition, had disappeared. The election propaganda had the effect of carrying the message of the League manifesto to the Muslim masses in the furthest corner of the country. Only about 20% of the adult population were enfranchised, but the election meetings drew huge crowds where the manifesto was endorsed unanimously. A new feature noticed in the election propaganda, was the participation of students in the campaign. They turned out in large numbers and made house to house approaches to enlist the support of the voters to the programme and candidate set up by their party.

The election meetings of the Congress were also well attended, but their proceedings appeared to be rather subdued. They lacked the euphoria that I could notice in the League meetings. The prospect of partition of India seemed to have reduced the exuberance among the Hindus one would have expected to see on the eve of independence. At least that was how it appeared to me.

But those meetings also high-lighted another side of the history of political evolution. The system of separate electorates segregated the Muslims from the Hindus in the process of selecting their representatives, thus removing the cause of communal tension on such sensitive occasions and allowing the elections to take place in a peaceful atmosphere I shuddered to think what would have happened during those crucial elections had the issue of partition of the country been contested on the basis of joint electorate. A civil war would perhaps have started before the elections were over.

As might have been expected, the League and the Congress swept the polls in their respective constituencies. The verdict of the elections and the commitments of the Congress and the British Government,

should have set the stage for the partition of India and the transfer of power to two independent states. However, an agreement in principle to divide the country into two parts would have left the real task of physical division still incomplete. Both the British Government as well as the Congress were perhaps hoping against hope, that practical difficulties in the way to dividing the country were so great, that the League could still be induced to agree to something less than partition when confronted with the realities of the task. The last round of negotiations still remained to be completed before the transfer of power could be achieved.

CHAPTER XVII

Resume of a political Metamorphosis

A resume of the checkered career of the Muslim League, its sudden emergence into prominence, and its unchallenged leadership of the entire Muslim community is perhaps necessary in order to maintain a link between the rapidly changing events that followed.

Political aspirations of the Muslims as a distinct community began to take shape early this century with the progressive association of the people with the government of the country. The Aligarh movement mentioned before was its initial manifestation. In its operative part, the main thrust was to induce the Muslims to accept modernisation with the help of western education which they had shunned in the past. That was the only way to prepare themselves to obtain their due share in the public life of the country. But, the community life being confined largely within the confines of the neighbourhood of a village or a town, the need for a country wide organisation of the Muslims became necessary to give shape and form to their political aspirations.

When fresh proposals were mooted for constitutional changes in 1906 culminating in the Morley-Minto Reforms the following year, there was no organisation of the Muslims on an all India basis which could represent the community in the parley with the government. An ad-hoc committee was set up by a number of people prominent in public life under the leadership of the late Agha Khan to formulate the demands, which the Delegation would present to the Viceroy for acceptance, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the Muslims under the new dispen-

sation. It was on this occasion that the scheme for separate electorates for the Muslims and the reservation of seats for the minorities in the legislative bodies were presented to the head of the government and ultimately accepted. Those proposals formed the basis for the adjustments of communal representation in the reformed council which were announced the following year.

The British government having given formal recognition to the identity of the Muslims as a separate community, the latter at last came to realise the necessity of having a political association of their own on a countrywide basis, to obtain the benefits which the Reforms promised to confer. Soon after the meeting with the Viceroy, a large number of leaders assembled in Dhaka in December 1906 for the Muslim Educational Conference. Taking advantage of the congregation of the leaders, Nawab Salimullah took the initiative to establish a political association, This was heartily endorsed by everybody. Thus the All India Muslim League came into existence with the Late Agha Khan as the first President. (Auto-biography of Agha Khan).

Such a novel political device as a separate electorate could not but provoke a lot of controversy. It would perhaps surprise many people to learn, that the only notable Muslim who initially opposed the scheme was a young barrister of Bombay, namely Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It is worth quoting from the memoirs of the Late Agha Khan, the leader of the Delegation, who described the episode thus : Quote :

“—within their own time, the Morley-Minto Reforms were a genuine step forward. We had established a major political principle; its application in practice was to be a permanent feature of all constitutional developments in India henceforth. It was not, however, conceded without opposition. And if in retrospect there is an element of irony about Lord Morley's remarks—, there is a much more freakishly ironic flavour about the name and personality of the chief Muslim opponent of the stand which we took. For Lord Minto's acceptance of our

demands was the foundation of all constitutional proposals made for India by successive British governments and its final inevitable consequence was the partition of India and the emergence of Pakistan.

“Who then was our doubtiest opponent in 1906? A distinguished Muslim barrister in Bombay which a large and prosperous practice, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah.—. We had always been on friendly terms, but at this juncture he came out in bitter hostility towards all that I and my friends had done and were trying to do. He was the only well-known Muslim to take up this attitude—.; he said that our principle of separate electorates was dividing the nation against itself, and for nearly a quarter of a century he remained our most inflexible critic and opponent”.

But Mr. Jinnah soon got reconciled with the new concept of a separate electorate and he took a leading part in concluding the Lucknow Pact ten years later between the League and the Congress, which endorsed the terms of the agreement reached between Lord Minto and the Agha Khan Delegation, setting the pattern of communal representation.

The new principles of constitutional reform were thus formulated before the Muslim League came into existence as a political association. The League however remained an upper class organisation, serving their limited interest. Even after the introduction of post war reforms the Diarchy - the electorate remained very restricted due to high property qualifications prescribed for the voters. Civil administration was limited largely to the task of preservation of law and order, collection of revenue and administration of justice. Hence the political parties had very little scope for articulation on the basis of a socio economic programme to approach the people for their support.

The only organisation which could indulge in political work as such, was the Congress. They set themselves to the sole task of politics for independence. By the time the first World War was over, they had been in the field for more than a generation. They were holding their annual

sessions regularly in different parts of the country, electing a new president every year. They began their activities with petition and representation to the government for obtaining the rights and privileges as Citizens. As western education began to imbue the intelligentsia with the spirit of nationalism, the Congress became an institution for the expression of that spirit and progressively gathered strength for the show-down to win freedom for the country in the course of time. At the same time they were able to create a cadre of dedicated workers, and set up party organisations throughout the country. Thus, even in the early twenties the Congress was in a position to launch political agitations on an extensive scale. The movements launched in 1920-21, and again in 1930-33, were their two initial attempts in that direction, but failed to achieve any significant success. But there was going to be no end to the struggle for independence until freedom was attained. The congress and the British rulers were both conscious of this. The only difference was that the strategy of the former was designed to wrest freedom from the colonial rulers as early as possible. The British was equally determined to hang on to their Empire for as long as they could.

Mr. Jinnah was the President of the League for a long time. He held that office till his death in September' 1948. The League remained an association on paper only and failed to assume the political leadership of the community for many years. It did not take part in the elections as a party when the Diarchy was introduced. The measures considered necessary to safeguard the interests of the Muslims which could be visualised, were already attained. The demand for safeguards reached their limits in Mr. Jinnah's Fourteen Points, which he formulated shortly before the Round Table Conference. They hardly produced any new ideas which could be developed into a party manifesto for launching a campaign.

The Khilafat movement directed against the British onslaught on the Sultanate of Turkey, ended in a fiasco. Hardly any one even mentioned

the name of the League in political parlance. After the elections to the Central Legislature in 1935, the League did not form a group of its own. The Muslim members formed a group of Independents along with a few others under the leadership of Mr. Jinnah. Thus the League seemed to be going into oblivion.

Political groupings among the Muslims followed the aegis of important personalities with shifting loyalties all the time. Very little attention could be given by the politicians to the problems of the society and their solution. The ministers were dependent entirely on the bureaucracy for any idea or initiative which could be taken up and implemented when there was a call on the government for action. But a new and important feature which emerged was the creation of a forum for debate on public affairs, giving a sense of participation to the elected representatives of the people. This was indeed an important achievement of the constitutional reforms inspite of all its limitations.

The Muslims generally found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They were reluctant to throw in their lot with the Congress unless their identity as a community could be retained in the larger Indian Union, a demand the Congress was unwilling to concede. This disunity between the two communities provided the rulers with the opportunity they were seeking to perpetuate their hold over the country. What the Muslims needed was a way out of this impasse to motivate themselves to take up the struggle for freedom in right earnest. After fruitless negotiations stretching over two decades to find an accomodation within an Indian Union, the Muslim League at last came up with their demand for partition of the Sub-continent as the only way out of the impasse by which they could attain freedom and govern themselves. Almost all the Muslim groups and individuals combined and formed a united front under the leadership of the League on the single issue of Pakistan. The master stroke which transformed the little known League into an united front of the Muslims of every persuasion, was the issue of a separate home

land for the Muslims, independent and sovereign. The electorate gave a clear verdict in its favour in the last elections held in undivided India. Thus the die was cast for the liberation of the people of the subcontinent.

A western journalist (Beverly Nichols) once asked Jinnah whether the demand for the partition of India was inspired by the British rulers, who wanted to prolong their dominion by the oft quoted imperialist policy of "divide and rule". In reply, Jinnah told him that the concept of a united India was basically a creation of the British Raj. For once in a way, divide and rule does not apply. Such an unity, externally imposed could be maintained so long as the British power ruled over India. It is bound to cause endless strife. As long as strife continues, the British Raj have an excuse to remain in India.

Nichols asked "what you want is, divide and quit?" Jinnah replied, "you have put it very neatly".

The same expression was used by the League in response to the Gandhian slogan "Quit India", which sparked the Congress revolt in 1942.

The aspirations of people are articulated through associations of like-minded people in all fields of activities, social, cultural, economic and in politics. With the improvement of means of communication large scale organisations have become a distinctive feature of modern group life. They have virtually become centres of power regulating the daily life of the people in a significant measure. The division of the people of India on communal lines, pushed such associations and organisations to develop on communal lines, aggravating estrangement between the two communities with the passage of time. They were already divided on the social plane due to the caste-ridden traditions of the Hindus segregating the people into two communities. The disparity in their level of modernisation which began with the introduction of western education, had the effect of accentuating such differences. It soon assumed a political overtone. The community

at last assumed the role of a nation, culminating in the demand for the partition of the subcontinent into two nation states. The problem of the Muslims was aptly expressed by the first Prime Minister of Pakistan Liaqat Ali Khan, in these words : "As the day of freedom of these four hundred million people drew near, it became increasingly obvious, that at the end of the British rule, one hundred million Muslims would have to live their new life as a perpetual political minority. Long experience and the history of several countries had taught them, that under a dominating majority of three to one, freedom from British rule would mean to the Muslims, not freedom, but merely a change of masters. This was the cause of the problem which determined the shape and form of political aspirations of the Muslims of the sub-continent."

CHAPTER XVIII

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PARTITION OF INDIA—
—CABINET MISSION AND THEIR PLAN—
—“DIRECT ACTION” LAUNCHED BY MUSLIM LEAGUE—
BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR—

The British Cabinet set up a high powered Mission headed by Lord Pathick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, and two other Cabinet ministers to work out the form and procedure for the transfer of power. They arrived India soon after the elections. The granting of independence to India was taken as a settled issue and further negotiations of this point were unnecessary. The problem which still remained unresolved, concerned the Congress and the League, i.e. how they wanted to share the new found powers after independence.

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Mr. Jinnah called a convention of the Muslim League leaders at Delhi soon after the arrival of the Cabinet Mission. The “Lahore Resolution” which came to be known as the “Pakistan Resolution” was formally amended to make room for the creation of one state of Pakistan containing all the Muslim majority areas in the N.W. and the N.E. of the sub-continent.

The Muslim League hastened to put forth their demand for partition of India claiming two provinces in the east, i.e., Bengal and Assam and four in the west, the Punjab, N.W. Frontier, Sind and Baluchistan, where region-wise the Muslims formed a majority of the population, to

be included in the new state of Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission suggested to the League, two possible alternatives. If Pakistan is to include all the territories demanded by the League, it should be a federation forming a part of a larger Indian Union ; but if the League was bent upon having an independent state outside the Indian Union, then Bengal and the Punjab would have to be partitioned to exclude the districts, where the non-Muslim formed the majority of the population. The future constitution of the country would be drawn up by a Constituent Assembly, and an interim Indian government would take over the administration of the country forthwith.

The region-wise grouping envisaged in the first proposal was designed to give the substance of power to the regional legislative bodies, thus ensuring control over the region where the Muslims were in a majority. The League was inclined to accept the Cabinet Mission plan as a package. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru thought it fit to put a different interpretation. Their interpretation in practice was contrary to the whole purpose of grouping of the Provinces. They refused to abide by the interpretation of those who had compiled the scheme. Pandit Nehru, now the President of the Congress, hastened to announce his interpretation of constitution making, in which he repudiated any limitations over the powers of the Constituent Assembly. This made the Cabinet Mission plan virtually unworkable. Disillusioned and frustrated, the League at last rejected the plan. They decided to take recourse to direct action for the attainment of Pakistan. The League announced that August 16, would be "Direct Action" day when demonstrations and public meetings would be held all over the Country to explain the resolution and exhort people to rally round the League to take appropriate measures and press for their realisation. When the Viceroy invited Pandit Nehru to form an all parties provisional government, the League refused to participate.

The only province in which the League was strongly entrenched was Bengal. Mr. H.S. Suhrawardy was chosen to be the leader of the

League Parliamentary party and was appointed the Chief Minister. Hence the League thought it fit to concentrate on Calcutta to organise meetings and demonstrations to press forward their "direct action" on the 16th of August. But the Hindus constituted the majority of the population. They dominated the life of the city. They were equally determined and prepared to prevent the League from making a significant impact as a result of their "direct action." Provocation came from both sides, and the confrontation soon turned into violent clashes and rioting between the members of the two communities all over the city. The worst sufferers were the minorities living in small pockets surrounded and outnumbered by the members of the other community. Those who could not escape in time were massacred mercilessly. The clash soon escalated to the proportions of a civil war and continued almost unchecked for about a week, before the army could move in adequate force to bring the situation under control. Curfew was imposed practically over the entire city area ; but sporadic clash and isolated killings continued for a long time after the initial holocaust. It was estimated that between four and five thousand were killed, more than forty thousand were injured, and enormous amount of property were destroyed by arson and looting, in course of a week since the fighting started.

Although clashes and disturbances might have been anticipated on such an occasion of mounting communal tension, the scale and intensity of violence that erupted in Calcutta on the day of "Direct Action", took the local administration by surprise. They were apparently not prepared to deal with such a contingency. Existing arrangements for communications proved to be inadequate, and failed to keep the authorities informed about what was happening. Obstructions such as road blocks, prevented the police and other services from reaching the places where they were wanted. Soon the communication system broke down, making the city a battle ground for hooligans and desperadoes to do as they liked.

The Chief Minister was blamed by certain quarters of connivance or indifference in allowing the situation to get out of hand, with the purpose of giving an edge to the demonstrations organised by his party. It only needs to be pointed out that no one knew better than the Chief Minister himself, that those who would suffer most from a break down of law and order on such an occasion in a city like Calcutta, were the members of this own community. The only way to avoid serious disturbances was for the rival communities to desist from causing provocations, as the Muslims had done on the occasion of the "Quit India" movement launched by the Congress four years ago. But, as it so happened the Hindus were in no mood to allow the "Direct Action" to go unchallenged. They were determined to oppose and frustrate the demonstrations launched by the League in every way. It is also relevant to ask what the Congress leadership was doing when a civil war was about to engulf the greatest city in the country? The day after the holocaust was let loose, Pandit Nehru was negotiating with the Viceroy at Simla to form an all parties provisional government announced by the Cabinet Mission. The prospect of immediate grasping power seemed to have created a euphoria among the Congress leadership, turning their attention away from the dangerous situation which prevailed. No one seemed to have the ghost of an idea how the constitutional deadlock and political bickerings were pushing the country to the verge of civil war. When rival parties choose to take recourse to violence to bring about political adjustments, the civil administration finds itself helpless to deal with such a situation effectively.

The Congress had their volunteer organisation for a long time. So did the Hindu Mahasabha and their affiliates. The League organised their Muslim National Guards, the M.N.G. as they were called, after their Lahore Resolution. Most of them were involved in the clash that shook Calcutta and perhaps explain the reason why the disturbances could assume such large proportions far beyond the estimation of the local administration. In the past, the volunteers were usually called out

to defuse tension and prevent disturbances. On this occasion they exacerbated the confrontation and added fuel to fire.

A few years later I happened to meet the provincial leader of the M.N.G., I.A. Mahajir,—the “Salar-e-Suba” as he was called—when he came over to Chittagong in 1947 after partition. His version of Calcutta killings was that, knowing as they did the predominant position of the Hindus in the city, it was never their intention to attack or provoke a clash ; but they were equally determined to have their way—with force if necessary, in case they were obstructed in any way. It was also a fact that both sides were expecting an open clash and they had collected arms and ammunition for use in the final showdown, if it came. Fire arms were used freely by both sides in the Calcutta killings, causing death of many innocent people. Extermination of the rival community was the order of the day. Never before had genocide degenerated to such a lust for killing as had happened in course of the 16th of August and the following days in Calcutta. More than two divisions of the armed forces had to be deployed before a semblance of law and order could be restored in the city.

CHAPTER XIX

MY POSTINGS TO RAJSHAI, KHULNA AND CALCUTTA—VICEROY'S INTERIM GOVERNMENT— —THE LAST DAYS OF THE BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA

Shortly before the trouble started in Calcutta in 1943, I proceeded on my transfer from Barisal to Rajshahi. Twelve years ago, I had my practical training for six months in the same district. So, the place was well known to me. I could renew my friendship with many people whom I had met before as a junior police officer. It was the same sleepy old provincial town, where time seemed to have stood still and refused to move. Situated right on the banks of the R. Ganges, her proximity and the panorama across the vast expanse of water gave a distinct character to this town. My residence which was close to the embankment was an old colonial style building, with a large compound, which was partly used for share cropping with the landless farmers. The danger of erosion which threatened the town years ago had abated and protective works were strengthened making the place safe for living once again.

The Police Training College at Sardah was within a short distance of Rajshahi. I was placed in charge of the college for three weeks during the absence of the Principal on leave. The place was almost the same as it was when I came for my training in 1933. The only difference was that the officers mess, the centre of social life of the elite was empty. Admission of officers was suspended soon after the outbreak of war with a view to keeping the vacancies open for the employment of demo-

bilised officers at the end of the war. The training of police constables was in full swing owing to the large intake to meet the exigencies of war.

The "Direct Action" day was observed at different places with varying consequences, but no where did it flare up into a holocaust, as it did in Calcutta. At Rajshahi, a public meeting was held by members of the League on the appointed day and it passed off without a hitch.

The day after the troubles started in Calcutta, the news papers failed to arrive. Following the announcement by the League to observe the "Direct Action" day, some trouble was apprehended in the city. The news of wide spread violence and riots soon started to come. It indicated the number of casualties as being in the range of about fifty killed and five hundred injured. Actual number of casualties was much higher than what was anticipated. For once, the rumours lagged behind facts and underestimated the ferocity of the riots, which surpassed the imagination of the people. The District Magistrate and myself along with the leaders of both communities immediately got together to devise ways and means to prevent disturbances and preserve the peace. The news of continued disturbances in Calcutta began to generate panic and all sorts of apprehension, but a reassuring side of the endeavour was the willingness of the leaders of both sides to avoid provocation and preserve peace.

I left Rajshahi on transfer to Khulna early in September '43. Part of the rural areas there was inhabited predominantly by a Hindu depressed class called the Namasudras. They were known to be pre-disposed to communal violence which had caused considerable suffering in the past. No special precautionary measures could be taken, except asking the local police station officers to be vigilant and set up local committees of leading men to preserve the peace in their respective areas by conciliation, in case of any noticable tension. Fortunately, there was no outbreak of violence in the district.

Khulna was the native district of my ancestors. My grand-father was a practitioner of law as a Mukhtiar in the local law courts, as I mentioned at the beginning of these reminiscences. Some of my cousins were still living in their native village. Although it was more than twenty-two years since my grand father had died, some old people could still recall their acquaintance. They were good enough to relate some stories of their past association. It indeed gave me a great deal of self-esteem, when a hoary gentleman of our old village paid me the compliment of saying that I was the first son of the village to hold the position of an officer of the district rank he had ever met.

A special feature of Khulna district is its forest wealth—the Sundarbans—, which cover nearly two thirds of its jurisdiction. I had heard many stories of these Sundarbans from my grandfather, who used to accompany safari parties in the forests from time to time. Rhinoceros were still roaming the forests. They were a favourite quarry for the old hunters. The horn and hide of rhinos fetched high prices and the coming of powerful fire arms shot the poor rhinos out of existence before long.

The extensive forest areas are intersected by numerous water channels which make the place easily navigable for touring launches. I made long tours through the forests with my family in those government launches. This was a very enjoyable part of the work in this district. I came across remarkable archeological relics in Syamnagar Police station ; they consisted of an old Kali Temple, the ruins of an old mosque and a mound, reputed to be the relics of a Portuguese church. All the three places of worship had been set up by King Protapaditya, who had ruled over the area in medieval times. His name and times were recalled by the venerable keeper of the temple. The Iman saheb of the local mosque was a native of Noakhali, with little interest in the history of the place.

I had to pass anxious days in Khulna when outbreaks of communal violence were disturbing peace and order in many parts of the country.

The best thing we could do was to get out along with the leading men and keep moving throughout the District to induce the people to remain calm and peaceful when the fortunes of the country were in the making, so that we could make a good beginning with our own independent government.

The general position however began to change when the refugees who had seen the carnage and suffered personal loss, began to spread out from Calcutta and arrive in their home districts carrying harrowing tales of atrocities committed in the riots by members of one community on the other. A large number of Muslim labourers from Noakhali and Comilla districts and Hindus from Behar who work in Calcutta industrial areas were compelled to flee and return home to save their lives. The stories of the Calcutta killings spread by the evacuees, inevitably gave rise to serious tension and soon provoked retaliation in other areas, Wide spread riots and killing soon started in Noakhali district. This was followed by outbreaks of similar violence in Behar. Hindu minorities in Noakhali and the Muslims in Behar suffered badly in those disturbances.

Still an agreement between the League and the Congress remained as remote as ever. As the scheme of regional grouping of the Provinces formulated by the Cabinet Mission was ultimately found unacceptable, the only other alternative that remained as a framework for settlement was the division of India based on the partition of Bengal and the Punjab. The partition of the two provinces however raised many thorny questions which had to be resolved to the satisfaction of both the parties, before they could be implemented. Outbreak of communal violence on such a large scale only increased the difficulties in the way of arriving at a settlement. The general situation in the country had reached such a state that no scheme could be imposed without the agreement of both parties.

The Viceroy took the view that the out breaks of violence must be brought under control and peaceful conditions restored before the trans-

fer of power could be achieved ; otherwise the country would inevitably be landed into a state of chaos and confusion. Neither party was yet prepared to bury the hatchets. They were not prepared to approach the difficult task in a spirit of give and take, while mounting tension and violence threatened to rend the country from one end to the other.

The constituent Assembly was called to meet early in December (1946). Babu Rajendra Parsad was elected President. The Muslim League refused to attend. Thus the break between the League and the Congress now became complete.

The interim government headed by Pandit Nehru was sworn early in September '46. At first the League stood aside and refused to join at the invitation of the Pandit ; but following an appeal from the Viceroy, they agreed to join and five nominees of the League were sworn in the following month. Participation of both the Congress and the League in a coalition to form an interim government, raised expectation in many quarters of a possible rapprochement, which might bring about an agreement to preserve the territorial integrity of India. Before long all such hopes were belied. It turned out to be a coalition in which members were determined not to cooperate with one another.

The League group in the cabinet under the leadership of Liaquat Ali Khan, refused to accept the convention of collective responsibility. Constant opposition and friction between the two groups made it evident that it was impossible to build up a spirit of team work, without which a Council of Ministers could not function properly. The experiment with an Interim Government only proved that the two parties were unable to form a coalition to run the affairs of government. Opposition and friction between the two groups began to mount with the passage of time.

The distribution of portfolios held by the members of the Cabinet deserve attention. Because the Congress joined first, they could have their choice of portfolios. They picked up Defence, Home and Foreign

Affairs, each very important subject in any government. Only Finance was left among the major departments, for the League to choose from. The pervasive control of Finance over every other department of government was not known to the politicians. The Congress realised their mistake too late. When Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan was offered the portfolio of finance, he was hesitant to accept it. Fortunately, a person like Choudhury Muhammad Ali, then a senior officer in the Finance department was present to give his advice and convince Mr. Liaquat Ali about the powers vested in Finance which virtually gave control over every other department of government. This was what Mr. Liaquat Ali wanted to enable him to harry colleagues from the Congress and thus make them understand they had better part company, so that both could live in peace in Pakistan and Hindustan. As could be noticed in the process of these negotiations, though "knowledge had come, wisdom lingered". Countless people would undergo untold suffering before their leaders would come to terms as to how they wanted to live in freedom.

Early the next year we had our annual Police Association dinner, our last get together. Discussions centered round speculations about the possible steps which would resolve the crisis and the way to a peaceful solution. Most of the British officers were anxious to leave, having been given generous compensation for the loss of career. They were awaiting the announcement of a date, when they would be asked to hand over office and allowed to go home. It was revealed that fixing a date line for the transfer of power and the termination of British rule was under active consideration. Partition of the province of Bengal was also a distinct possibility. The anxiously awaited announcement was a last made by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on the 20th of February. The announcement declared the definite intention of the British government to transfer power to responsible Indian hand by a date not later than June 1948. At the same time Lord Wavell was replaced by Viscount Mountbatten as Viceroy, so that he could work out an appropriate line of action to implement the new policy without delay

or hindrance. In order to forestall any obstruction which might be created by one or the other party, the announcement made it clear that in the absence of an agreement the British government would decide to whom the powers of the central government should be handed over in the best interest of the people. The announcement at last removed all uncertainties about the British government's policy and stepped up the tempo of political activities for the final act in the drama leading to the withdrawal of British power from India.

CHAPTER XX

THE FINAL ACT— PARTITION OF INDIA

Meanwhile communal violence began to escalate and spread out across the entire subcontinent to the Punjab and beyond to the Frontier Province. In spite of the fact that the populations of both Provinces were predominantly Muslim, Punjab at that time was governed by a coalition ministry from which the League was excluded. Although they were the largest single block of members in the Legislature, they were manoeuvred out of power by the Hindu and the Sikh members with the help of a splinter group of Muslim members forming the Unionist Party. The Frontier Provincial Legislature was dominated by the Red Shirts, the Party organised by the Khan Brothers, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Sahab in alliance with the Congress. The League thus found that there was a serious predicament in the way of their Pakistan movement in this part of the country. In desperation, the League at last started their "Direct Action" early in February '47 to topple the Provincial ministry formed by the Hindu-Sikh-Unionist coalition, with Malik Khizir Hayat Khan Tiwana as the Chief Minister. Following the 20th February announcement setting a date line for British withdrawal, the Muslims League per force stepped up their civil disobedience, harrasing the administration almost to the point of collapse. The position of the Muslim Chief minister at the head of a non-League ministry at this crucial juncture became untenable. Although his coalition party could still command the requisite majority in the Legislature, the Chief Minister

thought it fit to tender his resignation. The leader of the Muslim League, Khan of Mamdot was invited by the Governor to form the ministry but he failed to obtain the support of the majority in the house and was forced to give up his attempt to form an alternative government. Constitutional government had to be suspended, and the Governor took over the provincial administration as provided under section 93 of the Government of India Act. The defection of the Muslim Chief Minister and the political deadlock produced a crisis leading to civil war which soon engulfed the entire north western region on the eve of independence.

The Frontier province proved much more intractable for the League. The Pathans who formed almost 90 per cent of the population were smarting under a long standing grudge against the British rulers, waging almost a continuous guerilla warfare since the British forces moved into this region. When representative government in the form of Diarchy was introduced in the rest of India in 1921, this province was excluded from the benefits of the Reforms, presumably for strategic reasons, adding insult to injury. Since then the Khan Brothers, the acknowledged leaders of the Pathans of this region organised their party, the "Khudai Khitmatgars", or the Red Shirts as they were known by their uniform, and launched a relentless agitation against the injustices meted out by the rulers to their province. Their agitation was synchronised with the non-cooperation movement launched by the Congress in the early twenties. As both the movements were directed against the British Raj, the two groups became closely associated and they continued to remain allies until the very end of British rule. Reforms i.e., the Diarchy were ultimately introduced in the Frontier Province in 1932, but the Red Shirt Party continued to dominate politics of the Province in alliance with the Congress. A pious man leading an ascetic life, Ghaffar Khan adopted Gandhian way of non-violence in his political activities. This earned him the popular title of "Frontier Gandhi".

The League under the leadership of Abdul Qayum Khan, an ex-congressman, was fast increasing in popularity after the launching of the

Pakistan movement ; but their opponents in power, the Khan Brothers could still hold their own against the "Direct Action" launched by the League. Ultimately a plebiscite had to be held to determine the fate of the Province. The outcome was a foregone conclusion. Soon after assuming his office as Prime Minister in the interim government, Pandit Nehru paid an official visit to the Frontier Province with the intention of boosting the morale of his allies, the Khan Brothers. However, he received a very hostile reception from the Pathans indicating which way the wind was now blowing.

Immediately after assuming his new office towards the end of March '47, Lord Mountbatten undertook an intensive round of consultations with the leaders and concerned officials to make himself aware of the current situation. He soon discovered that the Cabinet Mission Plan was no longer feasible. There was no option open other than partition of the country and the transfer of power separately, to the representative of the two communities in which the people were divided. The mounting civil strife over the last six months as well as the experience of constant friction between the two rival groups in the coalition government at the centre, began to soften the resistance of the Congress leaders against partition and induce them to change their mind. They at last realised it was the ultimate price that had to be paid for freedom. This change was brought about in the process of discussions over the future administrative set up of the country, that took place between the Viceroy, Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru. After careful consideration of various aspects of the issue, Lord Mountbatten pointed out to the Congress leaders, as only a far sighted statesman could do,—that all the schemes for maintaining the territorial integrity of India, envisaged a loose type of federation and a weak central government with a view to accommodate the Muslim demand for control over the Region where they were numerically preponderant. Weak central government in a vast country like India, inhabited by people belonging to diverse race, culture and religion would be a serious hindrance in the way of national integration and it

could even open the country up to the threats of Balkanisation. Would it not therefore be better for the future of the Indian Union to give up portions of territory in the East and the West, where the inhabitants wanted to secede, and be content with no less than the fourfifths of the Subcontinent politically united under a strong central government, capable of reconstructing the country as a nation state? Mahatma Gandhi who had all along been opposed to partition, at last agreed and gave his blessings to the scheme outlined above.

Negotiations for partition of India had at last taken a definite shape according to which, partition of Bengal and the Punjab became inevitable. Areas in those provinces adjoining India in which non-Muslims were predominant, had to be excluded from Pakistan. Having obtained clearance of his plan for partition as well as the scheme for transfer of power from the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League, Lord Mountbatten made his historic announcement on the 3rd of June '47 in a broadcast over the Indian Radio.

It came as a great relief to everybody, hoping at long last civil strife would soon be over and the country would be able to attain independence on a happy note. The following morning in a press conference the Viceroy announced that the date of transfer of power had been advanced and it would now be completed by the 15th of August '47.

I left on transfer from Khulna to the Intelligence Branch in Calcutta soon after the Viceroy's announcement. The Communal violence which started in this city ten months ago was to a large measure under control. Incidents had diminished in number, not so much due to the relaxation of tension, but due to the complete segregation of the inhabitants into separate Zones. The question of the future status and safety of the minorities in the city which was likely to be included in the Indian union, loomed large in the minds of the hapless Muslims to be left behind in Calcutta where they had started the "Direct Action" with such eagerness and zest less than a year ago. Stray incidents continued to occur almost every day. Civil administration had virtually collapsed. Municipal

services almost stopped functioning. No one could expect to get any assistance from the authorities in case of need. Fortunately, electric power and water supply remained uninterrupted, but garbage and filth began to pile up at every street corner due to the failure of the conservancy services. A new type of terror was let loose by gangs of armed men riding in jeeps armed with automatic weapons and firing indiscriminately on passersby and public vehicles in the Muslim quarters. One such incident occurred in the Park Circus area where I was living, causing death and injury to a number of passersby. Advancing the date of the final act of independence may have brought relief to the politicians and the officials, but it left countless thousands in the dark over their future in a land dominated by hostile neighbours all round.

Fortunately for me, my task of dividing the office records and equipment of the I.B. and the C.I.D., raised no problems and was completed without any hitch, thanks to my colleague and opposite number in the I.B.

The Intelligence Branch was more concerned with the destruction of sensitive old records, than their division among the successor governments. The personal files of the I.B. agents and informers, had to be destroyed to prevent their exposure. Through out the era of British rule, the timely supply of secret information by those agents had enabled the British Raj to maintain their grip over the increasingly disruptive anti-government forces, particularly since the beginning of the century. It was expected that the exposure of the secret agents would not only create social ostracism but in the present climate of violence and lawlessness their life would be in danger. All traces of their association with the I.B. was thus carefully destroyed by burying their records. A senior British police officer carefully monitored the task. Important agents who were still alive were given handsome rewards as farewell gifts personally by the chief of the I.B. Thus, even at the time of parting, their faithful services were not forgotten. This downward loyalty of the upper echelon of the British rulers elicited a faithful response

among their subjects which enabled them to rule over a vast empire far away from their homeland. I can cite another example of which I had personal knowledge and which deserves mention. During the Japanese invasion of Malaya, a wounded British army officer was rescued by two Bengali employees of the regimental mess and was nursed in secrecy in their hutments until he died. The wounded officer gave his rescuers a letter, mentioning both the care and attention he had received from them in the last days of his life, as well as the great risk which they had taken to themselves. Returning home to Chittagong after the war, they produced the letter to the British diplomatic mission in former East Pakistan in search of employment. Both of them were handsomely rewarded by an officer of the British High Commission in a simple ceremony which I attended soon after independence.

After ten months of bloodshed, the agreement on an overall settlement announced by the Viceroy on the 3rd of June should have brought the civil strife to an end on the eve of independence. But this was not to be. On the eastern sector partition of Bengal was received with a sense of subdued relief and communal tension was relaxed in a significant measure. In the West, however, the widespread revolt of the Sikhs threatened to plunge the Punjab into confusion and disorder. It began around the middle of August. In marked contrast with the celebrations of independence in the two Dominions on the 14th and the 15th of August, the Sikhs started their war of revenge.

It seems that the Sikh problem did not receive all the attention it deserved from those who were in charge of affairs. They were a highly cohesive minority group living in the Punjab. In the past they were given special status and the privilege of having a separate electorate for electing their representatives to the legislature. They are tough and hardworking men, well known for their skill in farming, as well as their prowess in soldiering, making up a large proportion in the Indian army. Although the Muslims and the Sikhs had been living as neighbours since Sikhism came into existence, the relationship between the two communi-

ties had been in a state of tension ever since. As long as the Muslim rulers dominated the region they found the tough freedom loving Sikhs a troublesome element in the strategic North-West region. The struggle and warfare between the Sikh gurus and the Muslim rulers, fill the pages of legend of the former and kept the germ of tension alive. On the other hand, during the ascendancy of the Sikhs in the Punjab in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Muslims had a very hard time and suffered a lot under their rule. The two communities failed to bring about rapprochement in their relationship to enable them to live in a spirit of give and take. It was a triumph of British diplomacy, which succeeded in compelling them to live in peace without clashing with each other over a period of hundred years. On the eve of British withdrawal from India, the pent up forces of discord and resentment burst forth in terrific fury.

The Sikhs were divided and settled in almost equal halves in the East and the West Punjab i.e., the two areas into which the Province was about to be divided. The new element which aggravated the old discord was the prospect of dividing the Sikhs among the two Dominions as a result of the impending partition of the province. Like all minority groups they also highly cherished the political integrity of their community. It was considered almost a part of their religion that they must live in unity. The impending break up of that unity brought the frustrations of the Sikhs to flash point and pushed them to rise in revolt in a last desperate bid to preserve the unity of their community. Master Tara Singh one of their top ranking leaders ceremoniously declared by drawing his sword in public, that if they could wrest freedom from the British Raj, they could as well remain free from Muslim rule over their homeland.

Their resentment was inflamed by the attacks made on them by the Punjabi Muslims in the earlier phase of "Direct Action", in which several hundred Sikhs were killed. They were burning with passion for revenge and were making preparations for a concerted attack on the Muslims.

Government was apparently aware of the dangerous situation. As a precautionary measure, a special military unit called the "Border force" was set up to deal with the possible outbreak of violence at the time of implementing the partition of the Punjab. The Late Ayub Khan, then a full colonel, was placed in command of one of those units. But when the trouble started they were so widespread, that the Border Force found it impossible to deal with it. They were soon disbanded.

The Punjabi Muslims retaliated with equal ferocity. It was soon realised by the governments of the two new Dominions that there was no remedy other than an exchange of population, i.e., evacuation of the Sikhs and the Hindus from West Punjab and the Muslims from East Punjab. Thus started the largest migration of population ever known in history. Between twelve and fourteen million people crossed the border in both ways before the task was completed. Most of them had to undergo untold hardship and privation in their quest for a new home in a distant land for resettlement. Countless people lost their lives in this upheaval which was unsurpassed in magnitude and enormity. A well informed journalist Ian Stephens, the editor of the daily news paper "The Statesman", in his book on Pakistan, stated that in about sixteen months of civil warfare the estimated death toll was about 500,000. Compared with the reported loss of life suffered by the combined commonwealth forces in World War II, which was figured out to be about 5,40,000 indicated the extent and ferocity of the civil strife in the wake of the creation of the two dominions of India and Pakistan.

In the Eastern region also, the exchange of population took place between East Bengal and the adjacent provinces of India. This was a much smaller scale migration than that in the west. Although stray incidents could not be avoided, by and large it was peacefully carried out.

I left Calcutta on transfer to Chittagong as the District Superintendent of Police shortly before the 14th of August, '47, the day fixed for the inauguration of independence. Thus ended my career in India. My memories of that career gathered over the formative period of life,

spread over no less than thirty eight years, could not but leave a profound impression on the mind. Never-the-less I had little hesitation in opting for Pakistan. I was born and brought up in the area which fortunately formed a part of Pakistan. Most of my close relatives and friends belonged to the same region. Coming over to Pakistan,—to be precise East Pakistan—was almost like returning home with few regrets for anything left behind. The thought that independence in divided India would at last put an end to the discord which had embittered the relationship between the two communities ever since, came as a great relief.

Before proceeding to the Pakistan episode of my reminiscences, I would like to record in brief, some reflections on the British Raj, who ruled over us for the best part of two hundred years.

CHAPTER XXI

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE BRITISH RAJ IN INDIA

The arrival of the British Trading Company in India early in the seventeenth century, their progress in business, conquest, and empire building and ultimate withdrawal of the British power from India taken together, is a fascinating story of enterprise and sagacity even told.

In the historical epoch stretching over thousands of years, India had come in close contact with many diverse civilisations and cultures. Beginning with the arrival of the Indo-Aryans in the second millennium B.C., wave after wave of new comers entered India and spread over the hospitable land of the subcontinent. Most of them came along over Land routes through the mountain passes of the North-West. They came as conquerers and immigrants in quest of better land to settle down for good. They lost all contact with their native land in course of time. This migration into India has always been in one direction. There was hardly any emigration out of the country. The last wave of those conquering immigrants were the Mughals. Arriving early in the sixteenth century, they established one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen and left a lasting imprint on the country. In contrast there were other invaders in between, such as Tamerlane and Nader shah who came only for pillage and plunder. They soon left and returned to their native land without leaving any trace of their so-journ in this country.

The advent of the British in India was by a different route, i.e., by sea. Their emergence in the east was also for a different purpose.

They came, at least initially, for trading enterprise and not for conquest and colonisation. From time immemorial the people of Europe had seen valuable products coming as imports from the East. Such products as spices, pearls, fine silk and cotton fabrics, sugar, dyestuff, fetched very high prices in the European markets. The Arabs and the Phoenician merchants who controlled the trade with the East travelling across the Arabian Sea and land routes to Europe, reaped fabulous profits. Alexandria, Venice and Genoa developed into rich emporiums of such precious commodities at the European end of this trade route and became prosperous cities through such business.

Improvement in the techniques of navigation and the discovery of the sea route from Europe to India at the end of the 15th century, revolutionised the old ideas of travel and opened up a new area of adventure to the bold sea-faring people of western Europe. The legendary wealth of India and other countries of the East at last came within their grasp. It encouraged them to undertake fresh ventures to open up new trade routes linking their home country with the East. The hazards of the long sea voyage round the Cape of Good Hope and the fear of the unknown, ceased to be deterrents for the new breed of seafarers and ships began to ply across the ocean, linking the shores of distant lands.

The British East India Company came into existence in this new age of exploration and discovery. It was incorporated in A.D. 1600, with a capital of £70,000 (R.C. Dutt's Economic History of India). A Royal Charter, granting the exclusive right of trading with the eastern countries was granted to the company. Their early voyages were directed to the Indonesian islands in quest of spice trade, in which the Portuguese and the Dutch preceded the British. A few years later they came over to India, where they managed to obtain the requisite "firman" or permit from the court of the Mughal Emperor for opening their first permanent trading post at Surat. The diplomatic move thus initiated was followed up by sending an accredited ambassador from the court of the King of England to the Mughal Darbar of Emperor Jehanghir.

Sir Thomas Roe was the ambassador. Before Sir Thomas left India three years later, the East India Company had successfully established factories in a number of places within the domain of the Mughal Emperor and soon spread out on both sides of peninsular India. By the middle of the 17th century they were at Hughli and had extended their business to several places in the Gangetic valley.

We hear that peace and order generally prevailed within the domain of the Mughals ; but conditions used to be less and less stable in areas away from the centre of power and authority. This was particularly the case in south India, where disputes between local potentates frequently disturbed peace and order. Gangs of outlaws used to go on rampage and disturb the placid life of the country-side. Their targets usually were the prosperous sections of the people. The business houses and the landed gentry had to make their own arrangements with the help of retainers, for protection against those outlaws and invasions of the free booters which began to increase with the break up of the Mughal Empire.

The East India company therefore found it necessary to build fortifications for the protection of their factories. Some of them developed into regular fortresses in course of time. They enabled the company to dig in and hold their own against the growing forces of disorder.

When the lease of Madras village was obtained by the company from the local rulers near about the year 1640, the Company built a fortified factory and named it Fort St. George. This became the headquarters of the British settlements on the east coast of the peninsula. Similarly,

Bombay developed into a secure settlement on the west coast and they shifted their main activities from Surat to Bombay. About sixty years later round about 1700 A.D., the Company obtained the lease of three villages in Bengal, namely, Sutanati, Govindapur, and Kalighata lower down the river and shifted their factory from Hughli where they had opened their first settlement many years ago. Building of fortifications became necessary for protection. A fortress was built in the new settle

ment, which was named Fort William in honour of the reigning King of England. The village Kalighata soon assumed the name Calcutta, destined to become the Capital of the British possessions in India till the beginning of the current century.

The problem of security loomed large in business circles with the progressive weakening of the central authority creating conditions of anarchy in the country-side. Enterprising businessmen and artisans soon began to cluster round the fortified settlements of the company because of the security they could enjoy against the depredations of the freebooters and the opportunities for exchange of merchandise which developed in those trading centres.

The new opportunities for exports which were created by the overseas traders, stimulated manufacture and augmented production. This greatly benefited the producers and the merchants living within reach of the trading posts. Such business could thrive only on the basis of mutual trust and good will. The fact that a group of merchants coming from a distant land facing all the hazards of business in a foreign country, could thrive and progressively expand their business year after year, bear testimony to the fact that necessary preconditions for such business were available at the trading posts and transactions were conducted with equity and fair play benefitting all concerned.

Since its foundation round about A.D. 1700, Calcutta began to grow and expand rapidly. In little more than a generation, it grew into a prosperous port town with an estimated population of about 1,00,000. Similarly both Madras and Bombay began to grow and prosper. Expanding foreign trade indicated the potentialities of the economy, which could grow under favourable conditions. It is perhaps significant, that such growth was taking place under the aegis of a foreign commercial enterprise, when social and political conditions within the country were being destabilised. It gave rise to the necessity of acquiring capabilities to intervene in the struggle for power raging all over the country for the

sake of security and survival. Thus, once involved in power politics, territorial aggrandisement became inevitable in course of time.

The East India company had to face rivalries and competition from similar enterprises from other European countries, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French. The Portuguese and the Dutch were soon out of the contest. By the middle of the 18th century the French were the only European rivals who remained in the field contesting for supremacy.

At the same time the virtual collapse of the Mughal power in Delhi, progressively pushed the country towards chaos and confusion, encouraging the local governors and feudatory chiefs to withdraw their allegiance to the central authority and set up independent Kingdoms of their own. Both the French and the British got themselves involved in local political intrigues. Their alliance was sought eagerly by the rival potentates, because of their superior military capabilities. Such alliances enabled the foreign companies specially the British, to obtain a strong military hold over the potentates. It was only a matter of time before they could be eliminated, leaving the British power unchallenged to establish their hegemony all over the subcontinent. In this daring enterprise, the British command over the sea and support of the Home Government enabled the East India Company to defeat the French in the struggle for power, after their victory in the battle of Wandiwash in 1760.

In the local contest for political supremacy among the contending parties, the common people as such, had no part, and little concern. They neither had any voice in the choice of rulers, nor any say in the way they wished to be governed. Those who could bear arms and were prepared to fight lent their services as mercenaries, whoever was willing to pay them. Occasionally they went on a rampage where ever they could despoil the people. The Maratha hordes devastated the country from end to end for many years. In contrast with the prevailing anarchy, the conditions in the Company's trading posts and territories under their control provided some semblance of peace and order. So, there was

little urge in the people to resist the extension of the hegemony of an alien power who could restore peace and order in the country. There was little prospect of a Messiah to emerge to save them from chaos and confusion, over which they had no control. The foundation of the British Empire was thus laid before the end of the eighteenth century, i.e., about two hundred years after the company got their Royal charter from Queen Elizabeth I of England.

As was inevitable, the change in the status of the company from those of traders into rulers, also altered their relationship with the people. From their position of trading partners and customers, the people were reduced to the position of subjects while the Company was elevated to the position of rulers with absolute powers over the people. Thus, security and peace were perhaps purchased at a terrific cost. Political power acquired by the company could now be employed for the ruthless exploitation of their possessions. We shall presently see how the policy of the new rulers was tailored to enrich themselves at the expense of the subjects. This progressively impoverished the country.

The circumstances which enabled the British power to establish their hegemony in India were the same as those which attracted the conquerors to this land in the past namely, internal dissent among numerous principalities into which the country had become divided following disintegration of the central authority, and the superior military capabilities of the new comers, by which they could eliminate the former one after another. We can see a similar historical phenomenon repeating itself, as the East India Company began to acquire territories in India. Unlike most of other military adventures whose success depended entirely on the capabilities of a leader who was an individual, the British Company was a body corporate, an efficiently organised entity assured of a continuous succession of leadership and enjoying the support of a resourceful Home Government in their overseas enterprise. They could undertake a sustained campaign against their adversaries who lacked the power of resi-

licence, which the company could command. But the most remarkable feature of the episode was perhaps the way in which the company was able to organise and deploy local resources of men and materials in a far more effective manner, than their adversaries contending for power. This enabled the British to establish themselves and defeat their rivals whoever challenged their position. The conquest of the subcontinent by the British was thus achieved in a large measure with the help of local resources of the country they conquered. Their next move was the diversion of the resources of their dependencies for the benefit of their home country. This became the corner stone of their imperial policy.

The initial advantage gained by their superior military capabilities were consolidated by their diplomacy. Civil administration was left undisturbed for the time being after replacing a few top officials with persons of their choice in key positions, until the company could feel confident enough to take over the responsibilities of running the government of the country.

But the conquest of territory in no way altered the objectives of the company, which remained the same as before. Relentless pursuit of trading profits was the motivation which brought them across the seas to the East. Acquisition of wealth was their prime concern. Political power gave them a great deal of advantage which they could now utilise for the exploitation of the country in every possible manner, fair and foul.

In a vast country like India, the new comers had to take a lot of time to find out the most profitable areas for their business. The East India Company started at Surat in the west coast of India, gradually extending their operations to Madras in the east coast. They arrived Bengal in the last leg of their explorations for commercial enterprise. Ultimately Bengal became their base from where their campaign of territorial conquest began, with Calcutta as their headquarters. This shifting of their centre of operations was due to the fact that Bengal was economically the most prosperous region in the subcontinent providing the best

opportunities for the business which the overseas merchants were seeking. We know that traders from distant lands like Arabia, China, East Indies, Armenia and other Asian and African countries, had long standing commercial transactions with Bengal. Merchantmen from distant lands used to call at the ports of Bengal to purchase both agricultural and manufactured goods which were available for export from this part of the country. The existence of navigable waterways provided facilities of communication and an anchorage for ships. These had put Bengal on the commercial map of the world since early times. The accounts left by contemporary travellers about commercial activities in this region were thus confirmed when the East India Company thought it fit to settle down at Calcutta as their base of operations. The agricultural and industrial potentials of this region provided the surplus resources, which enabled them to embark on military ventures leading to the establishment of their Indian Empire.

The first baneful effect of British rule was the economic exploitation of the territory they occupied. Mutual benefits from the exchange of goods, derived from the normal process of trade disappeared as far as the Indians were concerned. After the battle of Plassey, the new rulers placed on the throne of Bengal through the military prowess of the company, were compelled to pay large sums of money as rewards to their benefactors as presents. Monopolies were created in many varieties of goods which could fetch good profits, putting the local traders out of business. Huge profits were thus earned by the company and their employees by such unfair practices bringing no benefits in the process of exchange to the country. The harmful effects of such unfair commercial exploitation have been described by more than one observer. This caused an enormous drain of wealth from India and impoverished the people.

Such unfair and harmful commercial exploitation was bad enough for the economy of the country. Unfortunately that was not all the

hardship which the country had to endure under the alien rule. The new rulers were bent upon changing the system of land revenue administration in a manner which enabled them to exploit the resources under their control, as if the territories were their private property. They considered India as a vast estate or plantation, the profits of which were to be taken away from India for the benefit of their country (R.C. Dutt.) Until the advent of the British, the native rulers, however exacting in their demand for revenue from their subjects, had to spend their collections within the country, which in its turn, conferred benefits to the people in various ways. But when an alien ruler began to appropriate a large part of the revenues to transfer wealth, the process imposed net economic loss to the country not compensated in any way. This is what began to happen as soon as the company assumed control over land revenues and other taxes obtained from the people. It was done in two ways. One was diversion of a part of the public revenue for expanding the commercial enterprise of the company, with a view to augment profits of the shareholders. They euphemistically called these as investments. The other device was the payments made in their home country arising out of expenses for maintaining their overseas establishments called the "home charges", which continued to be remitted up to the end of the British Raj in India. With their mounting ambition for conquest and the extension of territory which soon spilled over to adjacent countries, they had to expand their civil and military establishments in India, with a consequent increase of outlay and the amount of "home charges" to be remitted to England year after year.

Land revenue being the principal source of income in those days, the government thought it fit to devise ways and means to increase the assessment of Taxes on agricultural land, which was the sole means of livelihood of over 90% of the people. In Bengal the land tax was originally fixed at 90 per cent of the rental, and over 80 per cent in the rest of India between 1793 and 1882. By the middle of the nineteenth cen-

ture, one half of the net revenues of India began to flow annually out of the country in this manner (R.C. Dutt.) When the Empire was transferred from the Company to the Crown, their capital was paid off from the revenues of India, imposing an additional burden on the people. The economic conditions of India deteriorated progressively throughout the nineteenth century causing repeated famines, which decimated the people all over the country.

Socio-economic life in the countryside was organised on a feudal pattern, in which the Zamindars or the land lords were the dominant group. Traditional institutions and local customs had built up a village based community life resting on mutually recognised rights and obligations. The village became the smallest unit of administration in relation to basic functions of government, namely collection of land revenue, maintaining peace and order and adjudication of disputes. The Sultan, or the public authority was recognised as the owner of all land, the Zamindar was only the collector of land revenue, who was entitled to retain the prescribed share of the collections as his remuneration. The tenant enjoyed security of tenure as long as he paid his rent. The Zamindar also had his own responsibilities for maintaining peace and order and public works for the benefit of the people, as could be provided in the country-side. All concerned understood their mutual relationships and obligations which could not be transgressed except at their own peril. By and large the system was a going concern by the sheer force of long standing customs and conventions.

An important feature of this traditional way of life was the security of tenure which the tenants could enjoy under the force of local customs. True, they were adapted to the conditions of subsistence economy ; but nothing better was in sight yet.

Administrative changes introduced by the company to consolidate their hold on the country, were designed around the same basic functions of government, mentioned above, namely.

- (a) Land revenue administration
- (b) Law and order and administration of justice

As could be expected, these changes had little to do with the welfare of the people, whose interests were completely ignored. They disrupted the long standing village based community life. Although Permanent Settlement vested right of ownership of land on the zaminders, the rigid enforcement of sale law for default of payment, ruined many of the old established zamindars whose estates passed into the hands of the money-lenders and the new rich class of businessmen coming up under the patronage of the British company. They failed to provide any reasonable protection to the tenants, who were left completely at the mercy of the land lords. The new class of proprietors were generally bereft of the sense of obligation towards their tenants imposed by time honoured custom, which put the latter at a serious disadvantage in their relationship with the powerful land lords. Economic exploitation, draining the country of its wealth and resources, together with administrative changes, causing the disruption of the traditional socio-economic pattern of life, inflicted terrible hardship on the people. This led to popular uprisings against the government from time to time accompanied by violence and disorder.

The Muslim upper class, and those traditionally dependent on the former regime for employment in public services and the army, were particularly hit hard by the change. They suddenly lost their source of livelihood in large numbers and failed to adapt themselves to the changing conditions of society. Their cup of misery was full when the official language was changed from Persian to English by Lord Bentinck, the Governor General in the early thirties. The merchants and artisans largely belonged to the Hindu community, with whom the company established business contact after their arrival in this country. The Hindu upper class and businessmen, realising its importance, lost no time in learning English, necessary for collaboration with the new rulers

and thus obtained for themselves the benefits of the new opportunities, which the change of regime could offer. All these circumstances combined to provide the Hindus with a great deal of advantage over the Muslims, in grabbing for themselves positions of power and benefit right from the beginning of the British Raj ; while the Muslims were driven out of their old established positions in society. The most surprising thing was how the Muslims could fail to realise what was happening to them, until they were completely down and out.

Although learning the English language had begun much earlier, the establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 in Calcutta, is generally taken as the beginning of the new era of English education in India. It increased opportunities as well as gave an impetus to the spread of English education among the intelligentsia, mainly among the Hindu upper class. Admission in the college was, however, restricted to the Hindu students only ; so the Muslims were excluded from the college. It was not until 1877, that similar facilities for modern education were created for the Muslims, when the Mohamedan Anglo-oriental College was established at Aligarh by Sir Syed Ahmed ; but the Aligarh College did not bar admission of non-Muslims. Thus there was a gap of no less than two generations before the Muslims could realise the importance of English education in the resurgent modern society. Still, its progress among the Muslims was much slower than among the Hindus, a feature I have attempted to highlight in an earlier phase of these reminiscences, dealing with my school and college life. It is however curious why the influence of western culture, which had its beginning in Bengal and initially created such an impact on the Hindus, left their Muslim neighbours largely untouched. It was left to the Muslims of upper India to take the initiative and awaken their community to realise the necessity of modern education for their welfare and establish the first institution of its kind at Aligarh, far away from the place of origin where the process initially started. Further East, more than a generation was allowed to pass in

doubt and despondency, before the Muslims of Bengal could fully realise the implications of the change and accept western education without reservation. The establishment of Dhaka University marked the beginning of the new era.

The Aligarh movement was sustained by the All India Muslim Education Conference, and exhortations of scholars like Justice Syed Amir Ali, who maintained that scientific education was not contrary to the teachings of Islam. Yet the move from wishful thinking to actual endeavour to adopt a new way of life was a hard and demanding task. The will to change with a view to improve the lot of the Muslims called for a determined effort, which unfortunately was not forth-coming yet. The group who was in the best position to show the way was the landed gentry. They failed to rise to the occasion and provide the leadership. This was perhaps a cultural lag, which was never explained.

Even in the decade of the twenties, i.e., more than a generation since the movement began, the proportion of Muslim boys in non-denominational high schools was generally one to four in the urban areas. It was even less elsewhere. Their preference was still for religious education ; those who could afford, sent their boys to the madrasas. An attempt was made early in the century to introduce modern education in a number of madrasas under a new scheme, which was not successful. It was true that facilities for education were not plentiful ; but it was also a fact that those available were not utilised by the Muslims to the extent possible. Even the well-to-do families who could afford it, failed to display that amount of eagerness to educate their children as ought to have been. The leisured class were generally reluctant to put much effort on schooling, beyond the acquisition of a working knowledge of English, which had become a status symbol. The number of Muslims who were able to join the learned professions were woefully small ; and those who earned distinction in their career were even smaller compared with those belonging to the Hindu community. This lamentable disparity in the

position and number of Muslims in the learned professions was most noticeable among the teachers of all ranks. Education of girls had hardly begun when we were in school.

Similar conditions prevailed in the field of commerce and industry, collectively known as business. Except for those among the Hindus born into a family devoted to a craft or calling enjoined by the caste system, the Bengalis as a cultural group were not known to be good in business enterprise. This lack of business acumen was marked even more among the Muslims. Except for those businesses which no Hindu would adopt, such as hides and skin, the butchers etc. and some middlemen dealing in agricultural produce, hardly a Muslim could be found in the business profession. The money-lenders were almost all Hindus.

In a predominantly agricultural country, land is bound to be the principal source of livelihood of the people. By far the vast majority of them are farmers, earning their livelihood by agriculture. Due to the system of land-tenure introduced in Bengal by the British Raj, it created a hierarchy of non-agricultural land-holders, known as the zamindars and jotdars who derived their income as rent collectors at various levels of the hierarchy. They formed the leisured class in society. While enjoying much of the surplus derived from land, they were also responsible for providing a large part of welfare services, such as schools, medicare, religious institutions during the rule of the British Raj, when the government had very little to do with the welfare of the people.

Knowledge is power. This is a truism ; but never before it has assumed such significance, as in the era of science and technology. The Muslims as a community being left behind in the race for modernisation, thus found themselves at a great disadvantage when faced by competition of those who were better equipped with the new knowledge of living which science had bestowed on mankind. Before the initial difficulties faced by the Muslims under the British Raj could be overcome the political reforms opening up the prospects of participation of the

people in the government of the country, caught the Muslims unprepared. The institutional device for the democratic management of society, place political power in the hands of the organised majority. The culturally homogeneous Hindus closely organised on the basis of the caste system, and outnumbering the Muslims in the ratio of four to one, made them a formidable adversary in the political field. Formation of political parties organised on the basis of socio-economic programme, as had emerged in western democracies was still beyond the concept of the leaders who were still steeped in the traditional view of society. Hence protection and safeguards against the apprehension of rule by the brute majority in a democratic set up became an obsession with the Muslims. The Current political theories and practices could not indicate a way out of this impasse. Sir Syed Ahmad declared that the British system of parliamentary government was not suitable for India, because of the communal nature of social life prevailing in the country ; but he could not suggest any alternative devise to govern the country when the British would go. Ultimately the devise of a separate electorate and the reservation of seats was accepted as a compromise, which initially cleared the way for the establishment of responsible from of government in India under British tutelage.

Such safeguards could remain effective so long as the British Raj ruled over India and ensured their implementation. They could be continued only with the "good will" and agreement of the Majority after the British power quite India as was inevitable in course of time. A little reflection would indicate that given the "good will", safeguards become unnecessary. It is because "good will" was suspected that safeguards became necessary. The transitory character of the safeguards soon became apparent and began to haunt the minds of the Muslim leaders. They began a search to find a way out of the dilemma as the termination of British rule became more and more a possibility.

The concern of the Muslims with constitutional safeguards, visualised a rule by a rival party, whose interference in certain areas of discretion were sought to be restricted or regulated. As a result, very little thought could be given to the wider problem of government, which it was assumed, would remain perpetually in the hands of the majority, from which the Muslims would be excluded. Such an apprehension inhibited the emergence of a political party in the true sense of the term. Political parties are an essential component of a democracy. So, when independence was achieved with the partition of India, the Muslims were again caught on the wrong foot. They were unprepared for the responsibilities of a task, for which a great deal of advance thinking and preparations were necessary. If it was the intention to continue struggle until the political objective was achieved, then it was equally necessary to give proper attention to visualise the problems that would arise in a new country and prepare a plan in advance for reconstruction. This was the imperative task which the League had to assume to establish itself as a political party. There were other serious problems, be-setting the government of the new country which could not be foreseen, such as the civil war and the refugee problem. Having set the political objectives for attaining an independent homeland for the Muslims, and forget to plan in advance its reconstruction, was bound to jeopardise its future.

The growth of political parties began almost simultaneously with the emergence of the spirit of nationalism in India. The Indian National Congress came into existence in 1885 with the blessing of the ruling power. Recognised as the spokesman on behalf of the people, it had an auspicious beginning. The association virtually assumed the position of the "Loyal Opposition". Political issues are never ending in their sequence in a changing world. The Congress had plenty of materials for its sustenance and growth. Initially its main function was to take up important issues with the government for redress of popular grievances, at the same time giving expression to the hopes and aspirations

of the people. Since the rise of nationalism, the contest in the political arena progressively took the shape of confrontation between the ruler and the ruled. In the absence of democratic institutions, the Congress emerged to represent the people in this struggle to uphold the interests of the people. Circumstances helped the Congress to draw into its folds, the leading men from the intelligentsia of all shades of opinion, giving it an apparent national status. The confrontation soon developed into a struggle for freedom, in which the Congress emerged as the undisputed leader of the people.

The majority of the Muslims, however, stood aside, who refused to throw in their lot with the Congress. They were apprehensive of the dominance of the Hindus as a community in a democratic set up designed for rule by the majority which the Congress was seeking. The rise of political consciousness among the Muslims, therefore, initially centered round the contriving of a device to safeguard and protect the special interests of their community. This was a limited political purpose and had little to do with the larger question of national objectives and policy. However, the proposed safeguards failed to create much interest among the Muslims masses or raise the level of their political consciousness, because they had very little to do with improving the conditions of their life. Their efficacy was questioned by some eminent Muslim leaders, among whom was no less a person than Mr. M.A. Jinnah, in the early days of his career. As destiny would have it, the British Raj thought it fit to concede to the demands for constitutional safeguards for the Muslims. Since the fulfilment of their limited objective, the Muslim League began to lose its importance as a political party. Unable to make further contributions to the changing pattern of society, it failed to maintain its leadership and was soon cast into political limbo. During the days of the Diarchy, the League had failed to maintain itself as a party in the central legislature until the last elections in undivided India. In the Provinces where the Muslims were predominant in number, the existence of the League as a political party was hardly ever perceived.

The position of the League changed radically soon after it raised the demand for a separate homeland. This was a revolutionary move on the part of the League which soon caught the imagination and support of the entire community. The League became a party of the Muslim masses almost overnight.

The concept of Muslim nationalism and a separate homeland came too late in the day, when the country was almost on the threshold of independence. It hardly had enough time and opportunity to take shape and mature in the minds of the peoples. Unlike the Congress which developed into a full fledged political party with their objectives and programme worked out over half a century of its activities, the League was confronted with the task of building a new country without adequate thought and preparations. The predicament of the League in post independent Pakistan will be related hereafter.

CHAPTER XXII

DIVIDING THE ADMINISTRATION BEGINNING OF THE PAKISTAN ERA.

Out of the turmoil of civil war uprooting millions of people from hearth and home, emerged the new state of Pakistan. It not only liberated the Muslims from foreign rule, but also ensured their freedom from domination by a much bigger and caste ridden society, with which integration was not possible. There was great jubilation among the people over the achievement.

Expectations were widespread in Pakistan that the Partition, which provided the Muslims and the Hindus with separate homelands, would at last put an end to the animus which vitiated the relationship between the two great communities in the sub-continent. They had lived as neighbours for over seven hundred years, without coming closer to one another in a process of integration into a larger composite society. The new spirit of nationalism having accentuated their differences, the only solution was partition of the country so that each community could live its own way of life without interference from the other. Although Pakistan was the loser in the process of partition, it was accepted by the Muslims without reservations. A similar response from the other side was needed to enable the two countries to live in peace as good neighbours. Unfortunately, this was far from the position taken up by the leaders of the other community in India. They began to harp on their old theme of indivisibility of India and made no secret of their aspirations to see partition annulled and the unity of India restored in not a very distant future.

There was a large body of opinion among the intelligentsia in India, who deemed Pakistan to be an unnatural and unviable entity, which was doomed to collapse in course of time. They thought, the process of its liquidation could be hastened by appropriate measures without the intervention of the armed forces. On the occasion of the Independence Day on the 15th of August '47, the Congress president Acharya Kripalani openly declared their determination to employ all their energy to undo partition and restore territorial integrity of India. Similar declarations were made by high ranking Indian leaders like Pandit Nehru, Patel and others. Even Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence, began to talk of war with reference to partition in his prayer meetings. Those were not empty threats ; they set the tone of India's relations with Pakistan as it began to unfold itself. The government of India, from their position of strength which they enjoyed on the eve of partition as an established power, started a systematic campaign to obstruct and where possible prevent transfer of Pakistan's share of stores and assets from undivided India and thereby cripple her administration right from the beginning.

The legal instrument by which India was partitioned and transfer of power was effected was an Act of the British Parliament, "The Indian Independence Bill". It received royal assent on the 18th of July, 1947. The creation of the two Dominions were marked by dividing the interim government which was set up eleven months ago into two groups, representing the two successor governments—Pakistan and India. At the same time a commission was set up to demarcate the boundary of the two Dominions, with Sir Cyril Radcliffe as chairman.

The task of dividing the administration was assigned to a "Partition Council", set up at the centre and in the Punjab and Bengal, the two provinces which were also divided. A steering committee composed of two senior officers, namely Choudhuri Muhammad Ali representing Pakistan and H.M. Patel from India and a number of expert committees

were appointed to divide the administrative apparatus, personnel, records, and equipments, assets and liabilities pertaining to the two successor governments, so that both the governments could assume their new responsibilities as going concerns.

The job of dividing an unitary administration into two parts and set one up a thousand miles away would have been a difficult task under the best of circumstances. The prevailing climate of bitterness and tension increased enormously the difficulties of the task. The work of the Partition Council proceeded more or less smoothly up to the 15th of August, when the British authority was withdrawn. Some important decisions could be taken relating to personnel and records, which did not give rise to much controversy ; but a lot of other issues remained to be settled before the task could be completed. The attitude of the Indians began to change soon after the transfer of power. As soon as the British authority was withdrawn, the unfinished task of the Partition Council ran into serious difficulties. The official records pertaining to Pakistan agreed to be divided, never reached their destination. Two train-loads of important government records were set on fire and destroyed while on transit to Karachi. All possible obstacles were put on the way to prevent the records, stores, equipment receivable by the government of Pakistan from reaching their destination.

A Joint Defence Council was set up with Lord Mountbatten as the chairman to supervise the division of armed forces, defence equipment and stores. It was supposed to complete its task before the end of March '48. But the Indians unilaterally terminated the agreement and abolished the council before the end of November, 1947 without completing the task. It suited them not to proceed with the work of the committee, as they were reluctant to part with whatever they had in their possession. Out of about 1,65,000 tons of ordinance stores and equipment only about ten percent were delivered. Most of them turned out to be obsolete and unserviceable. The rest were never received by Pakistan.

Similarly, transfer of cash balances of former government transferable to Pakistan, was held up on some pretext or other. Even after agreement was reached fixing 550 million rupees as Pakistan's share, the Reserve Bank was prevented by the Government of India from transferring the amount, although the Bank was under a clear mandate to make the payment. Ultimately when the cash balances were released after some time, a sum of 50 million rupees were deducted, contrary to the financial agreement between the two governments.

These were the indications of an unhappy beginning of the independence of two neighbouring countries. Having obtained liberation from foreign rule, they became victims of their own passion and prejudice which lay deep in their minds, jeopardising reconstruction of their respective countries.

Independence was celebrated on the 14th of August 1947, throughout Pakistan in a befitting manner. I joined Chittagong on the same day as the district Superintendent of Police. Partition of India involved exchange of central government employees between the two Dominions according to their option. The same privilege was extended to the employees of Bengal and the Punjab, i.e., the provinces which were partitioned. Chittagong being the only sea port in this part of the country and the headquarters of the Eastern Railways, witnessed the exchange of a large number of employees of the central government. Almost all the Hindus left their job, whose places were taken up by their Muslim counterparts, when they came over from various parts of India.

Partition of Bengal entailed similar exchange of Provincial Government employees of all ranks. The tension created by the communal riots induced the Hindus in government service to opt for India and quite on masse, leaving more than half the jobs vacant. The change over almost stalled the administration for the time being. The day I took over charge of the district police there were hardly about twenty-five officers and those of other ranks available in the Chittagong town. Fortunately,

transfer of government employees from one Dominion to the other went through without any hitch ; each side being anxious to get rid of those who wanted to leave. They had no hesitation to make their departure as smooth as possible. As the Muslim officers began to arrive from West Bengal and get posted to the different districts of the Province, a large number of vacancies were filled up within a short time.

The exchange of employees however left many of the higher level posts vacant. The shortages were particularly acute in the category of teachers, doctors, engineers and technicians of all grades, i.e., the jobs in which the Hindus far outnumbered the Muslims. While some of the posts of generalists and police officers could be filled up by promotion from lower ranks, those of teachers and professional classes had to be left vacant, until qualified candidates could be found. The only way to get them was to educate and train the young men which was a time consuming process. This was one of the chief initial handicaps Pakistan had to contend with, which did not lend itself to quick solution. Education perhaps suffered the greatest damage, when a number of buildings of the institutions were taken over for the accommodation of government offices in different parts of the Province. There was no alternative, because specious buildings were not available anywhere for housing government offices. Such a contingency could not be foreseen until the partition of the Province was decided, allotting Calcutta to West Bengal. Government offices began to move to the new provincial capital Dhaka, in August, '47, hardly two months after the announcement. However, the pivot of provincial administration being the district which had an inbuilt device for continuity, the general framework of administration could be maintained without interruption. Intervention of government in the daily life of the people was minimal. Hence temporary suspension of their functions caused very little concern to the common people, who hardly felt any impact of the change over. Willing cooperation of the people which the British Raj tried to foster

and maintain throughout their rule, got great boost with the achievement of independence. It enabled the local administration at all levels to tide over the short comings of the transitional period of partition without serious breakdown.

As could be expected, the new government of East Bengal was faced with many difficulties in establishing its provincial headquarters in Dhaka. The government buildings constructed during the short tenure of the first partition of Bengal were all taken over by the Dhaka University, which had become a renowned institution in this part of the world. The newly constructed buildings of the Eden Girls' College and the hostels were the only premises found suitable for the offices of the new provincial government, which were taken over for the purpose. A number of private houses were requisitioned to accommodate other offices and residence of officers. The problem of accommodation remained near crisis point for a long time ; but the spirit of patriotism generated by the liberation of the country, enabled everybody to put up with all sorts of hardship with forbearance and proceed with their respective task of administration without interruption.

CHAPTER XXIII

PAKISTAN—INDIA RELATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNAL STRUGGLE FOR POWER.

The partition of the country left large groups of Muslims and Hindus still living in India and Pakistan respectively, as they did not bargain for migration elsewhere. The fate of the minorities left behind in each country, did not seem to have received much attention of the leaders. It was perhaps never contemplated that there would have to be an exchange of population after partition. Neither much thought was given to the problem of their status under the new dispensation. This omission must have had a lot to do with the revolt of the Sikhs on the eve of partition. The tension and bitterness generated by the course of events could not have failed to raise such an apprehension as the time for transfer of power drew near. The intelligentsia and those who were politically conscious, became increasingly concerned over their status and security when they found themselves on the wrong side of the border. Strangely enough, those who were presiding over the destiny of the two new countries, were unable to grasp the gravity of the situation and failed to take appropriate measures to prevent a repetition of communal holocaust after independence. Precautionary measures taken, proved ineffective to deal with the worsening situation.

Those were very disturbing developments in both the countries. At the time when they were in dire need of peace and order for rehabilitation of the divided countries, they were overwhelmed by one disaster after another. There was no end of their trouble yet.

Within ten weeks of independence a fresh dispute nearly plunged the two countries into open hostilities. This was over the accession

of the Princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The population of the state being predominantly Muslim, it was assumed that it would accede to Pakistan. Its Hindu ruler, however, had different intentions. The proximity of the state to Pakistan and difficulties of communication with India induced the Maharaja of Kashmir to enter into a "standstill" agreement with Pakistan on the 15th of August '47 and maintain the status quo. The only line of communication with the outside world being through Rawalpindi, the state authorities handed over the management of postal services to Pakistan officials. As it turned out ultimately, this was a subterfuge on the part of the Maharaja to gain time for his preparations to accede to India, which he was negotiating in secret. Such a move on his part did not remain a secret for long. It created a great deal of resentment in Pakistan, particularly in the adjacent areas of N.W. Frontier. In desperation some of the local leaders hatched a plan to occupy the state by force. Batches of irregular forces were organised with the help of warlike frontier tribesmen. Early in October '47 nearly 2,000 tribesmen were mobilised with the purpose of taking over physical possession of the valley, before the Indians could move in to occupy the state. The Maharaja fled his capital Sreenagar and took shelter in distant Jammu. As the tribal forces poured into the state they met with very little resistance, because the local forces disintegrated as soon as the Maharaja left his capital. Warlike Kashmiri tribesmen such as the Sudhans, thousands of whom served in the world war, joined the liberating forces as they advanced through the valley. They penetrated deep into the territories of the undefended state towards Sreenagar and the only airstrip in the valley close to the capital. Possession of the airstrip would have given them control over the only remaining access, and seal the valley against the approach of Indian forces which the latter were preparing to do by air lift from Delhi. All accounts of the tribal operations against Kashmir are unanimous that both Sreenagar and the airfield lay open and were almost within reach of the advancing

tribesmen if they could only maintain the speed of their thrust towards their objective. Unfortunately, their propensities for pillage and plunder slowed down their advance as they indulged in sacking Baramula an important township on the way. The leadership of the expedition failed to maintain their speed and surprise, which were essential for success in such a venture when victory was almost within grasp. The time thus wasted on the way at last frustrated their plan to capture the airstrip and they failed to forest all the Indians in their race against time. The Indian airborne forces had just enough time to land successfully at Sreenagar airstrip within sight of the advancing tribesmen when they were busy sorting out the proceeds of their spoils which they had collected enroute. The fugitive Maharaja announced his accession to India from Jammu on the 27th of October '47 where he had fled earlier. Landing of Indian forces took place the following day. Never before in a mortal contest such a big prize was thrown away on account of bad management and unholy greed of those engaged in fighting for a noble purpose.

Once the regular Indian forces could land successfully, the game was up. The irregular tribal levies, inspite of their personal fighting qualities were no match for the regular Indian troops in an open warfare. The advance of the tribesmen was stopped immediately and they were pushed out of the valley within a short time. They were forced to retreat into the mountainous regions in the north and west of the state. The mountainous terrain of the region offered a distinct advantage for guerilla warfare, in which the local tribesmen were past masters. The Indian army was unwilling to engage in such warfare and they stopped further advance into the hostile territories where their adverseries enjoyed an advantage inspite of their superior resources. The lessons of unsuccessful military operations of the British army against the tribal territories in the N.W. Frontier regions spread over more than fifty years, were perhaps not wasted on the military strategists of

India. They allowed the Azad Kashmiris to keep the mountains to themselves.

The freedom fighters, or the Azad forces as they were known, were able to maintain their hold on those regions against the thrust of advancing Indian army and keep a large part of the State under their occupation. But the vale of Kashmir was lost, A provisional government was soon set up with the help of fugitive Kashmiri leaders who came over to Pakistan and took charge of administration of the liberated areas. The armed forces were reorganised with volunteers from Kashmir and Pakistan into regular battalions, who continued their resistance against the pressure of the Indian army, until a cease fire was brought about with the intervention of the U.N.O. An agreement was reached for demarcation of the cease fire line on the basis of actual line of control, which at least terminated open hostilities. Although the famous vale of Kashmir containing the most productive areas were lost in the contest, a large part of the State in the West and north west still remained under the control of the Azad Kashmir Government.

A cease fire line is a precarious position on an international boundary between two countries, particularly when their mutual relationship was in such a state of tension. With the advance of the Indian army through Kashmir, the Pakistan Army was compelled to move forward to give support to the Kashmir forces to hold and stabilise the cease-fire line. In this way the armed forces of India and Pakistan came to a position of confrontation ever since the occupation of Kashmir by the Army of the two countries.

I shall not recount the oft repeated story of the dispute in these reminiscences. What is significant in this episode, is the consequence of such a misadventure, compelling the governments of the two countries to divert valuable resources needed for the purpose of reconstruction, to wasteful military expenditure which ultimately proved disastrous for Pakistan.

When fighting flared up in Kashmir, both the governments had their hands full with their post partition problems of rehabilitation of millions of refugees and reconstruction of a divided administration. It was their preoccupation with such colossal tasks which prevented the two governments from escalating the dispute into an all out war. The armed forces were in the process of being divided between the two countries. They were hardly in a position to mount major military operations. As mentioned before, Pakistan received very little of her share of military stores and equipment, all of which were in physical possession of India. Transfer of military stores was completely stopped when fighting began in Kashmir and never delivered. So Pakistan found herself in a desperate position to keep the fighting forces supplied with arms and ammunition. I would mention a few incidents from personal knowledge which would illustrate the position. Chittagong district having been the base of military operations against Arakan during the war, a lot of arms and ammunition were dumped by the allied forces when they had left. A thriving business in scrap metal gathered out of discarded ordinance stores grew up in Chittagong. Some of those serviceable arms were in the possession of the local people. The police had to mount a drive to recover those arms and prevent them from falling into the hands of criminals. A request was received through the military estates officer to hand over the recovered arms to a collection centre at Karachi which was set up to gather and supply the Azad Kashmir forces. We managed to collect and send about 200 service rifles and 40,000 rounds of ammunition on board a naval vessel bound for Karachi. Next, I was informed by an army officer, who paid a visit to a forward position of Kashmir border which had a 25 pounder field gun, that the shells were strictly rationed and they were told not to use more than two rounds a day. Such was the predicament of the Azad forces when the cease-fire was concluded. Although India was in a much better position as regards strength and resources of her armed forces, she was in no mood

escalate fighting in Kashmir, when her attention was needed to more pressing tasks of government at home immediately after independence.

As is well known, disengagement of military forces was effected on reaching an agreement between the two countries to decide the final accession of Kashmir on the basis of a plebiscite to be held under the auspices of the U.N. It soon became evident that India was in no mood to abide by such an agreement. She could do so because of her much superior power by which she was in a position to enforce her will against her smaller adversary and ignore the resolutions of the U.N. Unlike Pakistan, which had to set up her central government from the scratch, India inherited an administration with most of its resources intact. It was set up by the British authorities over a period of over hundred years as an efficient administration which was taken over by the independent government of India as a going concern. This was also true, regarding the Defence Establishment. All the ordnance factories were located in the territories of India. Both in the military as well as the civil service the non-Muslims far outnumbered the Muslims, who came over to Pakistan. Contrary to general impression, the Muslim elements in the Indian Army was relatively small at the time of independence. Pakistan inherited six infantry divisions and only one armoured brigade which were truncated formations, because there was no exclusively Muslim unit in the Indian army (Ayub Khan's autobiography). There were very few Muslim officers in the senior ranks. This was one of the serious handicaps faced by Pakistan at the time of Partition. India had a well established industrial base, which was yet missing in Pakistan. No sooner the administration got over their initial difficulties and became conscious of their military capabilities, India did not hesitate to denounce past commitments and was determined to hold on to their possessions in Kashmir by force of arms ; at the same time, made no secret of her intentions to recover Azad Kashmir from the possession of the Provisional government. When challenged in the U.N.O., India evaded

the issue of plebiscite on one pretext or another and proceeded with her scheme of integration of the State into the Indian Union.

Early in 1962, I happened to meet Late Kinsley Martin, the editor of the famous English periodical "The New Statesman and Nation", who came on a visit to Dhaka when I was Chief Secretary to the Government of East Pakistan. While discussing current topics he made it a point to convey his assessment of the Kashmir issue in clear terms, that plebiscite was no longer a practical proposition, as India would not allow it ; it was only a waste of time to pursue the case in the U.N. where the climate of opinion had changed and most of the member countries had lost interest in the affair. In his opinion, the only alternative to resolve the dispute was the partition of Kashmir. Although such a proposition could not have escaped the minds of those who wanted a peaceful settlement, neither party in the dispute was in a position yet to entertain such a proposal. Among the dominant group in West Pakistan it was unmentionable—an anathema.

As could be expected, the dispute over Kashmir had the effect of keeping alive the unhappy tension and bitterness in the relationship of the two neighbouring countries. Both sides began war like preparations as a precaution against the possibility of armed intervention from either side. Military strategists considered occupation of Kashmir valley by an unfriendly power to be a threat to the security of Pakistan and advised the government to undertake adequate preparations for defence in order to guard against the danger of aggression by India. Thus started the military build up which began to escalate with the passage of time. While the other outstanding issues could be tackled through negotiations in course of time, the dispute over Kashmir defied all attempts to come to a solution resulting in ever mounting expenditure on defence, reducing correspondingly the resources needed for reconstruction and development of the new country.

Every independent state must have organised armed forces to defend its freedom. But a standing army is an expensive item in the national

budget. Its strength must necessarily be limited by the resources the country can produce and devote for their up keep. In case of war the entire nation has to be mobilised. Hence military training of the youths of the nation has become almost universal to supplement the standing army, who can be mobilised quickly for the defence of the realm whenever required. After all, a balance must be maintained between the economy of the nation and commitment of resources to its armed force. If too much of resources is diverted for the upkeep of the standing army, leaving too little to ensure economic health of the nation, such an army cannot possibly remain an effective instrument of defence for long. This is becoming evident more and more with modern warfare, which call for total mobilisation of the nation.

Soon after independence the over-all size of the armed forces of Pakistan was determined to be about 1,50,000 strong. This information was gathered from the late F.M. Ayub Khan, when he was the C-in-C in East Pakistan. When fighting began in Kashmir, the armed forces could count no more than about 60,000 men. Due to the growing tension with India, the defence of the country had to be given top priority by the Central Government. More than 70 per cent of the budget was allotted for the reorganisation of the armed forces, leaving very little for other pressing needs of the people. Having thus set the pattern in the national budget, such a disproportionately large expenditure on defence continued to be maintained year after year. The strength of the defence forces was soon increased to double the original figure and exceeded 3,00,000 within a few years. The time honoured devise of universal military training of the youths for the defence of the country was never considered seriously. The defence forces became more and more professionalised maintaining its close links with particular regions and tribes which were their principal source of recruitment since the hey days of the British empire.

The Indian army which was built up by the British over a period of a hundred years, confined their recruitment to the inhabitants of par-

particular regions of the country. They were obtained largely from the Western provinces, such as the Punjab, the N.W. Frontier province, Rajputana, and such other areas as Maharashtra and Nepal, from tribes who were considered belonging to the "martial races". More populous Provinces of the eastern region such as Bengal, Assam, Behar and Orissa were almost completely left out on the ostensible ground that the people of those region did not belong to the martial races and were not fit for service in the armed forces.

A peep into the history of British conquest will show that the conquest of the north and western India, supposed to be the home of martial races, were accomplished from their base located in Bengal. The largest contingent of the British forces in the initial stage of their empire building was the Bengal Army, recruited and trained in Bengal. It was with the help of such an army that the British Raj managed to subdue the Gangetic and the upper Indus valleys, which completed the establishment of their hegemony over India. So, it is a fact of history that the so called martial races had very little to do with the British conquest of India. On the other hand they were subdued with the help of an army composed largely of such people who did not belong to the category of martial races, so called.

In fact, exclusion of the people of Bengal from the armed forces began with the mutiny of the sipoys, which was supposed to have been instigated by them. The old Bengal Army was disbanded and recruitment in the army from this region was suspended. This assumption against the Bengalies continued right up to the beginning of the world war, when the alleged distinction between the martial and non-martial races was forgotten and recruitment was thrown open to the people of all races, caste and creed. If the supposed non-martial people could be found good enough for the army at the time of actual warfare, one may ask how could they be held unsuitable during the intervals of peace ?

Be that as it may, the old prejudice against the induction of Bengalis in the armed forces of Pakistan continued after independence. As a concession to the demand of East Pakistan for participation in the defence of the country East Bengal Regiment was constituted with its headquarters at Chittagong. But the strength of the Regiment and recruitment of East Pakistanis were limited to a small fraction of the armed forces. It was reliably learnt that it was limited to ten percent of the overall strength of the army, as a matter of policy. The army became a close preserve among certain classes of people of West Pakistan and their employment opportunities there-in were jealously guarded. Participation of East Pakistanis in the armed forces was minimal, which could not but alienate the army from the larger section of the people.

A modern nation state cannot possibly maintain its existence without the capabilities of its citizens to fight for its independence. The spirit of nationalism at the same time must inculcate the spirit to defend freedom of the country at all cost. Otherwise the country cannot possibly exist for long. This home truth soon became evident in a country like Pakistan, divided as it was territorially into two segments more than a thousand miles apart. Who was going to ensure the defence of East Pakistan, except the citizens of the region? Any other strategy was meaningless to the people and must affect adversely their sense of security.

Unfortunately, military strategists of Pakistan entertained different ideas regarding the defence of the country. They assumed that the only military threat which Pakistan had to contend with, was from India and propounded a theory that the best way to defend the country was to build up the fighting capabilities of the army in West Pakistan as an integrated fighting force, which would act as a deterrent to the potential enemy and prevent them from indulging in aggression against any part of the country. A token force of one division stationed in East Pakistan was considered enough for its defence, as the rest of the army in West Pakistan with their deterrent posture was the best way to prevent aggression

against the Province. We were assured with supreme confidence by senior army officers that the people of East Pakistan should have no worry about their defence, because India was aware that Pakistan army was capable of occupying Delhi, before Indian army could over-run East Pakistan. There were lot of wishful thinking about the capabilities of the Pakistan Army in the early days of Pakistan. Middle ranking officers class, posted in the Province tried to give an impression that they were itching for a fight to settle scores with their adversary. That time was in their favour ; but the timid politicians would not let them fight it out. Coming from the horses' mouth, it sounded plausible enough. Those who had read General Ayub's observations in his autobiography about the condition of the Army at the relevant time may well ask, whether the pugnacious officers knew anything at all what they were talking about.

The dispute over Kashmir and the confrontation of the armed forces across the cease fire line, which raised the bogey of aggression from a much bigger adversary, soon became the central issue around which the policy and functions of the central government began to revolve. More than two thirds of the central budget having been committed to defence, very little remained for other activities of government. The ministry of defence became the most important department and the army was given a free hand to expand and augment its fighting capabilities. Diversion of resources of the country in peacetime to such unproductive purpose, restricted seriously the role of the government in the sphere of welfare of the people. They could see very little change for the better since the achievement of independence, and were getting more and more frustrated with the performance of the government.

The rapid expansion of the army began to generate other forces destined to produce far reaching effect on the political development of the country. Warfare and threat of aggression tend to increase the influence of the armed forces on government, particularly in a country

lacking in political maturity. The clash with India over Kashmir created a war psychosis in West Pakistan which gave the army a firm hold on the central government. This phenomena became more and more pronounced since the assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in October '51, which marked the decline of political leadership never to be regained. It opened up the way for the army to step into the power vacuum which they were seeking. General political conditions also helped a great deal to fulfil their aspirations. They began to toy with the idea that defence being the supreme need of the country, those who were responsible for defence, should also have a hand in the over all management of the government. Decline of political leadership, along with the expansion of the armed forces at last generated a perception of power and a sense of confidence, which encouraged the armed forces to entertain political ambitions of their own.

Rapid expansion inducting a large element of fresh recruits also induced a spate of accelerated promotions in the armed forces. Contrary to general impression, far from giving satisfaction to the beneficiaries, swift promotion began to engender discontent among the officer classes. It had the effect of raising expectations to unprecedented heights, which was impossible to achieve. Such discontent, together with the political ambition which began to raise its head, had the effect of undermining discipline and erode the traditional loyalty of the armed forces to the civil authorities.

The first indication of such unhappy tendency was a conspiracy to overthrow the government by a group of army officers, which was discovered soon after General Ayub Khan took over the office of Commander-in-chief from Gen. Gracey early in 1951. The incident came to be known as "Rawalpindi Conspiracy" case. It appears that the top brass were blissfully ignorant of what was taking place within the armed forces, until the civil intelligence agencies discovered the conspiracy and brought it to their notice. The conspiracy was master minded by no less a person

than the Chief of staff of the army, Gen. Akbar Khan. It was discovered just in time to enable the authorities to prevent the conspirators from staging a coup, which they were planning. Genl. Akbar Khan and his associates were prosecuted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. A number of leftist intellectuals were also involved in the conspiracy and convicted along with Gen. Akbar Khan. The timely discovery of the conspiracy saved the government from a major crisis. It also brought to light that all was not well with the Pakistan Army.

General Akbar Khan's conspiracy was perhaps the first indication of the growing restlessness in the Pakistan army, aspiring to be the rulers of the country. At the time of handing over charge of the office of C-in-C, General Gracey gave such an indication to Gen. Ayub Khan, that there was something like a "Young Turk Party" in the army and some "peculiar people like Akbar Khan" were there, who sponsored such a movement (Ayub's autobiography). The new C-in-C failed to take notice of such a significant disclosure made by his predecessor, as subsequent events had proved. Politically conscious intelligentsia may be horrified to learn about the growth of such a tendency among the armed forces when the country was struggling with the task of reconstruction after independence. Those among the high societies of Lahore and Karachi who knew better, began to express their doubts, how long the proud "martial races" of the Punjab and the Pathans would put up with the shaky rule of the unworthy politicians and clerks ! Genl. Akbar's attempt to overthrow the government failed, because it could be forestalled by the watchful civil intelligence agency and the army was not strong enough yet to execute such a plan. No one questioned his good intentions,—none the less he was prosecuted and sent to prison as too dangerous an element to be allowed to remain at large. Only eight years later General Ayub, the C-in-C himself staged a coup with the help of his army junta and succeeded to capture power. It was hailed

as a revolution and General Auyub Khan emerged as a hero and a saviour. Why? because the coup was a success and the lawful government was overthrown! Alas nothing succeeds like success.

India's aggressive attitude was a factor which had a lot to do with the boosting up of the Pak. Army and increase its influence on the government. It was expected that after the "cease-fire" in Kashmir in January '49, and the disengagement of the armed forces, the tension between the two countries would be defused. But the hostile attitude of India soon after threatening armed intervention against Pakistan again pushed the two countries on the edge of a precipice.

Right from the beginning of independence, reluctance of Indian leaders to accept partition as a settled fact, made it impossible to normalise relationship between the two countries. Every issue which remained unresolved, became more and more difficult to tackle with the passage of time. Even internal affairs of the two countries began to cast their shadow on their relationship. Unfortunately partition failed to resolve the communal discord which continued to flare up from time to time adding fuel to the fire.

A planned campaign was launched towards the end of 1949, jointly by the Hindu communal organisations and a section of the Congress to stir up trouble in West Bengal and East Pakistan, with a view to create conditions for armed intervention by India against the latter. An association under the name of "the Council for the Protection of Right of Minorities" and the Hindu Mahasabha, started a persistent campaign with the help of the communal press for the annexation of East Pakistan. They openly denounced partition and demanded its annulment and reunion of Pakistan with India. Annual Convention of the Hindu Mahasabha held in Calcutta towards the end of December 1949, passed a resolution to the same effect. This was followed up by the Deputy Prime Minister of India Sardar Patel, who in course of his public address in Bombay and Calcutta in January '50, made a highly inflammatory speech directed

against Pakistan which encouraged hopes of annexation, if conditions could be brought about for "Police Action" by India, as was done against Hyderabad. They went so far as to set up a provisional government of East Pakistan in Calcutta.

Serious communal riots that followed early in 1950 compelled thousands of refugees to cross the borders on both sides, aggravating the tension between the two countries. It was estimated that nearly 4,00,000 helpless refugees crossed the borders between East Pakistan and India, almost a repetition of the Punjab crisis on a smaller scale. India began mobilisation of her armed forces towards the borders of Pakistan on both sides. The war hysteria that siezed India, almost precipitated a major armed clash. However, good sense prevailed before reaching the flash point and the crisis was defused following a meeting of the two Prime Ministers at Delhi in April '50. The "Liaquat-Nehru Agreement" laid the basis of a settlement which averted the imminent crisis and brought about a welcome relaxation of tension for a while. It was followed up by visits to the riot affected areas by the central ministers of the two countries, along with a team of journalists with a view to remove apprehension and restore good will between the two communities. It gave them an opportunity to observe the situation as it prevailed on the ground. I happened to accompany the party during their tour of Chittagong Division. They visited a number of camps set up to provide shelter to the refugees, who were forced to flee their home in India. Gruesome stories of the incidents related by the victims left no room for doubt that the riots were planned and instigated by communal organisations with the purpose of creating a crisis to force the government to take what was called "police action" against East Pakistan; at the same time drive out as many Muslims as possible from West Bengal. Sequence of events demonstrated clearly that the trouble in East Pakistan began only after thousands of refugees poured into the Province, following attacks on the Muslims in West Bengal, which inflamed communal ten-

sion leading to retaliatory action, in which the refugees took a leading part. It also demonstrated that unlike pre-partition incidents, those clashes were not the outcome of friction between local groups belonging to rival communities, but was brought about by planned instigation of communal organisations, who had a vested interest in keeping communal tension alive for political purpose. They had no other way to maintain their identity in public life after partition.

The good result of the agreement and its follow up action to normalise relationship, was however short lived and failed to ensure long term objective of bringing about a sense of security to the minorities. While all shades of opinion in Pakistan hailed the Agreement as a good achievement and abide by its conciliatory spirit, the press in West Bengal reacted in a hostile manner and continued their anti-Pakistan agitation to keep the tension alive. Two central ministers from West Bengal who demanded "police action" against East Pakistan, resigned from the Union ministry in protest against alleged inaction of the centre. While signs of communal tension was fading out in Pakistan, there was little indication of its disappearance from 'secular' India. Between 1950, when Liaquat-Nehru agreement was concluded and 1964, more than 600 communal riots all over India inflicted untold misery on the helpless Muslims.

The next round of troubles began soon after. Having reached an agreement with Pakistan over the accession of Jammu and Kashmir, India thought it fit to go aback on her commitments and took a provocative step by setting up a Constituent Assembly for Kashmir to forestall the issue of plebiscite. As a demonstration of her military might and a deterrent against possible move on the part on Pakistan, she again mobilised and concentrated her armed forces in East Punjab and Kashmir towards the middle of 1951. Such an action on the part of India again created an explosive situation. A protest was lodged with the Security Council of the U.N. for such a hostile move by India against Pakistan. Some fanatical elements raised a call for "Jehad" in Pakistan to protect

the Muslim minorities and India seized the opportunity to reply that her troop movements were only precautionary measures against attack from Pakistan and that she had no aggressive designs against the neighbouring country. This was followed by renewed correspondence between the two Prime Ministers. In order to remove apprehensions, Pakistan proposed a "Peace Plan", and in reply India came out with her plan of "no-war declaration". Nothing came out of such overtures, They only produced the effect of keeping the tension alive which vitiated their relationship ever since independence.

Repeated provocation and threat of aggression from a much bigger and resourceful neighbour, could not but create a genuine apprehension to her security in Pakistan. The only way open to a smaller power placed in such a predicament, was to seek alliance with friendly powers for collective security in times of need. Such were the circumstances, which compelled Pakistan to conclude the "Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement" with the United States in 1954. It enabled her to obtain assistance in the shape of military stores and equipment from that country to strengthen her defences. Pakistan also became a member of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) soon after, placing herself firmly in military alliance with the West--so her leaders believed !

It is not my intention to go into the details or the merits of the above alliances concluded between Pakistan and the U.S.A. They provided a much needed sense of security for the time being and ensured supply of military stores and expertise to enable Pakistan to equip and modernise her expanding armed forces .One of the implications of the agreement was a tacit understanding that the military aid receivable from the U.S.A, cannot be utilised to reduce the current expenditure Pakistan was devoting on her defence ; the aid is to be utilised to augment and strengthen her military establishment. As could be expected the military top brass were quite happy with such a stipulation. The purpose

of the Americans was to build up the military potentials of Pakistan for containment of communism in Asia, which the Russians were trying to propagate in this region. Thus it admirably suited the purpose of both the donors as well as the recipient of the military aid. The aid however did little to give relief to the finances of the central government overburdened with a bloated defence establishment.

India was already obtaining economic aid as well as equipment for defence from the U.S.A. An American military advisory group was working in New Delhi long before Pakistan concluded her agreement with U.S.A. But India lost no time to lodge a strong protest with U.S.A. as soon as she was informed, on the ground that military aid to Pakistan would disturb the balance of power in the subcontinent. Be that as it may, this new move on the part of Pakistan provided a pretext to Prime Minister Nehru to repudiate openly the agreement over plebiscite in Kashmir and proceed with her formal integration in the Indian Union, which virtually began with the appointment of a constituent assembly mentioned before. Although India did not refuse to hold further talks on the issue, henceforth she took a firm stand not to agree to hold plebiscite ; at the same time laid a claim on the rest of the territory, under the control of the Azad Kashmir government.

The continuing dispute with India posing threat of military aggression on the one hand and American military aid calculated to increase her defence capabilities on the other, combined to boost up the armed forces of Pakistan which soon became the dominant element in the government of the country. The army began to look down on the civil authorities as unworthy of their task and progressively got out of their control. How far American aid could enable the Pak army to acquire sufficient strength to defeat the armed forces of an enemy three times its size, subsequent events would demonstrate. An important side effect of expanding the armed forces in peace time was to make them the dominant power in society, which in its turn heighten their ambition to take

Under Three Flags

: government of the country. When they found they had sufficient manpower to do it, nothing would stop them to overthrow the civil authorities. At the same time it produced an exaggerated idea of power, distorting their sense of proportion. Free from control of civil authorities, there was nothing to stop them from embarking on military adventures, which ultimately proved disastrous for the country. In the words of a war time British Prime Minister, warfare is too serious a business to be left to the generals only. An army independent of civilian control can be a menace to society.

CHAPTER XXIV

Stages of Political Development

Interim Constitution—The Constituent Assembly and its task.

The rise of Muslim power in the subcontinent began with powerful Empires ruled from Delhi who managed to bring a large part of the country under the sway of one government. Ruled by powerful dynasties, their control began to expand or shrink, depending on the military capabilities of the ruler. Successive waves of the new conquering immigrants introduced a diversity of race and culture among the Muslims who came to live in the subcontinent. Conversion of large groups of local people into Islam continued the same process. After getting over the initial local resistance which was easily overcome, the Muslim power came across very little opposition against maintaining their rule over the non-Muslim population. The political conditions that prevailed during the era of Muslim hegemony, were dominated by a struggle for power and ascendancy among different Muslim dynastic groups ; while the people over whom they ruled, displayed little concern over occasional change of rulers. There was very little warfare between the Muslim and non-Muslim powers in India, since the initial resistance of the latter was overcome. Hence political conditions that prevailed were favourable for the Muslims to make the subcontinent their home and settle down for good. Thus the Muslim conquest of India introduced fresh additions to its diverse elements of population and culture ; it had little to do with their integration into a composite society, much less a nation. They remained separate from the Hindus as well as divided amongst themselves.

As Islam began to spread far and wide, it brought people of different races and culture into its folds. It also developed an egalitarian society,

free from prejudice of caste or colour, which divide other societies even to this day. The teachings of Islam have always inculcated a bond of spiritual unity among its adherents. The community of faith, which transcended diversity of race and culture, did not, however, go far enough to create an urge for political integration among different races and groups of Muslims, owing allegiance to different rulers and chiefs. This phenomena of political fragmentation of Muslim society is noticeable so long as they were free and independent. After their initial period of conquest and empire building, constant warfare amongst themselves in the later period progressively reduced their strength and undermined their dominant position as rulers in the subcontinent.

Struggle for ascendancy among kinship groups is not unknown ; but what strikes as unusual is the failure of the Muslim potentates of the subcontinent to foresee an imminent danger to their hegemony and their reluctance to unite to resist aggression by a common enemy threatening their existence. Their decline and fall was as complete as it was rapid. Unlike Muslim conquest which increased diversity and political fragmentation, the British conquest not only established unity of administration, it also had the effect of promoting a gradual political development of the people, which had never happened before. They however failed to wield themselves into one people. They ultimately emerged as two nations.

After several generations of subservience to foreign rule, there came an upturn in the political consciousness of the Muslims to regain independence. This change was brought about by two factors ; the impact of western education and culture, and the apprehension of permanent subjugation as a minority. While in search for a way out of the impasse and maintain their cultural identity, the community of faith developed into a community of interest inculcating a new spirit analogous to the spirit of nationalism. This transformation of the Muslim community, gave shape and inspiration to the movement for political emancipation

of the people of the subcontinent. While seeking independence, they had to fight for freedom from the alien rule and also struggle to establish a homeland, to be free from domination of a much larger community, with whom integration was impossible.

A long period of struggle and preparation had cleared the way for the elimination of the alien rules ; but the struggles of the Muslims for a separate homeland had to be intense and swift, which did not have much time for preparations. The most difficult problem faced by the country immediately after independence was the task of transforming a colonial type of democracy into a parliamentary democracy of an independent country.

The basis of the new government of Pakistan was provided in the Indian Independence Act passed by the British Parliament in July 1947. This was the Interim Constitution to be in force until a new one was promulgated by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It was designed on the model of the British Parliament with a federal structure and was based on the Government of India Act 1935, with which our politicians were familiar. A separate Constituent Assembly which was set up under the plan announced by Lord Mountbatten in June 1947 immediately before the partition, became the first federal Legislature of Pakistan, in addition to its task of constitution making. It had seventy nine members,—forty four from East Pakistan, and thirty five from West Pakistan representing the provinces and the States and Frontier Regions. The selections to the Constituent Assembly were dominated by the League and all the Muslims members were returned under the League ticket. A number of seats from East Pakistan was allotted to the members of West Pakistan, one of whom was the first Prime Minister Late Liaquat Ali Khan, who lost his constituency in East Punjab now in India.

Mr. Jinnah who became the first Governor—General was unanimously elected President of the Constituent Assembly. Contrary to parliamentary practices, he took over charge of a number of depart-

ments, such as the ministries of the States and Frontier Region and Evacuees and Rehabilitation. He also used to preside over cabinet meetings. Initially, the working of the Central Government looked more like that of Viceroy's Executive Council, than a Parliamentary Cabinet. It was also intended to be so. Mr. Jinnah had no intention to be a figure head of the State ; he wanted to exercise the powers and functions of the head of the government as well. In course of a discussion over the subject, Lord Mountbatten once suggested to Jinnah that he should be the Prime Minister if he wanted to run the affairs of Government and not the Governor-General. Jinnah's response was that in Pakistan, the Prime Minister will do what the Governor-General would tell him to do. This was perhaps a natural response from a leader who had so much to do with the creation of a new country, where he came to be regarded as the Father of the Nation. The association of a leader of Jinnah's stature in the day to day conduct of government, may have been necessary in the early days of Pakistan to enable the new government to establish itself ; it was also a step of political expediency. But on the other hand it created a precedence which did not conform with the parliamentary form of government and stood in the way of the growth of sound parliamentary practices. It had the effect of perpetuating the concept of the ancient regims of the British Raj to have a strong centralised executive as the sine-qua-non of good government. It also opened up the opportunity for the central government to interfere in the affairs of the Province. The Interim Constitution having been in force for long nine years, practices and precedence that were established practically set the pattern of a constitutional government for the future.

The elections having been held immediately before partition, both the Central and the Provincial legislatures could settle down with their task without loss of time. The principal political party the Muslim League, fresh from their success in establishing Pakistan under the leader-

ship of M.A. Jinnah, provided the political base for the reconstruction of the truncated country.

A Council of ministers was set up by the Governor-General, with Liaquat Ali Khan as the Prime Minister. Cabinet ministers were selected, representing different regions of the country.

The division of the country into two separate geographic regions more than a thousand miles apart, became an important factor in the administration of the central government. Sea voyage from the port of Chittagong in the East to Karachi, the capital of the country in the west was nearly three thousand miles apart, a distance which a ship would take the best part of ten days to cover. Wireless communication was established within a short time. Air Transport service was opened by a group of enterprising business houses linking Dhaka and Kariachi by aircraft flying once every day. It was named the "Orient Airways". The port town of Chittagong was linked with Karachi by a ship carrying passengers once a month. The air service was opened with the help of a number of war time twin engined Dakota Transport Planes which could carry about 24 passengers. It could not fly nonstop from Dhaka to Karachi ; it had to touch down at Delhi for refuelling. The British Airways soon opened an additional air service with bigger aircrafts "the Skymasters" flying twice weekly. They could cover the distance without stopping enroute. Facilities for transport and communication are an important factor in the administration of any country. The air transport almost became the life-line for the government of Pakistan.

Inadequate facilities for transport limited movement of people from one region to the other. This was noticeable even in the attendance of members in the sessions of the federal legislature as well. Air Travel was not as comfortable as it is today. The members did not like the long and bumpy air travel lasting 10 to 12 hours, between Dhaka and Karachi. Attendance in the legislature hardly exceeded 55 members

on an average during the session. The highest number voting in a division was less than that number. This was much too small a number to ensure a meaningful representation of eighty million people in the central legislature of the country. Neglect of legislative business was an unhappy beginning of the institutions of democracy. It allowed the bureaucracy to run the administration without adequate check and supervision. There were also ministers in the Central Cabinet who looked upon the Legislature with contempt. Our politicians failed to realise the importance of popular supervision over the administration which it could provide. They forgot that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, for the lack of which the nation had to pay dearly in the end.

The ruling party, the Muslim League enjoyed an absolute majority in the House. There was practically no opposition party in the Legislature. The Congress represented by a small group of Hindu members failed to play the part of a truly loyal opposition, because of their background and political differences which made their loyalty to the country a dubious proposition. They remained more or less quiescent except when the interests of the Hindus were concerned.

The sessions of the Federal Legislature were few and far between. The membership was limited to 79 members, representing 80 million people. Their attendance in the sessions were even less as mentioned above. Proceedings of the Legislature were usually devoid of lively issues and debates. They attracted very little attention in the country or abroad. In sum, the federal Legislature failed to play an effective part in the life of the nation as it was expected to do.

More than 70 per cent of the central budget having been devoted to meet the expenditure on defence, very little resources were left for activities touching the welfare of the people. Hence, even the budget session of the Legislature, which is supposed to lay down the financial policy of the government, failed to attract much public attention. This was particularly the case in East Pakistan, where the activities of the central

government were hardly, if ever noticed by the people. The expenditure incurred by government, besides providing various public services also adds substantially to the income of the people. More than 80 per cent of the central government expenditure having been committed to West Pakistan, the Eastern Region derived very little economic benefit from the activities of the federal government. The chief instrument for the promotion of distributive justice practically left East Pakistan out of its purview. The pattern of the central budget thus set, was never changed.

The situation almost became a source of deprivation to East Pakistan and was an important factor in the growing economic disparity between the two regions of the country. It began to embitter the relationship between East Pakistan and the central government with the passage of time. This one way flow of resources could be compared with the "Home Charges" during the British Regime which transferred net resources from India to England year after year in payment of the cost of defence and other services rendered by the latter.

In a country like Pakistan, composed of different racial and linguistic groups, struggle for power and dominance was inevitable, which soon began to manifest itself. As soon as the common struggle for liberation was over, internal dissensions began to raise their heads, which called for political direction to resolve. Preoccupation of the government with post partition emergencies, and the able leadership of Mr. Jinnah, kept the dissensions under reasonable control. The death of Jinnah within just a year of independence, deprived the country of the benefits of his guidance at a critical point of time. The next in the hierarchy of leadership was Liaquat Ali Khan. He preferred to remain Prime Minister. The choice for the office of Governor-General fell on Khwaja Nazimuddin, the chief minister of East Pakistan. An ardent believer in parliamentary form of Government, the appointment of Khwaja Nazimuddin as the Governor-General and Liaquat Ali Khan

as the Prime Minister held out promise of developing sound parliamentary practices and conventions. Unlike Jinnah, he seldom presided over cabinet meetings. This was a good opportunity to sustain and develop a cabinet from of government.

As the leader of the Party having an absolute majority in the House, the Prime Minister had effective control over the Legislature. He enjoyed a wide popular support throughout Pakistan. Although he originally belonged to East Punjab he was returned from a constituency in East Pakistan. Hence he was in a good position to arbitrate impartially in interprovincial disputes, and hold the different groups contesting for ascendancy in check. Unfortunately, in spite of such favourable conditions, a sound Cabinet system failed to develop. Although the outward form of Cabinet system was maintained, the team spirit and the concept of collective responsibility failed to emerge. The cabinet soon split into two main factions—the Bengali and the Punjabi factions. Instead of a team working on the basis of consensus—as a Cabinet should work, it took the form of a house divided, each side struggling for supremacy. Such unfortunate division at the highest level, began to cast its shadow downwards and permeate the political climate of the country. Right from the beginning, the Punjabis—by far the largest group in West Pakistan—was actuated by a vision of dominating the centre and rule over the country. As mentioned earlier, their pre-dominant position in the armed forces gave added encouragement to such an ambition. The location of the capital as well as the head offices of the central agencies in West Pakistan, gave them all the advantage. The only obstacles in the way of realising their ambition were the Central Legislature, and the Constituent Assembly, where East Pakistan had a majority of member in conformity with the distribution of population. They were bent upon neutralising this advantage which was in favour of East Pakistan. The unhappy dispute that emerged prevented finalisation of the draft of the new constitution during the life time of Liaquat Ali Khan. Occa-

sionally when the Cabinet failed to reach a consensus on an important issue the Prime Minister took recourse to voting to decide the case, a procedure unprecedented in Cabinet practice. It had the effect of keeping alive the differences among the central ministers and failed to develop much needed team spirit which is the basis of Cabinet system of government and collective responsibility of the ministers.

The Interim constitution was based on the Government of India Act of 1935. The original law was formulated to serve the purpose of a centralised system of government headed by a strong executive, having special provisions to extend Central control over the provinces. The government had limited functions to perform in the area of colonialism and had set objectives to pursue. Hence central control could be meaningful as well as possible. All those special powers of the centre were provided in the Indian Independence Act 1947, vesting the governor-general with extra-ordinary powers to enable him to deal with unforeseen contingencies that might arise in the formative period of the new country. In addition, the Governor-General was empowered to appoint the Provincial Governors who were practically turned into agents of the central government. The governors were placed under his general control and direction in such matters as the appointment and dismissal of provincial ministers and important officials, which enhanced further the powers of the Governor-General, if he wished to exercise them. Although the provinces had elected legislatures to which the ministers were responsible, the chief ministers were invariably selected by the centre which gave the latter a handle for interference in the affairs of the province. But the most drastic provision in the Interim constitution was the power by which the Governor-general could suspend the constitutional government of a province and by proclamation direct the governor to take over the administration on behalf of the Governor-general, whenever, in his opinion, there was an emergency threatening peace and security of the country. Such extra-ordinary powers by virtue of

which central rule could be imposed on a province was by no means a constitutional fiction in Pakistan ; they were exercised repeatedly over all the four provinces in open contravention of the spirit of federalism and provincial autonomy which it implied. Surely such powers are vested by the letter of the law in the hands of the head of the state in almost all countries ; but their application is regulated by convention, to be exercised on the advice of the popularly elected ministers, i.e., under democratic control. Only a few years before independence one could see in the part played by the Viceroy and the governors during the British regime, a genuine desire to work the constitutional reforms,—limited as they were in scope—and abide by the spirit of democratic practices and conventions. This was highlighted in the special instrument of instructions, issued to the Viceroy and the provincial governors, along with the introduction of reforms in India since the days of the Diarchy. In Pakistan during the first nine years of independence when the interim constitution was in force, such conventions which provide the foundation of democracy were observed more in the breach than observance. (Dependence on subventions from the centre for the provincial budget, control over commerce, industry and the superior services by the centre, all combined to create a system of government highly centralised in its operations and compromised the spirit of federalism, which could usher democracy in the country.

In the geographic configurations of a country like Pakistan divided into two separate regions, concentration of power and authority placed East Pakistan at a serious disadvantage in its relations with the central government. Almost all affairs requiring consultation or clearance from the centre for disposal, became a time consuming and difficult process. There were very few important subjects in which the province could act on its own judgement or discretion. This was particularly the case in the early years of reconstruction. The central government which had to be set up literally de novo with the help of personnel who opted for

Pakistan had very few officials having any knowledge of East Pakistan. As we shall see when dealing with the problems of public administration, there were very few Muslim officials in the government of India serving at the policy making level. None of them was from the area which constituted East Pakistan. The imperatives of such a situation placed the burden of decision making on a handful of top officials which rounded up the story of concentration of power and authority at the centre. Woe betide East Pakistan in running the affairs of government under such conditions.

Political consciousness of the Muslims as a separate entity began with the desire to obtain safeguards for the protection of their rights and privileges as a community, but within the ambit of a larger Indian society. The idea of a separate homeland did not take shape until the country was almost on the threshold of independence. It happened at a time when the country was embroiled in the Second World War. It was preceded and followed by a devastating civil war, the like of which was never seen before. It was not known whether partition was going to take place or not, until the very end. Such a colossal task was pushed through in a hurry in about ten weeks. There was hardly any occasion to give adequate thought to the different aspects of the problem of creating a new country and much less to the question of preparations for smooth transfer of government from a dependency to an independent country separated from the rest of India. Having been overtaken by events and beset with unforeseen problems, the architects of Pakistan might have thought that centralisation of power and authority was necessary to maintain the integrity of the new country and set its house in order. Unfortunately such a course of action was not in keeping with the needs of the hour and the geographic situation of the country. Short of experienced manpower both in politics as well as administration, centralisation of power and responsibility in the hope of better management was self defeating, because, the requisite expertise was not available at

the centre. The art of government had to be learned the hard way working on the job. What was necessary was decentralisation of power and responsibility to the maximum extent and allowing the Provinces to get on with their job as well as they could. Thus the Federal Government could be free from blame for shortcomings and mistakes to the extent that powers and responsibilities were vested in the provincial government. The centre could assume such powers as was considered necessary in the light of experience gained in course of time, for which ample provisions were made in the Interim constitution. Centralisation of power ab initio, had the effect of increasing the difficulties and discontent in East Pakistan against the centre, without any countervailing advantage. Difficulties of transport and communication only aggravated the problem.

When Mr. Jinnah assumed the office of the Governor-General, he was also holding the office of the President of the Muslim League Party. Subsequently, he was also elected President of the Constituent Assembly. In this way a precedence was set up for concentration of power into the hands of a single individual. If this was necessary because none of his colleagues were considered competent to assume such onerous responsibilities, it did not augur well for the future of the new born country. Before independence, Mr. Jinnah held the office of the President and guided the activities of the party for the best part of thirty years. Unlike the Congress which usually elected a new President every year, thus building up a cadre of leadership, the League became dependent on a single individual to guide its work and activities year after year. The new nation and particularly the party became so much dependent on the charismatic leadership of one individual, that a line of succession failed to emerge and the future of the party became uncertain. In fact it began to disintegrate soon after the demise of the leader.

Jinnah's death within a year of independence produced a real crisis in the political leadership of the country. The nation had to find replace-

ment not only for the office of Governor-General, but two other important offices as well, which he was holding, namely the chief of the party and the President of the Constituent Assembly. The next leader in the line of succession was Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan ; but he preferred to remain in the same office he was holding, i.e., the Prime Minister. The mantle of the Governor-General fell on Khwaja Nazimuddin, the chief minister of East Pakistan. An attempt was made to find a new incumbent for the office of the Party chief. But it did not work. Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan became the President of the Muslim League in addition to his office of Prime Minister. Such an arrangement of combining the two disparate offices was not in keeping with the conventions of party government ; but because of the shortcomings of the party system that prevailed in the League circles, such an arrangement unsatisfactory as it was, had to continue.

Khwaja Nazimuddin was a politician all his life. Educated in Cambridge and qualified Bar-at-law, he started his political career in the local government as chairman of Dhaka municipality, an office he held many years. Later he was elected a member of the Bengal Legislative council and served as a minister during the Diarchy. Brought up in the traditions of parliamentary democracy, he had high regards for constitutionalism and respect for its conventions. The Prime Minister as the leader having absolute majority of his party in the house, held out the prospect of political stability in the country. Hence the years of Nazimuddin-Liaquat regime had all the advantages to sustain and develop a Cabinet form of government. But this process was cut short by assassination of Liaquat Ali in Oct. '51 at Rawalpindi.

Though the motive of this outrage could not be definitely established, its political implications could not be overlooked. The top ranking leaders of the League during the high tide of Pakistan movement, came from the rest of India. Both Mr. M.A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan belonged to the geographical region outside the area which came to Pakistan. They, along with those who came over from India after

independence, were known as the "Refugee" element. The strong tribal and local affinity which characterised Indian society in general and the Muslims in particular, began to generate a dislike for the Refugees in the top echelon of political leadership, in which the powerful indigenous groups found themselves left out. However important they might have been in prepartition India for the purpose of leading a united movement, they were placed in the position of a minority in independent Pakistan. The dominant group in West Pakistan having their base in the Punjab who were in a position to take over the leadership, were getting impatient and began to resent control of the old guard over the government. The hand that pulled the trigger was that of poor Syed Akbar ; but the instigation must have come from other sources who wanted to bring about a quick change of regime. This aspect of the incident did not fail to pass the mind of Field Marshal Ayub Khan, as mentioned in his autobiography (p.41).

After the death of Liaquat Ali, Khwaja Nazimuddin relinquished his office of Governor-General and became the second Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Finance Minister Gulam Muhammad assumed the office of the Governor-General. He belonged to the Punjab. He joined the Indian Audit and Account service under the British Regime. After retirement he was serving a Princely state as Financial Adviser when he was picked up by Mr. Jinnah at the time of partition to be the first Finance Minister of Pakistan. There was no doubt about his abilities as a technocrate ; his knowledge of the intricacies of public finance undoubtedly made him competent to hold the portfolio of finance in the new government. On the other hand, he had little experience of political office. Having spent his entire service life with the central government, he had no contact with the working of representative governments in the Provinces. His service with the Princely state after retirement exposed him only to the imperatives and orientation of a despotic regime, which were all contrary to democratic way of life.

At the time when he assumed the office of Governor-General he was suffering from partial paralysis making him almost a cripple, affecting his faculty of speech. The handicap made him impatient by nature and incapable to participate in discussions with his colleagues. He was a man of strong likes and dislikes, having close association with the top echelon of the bureaucracy and the armed forces, as well as with the dominant landed interests in the Punjab. Both his character and his antecedents thus gave him distinct leanings towards autocracy and a contempt for the parliamentary form of government. Elevation of such a personality to the position of the Governor-General in the formative years of the country therefore, did not augur well with the evolution of democracy in Pakistan.

The end of political development is the realisation of democracy which enjoin management of public affairs according to the wishes of the people. It is an ideal cherished by every nation. The institutional device which has been evolved for its attainment has two aspects. The formal part is the Constitution and the Parliament which rest on law and deal directly with the affairs of the government. The other aspect according to the Western model is the political party. The functions of the political party are to give practical shape to the popular demands, initiate nation-wide debate and discussions to develop a consensus, formulate alternative plan and programme for the choice of the electorate and seek popular support for their implementation by the Government. The over-all purpose is to provide leadership to enable the nation to make progress towards the realisation of its hopes and aspiration.

In the western democracies two or more political parties usually contest for popular support. They continually try to adapt their objective and programme with the changing conditions of time, at the same time maintaining continuity of administration through a peaceful change of government. Failure of democracy results from the failure of political parties to provide requisite leadership for peaceful change and

adaptation. It is not an easy task ; neither can it be learned within a short space of time. It has taken western countries several generations to develop their democratic form of government and acquire requisite experience and habits.

The struggle for partition of the subcontinent was a united effort where there was no let down in any quarters. The Interim Constitution was drafted in the white Hall in which there was no scope of any controversy. Now, the task before the new nation was the political management of the country and the drafting of a new constitution incorporating the aspirations of the people. The problems arising out of the Interim Constitution have been mentioned before. The basic political issues which the new country had to resolve began to emerge, when the Constituent Assembly took up the task of drafting a new constitution.

An entirely new issue which arose right at the beginning of constitution making was the demand to make Pakistan an Islamic Republic. This feature had to be reflected in the constitution. Having no precedence to guide the politicians and the constitutional lawyers, a great deal of discussions took place as to how such a provision could be incorporated. It was ultimately resolved by including a clause in the preamble, known as the "Objective Resolution" setting forth the aims and objectives of the constitution. The resolution opened with these words—"whereas sovereignty for the entire universe belonged to God Almighty alone and authority which he has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within limits prescribed by Him, is a sacred trust"—". The resolution also laid down that the Muslims should be enabled to order their lives in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Such a provision generally satisfied the demand to give Islamic character to the constitution.

The decision for a federal structure of government was taken without any dissent.

The Basic Principles Committee set up by the Assembly to work out the details of the constitution, however encountered acute differen-

ces between the members representing East and West Pakistan over those provisions of the constitution defining the relationship between the two regions of the country. East Pakistan having only about one sixth of the total area had more than half of the population of the country. The West Pakistan was divided into four provinces, a number of States and the tribal areas who had to be separately represented. Allocation of membership so as to maintain a political balance in the central Legislature, raised complicated issues to which the Assembly had to address itself.

The committee failed to arrive at an agreement over the details of the federal structure and the quantum of representation from the two regions of the country. The recommendations of the Committee put up to the Prime Minister in 1948 virtually reduced East Pakistan's representation into a minority, although the population of the province was larger than all the provinces of West Pakistan put together. Another issue which raised a great deal of resentment was their recommendation to make Urdu the single state language, ignoring the clam of Bengali to be one of them. The report of the committee raised such a storm of protest in East Pakistan, that the Prime Minister at last was obliged to postpone consideration to gain time for a compromise. Before the Assembly could produce a revised version of the Draft, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in Rawalpindi in Oct. '51, which ended the first effort at constitution making. Khwaja Nazimuddin, who succeeded Liaquat Ali as the Prime Minister in Oct. '51, prepared a fresh draft, incorporating some changes in the proposals with a view to arrive at an agreement on the new constitution. A notable feature of the second Draft was the principle of parity of representation between the two Regions of the country. The federal legislature was to be bi-cameral, to which both the Regions would send equal number of representatives. This time West Pakistan refused to accept parity on the ground that the four units of West Pakistan could not be equated with only one unit of the East

as it contravened the other issues according to which all the units of a federation have to be treated equally for the purpose of representation. The second draft containing a provision to set up a Board of Ulemas to maintain Islamic values, failed to elicit general support. No agreement could be reached to resolve the issues in dispute. Finding no alternative, the Constituent Assembly was forced to postpone deliberation on the second draft indefinitely. It was never revived.

The brief episode of constitutionalism during Nazimuddin-Liaquat regime came to an end with the death of the latter at the hands of an assassin. The new governor-general, a retired civil servant brought up in the old bureaucratic traditions of Viceregal rule as indicated earlier, was in no mood to remain hamstrung with constitutional practices and limitations. He wanted to establish the hegemony of the bureaucracy with the support of the army, relegating the politicians and the parliament to the background. Unfortunately prevailing political climate encouraged such a move on the part of the Governor-General. The cabinet was divided amongst themselves and failed to work as a united body. The Bengali and the Punjabi groups were locked in frequent disputes over almost every-thing concening respective interests of the two regions, which became more and more pronounced since the death of Liaquat Ali, and began to hamper smooth conduct of business of the government. The failure of the cabinet to work as a team, must have egged him on to avail himself of the opportunity to put the politicians out of the way where ever possible. His perception of political conditions that prevailed convinced him that any serious opposition to his scheme was unlikely. The only hindrance was the Prime Minister. A senior politician and a former Governor-General—Nazimuddin was not amenable to his machinations. Hence he had to be replaced by some one who would be agreeable to work under his tutelage. In a surprise move he dismissed Nazimuddin cabinet in April '53, soon after the national budget was passed which indicated that he still enjoyed the confidence

of the Parliament. Muhammad Ali of Bogra, who was serving as Ambassador at Washington was summoned to form a new cabinet. This was obviously done with prior arrangements as the new cabinet was sworn in within a few hours of the dismissal of the former cabinet.

Although the dismissal of the cabinet by the Governor-General was within the powers vested in him by the Interim Constitution, there was no doubt that it was contrary to the conventions of the constitution. There was no indication that the cabinet had lost the confidence of the Legislature. But what surprised everybody was the ready acquiescence of the League parliamentary party, who agreed to accept Muhammad Ali as their leader without demur. Lacking cohesion and unity of purpose, it could not throw a challenge to the unconstitutional action of the Governor-General. It also exposed how insecure was the political base of the parliamentary institution in our country.

The new Prime Minister was able to bring about an agreement on the issue of representation in parliament on the basis of a formula of parity, which was at last accepted by the constituent Assembly. Parliamentary form of government and bi-cameral legislature were maintained.

A compromise was also reached on the issue of language by giving the status of state language to both Bengali and Urdu. At the same time English was retained for the next twenty years to allow time for necessary adjustments for the change over in due course. The above agreements were ratified by the Constituent Assembly in October 1953. It took more than a year to finalise the draft according to the new formula. It was announced by the Prime Minister that the Draft would be presented to the Assembly for promulgation of the constitution in December 1954.

The compromise over the question of representation and delimitation of the powers and functions of the Governor-General failed to satisfy the influential groups in West Pakistan. They apprehended an ero-

sion of their dominant position, because of the division of West Pakistan in a number of units, whose shifting alignment on important issues might jeopardise their interest. The Governor-General appeared to hold the same opinion. He addressed himself to find a way to throw out the Draft and postpone the promulgation of the constitution.

In his autobiography, General Ayub Khan tells us of an incident, which happened about this time when he was suddenly summoned by the Governor-General while he was abroad along with the Prime Minister. On his return when he called on the Governor-General in response to his orders, he was asked much to his surprise to take over the government and produce a constitution within three months (p.52) The draft of the order as well as Ayub's acceptance there of, were ready and awaiting their signature and announcement. The intention obviously was to suppress the Draft which was almost ready for promulgation by the Assembly and substitute a constitution containing provisions which would be more in keeping with the wishes of the ruling bureaucracy-military coterie close to the Governor-General. Although the account of the above incident did not mention the date of its occurrence, the sequence of events point to the relevant time corresponding with the Prime Minister's announcement about its imminent promulgation.

...General Ayub was sensible enough not to agree to such a course of action. The army was not in a position to take over the civil administration yet. But the refusal did not prevent the G.G. from pursuing his determination to prevent promulgation of the constitution. He dissolved both the Cabinet and the Constituent Assembly on the 24th Oct. '54, ending its Long seven years of exercise in futility.

Legality of the action of the G.G. dissolving the Constituent Assembly was challenged in the Supreme Court. The litigation that followed raised important issues of constitutional law which were debated and argued by eminent lawyers and attracted a lot of attention. Dissolution of the Assembly was upheld by the court as lawful. The court

however decreed that the constitution must be framed by an assembly elected in the same manner as its predecessor. The head of the State could not impose a constitution by his fiat. The judgement of the Supreme Court cleared the way for the election of the second Constituent Assembly.

The controversy over the detailed provisions of the constitution brought out the basic issues which divided the nation—the question of balance of power in the central government. The western region divided into several administrative units, made its leaders apprehensive of control of the centre by an united eastern region. Similarly East Pakistan was chary over losing its hold over the centre which its larger population should ensure as a matter of course. Location of the capital and the headquarters of all the central offices and agencies had given West Pakistan a great deal of advantage in their dealings with the centre. If the Eastern Region was deprived of the only advantage it had on the score of representation by virtue of a larger population, the region was destined to be placed permanently at a disadvantage in its relationship with the centre. The issue was complicated further by the wide powers vested in the central government and the centralised system of administration that prevailed.

The principle of parity itself involved some amount of sacrifice on the part of East Pakistan, as it contained more than fifty per cent of population. But the principle had a strong appeal on the ground of equity and could not be ignored. There was no other way in which the problem of representation could be solved. The only snag which the west had to resolve was its fragmentation into a number of units. The dominant group in West Pakistan decided to merge all the provinces into one unit, with a view to neutralise the advantage which East Pakistan might enjoy by virtue of its unique position in the central legislature. As could be expected such a scheme was strongly opposed by the smaller provinces like Sindh which did not like to lose its identity as a separate province. Moreover, merger of all the provinces of the west into a single unit

would give the Punjab, the biggest and the most advanced among them, a great deal of advantage over all other units in the integrated province. The status of the provinces could not be changed without the concurrence of the members concerned. Hence, they had to be persuaded to agree, failing which to be forced to vote in favour of a merger for the creation of one unit. Pressure tactics ultimately succeeded in getting the "one Unit Bill" passed by the Federal Legislature. The intrigue and coercion that were employed in the manoeuvrings to suppress the opposition to the creation of one unit, brought out the seamy side of politics that prevailed, eroding democratic values which progressively undermined political life of the country.

Failing health of Gulam Muhammad soon compelled him to quit office. He was succeeded by General Iskander Mirza, the Home Minister in the Cabinet. He was a Sandhurst trained commissioned officer, who spent most of his life in the Indian Political Service during the British Raj. The members of the old political service were trained for jobs in the tribal areas and the princely states. They had nothing to do with the working of democratic form of government. Like his predecessor, Mirza had little regard for parliamentary practices and conventions and looked down with contempt on the politicians and their ilk. His old association with the army made him lean more towards the armed forces, than to the political party to keep himself in office. As mentioned earlier, the top brass of the armed forces were getting more and more involved with political appointments at the higher levels.

I happened to serve under him as a Deputy-Inspector General of Police in 1954-55, when he was the governor of East Pakistan following suspension of constitution under Sec. 192A of the Independence Act. He came with the set purpose of disrupting the ruling party, the United Front, who won the provincial elections a few months ago defeating the Muslims League. The subject will be dealt with as we proceed with the story of the political development.

The Second Constituent Assembly was formed according to the procedure decreed by the Supreme Court. Members were elected by the Provincial Legislatures acting as the electoral College. It was inaugurated early in July 1955. Elections in the Provinces on adult franchise basis after independence made them truly representative in character. Merger of the provinces into one unit removed the reservations of West Pakistan over the question of parity in representation. The Second Constituent Assembly thus could address itself to its task with promise of success.

Muhammad Ali of Bogra was in the mean time replaced by Choudhury Muhammad Ali as Prime Minister. Thanks to his endeavours, the new Draft of the Consitution—the fourth in the series—was presented early in January '56, and adopted by the Assembly on the 29th of February, 56. It provided an unicameral legislature with parity of representation. Thus after nine years of effort the country got its constitution, declaring itself as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The story of political development will remain incomplete, without an account of the political party, which played such an important part in bringing about partition of the subcontinent and a separate homeland for the Muslims. The story will continue in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXV

POLITICAL PARTIES-THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES

The term politics is used to indicate the eternal endeavour by organised groups of citizens to capture power ; or more precisely seeking control over government, with a view to direct the administration of the country according to their wishes. Such endeavour find their expression in the activities of the political parties. An important function of such parties is to facilitate a peaceful process of change through agreed method of elections in all democratic countries. Those who win the elections as well as those who lose, both have their part to play in the government of the country. The two combined make the modern party system.

Thus the party system is a necessary complement of representative government. They have been in existence ever since management of government have come under the control of the governed. While the constitution provides the legal framework within which government can function, the political parties provide the organisation of the citizens to enable them to participate in its management.

Modern party system is the symbol of political consciousness of the people. The functions of the party are to give shape to their aspirations and mobilise the citizens for their attainment. The pre-requisite of the system is the political ideal which the party seek to uphold and call upon the people to subscribe. Without a political ideal and a programme which it seeks to implement, a party cannot exist, because then it has nothing to offer to the people on the basis of which the party may seek their support. The party operate through its organisation which is its source of power and influence over the people. Such powers are liable

to be misused, a phenomenon which is almost universal. Misuse of power is the source of corruption in public life. They are the imperfections of open society. The business of politics is to sustain society in freedom ; but politics has not been able to find effective measures yet to eradicate corruption which comes in its wake. The only check over misuse of power are those imposed by the vigilance of the citizenry and the character of those who exercise such powers. Society can be free from corruption to the extent we can uphold the values we cherish and maintain vigilance over those entrusted with the task of exercising such powers.

I have though it fit to start my account of political parties with an apology on their behalf. This was necessary because they are often condemned for all the ills that befall us, forgetting they are none but an epitome of our own society.

But how to find a better alternative or what are the requisite means for removing the imperfections that constantly haunt our society ? As yet, there is no answer to such questions. None the less, political parties continue to dominate the world of politics.

It took a long time for the Muslims of India to develop a political ideal of their own having a countrywide appeal. They could find none, until the country was almost on the threshold of independence. Since the awakening of political consciousness which for the first time developed a sense of community of interest, all that the Muslims were seeking was an accommodation with the alien rulers on the one hand and the majority community, the Hindus on the other. Such a mission had only a limited appeal. Hence, although the Muslim League was the only countrywide party of the Muslims, it could make very little impact in course of its first thirty years of its existence. They had no political ideal to uphold and very little programme to implement. During twenty years of diarchy under the British regime, the League failed to show up as a political party in the Indian Legislature.

Political activities of the Muslims centred round important personalities. They hardly extended beyond the limits of the Province. The only countrywide association, The Muslim League was dominated by big land owners and western educated upper middle class. Jinnah remained as its president continuously since the early thirties. It had very little influence in the Muslim majority provinces like Bengal and the Punjab, where the provincial leaders dominated the political arena and resented outside interference. The Reforms introduced by the Government of India Act 1935 fulfilled much of the expectations of the Muslims and left very little unrealised for the League to continue with its political work. During the absence of Mr. Jinnah for a few years from the country early in the thirties when he went to England to practice law, the League became moribund and ceased to be active in politics. Mr. Jinnah's withdrawal from the political scene coincided with the communal award of the British Prime Minister, conceding his demands which practically exhausted the list of Fourteen Points he had formulated for a political settlement. So, he had very little to do with politics, at least for the time being. The apologists of Jinnah tried to explain he left the country out of disgust over disunity and continuous bickering among the leaders of different provinces. Actually the real cause of disunity was the absence of a political ideal which Muslims all over India could unitedly subscribe. It was eluding the grasp of the leaders. True, the community of faith provided a link in the shape of spiritual bond. But this aspect of culture was traditionally looked after by the Muslim divines, who had little concern for politics. The task of the politicians was to find ways and means to liberate and foster a spirit of political unity and initiate a programme for its realisation. The leaders found themselves in a quandary over such a perplexing issue.

In a colonial dependency, leadership in the struggle for liberation against the alien rule is the first priority in politics. The struggle was becoming more and more strident under the leadership of the Congress

over a number of years. Although it had all their moral support, the Muslims were generally reluctant to accept Congress leadership in the absence of a political settlement. But such a negative stand could have no purpose other than to wait and see which did not call for leadership. Non-involvement in the over-riding purpose of politics in such a juncture, threatened to cast Muslim politics into the limbo.

A change in the political climate was brought about following the constitutional reforms late in the thirties. The Congress having won an absolute majority following the elections of 1937 in almost all the Hindu majority provinces, their leaders thought it fit to reject the offer of collaboration made by the League, in response to a prior agreement. They refused to accept the nominees of the League in the Congress ministries, unless they signed the Congress creed, which virtually meant liquidation of the party. Such a demand on the part of the Congress at last confirmed the apprehensions of the Muslims getting suppressed under the rule of an unsympathetic majority, which was haunting their political thinking ever since the Aligarh movement drew attention to such an unhappy prospect. Jinnah's address to the annual conference of the League at Lucknow in 1937 explaining the political imperatives confronting the community, made a profound impression on the leaders who gathered from all over India. In answer to his call for unity, all of them came forward to join the League and mount a united effort to obtain a rightful place in the political life of the country.

The vision of poet Iqbal which he tried to project in his address to the annual conference of the League in 1930, contemplating a scheme of political arrangement enabling the Muslims to live in freedom, did not make much of an impression, so long as a hope for a political settlement with the Congress seemed feasible. The conduct of the Congress in the hour of their triumph, at last destroyed such an illusion. The vision of Iqbal once again reappeared as the only path to liberation and began to take shape in the minds of the leaders. It ultimately found an

expression in the resolution adopted by the League in their annual session in 1940 held at Lahore. It called for a partition of India to provide the Muslims their own homeland.

The demand for partition of India completely changed the character of Muslim politics in general and the Muslim League in particular. It set a definite political objective concerning the future of the community, having a universal appeal to the Muslims. It generated the spirit of unity among the Muslims enabling them to launch a united struggle for achievement. The rest of the story has been told in an earlier chapter.

The above reference to an earlier phase of political development was necessary to pick up the threads of a movement which moved with such rapidity, that the leaders found themselves almost overtaken by events. Success in achieving partition of India was perhaps beyond their expectations. Not long before partition, the writer could gather from highly placed politicians, that the demand for partition was a move to obtain a strong position for bargaining with the Congress and the British Raj to get as much concessions as possible. This was confirmed by the initial acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan by the League. But widespread civil war and the haste in which the British were anxious to quit, pushed the course of events beyond the control of both the League and the Congress. The situation was allowed to drift to the point of no return and partition threw the entire country in turmoil and confusion.

Drastic as it was, the demand for partition could set only a limited objective. Once done, the task was over. The bigger task lay ahead. All on a sudden a new country was brought into existence. It called for all the skill and ingenuity that the politicians and administrators could muster for its reconstruction and development.

There was hardly any opportunity to foresee the problems which lay ahead for which advance thinking and planning were necessary, in order to give the new-born country a sense of direction and purpose. The

Muslim League failed to comprehend the problems and allowed politics of the country to drift aimlessly, enabling the self-seeking persons and powerful organisations to exploit the fluid situation to their advantage. Orderly development of the institutions of democracy was retarded by the activities of pressure groups and ambitious politicians.

Failing to provide leadership in such a crucial period of post partition era, the Muslim League began to lose its hold both in the Legislature as well as on the people. The first constituent Assembly failed to adopt a constitution because of the clash of interest between the Regional groups which the Party failed to resolve. The delay only aggravated the problems which the government had to grapple with. The controversy over the state language which was allowed to drag on for several years, only embittered the relationship between the two Regions of the country. It was a mistake to raise a sensitive issue at such a stage when the country was confronted with so many urgent problems.

Separate homeland was a political ideal and was achieved through political leadership and direction. Democratic management of government is also a political objective and a continuing task. The failure of political parties to assume their responsibility allowed other forces to step into the vacuum and retarded development of democracy.

The united movement of the Muslims for partition of India was launched under the leadership of the League. Calling themselves as a nation separate from the rest of the people of India, the political ideal caught the imagination of the Muslims like wild fire and brought about an unity of purpose never known before. It did not however mean that the Muslims forgot their local affinities and old associations, neither did it bring about their merger into a composite body of people. The unity was achieved for the purpose of a definite objective, i.e., creating a separate home land. The task of political management of the new country was yet to be defined. It called for an understanding among the various Regions and groups, which was a task of

political leadership to deal with. The integrity and stability of the country depended on how well such a task could be performed.

The death of Jinnah, the acknowledged leader of the country only a year after independence, and the assassination of Liaquat Ali his able colleague soon after, threw the League into disarray. There was no other political party who could take over the task of political leadership of the nation. Still the rump of the Party was in control of the Legislature at the centre as well as the Provinces, maintaining a semblance of balance between the two Regions of the country. They managed to maintain their hold after post-partition elections in West Pakistan. But the political climate in the other Region in the East was undergoing change in a manner, which the League leadership could not anticipate.

Solid support obtained by the League from the Muslims all over the country in its campaign for partition, began to decline soon after independence. It has been mentioned before that political activities usually centered round important leaders of the Province. It was only an outstanding issue such as a separate "home land" touching the hearts of almost every Muslim, which could mobilise the entire community, transcending provinces and personalities. The secret of leadership is its ability to show the way to achieve the desired objective. Having obtained the immediate purpose of partition, the League leadership began to falter in the next task of political management of the new country and set its own house in order; hence its hold on the course of events began to weaken. Old political forces began to reappear centering round personalities. Unfortunately for the League, important leaders of East Pakistan found themselves left out of the top echelon of the leadership, which began to alienate the political elements of the Province. Selection of Nurul Amin as the Chief Minister and the head of the party in 1951, failed to arrest the erosion of its position in the Province.

Fazlul Haq, who moved the famous Lahore Resolution in 1940, Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister of the League Cabinet in Bengal immediately before Partition ; Moulana Bhasani the President of Assam Provincial League about the same time, were all pushed out of the Party hierarchy. Those who were taken in their place, could not exercise the same amount of influence as the old guard could do. The crack in the political edifice did not appear so long as Jinnah and Liaquat Ali were there to maintain at least a facade of unity. In their vain attempt to retain the power of political direction in their own hands, the League coterie of West Pakistan crippled the Party and lost the support of East Pakistan.

Fazlul Haq, the grand-old politician of Bengal, had numerous supporters in East Pakistan. He could soon gather round himself old associates and followers, and revive his erstwhile Krishak Praja Party, under the new designation, Krishak Sramik Party (K.S.P.). Suhrawardy, and Moulana Bhasani combined to organise a new party called Awami Muslim League which attracted a large section of the younger elements from the Muslim League, depriving the latter its cadre of party workers. The rightist group launched another party, the Nizam-e-Islam. The members who joined the new parties were the activist elements who provided the driving force to the movement for partition. Their desertion made the League moribund and lifeless.

The last elections in the provinces were held in 1946 before independence. Hence the next elections were due in 1951. West Punjab held its elections according to schedule, in which the League maintained its predominance in the Legislature. The opposition groups could not organise themselves yet. The new leadership of the League in East Pakistan thought it fit to postpone elections for several years, which enabled the opposition to gather strength and organise themselves as mentioned above. Collaboration of the centre with such unconstitutional move on the part of the Provincial League only increased the resentment against the centre.

Soon after the announcement of the date of provincial elections to be held early in 1954, the new political parties formed themselves into an "United Front" with a view to offer straight fight to the League. They announced a twenty-one point programme in their election manifesto. Country-wide campaign which the United Front organised, recalled the effort and enthusiasm which had distinguished the elections of 1946 contested on the issue of partition. In many places the U.F. party workers were almost the same set of people who had participated in the former campaign ; but on this occasion, they were working in favour of the U.F., and against the League.

The central leadership did all they could to render assistance to Provincial League in their election campaign. The Prime Minister Muhammad Ali himself took part and addressed a number of election meetings in the Province. In his last address to the representatives of the press at the airport before returning to Karachi, he expressed the hope that there was 50 : 50 chance for the League to win. Such an assessment on the part of the party chief disclosed to what extent the leadership was ignorant of the situation that prevailed and how the old party was getting alienated from the people.

The writer could watch the drama of election contest between the League and the U.F. taking place in the entire province from his official position as the Deputy Inspector-General of Police in charge of the Intelligence branch. Weekly intelligence reports indicated a mounting campaign launched by the volunteers of the U.F. organised with the help of their "All Parties workers camps" in the Districts. They started their work two months before the date of polling. Majority of the candidates who filed their nominations under the U.F. ticket were new comers. They had to get over their initial handicap by house to house approach to the voters, whose numbers increased five times due to the introduction of adult franchise. Association of old guards like Fazlul Haq, made famous by his popularly designated title, "Sher-e-Bangla", or the

Tiger of Bengal, and Moulana Bhasani, whose names were almost household words in the Province were the best introduction to their constituencies.

In contrast with the campaign of the U.F., the official candidates of the League could hardly hold a meeting without prior arrangements made by the District administration. The latter were hardly seen in their constituencies until the elections were postponed for about a fortnight to enable the League to complete their preparations. The most surprising feature of the episode was the blissful ignorance of the old guard of the League about the impending disaster that was about to take place to the fortunes of the Party—the oldest in the country.

This was the first election in the Province held on the basis of adult franchise and demonstrated the changing mood of the people. Independence generated high hopes in the minds of the people. After all the hardships suffered during the war and the disruptions of partition, everyone was looking forward to a change for a better life. They were told time without number, that most of their hardship were caused by exploitation of the colonial power and the Hindus ; and that the only way to improve their lot was to eliminate such exploitation. Six years of independence brought very little change for the better. The euphoria of independence was soon turned into disappointment and frustration. Now the party in power was blamed for its inability to fulfil its promise of a better life.

Although influx of non-Bengalies into East Pakistan was relatively small they came to occupy a place of power and influence with administration as well as business much in case of their numbers. Most of the higher positions left vacant after the departure of the British and the Hindus following partition, were taken over by those who came from the rest of India. In the administration they found their respective places in accordance with their seniority, which was in their favour. In the field of business, the migrant non-Bengalies managed to establish

themselves within a short time by virtue of their expertise and old links, as well as the capital which they were able to transfer from India. The inhabitants of the Province failed to take advantage of the new openings created by partition. It was also alleged that the superior positions, having been held by their compatriots the non-Bengalies were able to enjoy a great deal of patronage from the government, which were denied to the Bengalies; who were almost strangers to the new incumbents in the higher positions of administration.

The non-Bengalies belonged basically to a different racial group, a factor which usually segregates mankind into separate societies. The common bond of religion was good enough to generate a spirit of unity for a common struggle for liberation. The success also opened up the prospect of integrating them into a nation, provided appropriate policy could be devised for national reconstruction. . . . But this was a subject which was not understood by either party. United struggle for liberation was taken to be enough indication of national unity, which did not call for further nurture and promotion other than living under the same government. While living as subjects under the British Raj, the different racial and linguistic groups having their cultural affinities derived from a common faith, indeed made the Muslims appear socially integrated as a community. But the economic disparity which began to develop between the two racial groups after independence, began to create a class distinction and generate social tension between the two sections of the people, which was not anticipated before. In the provincial elections the entire refugee group voted for the League enblock ; where as the vast majority of the Bengalies voted for the United Front, a party which was almost a stranger to the non-Bengalies. Support of the two racial groups to the two different political parties, demonstrated further, the growing hiatus between the two sections of the people, which began to manifest itself since independence. . . . Strangely enough, living under the same government after independence seemed to alienate the two groups from one another, rather than promote their integration.

There were about 309 seats in the Legislature of East Pakistan. The nominees of the United Front (U.F.) were returned from as-many as 299 constituencies in the elections of 1954, conceding only ten seats to the League. Thus the League failed to secure even the minimum number of seats necessary for recognition as a party in the House. Elimination of the League removed the only party having a political net work spread over the entire country. No other party had come up to that status yet, which could claim an all Pakistan standing for itself. The result of the elections also demonstrated a lack of confidence of the people of East Pakistan in the central Ministry which was holding their office beyond the normal tenure of five years.

An attempt has been made before to analyse the causes which undermined the hold of the League on the people of this Province. But the extent of its unpopularity demonstrated by the result of the elections, surprised everybody. It indicated the changing power structure in East Pakistan. Unlike the Provinces of West Pakistan, where politics was dominated by the big land owning families, in East Pakistan the rising middle class intelligentsia were gaining in power and influence since independence. The abolition of the Feudal system of land tenure in the Province and introduction of adult franchise, seemed to have brought about the change. It also had the effect of destabilising the society, making it difficult to maintain a sound parliamentary government due to shifting loyalties of the different groups and factions, which henceforth characterised the political life of the Province.

The U.F. was a combination of diverse political elements, who were united in a common endeavour to oust the League from power, having only a tenuous bond of unity on the basis of their twenty-one points programme. One of their associates was the Communist Party. Although their inclusion could not be announced formally due to opposition of some of the major groups in the coalition; they had an important part to play in organising the election campaign through their "All Parties

Workers Camp" mentioned before. Their expertise in agitation and propaganda, and the guidance they received from "The International Communism", enabled them to give a tremendous boost to the election campaign of the U.F. and demoralised their opponents. But the lessons learnt from such tactics and methods were not lost on the youthful volunteers who supplied the main workforce for the Workers' Camps. Success of such methods encouraged them to adopt more and more an agitational approach for political work, which soon began to embarrass their friends and foes alike. It gave the younger elements a sense of new found power. The methods and tactics soon gave a new turn to the political activities of the Province, in which the youths and the students began to take a leading part.

The leader of the U.F. Fazlul Haq was called upon by the governor to form the Provincial ministry. The front was not a homogeneous body, but a conglomeration of a number of groups having different ideologies and views on almost all important issues of national concern. Accommodation of such diverse elements in a ministry which is supposed to work as a team, was indeed a difficult task. Thanks to the stature of the Chief Minister as an elder politician, it was possible to form a cabinet inspite of initial difficulties.

The Central Government however could not look with favour at the Provincial ministry constituted as it was, by a party opposed to their own, after suffering such an ignominious defeat at the poles. Having a senior politician like Fazlul Haq as the Chief Minister, the Centre could not expect to interfere in the affairs of the Province as they were prone to do since independence. Hence, the latter was looking for a pretext to dismiss the Ministry or, at least replace the Chief Minister by someone more amenable to Central control.

Disappearance of the League from the Provincial government to whom the refugees were beholden for protection and patronage, made them feel nervous and insecure. This was evident among rich

Industrialists who invested large sums of money in jute industries which the U.F. threatened to nationalise in their election manifesto. Tension began to mount, particularly in the industrial areas at the outskirts of the capital, where the Bengalis and the Refugee elements were living in close proximity but in separate social groups. Following a fracas resulting in the death of a refugee youth one evening in the Adamjee Jute Mills labour colony, serious rioting broke out next day, between the Bengalis and the refugee labourers, in which thousands on each side took part. Fighting continued throughout the day resulting in the death of over six hundred men, women and children and injuries to more than a thousand persons. In spite of the presence of a contingent of police forces, the riots could not be prevented. Ultimately military forces had to be deployed to restore peace. The incident brought out clearly the deep seated animosity that prevailed between the two groups of Muslims, the Bengalis and the non-Bengalis, living side by side in the Province.

It was suspected that the Adamjee Jute Mill riots were instigated by interested quarters to discredit the newly formed U.F. ministry. Investigation of the case by the police disclosed that at least one of the managers actively abetted the riots on the side of the non-Bengalis. Circumstantial evidence deepened the above suspicion. It was quite evident, that the trouble was the result of racial animosities which were brewing over a period of time. Those who instigated the riots could never anticipate that it could escalate into such a pogrom as it ultimately turned out to be. Unfortunately the non-Bengalis in general, and the Refugees in particular, persisted with the idea that the best way to establish themselves in the Province was by the show of force. The upcoming new rich class were almost all non-Bengalis. They acquired all the traits of those who suddenly become wealthy, making them arrogant and rude. Nothing less than a dominant status would satisfy them. They thought it fit to segregate themselves and made little efforts to get integrated

with the local society, which all immigrants should do in their own interest. Very few non-Bengalies thought it necessary to learn the local language Bengali, although they come to settle down for good. They assumed the role of an upstart aristocracy as the conquerers of yore were prone to do and ultimately reaped its bitter harvest.

The Adamjee Mill riots provided just the pretext which the Central Government was seeking to suspend the constitutional government in the Province. The governor, Choudhuri Khalequzzaman, a veteran politician was replaced by General Iskander Mirza who took over the administration of the Province on behalf of the central government. A few months after, the Governor-General dissolved the constituent Assembly, when the third Draft of the new Constitution was almost ready for promulgation. Thus, by successive arbitrary action on the part of the governor-general, constitutional government were suspended both in East Pakistan as well as in the centre.

Those measures were taken at a time when the requisite institutional devices were getting ready to build democracy. The need of the hour was collaboration on the part of the top echelon in the executive, to deal with constitutional affairs in a manner which could help building the nascent institutions. It was easy to subvert them at this stage. The motive behind such action was quite apparent. Apprehensive of losing their own power and position, the ruling coterie was bent upon thwarting progress of democracy with a view to perpetuate themselves in power. It was a power game in which no hold was barred.

The new governor Iskander Mirza came to the Province with the set purpose of crippling the political parties by pressure tactics and by encouraging internal dissensions so that, they might not again pose a challenge to the centre in a body, as they did in the last elections. The component groups of the U.F. were already showing signs of restlessness even before dissolution of the ministry. The process of disintegration was accelerated by threats and intrigue, which the new governor had no

scruples to employ. The first group to break away from the front, was the Suhrawardy—Bhasani group who called themselves the Awami Muslim League, when they sponsored a no-confidence resolution against the leader, Fazlul Haq. Not long after the two groups of the same party, one headed by Suhrawardy and the other by Bhasani, parted company. The latter formed a new party under the name of National Awami Party (NAP). The A.M.L. became Awami League dropping the middle name 'Muslim', to make it non-denominational in character so as to allow the non-Muslims to join as members. The smaller groups contented themselves sitting on the fence, in the hope of deriving some advantage from the estrangement of the two principal parties contesting for power when constitutional government is restored. In less than a year, the facade of party government which the U.F. tried to build up in the province was completely shattered and ushered in an era of instability from which it could never recover again. How much of the unhappy state of affairs was brought about by the inherent conditions of society that prevailed and how much was induced by purposeful vested interests, would perhaps remain a controversial issue. That the action of the governor-general was highly unconstitutional, no one can dispute. It also brought out the salient fact that it is not the letter of the law, but the spirit in which it is worked that determines success or failure of democracy.

The principal feature of political development since the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, was its motivated direction by persons in the high offices of the state, calculated to destroy democracy rather than build it, so that authoritarian rule by a small coterie could be perpetuated. They could not have done it so flagrantly as they did, had they not been assured of the requisite support (should they need) from a power base, who were in a position to provide such support. Who could be the source of their power and strength?

All countries are faced with the activities of dissident groups, who want to subvert society for one reason or another. Their motivation may be ideological, altruistic or simply mischief, but the result of their activities, whether idealistic or mischievous is the same, i.e. subversion of established society. In a democracy, the process of change is sought to be regulated by the law of the land and brought about in an orderly manner. The opposition parties assume a constructive role in bringing about a change in an agreed manner through due process of law. The non-conformists find a place along with others in the institutional device set up to bring about the desired change on the basis of a consensus. But still, there remain certain groups holding extremist views who can never reconcile themselves to the trammels of society and want to operate outside the bounds of law and order. One of the principal tasks of government is to protect society against their activities directed towards subversion. It is however impossible to define what actually constitutes "subversion", because it will always depend on what is sought to be preserved. In a democracy, opposition is a necessary constituent of government. On the other hand, in an authoritarian regime every one who dare oppose the ruling coterie is dubbed as subversive, whom they try to eliminate at all cost. Freedom of association and pursuit of ends must therefore be regulated by a set of values which the society wants to uphold ; otherwise an orderly government becomes impossible.

Every government therefore is in need of an agency for collecting intelligence to keep itself informed about the movements of all those groups and associations, whose activities may transgress the law of the land and threaten to subvert society. Such an agency is necessary as much for the democracies, as they were needed by the ancient regime or by the totalitarian governments of modern times. However, the very nature of their function makes such agencies a very potent and powerful weapon in the hands of the rulers of the country. The

only assurance of proper use of power is the dictates of a set of values cherished by the society which provide the foundation of democracy. Intelligence Agencies are needed to preserve society ; they can also be used to cripple democracy.

As could be expected, the British Raj employed their intelligence agencies to maintain themselves in power, and suppress activities calculated to subvert their empire. They began to expand and became a strong arm of the British Government since the emergence of the revolutionary movements, whose purpose was to throw them out of India. The targets of the Agency were mainly the organisations and personalities taking part in political activities, directed against the colonial government. In other words their function was to gather political intelligence and advise government how to deal with them. The agency was manned largely by Indians, working under the supervision of British officers. They performed their task with remarkable competence.

Similar intelligence gathering agencies were set up after independence, both at the centre, as well as in the Provinces. Initially their chief targets, as it should be, were the dissident associations and groups who opposed partition and were trying to create trouble for the government. As the political activities in the country increased, and in the usual course opposition to the ruling party raised its head, the attention of the intelligence agencies began to be directed against them more and more, and the internal political intelligence became their chief concern. The distinction between opposition and subversion at last began to disappear. It may be mentioned that the Intelligence Bureau was an agency of the central government and was placed directly under the Prime Minister.

Frequent supersession of constitutional government and banning of political activities increased the power and functions of the intelligence agencies, who were soon pressed into service to suppress opposition with a view to maintain the ruling coterie in power.

The usual methods of wire tapping and shadowing the movements of the adversaries were employed to demoralise the opposition and scare away their supporters. A few years later, the Constitution Commission came to the conclusion that the Governor-General Gulam Muhammad could dismiss Prime Minister Nazimuddin and his cabinet in 1953 without fear of repercussions, because he could assess correctly the implications of his action on the basis of political intelligence at his disposal. Who could supply him with such intelligence except the agencies employed for such purpose ?

Curiously enough the Military Intelligence, which was a much bigger organisation, were also getting involved with political activities. The two combined made a powerful weapon in the hands of the executive to control and manipulate the political affairs of the country. In this way the institutions of democracy were getting undermined more and more, hampering political development on healthy lines. Frustrated in the exercise of their constitutional right to organise and oppose the party in power, the opposition began to turn more and more to agitational tactics to embarrass the government, vitiating the political climate of the country.

Whether it is a democracy or an autocracy of a totalitarian regime, the government require a power base to operate successfully. In a democracy, political power is derived from the organisation of citizens which come to prevail in the form of political parties and other institutional arrangements of democratic societies. In a totalitarian regime, political power come to rest with the armed forces, assisted by secret police and the bureaucracy. When institutional arrangements fail to grow, or they are undermined, the armed forces find it easy to step into the vacuum and take over the political management of the country. In Pakistan political ambition of the armed forces had begun to grow since the early days to her existence as has been mentioned in a previous chapter. Disruption of the institutions of democracy made the fulfilment of their ambition an easy task in course of time.

CHAPTER XXVI

Politics and Administration-Problems in the Early days of Pakistan

The system of public administration introduced by the British Regime had a highly centralised structure. Under its impact, the traditional pattern of local governments which sustained community life in the villages, soon began to disintegrate. Although the system that prevailed under their predecessors in a sense was also centralised like many other empires, still the latter found it necessary to leave important public functions like collection of land revenue, maintenance of peace and order. The administration of justice, to be performed by the village level units of administration, called the "Panchayets". Generally, the village was a closely knit community, a self sustaining economic unit having extra-ordinary resilience, which enabled it to survive through the time of trouble of all sorts. A senior civil servant in the early days of the Company's rule described the village society as "little republics having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumble down ; revolution succeed revolution ; Hindu, Pathan, Mughul, Marathta, Sikh, English are masters in turn ; but the village community remain the same (Metchalfe)."

The new system of land administration, centralised police force, a novel type of judiciary introduced by the British Raj deprived the village government of its important functions which sustained them, with the result the relic of village elders' participation in administration disappeared, leaving no vestige of local government. A significant feature of such a change was erosion of the traditional power structure and the emergence of a class of touts providing an informal link bet-

ween the ruling elite operating from a distance and their clientele in the countryside. Local government in one form or another is the appropriate device for providing welfare services to the community. They were also the forerunner of democracy in western countries. The British Raj introduced a system of government in India, which destroyed indigenous institutions of self government as well as shut down all avenues of people's participation in administration. Disappearance of the village level institutions which were in existence hundreds of years catering to the needs of their collective living, weakened the fabric of society. Later on it became difficult to organise community development programme after independence, requiring an active participation of the people.

The system itself restricted activities of government within such narrow limits, that virtually the only contact of the people with the government was the visit of the tax collectors, or when they had the misfortune of getting involved in litigation in a court of law.

The purpose of such a centralised administration obviously was to obtain absolute control over their domain, ensure timely collection of revenue and prevent emergence of local centres of power which might throw a challenge to the alien ruler. They were achieved at a terrific cost to the people. It retarded the development of an organised community life which was necessary to provide any form of welfare service. When local government of a sort was introduced many years after, it was again placed under the tutelage of officials. The scope of people's participation. As well as the resources placed at their disposal were so limited, that they failed to liberate the energies necessary to initiate collective endeavour of the people. The emergence of local self-government which played such crucial part in the progress of responsible government and the extension of public services in the west, thus failed to develop in our country for the reasons mentioned above.

The success of British administration was due largely to the limitation of their objectives. Until the first world war, they were confined within the limits of what is usually known as the "general administration", a term which indicate such functions as collection of revenue, maintaining law and order, and the judiciary. The other important function, that of protecting the country from external aggression was the task of the army. Any other task undertaken was either complementary to those enumerated above, or was just marginal in scope. Education, public works, communication, Health were under this category. Designed intially to consolidate British power in India, the system of administration ultimately settled down with the purpose of maintaining the status quo rather than initiate change and development.

The two arms of the British power in India were the civil service and the armed forces. In both of them, the top positions were reserved for the officers of British origin during the first hundred years of the British Raj. When entry into the I.C.S. was thrown open to the Indians, the opportunities were so limited that the Indianisation of the service proceeded at a very slow pace. The first Indian to get into the I.C.S. was Satyendra Nath Thakur in 1864. At the time of partition, that is, eighty-three years after the entry of Indians began, over fifty per cent of the officers in the I.C.S. were still British. The proportion of commissioned officers of Indian origin in the army was extremely small. The entire apparatus of public administration was thus designed, manned as well as oriented to serve the purpose of British policy even a generation after the responsible form of government was introduced, and when the British power was getting ready to quit India. Reconstruction of public administration befitting independent Pakistan aspiring to build a welfare state, was therefore, a difficult task. The difficulties were aggravated by the shortage of Muslim officers in the higher echelon of administration. Less than

then per cent of the I.C.S. cadets were Muslim at the time of partition who came over to Pakistan.

The Interim Constitution set the pattern of administration in Pakistan, which was inaugurated on the 14th of August, 1947 at Karachi by the last Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. It followed broadly the model laid down in the Government of India Act 1935, with which both our politicians as well as the bureaucracy were familiar. The Muslim members of the Interim Government of the last Viceroy with some additions and Liaquat Ali as Prime Minister, were sworn in as the first cabinet of Pakistan by the Governor-General, Mr. M.A. Jinnah. The Muslim officers who came over from the old establishment of the government of India formed the nucleus of the central administration of Pakistan.

The new provincial administration was inaugurated at the same time at Dhaka. The governor, Sir Frederick Bourne was a member of the Indian Civil Service, who served in the Central Provinces of India. The Provincial Cabinet was sworn in with Khwaja Nazimuddin as the Chief Minister. He replaced Suhrawardy who headed Bengal Cabinet before partition. His replacement by Nazimuddin was entirely the decision of Jinnah. Khwaja Saheb was a veteran politician belonging to a conservative family of landowners, who was brought up in the old traditions of the British colonial administration. By his character and temperament, he perhaps became a misfit in the new political milieu in which the Province found itself after liberation. As an elder politician, appropriate place for him was the Central Cabinet where his presence could be a stabilising force in the rapidly changing political fortunes of the country. Suhrawardy was perhaps much better equipped by virtue of his personality and experience to deal with the political and administrative problems confronting the province in the early years of independence. The problems arising out of partition, which began to baffle almost everybody, called for harnessing the energies of all available talents to deal with them suc-

cessfully. There were not many people who could provide leadership needed in such a difficult situation. Coalition of different political groups in the form of a national government was the best way to tackle the situation. But clash of personalities made such a united endeavour beyond the scope of practical politics in Pakistan. Frustrated by his rejection by the Party chief, Suhrawardy stayed back in Calcutta bidding his time.

The elimination of the acknowledged leaders of East Pakistan one after another from the political arena on the eve of independence, in the hope of imposing the hegemony of the Centre on the Province, ultimately proved counter-productive. After a year, when chief minister Nazimuddin left the Province to take up the office of the Governor-General, the dispute over the selection of his successor for the post of the chief minister, began to disrupt the League, as there was no one left capable enough to hold the party together. It almost set up an unhappy precedence of interference by the centre, where the Province should have been left to find its own leadership. From the outset, ideas and thinking among the leaders in West Pakistan took a line out of tune with the political conditions that prevailed. They refused to acknowledge that leadership to be effective must be based on consensus and acceptance, it could not be thrust upon unwilling followers for long. The extent to which it could be imposed, depended on the influence of those at the helm of affairs. Such a choice imposed by a leader of Jinnah's eminence could work up to a point at a time when single minded direction of liberation movement was necessary ; but it also compounded the difficulties of the future. Success of leadership depend as much on the ability to lead, as on a foresight to bring up capable successors who can continue the task of nation building. When situation changed and lesser people thought it fit to repeat such arbitrary action, it recoiled on the political edifice and soon threw it into disarray as mentioned in a foregoing chapter.

The areas constituting the province of East Pakistan were within the zone of military operations for conducting the war against Japan in the years preceding independence. Administration as well as economy of the Province were geared for the purpose of conducting the war. Hundreds of villages were evacuated to enable the military to construct defensive positions, army encampments and aircraft landing grounds. Surplus food grains were removed from the region ; country-boats, the only means of transport in the riverine areas were removed and destroyed to deny the enemy their use ; railways and country roads began to deteriorate due to overuse and lack of maintenance. Although the evacuees were supposed to be paid compensations for their rehabilitation, but in the stampede of war preparations, many of them never received their dues and they just disappeared into the blues. They all combined to disrupt the tranquil life in the country-side and ultimately brought about famine, pestilence and death to nearly three million people.

The disruption of administration caused by the civil war, combined with those mentioned above, undermined the conditions of law and order in the Province. Crime of all sorts, particularly, organised crime with violence such as dacoity, looting, forcible occupation of property increased all over the province. Land and river routes became infested with gangs of robbers, and transportation of both men and merchandise became unsafe on the highways. The process of partition and transfer of personnel on such a large scale brought local administration practically to a halt for the time being. It gave the criminals and the desperados a chance to prey on the hapless people.

Even after completing the transfer of personnel, many important positions were left vacant. Filling up the vacancies involved recruitment and training which take time to complete. Efficient administration requires local knowledge on the part of the personnel, and a spirit of team work to achieve results, both of which take time to develop.

The change over, therefore, caused an upheaval in the process of partition, and the administration lagged behind the expectations raised by the coming of independence.

The pattern of new administration followed the same old model with which we were familiar in India. No question could be raised regarding the suitability of the old system, designed for a colonial regime, to serve the purpose of an independent country. Those who were presiding over the destiny of the nations, had not seen any other system. There was no choice or hardly any time to think on new lines yet. Reviving the public administration as a going concern was the first consideration. The old familiar model was the only answer. The Central Government was set up organised into Ministries, Divisions and attached departments as of yore and the Provinces into Departments and Directorates at the headquarters, and Divisions, Districts and subdivisions, exactly as they existed on the ground under the British Raj. Old codes of law and Rules of Business were adopted without change for conducting the affairs of government. It was the same old wine in a new bottle.

What was then the purpose of the change brought about after so much of suffering and sacrifice? It was the vision of a better life which inspired the people to participate in the struggle for liberation. Spontaneous cooperation of the people sustained the new country through the turmoil of early days of its existence. They were ready to respond to the call of building a new society. This was indeed a great challenge to the leadership of the country.

The structure of government is designed to serve the purpose for which it is set up. The British regime could attain a remarkable measure of success in approaching the objectives they had in view. The government of Pakistan thought it fit to follow the same system. The new administration in Pakistan, therefore, became highly centralised, as it existed in India before partition. Although federal

in structure, it assumed a strong central bias. The country being divided into two separate geographic regions, it was thought necessary to extend control of the central government over the Provinces in the interest of maintaining unity and integrity of the country. But equally important from the point of view of a welfare state, which every independent nation seeks to achieve, is a comprehensive system of Local Government. It is the only device known by which the benefits of public service can be extended to reach the doorsteps of the citizens ; at the same time ensure their participation in such endeavour. This was missing in the British regime in India and unfortunately, escaped the attention of those engaged in setting up the new administration in Pakistan. The lowest tier of government was the province. Poor and under-developed means of transport and communication made it impossible for the provincial government to undertake much activities beyond those of general administration. Promotion of peoples' welfare was not assumed as their responsibility by the British Raj. A hundred and ninety years of their rule, left more than 90 per cent of the people illiterate.

The only vestige of local government were the District Boards and the Union Boards in East Pakistan. They were introduced by the British Raj, more for the purpose of training the people in the art of self-government, than as agencies of general welfare. Moreover in East Pakistan, their functions practically stopped since the outbreak of the Second World war. Disruptions caused by the war and shortage of materials, practically suspended their activities. The Provincial Government in the end had to come to their rescue providing subventions to pay their employees. The source of income had become inadequate even for the maintenance of their public works due to phenomenal rise of cost. Constituted as they were, and having scanty resources at their disposal, the local bodies were not in a position to do much to promote the welfare of the people.

The principal instruments of government for performing the functions of administration are collectively known as the bureaucracy. As with the case of structure, the organisation and orientation of the bureaucracy have to be designed in keeping with the purpose it is called upon to serve. The British Raj developed a bureaucracy by a process of trial and error in a period stretching over a century which was admirably suited for their purpose. It was designed according to the prevailing concept of providing the minimum of government. "That Government is the best, which governs the least," was the maxim. Such a concept not only served well the needs of the Empire, it was also largely in keeping with the current theory of "Laissez-faire", as the best method of governing a country.

The basic purpose of the British administration all along was to maintain their suzerainty over India. All other activities of the government were adapted to this overriding purpose. Their ability to restore and maintain peace and order at a time when the subcontinent was rent with violence and disorder, was enough to win the confidence of the people. A regular system of judiciary dispensing evenhanded justice among socially disparate groups of people, gave legal cover to the traditional society which enhanced their reputation as rulers.

Public administration was organised round three basic functions of government mentioned before. Welfare activities undertaken, such as education, health, transport and communication, did not extend beyond what was needed to maintain a skeleton of administration to perpetuate the British Raj and was necessary for the economic exploitation of the country. A high school and a small hospital at the headquarters of each district, and a few trunk roads, telegraph lines and railways were all the infrastructure provided till the last days of the British rule. Essentially a conservative society in which the people were content to live according to their time honoured concept and customs, such a non-interfering administration suited admirably

the temperament of the people, as well as served the purpose of the rulers. From a pragmatic point of view, the British Empire seemed to have come to stay, until the impact of the war destabilised the political system all over the world.

Training and orientation of the bureaucracy was carefully tailored to serve the purpose of the British regime. This could be noticed in the method of recruitment and training of the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.), which provided the "Steel Frame", and the tone of British administration. Pay and conditions of service prescribed for the I.C.S. were made sufficiently attractive to induce the best students of the universities of U.K. and India to join the service. Although their place of work was India, their pre-entry training was held in U.K. Those who took their examination in India, had to spend two years in U.K. The purpose obviously was to give the Indian candidates a veneer of British culture in an attempt to maintain uniformity of outlook among the top echelon of bureaucracy. They all combined to ensure a high standard of probity and competence among the members of the I.C.S. till the last days of the British rule.

The reconstruction of administration had to be done at two levels, the centre and the two major provinces East Bengal and West Punjab which were partitioned. The other provinces of West Pakistan were better off, because they did not have to go through the traumas of territorial division. The initial difficulties encountered were shortage of high level personnel almost everywhere. The centralised form of British administration had to rely heavily on a small cadre of officers belonging to the Indian Civil Service and a few other central services for the management of the bureaucracy. Their number was determined, keeping in view the minimum of government functions which the colonial regime thought it fit to perform. The requirements of administrative personnel, therefore, could not be reduced further, although the new country was much smaller in size. In 1947 at the time of partition, the total

number of I.C.S. officers serving in British India was about eleven hundred. Although Muslims constituted a quarter of the population, their number in the I.C.S. did not exceed 10% of the cadre. Their total number available for service in Pakistan was between 85 and 90. No more than half of them could claim having experience exceeding ten years of service.

Only ten of those officers held posts in the secretariate of the government of India. The highest position held by any of them were three posts of joint secretaries, an office third in rank in the hierarchy of the secretariate officers. The rest were serving in the Provinces and other central establishments scattered throughout the country. About half of them were employed in predominantly Muslim provinces of Bengal, Punjab, Sindh and the N.W. Frontier. Only three ethnically belonged to Bengal; one third of them were Punjabis by birth. The rest came from other parts of India and opted to serve Pakistan. The prevailing opinion about competence in the art of government was permeated with the idea that the members of the I.C.S. were the best, if not indispensable for the esoteric task of administrative management. The I.C.S. is often blamed for their self-opinionated claim to be made to govern; but the politicians were equally imbued with the same view. Only about ten senior officers of other central services were inducted into this category. The Secretary-General, Choudhuri Muhammad Ali was one of them.

The shortage of Muslim officers in the higher administrative ranks was sought to be relieved by inviting the British born members of the service, who were about to quit, to stay and accept contractual jobs to serve in Pakistan on the same terms and conditions of their erstwhile service. About fifty of them accepted the offer and rejoined service in Pakistan. Their total number along with some war service candidates came to be about 135 officers who formed the nucleus of the new administrative service, who later on came to be known as the Civil Service of Pakistan.

Thus nearly 30% of the superior officers in the generalist cadre, available for service in the early days of Pakistan were British. The significance of this figure can be appreciated when compared with the proportion of British officers who held about 52% of such posts in India on the eve of partition. Some of them were placed in key positions both at the centre as well as the Provinces. The Governors of East Bengal, West Punjab and the N.W. Frontier, the Secretaries for Finance, Food and Agriculture in the Central Government ; the Chief secretary of Sindh, and several posts of Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates were held by British officers.

Apart from the administrative service (P.A.S.), British officers continued to hold important offices in other sectors of administration, such as the railways, Post and Telegraph the Mint etc. who could not be replaced by Pakistanis for the time being. In the Defence establishment the Commander-in-Chief, along with some important positions were held by British military officers. As far as I could recall, the British born C-in-C prevented the Pakistan army's intervention in the initial phase of the Kashmir dispute at a crucial point of time. It may also have saved the new born country from the consequences of meddling in an ill-conceived military adventure.

Almost all the ex-colonial countries had to face the trauma of independence with similar problems of shortage of officers having requisite aptitude and experience in administration. Never-the-less, they had the advantage of inheriting a national entity as a going concern which only changed its status from a colony to an independent nation. Pakistan had to create a state almost de novo from two physically separate, strife torn regions. The task of administration was thus combined with the task of national reconstruction abinitio. Induction of fifty seasoned British I.C.S. officers and about equal number other experts relieved the difficulties of the situation created by the acute shortage of administrative skill in the early days of Pakistan.

Although the character of administration was bound to change after independence, the immediate need was rehabilitation of the administration so as to enable it to deal effectively with day to day function of government. When such a task had to be performed with the help of personnel migrating from different parts of the subcontinent, and without the help of their service records and office equipment, the difficulties could better be imagined than described. The only instrument with which the job could be tackled was the experience and resourcefulness of the officers concerned. Shortage of senior Pakistani officers with requisite knowledge of central administration was therefore a serious handicap, which the new government had to contend with. Re-employed British officers were in the best position to deal with such a situation, by virtue of their standing in the administration of undivided India. They helped a great deal to maintain confidence, and provided much needed respite to enable the up coming batches of Pakistani officers to settle down and take over the responsibilities at the higher level of administration after a short time. It was none-the-less a very important work done at a critical period in the life of the new country ; at the same time helped setting up the central administration with the shortest possible time.

The I.C.S. had to play a dual role in British India. On the one hand they were responsible for the management of the bureaucracy which was their administrative role. It was also their mission to uphold the British regime in India, which was truly a political function. Politics and administration were thus neatly rolled into one package in order to maintain the supremacy of the British power in India. One branch of the same service cast off its camouflage and called itself the Political service whose jurisdiction covered the Princely states and the Frontier Region. The relationship between the two aspects of their functions had a profound impact on Political development in Pakistan with the passage of time.

Besides the central services, the Provinces also had their own cadre of executive officers who manned the posts under the Provincial Government. Bengal Civil Service ranked next to the I.C.S. in the Province. The members of the service were employed both in the provincial secretariate as well as the districts. The proportion of Muslim officers who were available, was also much smaller than their ratio in the population of the province. In Bengal they formed only 30 per cent of the cadre. Their number in the technical services like engineers, doctors and teachers was even less. The imbalance in the judicial branch of the provincial service was greater than that in the executive service. In the Bengal secretariate, out of 55 posts of deputy secretary and above, only six were held by Muslims before partition.

Rehabilitation of provincial administration had to be done on two levels - setting up the headquarters of the Province at Dhaka, and regenerating the district administration through out the province. Adoption of almost all the existing codes of law and rules of business by the new provincial government, enabled the districts to proceed with their task without interruption. Some war time measures giving considerable autonomy to the districts enabling them keep functioning, even if cut off by the enemy action, helped a lot to maintain the administration in the period of transition, when the Provincial government was in the process of reconstruction.

Maintenance of law and order was the responsibility of the Province. The principal agency for the performance of this task is the police. They were somewhat better off as regards manpower, because the proportion of Muslim in all ranks of the police force was higher than that of other services. At the same time they were called upon to assume new responsibilities like the security of the border stretching over 1700 miles.

The new chief of police, Zakir Husain joined the Indian police as a direct recruit early in the twenties. He was serving in the position

of Deputy-Inspector General of police on the eve of partition. Direct recruitment of Indians through competitive examination in the superior rank of the police was introduced after the first world war. The new recruitment policy provided admission of 50 per cent Muslims on provincial basis, which ensured a good proportion of Muslims in the rank of the Indian Police. The exigencies of the second world War, called for rapid expansion of the police force as a temporary measure. It inevitably led to lowering of standard of recruitment and training. On the other hand direct recruitment of University graduates in the superior ranks was suspended soon after the outbreak of war, creating a big gap in the hierarchy, which was filled in by promotions all down the line, much before the time they were due for promotion. Absorption of optee officers in the higher ranks blocking chances of promotion of the local officers, gave rise to a lot of resentment and undermined the esprit de corps of the force. Influx of the optees as a result of partition from all parts of the subcontinent introduced a large number of strangers into all ranks unaccustomed to the conditions of living in which they were placed. Uprooted from the society in which they were born and brought up, and suddenly forced to leave their hearth and home, they introduced an unstable element in the Police force. This was a phenomena noticed in almost all sectors of society. All those exigencies of transition seriously undermined morale and discipline of the police force, when it was reconstituted after partition. The Government had to deal with rebellion on the part of groups of policemen on more than one occasion, one of which I had to face in Chittagong soon after independence. It was however possible to get over the crisis in administration without serious dislocation of work. The people all along behaved with remarkable patience and sobriety, helping a great deal the process of rehabilitation of the administration.

The influence of British officers declined after 1950, when they began to quit one after another. Two senior British Police officers

servicing in East Bengal left within a year. Brought up in the traditions of British imperialism with a sense of mission all their own, the changed environment of service after independence must have had a lot to do with their quick departure, when there was still need of seasoned officers in administration. Only three of them remained in the central government for ten years or more. They held two key posts of secretary in charge of Establishment and the Ministry of Law, the other was the Principal of the Civil Service Academy at Lahore, who served till 1958. A few other I.C.S. officers remained in the Provinces in senior posts for several years.

Fresh recruitment for the services was taken up soon after independence with the help of Public Service Commission. The new personnel policy was designed to suit the geographical conditions, so as to maintain a balance between the different regional groups, who made up the population of the country. Reconstruction of the services went ahead according to the existing pattern, but their training was reinforced with the help of specialised institutions which did not exist before except for the police. The Police Training College at Sardah which was previously a provincial institution, was upgraded into a National Academy for the training of the officers of the Pakistan Police Service.

Overseas training of the C.S.P. officers was continued in the old traditions of the I.C.S. for the time being which was discontinued after ten years. Rehabilitation of the services, aimed at bringing them up to the minimum strength took the best part of six years. It made the services predominantly youthful in character. While it brought a lot of vigour and freshness of outlook, it was still lacking in maturity of experience which could be acquired only with the passage of time.

The long exercise over rehabilitation of the public services was undertaken keeping in view more or less the same old concept about the functions of government. The general outlook was not much different

from what prevailed in India during the inter-war period under the British regime. The prevailing idea was that all the ills which descended on the Muslims of India were due to the British rule on the one hand and the economic domination of the Hindus on the other. Liberation from the shackles of British rule as well as removal of Hindu influence, generated a sense of complacency and a desire to return to status quo in the fond hope, that independence itself would bring about a resurgence of the Muslims enabling them to build a new society in the light of their tradition and the genius of the people. In the euphoria of the new found freedom, the responsibilities of government in the task of reconstruction of the strife torn country escaped adequate attention of those presiding over the destiny of the country. This was evident from an observation in the report of the first "Pay Commission" set up by the Central Government soon after independence to examine and report on the reconstitution of the services and scale of their remuneration. The commission thought it fit to assume that the functions which the government is usually called upon to perform, did not require high class talents in the government services. They observed, "we do not think it to be the right policy for the state to offer such salaries to its servants as to attract the best available material. The correct place for our men of genius is in private enterprise, and not in the humdrum career of public service, where character and a desire to serve honestly for a living, is more essential than outstanding intellect. We cannot therefore prescribe our pay scales with the object of attracting to public service all the best intellect in the country", (Quoted in Rowland Eggar's Report - on Public Administration in Pakistan 1953).

Such a view on manpower requirement could not but relegate the tasks of Government to those obtaining in the good old days of "laissez faire". Even the British Imperialists in their later days found it necessary to obtain the services of the best products of the universities for the management of the bureaucracy in India. The standard of work

performed depended as much on the quality of personnel employed, as on the framework of the organisation in which they have to work. Downgrading quality of manpower serving in the administration designed after the old British model, could not possibly produce the same results which they had in view. More over, the assumption that the nature of public service to be humdrum type of work, was far from correct under any circumstances. It was never so even in the days of the British Raj, when administration was restricted to the basic functions of government. It could not be so when a lot more was expected from the government of an independent country by the citizens. Modern governments were assuming the responsibilities for the promotion of welfare of the people, which called for planning and development with the help of large scale organisations, which only the government could undertake. Utilisation of the benefits of modern science and technology required services of highly trained manpower, which the country could produce. Far from diminishing, the functions and responsibilities of the government were increasing every day. The government of a new country like Pakistan, emerging from the ravages of a civil war was in need of the services of the best talents which the country could produce for her reconstruction and development. The above dictum from such a high powered commission indicated an unfortunate confusion that prevailed at that time in Pakistan, regarding the functions of a modern government.

Under the British rule the Subcontinent developed into one administrative unit as well as a single economic entity. Their object of having overseas possessions was economic exploitation of the dependencies for the benefit of the motherland. The basic conflict that arose was, therefore, clash of interest between the policy of exploitation by the rulers, and the economic interest of the people as a whole. Political dominion as well as financial powers gave a distinct advantage to the British business houses, operating under the aegis of government.

which never hesitated to utilise their powers for ruthless exploitation. The unhappy situation at last began to draw attention of the new generation of nationalists imbued with the ideas of western economic theories. As separate branch of academic discipline grew up under the name of "Indian Economics" claiming attention to measures necessary to safeguard the interests of the people, and the promotion of their welfare. Although it was the duty of the government, this was a subject which received very little attention of the British Raj. Publication of such works as "Economic History of India" by R.C. Dutt, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service early this century, revealing harmful effect of British policy and calling for remedy, began to produce their impact on the minds of the intelligentsia as well as the rulers. It became evident more and more that while the standard of living in the western countries was improving since the Industrial Revolution, economic conditions of the Indians was deteriorating more and more since the establishment of the British rule. The old propaganda about the benefits of British rule at last began to lose its force. Progressive association of the Indians with government since the introduction of constitutional Reforms enabled them to discuss economic issues at higher levels of administration and press for safeguarding the interests of the people. They were reinforced by the new spirit generated by the "Swadeshi" movement calling for redress. The British Raj was at last compelled to have a fresh look at their old concepts and policies with a view to adjust them in keeping with the new spirit crying out to serve the interest of the people.

During the first world war, Indian manufacturing industries, particularly TATA Iron and Steel, helped a great deal, providing the supply of essential goods required for military operations in the Middle Eastern theatre of war. It was evident that an industrial base which India could provide, became necessary to develop in the interest of the far flung empire. The old prejudice against the Indian industries growing

into a threat to the economy of the mother country at last began to disappear.

A succession of high level commissions, such as the Indian Fiscal Commission, Tariff Commission, Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture were appointed to examine the economic problems of the country and recommend measures for their solution. At the same time a law was passed recognising rights of the industrial labour to organise Trade Unions for collective bargaining with the employer regarding terms and conditions of employment. In this way the post war era gave a new direction to the economic policy of the government. Official reports and reviews on economic affairs, became a regular part of curriculum on Indian Economics since the decade of early twenties, when I was an undergraduate in the Dhaka University.

In Bengal the vast majority of the Muslims were engaged in agriculture. Small scale farming with the age old tools and technique were their only stock in trade. Modern methods of cultivation had failed to reach even the fringe of agriculture which was the source of livelihood for over eighty per cent of the people. The intelligentsia as well as the landed gentry had failed to take any interest in agriculture except rack - renting the tenants engaged in producing the major portion of the country's wealth. In the field of cottage industries and handicraft the Muslims could be seen only in handloom production and a few others from which the Hindus were debarred due to their caste restrictions. They however found an opening for employment in large scale industries as workers, where necessity of communal living away from home, gave them an advantage over others.

Preoccupation with politics of survival, seems to have kept the minds of the Muslim intelligentsia away from the economic problems of the country. In any case it was perhaps not possible to differentiate between the economic interests of the Muslims from those of the Hindus, when the basic issue was protection from exploitation of the alien rulers.

Private enterprise in a capitalist economy being the dominant feature, it was out of question to adjust government policy with a view to protect the interest of one community against another, as could be done to some extent in political affairs. There was no special interest of any community in the field of commerce and industry which called for safeguards.

Although there were a few Muslims business houses doing well in commercial enterprise, in the field of modern industry they were conspicuous only by their absence. Besides the Hindus, entrepreneurs of other minority communities in India, such as the Parsis, the Sikhs, were able to establish large scale industries, overcoming the initial difficulties which modernisation had to face everywhere. Government policy towards the Indian industrialists was far from helpful; but the resourcefulness of the entrepreneurs proved more than a match in the struggle for survival. The growth of modern industries in India before independence, was entirely a product of private enterprise, which synchronised with the emergence of the spirit of nationalism.

When modern industries were getting into their strides in different parts of India, the Muslims unfortunately failed to participate in the new venture. Lack of knowledge and enterprise, prevented the Muslim leaders taking an intelligent interest in industrialisation, with the result, that when the time arrived for political direction of economic affairs of the country, they found themselves in a quandary and failed to provide the leadership necessary to make the best use of the newfound opportunities in Pakistan. Soon after independence when economic affairs began to loom large in the task of government, failure to measure up to the new challenge progressively removed the reins of power out of the grasp of the politicians and spelled their doom.

A brief reference to the approach of Indian National Congress to the economic affairs of the country during the last decade of the British Raj, would throw some light on the way the Indian politicians

as well as the industrialists began their preparations to deal with them. The big industrial houses in India such as the TATAS, the Birlas each of whom was a host in himself, were in close alliance with the politicians in an effort to come to an understanding and prepare an outline of industrial policy necessary for accelerated development of the country. They also provided the best part of funds to keep the activities of the congress alive. The beneficial effects of the "Swadeshi" Movement on the nascent industries early in the century mentioned in chapter five, was not lost on the industrialists. Even before the outbreak of the Second World War, Subhas Bose as President of the Congress set up a Planning Committee in 1938, to prepare a Plan for accelerated development of industries. Such a plan, known as the Bombay Plan, prepared under the behest of the industrial houses was available even before independence. Those exercises gave the industrialists as well as the Congress leaders, an insight into the problems they had to deal with and initiated discussions on alternative options available for economic development of the country. Equally important was the deliniation of the functions of government in such a task and creation of an appropriate administrative devise for planning on a national scale and its implementation. There was no source of past experience which could be taken as a guide for setting up the new departments of government. This was entirely a new field of endeavour, which the government had to explore and develop in order to build a welfare state.

Economic affairs was a subject which did not attract much attention of the Muslim intelligentsia except perhaps for a few at the academic level. Besides agriculture, participation of the Muslims in economic activities was confined entirely to the traditional sectors of trade and commerce. Their entry in the field of new science and technology was relatively recent compared with the Hindus in undivided India. While rehabilitation of administration could be achieved

some how with the help of expatriates and reemployment of the outgoing British officers, the shortage of managerial, and technical personnel left a big gap in the requirement of manpower, which proved a serious hindrance in the way of undertaking new tasks of planning and development. Even the nature of the problems was not appreciated correctly. The shortcomings of the prevailing ideas about the functions of government betrayed in the observations of the Pay Commission have been mentioned before.

The reasons which made the British administration a success in India, also ensured its quick rehabilitation in Pakistan. The limitations of their objectives and a simple devise developed through a long process of trial and error, made its adaptation in Pakistan an easy process. The people being accustomed with the system, had little difficulty in getting adjusted to the new faces now manning the offices and field services. Political instability and internal tension that ensued after independence, made return to status quo almost a necessity for survival. It ensured cooperation of all concerned; and met with little opposition.

Any change in the system could be undertaken only after the new objectives were set for the government to keep abreast with changing circumstances. The first indication was given in the purpose of partition which called for the creation of a homeland for the Muslims where they could order their life according to the values and teaching of religion. Such aspirations were embodied in the "Objective Resolution" passed by the Constituent Assembly, as indicated earlier.

Separation of religion from any kind of state interference became complete under the British Raj. Religion was brought under the guidance of the spiritual preceptors, the Pirs and Imams who had no truck with the rulers or the politicians. As a matter of fact, some of the important theologians of India were reluctant to lend their support to the Pakistan movement.

The Muslims of India had developed a distinct culture of their own, which marked them off from the rest of the people. Subjugation under

a non-Islamic power could itself be a hindrance to the desired way of life. That blot was at last removed.

The ultimate measure of democracy is its ability to recognise and meet the demand and changing needs of the people. Government intervention in economic affairs was unknown during the British regime. Hence public administration had very little to do with it. Rehabilitation of the administration according to the same old model, which prevailed before independence, left a big gap between what was needed and what the system could provide. Moreover, the conditions in which the country came into existence, made intervention of government in the socio-economic life of the people inevitable in order to meet the growing needs of the independent country.

Government control over the economic sector by way of regulation of foreign trade, allocation of foreign exchange, rationing of essential commodities came to prevail since the days of the war. But very little could be done to stimulate the productive sectors like agriculture, and industry, education and health, which remained stagnant as before. Much needed change was at last initiated by the acceptance of planning for economic development of the country, which opened up a new area of government activities. It also called for reform of public administration to enable it to undertake its new tasks and responsibilities.

Fresh ideas relating to intervention of the state to promote general welfare of the people was becoming more and more strident since the conclusion of the war. The task of reconstruction of war ravaged countries, called for long term planning and participation of government for its implementation. It was becoming more and more evident, that in order to enable the newly independent countries to utilise the technique and resources of modern science effectively for their development, intervention of government was essential. An indication of the new line of thinking in high government level about the

mundane affairs of the country, was given soon after partition in the pronouncement of Mr. Jinnah the Governor-General. Addressing a gathering of citizens at Chittagong he indicated reconstruction of society on the line of "Islamic Socialism". The government should adopt a policy of state planning and intervention to accelerate the process of development of the country but with an eye to social justice. Directions were issued by the first Prime Minister for the preparation of a national plan covering five to ten years. He was conversent with the idea of planning since his incumbency as the Finance Minister of undivided India, when a department of planning was created to prepare projects which could be implemented after the war. The Provinces were also asked to prepare their projects which could be executed with the help of central loans and grants.

A Development Board was set up by the Government of Pakistan as early as 1948, with authority to determine priorities, coordinate development plans and watch the progress of the projects. A separate body under the name of Planning Advisory Board, composed of both officials and representatives from the business community was created to advise the government on appropriate policy for the promotion of the private sector. This was soon followed by a Ministry of Economic Affairs to coordinate planning and economic activities of different ministries. But faced with post partition troubles and war in Kashmir, government could not pay much attention to the activities of the Development Board. The Board could do precious little without adequate financial resources which were not forthcoming. The initial efforts of those bodies highlighting what the government could possibly do for development of the country created a lot of interest in planning which was never known before.

Eminent economists of the Western World, where capitalism reigned supreme, produced new ideas of planning encompassing the private sector. The highlights of their scheme were planning by

inducement, as opposed to planning by direction. One such publication which drew wide attention of planners was a pamphlet produced by an economist of Manchester University, Arthur Lewis, "Principles of Economic Planning". Although the treatise was written with an eye on the conditions obtaining in the U.K., the general principles which were highlighted could provide guide lines to improve the technique of planning for development in other countries also.

As planning for development became an important aspect of government policy, it called for the services of economists more and more. It opened up a new demand for their employment in government service a new comer in the bureaucracy, to deal with planning and management of economic affairs.

Early in 1950 planning received added impetus, when Britain initiated the Colombo Plan to coordinate bilateral aid provided by the commonwealth and other friendly countries, to help "Development of South and South - East Asia". A six year development plan for Pakistan was prepared beginning from July '51 to June '57 and incorporated in the Colombo Plan. An important feature of the plan was the recognition of the prime need of developing human resources to remove shortages of skilled manpower, without which no development can take place on modern lines any where. Provision was made for overseas training of the civil service probationers as well as technical personnel under the plan.

The realisation of the urgency for economic development with a view to lift the people out of the prevailing conditions of poverty and ignorance, found expression in a statement issued at the time of publication of the six year plan : "The Government of Pakistan is convinced, that time is the most important factor in the present situation which confronts not only Pakistan, but all the countries of South and South-East Asia. For many centuries, religion has been the only solace which had reconciled the people of the land, to a life of famine and

pestilence but even faith is now receding from the heart of the people and the desperation of disbelief accentuates the awareness of their poverty and make them yearn for any panacea that would cure their many ills—or at least bring relief of oblivion. In such times quacks do flourish, and such periods of human history are preludes to revolution”.

Progress of science and technology opened up a vista for the attainment of such a development within a fore-seeable future. It also opened the eyes of the planners to the tremendous backlog in the existing economic infrastructure which had to be removed, before the country could make much progress towards modernisation. The first requisite of the infrastructure for development, was a sound administration and manpower having necessary skill and experience to undertake the new task and their management.

A new administrative device was set up early in January '51, “The Planning Commission”, with twenty members replacing the Development Board. Its function was to implement the Six Year Plan.. At the same time an Economic Council was created, presided over by the Prime Minister to oversee development.

Activities of the Planning Commission extended over the jurisdiction of almost all the ministries except for the ministry of Defence. Adjustment of their relationship therefore created a lot of difficulties. The all powerful Ministry of Finance did not look with favour at the innovations that threatened to tread on their toes. Preparation of Rules of Procedure for dealing with projects took nearly two years to finalise. Six sub-commissions, each headed by a secretary to a ministry to prepare projects in the fields of Agriculture, Education, Irrigation, Health and Housing, never functioned. On the other hand projects were frequently approved on account of political pressure without the scrutiny of the Commission. It had to undergo many changes in its structure and procedure, before the Commission could take its proper place in the structure of the administration.

The surprising thing was not so much that the Planning Commission had to face difficulties and undergo frequent changes and adaptation, as the indifference of the politicians in power towards planning up to the last days of popular government in Pakistan. The political parties failed to comprehend the problems arising out of independence and prepare a programme of their own for improving the lot of the people on the basis of which they could approach the electorate for support and ensure their survival. The first five year Plan prepared during the years 1953-56 was entirely a product made out of the endeavour of the bureaucracy with the help of American experts, with which the politicians had little concern. Non-the-less they could have utilised the plan to establish their credentials with the electorate if they had wished, but they failed to do so. Even the cabinet thought it fit to put off consideration of the Plan as long as two years, after it was due to commence implementation.

In dealing with the Six Year Plan the Planning Commission was faced with unforeseen difficulties. It should cause no surprise as they had very little experience of the task they were called upon to perform. The Plan, however, provided a model that could be implemented only in part. It was not possible in all cases to prepare an annual development programme based on projections stretching over such a long period as six years, at the initial attempt of Planning. It was therefore, found necessary to modify and adopt a less ambitious plan restricted to the fields of power, agriculture, industry, transport and communications. A two year priority programme was prepared accordingly, covering the period 1951/52 and 52/53. Further changes were initiated with the establishment of a new agency called the Planning Board in July 1953. It was given the task of preparing a National Plan for the attainment of economic and social objectives of the government. This was the genesis of the First Five Year Plan.

Its implementation was due to begin from April 1954, but it had to be postponed due to inadequacies of expertise available for such a job. The Six Year Plan began to fade out of sight.

The exercise with the six year plan brought out in bold relief the inadequacies of the system of public administration that prevailed to deal with the new task for which it was never designed. The Planning Board was therefore, directed to examine this question, and come up with proposals for Reforms to adapt the machinery of the administration befitting the new functions which the government assumed since independence.

Reform of administration was a task for which requisite expertise was not available within the country. An American Consultant on public administration, Rawland Egger was commissioned for this purpose. His report was available towards the end of 1953. The findings and recommendations of the consultant regarding the structure of the administration, sought to bring about an order and coherence in the chaos and confusion created by the unplanned proliferation of the government offices, and their staffing by personnel who were not trained for their jobs. Similarly, changes in the rules of business were also necessary to enable the government to perform their new functions and for expeditious dispatch of business. The recommendations also highlighted the importance of developing technical skill and adoption of a sound personnel policy, which would attract technicians in adequate numbers to the public services. It involved the upgrading of the pay, and the status of the technical services, and bring them in line with the generalist civil service, who constituted the higher echelon in the bureaucracy. Such a change which went against the vested interests of the Civil Service, strongly entrenched in the administration as they were, was not an easy task to accomplish. The prevailing political instability, making the bureaucracy the chief instrument for preserving order and prevent chaos, held up the much needed

changes in the administratin, which was allowed to continue largely in the same old fashion as they were before.

Progress of economic development was dependent on the application of science and technology to the natural resources of the country. Facilities for such education and training to develop human resources created by the former rulers of the country, were matched only by the limitations of their aims and objectives. They were designed to develop a variety of manpower needed for exploitation, rather than development of the country. Colleges of engineering, medicine and agriculture, only one of each in a Province were set up, mostly at the provincial headquarters. East Pakistan got only one of them, the College of Agriculture, which was established in Dhaka shortly before partition. West Punjab was lucky enough to have all those institutions along with the Provincial capital, Lahore.

The importance of scientific and technical education arose out of the new purpose which the government of Pakistan had to assume after independence. Facilities for such education and training had to be expanded a great deal before the desired economic development could be stepped up. It required reorientation of the entire education system, right from the level of secondary schools, where necessary facilities for teaching of science had to be provided to prepare the students for technical education at the higher levels. The Dhaka Engineering School was soon up-graded into a college ; in the field of medicine, a medical college was established at Dhaka with the help of a large quantity of medical equipments and stores left behind by the military hospitals which were set up during the war. Each successive five year plan made liberal provisions for the expansion of technical education. With generous aid from the friendly countries like the U.K. U.S.A., it was possible to expand facilities for such education and training within the time span of a decade, which would have taken more than a generation to achieve under the old regime.

However, the initial shortage of technical manpower put at naught any scheme to accelerate development. There were very few qualified men among the Muslim refugees who came over from India to replace the Hindus who left at the time of partition. It was not possible even to fill up all such posts left vacant by the departure of the non-Muslim incumbents. The scheme for reorganisation and up-grading the technical services was virtually shelved. The failure to initiate an adjustment in the relationship between the generalist civil service and the new generation of technical personnel, conscious of their growing importance in society soon introduced an element of tension in civic life. It did not auger well for the administration, which had to work as a team to achieve the best possible results.

Generous facilities for overseas education and training helped a great deal to remove the deficiencies within a short time. Increasing opportunities for employment attracted the best talents of the country to study science and technology. Although it was possible to introduce some changes in the administration, the archaic personnel policy failed to recognise the growing importance of technical services, and prevented the public sector from acquiring that degree of competence which it could do by developing managerial talent among the technical personnel. This was necessary to enable the public sector to grow and give a good account of itself. An unfortunate result of such a policy was the loss of technical personnel trained overseas. Many of them refused to return home and remained abroad in search of better employment for whom the demand was growing everywhere.

An important innovation that was soon introduced was the public sector corporations, established for industrial development. They were given a wide range of autonomy in their operations which was not possible in the bureaucracy. The first of its kind has the "Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation", set up in 1952. It was followed by a number of other corporations and semi autonomous bodies, which

were established to undertake construction of the infrastructure facilities and provide essential public services, which the private sector was not in a position to undertake.

Although the country is predominantly rural, the villages received very little attention from the government. The rural masses were all along left to fend for themselves and sustain their own way of life. Curiously enough, their problems attracted very little attention of the leaders and intellectuals. A few studies which were undertaken by scholars from time to time, highlighted some of the problems, without finding any means for their solution. The problem was so vast and complex, that it baffled the leaders and economists alike.

Except at times of natural calamities like famine and pestilence, administration hardly ever came anywhere near the rural people. A few projects introduced for their benefit, such as the cooperative societies and land reforms, failed to make a significant impact. The problem of their adaptation to changing conditions failed to receive much attention. Application of science and technology for the development of agriculture, was yet confined to experimental farms and laboratories; extension work was almost unknown. Cottage industries followed the same old technique and remained confined to local level like agriculture. As long as there was enough land to support subsistence economy, the villagers were more or less content with their lot and the traditional way of life they lived.

Pressure of population on land was at last straining the village economy, when the exigencies of the war created a serious crisis throughout the country. Their consequences have been described in a previous chapter (XIII). Yet the turmoil of partition delayed adequate attention towards the problem of rural development.

Early in 1953, a new chapter was opened in this field with the introduction of Rural Community Development Programme in the country, under the sponsorship of U.S. Foreign Aid and the Ford Foundation.

It was called the Village Agricultural - Industrial Development Programme, popularly known as the Village AID. The purpose of the programme was to initiate the village leaders and counsellors in new ideas of self - help and self-improvement and train the villagers in the new skill in Agriculture, cottage industry, education and general welfare so as to promote development through village level planning. A large number of V-AID workers were needed for implementation of the programme. Eight training institutions were set up for their training. The executing agency being the government, a separate branch of administration was set up for its implementation. As it cut across the functions of more than one department, it created a new problem of coordination, and gave a foretaste of what the administration would be called upon to tackle as the government stepped up its policy of planning and development.

The V-AID programme contemplated an intensive campaign for over-all improvement of rural life. It was essentially a pioneering venture, which had to go through a period of trial and adaptation before it could produce the desired results. The period of five years assigned for its implementation was too short to produce any significant change in rural society. But it was able to produce some useful results. Experience gathered in course of its implementation had a far reaching impact on the concept of rural development, and opened up new avenues of planning for the improvement of rural life. It helped to draw attention of the government as well as the scholars to the problems of the country-side, and rural community became a subject of special interest of planning and development.

A large number of village level workers were trained in the V-AID Institutes, who were available to the administration to continue the programme in various forms. A lasting benefit arising out of the V-AID, was the establishment of two Academies, one at Peshawar, the other at Comilla, devoted to study and research on the problems related

to rural development. The Academy was the last item of the programme which came into existence then the programme as such, was all but would up. But the Academy continued to develop and soon became an important establishment for training of government officials employed on all branches of administration working in the country side, in addition to its task of study and research on problems of rural development.

The Academy at Comilla was fortunate enough to obtain the services of a capable and devoted worker as its first Director, Mr. Akhtar-Hamid Khan. Under this able guidance, the Academy soon developed into a leading institution of its kind in South East Asia.

I shall return to this subject in chapter XXXII, while recording my observations on rural development, when I was working as the Secretary to that department.

Overseas training of serving officers was extended to almost all the departments of government. Two scholarships for the training of police officers were awarded by the provincial government in 1949, one of which was received by my friend and colleague Hafizuddin, and the other was awarded to me. My training was arranged with the officers of the London Metropolitan Police in their Detective Training school. Hafizuddin went for a different course of training. Together we left Dhaka by air towards the end of December '49 and reached London on the last day of the year. Another police officer of Karachi, joined the same course of training with me.

It was an intensive course of training extending over ten weeks, designed for the senior officers employed in investigation and detection of crime. Instructions on criminal law and procedure formed a substantial part of the training. Although much of the British criminal law were not relevant to us, the art of application of law to specific cases under investigation, collection of evidence and prosecution of the offender, which formed the main part of instructions, were in a large measure useful to police officers almost everywhere. We never had:

facilities for training of our officers, while serving in their job. It was never considered necessary. After their initial training, police officers of our country had to acquire their skill as well as they could working on the job, without much guidance. My exposure to this study convinced me of the importance of in-service training for improving their competence in the performance of their duty.

Equally interesting was the development of the forensic science, a term which indicates the branch of technology devoted for the prevention and detection of crime. As criminals were adopting more and more sophisticated ways of committing crime and suppressing the clues to their detection, modern science had to be employed to discover effective means to thwart their activities to keep crime under control. Science can indicate how this can be done, but appropriate technology had to be developed by each country in keeping with the prevailing conditions of society. This is a field of research. The possibilities which modern science and technology has opened for the detection of crime are indeed immense. Utilisation of such resources in our country as yet was minimal. We were taken round on a tour of the famous "Scotland Yard", the C.I.D. of London Police where the officers of different departments explained the activities on which they were engaged.

We arrived in London in the middle of the cold weather and the sojourn came to an end at the beginning of spring. In spite of the rigours of winter weather, we managed to go round sight seeing, visiting museums and art galleries, as well as a few historic castles and mansions, which are the usual attraction of tourists. Destructions caused by bombing were still evident everywhere, and it appeared that it would take the best part of a decade to remove the scars of war from the face of London. Essential items of food stuffs were still strictly rationed. But life in London moved like clockwork and there was very little evidence of scarcity anywhere.

I returned home early in April '50, and rejoined my post of Deputy Inspector-General of Police in Chittagong.

While the public Administration was thus getting geared up to the call of the new tasks and responsibilities, an increasing deterioration had set into the political institutions, namely the Parliament and the party system, retarding political development which was necessary to keep the country on the path of democracy.

Before reverting to the story of political developments since the promulgation of the constitution in 1956 (Chapter XXIV), I would try to recount broadly the changes that were taking place in our society since independence in the following chapter:

CHAPTER—XXVII

Social and Cultural Developments Since Independence

During the British colonial era modern industries and their outgrowth the urban centres, left the region comprising East Pakistan almost untouched. The biggest town of the region, Dhaka, had less than one hundred thousand inhabitants. Along with its suburb Narayangange, Dhaka developed into a good inland river port and distribution centre for agricultural produce. The market place gave it an urban character, not the industry. There were only two cotton mills which could be called modern, and a few press for baling jute for export ; but they hardly touched the fringe of town life. Its importance, however grew as a seat of administration, with which was added a residential university, making Dhaka an important centre of learning. The headquarters of the rural districts grew up into small townships whose importance arose for similar reasons, as market places, centres of administration and higher education. All modern industries were concentrated on the banks of the River Hooghly round about the city of Calcutta.

Life in Calcutta had very little influence over the village folks, except when a few of them went to the industrial areas for employment. The pace of change was slow and almost imperceptible, It was taking place to the extent necessary for adaptation and survival of the traditional society. There was hardly any pressure to migrate from village to town because the source of livelihood was still their ancestral village, where they usually lived in extended families. Those who had to come out of the village for employment in the cities, would usually return to the village after retirement. A few who could earn enough money to build a house and acquire an independent source of income, could afford to

migrate to town. They were small in number. The resilience of the village to survive against all kinds of calamities and hardship, and their capacity to recreate their old society after devastations of war, famine and pestilence which they had to endure from time to time, did not escape the notice of the civilians who came to serve in the early days of the British rule. The condition of the countryside, which provided the source of livelihood to nearly 90 per cent of the people, did not undergo much change up to the outbreak of the second World War.

The impact of the war and the movement for independence at last began to remove the isolation of rural life and bring it into closer contact with the outside world. It began with the arrival of the allied army who spread out over a wide area in order to build defensive positions and establish lines of communication and transport. At the same time they provided employment to the rural people on a large scale. More than fifty-thousand were enlisted in the defence services from this area, who were sent to different places both within the country and abroad for service. Relief work and public health measures undertaken during the famine and its aftermath in which personnel of the defence services took part in large numbers, brought the government in close contact with rural people for the first time all over the country. The famine of 1943/44 together with the exigencies of war dislocated the traditional village society to such an extent that it could never regain its former self-sustaining character, as it was possible to do in the past. On the other hand, conditions created by the war, which inflicted such hardship on the agriculturists in the rural areas, brought windfall prosperity to the commercial and industrial classes, who could utilise the new opportunities to earn huge profits creating a new class of wealthy people.

The new rich class almost entirely belonged to the urban areas. Accretion of their wealth gave a spurt to economic activities, creating facilities for employment, which attracted people from the surrounding rural areas. Those who came out in search of employment during the

war, were reluctant to go back to their village. They preferred to stay put in the urban centre as far as they could.

The migration of people from village to Town in search of employment, began to increase after independence. Increase of population reached a stage when the villages could no longer provide for the additional workforce seeking employment. Increased mobility of population noticed since the outbreak of war, enabled more and more people to migrate from rural areas to towns. Opportunities for employment were undoubtedly increasing, but not at the rate of the new arrivals. Slow progress of urbanisation and public services failed to keep pace with the increase of work force seeking employment. The problem was aggravated by the arrival of refugees from India for several years. Most of the refugees, who came to East Pakistan were town dwellers. They were businessmen, shopkeepers, artisans, semi-skilled workers, and professional men of all sorts. Many of them were the victims of communal riots who were driven out of their hearth and home. They had to start life afresh in their new country of domicile. Such movement of population soon gave rise to new problems of accommodation, leading to the growth of slums, shortage of water supply and sanitation, which could not be augmented in keeping with the expanding population of the towns and also creating other problems associated with the influx of refugees from a strife torn country.

The problems were undoubtedly difficult to tackle. No one seemed to know how to deal with them. While it was possible to meet the requirements of personnel for the new administration within a short time physical needs of the population at large, who were on the move on a big scale could be given very little attention by the authorities. They had to be left to themselves to find the way to their rehabilitation. Looking back across a time span of a generation at the situation which at the time seemed intractable, it appears what helped the refugees rehabilitate themselves in East Pakistan without much difficulty, was non-

interference on the part of the government with exchange of property, transfer of assets and absence of restrictions on travel at the critical period of time. But before long, when the open period came to an end and restrictions on travel were imposed, the refugees in the later period had to undergo much more hardship to rehabilitate themselves. It was also the policy of government to discourage further influx from India once the initial stampede was over. But continued communal tension and repeated violence against the minorities in India kept up movement of a stream of refugees coming to Pakistan for many years.

The Hindu intelligentsia occupying leading positions as landlords as well as in the learned professions, services and business, migrated to India after partition. Their position in the administration as well as in business were taken over by the refugee Muslims coming over from India without difficulty. Most of them were non-Bengalies creating a peculiar situation of refugees taking over the dominant position in the society. This was perhaps inevitable under the circumstances in which partition took place ; but the politicians failed to comprehend the problems arising out of such a situation, which led to wrong policy decisions creating hindrances in the way of their mutual accommodation. This was indicated by the circumstances surrounding the controversy over the issue of state language, which aggravated the tension between the Bengali and the non-Bengali elements in the population. The controversy over representation in the central legislature was another instance of such a dispute, giving rise to mutual suspicion. All over the world the immigrants have to make a conscious effort to integrate themselves with the local population. In East Pakistan any such effort on the part of the refugees, was conspicuous only by its absence. They neglected learning Bengali language which was necessary to communicate with the local people with whom they had come to live for ever.

The foundation of the new society in East Pakistan was thus laid in two segments - the Bengalis, constituting the vast majority of the people and a small minority group of non-Bengalies. The former was occupied largely with the agricultural sector of the economy, while the latter came to fill the gaps in the field of commerce and industry created by the migration of the Hindus to India. A noteworthy feature of such a situation was that, while the Bengalie remained occupied with the traditional sector of the economy which was almost static, the non-Bengalies could embark on economic activities capable of rapid growth on account of the opportunities created by independence. They were also in possession of capital repatriated from India which was needed to avail of the new opportunities. They were undoubtedly rich in material resources, but were poor in qualities of leadership, with the result they failed to establish the necessary rapport with the local people without which they remained as good as strangers. It gave rise to social differentiations and discontent, which began to get accentuated with the passage of time. It was also noticed that most of the non-Bengali business houses were transferring the profits of their business to west Pakistan, where they decided to settle. They came to the province only to earn profits without any commitments to the local society. There were, however, a few honourable exceptions, but the general impression that prevailed was the same as mentioned above.

Social problem arising out of change of environment seemed to have escaped attention of the Muslims ever since they lost their dominant position, preventing their adjustment and regeneration. General idea that prevailed considered the community of faith to be a bond of unity strong enough to maintain their cohesion and protect their interest. During the British Raj they had failed to get themselves adjusted early enough in their mundane affairs, so as to maintain their position at least on equal terms with the others with whom they had to lived side by side in society. Such problems arising out of partition.

and independence again failed to attract adequate attention. Living under one government was not enough to bring about integration of the diverse elements composing the new society as it was supposed to do. The only weapon used to suppress friction and discontent was the arbitrary use of force, as far as could be done to maintain a facade of order and harmony. Hundreds of Bengalis were imprisoned without trial from time to time, . Such actions only made matters worse, and hastened the process of disintegration.

The power structure of the traditional society was provided by the feudal gentry who owned the bulk of landed property, the mainstay of the people. The archaic pattern of landlordism that prevailed in Bengal was abolished soon after independence. Much of the savings used to be invested in land. Hence this was a measure directed against private property involving a large element of confiscation because, compensations paid were nominal, much smaller than their market value. Although it took many years to implement the East Pakistan state Acquisition and Tenancy Act, fixing the ceiling of land ownership to thirty-three acres, the promulgation of the law itself produced a far reaching effect on the rural society. The educated middle class was not in a position yet to take over the responsibilities of leadership, replacing the old landed gentry. The small land owners forming the next lower tier in rural society who survived the land reforms, became the new dominant group in villages. They however failed to exercise that amount of influence over the rural society necessary to ensure political development in an orderly manner. One beneficial effect of land reforms was that all the occupancy tenants became peasant proprietors, which improved their status. In such a state of transition when the traditional power structure began to crumble, unscrupulous elements found a chance to step into the vacuum created by disappearance of the land-owning elite. Misuse of power became rampant. As a result, there was an erosion of traditional values,

an unprecedented increase of crime and propensity to take recourse to violence for settling disputes, increased. Inability of the administration to deal with the situation undermined public confidence and encouraged the desperadoes to defy law and prey on the peace loving people.

(The leadership of the League which created political upsurge for obtaining a homeland for the Muslims, at last began to falter in upholding an ideology necessary for building a new society. Other political parties which began to emerge after independence, had little concern with ideology or a programme of reconstruction so necessary for a country, which came into existence after such turmoil and struggle. In this scramble for power and position, the religious preceptors, who were the guardians of society in the past and were able to sustain it on the basis of the traditional values through all their time of trouble, found themselves pushed to the wall.) Apparent indifference of a large section of the ulemas to the Pakistan movement mentioned before, might have had something to do with the down grading of their influence, particularly on the younger generation. (In the climate of scepticism and doubt which came to prevail in the newly liberated society, alien ideology and doctrine began to make their inroads into the minds of the young intelligentsia preventing the new society to maintain its identity and define its purpose.)

Interest in Marxism rarely extended beyond academic circles before the war. The Communist Party of India (C.P.I.) was still in a formative stage and was confined to a small group of members, who kept themselves isolated from other political parties. Their dedication was to their ideology under the leadership of the Communist International and not to the nationalist movement for independence. Hence they failed to attract much attention in an era when struggle for independence demanded all the energy that could be directed to the field of politics. Most of their efforts were directed towards the up coming labour

unions, where they were chiefly responsible for the industrial unrest. They were identified by the British Government as subversive elements and measures taken for their suppression kept their activities within narrow limits.

As long as the second World war was confined to western Europe, the C.P.I. condemned it as a war of the Imperialists and called upon the people not to cooperate with the Allies. Their outlook however changed overnight when the German Army invaded Russia. Declaring it a peoples' war, they pledged their full support to the Allies in their war against the Germans. In response to their offer of cooperation in war efforts and maintain industrial peace, the government withdrew the ban on their activities and gave them a free hand to organise themselves for the purpose. While they kept their pledge to maintain industrial peace and step up production to help the war, they also utilised the opportunity to expand their party organisation all over the country and propagate their doctrine. The tumult of war which soon reached the borders of the country, created a ferment in current ideas and values, providing a fertile ground for the propagation of Marxism. Their chief targets were the students and young intellectuals. They could easily infiltrate into important educational institutions and enlist supporters and members from the teachers and the student groups. Incarceration of the Congress leaders following the "Quit India" movement which suspended the activities of the Congress, left the political arena wide open for the communists to exploit and entrench themselves to an extent which they could never attain before. A large number of young recruits imbued with Marxist doctrine soon strengthened the C.P.I. all over the country. Their tacit support to the Muslim League demand for partition of the subcontinent prevented any opposition from the Muslims in their political work.

Industrially backward region comprising East Pakistan, prevented the C.P.I. from establishing themselves in this areas before the war.

Many terrorists of the old Jugantar and Anushilan Parties belonging to this region joined the C.P. after independence, who formed the nucleus of the Party in East Pakistan. The success of the peasant movement in China under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung, encouraged a section of the C.P. to spread out in the rural areas. They came to be known as the followers of Mao. Their attempt to set up peasants' organisations in the rural areas did not meet with much success. A movement to improve the lot of the share croppers suffering from excessive exactions by the owners and insecurity of tenure, failed to achieve desired results. But it succeeded to arouse public interest to the oppressive nature of such tenancy which called for redress.

Changing their tactics, they decided to organise a small band of dedicated workers recruited from the new intelligentsia, and infiltrate the Educational institutions and the upcoming industrial unions to establish their hold. They found it difficult to infiltrate the League as long as they were engaged in pursuit of their political ideal. But an opportunity was created when the League began to break up into its various component groups who had joined hands in the Pakistan movement. Their attempt to infiltrate other parties met with success up to a point, when political agitation was the main purpose of their activities. The way they managed to manipulate agitation and propaganda of the United Front in their elections held in 1954, has been mentioned in a previous chapter.

Marxist transformation of the Russian society had begun with the help of the Communist Party which was indoctrinated and organised by Lenin and his associates. Realising the impracticability of transforming a backward society with the help of an equally backward bureaucracy, he found it necessary to create in his communist Party a highly trained and disciplined "priestly order" on whom he could rely to execute his plan to build a new society. While it was relatively easy to destroy an old crumbling society, the task of reconstruction requi-

red a lot of advance thinking and planning, as well as a body of trained and dedicated workers to implement it. The communist party was able to provide such an agency, inured as they were in the new set of values and expertise required to implement communism which replaced the old order.

The handful of communists in East Pakistan were in no way competent for such a task. They were looked down with suspicion almost everywhere. They did not inspire much confidence and often they had to work under cover to hide their identity. (But they were undoubtedly a set of dedicated party workers prepared to undergo a lot of hardship in the execution of their mission.) The question that arose was, what could be their mission? Were they in a position to take over the government of the country and transform it according to their plan and programme? They were not. (They knew how to subvert the existing order of society and were trained to execute such missions with all the means at their disposal. They readily lent their expertise and services to the opposition groups to embarrass the government and obstruct the conduct of administration, but had no alternative programme to replace it. However high and mighty their social ideal might be, the activities of the communists in East Pakistan amounted to subversion. The pressure tactics which they were able to introduce by their superior art of agitation and propaganda, completely changed the character of political activities in the Province. They had the effect of introducing an element of bitterness against the government of the country, no matter who was in power for the time being.) Administration was confronted with the problem of containment of political agitation, a task with which they were not accustomed: It distracted attention and energy from their basic functions of maintaining law and order. The administration repeatedly came into open clash with political agitation, which soon had the effect of damaging its morale.

Although the communist party could not establish itself in a significant manner in Pakistan, the ideas propagated by their cohorts

and efficacy of their agitation and propaganda made a profound impression on the young intelligentsia, giving them a new sense of power, but without any sense of mission or direction.

Independence created increasing demand for higher education. Demand for admission in college and university soon exceeded their capacity. Steps were taken to establish new universities, Colleges and institutions for technical education ; but their capacity was circumscribed by shortage of teachers everywhere. The shortage was sought to be removed by overseas training of increasing number of scholars for which foreign aid came to supplement the educational programme of the government. Foreign teachers were also employed in the institutions of higher learning. A new aspect of education was the increasing number of girls seeking admission at all levels. The time honoured practice of seclusion of women, at last began to disappear. This was one area of much needed reform which came about almost by itself without the pressure of movement or propaganda. The wind of change was enough to remove this out-moded practice from society. It was a pleasant surprise to see how the new generation of women got themselves adapted to their release from seclusion in which women in our society were living from time immemorial.

Programme of elementary education however remained slow and difficult. Facilities created for its expansion remained underutilised and very little could be done yet to increase the admission and reduce drop-outs at the level of primary education. There was much talk about universal elementary education free and compulsory, but little effort was directed for its achievement. No one could indicate what could be done to remove illiteracy from society within a foreseeable future.

Cultural activities in the field of fine arts did not receive much encouragement in the traditional Muslim society. Painting, sculpture as well as performing art were frowned upon. Folk song and dance

however remained the principal source of esthetic enjoyment among the rural people, where many a poet and artist delighted the villagers with their song and folk dance on festive occasions. In the inter-war period, popular vocalists like late Abbasuddin were able to elevate the standard of folk songs and make them popular among the sophisticated urban society. Compositions of famous poets like Nazrul Islam and Jasimuddin on similar themes infused new esthetic values to folk songs which now received due recognition side by side with classical and Tagore songs in the world of music. The Nationalist movement at last began to revive interest in our heritage of the past, in which folk song and literature obtained due recognition.

Independence created new interest in the field of culture. A significant step in this direction was the establishment of Government Art Institute at Dhaka soon after independence, for imparting instructions in fine as well as graphic arts. It was located in the old garden house of the Nawab of Dhaka known as "Shahbagh" providing the best possible surroundings which one could expect for such an institution. The famous artist Zainul Abedin who prepared the plan for the institute became its first Principal. He along with his leading contemporaries, namely Saifuddin, Anwarul Haq, Qamrul Hasan came to be known as the Dhaka Art Group among the connoisseurs of Art. The old taboo against painting which prevented the flowering of artistic genius among the Muslim youths, was at last removed. The Art Institute soon became a popular centre for cultural pursuits which attracted artistic talents from all over the country.

Performing art did not receive the same kind of support from the government to develop. Never-the-less, it is a part of life, and its importance could not be ignored among a culturally deprived people. There was a lot of scope for musicians, dancers actors to find a place for themselves in the society. This task was taken up by a contemporary artist Bulbul Choudhury who attained fame as an associate of

the Indian dancer Udaya Shankar. He opened a school of music and dancing which soon attained considerable popularity and attracted a large number of students, both boys and girls. He was able to gather round himself a team of good teachers for his institution who were able to lay the foundation of a school of music and dancing which was entirely a new venture in this part of the world. Unfortunately, Bulbul Choudhury died soon after, while still in his late thirties which threatened to retard development of the nascent institution. Fortunately his able wife Mrs. Afroza Bulbul,, herself an accomplished dancer, managed to maintain the school and expand its activities with the help of the colleagues her late husband had gathered round the Institution. Government also came to assist its development by allotting a house situated on the banks of the River Buriganga for their accomodation in the old city of Dhaka. The institution which came to be known as the "Bulbul Institute of Fine Arts" in memory of its founder, became the leading school of music and dancing ever since. A number of other insitutions of performing art were established in the city and different parts of the country, which had been taking an active part in the cultural life of the people.

Another noteworthy feature in the cultural life since independence was increasing interest in the field of Bengali language and literature. Vernacular language is the chief vehicle of culture. Bengali can claim to have an accumulated heritage spread over a thousand years. In the past it received its gretest sprut of creative work during the regin of the independent sultanates of Bengal from 14th to the 16th centuries. The famous Indian Epics Ramayan and Mahabharata composed in Sanskrit, were translated into Bengali under the patronage of the Muslim rulers of Bengal, when the language found a place of honour in the court of the Royalty. Composition of important works of literature continued to take place from time to time in the form of poetry. Translations of literary works from Persian and Arabic languages brought the

classics of the Islamic world to the door steps of the people of rural Bengal. They came to form a considerable volume of folk literature providing the much needed means for esthetic enjoyment of the people.

Literary activities in Bengal received renewed impetus with the revivalist movement of the last century but such activities were destined to be confined almost entirely among the non-Muslims. The works of poet Rabindranath Tagore and his contemporaries elevated Bengali language and literature to the level of other modern languages of the world. Appearance of poets like Nazrul Islam and Jasimuddin early in this century gave a new turn in the creative works of Bengali literature.

It was indeed a pity, the leaders of West Pakistan failed to recognise the importance of Bengali language in the cultural life of the nation. The vernacular language of the majority of the people was Bengali. It had attained a level of development comparable with any other language of the world. Judged by any standard its claim to be recognised as one of the state languages was preeminent. The message was conveyed to the rulers in no uncertain terms. Initial failure to recognise this simple truth only indicated their lack of vision in the task of nation building. Even the great leader Qued-i-Azam Jinnah whose brilliant leadership enabled the Muslims achieve Pakistan, failed to grasp its implications and attempted to initiate a policy which proved to be contrary to the dominant forces emerging after liberation. The ruling coteris was ultimately forced to accept the demand of the people and Bengali was given the status of state language in the constitution. The initial controversy, illogical as it was, leading to the loss of life in a clash between the students and the police over the issue, created a bitterness in the relationship between the people of the two regions of the country, which could not but damage the spirit of cohesion engendered by the united struggle for liberation.

During the British Raj, government patronage in the field of education and culture was confined to the propagation of English, and teaching

of science and technology. Medium of instruction for higher education was also English. The development of Bengali language and literature, received very little recognition from government. Perhaps this was not possible. The people of the subcontinent were divided into so many language groups that it was impracticable for the alien rulers to patronise any or all of them. The situation however changed completely since independence. Racially homogenous East Pakistan having a well developed language of its own, demanded something more than mere recognition as a state language. It called for wider efforts for culture and development.

Unfortunately, the leaders of the League failed to recognise the new spirit crying out for cultural liberation in the form of the language movement which could be utilised for their rehabilitation in the new political climate created since independence. Following the old practice of the British regime which was evident in almost all spheres of government activities, the League thought it fit to leave the task to the scholars and men of letters. The United Front found their opportunity to get ahead of the League by including a project for establishing an Academy for development of Bengali in their manifesto for the elections of 1954. They lost no time to establish the Bengali Academy after their victory in the elections. The Academy soon became a leading institution in the cultural life of the province, providing a much needed forum for literary activities and the development of Bengali language, to meet the growing requirements of an independent nation.

A big problem which East Pakistan had to face was assimilation of the non-Bengalies who came over from the rest of India after partition as refugees. Most of them were urban dwellers who migrated to the town areas of the Province to resettle themselves. It led to sudden increase of population in a small number townships, bringing in their trail all the unpleasant consequences of overcrowding. There was no lack sympathy for the refugees, which considerably helped

their resettlement. Many of them were enterprising businessmen, artisans and skilled workers, who managed to rehabilitate themselves by their own effort. They preferred to form their own social groups and kept themselves aloof from the local people among whom they came to settle. Cultural differences between them, particularly the language barrier,—urdu being their vernacular—began to hinder their integration. Urdu was not unknown in this region. A number of Muslim families having their language urdu were living in Bengal side by side with others without any feeling of segregation or social distinction. Many of them were bi-lingual. Hence, developing a bi-lingual society was considered within the range of possibility. But conditions came to prevail after independence which made integration of the two, more and more difficult. Although both Bengali and urdu were ultimately recognised as state languages of the country, the society remained divided into two segments on the basis of language. Moreover, economic disparity which began to grow between the non-Bengalies and the Bengalies, introduced a new element of class distinction, creating social tension between the two sections of the people. Unfortunately the government failed to adopt an appropriate policy for the eradication of such tensions. No one seemed to know what could be done to remove it. It was left to time,—“the great healer”, to find its own solution.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Holiday Interlude in the West

Every youngster who had the good fortune to go to an university, developed a fascination for Europe, specially the United Kingdom, because its knowledge and culture held out much promise of a better life. The opportunity to be able to study in the universities of Britain was the highest privilege a student could aspire ; but very few could obtain it. Still, visitors of Europe were not so rare. Regular sailings from Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi by luxury liners took shiploads of passengers across the seas to U.K. The Anglo-Indian press used to publish the names of those "homeward bound". Indians formed a good proportion of those passengers. Almost all the senior university teachers had been to various universities of Europe for higher studies. Travelling has a fascination of its own for everybody. But travelling for pleasure was expensive and only the rich could indulge it. Unless some special facilities were available, it was beyond the means of the people in the middle income group. Fortunately, this was available to me due to some privileges the members of my service inherited since the days of the British regime.

The officers belonging to the former Imperial Services of British India enjoyed the privilege of drawing their salary in pound sterling while visiting countries of Europe on leave. Such facilities were allowed to continue in the early days of Pakistan.

My first visit to U.K. for the training course in London during the winter of 1950 left me very little time to go round the continent. The countries of chief tourist attraction, Switzerland and Italy were left out of my travel schedule. Hence a longing for a holiday in Wes-

tern Europe was seeking fulfilment. An opportunity was created by the financial benefits arising out of non-devaluation of Pakistani currency when U.K. devalued her pound sterling in 1949 in relation to U.S. dollar. The exchange rate of Pak rupee increased to Tk. 8 /5 per pound. Hence conversion of my salary in terms of pound gave a good margin to meet the expenses of a tour of Europe for me and my wife. I took eight months leave from the beginning of April in 1955, and left Karachi by the Italian liner M.V. "Victoria", reputed to be one of the finest ships afloat. We obtained a small cabin for two in the tourist class. We sailed on the 10th of April in bright sunny weather. As we moved out of Karachi harbour, the water gradually changed from its greenish tint to a deep blue hue of the open sea. My wife maintained a diary recording our movements and events which struck her as note-worthy. I have followed her account to refresh my memory while recounting these reminiscences.

The entire ship was air-conditioned maintaining a comfortable temperature in the cabin and the public rooms. There was ample space on the open deck for all the passengers to stroll. A small swimming pool and a recreation hall rounded up the amenities on board the ship. But the most attractive part of life on board was the view of the sea stretching up to the horizon, where the deep blue sea met the sky. No one ever seemed to get tired of gazing at the vast watery horizon which held everybody spellbound.

The ship was coming from Hongkong and picked up passengers enroute. A Bengali couple and a girl travelling to U.K. to join her husband, boarded the ship at Bombay. The former turned out to be a friend to my younger brother working together in the Bata Shoe Factory in India, and the girl was the daughter of an old acquaintance, whom I met while posted in Birbhum district. The slender thread of acquaintance was good enough to create a small friendly circle to meet and while away our time. A good number of missionaries were travelling in

the tourist class, returning home. The passengers were generally eager to talk to each other, telling stories of their voyage. There was a Jew girl from Israil, who talked to my wife on a few occasions. She once expressed her regrets over Pakistan's reluctance to give diplomatic recognition to her country.

Tranquil sea combined with bright sunshine during the first week made sailing as pleasant an excursion as one could expect. We reached Aden, the first port of call on the fourth day. The name of the place was familiar enough; but the look of the place was dismal. Perched on the edge of a desert, the town is built behind a low range of hills, which surround the port. Except a few shrubs of stunted growth and some datepalms, there was no sign of vegetation. The centre of the town, the market place, was striking from accumulated dirt with flies buzzing all round the place. We made haste to quit and return to the ship without going round the residential areas as we had intended to do. Next day the ship sailed through the Red Sea, heading for Suez. The days were getting warmer and very few remained on the deck after midday till evening. We sailed past a number of rocky Island, completely arid and devoid of any sign of life.

The ship reached Suez early on the 17th morning. She had to wait several hours before beginning its transit through the famous canal. The interval of halt was utilized by pedlars to sell their goods. Their boats were bodily hauled up by the ships crane on the deck where they displayed their goods. The passengers came out to see the display of merchandise, but very few were sold.

Shortly before midday the ship sailed in a convoy and proceeded at a slow speed through the Suez canal. There were more than a score of ships in the convoy, all except two being cargo ships. The other passenger carrying vessel was the famous P.&O. liner, "S.S. Viceroy of India".

I had a great fascination for this marvellous feat of engineering, the Suez Canal, linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. It reduced the length of voyage between Europe and India to about half the length of the ancient route round Africa. We travelled by ship in preference to aircraft to have a chance to see the Suez Canal, which was an ambition I entertained since childhood. It was indeed a very rewarding experience.

Historians tell us that the Suez Canal was not the first waterway made by man linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. We are told that the rulers of ancient Egypt (Ca 2000-1988), constructed a canal connecting R. Nile, with the Red Sea, providing a continuous waterway for transportation of merchandise between Europe and Asia. The waterway was reexcavated from time to time by later day rulers down to the era of the Caliphs and was in use until the discovery of the sea-route to India by Vasco-da-Gama sailing round Africa towards the end of the 15th century.

Sailing past Port Said at the Northern end of the canal as the ship entered the Mediterranean, the sea-scape seemed to change, increasing the impact of the voyage both on the mind and body. The weather was getting cooler and crisp, the Blue tint of the sea, as well as the azure transparency of the sky, both looked deeper in hue and richer in expectations. The fresh westerly breeze at last compelled us to put on warm cloths and the swimming pool was shut down for the rest of the journey. As we sailed past the island of Crete, the wind began to blow stronger and stronger into a mild sort of a gale. The sky was over-cast with cloud and the ship soon began to pitch and roll, making many passengers sea-sick and shut themselves up in their cabin. The dining room was thinly attended. I also suffered from sea-sickness for some time. Happily enough my wife could withstand the effects of stormy sea without such discomfort.

As we passed through the strait of Messina and sailed up the coast of Italy, the weather improved but became too cold for outdoor life on the

dack. On our right was the main land of Italy which looked like a ridge of hills with villages and hamlets dotted all along the coast line. On our left we sailed past the volcanic island of Stromboli. It is an active volcano, having a cloud of steam and smoke hanging at the tip all the time.

We reached Naples, our destination on the 20th of April. The harbour where the ship was moored stretched right into the middle of the city. Our hotel was less than half a mile from the quay. We made the trip to the hotel in a horse drawn carriage which had a meter attached to indicate the fare. Later we were told by the hotel keeper that carriages were more costly than taxis.

Our chief attractions in Naples were the Volcano Vesuvius, its victim, the ruins of Pompei and the island of Capri. Tourists coach climbed up the slopes of the Vesuvius and took us within easy reach of the crater, which we could reach on foot at the summit. We were taken right inside, climbing down a flight of steps hewn on the side of the crater, where steam and sulphurous gas were coming out from different places. The volcano had a minor eruption some time ago and traces of fresh streams of lava could be seen on its sides.

A visit to Pompei was of more than usual interest even in a country like Italy full of relics of its old civilisation scattered all round. The volcanic debris which kept the city buried for over sixteen hundred years, kept the luxurious villas of the ancient Romans in wonderful state of preservation. They disclosed the way the prosperous Romans lived in the hey-day of their Empire. We were served lunch at an improvised restaurant on a covered terrace of a big building excavated out of the volcanic debris, which was perhaps built for the same purpose of entertaining the Roman elite, eighteen hundred years ago.

The island of Capri lay south about two hours journey by launch. As we approached the place it looked like a single piece of rock jutting out of the sea, having houses built on terraces out on the side of the hills. We landed at a small harbour, from which winding paths climbed up the

hillside. The island has been built up as a holiday resort ever since the days of the Romans, who built Pompeii. The chief attractions are the wonderful landscape and bracing climate, which attract tourist from all over the world.

We left Naples on the 4th of May and proceeded to Rome by the coach service along a highway known as the "scenic route", because of the attractions of landscape, which the highway traversed. It passed by an ancient monastery at Mount Casino. The place was destroyed during the war, but was rebuilt by the Americans, soon after, according to the same old model. We passed by several grave yards where those who had died in the last war were buried. With the advent of spring, the orchards all round were covered with bloom producing a superb view of the rolling countryside. We reached Rome in the afternoon at the end of a pleasant journey.

The places of interest in Rome are well known. They have been visited by the tourists hundreds of years. Rome was the bone of contention of so many conquerors, that repeated warfare had destroyed much of the relics of the ancient civilisation that was Rome. The ancient ruins which were still extant were not as good in their state of preservation, as those we saw at Pompeii.

Our chief place of interest in Rome was the Vatican, the capital of the Papacy. It contained the cultural heritage of Christianity spread over a period of a thousand years. Built and decorated by the best architects and artists the world have ever known, it contained the largest collection of famous sculpture and paintings to be found anywhere. We spent a lot of time going round St. Peters, the Cistine Chapel and the art galleries of the vatican. Although essentially the holy place of Catholic Christianity, the collections of artistic treasure were not confined to the objects of their veneration only ; there were a lot of other relics of art since the time of the heathens, showing a continuity of civilisation and culture, which produced the western society.

After spending six days in Rome we proceeded to Florence. The place is famous for its beautiful architecture and collection of sculptures and paintings of the Renaissance period, which have been preserved in an excellent condition and displayed in those old buildings. Besides being an important centre of that movement, the place could recall with pride its past association with such artists as Micheal Angello, Leonardo da Vinci, Raffael, a good collection of whose works are displayed in the art galleries of Florence. The place has maintained its artistic traditions to this day by its Institute of Fine Arts, which attracts students from all over the world. We found a young Bengali attist, namely Aminul Islam among the student artists learning fresco painting. He took us round some of the notable places, one of which was the Biblio Gardens. Built on a low hill on the other side of R. Arno, the gardens provide a beautiful view of the city across the river. The place was however, living on its past glories ; but none the less they were still as fresh and bright as ever. Four days at Florence provided us a view of famous architecture, sculpture and painting which could compare with an experience of a life time.

The next part of our travel was a tour of the Riviera, the strip of coast of Northern Italy and South of France hemmed in between the mountains and the Mediterranean Sea, famous for its beauty and mild summer climate. We left Florence by train to a place called Rap-palo, the centre of Italian Riviera. Two other adjacent villages, Santa Margharita and Portofino combined to make the place a centre of tourist attraction. The foot hills of the Alps came right down to the sea, making a number of inlets of semi-circular bays, girdled by forest covered range of hills, all combined to make a landscape unsurpassed in natural beauty. The Tourist trade was a thriving industry. The high rise buildings had'nt made their appearance yet to distort the sky line. The inhabitants had done their best to preserve their assets given by nature, and improve on it by making the beauty-spots easily accessible in various manner for the convenience of the tourists.

The inhabitants of Santa Margharita a village adjacent to Rappalo, claim that the famous explorer Columbus was born in that village. The other claimant to this honour is Genoa, further west, a claim which the historians generally support. Conditions of life were such, that the people had to look to the sea, rather than land for a living. While the hills enhanced the beauty of the scenery they provided very little for livelihood until the tourists came to supplement their income.

With the advance of summer, the days were getting longer and longer, providing extra hours of sunshine which we could enjoy strolling through the hills and dales within view of the beautiful sea. Our four days at Rappalo passed off as if in a dream.

The next part of our Riviera tour lay in Southern France. We left Rappalo by train to spend a few days at the well known holiday resorts of Nice and Cannes. While the French Riviera, which was better known, could provide all the comforts of living that money could buy, the region was lacking in natural beauty produced by the proximity of the mountains and the sea we found in its counterpart in the less sophisticated Italian Riviera. The sea front was packed with hotels, big and small. Magnificent beach and safe bathing, combined with warm sunny weather in summer provided the main attraction for tourists.

We took a coach excursion into the mountains, reaching far up to the snow line. The coach ride, the way-side stops, and the midday repast gave us the first taste of sophistication the French had attained in the art of living.

An object of special interest in this area were the factories making perfumes, which is a speciality of France. We joined a small party on a tour of a perfume factory. We were surprised to find so many ingredients used in the manufacture of perfumes; but distillation of extracts from flowers remained the base of all perfumes. My wife purchased a small quantity in an aluminium container, which cost a fraction of the price of those sold in fancy bottles.

The other place of interest was the garden house of the Aga Khan, "Yakimore", situated a few miles from Cannes. The place was not open to visitors ; but the house keeper was good enough to admit us considering we were citizens of Pakistan coming all the way to see the place. I could not obtain a history of the place and the gardens ; but considering the size of the carefully planted rows of trees, and the general look of the place, they must have taken at least a generation in the making. After spending about a week on the Riviera we left by train for Paris on the 27th of May, reaching the metropolis of French the following morning.

We put up with a relative who was the commercial councillor in the Embassy, late A. Rab. Thanks to their care and hospitality we could go round and see as much as we wanted. We followed the usual tourist ways of sightseeing in the city, in organised tour of the neighbourhood such as Versailles, forests of Fountainblau and the artists' village of Barbizon made famous by its association with modern French artists such as Millet, Rousseau and Diaz. We were shown an old restaurant, having its walls full of paintings. They were done by the artist Corot. Unable to pay for his meals the poor artist satisfied the owner, by painting a number sketches on the wells in satisfaction of his debts. But Paris lost its novelty after a few days. It was indeed a beautiful city, but it looked the same in every direction and became monotonous. We were away from home for two months, and the holiday started getting rather boring.

However, the next leg of our Journey, a tour of Switzerland looked promising. Beginning from 8th of June we spent eighteen days, visiting Lucern, Interlaken and Lugano.

Our knowledge of Switzerland was derived largely from what we had learnt from geography lessons in school. The chief occupation of the people was reported to be hotel keeping, patronised by tourists, who flock to the country to enjoy the scenic beauty of the mountains, enhan-

ced by the presence of numerous lakes situated at different altitudes. "The Swiss export beauty of nature and in return import the necessities of life which they cannot produce at home" this was the dictum of a geography we had read at school. The famous beauty spots were made easily accessible by cogwheel railways, specially designed to climb the steep slopes of mountain side ; by roads, and chairlifts, which could be used by the tourists at a reasonable cost. All those marvels of engineering were constructed in close affinity with nature, making it possible for ordinary tourists to enjoy the wonders of mountain land, which were beyond the reach of anyone except a few sturdy mountaineers. The cogwheel railway cut through solid rocks, took us up to the summit of the Jungfrau mountains, more than eight thousand feet above sea level in the land of eternal snow, where we spent the best part of a day.

Equally impressive was the way in which the Swiss people had built up their country as one of the leading industrial nations of the world. The country is endowed with very little natural resources. It is an example of what ingenuity and hard work of the people can do to overcome the shortage of local resources for the enrichment of the country. While going round the northern parts of Switzerland in a tourist coach, the tour guide mentioned that their country was producing almost every kind of manufactured goods except ships and automobiles. Such progress of industrialisation was possible as the country was not involved in warfare since the days of Napoleon. There was no evidence of slums or pollution of environment, which usually come in the wake of industrial development. The Swiss could demonstrate it is possible to obtain the benefits without suffering the seamy side of industrialisation through planning and a disciplined way of life. A tiny little country, poor in endowments of nature, inhabited by people belonging to three different racial groups living in harmony, were enjoying the highest per capita income in the world.

The Swiss are intensely freedom loving people. Local self government play an important part in their civic life. We were told that at many places, after Sunday church service, they assemble at designated places to decide important issues of civic life, which is a devise resembling a pattern of direct democracy. Having developed their economic life from tourism, which keep the Swiss engaged in running their hotels in summer, they did not get into the habit of holiday excursions, which drive the people of the other rich countries almost to a point of frenzy. We were highly impressed with their politeness of manner and hospitality.

Having completed our sojourn of Switzerland we left for United Kingdom by rail via Paris and reached London at the end of June. There were many relatives and friends, whom we were looking forward to meet in London. Some of them were prosecuting higher studies ; others doing business or looking for jobs when there was no restriction on the citizens of the Commonwealth. The first week was spent establishing contacts with them. After spending the best part of three months on a hectic tour of the continent, a period of rest and meeting old familiar faces was a delightful change.

We had plenty of times to spend in U.K., so we arranged our schedule in easy stages. The places of interest in London and neighbourhood were familiar ; travelling was much cheaper than now. Life in the city appeared more relaxed than what it was five years ago ; places of recreation and transport were over crowded but, an inborn sense of discipline enabled everyone to get on with his job without trouble.

After spending about a month in London, we went on a tour of Scotland, visiting Edinburgh and fort William, the centre of Scottish Highlands. The guides on the coach tours in Scotland waxed eloquent on the battles of yore fought between England and Scotland and the exploits of Scottish chieftains and gentlemen robber whose stories abound in local legends and folklore. The beauty of the Scottish lakes and the

desolate landscape of the highlands had a special appeal, which was heightened by the ancient legends, some of which were familiar to us from their accounts in English literature. We returned to London on the 18th of August.

A course of training on the management of security services was arranged for me in Washington. It was scheduled to begin early in September. So, we left London for Washington by air the following week, spending two days at New York on the way. The course was designed to give an insight into the methods employed for espionage, techniques evolved by science for their prevention and detection, and a study of old cases giving graphic accounts of activities of secret agents trying to execute their mission. Their activities were directed as much towards official secrets as to research and inventions by big industrial corporations in the field of science and technology relating to military affairs. I was shown a film depicting how a foreign agent obtained the secrets of computer technology, which was in the process of development at the time. Equally important was the way in which secret agents were planted to execute their mission which could be anything from sabotage, agitation or conspiracy to remove an unfriendly regime from power, and replace by a rival coterie amenable to the wishes of the aggressor. This was a part of the cold war which was raging all over the world at the time, from which no country could be safe. The training course spread over four weeks, was as comprehensive as I could absorb. It was almost like initiation in a profession in which I was still an amateur. A visit to the Niagara Falls rounded up our visit to the States.

Our return journey was all the way by sea. We left New York by the "Constitution", a big modern ship carrying tourists bound for Cannes and Genoa. The ship sailed out of the harbour when a cyclonic storm was raging on the Atlantic ocean. She was supposed to be equipped with "stabilisers", but still pitching and rolling were

such that we were confined to bed with sea-sickness for the first two days of the voyage. The sky cleared up on the fourth day and the sea remained clam for the rest of the journey. The ship sailed across the widest part of North Atlantic, known as the Sun Lane“ because of the bright sunshine which usually prevail in this part of the ocean, which is a great attraction for the tourists. The only landfall on the way till we reached Gibraltar was the Spanish island of Madiera, a favourite resort of the Europeans seeking a change. The ship called at Cannes for a short while. It was middle of autumn, the air was getting cooler, and the beautiful sea beach of Cannes, which we saw packed with sun-seekers in summer, was all but deserted. We reached Genoa the following day.

The last leg of our voyage was Genoa to Karachi. We were booked by the same ship. M.V. Victoria, in which we came the other way at the beginning of our tour. We had five days in hand before sailing, which we utilised going round the ancient city and its neighbourhood. A coach trip to Milano enabled us to see the famous fresco painting, the “Last Supper” painted by Leonardo da Vinci on the walls of the dining hall of a monastery, Maria delle Grazie. Considered to be the masterpiece of the artist, “it has so stamped itself on the imagination of the world that we can no longer visualise the (Biblical) scene it seeks to depict in any other fashion”, The building was damaged by bombing during the war but fortunately the painting survived. The paint however started peeling off.

A very impressive place near Genoa is a village called Narvi. It is built on a narrow terrace of a rock overhanging the Mediterranean Sea. The hills behind protect the place from cold westerly wind, making the place a favourite resort in winter. A path overhanging the ledge built for strolling on the sea side, provide a magnificent view with surfs pounding at the foot of the rock all the time.

We sailed from Genoa for Karachi in the last week of October. It was a clear day. As the ship pulled out of the harbour, we had a beautiful view of Genoa, wedged between the sea and the azure transparency of Mediterranean sky, basking in the morning sunshine.

The homeward journey was smooth and pleasant. On the way we got out at Port Said for a while to visit a park, where a statue of the French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps was placed at the entrance to the Suez Canal, recalling his splendid achievement.

CHAPTER XXIX

LAST DAYS OF "DEMOCRACY"

In Pakistan

It is perhaps an irony of fate that the spirit of unity among the Muslims of the subcontinent, which manifested itself so strikingly in the struggle for Pakistan, began to wither soon after independence. The political party which provided the leadership in the struggle, began to disintegrate after the death of M.A. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. It failed to respond to the challenge of Post independent problems faced by the nation, and provide the leadership for the reconstruction of the new country. Powerful groups found themselves divided against one another on almost every important issue. The political arena presented a picture of a house divided against itself. The only political party which could ever claim a country-wide following - the Muslim League - almost disappeared from East Pakistan, after their defeat in the Provincial elections of 1954. Party is the chief agency for the expression of the political will of the people, There was no indication, whether any of the up coming parties which were all provincial or at best regional in character, could extend its hold over the entire country and assume the status of a national party as the League had once achieved. They could not, because they were all organised for the pursuit of regional issues or group interests. This aspect of politics in the country intensified with the passage of time.

The main issue, if not the only one which called for common concern was the defence of the country against aggressive designs of a much bigger neighbour, standing between the two regions of the country. Listening to the public speech of the late Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in the early days of Pakistan, I could not divine any point

other than this threat of aggression and his call for a united stand against the common danger. As mentioned before, defence became the chief concern of the centre, leading to the expansion of military forces in peacetime, much beyond what the resources of the country could possibly afford. It relegated all other issues to the background. People were looking for a better life after independence, but no one could tell when such hopes would be fulfilled. Defence was based entirely on West Pakistan. East Pakistan was left to its fate, and her participation in such an important national affair was minimal. Left to themselves in such a helpless position, the attitude of the people of East Pakistan could not be the same as that of the people of the other region having capabilities to defend themselves. The only means of survival of this region was the good will of her neighbour. Without common outlook on important issues of national concern, development of political parties on all Pakistan basis became almost an impossibility.

After nine years of negotiations and debates with which no less than four successive Prime Ministers were associated, the new constitution of Pakistan was promulgated on the 23rd of March 1956 (Chapter XXIV). This was the first time since independence, when different political parties could come to an agreement on an important political issue. The Awami League under the leadership of Mr. Suhrawardy, however, thought it fit to dissociate themselves from the final session of the Constituent Assembly when it was passed.

The Promulgation of the Constitution at last removed the doubts and uncertainties which betide the political climate of the country for the best part of a decade since independence. It cleared the way for the progress of a parliamentary form of government. It brought a sense of relief to the politically conscious section of the people and renewed the hope that democracy at last had come to prevail. This was not altogether an innovation in the country. Experiments with representative government were initiated by the British Raj since

1921 more than a generation ago, which was progressing in stages. Most of the elder politicians were acquainted with its form and working at the Provincial level for twenty-five year before independence. Refusal of the Congress to participate except for a short interval of two years, limited the scope of the experiment ; on the other hand, their success with building up a country wide political organisation to mount the struggle for liberation, enabled the Congress to prepare the grounds for parliamentary democrcy in independent India, which they were looking ahead to achieve before long. The Muslims, keeping themselves aloof from the Congress, thought it fit to participate in the experiment with parliamentary institutions during the British regime, but failed to organise their political party, which was a necessary complement for the working of such institutions successfully.

Such an experiment with popular government without the help of political parties could be conducted in a way under the tutelage of the British Raj, because, it was confined to the provinces, and was buttressed with safeguards to prevent a breakdown of administration. The British rulers, however tried their best to work the constitutional reforms with a spirit in keeping with the parliamentary traditions inspite of its limitations. The Congress, during their participation in the provincial ministries for a while did not find much fault with the reforms when they were worked in its true spirit. The existence of their party organisation facilitated its implementation. But the outbreak of war and its political impact prevented further progress in experiment with colonial democracy. Parliamentary government as it has evolved in the western world, cannot possibly work without the help of political parties, because the parties provide the ultimate link between the people and the government which is the essence of democracy.

Before independence, political activities of the Muslims were confined largely to their respective provinces. Parties that emerged

were centered round important personalities, who made politics their pastime without much to do with policy or programme. In the Central Legislature they occupied the position of a minority, too weak to enable them to exercise much control on the government. The only party of the Muslims, the League with an all India standing, confined their activities to negotiations with the Rulers and the Congress for safeguards and protection. The Muslim League failed to show up as a separate party in the Central Legislature until the last election before independence.

In the four provinces where they formed majority of the population, the Muslims could expect to form a ministry of their choice, which was their main attraction in politics. The League high command however, had very little influence over provincial politics, as the local leaders were reluctant to allow outside interference. Political activities of the Muslims were therefore, very largely a provincial affair without much contact with one another, until the call of Pakistan carried them off their feet and plunged them into a united struggle for Partition of the subcontinent. It was the timely and clear objective set by the League in their Lahore Resoluton, which lifted the political activities of the Muslims from the province to the national level, and made it possible for them to unite in their single minded pursuit of that goal. The unity was thus achieved for attaining a definite political objective. Once that objective was attained, the bond of unity began to weaken, and politics soon assumed its former provincial character.

The same outlook permeated political activities at the centre, preventing the emergence of any other party having a country-wide sawy, who could maintain a balance among the conflicting claims of the different region. Absence of a strong party organisation at the national level allowed the functions of political management to pass largely into the hands of the bureaucracy, the only effective nation wide organisation, who soon assumed the role of the real rulers of the country.

Promulgation of the Constitution set the stage for the next episode of political development. It was the embodiment of the highest common measure of agreement among the different regional groups, and a synthesis of the demands of the Islamists and the modernists, as far as could be achieved. In the operative part of the Constitution there were very little change besides putting certain clauses limiting the exercise of presidential powers to dismiss the ministry. The general provisions remained similar to those of the interim constitution. The gain was largely in the realm of self-esteem, the nation having obtained for itself a constitution prepared by an elected assembly embodying political and cultural aspirations of the people.

General Iskandar Mirza was ~~elected~~ the first President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. There was a strong rumour that General Mirza held out a threat that he would refuse to sign and authenticate the Constitution Bill, unless he was assured of re-election. Those who knew him well enough were inclined to believe that he was quite capable of exploiting his position to realise his ambition. Having completed the task after long nine years of effort, the members of the Electoral College thought it fit to avoid taking further risks of delaying its promulgation and elected him without dissent. The conduct of General Mirza motivated as it was by his desire to keep himself in power by any means, added further to the forces of political instability, which retarded the growth of sound parliamentary practices and conventions.

After completing its task of framing the Constitution, the Assembly became the Central Legislature, calling itself the National Assembly. The Prime Minister announced that the general elections would be held as soon as arrangements for holding it could be completed. The eighty members of the National Assembly were divided into a number of parties, none of whom could claim a majority in the House. The Muslim League lost its predominance in the second Assembly, but was still the largest group with twenty-five members, almost all of whom were

from West Pakistan. The members from East Pakistan belonged to the United Front, the Awami League, Pakistan Congress and the Scheduled Caste Federation. There were a few other small groups and independent members, which added further to the unstable character of the Central Ministry. ✓ A coalition of the two major groups, namely the Muslim League and the United Front provided the basis and Choudhuri Muhammad Ali formed the first Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

✓ The ministry could not remain in office for long. ✓ It was replaced by the Republican - Awami coalition ministry in September 1956, with Suhrawardy the leader of the opposition as Prime Minister. A stable ministry could not function in the condition obtaining in the National Assembly and the general political conditions that prevailed outside the House. ✓ The pre-occupation of the politicians to get absorbed with personal and parochial considerations were reinforced with the prospects of the next general elections, where local influence was likely to be the deciding factor. ✓ Elections were promised towards the end of 1957, but subsequently postponed till the following year. Absence of political parties with national status having their sway throughout the country, was likely to reduce the elections to little more than a local scramble for power, devoid of commitment or responsibility. ✓ As the time for the general elections drew near, it had the effect of increasing confusion and uncertainties. ✓ During the period of eighteen months from March '56 till September '58, when the new Constitution was in force, there were as many as four different ministries one after another, caused by shifting alliances and crossing of floor by the members leading to the decline of parliamentary government. At the same time it would not be too much to say that personal ambitions of President Mirza and his intrigues added further to the growing political confusions during the months preceding the expected general elections.

✓ Similar conditions prevailed in the provinces. Circumstances leading to the suspension of constitutional government in East Pakistan in 1954 has been related before. ✓ Popular government was restored in June '55 on the eve of the elections to the second Constituent Assembly, which finalised the constitution the following year. ✓ Restoration of popular government gave rise to an occasion for a lot of political intrigue and bargaining, which at last disclosed the intentions of the ruling coterie at the Centre.

✓ They did not like to see a strong ministry installed in East Pakistan, who could resist directions from the Centre, as Mr. Fazlul Haq once tried to do leading to his arbitrary removal. ✓ The Awami League in the mean time, had broken away from the United Front reducing its strength in the Provincial Legislature. ✓ However, the Front was still considered strong enough to form a ministry and the Centre thought it fit to induct them in office in preference to Awami League. ✓ But they refused to allow Fazlul Haq to be the Chief Minister. ✓ A compromise was ultimately reached to induct Mr. Abu Hossain Sarkar, an old associate of Fazlul Haq, to be the Chief Minister. ✓ His cabinet was installed in June 1955. ✓ But the new Chief Minister could not maintain his party in tact, and failed to collect a majority of the members to support him in the House. ✓ Through a process of political manoeuvring and intrigue, the ministry managed to hang on for more than a year without calling the Legislature to session, where their credibility to remain in office could be tested on the floor of the House. In the end, the Central Government had to come to the rescue of Sarkar ministry from defeat by suspending the constitution for a while, a measure taken in complete disregard of parliamentary practice.

✓ The Sarkar ministry was at last compelled to quit at the end of August '56 soon after the new constitution came into force, ending the period of an inglorious regime of unparliamentary practices. ✓ They were replaced by the Awami League ministry. ✓ The leader of the

Awami League parliamentary party Ataur Rahman Khan was called upon to form the ministry early in September '56. ✓ As luck would have it, Suhrawardy, the chief of the Awami League became the Prime Minister in the central government shortly after. Thus the Awami League had the good fortune to be in power, both at the Centre and in East Pakistan for a while. The Provincial Legislature which hardly ever met since the elections of 1954 was summoned and the Awami cabinet could demonstrate they enjoyed the confidence of the house. They made a good start and was able to restore order and a sense of purpose in the administration which were undermined by the reckless and arbitrary practices of their predecessors.

✓ Having a clear majority in the House, and enjoying the blessings of the centre where their chief was the Prime Minister, the new ministry in East Pakistan showed good promise of working a democratic movement successfully. ✓ But fortune which smiled on the Awamis a while, soon turned away when a good number of its members deserted the party to join a new group, the National Awami Party (N.A.P.) formed under the leadership of Moulana Bhasani. The reason for the break-away was supposed to be disagreement over foreign policy, a subject altogether outside the purview of the Provincial government. ✓ Still it was taken as a pretext to oust the Ministry from office and throw away the opportunity which their party had obtained after years of struggle to capture power in the Province. ✓ They joined the opposition and threatened to defeat the ministry in the Legislature. ✓ The conduct of the dissenting members demonstrated once more the weakness of the party organisation. Dubious loyalty and poor discipline of the party members were preventing democracy from striking root and making parliamentary government unworkable in the country yet.

The split in the Awami League was due to the pressure of the leftist groups to bring about a change in the current pro-western foreign policy, demanding closer association with the Soviet Union. It

was the era of the "Cold War", when the smaller nations were compelled to choose between one or the other side to demonstrate their leanings in international affairs. Such a move introduced a fresh element of controversy over political ideal when the nation was still struggling for national integration.

✓ But the climax in the mounting contest for power was yet to come. Due to the defection of more than thirty members who had joined the Bhasani Group, the Awami ministry failed to get enough support to pass the annual budget for 1957-58 in the Legislature. ✓ Hence they were dismissed by the Governor, Mr. Fazlul Haq, and the leader of the U.F., Abu Hossain Sarker was asked to form a new ministry. ✓ The action of the governor was not approved by the Central government, which was dependent on A.L. support to keep itself in office. ✓ The governor was dismissed, and Awami League ministry was reinstated. But the new ministry could not be saved by such an intervention by the centre. ✓ The new ministry was defeated on the floor of the House, when the Legislature met soon after and was ousted from office.

✓ Although the leader of the U.F. Abu Hossain Sarkar was again invited to form a ministry he could not remain in office, because of the dubious role of the newly formed National Awami Party, (N.A.P.). ✓ The position of the two major parties, the U.F. and the A.L. was so evenly balanced that no ministry could work without the support of the minor groups. ✓ The N.A.P. utilised the opportunity to make it impossible for any party to form a ministry. ✓ Two ministries went in and out of office within a week. Constitutional government was suspended and Presidents' rule was imposed for a while to get over the crisis. ✓ When Parliamentary government was restored and the Provincial Legislature was summoned in September, there was a free fight inside the Legislative chamber, resulting in serious injury sustained by the Deputy Speaker Mr. Shahed Ali, who was conducting the proceedings of the House. ✓ Mr. Shahed Ali died due to the injuries sustain-

ned by him. ✓ It was alleged that President Mirza himself instigated the U.F. to prevent at any cost the A.L. forming a ministry. ✓ The disturbance inside the House was the result of such instigation. ✓ It was becoming evident that President Mirza was trying to prevent any stable ministry holding office in the Province, to enable him to intervene and utilise such opportunity to maintain himself in power.

✓ The political situation in West Pakistan also conjured up a similar picture of shifting alliances and changing ministries reducing the Political arena into a cockpit for power struggle. ✓ The existence of some powerful land holding families, gave a small minority considerable influence on the political affairs of the Province. ✓ This was perhaps the reason which enabled the League to maintain its predominant position, because the patrons of the Party largely belonged to the class of landed gentry. ✓ Although landlordism was a relic of feudalism, never the less, it had the effect of ensuring stability in society in a large measure. Unlike the land holders of Bengal, those of the Punjab were an enterprising class, who were in a position to take over the leadership in new areas of economic activities. But they refused to allow reforms in the archaic tenancy system, pressing hard on the poor farmers.

✓ After amalgamation of all the Provinces of west Pakistan into one unit, the first elections were held in January '56 to constitute the Provincial Legislature. ✓ In a house of 306 members, the League claimed 240 members. ✓ Elections thus provided an opportunity to have a stable ministry in the Province and demonstrated the desired trend towards the growth of sound parliamentary institutions ; but this was not allowed to develop by the ruling coterie at the top, as it threatened to topple them from their office. ✓ It may be recalled how after the elections in 1954, the possibility of a similar development in East Pakistan was frustrated by intrigue and unconstitutional action on the part of the central government. ✓ Through the intervention of President Mirza and the governor Gurmani, a veteran politician of

the former Frontier Province, namely Dr. Khan Saheb, who was all along an opponent of the League, was inducted to be the Chief Minister. Such intervention on the part of the President was naturally resented by the League, whose legitimate claim to ministry was thus frustrated. After the election of the leader of their own parliamentary party, they were determined to replace Dr. Khan Saheb by their leader, Sardar Bahadur. Their demand was rejected by the governor. The dispute produced a split in the Parliamentary party enabling Dr. Khan Saheb to form a new group of parliamentarians drawn largely from the ranks of the League. The new group was named the "Republican Party". This was made possible by the intervention of President Mirza and the governor, who successfully brought about a split in the League Parliamentary party, obviously with the intention of maintaining their grip on the political developments in the Province. The verdict of the electorate was frustrated in this way.

Official involvement in political manoeuvrings and intrigue were not unknown in West Pakistan; but the way in which Dr. Khan Saheb's cabinet was saved from defeat and the Republican Party was formed, brought out the seamy side of politics in that Province, in which the executive officials and the Police began to take more and more an active part. It has been mentioned before how pressure tactics were employed to get the "One Unit Bill" passed, amalgamating the provinces of West Pakistan. This was resented by the people of the small provinces. It remained a live issue even after the promulgation of the new constitution and divided the politicians in their bid for power.

The creation of one unit brought about important changes in the administrative and political milieu of West Pakistan. Like all extensive changes imposed from above disturbing the status quo, it created new sources of tension. Differences over important local issues, unwarranted interference by the President and the officials in local politics, all combined to generate forces of instability making smooth con-

duct of parliamentary government almost impossible. Constitutional government was suspended in March '57 for a while to save Mr. Khan Saheb's ministry once more from defeat. The opposition groups having a clear majority in the house, were not given a chance to form alternative ministry. Dr. Khan Saheb however failed to muster requisite support and was compelled to resign from the leadership of the Republican Party. In his place, Abdur Rashid, a former chief of Police, and the chief minister of the Frontier Province, was inducted to be the new leader of the party and was installed as the chief Minister of West Pakistan when constitutional Government was restored shortly after.

✓ The National Assembly presented the picture of an arena, where a three cornered contest was raging among the Republicans, the Muslim League and the Awami League jockeying for ascendancy. Apprehending danger from the Muslim League which was gaining popularity in West Pakistan on the eve of the general elections, the Republicans thought it fit to lean more and more on the Awami League to keep the Muslim League out, in order to sustain themselves in power. Non-existence of the Awami League in W. Pakistan, made them a safe quantity to depend upon in such a situation. The restoration of the Awami League ministry following the political crisis in East Pakistan mentioned before, was the result of such an alliance. The Republican Awami coalition at last helped a lot to ensure the ascendancy of the former, both in West Pakistan and in the Central Government.

Thus the political conditions that prevailed during the first decade of independence were far from what was necessary to allow parliamentary government to work satisfactorily. Considering the conditions in which the country came into existence it was perhaps too much to expect the desired conditions to prevail within a short time. To make matters worse, those holding power at the highest level, who were in a position to influence their development, were motivated to hinder rather than help to develop them on the right lines.' The pro-

blem was therefore how to get rid of them from the position of power to enable the institutional devise to function properly. This was not a new problem. Every country having democratic form of government had to go through this process. In spite of all their limitations, the elections held since independence demonstrated that political parties at the provincial level, were adequately organised to run the parliamentary form of government. It was the vested interest at the centre, whose unholy interference crippled their operation.

It was true that political activities largely assumed a provincial character. Besides the Muslim League, no other political party could emerge yet, having its sway all over the country who could claim national status. Considering the manner in which the Centre was run by the old regime, which sought to insulate the National Government from the people, nothing better could perhaps be expected. The only way to revitalise the national government was to promote participation of the people through the institutional devise created for the purpose by the Constitution. Coalition among different provincial groups so far provided the necessary means for political management of the Central Government. In spite of shifting alliances this was perhaps the only way, by which like minded people could get together to form a political party at the national level. There was no other way to develop democracy in the sense in which the term is generally understood.

Elections are the most important devise to enforce political responsibility. But general elections were not held in the country since independence, which enabled the vested interest to entrench themselves and thwart the development of sound parliamentary institutions.

Prospects of general elections towards the end of 1958, once again directed attention of the politicians from the council chamber to their constituencies in the country-side, where the next round of contest would take place.

Although the army had little to do with the creation of Pakistan, the problem of its security in post independence era created by the conti-

nuous threat of aggression from a powerful neighbour, boosted up the armed forces of the country to a point, which not only gave them a preponderant voice in the central government, but also a grip on the politics of the country. Safety and defence of the country had to be ensured first, before politics could be given a free hand. The armed forces inherited by Pakistan from the British regime were based on manpower recruited largely from a limited group of tribes reputed to be the "martial races". Service in the armed forces was their profession for generations. Having obtained control over the source of their livelihood, they immediately saw the possibility of preserving the employment opportunities in the armed services for themselves. Employment in the army became a closely preserved profession, in which admission of others was restricted to a small number. It gave them a sense of cohesion and power, at the same time marked them off from the rest of the population.

The War in Kashmir, and the military threat led to the rapid expansion of the armed forces mentioned before. Rapid promotions and war hysteria generated tension and discontent seeking a way out for relief and satisfaction. The changing contour of society in West Pakistan after independence where most of the armed forces were concentrated, began to draw them into the vortex of politics, encouraging political ambitions to develop among the top brass, who were becoming impatient with the existing state of affairs. As mentioned before, an attempt to stage a coup by a group of army officers early in 1951, could be quashed due to the timely discovery by the Civil Intelligence Agency. Scramble for power among the politicians and the frequent changes of ministry, were putting the politicians to disrepute and eroding the power base of the civil administration. But perhaps more significant development was the encouragement received by the military top brass from high quarters, to intervene in an unstable political milieu, ostensibly to bring about order and sanity in the conduct of

public business. President Ayub has given a vivid description of the state of affairs while he was the Commander-in-chief, when various personalities, including no less a person than the Governor-General himself and later, the Prime Minister, Choudhuri Mohammad Ali were pressing him to take over the charge of the civil administration. Thus the ambition and intrigue of persons occupying positions at the highest level of administration had as much to do with the decline of democracy in Pakistan as the struggle for power among the politicians.

Right from the beginning of independence the civil administration had very little control over the armed forces. As mentioned before, even the direction given by no less a person than the Governor-General Jinnah to send armed forces to occupy Kashmir, was not complied with by the Commander-in-Chief, General Gracey. Since the death of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, administration practically lost control over the armed forces. However, confrontation of the armed forces across the cease fire line in Kashmir and the threat of armed aggression kept them preoccupied for the time being, leaving the civil administration undisturbed.

The rapid expansion of the armed forces, not only diverted disproportionately large resources for military build up, it soon began to create a problem of keeping them adequately occupied. They took over the officers' corps of the Border Police, replacing the Police officers, who were employed for guarding the borders with India. The balance was tipped heavily in their favour when the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement was signed in 1954 with the U.S.A. Substantial military aid provided under the agreement enabled the armed forces to expand far beyond the current requirements of defence. The military strategists would undoubtedly disagree with the view expressed above, because in terms of fighting a war, their requirements could be limitless. But the military build up in anticipation of fighting a war, when there was no war to fight, must neces-

sarily leave the armed forces unoccupied. This is a situation which sooner or later create a threat against political freedom of the citizens of the country. In a new country, this is a real danger.

The American military aid began to arrive when the cease fire line in Kashmir reached a stalemate and relations with India were becoming stabilised. But Pakistan armed forces continued to expand and improve their fighting qualities. How far it served the global interests of the donors. I have no pretensions to make an analysis. On the other hand if it was the intention of the Government of Pakistan to build up the military forces in order to enable them to negotiate Kashmir from a position of strength, this was perhaps an illusion which was soon dispelled.

In 1953, when Governor-General Gulam Mohammad offered to hand over the government to the C-in-C Ayub Khan, the latter was good enough to decline to take over. At that point of time the armed forces did not have enough personnel to look after both the defence, as well as the civil administration of the country. There was no reason for him to be in a hurry. Under his command, the army was building up a position for itself in such a manner that nothing could be done concerning the armed services, without the concurrence of the top brass. Five years later after obtaining his second extension as C-in-C, the position had changed to such an extent, that he did not know what to do with the huge armed forces he had built up over the last seven years of his command since 1951. The size of the army became much larger than what British India ever had in peacetime for the defence of the Empire. It was in every sense a army, first class in fighting qualities, but restless and impatient, having very little to do.

Early in July 1958, I was posted to Karachi in temporary charge of the Central Intelligence Bureau in the absence of the Director who went abroad on leave. Karachi was then the capital of Pakistan.

Change of ministries and party alignments seemed to produce very little effect on the administration and left the city life untouched. Such events had even less to do with life in the country side where more than eighty per cent people lived. Karachi had developed into a busy metropolis and was growing at a rapid pace since independence without interruption. The ponderous central bureaucracy had grown year after year with proliferations of ministries and divisions. Those who could learn how to do business with the bureaucracy, had little difficulty in getting things done ; but those who did not know or failed to learn the art, had little chance of success. This was the character of the Central Government ; very little could be cleared from the central secretariate in the regular course of business. Unless there was some one to take a personal interest in a case, it usually got shelved, to be considered in "due course". In marked contrast to the busy life in the city where everybody seemed to be in a hurry, there was a general lack of a sense of urgency at every level of the central bureaucracy and no one seemed to mind it.

Political activities related to the elections were getting increasing coverage in the news papers ; but such activities on the ground had very little impact on the life of a busy city like Karachi. In course of the periodical meetings of the Bureau, a senior officer reported that the higher business circles were getting skeptical about the prospects of general elections before the end of the year. Those who knew President Mirza well enough were of the view, that he was capable of frustrating elections, unless assured of his re-election as President. On the last occasion he got himself reelected by pressure tactics on a small electoral College, on whom he had some control. But the general elections now threatened to upset his calculations, which set him searching for ways and means to fulfil his ambition.

The political circles were however, optimistic. After the promulgation of the constitution, elections could no longer be postponed. This

was the general impression. The prospect of getting rid of a personalities like President Mirza from office seemed to meet with general approval.

Since the appointment of Gulam Mohammad as the Governor-general, he, as well as his successor Iskandar Mirza were trying to develop a closer association with the military establishment for support to maintain themselves in office, at the same time trying to disrupt the political parties contesting for power. The former was a civil servant and the latter a commissioned officer in the armed forces. Both of them looked down on the politicians with contempt, and had little respect for parliamentary institutions. The conspiracy of Gulam Mohammad to hand over the civil administration to the military and the activities of Iskander Mirza to undermine democracy have been related in the foregoing chapters. The decline of the parliament had pushed the bureaucracy to the forefront of administration, who practically became the rulers of the country, as they were during the British Raj. The Government of Pakistan assumed more and more the picture of the Viceregal rule, minus their probity and competence which generally prevailed during the British regime.

Indications of growing political ambition among the commanders of the armed forces since the early days of Pakistan have been mentioned before, as they came to notice from time to time. Political ambition inevitably generated the euphoria of power, which "flow along the barrel of the gun": Intelligence reports received from the military sources began to give wider and wider coverage of internal political activities. They were watching closely the political developments in the country which were clearly outside the scope of their activities.

About the middle of July '58, while I was serving my temporary tenure as Director in the Intelligence Bureau at Karachi there was a military coup in Iraq, leading to the assassination of the King and the

Prime Minister. Myself and Assistant Director, Musa Ahmad went to the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID) to obtain the latest information from Iraq. The coup was brought about by the pro-Egyptian group in the army with the help of the communist Party of Iraq. The army took over the government without much bloodshed. Bagdad was the head quarters of the military pact of the western powers, designed to contain the communist hegemony in the area. The success of the coup clearly demonstrated the failure of the western powers in their mission. Incidentally, the C-in-C, General Ayub Khan along with his advisers on Bagdad pact were on their way to Turkey to attend a high level meeting of the allied countries at the time of the incident. The Director ISID expressed great concern over the happenings in Bagdad which dealt a serious blow to the defence strategy of the area.

Although it was not our intention to raise the subject, the political situation in the country came up next for discussion, covering the issue of elections. Expressing his concern over the lack of stability at the Centre as well as the Provincial Governments, he mentioned that some politicians were trying to contact the armed forces to obtain their support in the elections. Expressing his determination to keep the defence forces free from contamination of political turmoil he requested us to bring to his notice whenever any such incident came to light. We left the I.S.I. Directorate with a sense of relief as far as the army was concerned.

At the end of my short tenure at Karachi I took leave and went on a tour of Peshawar, Khybar Pass, and Abbotabad. At Peshawar I met the Deputy-Director of Intelligence, Late Ataulah Jan, a veteran policeman and a scion of the frontier Tribes. Our discussions centred round the ensuing elections. Political activities were rising in tempo chiefly due to the efforts of Abdul Qayum Khan, the former chief minister, now the President of the Muslim League Party, who once

more was able to establish a strong position for the League in this region. However, he was not in the good books of the military high command and his attempts to establish contacts with the armed forces were strongly resented by them. It was at Peshawar that I was once more told that elections might never be held, because the army was not in favour of holding the general elections. He did not elaborate the reasons; neither did he mention whether the military had any intentions to intervene. He only mentioned that political rivalries were taking violent turn, and the general elections might lead to widespread disturbances, consequences of which were difficult to foretell. The issue of integration of the Provinces of West Pakistan into one unit was resented deeply by the people of the frontier and they were up in arms to bring about its dissolution.

My last place of halt before returning home was Lahore. There I met my old friend and colleague Mr. N.A. Razvi, Deputy-Director of Intelligence in charge of the Punjab region. Conversations naturally turned on the issue of the elections, which presented a scenario different from the frontier area. Old feudal aristocracy dominated politics in the Punjab, which they were trying to maintain with the help of their supporters among the Police force and the officialdom. The party in power enjoyed a great deal of advantage in the way of posting officers of their choice in key positions, who could manipulate the polling of votes in favour or against a particular candidate. Although denounced as corrupt and forbidden by law, such practices were nevertheless prevalent and could be employed in a manner evading the law. The creation of one unit had given the predominant position to the Punjabies, an advantage which the party in power was trying to utilise to consolidate their position throughout West Pakistan, by posting their supporters among the police officers in key posts before the elections. A large number of police officers from the district ranks down to those in charge of station houses, were on the move at the time.

Lahore seemed to be more optimistic about the scheduled elections taking place before the end of the year. When I mentioned what I had heard at Peshwar, my friend at Lahore paused for a while and replied, that what the army wanted to do they would never tell anyone else. Others would come to know only after they had done it if they wanted to strike. But, why should they want to meddle in such affairs ? They were having almost everything they wanted without embroiling themselves with the civil administration, which they would have to do if they interfere with the general elections.

Such were the news and views on the general elections, the first to be held ever since independence. I returned to Dhaka towards the end of September (1958) and rejoined my old post of Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau in East Pakistan.

Parliamentary government came to an end at midnight on the 7th 8th of Oct. '58; when President Iskander Mirza by Proclamation abrogated the Constitution placing the country under Martial Law. General Ayub Khan, the C-in-C, took over the management of the civil government as the chief Martial Law Administrator at the same time. Thus ended the brief interlude of "democracy" in Pakistan.

CHAPTER XXX

PAKISTAN UNDER MARTIAL LAW

The Abrogation of the constitution and the imposition of martial law, put an end to the institution building for democracy in Pakistan. The process began towards the beginning of the century under the tutelage of the British Raj. It was implemented in stages over a period of thirty years until the end of the colonial rule which was terminated by an Act of the British Parliament, when full powers were transferred to the governments of the two Dominions of Pakistan and India. A previous Act of Parliament passed in 1935, which established self-governing provinces, formed the basis of the Interim constitution of the New Dominion. A new constitution was passed by the constituent Assembly and promulgated in 1956, terminating the last vestige of colonial rule.

The change from colonial rule to independence was symbolised by the Constitution of the country. It prescribed the manner in which the people wished to be governed. The fundamental rights prescribed in the Constitution was the "Magna Charta" of the citizens, protecting the rights and privileges of the people against arbitrary action of public authorities. The very fact that the makers of the Constitution thought it fit to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens, clearly indicated their importance in a free society. Besides law making, the elected legislature is the chief forum for discussion of public policy and supervision over the conduct of public authorities,, where representatives of the people and those in charge of the executive arm of government, come face to face for making the administration answerable for the way they perform their task. In spite of

all its limitations, this is the only way the government can be made accountable to the people in the discharge of their responsibilities. There is no other way in which the people can live in freedom.

Representative government is a devise which took a long time to develop and strike foot in the countries where they now prevail. It had to go through a process of experiment and adaptation before it could attain functional efficiency in the new countries. Political parties provide the activists, who keep such governments moving. But the institutional devise must be allowed to prevail and function over a reasonably long period of time, before it could be adapted to the genius and changing needs of the people.

The Promulgation of the Constitution could not complete the process, until the next general elections were held. Admittedly the National Assembly as it was constituted after partition, was not functioning well ; but the proper remedy was to bring about a change in the lawful manner, that is, by general elections, which was not held since independence eleven years ago and was overdue. Condemning the Constitution as unworkable before holding even one general election, was clearly doing less than Justice to the Constitution of the country which was formulated after such a long process of work on part of the best available brains devoted to the task. Abrogation of the Constitution not only destroyed the sanctity of law, it also undermined the moral values which could build a free and democratic society.

Constitution cannot provide a built-in devise for its enforcement. It is the self-imposed obligation of those at the helm of affairs to protect and defend it and ensure working of the democratic government. The violation of the Constitution set up a chain reaction in the social and political life, which ultimately led to the disintegration of the country.

The politicians, the people as well as the bureaucracy were getting familiar with the parliamentary form of government over a time span of more than a generation. It had almost become a part of the political

ideal of the intelligentsia, who provide the leadership in all collective endeavour of the people. It was therefore, quite reasonable to expect that the stage was set for further development of democratic government after the ensuing general elections.

Abrogation of the constitution and the imposition of martial law came like a bolt from the blue to every one. Peaceful conditions prevailed throughout the country. There was nothing unusual either in the domestic or international affairs calling for emergency measures as a precaution. President Mirza gave various reasons which had allegedly prompted him to take such action. Frequent changes of ministry, inability of political parties to form a government were the principal reasons given. His oath of office, by which he was enjoined to protect and defend the Constitution, was conveniently forgotten. Shifting party alliance, leading to frequent change of ministry was apparently due to the outdated composition of the legislature. Its interim character, and the changing mood of the people since independence, combined to create the unstable conditions in the political arena, which was a natural phenomenon in a new country, where the people had to adjust themselves with their newfound freedom. Periodical elections provide the process to bring about such adjustments. The people of Pakistan had no opportunity to elect their representatives to the national assembly since independence. To condemn the constitution for the lapses of a handful of politicians who proved themselves unworthy of their high office, could not be justified on grounds of political exigencies ; it could never be in keeping with the spirit of democracy or the promise of good administration. It had never been possible to conduct the affairs of government in the interest of the governed, except under a device which could make the former accountable to the latter. Hence it was futile to expect good administration from those who were accountable to no one other than themselves. One may not question the good intentions of General Ayub Khan and his cohorts ;

but can the lofty intentions of the generals justify their action outside the pale of law and morality, which rob the people of their freedom and democratic way of life? It created a dangerous precedence subversive to freedom, which blocked the way to democracy. The generals were prone to talk of discipline and its importance in national life. A little reflection would show that all the misdeeds of politicians listed in the proclamation of President Mirza would pale into insignificance, compared with the uncalled for interference of the military top brass with the civic life of the people. Military take over of the government was entirely due to the devouring political ambition of the armed forces, which had expanded beyond measure and which were seeking justification for their bloated existence.

In his proclamation, President Mirza tried to recount his reasons for such a drastic action, transgressing all bounds of law and political expediency. However, his declaration remained unchallenged. There was no scope to state the other side of the case. Those who imposed martial law and usurped power, could have their say in justification of their actions; but all voice against such an arbitrary action transgressing the liberty of the people was silenced under threat of severe penalty. Every precaution was taken to prevent and suppress any attempt to oppose martial law, because they sought to establish their legitimacy by the absence of open challenge to their authority. The take over had to be without opposition or blood shed. They were able to achieve their objective by careful preparations and complete surprise which they were in a position to maintain in their move to strike. All propaganda and publicity were one sided in an attempt to rationalise their action. They however, held out promise to restore democracy as soon as the alleged mis-government of the past was rectified and an appropriate constitutional device could be formulated. Thus, constitutional government still remained the ultimate purpose of such action. Martial Law was held out to be a temporary expediency to

rectify the alleged misdeeds of the past and reinstall a new constitutional device, which would prevent its repetition. All the invectives in the Proclamation were directed against the politicians in general and the members of the Legislature in particular, who, taken together could not have exceeded a thousand in number. The people were praised as basically "good"; but the politicians, who were elected to represent them in the National Assembly were castigated to be "bad". The implications of martial law on the basic rights and privileges of the people were ignored completely. That it deprived the people of their freedom, the most precious possession of those who were fortunate enough to be free, did not seem to pass the minds of those who brought about the coup. It also robbed the people their fundamental rights regulating the relationship between the government and the citizens. It closed the doors for participation of the citizens in the conduct of government of the country, which is the essence of liberty.

A cleavage soon appeared between the army, who became the de facto rulers and the people, now reduced to the position of subjects. This is no figment of imagination. The makers of the Martial Law orders and 'regulations' which took precedence over the law of the land were far removed from the people, who did not have the remotest connection with their formulation and administration. The intelligentsia, the leaders of public opinion, the politicians were all cast into the limbo along with the people, to be ruled by the armed forces of the country as they thought fit.

Representation of the Bengalis in the armed forces being nominal and none having reached yet the rank of a "general", the coup-d'état made the defence forces stationed in the Province look more like an army of occupation than a national army serving to defend the country. A tension developed between the Bengali and the non-Bengali sections of the population due to class consciousness arising out of the dominant

position of the latter in administration as well as in economic life of the Province which came to prevail since independence. The only area where the Bengalis could have equal status in public life with others, was the political management of government. Suppression of the Constitution and imposition of martial law therefore, not only deprived the Bengalis of their hard earned freedom, it also had the effect of hurting seriously their self-esteem, having been deposed of their right to govern themselves. They were now ruled by a set of interlopers, who had no right to rule except by the force of arms. Psychologically it deprived the Bengali intelligentsia of their sense of belonging as equal partners. The growing economic disparity of the two regions of the country combined with the deprivation of political powers to govern the Province, reduced East Pakistan to the position of a colony ruled from afar. Unfortunately, this aspect of the problem, like many other political factors failed to attract the notice of the military rulers of the country. This was an indication of their ineptitude to grasp the political imperatives which assumed such an over-riding importance in an independent country.

The relationship between the Bengali and the non-Bengali elements of the people, none too happy yet, began to degenerate further, because of their different attitude towards the armed forces. While the imposition of Martial Law caused almost an universal disgust and dismay among the Bengalis, it was by and large taken as a reassurance on the part of the Non-Bengali section, against possible on-slaught of the former on the vested interest of the latter. It therefore, placed a hindrance in the way of integration of the two sections of the people in this province.

Pakistan was a political ideal. It was attained by political action, which divided the Sub-continent into two nation states. It materialised within such a short space of time, that it created a deceptive impression that the Muslims of India had already become integrated into a

nation and all that was necessary was partition of India to create the nation state of Pakistan in order to complete the process. When political consciousness began to grow under the impact of western education, it could take shape largely because of relative freedom of thought and expression that prevailed to enable the political ideals to develop, and allow people to organise for their propagation. The freedom movement with all its attendant consequences such as agitation, propaganda, civil resistance was allowed to take place without such prohibitory orders as the Martial Law. Civil government was never superseded either to suppress political activities, or for the ostensible purpose of public welfare. As a matter of fact, nationalist ideal came to prevail with the development of civil liberties and an administration conducted according to the rule of law. Changing the way of life must begin in the minds of men ; it is essentially a political process which cannot be imposed from above, much less by martial law.

The new nation had yet to go through a long process of reconstruction, before it could develop into a viable nation state. It started with good promise of progress towards its objective ; what was necessary was the correct policy and guidance. The task was essentially political in nature in the way of organising and motivating the people. It was necessary to make them realise that living together would ensure the prospects of a better life than living in any other form or disposition. The only devise by which the task of reconstruction could be undertaken was the democratic form of government in which the elected representatives of the people could get together for political management of their society. It could not be done by the imposition of martial law, the net result of which was aggravating the forces of disruption and reverse the process of integration, a phenomena which manifested itself so strikingly in the movement for freedom.

Having got the constitution out of the way along with the imposition of martial law both done by an elected President, the Chief Martial

Law Administrator, General Ayub Khan prepared himself to step openly into the arena of power. Three weeks after the abrogation of the constitution, Mirza appointed a council of ministers, consisting of three generals and a number of civilians, with general Ayub as the Prime Minister. They were sworn in on the 27th of Oct '58. At midnight, Iskandar Mirza was ousted from the office of President and General Ayub Khan himself assumed the office of the President. The next day, 28th of October was hailed as the day of "Revolution", a term by which the coup-d'etat came to be known and observed as a public holiday through out the following decade, as long as Ayub Khan was in power.

Although it was generally known that a drastic action such as the abrogation of the Constitution could not have been taken without the support of the chief of the armed forces, assumption of power by General Ayub at last cleared the political atmosphere and exposed Martial Law in its true colour. Public announcements made by General Ayub left little room for doubt that it was done under pressure from the army command. The finesse of having the unlawful part of the job, that is, abrogation of the Constitution done by the elected President, the chief of the armed forces could now move in to assume power without the odium of being an usurper, or so he thought. In course of an interview with the correspondents of the foreign news agencies, Genl. Ayub confirmed the above facts saying, that if President Mirza did not act as he was pressed to do, the army would have moved in to take over in any case. It also suited the personal ambition of Mirza, when he was seeking a pretext to stop the general elections, which was likely to put an end to his career as the head of the State. Little did he realise that nursing political ambitions on the support of the armed forces was like riding a tiger, the rider always running the risk of getting devoured by his mount. Iskander Mirza was sent into exile for the rest of his life.

As mentioned before, the armed forces of Pakistan were nursing their political ambitions since the early days of Pakistan. A conspiracy by a group of senior army officers to bring about a Coup-d'etat was discovered as early as 1951, soon after Ayub Khan became the C-in-C. This has been mentioned in a previous chapter. The civil administration progressively lost control over the military establishment since the assassination of the first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan. The Military confrontation in Kashmir and the threat of aggression from India, gave the armed forces a predominant position in the central government and made them practically autonomous. The defence of the country against threat of aggression being the first consideration for survival, the military top brass began to insist that they must be consulted in all matters of important policy and appointments in key posts having any relation with defence. Their intelligence department began to extend their coverage over the political arena more and more. The resources placed at the disposal of the military intelligence agency for such work was much larger than what their counterpart, the Civil Intelligence Bureau could ever obtain.

The political ambition of the Pakistan armed forces was also encouraged by the conduct of two former heads of State, who wanted to rule under the aegis of the army, putting the politicians out of the way. Such importuning in the early days of Pakistan was declined by Genl. Ayub, when the Defence establishment was not strong enough to deal with the additional task of running the civil administration.

Looking back over a time span of over twenty years, it is possible to discern how careful preparations on the part of the General and his associates were on the way, to take over the Government of the country at an appropriate opportunity. As a far-sighted strategist, he was not in a hurry in such an enterprise. His chief concern was, first to build up the armed forces, as well as a reserve of manpower to be deployed as he wished. He was able to achieve both within a few years,

with the help of generous American military aid. At the same time he had to make his own position secure in the power structure. He was cautious enough not to intervene directly in political affairs of the country, until the armed forces under his command were strong enough to deal with both the military as well as the civil administration. He entertained a firm conviction that a disciplined corps of officers was in a much better position to provide leadership for administrative management of the country, than the politicians.

Reading between the lines as it were his political biography (page 68), one can see while at one place he extolled the virtues of keeping the armed forces free from contamination of political influence which was his abiding endeavour, to another place he went on to say that a lot of people were blaming the armed services for their apparent indifference to the political exigencies of the time, allegedly calling for their intervention. A little reflection would indicate that visitors to the C-in-C could not possibly take the liberty of talking in such a manner, unless encouraged to do so. At another place (page 61) he recorded his thoughts on the kind of government the country should have for good administration. Those statements indicate how the mind of Ayub was working and his ideas preceding his action. At a lower level, the writer in his office as Director of civil Intelligence in the province, had occasions to meet the G.O.C. East Pakistan from time to time. The main subject of discussion usually turned round on politics, such as the mood of the people, relation between the parties and their wavering loyalties, conduct of the politicians unworthy of their task, and so forth. The G.O.C. maintained close contact with the leading politicians and journalists. It did not require much acumen to perceive that the political parties were in such a state of disarray, that any organised resistance against military takeover was unlikely. Ultimate consequences of such a measure was of course beyond their comprehension.

General Ayub was appointed C-in-C. early in 1951. In usual course, his term of office expired in 1956 when he should have retired. Extension of the tenure of the C-in-C in peace time was almost unknown. But Genl. Ayub made his position secure to such an extent, that he could obtain extension of his tenure not once, but twice. The second extension of the term of office as C-in-C was obtained in July 1958, shortly before the fateful event of the Coup-d'etat which took place following October.

It has been mentioned in Chapter XXIII how the dispute over Kashmir and threat of aggression from India, compelled the Government of Pakistan to expand its armed forces for the defence of the country. The relations with India were at last getting stabilised and the dispute over Kashmir reached a point of stalemate where each side found it impracticable to dislodge the other from their respective occupied areas. India refused to allow plebiscite to decide the final accession of Kashmir. Hence partition of the state along the cease fire line was the only possible way to resolve the dispute between the two countries. But neither side was in a position to broach the subject yet. Although occasional clash continued, supervision of cease fire line by a special agency of the U.N.O., prevented large scale flare up along the cease fire lines. The dispute however kept up a war psychosis in West Pakistan and enabled the armed forces to maintain their large establishment, which became almost a state within a state. The armed forces expanded much beyond the strength which the country could normally maintain. As the army began to expand year after year and their modernisation made replacement of old arms and equipment necessary, their demand on the resources of the government became almost insatiable. They put severe constraint on national budget slowing down economic growth of the country. But the fear of Indian aggression prevented the government from any cut back on defence expenditure. On the other hand such a large body of armed forces having very little to do, made them progressively restless,

creating a new problem of keeping them reasonably occupied. The rising political ambition of the armed forces had not a little to do with their bloated establishment expanding beyond measure.

It was self evident, that if such a military establishment was at all necessary for the defence of the country, their manpower could not possibly be diverted to any other purpose such as military take over of the government which was the job of other agencies to perform. Admittedly the military forces must be strong enough for the defence of the country; but when expanded beyond such limits, they must seek opportunities for conquests elsewhere. But what was there for them to conquer This Phenomenon was expressed pointedly in the words of late Chief Justice Kayani in an encounter with General Ayub soon after the coup. Congratulating him in innuendo, Justice Kayani said "well general you have at last conquered your own country." Indeed he had conquered; but in the end it broke up the contry beyond redemption.

The responsibility of running a democratic government much ultimately rest with those who take upon themselves the task of mobilising the political will of the people, that is the Politicians. When the armed forces assumed the responsibilities of running the government of the country, they overnight assumed the role of the politicians in full measure. The army virtually became the political party pressed into service to maintain the military regime in power. This task was undertaken by them not only by the show of force, but also with the help of all the media of public relations through propaganda and publicity. An energetic Brigadier was placed in charge of the central government ministry of Information and Broadcasting, with a Research wing attached, called the Bureau of National Reconstruction. Political propaganda assumed such energetic drive as was never seen before. It virtually assumed the character of "brain washing" the people. So, all talks of keeping the armed forces free from political influence were just bunkum. We shall presently see how through the pressure of political influence the armed

forces soon got divided into two groups, the "Hawks" and the "Doves", and how an ambitious young minister could conspire with the former group to bring about an armed conflict with India, which ultimately proved disastrous for the country.

Genl. Ayub made no secret of his contempt of political parties. They were held responsible for all the ills and confusion that prevailed in the country. In his opinion, political parties had to be eliminated from public life, before the country could move along the path of sanity and good government. Hence their activities were banned and all political parties were suppressed under the Martial Law. He declared his determination to rule without the help of political parties. He however did not reject the device of elections for the choice of the head of the State and the members of public bodies constituted for conducting public business, elections being the only way to acquire legitimacy for such office. A number of senior politicians were debarred from holding elective offices for a term of seven years for their alleged misdeeds while in office. This was nothing but a measure to forestall opposition, and clear the way for his success in the forthcoming elections for the office of the President. But even an authoritarian regime must have an organisation on the ground for mobilising the people for collective action and made them respond unitedly. Suppression of political parties and their activities thus disbanded the agencies through whom popular will could be mobilised and removed the chief link between the government and the people. But this was a task which had to be performed by some agency if the facade of popular government had to be maintained. The administrative apparatus was the only one left, which could undertake such a task on behalf of the military regime. It was soon pressed into service under the leadership of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Although it did not turn the administration actually into a "spoils system", its corrupting effect was not very different from those of the spoils.

The politicians were better known to the people at large than the man of the armed forces. The former had a lot of influence over the people. The unprovoked action against well known and respected politicians which looked like persecution and victimisation, created an adverse reaction in the minds of the people as usually happens in such cases. Their misdeeds, if there were any, were forgotten, and replaced by sympathy for the victims of such persecution. It not only antagonised the politicians, it also pushed a large section of the intelligentsia to the opposition camp, creating a climate of passive resistance to his ideas of reforme, particularly where their success was dependent on willing acceptance by the people.

As the stark realities of political arena began to stare in the face of General Ayub, he at last realised that he could not possibly run a popular regime without a political party. But unfortunately such a perception did not come to him until most of the politicians having some influence on public life, were put out of the way or gone over to the opposition camp.

The basic changes in the structure of government imposed by martial Law was its conversion from federal into a unitary form. Both the executive as well as the law making powers were vested in the central government at Karachi. The President with his appointed council of ministers became the sole executive as well as legislative authority for the entire country. The two provincial governments were reduced to the position of extension of the centre, under the charge of a governor in each province, without a council of minister to assist him. The governors had no power to enact law, a power which vested in the central government only. The function of the governors were confined to the administration of the affairs of the Province but divested of power of law making. Any regulatory order needed had to be issued under the Martial Law by the local Army Commander vested with such powers. It practically assumed the character of the old Viceregal system under

the British Raj, as it prevailed before the introduction of the constitutional reforms, but with this difference, that while the British Viceroy with all his powers still remained answerable to none except themselves. Centralisation of decision making and control over administration were thus made complete. It had to be done to enable Martial Law to have its sway all over the country without deviation.

Divided as the country was into two widely separated regions having their different ways of life imposed both by nature, such a unitary form of government with a centralised direction and control could not be at all suitable for good administration. Centralisation of power was a legacy inherited by the government of Pakistan from their predecessors the British Raj. Even the constitutional regime could not get over such limitations, ostensibly on the ground of maintaining the unity of the country. The Martial Law at last made it absolute, making the Provincial governments more or less adjuncts of the centre. Such a policy created a precedent in the power structure in which East Pakistan found itself in a difficult position in its relationship with West Pakistan and the centre, a position from which it could never extricate itself. The role of East Pakistan in national affairs progressively became restricted, while the centre and West Pakistan became closely allied with each other with the passage of time.

Struggle for power and position is an eternal phenomenon in the political management of society since the dawn of history. Democracy provides a set of rules of conduct by which the contestants for power can settle issues by peaceful means. The agreed process of change provides relief from tension in the corridors of power and assures stability in society by making political changes predictable in a large measure. It enables the people to make their adjustments to the changing conditions of time in an orderly manner. This is the only way social and political stability can be maintained. Intervention of the armed forces

may suppress democratic process; but it cannot eliminate the struggle for power, which is bound to appear in one form or another. The difference is that such a struggle is likely to take place outside public view in an unpredictable manner. It is bound to create tension and instability and retard political development.

The political regime which Martial Law replaced was blamed for instability brought about by frequent changes of ministry. It was soon found that the Military regime could do no better, for which they so clamorously lended themselves in the political arena. In the Province, the governor was vested with full powers for administration of the province. In a period of four years beginning from Oct. '58 when Martial Law was imposed, till Oct. '62, the Governor of East Pakistan was changed no less than four times. Each one of them had his own way of running the affairs of the Province and no one knew what was going to happen next.

Mr. Zakir Hussain former I.G. of police was appointed the first governor of East Pakistan under the Martial Law. He was a close friend of General Ayub since his tenure as G.O.C. in this Province. Soon after assuming his office as governor he made some changes in the high level posts in the administration. I was appointed Inspector-General of Police and the existing incumbent was asked to go on leave. The Chief Secretary Hamid Ali was transferred to the centre and M. Azfar was appointed in his place. A few high officials were removed from their posts and placed under suspension for their alleged mal-administration or misdeeds.

As a step for improving administration, screening of the entire cadre of officials was ordered under the Martial Law, with a view to eliminate those found incompetent or corrupt. Screening committees were set up at various levels to examine each and every case and decide who deserved to be removed from service due to incompetence or having the reputation of being corrupt. A summary procedure was observed

by which charges were framed and the accused were given an opportunity personally represent their cases. But the whole exercise had to be completed in such a hurry that it could not but lead to travesty of justice and impede fairplay. In my career as a police officer over twenty-five years, I saw many accused persons escape conviction and get acquitted, because of the high standard of evidence prescribed by law to prove guilt. I often wondered why law was so heavily loaded against prosecution. The requirements of law seemed to be concerned more to ensure that no innocent person was punished, than securing conviction of the guilty. Still the society survived, because, faith in the administration of justice is the corner stone of the edifice of society. When this faith is lost, the very foundation of society is undermined. Foresaking the time tested procedure for dealing with the delinquent officials for the sake of expediency could hardly be regarded as the path of rectitude, which the new Regime was insisting to follow. It could neither improve efficiency of administration, nor serve the ends of Justice.

The number of officers removed by screening was relatively small compared with their total number. The screening committees were undoubtedly working with a guilty conscience and did all they could to do the job without causing much violence to the time honoured system.

I do not think such a measure could do much to improve efficiency of administration. The whole procedure of screening and the manner in which it was done, could not but undermine the morale of the officials, whose task called for the exercise of discretion. With the extension of the area of administration the scope of such work was expanding. Scrutiny into their conduct in a manner which infringed the time tested procedure, compelled them to adopt more and more a protective attitude in the performance of their task and slow down the disposal of their work. I could never feel happy over the procedure of screening.

Soon after joining as I.G. of Police, I was called by the Governor and was told, it was contemplated to create a pool of senior administra-

tive officers. I was asked whether I would like to be considered for such posts. I agreed and was soon transferred to the Establishment Branch as an officer on Special Duty, awaiting my new assignment. A.K.M. Hafizuddin was appointed I.G. of Police in my place.

In order to maintain close liaison between the civil and the military branches of the administration, the Chief Secretary was designated Deputy Administrator of Martial Law. A new post was created for me to assist the Chief Secretary in his work. I was designated Additional Deputy Administrator of Martial Law, and placed in charge of a part of the work of the Home Department concerning Police and Intelligence Branch, and the Public Relations Department. Later, when the Bureau of National Reconstruction was created, it was placed in my charge as its Director. So, my experience with general administration began with a medley of different branches of the Provincial government.

Association with Martial Law authorities gave me an opportunity to obtain a perception of the ideas of the commanders of the armed forces concerning the civil administration and their intentions. They were not materially different from the general impression that prevailed concerning politicians and the bureaucracy. Slow moving, inefficient and corrupt were the usual charges levelled against the administration, which was alleged to be functioning still in the ways of the old colonial system and which was unsuitable for running the affairs of an independent nation. What was necessary to do for its reformation was, the elimination of the corrupt politicians and the inefficient officials, and the rest would follow. Such was the general assessment of the situation in high military circles.

The first shock of Martial Law produced some improvement in the day to day functions of administrations. Punctuality in office attendance improved ; timely submission of reports and returns, prompt attention to correspondence and discipline in the general conduct of office work, which became lax during the political regime, improved visibly.

The Bureau of National Reconstruction was set up as a research wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for aggressive public relations. The head of the ministry, Brig. F.R. Khan, a man of dynamic personality having a flare for the art of public relations, was its ex-officio Director-General. Its principal task was to devise ways and means for effective propaganda and publicity, with a view to create confidence of the people in the military regime and enlist their support. The way this was organised indicated how much advance planning and preparations were devoted to the task before its implementation began. Having suppressed the political parties, an alternative device had to be found to maintain contact with the people to ensure their support. Examples of success of such propaganda launched by the authoritarian regimes in other countries were cited for emulation which could be reinforced with the help of modern media of mass communication. A large number of writers and Journalists were engaged to produce publications in different regional languages for distribution all over the country. Cinema films and dramatic sketches were produced with a view to project the alleged misdeeds of the previous regime and the improvements brought about by Martial Law. An important theme of such publicity was projection of the President's personality as the saviour of the country, asking for popular support to enable him to continue and complete his task of nation building. Politics became more and more personalised, the public administration became politicised, and the armed forces remained the main prop to sustain the regime in power. Although initially the regime managed to build up a significant measure of public support by good work and public relations, the intelligentsia found themselves left out of the pale of public life and soon drifted into the opposition camp. The military regime failed to comprehend the role of the intelligentsia as the dominant minority in the developing countries. Often their role has been disruptive, but they could not be ignored in the task

of nation-building. Finding them sullen and apathatic, the military regime made a bid to enlist the support of the masses side-tracking the intelligentsia. The way this was sought to be done would be related as I proceed with the story in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Ayub Regime Drive for Reforms

His Ideas on Politics and Constitution

Ayub belonged to a family of Pathan tribes of the Frontier Region. I can recall him saying that his family was a branch of the Durrani Tribe. The Pathans were all along reputed to be freedom loving people, who could never be totally subdued by any conqueror who over-ran their territory from time to time. Even the British regime had to come to terms with the tribal people and was compelled to grant a large measure of autonomy in their internal affairs. The British government exercised very little control over the tribal territory. The tribes could maintain their existence in freedom, because they had a democratic pattern of society sustained by a code of conduct observed by all tribesman. Ayub's tribal background as well as his education and training at Aligarh and Sandhurst, gave him an orientation which was seeking legitimacy for his assumption of power as the head of the state. He did not want to be regarded as an usurper by the posterity. The only way a ruler could obtain legitimacy other than dynastic - was by obtaining the consent of the people to govern by a method, which is universally acceptable.

Peoples' vote was the only way by which they could express their choice of confidence. But universal franchise and the system of direct elections would be beyond the control of any agency on whom he could rely to attain his purpose. He wanted to obtain a vote of confidence from the people without the help of a political party. The problem was how to do it.

The politicians and their supporters were still at large, who knew how to sway the electorate one way or the other, making the outcome of elections unpredictable. Having condemned the political parties as the source of all evil, he could not possibly recall any of them, for such a purpose. So a system had to be devised by which political support could be organised in a manner to ensure maximum support for himself, at the same time maintain apparent freedom of the voters.

This was the genesis of the "Basic Democracies", designed to combine the functions of an electoral college in a system of indirect elections, with the units of Local Government at the lowest tier of administration. The existing pattern of local government institutions which provided the basis of the new system was the Union Boards set up under the Bengal Village Self-Government Act of 1919. The new device of Local Government established under the Basic Democracies Order of Oct., 1959, made extensive changes in the old system, building it up in the form of a hierarchy beginning with the Union Councils and town councils at the lowest tier, rising up to the thana, the district and the divisional councils. Only the lowest tier, the Union councils were the directly elected bodies. Those at the higher tiers consisted of ex-officio and indirectly elected members. All the elected chairman of the Union councils were made ex-officio members of the higher tier, the Thana council. The thana level government officers were made ex-officio members of the council. The elected representatives of the people were thus made to sit with the public officials in the Thana councils which were presided over by the Subdivisional officers. In this way the institutions of local government were placed under official tutelage. The union councils were vested with much wider functions and powers of taxation to enable them to undertake public works according to their choice. It was also indicated that their resources could be augmented by grants-in-aid in various forms from the government. Thus official control over the Basic Democracies was ensured through administrative arrangements.

The new responsibility with which the Union Councils were vested was their political function, when they were made the electoral college for the election of the President and the members of the National as well as the Provincial Legislatures. It created a vested interest of the Union councils, the only directly elected body, in the new institutional device of Basic Democracies, linking them up with the Provincial as well as the Central Government. Hence it ensured support of the Electoral college for the author of the system, who upgraded their status and increased their importance in the public life of the country, which they had never enjoyed before. The final voting was limited to 80,000 members of the Electoral College, 40,000 in each Province, making indirect elections manageable in the way Ayub Khan was seeking. It successfully put the intelligentsia in general and the urban elite in particular out of the contest clearing the way to Ayub's success in the elections. Such an assumption on the part of the author of Basic Democracies proved correct when Ayub launched his campaign early in 1960 to obtain a vote of confidence from the elected Basic Democrats to confirm his legitimacy to power. He also took it as a mandate to frame a new constitution, better suited to the conditions prevailing in the country as he thought fit.

Ayub was anxious to implement a number of reforms before lifting Martial Law and the return of popular government. There was ample scope for reforms. Since independence, the government of Pakistan was following more or less a policy of drift in their approach to the task of reconstruction. The achievement of independent homeland after two hundred years of alien rule, called for extensive measures for the reconstruction of society after independence. A beginning was made by the Planning Board while engaged with the task of preparing the first five year plan in 1954/55 ; but the plan failed to receive government approval before the abrogation of the constitution. So, a wide range of subjects for reforms awaited intervention of the

government. Ayub Khan at last decided to take up the work in right earnest.

Changes in the antiquated land tenure system assumed high priority in the schedule of reforms since independence. The general administrative pattern that came to prevail under the British Raj, was based on a system of land administration, which was their own creation. As could be expected it was intended to build up a new class of land owning elite, having common interest with the colonial power to uphold the status quo. Although, there were differences in the tenure system introduced at different times in the two regions of the country, they had the common feature of concentration of land ownership in the hands of a small number of powerful feudal families. At the same time it deprived the legitimate rights to the tillers of the soil, which they were enjoying before by virtue of the time honoured custom. While it enabled the land lords to appropriate the bulk of the wealth derived from land for themselves, it robbed all incentives for land improvement on the part of the tenants. By tradition many of the land owning families of West Pakistan had adopted large scale farming as their occupation, which ensured investment for land improvement, thus helping progress of agriculture. But the vast mass of peasantry were compelled to live under the yoke of an inequitable system of land tenure depriving them of their legitimate share in the produce of their own labour.

In East Pakistan, the landlords known as Zamindars, were engaged in rent collection only, who paid a fixed amount as annual revenue to the government and appropriated the rest for their own use. They took no part in agriculture and land improvement. The system deprived the government of a share in the accretion in the annual value of land and bestowed the benefits of the entire amount of unearned income to the Zamindars. Such an antiquated system not only transgressed all tenants of social justice, it became a serious drag on the

path of progress towards a welfare state. The whole system was crying out for a radical change.

Even before independence, the British regime in an attempt to rectify the unfair system of land tenure under the permanent settlement, appointed a Land Revenue Commission to examine and recommend appropriate changes in the system that prevailed. The Commission submitted their report in 1940, recommending abolition of the Permanent Settlement. The War followed by transfer of power delayed its implementation. Soon after independence the government of East Pakistan enacted the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950 which brought about a series of radical reforms in the land ownership and tenancy system. The changes calculated to produce far reaching effects were the abolition of rent receiving interests, fixing the ceiling of land holding to 33 acres, redistribution of land among the landless, and a graduated scale of compensation for the expropriated landowners.

Slow progress of enforcement of the law at last revealed the lack of political will to implement the Reforms. The Provincial Legislature which passed the law was composed of members elected before independence by an electorate covering only about 16 percent of the adult population, most of whom were owners of landed property. Hence they were reluctant to enforce a measure which would deprive many of them of a large part of their property. The elections held in 1954 on the basis of universal adult franchise, at last brought about a change in outlook and all the rent receiving interests were taken over by the government with effect from 14th of April, 1956. Implementation was again stalled by litigations instituted by the land owners, which were however dismissed by the High Court. The action of the Provincial government was upheld by the judgement of the court delivered in January 1957.

Enforcement of the law involved a vast amount of preparatory work in the shape of record of rights, compensation assessment rolls

as well as the reassessment of land revenue. This was indeed a real challenge to the administration in the field of reforms, a task in which it revealed its ineptitude. The complexities of the task could not be foreseen, because officials having requisite knowledge and experience were not available in adequate numbers. Preparation of fresh record of rights created endless trouble for the new land owners and was causing loss of revenue to the government. But the task was at last taken up in right earnest and an antiquated system of land tenure was rectified in a large measure. It however proceeded at a slow pace, creating a lot of confusion in land administration.

Land reform by way of land redistribution in East Pakistan was taken up after many years of investigation and heart searching. There was none who could possibly oppose the abolition of the Permanent Settlement. It had to be changed. An idea came to prevail that backward condition of agriculture, low yield of crops inspite of natural fertility of the soil, were due to the prevailing system of land tenure, rewarding the non-functioning intermediaries at the expense of the agriculturists. A lot of store was therefore laid by such a measure of reform, which was supposed to bring about economic transformation of the rural society by eliminating the exploiters of the poor farmers. Such a promise, however, remained ever since unfulfilled.

The British Raj did not pay much attention to the question of land reforms before independence in the area included in West Pakistan. Social and political conditions prevailing in this region did not perhaps allow any radical measure which might disturb the prevailing power structure, with whom the Raj had come to terms. The existing conditions were left undisturbed as far as possible. More over, the extensive irrigation system, built to bring dry land under cultivation gave rise to organised canal colonies which were supposed to take care of the problem of land redistribution,, without disturbing the old order. But things did not turn out as were expected ; The concentration of

landholdings created such strong vested interests, that it became almost impossible to introduce reforms which might affect them adversely.

President Ayub came to the conclusion that the constitutional reforms which he had in view, could not be worked successfully unless the old power structure was changed. The powerful landowners, who were in a position to exercise political influence were his chief adversaries. The desired objective could be achieved only through land reforms liberating the rural people from the clutches of powerful landlords and simultaneously reducing their influence on political activities which they were in a position to exercise through their large landholdings in the Province. At the same time land redistribution creating a class of peasant proprietors, would not only boost agriculture, but would also build up political support for his own regime.

It was a practice in West Pakistan to allot land to civil and military officers to establish agricultural farms of their own. It almost became a profession of retired officers. Some of the best organised farms were established by them. Although some of them misused the privilege by subletting their land enjoying its benefits as absentee landlords, practice of agriculture was a common vocation of the officer class in West Pakistan. So it was necessary for the government to have some spare land available which could be redistributed to those persons, whom the government thought it fit to reward. Attractions of agriculture were further enhanced by making the income derived from it free of income tax. It came to my knowledge that some of the senior officers were economically better off managing their farms than what they could obtain from their salary. The brighter side of such a practice was the encouragement it gave to the educated people to return to the village, who could provide the leadership in bringing about improvement of agriculture and rural development. At the same time it gave a lot of leverage in the hands of the ruling regime to ensure the sup-

port of key officialdom, should they want to utilise those patronage for such a purpose.

Land reforms were therefore given the first priority by Ayub Khan in his schedule of reforms, which he wanted to introduce. Within four days of his assuming full powers, a Land Reforms Commission was set up with the governor of West Pakistan as its chairman. The line of such reforms was already worked out by Ayub in his mind, as is apparent from his autobiography. So, the Commission had a fairly easy job to do ; it had to give shape, and work out the details for implementation of his ideas. The Commission submitted its report within a few weeks and the government announced its decision before the end of January '59 ; in less than three months, after the appointment of the Commission. The ceiling of land holding fixed was 500 acres for irrigated and 1000 acres of non-irrigated land, besides some exceptions for orchards and sundry other use. Thus the maximum permissible landholding remained sufficiently high to allow a new class of prosperous kulak farmers to emerge, reducing possibility of serious opposition to the reforms. It was expected that they would exercise a stabilising influence on the political life of the country as the farmers' lobby usually do. About six thousand families who owned land in excess of the prescribed ceiling were affected. They received compensations for the surrender of their excess holdings which came to a total of about 2.5 million acres. Those who derived benefits from the reforms were far in excess in number; than those who lost a part of their estate. Improved prospects of land grant ensured the support of the entire officialdom, both civil and military. Big land holding families who were once powerful, thus found themselves completely isolated, and were compelled to surrender without protest.

A separate Land Revenue Commission was set up in East Pakistan to review implementation of the State Acquisition and Tenancy Act 1950, the law by which the Permanent Settlement of 1793 was abo-

lished. It was found that only about 300,000 acres of land could be resumed from the owners in excess of the ceiling of 33 acres fixed under the law. The Commission expressed the view that the maximum permissible land holding of 33 acres was too low for advanced agricultural practices and retarded the rise of the middle class who could provide leadership in all movements for progress and development. The Commission recommended raising the ceiling of land holding to 120 acres by an amendment of the original Act of 1950.

In East Pakistan, the initial impact of land reforms worked itself out before the question was revived after Ayub assumed power. The heaviest blow fell on the big landlords, most of whom were Hindus who left the country after partition. While it deprived the landlords of their estate, contrary to general expectations it conferred very little benefit to the peasantry. Besides improving their formal status from tenants to peasant proprietors, there was very little improvement in their economic condition. The problem of rural development in general and agriculture in particular was hardly understood yet by the policy makers. Progress of science and technology, which had brought about revolutions in industry and agriculture in many countries of the world, left East Pakistan untouched. However, very few regretted the disappearance of the time honoured institution of landlordism and their colourful way of life from society.

Land reforms in West Pakistan was a different affair. It was calculated to bring about a significant change in the social and political milieu in the Province. Anticipating opposition from powerful vested interests, Ayub wanted to push through his scheme of land reforms before the impact of Martial Law began to peter out. It has been mentioned above that appointment of the Land Reforms Commission for West Pakistan was the first major step for reforms which Ayub wanted to initiate, and recommendations were made available in less than three months. It was possible to come to a decision over a major

question of change within such a short time, because Ayub had already worked out in his mind what he wanted to do. The ultimate power base from which he could enforce his decision was the armed forces. The officer class was drawn very largely from the rising middle class families, who had modern education and progressive views. The rapid expansion of the armed forces under Ayub and its modernisation ensured such a composition and outlook in the armed forces. This was the trend noticeable in some other Muslim countries also which were emerging from the traditional to the modern way of life, leading to revolutions in Turkey, Egypt and Iraq under the leadership of the armed forces.

There were very few among the officers who belonged to the families of big land owners. The ceiling of land-ownership was fixed at a sufficiently high levels so as to leave the families of the officers' class untouched. Such was the source of his strength on which Ayub could rely to enforce his land reforms which sought to dispossess and thus alienate the most powerful families in the Province. Initiation of land reforms and the determined thrust for their implementation not only enhanced the prestige of Ayub Khan among the masses of the people who were benefited by the change, it also received support of a large section of the intelligentsia, who could realise that but for Martial Law the much needed redistribution of land would have been impossible. Equally significant was the orderly manner in which the reforms were implemented.

Although a soldier by profession, Ayub's mind was not engaged entirely on the task of soldiering. He developed a wide ranging interest in the political and economic problems of the country. He worked out in his mind the possible ways of dealing with the problems and began to entertain a mounting ambition for their execution. His service as the commander of the armed forces in both the regions of the country, his long tenure as the commander-in-chief, and as a minister

to the central government gave him ample time and opportunity to observe the problems with which the country was faced and to think how best to deal with them. He could, therefore, take over the government of the country with a programme of work beginning with the land reforms and drive the administration for their implementation.

The problem of resettlement of millions of refugees, who were compelled to flee from India and come over to Pakistan was hanging fire since independence. Allotment of landed property in exchange for those left behind in India was a problem which so long defied solution. The refugees were allowed temporary use of abandoned property left behind by the Hindus and the Sikhs. Lacking the right of ownership, the occupants were neglecting maintenance of such properties with the result they were deteriorating in value. The military regime at last undertook to resolve the problem on the basis of whatever evidence was available, based on a formula to determine entitlement considered equitable under the prevailing conditions. This was another stroke of expediency which worked successfully cleaning the Augean stable. I was informed by knowledgeable persons that most of the beneficiaries ultimately obtained much more than what they had lost in India. This was possible because the sum total of the real property left behind by the non-Muslims in West Pakistan was much more than what the Muslim refugees were compelled to abandon in India. At the same time large slum areas in Karachi were cleared of refugees and they were resettled in a planned colony constructed at a place called Korangi, a few miles east of the city.

The resettlement of refugees on the basis of exchange of abandoned property was confined to west Pakistan only. East Pakistan had to receive and accommodate nearly a million refugees coming from the neighbouring provinces of India ; but no restrictions having been put on their movements and the exchange of property, intervention of government was unnecessary except for construction of colonies at a few places for their resettlement.

Large scale movement of population invariably gave rise to the problem of their integration into the local society. This process took different lines in the two different regions of the country. The refugees from the rest of India who came over to West Pakistan, had very little difficulty in getting themselves assimilated into the new society where they had come to settle. Although they spoke different dialects, Urdu language provided the lingua franca for inter-communication. They did not seem to find much difficulty adapting themselves to the way of life of the new society of their choice. The non-Bengali refugees who came over to East Pakistan were confronted with a different problem. Most of them found it difficult or were reluctant to make a conscious effort to integrate themselves with the Bengali society. This was evident from their reluctance to learn the local language, Bengali, which was the first step in the process of assimilation into the local society. They preferred to cluster round small colonies of their own having separate schools and associations, indicating their preference to keep themselves apart from the Bengali society. There were honorable exceptions specially in higher circles, where matrimonial alliances were not uncommon ; but as a social group, the non-Bengalies indicated a preference to remain separate from the rest of the community and live a separate social life. The hiatus between the two sections of the people, the Bengalies and non-Bengalies unfortunately continued to persist, at times leading to open clash with loss of life and property, recalling the riots between the Muslims the Hindus in undivided India. Racial differences seemed to override the community of faith, which formed the basis of the Muslim nationalism in India. Unfortunately this new phenomenon of racial tension was not properly comprehended and nothing was done to remove the causes of tension between the two sections of the people. Instances of such racial clash have been mentioned in a foregoing chapter.

Declaration of Martial Law was taken differently by the two sections of the people. It has been mentioned before, how the non-Bengalies came to occupy a predominant position in this province, both in the bureaucracy, as well as in commerce and Industry. Their favourable position was gradually eroding by the up-coming Bengali intelligentsia with the passage of time. Occasional racial clash also began to make them rather shaky. The armed forces, which were predominantly composed of non-Bengali personnel, - the command posts were almost exclusively held by the non-Bengalies, making martial law a reassuring change in the eyes of the non-Bengalies for the preservation of their rights and privileges. On the other side, dissolution of the constitutional government which only could ensure control over the provincial administration by the Bengalies, came as a rude shock and a disappointment to them. While the former looked upon martial law as a welcome device for the protection of their interest, to the latter it came as a loss of the hard earned freedom. An attitude of condescension which usually marked the behaviour of the non-Bengalies, in many cases turned into arrogance, at best patronising. They felt there was no longer any need to come to an adjustment with the Bengali society on terms of equality, when they were assured of maintaining their privileged position they were enjoying since independence. Martial Law, therefore, created a new problem of racial tension, reversing the progress of assimilation which was necessary to allow the two racial groups to live together in peace and amity. This was a problem which could not be solved by martial law ; it indirectly aggravated the problem.

Ayub's comprehension of problems covered some broad aspects of national life. He had the good sense to realise that there were many other subjects calling for attention which had escaped his notice. So, he initiated a series of enquiries to identify the problems which called for government intervention, and seek ways and means for their

solution. More than twenty different committees and commissions were appointed to deal with subjects covering social, economic and political problems confronting the people. Their findings and recommendations provided a sound base for reform and planning for development. The first five year plan at last received formal approval of the government soon after Ayub Khan assumed power. Thus a comprehensive policy and a wide ranging programme could be formulated within a short time to step up activities of the government throughout the country.

Ayub Khan wanted to shift the capital of the country from Karachi, to a place somewhere near Rawalpindi the headquarters of the armed forces. The reasons given were the enervating climate, and the alleged corrupting influence of the social and political life that prevailed in a great commercial city like Karachi. A committee headed by a senior general of the Army was appointed to examine the question and recommend a better location for the capital. The committee selected a site a few miles north of Rawalpindi, known as the Potwar plateau. It enabled Ayub to build a new capital, at the same time ensure maintaining a predominant position of the armed forces in the government of the country.

The measure which boosted the image of Ayub more than anything else was the Indus Basin Treaty with India, resolving the dispute over sharing the water resources of the Indus basin. Partition of the Punjab divided the irrigation system, - which sustained life in this region, without settling the issue of respective shares of the two countries in the water resources of the basin. Negotiations were initiated under the auspices of the world Bank as early as 1951, but no settlement was in sight yet. This was a complex issue involving both technical and human problems, and calling for international support on a large scale for their solution. Only an agreement between the two countries could obtain such a support. It also gave rise to political issues which could

be exploited to discredit the sponsor of any scheme for its settlement. Thanks to the good offices of the world Bank and Ayub's personal intervention, the Indus Basin Treaty could be concluded to the satisfaction of both the parties. Pindit Nehru himself came over to Pakistan to sign the treaty in conjunction with President Ayub in 1960. This was the first major dispute with India which could be settled through negotiations. Successful conclusion of the agreement encouraged hopes that perhaps a new era had opened for the resolution of the outstanding disputes which created such strained relations between the two neighbouring countries.

The problem of sharing the water resources with India was not confined to West Pakistan only. The entire area of East Pakistan is dependent for its sustenance on the river system comprising the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Meghna and the Teesta, all flowing through India before entering the province of East Pakistan. The region is the creation of this river system and its ecology is closely bound up with their natural flow. All those rivers had their sources in India and beyond. They were subject to possible interference at the upper reaches, detrimental to the life of the inhabitants of the Province situated down stream. The natural flow of the rivers made the riverins portion of the Province suitable for human habitation. So, an understanding with India over the sharing of the water resources of the Eastern rivers was equally important. The climate of understanding generated by the conclusion of the Indus Basin Treaty was the most opportune moment to sponsor the subject. This vital problem besetting East Pakistan escaped the attention of President Ayub, whose attention was directed more towards the Kashmir issue in relation with India, than the interests of the people of the Eastern Region of the country. India had already started her project of constructing a barrage across the Ganges at Farakka, with a view to divert its water into the Hoogly river, which would deprive this

Province of a large portion of the natural flow of the river in the dry weather. Request made to India to supply relevant information concerning the project was not complied with leaving our engineers in the dark concerning the likely impact of such withdrawal of water on the life of the people. Hence there could exist no excuse on the part of government to plead ignorance about such a vital issue.

The very nature of the regime had created a milieu at the higher level of administration, where nothing of any importance could move unless the boss thought it fit to make a gesture in its favour. Water is a natural resource for the sustenance of life. While dealing with the question of sharing such resources with India, strangely enough East Pakistan and her requirements were completely forgotten and the Province was abandoned to her fate.

The signing of Indus Basin Treaty in 1960, was the high watermark of Ayub's prestige and political ascendancy. No one could throw a challenge to his power and authority, He successfully initiated the important measures of reforms which were going ahead according to plan. While a number of other committees and commissions were engaged in investigating into various subjects, Ayub himself took over the important political issue of giving the country a new constitution designed to suit, what he thought to be the "genius of the people".

In pursuance of his ideas of building up a base of political support for himself without the help of political parties, Ayub formulated his scheme of Basic Democracies as mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. The scheme was formally inaugurated by an order under the Martial Law in Oct '1959. Election of 80,000 members of the Union Councils, the lowest tier of the hierarchy was held in January 1960. At such a stage Ayub thought it fit to obtain a vote of confidence from the freshly elected members of the Union Councils, together with a mandate to formulate a constitution designed as he thought most suitable for the country. The result of voting was a foregone conclu-

sion. Over 95 per cent of the voters cast their vote in favour of what Ayub wanted. Following the vote of confidence, Ayub was sworn in as the elected President on the 17th Feb. 60. Soon after his formal assumption of office he set up a Constitution Commission with Chief Justice Shahabuddin of the Supreme Court as its Chairman.

Prima facie, one may be led to think this was the beginning of the process of constitution making by Ayub. Actually he had worked out the framework of a constitution in his mind as early as 1954, i.e. six years before, based on the presidential model which he disclosed in his autobiography (P. 186) published in 1967. His mind was pretty well set on what kind of a constitution he was going to promulgate long before the Commission was set up. The constitution which was ultimately promulgated by Ayub was largely in keeping with his own ideas, and had very little to do with the recommendations of the Commission. The major issues on which both agreed, were the rejection of the parliamentary system and acceptance of the Presidential model which came to prevail ultimately in the new constitution.

These disclosures confirm further that the military take over of Oct. '58, under the leadership of Ayub Khan, was by no means an isolated incident in response to political exigencies, or to save the country from imminent chaos and confusion. It was the culmination of a preplanned scheme worked out well in advance over a number of years, to satisfy political ambitions of Ayub and his associates.

As mentioned before, the armed forces had expanded to such an extent that they could not possibly be kept fully engaged on peacetime assignments. Fresh avenues had to be found to keep them employed. Military take over of the country provided the best answer to the problem, at the same time satisfied the political ambition of the commanders. 'Conquest of their own country' was their ultimate aim, as was aptly expressed by late Chief Justice Kayani mentioned before.

As indicated above the new constitution that was promulgated, was entirely in keeping with the scheme which Ayub had in mind. It was announced on the 1st of March '62. The National Assembly and the Provincial Legislatures were elected by the members of the Basic Democracies acting as electoral college as he had wanted. The National Assembly met at Rawalpindi on the 8th of June, and Ayub was sworn in as President of the 2nd Republic. The Martial Law was lifted on the same day. Thus ended a suffocating era of Martial Law, which the people hardly ever deserved.

Besides the general agreement on Presidential model, Ayub Khan turned a blind eye to the recommendations of the Commission. Even the proposal to have a Vice-President specifically made to ensure representation of both the regions at the top executive level, was rejected. None of the checks and balances which usually form the part and parcel of Presidential system was acceptable to Ayub. The National Assembly was virtually made subservient to the executive, which was characterised by some foreign observers as a "rubber stamp legislature".

Absolutism of the ruler of a country was, perhaps nowhere given a legal cover with such refinement in any constitution ever promulgated. Even if one could accept his paternalism as a passing phase to tide over a difficult period of transition, it is still surprising to see his anxiety to thwart any prospect of change or an alternative government which is admittedly the essence of democracy. In an attempt to safeguard his own position, the procedure of amendment was made so rigid that it ultimately failed to accommodate new political demand for democratisation, creating a constitutional crisis a few years later. When external pressure called for a change, it completely broke down and the entire system collapsed like a house of cards.

The limitation of his ideas on political affairs soon became evident as he came out of his sheltered kind of politics after lifting the

martial law, which had sustained his position so long. He made no secret of his dislike of political parties whom he blamed to be at the root of all the trouble. As the ban on political activities was removed, he found himself cast into the same old political jungle, but without a party of his own to uphold his position. He could still depend on the Basic Democracies to elect him as President. As they were all elected on individual basis without party affiliation, they could not be put together in a group to take the place of political parties, who provide the organised link between the government and the people. It is the party by virtue of its organisation, ideology and its contact with the people which build up the power base for a democratic government. Together with the agreed method of submitting themselves to the peoples' choice by periodic elections, the system ensures peaceful method of change and stability in the art of government.

Politics is regarded as the "art of the possible". Ayub at last discovered that in his attempt to govern the country without political parties, he was trying to do the impossible. It was with the support of the armed forces that he could assume power ; and in the process, involve them directly with the politics of the country. But this was a dangerous adventure having unpredictable consequences and could not be relied upon for long. Who could take their place when they were sent back to their barracks ? Political party was the only device which could uphold his image and build up the support for his regime. As a face saving device, the task of removing the ban and making the political parties lawful was given to the newly elected National Assembly.

A search began to find the remnants of a party disbanded by the Martial Law, who could be resuscitated to fill the void created by such action. Ayub at last settled on the Pakistan Muslim League, who escaped relatively unscathed in the turmoil of Martial Law. It was the only party having a semblance of country-wide standing, albeit a great

deal eroded in its image since the heyday of the Pakistan movement. But the old guards of the League were rather weary of Ayub and the way political activities were taking shape in the post martial law era. The Council of the League was reluctant to fall in line with Ayub Khan's overtures. A section of the League, however, thought it fit to break away from the old League and agree to participate in a convention held in Karachi where a new party was inaugurated with Ayub Khan as President. Most of the members of the old Council of the League did not participate in the convention. In order to differentiate the new group from the old established League, the new party was called the "Convention League". So, the old phenomenon of shifting party alliance repeated itself once more, this time under the leadership of no less a person than Ayub Khan himself. It so happened that while the Convention League formed the ministry, it was the other group which led the opposition. Such were the vagaries of fortune with which politics of Pakistan had to contend with!

Promulgation of the new constitution in June '62 and lifting of the martial law, however, failed to clear the political horizon of the country. The political activists were not happy with the constitution containing innovations never tried before. Indirect election of the members of the National Assembly and the Provincial legislatures, consisting of one house only, where the local bodies provided the electoral college, removed the time honoured link between the people and the Legislature, which direct elections could only provide. While the election of the head of the State through the mechanism of indirect elections was a practice prevalent in many countries, it is the directly elected legislature which could represent the people and assume the responsibility to oversee the activities of the executive, at the same time remain accountable to the people. Ayub's constitution thus removed the usual checks and balances, making the executive all powerful in the government. The ministers held their office at the

pleasure of the President; but were deprived of their seats in the National Assembly. It made participation of urban elite in political life more and more difficult. This was one of the purposes of the devise as admitted by him. It also deprived the people the privilege of electing their representatives to the Legislature, a lacuna no one could overlook. Most of the elder politicians were chary over the kind of government Ayub's constitution sought to introduce and preferred to stand aside, wait and see. Although the change had the effect of lifting the pall of tension which stifled social and political life under martial law, political activities remained at a low key and failed to revive. Henceforth every thing became an "Official business", while the distinction between politics and administration began to disappear.

The indirect method of election based on the Basic Democracies at the lowest tier, enabled a large element of new comers to get elected as members of the legislature, who had practically no contribution yet in public life. They were, however, organised into two groups representing the party in power and a party in opposition; but they were all in the nature of "make believe", lacking the dynamism of political life. Its subservience to the Executive reduced the importance of the National Assembly in the estimation of the people. As the whole system was designed and oriented to deprive the intelligentsia of their due share of participation in the political life of the country, it turned them against the whole system, jeopardising its future. In other words, it failed to obtain their commitment to the Second Republic. Democracy is a creation of the intelligentsia; it could not possibly function without their participation. But President Ayub Khan had different thoughts. The Bureaucracy remained the real ruler of the country as they were under the British Raj. It also produced the same consequence of alienating the people. The apparent success of his new devise of Basic Democracies to regulate political activities, encouraged him to dig in and refuse to pay much heed to the changing conditions of time.

CHAPTER XXXII

MY CAREER AS SECRETARY AND CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT-CHANGES AND ADAPTATION OF ADMINISTRATION FOR THE NEW TASKS OF GOVERNMENT.

The circumstances under which I left the police force and came over to the Provincial secretariate to join the Administrative Service, have been mentioned towards the end of chapter XXX. Besides assisting the Chief Secretary and maintaining liaison with the martial law authorities, my main task was to deal with the affairs of the newly established Bureau of National Reconstruction. Its tasks were set by the Central Bureau, and had to work largely under its direction.

My assignment as Additional Deputy Administrator of Martial law and frequent contacts with the Chief Secretary and the G.O.C. gave the post a lot of prestige ; but actually, I had very little to do yet with the provincial administration. It was fortunate for me to be able to begin my new task at the periphery of the complex establishment, because without the knowledge of the ways in which the secretariate worked, one was apt to find himself lost in this bureaucratic net work. Occasional reference of files of different departments to me by the Chief Secretary for comments, gave me a chance to have an insight into the manner the Secretariate was working and get familiar with the functions of the various departments of the provincial government. Above all, the secretariate with its clearly defined hierarchy, rules of business, chain of command, ubiquitous red tape, and the lack of a sense of urgency were the manifestations of bureaucracy par-excellence. Every department was working as an independent

entity with its own code of conduct, having little interest in what was happening elsewhere on the same promises. The business of government was allowed to proceed in "due course", unless there was some one to take a personal interest to get something done.

The spirit of team work which is supposed to be the secret of success of all collective endeavour having a large number of participants, was not very much in evidence. A propensity to disagree and say 'no' to almost anything emanating from other sources, generally prevailed in the relationship between the different departments, each vying with the rest with its spirit of independence. This was evident particularly in the relationship between the department of finance and all other departments of government. I was advised by old hands in this business that one need not feel discouraged by the initial negative response from the finance. It was their way of ascertaining the degree of importance attached to a proposal. Nothing could be done by any agency of government without funds, which was under the control of the ministry of finance. In this way the entire gamut of government activities came within the ambit of their discretion. Exercise of their discretion had a lot to do with the formulation of policy, as the demand on the resources of government was far in excess of what was available for their satisfaction. Finance also had their own limitations. After all, they had to find the money which other departments wanted to spend. In the name of financial discipline, the finance department assumed the ultimate responsibility of deciding how public funds should be spent. But those who knew the ropes could get through the labyrinthine secretariate corridors of power and get things done without much trouble.

For the time being the Bureau National Reconstruction was my chief concern. As most of its activities were related to the task of publicity, the provincial department of public relations was infor-

mally tagged to the Bureau. Its functions were largely confined to maintaining contact with the press, conveying information which the government wanted to publicise and obtain editorial comments in line with the views of the Regime. As long as parliamentary government prevailed, the actual work of public relations was done by the ministers and their party. Under the Martial Law there was no ministers. Political parties were banned. Hence a government agency had to be pressed into service, to publicise the policy and the activities of the regime to obtain public support. The responsibility for the task was given to the public relations department with the backing of the Bureau. In the interest of uniformity of approach and consistency of policy, the task of laying down the guide lines and preparing the materials for publicity were centralised. The provincial Bureau had to prepare the Bengali version of publicity materials and pass them on to different news papers and periodicals and report the reactions to such publicity. The radio was under the control of the central ministry of Information and Broadcasting, whose daily programme was tailored to conform with such a task. A number of writers, poets, and artists were appointed to extol the benefits of the Martial Law and decry the misdeeds of the politicians and their regime. The provincial bureau was asked to prepare a brochure on the misrule of politicians. After some enquiry it was not found possible to prepare such a brochure and wiser council prevailed to give it up.

In a country having a literacy rate hardly above 10 per cent yet, publicity with the help of printed words could not possibly reach more than a small fraction of the people. The illiterate masses remained beyond the reach of such endeavour. There were very few radio sets outside the district towns. Hence, such medium of publicity could also reach only the small literate section of the people, who did not look with favour at the authoritarian regime imposed by the martial law. They were the vanguard of political activities

and could influence public opinion where ever it came into play. They could be brow beaten by the show of force ; but the political ideals with which they were imbued could not be given up easily. It was thought that the only way freedom could be attained was the democratic institutions of the western model ; deviation from its basic concepts was the negation of freedom. Any kind of authoritarian rule was resented by almost everybody among the intelligentsia, who held the view that democratic way of life must be allowed to develop through the process of trial and error. Suppression of the institutional devise of democracy as they are known today would only retard their evolution, hampering progress and reconstruction.

Such was the response of the cross section of the intelligentsia, who provide the leadership in the political affairs of the society. They were however, forced to reconcile themselves with the martial law in a spirit of resignation. Repeated assurance of General Ayub-Khan to restore popular government within a short time. sustained the hope of return to freedom and kept them quiet for the time being.

The political advisers to the regime however entertained a different ambition of neutralising the political activists, who might throw a challenge to president Ayub. They worked out a strategy of propaganda and publicity directed towards the masses of the people living in the countryside, who by far outnumbered the small section of the intelligentsia. In this way, the electorate would be prepared and persuaded to cast their vote in support of Ayub, when elections were held after the withdrawal of martial law under a popular government.

Projection of the presidents personality as the saviour of the country was the chief content of publicity. As he was not personally known to the masses of the people, an extensive propaganda tour was arranged to enable the president to meet the people in their

own country side, which he did with a great deal of fanfare and eclat. In this way the ground was prepared for obtaining their vote of confidence and a mandate to draw up a constitution "better suited" for the country.

political stability is the ultimate aim of good government. It can be achieved only through adherence to an agreed way of life and striving towards its realisation. It is, therefore, concerned largely with the means in the pursuit of common objectives. It must provide opportunities to the people to participate in the management of their affairs, which only could make them responsible citizens pledging their commitment to the national identity. The institutional devise that had come to prevail for its attainment had taken many generations of philosophers and politicians to evolve. They certainly did not deserve to be cast aside as unsuitable by those who had little experience with the management of complex affairs of society. Self-imposed discipline is the keynote for the proper functioning of free institutions. But, they have to be given reasonable opportunities to develop ; it could not be imposed from above ; neither their suppression could help a nation to make progress towards freedom and democracy.

Tension soon began to develop among the stalwarts of the ruling coterie on various issues. This was bound to happen when power was arrogated by the force of arms, which could not possibly fulfil the promise with which martial law landed itself in the political arena.

It is not an easy task to bring about a perceptible improvement in the quality of life in a poor country within a short time. If this was the criteria of judging the performance of rulers, woe betide the users of powers. Neither was it possible to rid the society of its seamy side which existed everywhere as a fact of life. The rulers soon ran out of the ideas and innovation and were forced

to fall in line with the usual ways of the bureaucracy, in which public affairs have to be run. The fear complex generated by the martial law made the officialdom, even more meticulous about rules as a protective device. aggravating the effects of "red tape", against which even the Martial Law could not find a remedy.

Major-General Omrao Khan, the G.O.C and Administrator of martial law in this province, used to hold periodical meetings in the secretariate to review the administrative affairs. After the initial phase of the change over which generated some unusual activities for the time being, everything again settled down to the usual run of affairs. The General began to feel that the martial law was running out of steam. In one of the meetings, he openly came out with a statement that the administration was sliding back to its old inertia and the Martial Law was faltering in its promise of bringing about a change for the better in the life of the people. Corruption was reported to be returning vitiating public affairs ; prompt attention was not given to complaints and grievances of the people and so forth. He of course had nothing specific to mention against any official or department of government. His exhortations were for the purpose of "gearing up the administration", so that the public might receive the services which they expected from the government. The burden of the speech was that the civil administration was not doing enough to uphold the prestige of Martial Law.

The press release concerning the proceedings of the meeting was printed next morning with banner headlines, saying that martial law had failed to fulfil its promise. It created such an uproar among the military top brass, that some one had to be made a scape goat to assuage their wounded pride. The poor director of public relations who had issued the press release was soon transferred to a less sensitive post which closed the unhappy episode.

While in West Pakistan the new Regime could undertake some important measures calculated to bring benefits to the people, such as the land reforms, refugee rehabilitation and the Indus Water Treaty which enhanced its prestige, there was very little on the credit side of the military regime in East Pakistan. The provincial government could hardly, if ever, rise to the occasion and soon slid back to its routine business of administration.

Economic condition in the province had reached a stage of stagnation because of repeated occurrence of natural calamities in the previous years, such as flood and cyclonic storms, from which there was no sign of recovery yet. The Province which had all along been surplus in foodgrains production was turned into a food deficit area since the mid-fifties. The change of government shifted the onus to the centre to find a remedy, but nothing was in sight yet. On the top of all those misfortunes, Martial law only inflicted loss of freedom and created a stalemate in society. Their achievements looked little better than the much maligned political regime, whom it had replaced. The stark realities at last began to stare in the face of the military rulers. But what could be done ?

In such a predicament when nothing else was feasible as a political stunt, turning round the key personnel was the only measure which could be taken to break the stalemate so as to initiate a fresh look at the situation. The governors of both the provinces were changed and they were made ministers at the centre. General Azam a serving minister was appointed the governor of East Pakistan. Replacement of a civilian governor by a general of the armed forces, completed the process of military coverage over civil administration. The G. O. C. was also changed shortly after.

Towards the end of 1959 I was appointed secretary to the Provincial Government in charge of Health, Social Welfare, Local Government and V-A.I.D. The subjects which called for most of my attention were the V-AID and the Local government, which covered the newly introduced Basic Democracies. Elections to the Union councils were held in January '60. The formation of councils of the higher tiers, the Thana, District and Divisional Councils followed suit.

Their immediate task was the marshalling of the Basic Democracies for getting a vote of confidence in favour of President Ayub, which was obtained in an ample measure as mentioned before. This was a preliminary exercise for the Basic Democracies destined to be the electoral college in the Second Re-public under the new constitution.

The job which attracted my keen interest was the programme of village agricultural development known as V-AID. This was perhaps the first planned endeavour of its kind, aimed at improving the lot of the people living in the villages, who constituted 90 per cent of the population, As mentioned in chapter XXVI, it was initiated in 1953-54, before the government could begin planning for development on a nation-wide scale. It was sponsored by the I.C.A. and the Ford Foundation of the United States, who not only provided bulk of the funds required, but also laid down the outline of the scheme and the strategy for implementation. It could not have happened in any other manner considering the socio-economic condition that prevailed, when thoughts on rural development had hardly begun in the country.

The programme of village A.I.D. was spread over a period of five years and was designed to give a coverage extending over 25,000 villages, half the number in each region of the country. American Experts and advisers arrived according to schedule, even

before the provincial governments could complete their part of the scheme to enable them to utilise the services of the experts. Besides participation of foreign agencies, implementation of the scheme called for collaboration of a number of ministries and departments of the central and provincial governments. Coordination of the activities covering different segments of the bureaucracy is always a difficult job and a new endeavour of the kind envisaged in the V-AID programme had to solve the problem of coordination, before it could go ahead with its task. Having got over its teething trouble, the scheme soon got into its strides and was able to expand its coverage according to schedule, indicating the usefulness of such a scheme to meet the pressing needs of the rural people. Activities of the V-AID for the first time brought the administration in close touch with the people. Even agricultural extension work, long considered to be an important function of government had hardly begun yet. Such services were taken to the door steps of the peasants by the V-AID workers. The problem of rural development at last received meaningful attention of government and opened the way to give it a place in the national plan for development which was taken up about the same time.

The first five year plan, covering the period 1955—60 included the V-AID as an on-going programme of rural development as a part of the plan. In the opinion of the planning Board, the scheme was so important that it should have received the "continuous and energetic support and active participation of public officials, political leaders and social workers from the highest to the lowest" level. Among its short comings, the planners indicated that the temporary nature of the scheme was preventing recruitment of good workers and sustain their interest. As rural development must be a permanent feature of planning they proposed making it a part of the

permanent establishment of the government. In spite of the initial difficulties besetting the programme, the V-AID was able to achieve a good measure of success during the first plan period. While much of the expectations in the other sectors of the Plan remained unrealised, the V-AID succeeded in fulfilling its targets of giving coverage of development areas to the extent indicated in the plan. Besides construction of water courses for irrigation, flood protection embankments, village roads and demonstration farms, the Planning Commission in its assessment was able to record that the adoption of improved farming practices was faster in V-AID development areas than elsewhere. More important than the physical achievement was perhaps the effect of exposure of the planners and administrators to the problems besetting the country-side and drawing their attention for their solution.

While on inspection tour, I used to meet the village committees set up at the behest of the Development officers in the project areas for local level planning and cooperative endeavour. At many places shortage of trained village level workers and technicians to be provided by the departments concerned, were hampering the progress of work which the villagers were in a position to execute. There was a great deal of enthusiasm and keen interest among the villagers participating in planning and development of their village, Better utilisation of land, rotation of crops, plantation of fruit trees and the inculcation of better habits of living were the usual innovations which the project could count as its achievements. The work which failed to create much interest in the village was the drive for literacy. Adult literacy campaign was almost a non-starter. While education received high priority among the literates who formed a small section of population, there was little urge among the illiterate household to acquire literacy or send their children to school.

Response to V-AID was almost spontaneous among the literate section and the relatively prosperous. The subsistence farmers and share croppers, who formed more than half the rural populace presented a different problem. They were usually indifferent, even reluctant to deviate from their usual way of living. It was not until they had seen one or two years demonstration of better results on the land of an enterprising neighbour, that they would agree to try out the new methods of farming. At a few places, wrong use of chemical fertilisers having damaged the crops, many months of patient work was upset and the sufferer refused to listen to the extension worker any more. But the idea which found ready acceptance was the possibility of raising a second crop on land which was producing only one, Cultivation of vegetables on fallow land and back yards were becoming popular, helping to improve the diet of the villagers as well as producing an extra source of income. But in order to sustain such new ventures it was necessary to make arrangements for supply and services which set a limit to such production. Only the intelligent and resourceful farmers could adopt new ideas in practices ; the rest were dependent on availability of essential inputs near at hand, which were not always forthcoming. Relatively prosperous farmers who had been to school, whose sons were looking forward to obtain higher education, whose daughters were attending village schools were the most responsive clientele of the V-AID. But in spite of handicap of illiteracy some of those farmers were found to be keen to improve their economic condition by adopting better method of production. However, they were more prone to be improvident in their way of living than their educated neighbours, Some of them were indulging in polygamy and wasteful expenditure. The poorer section of the peasantry remained outside the pale of the movement. It was believed that with the general improvement in the level of living in rural areas,

their condition would also improve. The programme could do little to improve the village industries. Their problem was not clearly understood.

Considering its long term utility as a programme for rural development, the Planning Commission which replaced the old planning Board in 1958—thought fit to include it in the Second Plan beginning from 1960 and extended its term by five years. It was expected that the donors, the I.C.A. and the Ford Foundation would do likewise and extend their support. Wide ranging political and administrative changes which were in the process of implementation made the adaptation of existing institution necessary, to conform with the new system. Under the new administrative arrangements, the task of rural development was given to the Basic Democracies within the ambit of the national plan. They were designed to provide complete coverage to the task of rural development. The new administrative devise went into action after elections to the Union Councils held in January 1960.

The V—AID programme was in the process of execution with the help of a team of American Experts and Advisers. They were unable to be associated with the new political devise of the Basic Democracies. It could not be accommodated within the terms of the Agreement. Hence the I.C.A. gave notice of its termination. The unexpected move on the part of the ICA put the whole programme out of gear. Integration of rural development with the new pattern of Local Government introduced by the Basic Democracies Orders was inevitable. Two separate agencies namely the V-AID the Basic Democracies could not possibly function for the promotion of rural development at the same place. Originally, association of the I.C.A. arose out of their interest in social service research. They were obliged to quit when the scope of such work got restricted. The Ford Foundation, however, continued their support for establi-

shing the Academy for Rural Development at Comilla, which soon became a leading institution of its kind in this part of the world.

The difficulties that arose were mainly due to the all embracing changes that were sought to be pushed through with undue haste without allowing adequate time and attention for consequential adaptations so as to keep the wheels of administration moving in the right direction. It could easily get out of gear under the pressure of impatient reforming zeal of the revolutionary boss, who was usually satisfied with a make believe picture of success of his own bright ideas.

The winding up of the V-AID establishment, transfer of its functions to the up coming Basic Democracies and creating a device for coordinating functions of rural development became the principal tasks soon after I assumed charge of the Secretary to the department. Integrating the Basic Democracies with the prevailing system of administration did not create much difficulty as the former was made to fit into the hierarchical pattern of the latter and placed under the control of government functionaries at each level. It did not call for any change in the basic structure of administration. Two of them namely the Union Councils and the District councils were set up by the conversion of the existing local bodies at the same level namely the Union Boards and the District Boards. Only the Thana Councils and the Divisional Councils were new, which were constituted with ex-officio and elected members and placed under the chairmanship of the senior officers at their respective levels.

The system of local government was developed to make the local community self reliant with the help of their own resources as far as possible. However, they were complementary to the government of the country. The question of supervision arise when they

are assigned tasks by the Central Government, along with the resources for their execution. The Basic Democracies were set up by a Martial Law Order with a long list of functions and responsibilities placed on each tier of the local bodies. Only the Union Councils and the District Councils were given powers of taxation to raise local resources of their own. When formulating the Orders, very little thought was given to the question how far Basic Democracies could be in a position to raise their own resources for the performance of the multifarious jobs assigned to them.

Except for the political functions of the electoral college placed on the Union Councils—the only elected body, every other function given to the Basic Democracies required matching funds for their performance. The resources which the Union Councils and the District Councils were able to raise had become inadequate even for the conduct of their limited functions they inherited from their predecessors.

Additional taxation is never a popular measure. The military rulers at last realised that it would not be expedient to press the local councils to impose additional taxes immediately after their creation, specially on the eve of inauguration of the new constitution. Hence, the Local Councils set up with their elaborate structure of the Basic Democracies found themselves without resources for the tasks assigned under the Basic Democracies Orders.

The Academy of Rural Development set up in 1959 at Comilla, had already initiated a study of the problems besetting the villages with a view to evolving a policy and programme of rural development. The Academy was set up in the abandoned premises of a former Hindu institution called the "Abhoy Asram" in the outskirts of Comilla town. The Director of the Academy Mr. Akhtar Hamid Khan was a member of the former Indian Civil Service, who gave up his job to devote himself to social service. He was the Principal

of a private college at Comilla before his appointment as Director. So, both by his experience and aptitude, Mr. Akhtar Hamid was well adapted for such a pioneering job. We were old friends since the days of the British regime. After my appointment as Secretary to the Provincial Government we had occasional meetings to discuss problems of rural development and its integration with the Basic Democracies. He had come to the conclusion that the Thana Council was the most appropriate unit of administration to deal with the task of rural development. With such an idea in mind he set himself to work out a programme, which could be undertaken with the help of the villagers themselves. He realised it was necessary to improve the infrastructure in the country side, before economic development could take place. He prepared a model plan which contained such items as the construction of flood protection embankments, channels for irrigation and drainage to augment agricultural production, village roads and bridges to connect with highways and repair of school buildings and other institutions forming the principal part of his programme. He could demonstrate by experiment on a limited scale, that villagers could be mobilised to execute such a rural works programme with the help of expertise available at the Thana level. It could be improved and expanded a great deal with financial assistance from the government and support from the local agencies of administration. This was an entirely new concept of rural development. The government, however, was not in a position yet to accept it, until and unless the Planning Commission thought it fit to include in the five year plan. The Second Plan issued in June 1960 still based its concept of rural development with the hope of extension of the V-AID programme, which was unfortunately terminated soon after. There was no alternative scheme of rural development as such in the Second Plan due to start in 1960, which could take the place of V-AID and continue the work. The Basic

Democracies were in the process of being organised, replacing the old device of local self-government. The important issue of distribution of power and responsibility between the Centre and the provinces was yet to be determined by the new constitution, before a fresh approach could be taken up for consideration.

When the question of rural development was in such a state of suspended animation, the province of East Pakistan was struck by severe floods in the middle of 1962. Natural calamities such as floods and cyclonic storms had almost become endemic since the middle of the fifties, causing widespread damage and hardship to the people. The year 1962 was particularly a bad year for floods. It was estimated that relief work would have to be undertaken on an extensive scale for the rehabilitation of the people of the flood stricken areas suffering destruction of standing crops and dwelling houses.

The usual method of relief work was distribution of dole, agricultural loans and construction of earth works to provide opportunities for employment in the affected areas. It used to be done without any plan and did not envisage any lasting benefit for the area. The Director of the Comilla Academy came up with his scheme of relief and rehabilitation, which besides providing the scope of extensive employment to the rural people, also contemplated a plan of rural works designed to improve the economic infrastructure in the countryside, thus providing permanent benefit to the people. The scheme was placed before President Ayub, when he came to see the flood affected areas. He approved the scheme and directed the Planning Commission to allocate a sum of one hundred million rupees for the implementation of the scheme. Besides providing employment to the poorer section of the rural populace in the slack season, its long term benefits were obtained by rehabilitation and improvement of village roads, bridges, culverts and flood protection embankments

which had deteriorated since the early days of independence due to the inability of the old District Boards to maintain them. Continuous increase in cost put such a task beyond the capacity and financial resources of the local bodies. The rural works programme at last came to their rescue. In an assessment made by the chief of the Harvard group of Advisors attached to the Planning Commission, he estimated that the economic benefits by the rural works programme far exceeded the cost of its execution.

At the initial stage, while economic benefits derived from the works programme were relatively high, it also produced significant political impact. The programme was able to mobilise a large section of the idle manpower, who were employed for the improvement of the village economy, at the same time it provided them with the means of livelihood. It was soon expanded to cover a large part of the country-side, which could demonstrate the government's policy to bring the villages within the purview of a comprehensive programme of development. Execution of the works under the aegis of the Basic Democracies, proved their usefulness and enhanced their prestige. Since the suppression of the political parties, the government lost its channel of communication, nothing remained except the bureaucracy to maintain a working relationship with the people. The Rural Works Programme filled the vacuum in a large measure and built up popular support for the time being.

Introduction of the programme at short notice and its extension over a large area of the country made it necessary to decentralise its administration and allow a large measure of discretion to those who were controlling the Basic Democracies. The executive officers presiding over the local councils from the Thana level upwards, practically took charge of the programme. The presence of the elected chairmen of the Union Councils at take off points,

that is the Thana and the District councils, ensured their participation in the execution of the programme in a large measure. As mentioned before, rehabilitation of the old and dilapidated works of public utility provided a clear cut programme at the initial stage and created an immediate impact on the countryside. Henceforth the Rural Works Programme became the principal item in the field of rural development and was given an appropriate place in the national plan.

The Basic Democracies were designed with the idea of combining the bureaucracy and the local government into one administrative set up. Although there might have been an intention to provide a degree of public representation in administration at different levels, in practice it had the effect of increasing official control over them, without much scope for the Basic Democrats having any say in the administration. There was a lot of wishful thinking and the planning Commission waxed eloquent on the desirability of decentralisation of the task of planning and development while formulating the philosophy of the plan, but in practice, the usual course of planning at the top of the hierarchy was maintained. The Basic Democracies were utilised to obtain and demonstrate political support for the decisions of the government and to maintain the facade of democracy. The conclusions of the Planning Commission were, "Getting participation in planning at local levels will be much more complicated, but the effort, if vigorously and consistently pursued will be rewarding in the long run". It never happened.

While president Ayub was able to build up his image and political support among the rural populace for the time being, the intelligentsia by and large remained apathetic to his leadership. The system of Basic Democracies made their participation in the local Councils more and difficult. When the Union Councils were ultimately made the Electoral Colleges for the election of the president as well as members

of the Legislatures, the urban elite found themselves left out of the mainstream of political life. Such an innovation introduced without a mandate from the people and made under the cover of martial law, was pronounced by many as unfair and arbitrary. It became more and more clear that his power base was the armed forces. His attempt to create a facade of political support for himself with the help of the rural populace sidetracking the intelligentsia began to alienate the latter more and more.

Although relatively a small group, the intelligentsia have progressively attained a dominant position every where. Realising that this group was his chief adversary, Ayub set about to reduce their influence in public life. But such an attempt was like swimming against the current. Knowledge of modern technology and facilities of mass communications were progressively increasing their influence. They provide leadership in every walk of life in society. A system of government which seeks to reduce their participation had little chance to survive for long. Having found themselves left out of the pale of the Basic Democracies, they soon began to yearn for the return to the good old system of direct elections and parliamentary form of government which had virtually become their doctrine. Their immediate concern was the withdrawal of martial law and the return to some form of constitutional government where they could reassert their position. However afflicted with internal dissensions and lacking common purpose, the politically motivated groups were not in a position yet to assert themselves. They were compelled to accept the dispensations of Ayub Khan with a sense of resignation.

After more than a decade of independence, most of the senior appointments in East Pakistan were still held by non-Bengali officers. The reasons which brought preponderance of non-Bengali officers have been mentioned before. As long as the Province had constitutional government, having a minister as the political

head of department, such a position did not attract adverse notice. The situation changed radically as soon as the constitution was repealed by the Martial Law. The departments of government lost their political boss ; all powers were assumed by the permanent officials. The appointment of Zakir Hossain as the governor of East Pakistan, however, ensured representation of Bengalis at the higher level of administration for the time being. The situation called for a review when Zakir Hussain was replaced by General Azam Khan as Governor. In the official hierarchy, the next in status and importance was the Chief Secretary, a position held by a senior non-Bengali officer belonging to the erst-while I.C.S. For political reasons it was considered necessary to replace the Chief Secretary by a senior Bengali officer, when a Pathan General was made the governor. Among the secretaries to the provincial government I had the longest "class one" service to my credit ; hence the choice fell on me. I took over charge of the office of Chief Secretary early in September 1961.

Dichotomy of the Provincial government into martial law to be administered by the commander of the armed force (the G.O.C) and the Governor in charge of the civil administration, began to raise complications ab initio. Although President Ayub had announced that the administration would be conducted as nearly as possible according to the 1956 constitution, the actual power was vested with the Administrator of martial law which became the superior law of the land. It virtually meant holding powers without responsibility, because the task of running the civil administration rested with the governor and not with the G.O.C. It gave rise to disagreements between the governor and the G.O.C causing friction between the two sources of authority, each claiming to hold superior position over the other. The usual manner of asserting himself on the part of the G.O.C. was finding fault with the civil administration, which he could find in plenty to embarrass the governor.

As was inevitable in such a predicament, the bureaucracy also got involved and divided, the non-Bengali section taking side with the G.O.C. and the Bengali official with the governor. The only remedy was replacement of both the governor and the G.O.C. The new G.O.C. General Rahim another pathan and the new governor, General Azam maintained good personal relations with each other, which eliminated the friction hampering smooth conduct of administration during the incumbency of their predecessor.

Besides coordination and general supervision over the activities of the various departments of government, the Chief Secretary was directly in charge of the establishment, dealing with matters of personnel management. A new task which devolved on the Chief Secretary since the repeal of the constitution was public relations, specially, maintaining contact with the editors of news papers. Meetings were held with the editors once every week, Those who used to attend were the late Abdus Salam of the "Observer"; the late Tofazzal Hossain of the "Ittefaq"; the late Zahoor Hossain of the "Sangbad", the editor of the Azad and a few others. The purpose of the weekly meetings was briefing the editors on government policy and activities. Equally important was debriefing the editors to obtain their assessment of political situation and the trend of public opinion relating to the government's activities and their reactions to the same. Due to the restriction imposed by martial law, the press was not in a position to express their views freely. My long acquaintance and friendly relations with the editors encouraged them to express themselves without reservations. There was bound to be differences in the assessment made between the official reports and those given by the journalists; but the trend of public feeling which the editors conveyed from time to time were so different from the reports emanating from official sources, that it became difficult to make out which was more realistic in its appraisal. Unlike the reports prepared in the

days of the British regime mentioned in an earlier chapter which besides being objective in its approach, were prepared in a spirit of self-criticism, the official reports during the Pakistani era, tended to conform more and more with the wishful thinking in the higher echelon in the administration, than recounting what actually prevailed on the ground. This tendency of "make-believe" in situation reports increased with the imposition of martial law. The military rulers became more and more intolerant of criticism of themselves. All they wished to be told was that everything was "O.K.". Criticism of the Regime was tantamount to heresy. Peace and order that prevailed since the imposition of martial law and the apparent improvement of discipline in civic life, quashed open criticism of the military regime. All available media of publicity were pressed into service to propagate that the Martial Law had ushered in a new era of peace and prosperity for the nation.

The senior journalists and editors were brought up in a climate of freedom of thought and expression, who participated in the struggle for liberation. They were all smarting under the restriction imposed on the press and political activities by the martial law. As a matter of fact, general conditions that prevailed were not what was made out to be in the official propaganda and publicity. As mentioned before a series of natural calamities, which struck the province several successive years, increased economic hardship of the people, from which there was no sign of relief yet. Corruption and lethargy prevailed as before ; the only difference was that there was no one to complain to or protest. Those who had access to the military authorities were usually full of praise for the regime ; but such people were very few in number. After all, habits and behaviour could not be changed by martial law. The suppression of tested instruments of social control could only push society towards anarchy and confusion. Such measures could not possibly change society in the

desired manner. It did not take long for the civil officials to find out how little the military officers were interested in the affairs of civil administration, as long as they could be humoured by assurance and flattery. The members of the public soon discovered that complaint to the military authorities produced very little results ; it only antagonised the civil officials with whom they had dealings all the time. It so happened that almost everybody, good, bad, or indifferent resigned themselves to a state of passive rejection of martial law, longing to return to the good old days of democracy and freedom.

The editors and other journalists were frequently called to the martial law administrators office for briefing—but actually to influence their reporting of news and views, which they called “brain—washing”. They resented such confrontation with military officers. They never ceased harping on the theme that people, who had once tested freedom, can never reconcile themselves with its suppression. Without participation in political management of the country, freedom can have no meaning. True, as long as the politicians were in power they committed a lot of mis-deeds ; but they never deprived the people of their freedom, which was the biggest offence the rulers could ever commit against the people. Martial law was alienating the government from the citizens, and could not possibly obtain their active support in the task of nation building, which the government had in view. political activities were sine-qua-non of freedom ; the ban imposed by Martial law, only drove such activities under cover. It could not be eliminated. The secret nature of politics that prevailed, made it impossible to make a correct assessment of its extent and direction. While prospects of election in the first republic encouraged different political parties to organise themselves to contest the elections in opposition to each other, their suppression under martial law compelled them to join hands

to build up a united opposition front against the government. It had infused a spirit of bitterness against the administration working with the martial law. No one knew when it was going to explode into open revolt. If the people could rise in revolt against the all powerful British regime and the Hindu majority, the story could repeat itself for the recovery of freedom and democracy,

Such were the trend of discussions that used to take place in the weekly meetings with the editors. President Ayub's repeated assurance of restoring democracy kept them in a state of suspended animation. The report of the Constitution Commission submitted to the President in May 1961, at last renewed the hope of restoring constitutional government before long and relieved their frustration to some extent.

The announcement of the new constitution by president Ayub on the 1st of March '62, its promulgation in June and lifting of martial law, have been mentioned towards the end of the last chapter. As could be expected restoration of constitutional government came as a relief to everybody. It was a step which was calculated to raise the image of Ayub in the eyes of the people. But a hasty action taken, presumably as a pre-emptive measure to contain possible opposition to his constitution, vitiated the occasion of the announcement for which the people, by and large was in a receptive mood.

President Ayub who had a contempt for political parties before he came to dabble in politics, was compelled to accept them in the end as a necessary device for the management of representative governments. He at last formed a political party of his own by splitting the rump of the old Muslim League and became the President of the dissident group which accepted his leadership. Since becoming the chief of the new Muslim League, he was faced with the prospect of political opposition which seems to have given him cold feet. His chief opponent was H. S. Suhrawardy and the party, the Awami

League, having a large following in East Pakistan. Frustrated in his attempt to have a representative government without parties, he took a step to eliminate effective opposition so as to ensure the transition to constitutional government as designed by him, without let or hindrance.

Anticipating opposition from the Awami League, the central government decided to arrest Suhrawardy and put him in preventive detention with a view to cripple his party. He was arrested in Karachi.

The arrest of Suhrawardy without any provocation on his part, created a deep sense of resentment and bitterness among almost all sections of the people in this province. Most of his supporters being Bengalis having their base in East Pakistan, reaction against his arrest was destined to be more serious in this province. Such an action without consultation with the provincial government was strongly resented by no less a person than the governor himself, General Azam. He made no secret of his disapproval and lodged a protest with the president for not consulting him before taking such a decision. The disagreement over the issue ultimately led to his resignation.

As could be expected, the arrest of Suhrawardi was the signal for the beginning of wide-spread agitations all over the province. For the first time since the imposition of martial law, meetings, strikes and demonstrations took place in protest against the arrest in open violation of prohibitory orders under the martial law. Protests and demonstrations went on for days together. Far from creating favourable conditions for the reception of the new constitution, such a preemptive measure to suppress opposition only vitiated the political climate of the province. It raised doubts against the bonafide of his avowed intention of restoring democracy. Some people went to the length of calling it the "great betrayal". This was particularly

evident in the following weekly meeting with the Editors. They made no secret of their views that the political strategy of Ayub was designed only to keep himself in power and the constitution could not provide even a facade of democracy. The cordial atmosphere which prevailed in the meeting began to disappear and all the efforts to restore good relations between the administration and the press proved infructuous. It was never the same again.

The next important event was the elections to the National and the Provincial Assemblies. Elections were indirect through the electoral college formed by the Union Councils. The electors were 40,000 Union Councilors. They were mobilised to return 75 members to the National Assembly, and 150 the Provincial Assembly from single member constituencies. So, the average number of electors in each constituency came to about 534 for the N.A. and 267 for the P.A. They had no mandate when they were elected to take part in indirect elections ; never-the-less they were pressed into service to return the members of the Legislature by a fiat of martial law.

Political parties were still banned ; hence the candidates had to contest the elections on individual basis. A large number of candidates participated in the elections. The vote of a small number of electors split among the contestants, made it possible for a candidate polling less than one hundred votes to get elected.

A large number of new comers was returned. Very few old politicians contested the elections. In spite of its limitations, the revival of representative government was a welcome change, holding out better prospects for the politicians in the next general elections to be held after three years. The ban of political parties was removed by the National Assembly in 1964, thus setting the stage for the first general elections to be held in 1965 on party basis.

The new constitution made important changes in the distribution of powers between the centre and the provinces. Two important departments of the central government, namely the Railways and the Industries were transferred to the provinces. Though over-all planning was retained by the Centre, the task of initiation and implementation of projects were delegated to the provinces. These changes called for important adjustments in the sphere of administration.

The problem of reorganisation of the provincial administration after independence has been mentioned in chapter XXVI. The disruptions caused by partition, initially called for priority on rehabilitation which created a bias towards the status quo. At the same time it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that neither the purpose of the state, nor the art of public administration had become a lively issue yet among the Pakistani intelligentsia. A quotation from the report of the first Pay Commission in chapter XXVI would recall the climate of opinion prevailing in the country.

The concept of reform of the administration in response to independence initially was how to change the attitude and behaviour of the government functionaries brought up in the traditions of colonial rule, who used to behave like masters. They must undergo change befitting the public servants of an independent country. Such thoughts occupied the attention of the reformers. Thus we find the first Five Year Plan "emphasised the need for an increasing awareness of the service side of administration on the part of officials", and "of the high ideal of establishing a living human relationship with the people". The topic which frequently came up for discussion on the subject of reforms was how to reconstruct a system designed by the colonial rulers to serve their own purpose, into an administration devoted for the welfare of the people.

Those who were engaged with the affairs of day to day administration could see, that the purpose for which the colonial administration

ation was designed, namely maintenance of law and order and collection of revenue, remained as necessary for the independent government, as they were in the days of the British Raj. Those were the primary functions of government and could not be given up. What was missing was the expertise for the promotion of welfare, and public agencies capable of rendering the much needed services to the people, without which little progress was possible in the modern world. The former consistently neglected this side of administration ; whatever existed were lost as a result of partition. They had to be developed de novo in Pakistan.

Progress of planning for development in the neighbouring country and the interest which it engendered in international forum, at last induced a reappraisal of the functions of government by the ruling coterie in Pakistan. Central planning for development soon became the key note of government policy. Restructuring the administration was undertaken with this purpose. It called for developing requisite manpower and setting up appropriate agencies fit to perform the new tasks and functions, which the government had to assume in pursuance of the new policy. Setting up the new agency for planning at the centre and the provinces were given high priority. The initial shortage of expertise was resolved partly by obtaining the services of a group of American advisors from the Harvard University, who arrived early in 1954. Although their mission was to help set up administrative devise and train requisite manpower, they were initially put on the actual job of preparing the first five year plan. The task could not be otherwise undertaken as there were people in the country having the knowledge and experience about planning. This was also the best way to develop the necessary staff for the planning department, as the skill could be learnt best while working on the job.

In spite of all its limitations, the first five year plan could provide a basis as well as a direction to step up economic activities in the country. It at last opened up a vista of improving the conditions of life and provided the Government with a new line of activity for its attainment. Its progress, however, was circumscribed by the shortage of expertise and manpower. The cumbersome old procedure of the bureaucracy was also a hindrance in the way of its progress. Although the basic problems were highlighted by the Harvard group since the preparation of the first plan began, the task of building up an appropriate administrative apparatus for planning was necessarily a slow process. However, steps taken to remove the deficiencies at last began to produce results, when the preparation of the Second Plan was taken up soon after martial law was imposed in the country. The new approach which General Ayub was able to introduce produced some good results by way of remodelling the administration. It reduced the levels of bureaucratic scrutiny, simplified procedure, set up joint committees for coordination and sanction, and virtually made planning the highest policy making body with himself as its chairman. Introduction of the section officers scheme in the Secretariat, abolition of expenditure section by the ministry of finance, creation of Development Working Parties for scrutiny and coordination were some of the steps taken, making public administration development oriented in a large measure.

Although, the armed forces provided the ultimate power base, Ayub's drive for reforms, the Basic Democracies, and constitution making, provided ample grist for his political mill to keep him going in the initial years of his rule; at the same time win for himself, the good will of a large section of the populace. As those programmes came to an end, planning for development became the major plank of his platform to sustain his political leadership.

Apparent improvement of administration, relative stability, and increasing amount of foreign aid in support of national plan, all combined to create a climate of optimism, which helped him a great deal to consolidate his position when Martial law was withdrawn. The politicians who were his principal opponents having no alternative programme to offer, found themselves in the lurch and were obliged to remain quiet. The Basic Democracies and indirect elections put them in disarray and removed any possibility of throwing a challenge to Ayub's leadership for the time being.

But the issue which created increasing concern of the intelligentsia was the question of disparity in growth which was progressively stifling economic condition of the people of this province. Having lost all control over political management, East Pakistan practically became dependent on the good will of the rulers to obtain due share 'of the country's resources.

The strategy of the national plan contemplated gathering of all available resources under central control, as well as the determination of priority for their utilisation. The way capital funds were utilised for the development of national resources would ultimately determine the process of economic growth of the respective regions. This was a questions of strategy which the policy planners had to devise to conform with the objectives of the plan and the Constitution of the country. So, the correction of economic disparity rested squarely on the Planning Commission and its chairman, President Ayub. After all, power must be matched with responsibility to achieve results for which power is vested with the executive.

As planning began to encompass wider areas of national life and development activities got into their strides, the emphasis of administration began to shift from the area of general administration to the social and economic sectors of planning. Such a change increased the number technocrats of the new generation as well as their impor-

tance in public service as opposed to the generalists, who occupied the dominant position since the days of the British Raj. The growing sectors were agriculture, education, health, industry, water resources, power, communication and transport, in short, almost every sector, except the judiciary, law and order and revenue collection. The territorial Districts and Divisions were also administered by the members of the civil service, forming the core of the general administration. As activities of government began to expand under the impetus of the National plan and modern technocrats began to occupy higher and higher positions in their professional line, a readjustment in the relationship between the generalist civil service and the technocrats became necessary.

After assuming power in 1958 under martial law, general Ayub Khan found the civil service not only the most appropriate instrument for the management of the bureaucracy, but also a willing agency to uphold his authority. He thought it fit to maintain the status quo. The administration was adapted where necessary, for the purpose of planning and development. While it succeeded up to a point, it began to generate adverse forces as the activities of government began to expand, calling for the services of higher level professional skill and competence. A compromise was found with the creation of public sector corporations and autonomous bodies, who were assigned the task of building the infrastructure, basic industries and public services for which private enterprise was not forthcoming yet. Such corporations or most of them, were placed in charge of technocrats, while the civil service retained their position in the bureaucracy. As mentioned before, the Basic Democracies were placed under the tutelage of the civil service ab initio, making them practically a branch of the district administration. With such modifications, the administration was revamped for the new task of planning and development.

After the elections, the next task of politics was the formation of the council of ministers by the governors in the province and by the president at the Centre. In the mean time, the governor was changed; Mr. G. Faruque replaced General Azam as governor of East Pakistan. He was almost a new comer to the Province, and had little knowledge of politics and personalities with whom he had to deal with. Most of the known politicians were disqualified from holding public office soon after Martial Law was imposed. I was asked by the governor to prepare a list of persons whom he could interview for selection of his council of Ministers.

A large number of elected members as well as others having anything to do with politics were aspiring for the office of minister. The choice would necessarily be limited to a few; the rest would be disappointed. So it was a difficult task to prepare a list of persons eligible to be ministers, at the same time ensure, that political support for the regime was maintained. I did not find it expedient to consult anybody other than official colleagues. A list was ultimately drawn up and submitted to the governor.

In the mean time I received a request from the cabinet Secretary to send him another list of persons from East Pakistan who could be considered for appointment as ministers in the central government. The request was duly complied with.

Both the president and the Governors had other sources whom they could consult for the selection of ministers; but the best agency who could assist in such a task, was the political party, which was not available. The task of running the government was taken over entirely by the bureaucracy and the ministers were needed only to maintain a bond of communication with the people. The minister by himself could do very little. The only agency who could provide a satisfactory link between the people and the administration was still missing. However, as luck would have it representative government

promised by president Ayub at last got a good start. Both the National Assembly and the provincial Assemblies were inaugurated by the president and the Governors respectively according to the schedule. Those who were left out could look forward to the next general elections for new opportunities.

The drive for reforms initiated by president Ayub, were making good progress as mentioned before. One sphere of administration where implementation of reforms came against opposition, was in the field of education. The commission on Notional Education set up under the chairmanship of professor Sharif of the Punjab, submitted their report in Aug. 1959. There was very little criticism against the report as such. The programme for its implementation took some time to prepare by the provincial governments. The changes contemplated placed increased burden of work on both the teachers and the students as well as higher cost of education on the parents. The provinces were not in a position yet to provide adequate funds to meet the increased expenditure arising out of the Reforms. Those in charge of implementation did not perhaps realise the necessity of motivating those concerned and win their acceptance, in view of the long term benefits the Reforms were seeking to confer. They were anxious to complete the task under the aegis of the Martial law in order to forestall opposition. Unfortunately this was not possible, because, by far the largest sector of education was under the management of private agencies. It was not possible to implement the reforms without their cooperation. Their opposition burst out into open agitation soon after the withdrawal of Martial law. It provided the opponents of president Ayub, their much awaited opportunity to tarnish his image as the unchallenged ruler of the country.

Towards the middle of September, 62 the agitation in Dhaka took a violent turn. The police was compelled to open fire on a

procession of students when they attempted to force their entry into the District police office, resulting in the death and injury to a number of young persons. The agitation was called off when the government announced the appointment of a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Mahmud Hossain, the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University to look into the grievances of the students.

In the course of an interview with a Central Minister, who came down to Dhaka to study the situation, Dr. Mahmud Hossain the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, expressed his views that the students were fighting for the recovery of freedom against an authoritarian regime ; so, it could not be suppressed merely by listening to their grievances. He made no secret of his sympathy with the students agitation. This incident was apparently reported to President Ayub, who began to suspect that the sympathy of the Vice-chancellor and the teachers were encouraging the students to agitate against the government. In the course of his next visit to Dhaka a few week later, he told the governor to remove Dr. Mahmud Hossain and appoint some one else as vice-chancellor in his place.

The views of Dr. Mahmud Hossain on the political conditions that prevailed in the country reflected by and large, the attitude of the intelligentsia towards the Regime of president Ayub. But inspite of their opposition he was able to gain a foot-hold in the political arena through his socio-economic programme which gave the country a new scope of direction and purpose.

The governor, Mr. G. Faruque, who was a bureaucrat all his life, soon fell foul with some of the politicians of the province who were taken into confidence by president Ayub. So, He too was replaced. Mr. Abdul Monem Khan, a central minister was appointed governor in his place. Thus the same old phenomenon of shifting sand of politics was resumed no sooner the politician were inducted into office.

Realising the necessity of having a party of his own, president Ayub was in search of men who could organise a Party to create a political base for himself in the country. Monem Khan was among the few notables having political background, who were returned to the National Assembly in the first indirect elections held in the middle of 1962. President had very limited acquaintance with the political personages of East Pakistan. Monem Khan appeared to be good choice to replace G. Faruque as Governor, who could combine the functions of the head of the administration with those of party manager, which became necessary to the authoritarian regime he had established. It indicated a big shift in the approach of the president when faced with the political realities of the country. Even his "controlled" democracy could not work, without the help of the politicians.

General Azam, as well as G. Faruque having similar service background as myself which we acquired during the British regime, could work in a spirit of team work for the smooth conduct of administration. Basically, the functions of government had not changed much since independence. The administrative apparatus inherited by Pakistan was conducting the functions of government in the same line, in which the populace were also accustomed. Complaints of corruption and nepotism were, however increasing; but, by and large, its political neutrality was able to maintain public confidence in the administration.

The appointment of Monem Khan as Governor brought about a big change in the relationship between the people and the administration. Creating a base of political support Ayub and his regime became the principal mission of the new governor. As political parties were not in existence yet, the only agency at his disposal to execute his mission, was the administrative apparatus. He set himself to party apparatus for utilising the power and

patronage at the disposal of the governor to strengthen his hold and the position of the regime, at the same time hit at the opposition in every possible manner in order to reduce their influence in public life. Expanding activities involving ever increasing outlay on the part of government, provided him with ample scope of patronage enabling him to draw within his sphere of influence larger and larger sections of the people. The Rural Works Programme introduced in the same year, placed in his hands a substantial amount of free resources, which he could utilise at his discretion for realisation of his political objectives. Besides the law and the rules of Business, the conduct of public administration is based on a set of old established values which give it a distinctive character and help maintain confidence of the people irrespective of political affiliation. Those values at last began to erode under pressure of political exigencies. It was bound to undermine confidence and generate forces of reaction against the ruling coterie ; but they thought it fit to turn a blind eye to the erosion of values, so long as the immediate objectives could be attained. Political metamorphosis of President Ayub Khan, was indeed staggering !

It was becoming more and more evident that the administration was being pressed into the of party politics, to strengthen the hold of the Regime on the political management of the country. The system of indirect election, which was a legacy of the Basic Democracies, placed wide ranging powers in the hands of the hureaucracy. It inevitably introduced a new element of corruption in the political affairs of the country. Serving in my position of the Chief Secretary, I was exposed to the pressure of the Provincial Governor, to exercise my discretionary powers for the benefit of the ruling party wherever possible. Having been brought up in the traditions of neutrality of public administration in party politics, I found myself in an intolerable position. I applied for leave to go on a study tour in the U.S.A.

In the meantime, I was offered the post of Chairman of the Central Public Service Commission after the expiry of the term of the incumbent in June (1963). I accepted the offer and took a month's leave before joining my new office at Karachi. Thus ended my career in my home province after long thirty years service.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Some Reflections on Service life

As indicated earlier the structure of administration and the bureaucracy built up by the British Raj was designed with checks and balances in such a way that it could virtually run under its own steam with the minimum of manpower, Impersonal character of the administration and limited range of its functions made it possible for a small number of British officers to sustain administration at a level of efficiency considered fair enough by all concerned. Among the personnel employed, the vast majority were Indians. They belonged to as many nationalities and religion in which the people of India were divided. The most remarkable achievement of the administration was perhaps the spirit of accommodation of such diverse elements under the leadership of the ruling elite represented by the I.C.S. The total number of such officers on the eve of partition was less than twelve hundred. They were holding top administrative posts both at the central and the Provincial governments. A little more than half of them was British born ; the rest were Indians. Training and orientation of the India members of the Civil Service were such that they could serve the purpose of the Empire as well as their British born colleagues. Their main function was the management of the bureaucracy, that is, getting work done by others, almost all of whom were Indians. Transition from the Empire into independence was therefore possible within the framework of the existing administration without major alteration.

As the British officers came far away from home to serve in the Subcontinent it was immaterial in which part of the country they

were posted as far as individual officers were concerned. In practice they were divided into cadres on provincial basis and rarely sent elsewhere, except when transferred to serve in the central government. They were allowed leave on a liberal scale calculated on the length of service, together with the cost of journey to visit their home from time to time. As long as the voyage involved travelling by sailing ships round the cape, opportunities to go home were limited to a few visits during their service life. Lonely life which the British officers had to live away from their home. Gave rise to the practice of transfer of officers from place to place as a change so far as exigencies of administration would allow.

When facilities of communications improved with the invention of steam ships and the distance between England and the Subcontinent was reduced with the opening of the Suez Canal, the frequency of home leave also increased, involving frequent changes in the postings and transfers of British personnel in all important positions. They used to go home on leave early in spring in the months of March or April and return in October and November, spending the summer at home. A large number of changes used to take place in the postings and transfers in spring and autumn every year. Necessary adjustments in personnel administration had to be made to allow officers in key positions to go home more frequently than before by increasing the proportion of leave reserve as well as formulating rules of business to make public administration as impersonal as possible. Progressive increase in the number of Indians serving in the next lower ranks, helped a great deal to maintain smooth conduct of administration, inspite of frequent changes of superior officers. It also enabled such Indian officers to get initiated in the modern art of public administration. Personal preference or special needs of any particular group or area to which administration had to address itself, were reduced to a minimum. It was made to function almost in a mechanical manner and run under its own steam in a large measure.

British India was ruled by a bureaucracy in which vast majority of the employees were Indians. With the growth of political consciousness among the native population, the ruling power thought it fit to insulate the government functionaries from its contamination as far as possible. Transfer of officers at intervals of not more than three years became the standard practice as a device to maintain the neutrality of administration.

Turning round the officers of the police service of higher ranks was more frequent than others. In the period of fourteen years service in British India I had fourteen transfers. Others may not have suffered as much ; but most of them had to move on transfer to different stations at short intervals, particularly during the early years of service. The superior officers were shifted from place to place to reinforce and brace up supervision and control where considered necessary, while actual police work in the districts was left largely in the hands of the lower ranks such as Inspectors and subinspectors of police. The superior officers were sent round in the province by frequent transfers to acquaint themselves with as wide an area of the province as possible, so that they could work with confidence wherever deployed to deal with an emergency which might throw a challenge to the British rule. This was the chief function of the police force.

Organised crime and revolutionary uprisings against the ruling power received prompt attention of the superior officers. All available means were pressed into service for their control and suppression in fact, the police force was rather thinly spread over the entire country. The reserve force at the district headquarters could be called up to assist the local police, but their deployment was restricted to deal with emergencies only. They practically had nothing in the shape of modern facilities for transport and communication. They were left more or less to fend for themselves whenever faced with any

serious trouble. So the police was armed by law with extensive powers over life, liberty and property to enable them to deal with all possible situation which they might be called upon to tackle. The routine work of prevention and detection of crime, maintenance of law and order which bring the police in close contact with the populace, received very little attention of the superior officers. Opportunities of misuse of powers encouraged corruption and the police acquired their unenviable reputation of being corrupt and oppressive. But so long as the police could preserve a semblance of peace and order and keep the anti-government forces under control, the British Raj did not seem to bother much about the kind of reputation the police force had earned for itself. The people had'nt seen anything better yet ; they were obliged to reconcile themselves to their lot.

It was understandable that administration would be geared to serve the purpose of the rulers ; it was also evident that service conditions would be regulated to serve the convenience of the ruling elite first, before paying any attention to the hardship of the native officers. The ruling elite had little contact with local society. Their segregation was almost complete. In the case of Indian officers serving in the midst of their own society, contacts with the local people were bound to play an important part developing their social life and behaviour. When this is disrupted by transfers at short intervals, it could not but give rise to problems of adjustment. It made service life rather a lonely and isolated sort of existence. Moreover, frequent transfers prevented development of continuing interest in one's work, which called for acquiring local knowledge and establishing contacts with the people. Perhaps those were not wanted by the ruling power for reasons mentioned above. This lack of opportunity to develop professional interest, deprived the task much of its lusture and the sense of belonging to a calling. This was a price we had to pay to be members of the elite "Imperial" Service" under the

British Raj. They all combined to develop a sense of distance between the members of the service and the people, a spirit which was handed down as a legacy to the services after independence in Pakistan.

A pen picture of the conditions in which we were landed in the early days of independence has been given in a foregoing chapter. A quiet easy-going district town like Dhaka was converted almost overnight into a busy provincial capital without adequate preparations. There was very little built up space to spare in order to accommodate the new government offices and their employees ; municipal facilities were too poor to serve the sudden increase of demand on their limited resources. In spite of such difficult conditions faced by the government and the people in a truncated country, the high hopes generated by independence enabled everybody to face the challenge with confidence. A determination to get over the short-comings by their own effort enabled the new government to settle down within a short time.

Those who obtained quick benefits by the change, were the government officials and those engaged in business. The entire field of commerce and industry lay open for exploitation of those who knew how to do business. Myself was promoted the higher rank of Deputy Inspector-General of police long before I expected. Similar benefits were obtained by almost everybody I could recall. The thought that the era of frequent transfers, which inflicted great deal of hardship on the family was over, brought me a sense of relief.

After four years service at Chittagong as S.P. and D.I.G. of Police I was placed in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, the C.I.D.—at Dhaka. Disruption of administration in the early years of independence mentioned before caused a serious outbreak of crime all over the country. Crime with violence such as dacoity was causing a great deal of worry in the country-side. The C.I.D. took up the task of rounding up the gangs of criminals and their prosecution.

The drive against crime was already producing good results. The propensity to indulge in violence was however increasing, particularly among the refugee section. The old police force which was strong enough to deal with static condition of society during the colonial days, was found inadequate to deal with the problems of law and order in post war era of independence. The provincial government appointed a Commission to examine the problem and recommend measures for reorganisation of the police. The strength of the police was increased as a result of their recommendations. While preparing the annual administration reports it became evident to me that the incidence of crime and breach of peace were progressively increasing and were likely to remain at a much higher level than what prevailed in the pre-independence era. Still peace and order could be maintained in a measure to enable the populace to go round their daily round of business without much trouble. Spontaneous cooperation between the people and the administration made it possible to keep the lawless elements in check. The control over fire arms introduced by the British regime by the Arms Act, prohibiting possession of fire arms except under a licence, prevented their use by the criminals as well as using it as the means of settling disputes between rival parties. People could be organised to resist commission of crime and the breach of peace as long as the miscreants were not armed with superior weapons. Peace and order in the countryside were maintained in this manner with the backing of the local police station. As illicit fire-arms began to find their way into the hands of miscreants the balance was tipped heavily against the peace loving people and resistance became more and more difficult. The invention of automatic weapons has increased further the capacity of the aggressor armed with such weapons to commit mischief and get away with their loot. This is a difficult problem with which the police is now faced. Recoveries of illicit fire arms is the only answer and must be

one of the foremost tasks of the law enforcing agencies, so as to prevent their use by the desperadoes.

I left the C.I.D. middle of 1953 and took over charge of the Intelligence Branch. This agency was set up by the colonial regime to watch the movements of the revolutionary groups working for the overthrow of the alien rule. After independence, the ruling coterie started employing them to watch and report the movement of the political parties and groups in opposition in the same way the colonial power had done in pre-independence day. In this way the brunt of the opposition activities fell on the police, whenever they were called upon to intervene and frustrate their demonstration. Clash with the police soon became a tactical move on the part of opposition to embarrass the ruling party. As the political base of the latter began erode, they had to depend more and more on such agencies as the I.B. and the police to sustain themselves in power.

Taking the cue from the politicians, the industrialists also began to take a hard line in their relationship with the labour unions, often leaving industrial disputes in the hands of the law enforcement agencies to deal with them, rather than negotiate for a settlement. Controlling the activities of the opposition in order to keep them within the bounds of law and order, became one of the chief functions of the police in important urban and industrial areas, distracting attention from their normal work.

The bureaucraey was practically made an instrument by the rulling coterie for sustaining themselves in power. It was difficult to maintain the morale of the administration under such conditions. Political development began to drift towards authoritarianism in this way, ultimately leading to the overthrow of democratic government and the military takeover in course of time.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Tenure as Chairman, Central Public Service Commission the C.P.S.C.—Life in the Metropolis of Karachi—Excursions into the Northern Mountains of Pakistan

After spending my leave at home to settle personal affairs, I along with my wife Dhaka early in June '63 for Karachi to take up my new assignment as Chairman of the Central Public Service Commission (C.P.S.C). We decided to travel by the sea route. The night we left Dhaka by board our ship at Chittagong Port, the southern part of the province was struck with a cyclonic storm. The train was held up at a way-side station soon after midnight because the telegraphic communication between railway stations were disrupted by the storm. Sitting inside the railway compartment with all the shutters down, we could still feel the strength of the gusty wind as the storm lashed at the stationary train, tossing it like a boat floating on stormy waters. Though the intensity of the storm abated with sunrise, a high wind was still blowing when the train resumed its journey at a slow speed towards its destination next morning. The storm wrought havoc in the country-side uprooting trees and destroying thatched houses in the villages we saw all along the way. We reached Chittagong in the evening, ten hour behind the scheduled time of arrival of the train.

The passenger ship M.V. Shams was a new acquisition by the National Shipping Corporation to ply between Chittagong and Karachi. We were looking forward to a pleasant sea voyage of ten days in the new ship, with a halt at Colombo. The cyclonic

storm delayed departure of the ship by one day. When she steamed out of the port, the wind was still blowing with the strength of a gale churning up the sea into high waves. The ship began to pitch and roll, which made most of the passengers sea-sick. It went on for nearly four days till we reached Colombo, The Captain of the ship was good enough to lay her at anchor for a day inside the harbour, to give a respite and rest to the passengers after four days of strenuous journey through rough seas. The advent of the monsoons early in June brings high wind blowing across the Indian Ocean, churning up the sea all round the peninsular India. The voyage across the Arabian Sea was, therefore, quite rough ; but we got used to the rolling and pitching of the ship. So, the rest of the voyage was not as uncomfortable as the first leg of the of journey. We arrived in Karachi two days behind schedule. After spending a few days in the government rest house "Qasre-naz" we moved into a hired apartment in the new housing society.

Shifting the capital from Karachi to Rawalpindi, a thousand miles to the north of the country, brought very little change in the life of the city. Karachi had attained the status of a major port in this part of the world even before partition. The Phenomenal growth of commerce and industry since independence, made it one of the fastest growing cities in the subcontinent. So, Karachi remained the Metropolis of the country by her own right. Most of the government office buildings still remained occupied inspite of the removal of the capital. Two major offices of the centre which did not shift to Rawalpindi yet, were the Planning Commission and the C.P.S.C. i.e. my office. The latter remained in the same block of hutments built after partition and allotted to the Commission. I settled down in my new assignment as chairman in the same office premises.

The Commission consisted of four members and the chairman. Those from East Pakistan were Mr. Abdul Haq Faridi a member of the Senior Education Service and Mr. A.M.S. Doha, retired Inspector-General of Police. All of us were old friends and colleagues. The two members from West Pakistan were Messrs Ata Mohammad Noon, a senior police officer and Shaikh Mohammad Akram a chief engineer. So, out of five members, three were ex-policemen. The group turned out to be an association of like minded people, which made working together a pleasant task.

My entry into the former Indian Police Service was through selection by the Public Service Commission in 1933. After thirty years service I had at last come to preside over the same Commission, being my last assignment in government service. It was indeed as fortunate a finale to a career, as a member in public service could expect.

A separate and independent agency for personnel management was brought into existence hand in hand with the evolution of the multiparty parliamentary system of government. Progressive extension of the functions of government requiring a high level skill and competence for their performance, called for the selection of employees on the basis of merit. But meritorious candidates could be attracted only if the public services could offer opportunities for a life long career and security of tenure. The multiparty system of government could create pressure for changing the personnel of administration with the change of the party in power, which could frustrate not only the continuity of administration, but also prevent commitment of the functionaries to their job. Sound personnel management, therefore, called for not only careful selection on the basis of merit, it also made it necessary to ensure their protection against the vagaries of political interference. The commission was created to perform this task, so as

to ensure neutrality of the public administration in a changing milieu of party government.

The establishment of civil service was attained during the British Raj in India. But British administration was by no means neutral. The Viceregal system that came to prevail did not admit alternative government. The public services were not called upon to adapt themselves to the changing political milieu with the passage of time. Activities of the government having been limited to the task of general administration, selection of personnel did not create much of a problem. As the bureaucracy was the real rulers of the country interposition of an independent agency to protect their interest was yet unnecessary.

The status quo began to change with the introduction of constitutional reforms since the first world war, which ushered in the parliamentary form of government on a limited scale. Public Service Commission was established soon after introduction of the Reforms. The Commission was given a place in Government of India Act of 1935, thus becoming a statutory body. The Act formed the basis of the Interim Constitution after partition. Such provisions were also made in the constitution of the first, as well as the Second Republic of Pakistan.

The circumstances in which the Central Government had to be reconstituted after independence, compelled many deviations from the old personnel practices that came to prevail in Pakistan. An attempt has been made to delineate the problems besetting the administrations since partition in chapters XXII, XXVI and XXXII of these memoirs. The process of reconstruction that followed the upheaval of partition, left the bare minimum of functions relating to personnel affairs with the Commission. Its main task was the selection of candidates for the All Pakistan and the central services and posts, and advisory functions on service affairs. The same old

method of competitive selection by holding examinations was adopted as was followed before independence. A psychological test was added some time later, which was the only innovation to improve the method of selection. There were a lot of criticism against the examination system as a competitive test of merit, but no one could yet suggest any practical alternative as an improvement which could replace the prevailing system. The only agencies whose services could be obtained to conduct the examinations were the universities and the senior civil servants, They did not know of any other system. So, the old method of selection had to continue.

The central services mentioned above were concerned largely with the general administration and their supporting agencies which were in existence since the colonial regime. They could be re-established without much difficulty. The problem relating to personnel administration which the government had to tackle was, finding suitable candidates for a variety of new posts in order to perform many new functions which the administration had to assume since independence. Such posts were created in increasing numbers on ad hoc basis, to satisfy the growing requirements of functionaries to undertake different tasks and responsibilities, It was also necessary to organise them into cadres of services on professional or functional lines, which could provide opportunities for individual development and promotion to higher ranks in course of them, so as to ensure a a life long career. By the time I joined as chairman C.P.S.C, more than two thirds of the appointments, for which requisitions were received by the Commission were ad hoc posts sanctioned on a temporary basis. A large number of such ad hoc posts belonged to the Planning Commission and related agencies which had become the growing sectors of administration and which had been expanding rapidly. This was rather an unhappy beginning for the new enterprise of planning and development, which soon became the principal task of the government of the new country.

Following partition, the Government of Pakistan, was compelled to set up the new administration on a "make shift" basis with the help of personnel migrating from various parts of India. The task had to be taken up without much forethought or planning. There was no alternative. In spite of the predominance of the unknown elements in the collection of personnel brought together by fate to set up the central government, no one could visualise the necessity of training and orientation to organise the vast concourse of human beings, into a complex machinery of administration, to enable them to work together as a team. Having been brought up under the aegis of the British administration, which appeared to move under its own steam, the builders of Pakistan thought it fit to leave the question of organisation to evolve by itself under the pressure of necessity. After getting over the initial stampede of partition it was expected that the various branches of administration would get integrated by themselves and learn to work in keeping with the rules of the game in course of time. Unfortunately it did not happen. Even sixteen years after partition the Central Government could not get over its "make-shift" image with little promise yet of becoming a fully articulated entity. The ad hoc creation of posts year after year was an indication of unplanned proliferation of the departments, ill adapted to the requirements of the new administration. The importance of inservice training was not realised until many years later, when the back log of untrained personnel became almost unmanageable.

The cumbersome procedure of dealing with ad hoc appointments, brought in its wake inevitable consequence of delay in payment of salaries, renewal of sanction, uncertainties of career all combining to put the incumbent into constant harassment which prevented him from settling down in his job and do his best in the performance of his task.

Disarticulation of the central administration for dealing with such problems gave rise to grievances of the employees in an increasing

measure. The administrative device available to the employees for redress of their grievances was petition to superior officers, with a right of appeal to the Ministry concerned. This device failed to work satisfactorily because of indifference on the part of the superior officers to the hardship suffered by their subordinates. The aggrieved employees had to look for other means for redress of their grievances. When such a state of affairs befalls a large section of employees, administration is bound to suffer.

Such an opportunity was made available to the employees outside the administration, in the "writ" jurisdiction of the High Courts, provided in the Constitution promulgated in 1956. They were also incorporated in the Constitution of the Second Republic in 1962. It is an instrument of British jurisprudence by which the Court may compel the Executive to act, or restrain him from acting in a manner which might cause injury to rights deemed to be of superior concern. Such measures were regarded as extraordinary remedies, which could be used for redress when no other remedy was available. Recourse to such remedies in the days of the British Raj by government employees was unknown, chiefly because the built-in device within the administration was adequate to deal with them. The failure of Pakistani administration to deal with employee grievances and the extent of their accumulation came to light when a large number of "writ" petitions were filed by government employees in the High Courts since 1956 to seek relief from apparent injustice suffered by them, as a result of administrative action adversely affecting their rights and privileges. In six years between 1956 and 1962, there were as many as 3000 such "writ" petitions filed in different High Courts, which on an average came to about 500 a year. The cause of action arose out of disputes over seniority, supersession in promotion, non-payment, of salary, loss of career and so forth, which the department concerned should

have been able to deal with. One of the functions of the C. P. S. C. was to advise the government departments in dealing with such affairs ; but the executive rarely thought it fit to refer such matters for advice, apparently in a vain attempt to maintain their authority over the members of their staff.

The incapacity to deal with grievances was an indication of failure of administration in the discharge of its responsibility relating to welfare and discipline of their employees, so necessary to maintain their efficiency in the performance of their task. It was also a tribute to the open society where a remedy was made available for failure of equity and Justice on the part of the executive, by taking recourse to the court of law.

The division of the country into two widely separated regions, and the tribal composition of society in West Pakistan owing allegiance to their own chiefs, created a problem of maintaining inter-regional balance between two parts of the country. An attempt was made to achieve the objective in public services by fixing a quota for each region and sub-region for vacancies notified for recruitment. While this policy could be implemented for the regularly constituted services like the C. S. P, and the P. S. P. for which the Establishment Division could notify vacancies in advance, it became extremely difficult to observe the recruitment policy in the case of ad hoc appointments, which made up more than two thirds of the annual intake of recruits in the Central Government. East Pakistan was the principal sufferer in this respect, having been deprived of a large share of their quota in the posts under the centre. As the bureaucracy became vested with more and more powers and responsibilities for control and direction of national life, adequate participation on the part of functionaries from East Pakistan became more and more necessary for the balanced development of the country.

Imposition of martial law in 1958 suspending political activities, curtailed further the scope of participation of East Pakistan in the Central Government and reinforced the causes creating inter-regional disparity, showing little sign of its reduction. No one could find the way to solve the vexed question of disparity yet.

Social life in Karachi revolved largely around commercial and industrial enterprise of the Metropolis. The merchants and the industrialists were the leading groups in the city. Senior government officials had left Karachi since the shifting of the capital to Rawalpindi. The headquarters of important public institutions like the State Bank, the Industrial Development Corporation and others still remained in the city. The shifting of the capital deprived the officialdom of opportunities of participation in the social life of the city, which was the most important centre of economic activities in the country. The reason given for shifting the capital, namely uncongenial climate for work, appeared fallacious when we came to live in Karachi. Very many more people were working much longer hours on more labour intensive work in Karachi, than all the members of bureaucracy put together. Moreover Karachi grew up because of the relative advantage it enjoyed to develop as a metropolis, which led the way to progress and prosperity. The removal of the Capital far away close to the tribal regions in the north which were left behind in the march of history due to natural causes, deprived the bureaucracy its contact with the modern growth promoting centre of the country. It could not but develop an insular attitude, neither conducive to progressive outlook, nor encouragement to hard work. Ethnic division of the people into a number of sub national groups called for the location of the Capital at a place which could develop an inter-cultural outlook by its own character, which Karachi had developed in an ample measure. It was selected to be the Capital immediately after independence by national consensus. The cost of

building a capital city at a new site was prohibitive by any standard. Such considerations were brushed aside. To remove the Capital to Rawalpindi by the military rulers after the coup-d-etat was a decision, which was taken more in pursuance of their anxiety to remain close to the military establishment which was their mainstay of power, than any consideration of national interest.

While the city was expanding rapidly with its commercial activities, growing industries, housing estates and shops, provision of modern amenities like municipal services, transport, health and education were lagging far behind the requirements of the exploding population. Facilities for cultural activities were very poor. The National Museum was a small establishment containing relatively few exhibits, inspite of a long history of civilisation of this region. Cinema houses and restaurants were the chief means of relaxation for the populace. There was no theatre. Parks and open grounds for sports and athletic games were very few. The stadium built at a distance from the city had not produced a comprehensive programme of sporting activities yet. A fairly large area was allotted for building a sports complex, which awaited development. The best of all amenities that was available to those who could afford, was a drive to the sea-beach west of the city, known as the Hawks Bay and the Sands Pit, which were crowded with people every week-end. But they were a very small fraction of the people living in the city. We enjoyed the sea side resorts which we could visit from time to time.

Karachi also had its seamy side of life, common to all rapidly growing urban areas. Slums were growing up in many parts of the city, except where planned development could be undertaken. But the extent of planning for development was lagging far behind the need created by the influx of the new comer who continuously swelled the number of inmates in the slum areas. Failure of municipal services to provide adequate water-supply and sanitary facilities under-

mined the health of large areas of the city. But human beings seemed to get accustomed to any sort of hardship with which they have to put up. Such daily hardships created a lot of tension and restlessness in its wake. Fracas at the street hydrants over drawing daily supply of water were frequent, occasionally leading to loss of life. But on the whole, life in Karachi was permeated by an air of optimism which encouraged the citizens to look forward with confidence and hope for a better life in future.

In spite of all the modern amenities which city life could offer we soon began to feel the absence of Bengali society. Those belonging to the middle class who happened to be in Karachi were officials serving in the Central Government. It was this kinship group, who could provide the social environment for the officials working away from home. Most of them had moved to Rawalpindi, disrupting the Bengali society, which had been growing up in Karachi since independence. The rest composed of shopkeepers, industrial labour, and those engaged in domestic service. The industrial labourers enjoyed a good reputation for their sobriety and hard work. The shopkeepers were doing thriving business. The Bengalis belonging to such classes were coming to Karachi in a steady stream in search of employment and business. Their number was estimated to be over a hundred thousand at the beginning of the sixties. But they were scattered over the sprawling city in such a way that their presence was hardly felt. Some members of this group, who came to see me complained bitterly against the shifting of the capital of the country, which deprived them of the leavening influence which the society of intelligentsia could provide. Equally important was the removal of the centre of political activity which, more than anything else could give the sense of belonging among all sections of the people while living away from home. Rawalpindi and later Islamabad, the new capital, virtually became a place exclusively for the bureaucrats

and the diplomats living in segregation away from the main-stream of national life. It was aptly described by a friend as a "cantonment of the bureaucrats", ruling Pakistan from the sequestered heights of Islamabad, blissfully ignorant of the changes that were taking place in the society, until they were overtaken by events.

An excursion into the Northern Mountains of Pakistan.

Posting in Karachi provided facilities to visit various places of historic interest and those famous for scenic beauty. We had already seen several places in the North West Frontier Region, including the Khyber Pass the famous mountain trail along which invading immigrants entered India over thousands of years. Less known, but unsurpassed in scenic grandeur are the Northern Mountains of Pakistan, having some beautiful spots. Situated in the remote inaccessible places, they have been opened up by the newly created facilities of air transport and jeepable tracks. Places like Gilgit and Hunza, whose existence could be seen only on maps tucked far away into the mountains, were now made accessible by aircraft. I was fascinated by a description of those places which I read in a book "Horned Moon" written by a well know journalist Ian Stephens. Ever since I was looking forward for an opportunity to see some of those places. Soon after joining my post at Karachi, I took a short spell of leave to visit Gilgit, Hunza, and Skardu.

It was necessary to obtain a permit from the Ministry of the States and Frontier Regions to visit those places. The Pakistan Airways was running a twice weekly air service between Rawalpindi and Gilgit. On a clear September morning my wife and I took off from Chaklala, as the airport was called-in a F27 passenger aircraft for Gilgit. After flying over the foot hills of the Himalayas north of Pindi, the pilot set the course of flight over the gorge of River Indus. We were flying over 12,000 above sea level. The river could be seen below like a thin silvery ribbon winding its

course through the deep gorge which she cut over aeons of years, while the mountain walls towered ever higher on both sides of the flying aircraft. It took us within a short distance of the "Nanga Parbat", the fourth highest peak in the world. Rising above 26,000', the flight gave us a beautiful view of the mighty mountain from a close range. Covered with snow and ice and sparkling in the morning sunlight, we could see clearly the glaciers running down all sides of the giant massif. After passing the "Nanga Parbat" on our right, the air-craft took a sharp turn to the left to fly over the wide expanse of R. Gilgit, and landed on the airfield at the other end of the valley. It took nearly an hour to reach our destination after a breath-taking flight I ever had in my life.

Gilgit is an old and prosperous township, surrounded by orchards and cornfields, providing sustenance to the people. Before introduction of air transport the only communication with the outside world was along a narrow mountain trail to Sreenagar, the headquarters of the State of Kashmir. The trek used to take about two weeks to traverse. It took only an hour now to fly from Rawalpindi to Gilgit.

The township is situated at the southern end of an old mountain route to China mentioned by the famous Venetian traveller Marco polo in his travel lore. It was known as the "Silk route", a name acquired from the precious merchandise which used to be transported from China in ancient times along this pathway, to India and Europe. Existence of the village over a long period of time is indicated by the relics of the ancient Buddhist civilisation found at this place. A big statue of Goutama Budha, hewn out of solid rock can be seen on the side of a hill in the outskirts of the township at the entrance of a narrow gorge called the Karga Nallah. The statue was in a good state of preservation. It looked similar to those

discovered in the Bamian valley in Afghanistan, and must have been executed in the same era which produced the Gandhara school of Art. It was indeed a tribute to those enterprising Buddhist missionaries and sculptors, who could reach such remote places in the mountain regions so difficult to traverse, in order to preach their gospel and propagate their culture. We could see repetition of similar enterprise and dedication after a thousand years, when the Muslim devines arrived to preach the message of the Holy Prophet and convert the people to the religion of Islam. The entire population of the region are Muslims.

On arrival we were received at the airport by the police Superintendent, Babar Khan. Born and brought up in this region, he acquired distinction as the leader of the armed insurrection of the people of Gilgit, who liberated the northern mountain regions from the domain of the Ruler of Kashmir in the wake of the partition of the country in 1947. While relating the story of his early life, he mentioned that the only school in the region was at Sreenagar. It took nearly fourteen days to cover the distance along the difficult mountain trail to reach Sreenagar on foot and riding a pony. The school remained closed in summer for two months to allow the students hailing from distant places to spend a month at home, the remaining one month was spent on the journey between home and Sreenagar. The track remained snow bound and closed throughout winter about six to seven months in the year. Recalling his exploits in the Kashmir liberation war, he mentioned that the local governor, who was a Dogra Hindu, had little chance to maintain his authority. The resistance which he attempted to put up with the help of a handful of retainers, was easily overcome by the freedom fighters.

The township of Gilgit' is the Head quarters of the political Agent of the region, a post equivalent to that of the Deputy Commissioner in districts. It was also an important station of the Border forces called the Karakoram Rifles, deployed to protect the

country against external aggression, as well as maintain internal peace and order. High ranking officials as well as visitors from the Metropolis were accorded warm welcome in those remote places, where the people were isolated from the rest of the country. They gave importance to such association however brief, as a reminder to the shared life with the nation which they seemed to cherish. We received generous hospitality from various people whom we happened to meet in course of our visit. The old mountain tracks were difficult to travel, but they were wide enough to enable motor transports like jeep to move freely. We had a good view of the mountainous country, driving round by Jeep along the old silk route. We made the journey in easy stages, spending the night at a place called Naltar. Situated on a track off the main road to Hunza, we had to drive up more than 2000, feet to reach the place. The Airforce had built a training establishment which they called the "School of Survival" for training officers how to survive in case of forced landing in the inhospitable mountain regions. The school was not in session ; but we were well looked after by the care-taker in the comfortable rest house. We had to light a fire to keep ourselves warm at night.

Next day we left for Hunza. The zig zag alignment of the road and sharp bends slowed down the speed at which the jeep could run. It gave us an opportunity to enjoy the wonderful landscape of the rugged mountains. We soon reached a spot well known for the views of a high peak called the "Rakhaposhi". One of the political Agents who served in this region and travelled in many countries, described "Rakhaposhi" as one of the grandest views in the world. Rising from a plateau of about 10,000, feet above sea level, it soars nearly 14,000, feet into the sky, completely covered with snow. Sparkling through clear thin atmosphere at this altitude from which we were looking, it was indeed a rare and beautiful sight.

The grandeur of the mountain scenery could be appreciated by the fact, that none of the peaks in this area was given a name unless its altitude exceeded 20,000, feet. There were more than fifteen of them in this stretch of the country between Gilgit and Hunza.

There was a government health centre at this place providing medical facilities to the people of the countryside. We were pleasantly surprised to find a couple from East Pakistan both qualified doctors. The husband was out with a party engaged in the work of demarcation of border with China, up in the north. His wife was working in the health centre in the absence of the doctor husband. A bright and resourceful young woman, she could adapt herself to the regours of life in the remote mountains, without much difficulty.

We reached Hunza village about midday. The Ruler, called the Mir of Hunza was holding his daily court in his office with the visitors and a few functionaries of the state. His domain was reported to be free from crime or violence. Most of his work was concerned with adjudication of civil disputes and revenue affairs. In spite of hard conditions of living imposed by nature the inhabitants were enjoying the longest life expectancy found anywhere else, which was a wonder of the medical world. Common ailments were almost unknown or the people rarely took notice of such minor incidents of life. Recently a team of doctors from western Europe paid a visit to this place to investigate the causes which helped to maintain health and vitality of the people of this area.

The village of Hunza is situated in a wide expanse of a valley created by the river bearing the same name. The soil of the valley is remarkably fertile. Orchards and cornfields surrounded the place. Local lore tells us that the ancestors of the Mir along with their followers, came to settle in this valley more than six hundred years ago. They built a fort on the high grounds overlooking the valley around which the existing settlement had grown up. The old fort

is a modest but an impressive structure, bearing testimony to the prowess of the chiefs of this small principality whose leadership made human settlement possible in this remote inaccessible valley in the mountains. The Mir and his subjects are the followers of the Agha Khan. He is designated as the leader of the congregation living in the land stretching from Gilgit to Central Asia, which added further to the prestige of the Mir as the ruler of this clan.

The ruling Mir built a modern residential house for himself, soon after the improvement of transport facilities made it possible to bring building materials such as cement and steel to the remote mountain valley. We were entertained as the guest of the Mir in his new house. There were two other visitors, an American girl working in a Lahore hospital and a Punjabi lady in the guest house. All of us gathered round the fireside of the living room in the evening to hear the stories of his domain from the Mir Saheb, interesting description of geographical features, fauna and flora, and his hunting exploits in the mountains. We returned to Gilgit after spending two very pleasant days as the guest of the Mir. The sojourn to Hunza was an unforgettable experience.

From Gilgit, the next part of our programme was a trip to Skardu, the furthest station in the north which could be reached both by jeep and aircraft. The journey was by jeep along the old road and was scheduled to take two days, with a stop enroute. There was another jeep in the party in which an officer was travelling to the same place. A fellow traveller in such a lonesome journey was a welcome companion. We had to cross the R. Indus over a suspension bridge and drive along a narrow mountain trail round the base of the "Nanga Parbat", which popped up in view from time to time. The trail soon began to climb up the slopes, till we reached a place called Astore, on the top of the ravine through which we were driving after crossing the Indus. Astore is an

important market place, and a station of the civil armed forces. While our companion was taken to the rest house at Astore, we were taken further up on the top of the ridge to a hamlet called Rama, which used to be the summer lodge of the political Agent of Gilgit. Situated on the edge of a pineclad plateau, the spot gave a magnificent view of Nanga Parbat looking towards the west. The altitude of the place was over 8000' feet, which made the place quite cool. We had to light a fire to keep us warm in the evening.

Leaving Astore soon after sun-rise next morning, we made our way due east towards Skardu. After driving for more than an hour through the forests of pine and silver fir along a narrow trail hanging by the side of a deep ravine, the jeep began to climb up the gentle slopes, till we reached a rolling open plateau, stretching as far as eye could see. We soon arrived above the forest belt, where the landscape became completely bleak and desolate. There was no sign of life anywhere except for some shrubs and lichen by the road side. Far to the north could be seen the Karakoram mountains towering above the horizon. On the south were the Himalays. We were driving across a desolate country, known as the "Deosai" plateau. Rising to an altitude varying between 12,000 and 14,000 above sea level, the plateau stretched between the two highest mountain ranges of the world. The rarefied atmosphere at this altitude slowed down the speed of the jeep, which could pull only on high gear even on level ground. We got down at a few places where even walking over gentle slope made us gasp for breath. Soon we passed by a lonely little rest house provided for the travellers, but there was none to look after it.

We had to cross two swiftly flowing mountain streams within a short distance of one another. One of them was spanned by an

improvised suspension bridge. There was a small caravan of horses and yak in charge of a party of hillmen, resting near the bridge. They were travelling from Skardu to Astore. On enquiry from the headman it was ascertained that the trek took about three days. They were engaged in transporting essential merchandise like salt, sugar and spices between market places and the hamlets further down the valley. They were all shepherds and their products were carpets and various kinds of woollen fabrics. In spite of inhospitable and desolate landscape we saw, the area was therefore not entirely devoid of civilisation.

It took nearly six hours drive to cross the "Deosai" plateau. Early in the afternoon we reached the shores of Satpara Lake, a large expanse of glacial water near Skardu. We reached our destination before sunset.

Skardu is the headquarters of the Political Agent administering the area. Situated on the left Bank of the Indus, it is the uppermost point where the river can be crossed by boat. The river was flowing through a deep gorge up stream, and curved out a wide valley at this spot where the township has grown up. The wide expanse of the river at this point and the sand bars on both sides of the river-bed took nearly an hour to cross when we went on a drive on the other side. The valley is about 12 miles long at the end of which the river again entered a gorge from which she did not emerge until reaching the foothills hundreds of miles down the river.

In the past, Skardu was used as the starting point for the expeditions set out to climb the second highest peak in the world, the K-2, in the Karakoram mountains. K-2 is not visible from this place. The nearest spot from which it could be observed was at a distance of two days journey on foot. We could travel a few miles by jeep along the trail, which took us through a few villages on the way up to a point where there was a rest house. The landscape did not appear as

gorgeous as those we saw between Gilgit and Hunza. But it had its novelty.

We enjoyed a programme of three days at Skardu. Twice weekly flights connecting with Rawalpindi failed to arrive according to schedule. The Indus River being the only guide to the pilot, air craft could fly only on days when the sky was clear to enable the pilot to see the course of the river. The aircraft failed to arrive according to schedule as on the way the sky was overcast with cloud shutting out the landmarks from view. We were compelled to hang on two more days before the plane turned up for the return flight, The airstrip was about nine miles away. We arrived just in time to take off for Rawalpindi and returned to Karachi the following day.

The tenure of my post as chairman was for three years beginning from June. '63 up to May '66. But the course of events following the general elections early in 1965, was destined to change my career when I was invited to join the Central Cabinet as a minister.

CHAPTER—XXXV

General Elections of 1964-65 and their highlights—The author invited to join the last cabinet of President Ayub Khan—A peep into the working of the Central Government—Growing disparity in economic growth of the two Regions of the country—war with India in September 1965—Suspension of fundamental Rights of the citizens.

Although President Ayub started his campaign of reforms with a host of commissions and committees to enquire and report what changes were necessary in different sectors of national life, he rarely if ever accepted any recommendation which did not conform with his own ideas. No where was this resistance to an idea different from his own more evident, than on the issue of distribution of powers of government and the form of elections to the legislature. He was determined to make the executive all powerful in every respect with himself at the head and rejected all impediments by way of checks and balances. Decentralisation of power could take place only by delegation and not by law, so that he could intervene anywhere at any time he wished. He wanted to propagate a political theory that in the past, the Muslims could thrive and prosper only so long as they were ruled by a strong executive and they lost their freedom whenever the focus of power was destroyed. He was haunted by an apprehension that Pakistan consisting of disparate groups of nationalities, was on the way to disintegration. They required the strong arm of the executive to hold them together. The need of effective participation of the people on the basis of decentralisation of powers in the political management of the country as a necessary condition for nation building, did not seem to find a place in his mind. As result,

he looked upon the demand of East Pakistan for autonomy, as a move towards disintegration of the country. He wanted to build up the military-bureaucracy combination as the basis of his power, reducing the role of the political party to those of public relations only.

Although the Constitution Commission as well as the Francise Commission recommended adoption of direct elections for the office of the President and the members of the legislature, the interim arrangement of indirect elections came to prevail as the permanent device as desired by President Ayub. The efficacy of the system proved his anticipations, and it was not to be given up easily. It was a stratagem to retain a facade of adult franchise built into a system of restricted electoral college, which could be manipulated to obtain the desired results. How it ultimately began to alienate his regime from the people was beyond his comprehension. The ban on political parties imposed under the martial law was removed by an Act of the National Assembly passed in 1962. Field Marshal Ayub Khan himself became the president of a faction of the Muslim League, making the same his official party. The stage was thus set for holding general elections scheduled to be held in 1964-65. It began with the election of 80,000 members of the Electoral College-cum-Union Councils in Oct.-Nov. 1964, followed by presidential elections in January 1965.

While Ayub Khan was nominated by his party as their candidate, all the opposition groups combined to set up Miss Fatima Jinnah, the sister of Late M.A. Jinnah, the founder Pakistan, to be their candidate for the office of President. The choice of Miss Jinnah only demonstrated the weakness of the opposition groups, who thought it fit to exploit the memories of the departed leader to attract the support of the voter, as they were not sure of their own political standing in the country. The Electoral College returned Ayub Khan defeating his rival by a large majority. This was followed by the elections of the central and provincial legislatures. The elections were keenly

contested and were marked by a great deal of interest displayed all over the country. The Suppression of political parties under martial law, did not stop political activities on individual basis ; on the other hand such activities got a fillip since the introduction of Basic Democracies, which had an elected base. The reluctance of any politicians to cooperate was more than offset by the participation of a host of newcomers, creating a picture of regenerated political life after its suspension for seven years. The revival of political parties heightened popular interest in the elections.

Although parties as such had very little to do with the conduct of elections, Ayub's parliamentary party managed to gather support of over two thirds of the elected members in the Central Legislature, thus ensuring the smooth conduct of business in the National Assembly. Mr. Nurul Amin former Chief Minister of East Pakistan became the leader of the opposition. The second Republic thus seemed to get set with all the trappings of democracy.

I was invited to join the new cabinet, and was sworn in as a central minister on the 28th of March '65, along with three others. This was the second batch of minister to be added to the cabinet. I was put in charge of the ministries of Education, Health, Labour and Social Welfare. A separate division was added to the ministry of health dealing with family planning. It was entirely a new function assumed by government for the first time.

Having landed myself suddenly in the political arena, I was compelled to look round to make an assessment where I stood in relation to the new world which I had chosen to enter. The first impression I could gather as a minister was the "make-shift" sort of arrangements with which the central government was working since the shifting of the capital from Karachi to Rawalpindi. The President's office was located in an old abandoned garden house close to the residence of the Commander-in-Chief of the army where he was living. It

was known as the Old Brewery. My Office was located in a part of a premises belonging to the Railways, vacated to accommodate offices of the central government. Another part of the ministry was located in some old hutments situated in the cantonment areas vacated by the army ; while some other sections still remained in Karachi awaiting their turn to shift when accommodation would be available. It was almost a repetition of the same old drama enacted eighteen years ago while setting up a new capital at Karachi after partition, a thousand miles away. Similar disruption had taken place after amalgamation of the four provinces in 1955, when the offices of three other provinces were transferred to Lahore for their integration into the new province of West Pakistan. The office of the Planning Commission which assumed the role of the top policy making body, still remained in Karachi. Similar was the case with the Foreign Office. Repeated shifting of offices and moving of personnel from place to place not only hampered smooth conduct of public business, it prevented the administration from settling down with its job for many years after independence. Although the construction of the new capital at Islamabad was making good progress, the rumour that the transfer of capital may not be the last shift was still persisting. The counterblast against such rumours came from the opposite side who held that no major decision could be taken in Pakistan with out the concurrence of the armed forces, and that they would not allow the capital to be shifted from Islamabad under any circumstances. It did not require much wisdom to realise which way the wind was blowing.

The weather in spring time in this part of the country was very pleasant when we arrived. We settled down soon in a comfortable house in the suburbs of Rawalpindi. It was indeed a delightful change. The official group having been collected in a small place was able to develop social life of their own within a short time removing the usual boredom of living away from home in a large measure.

A system of representative government was in existence since 1962. The rule of law and fundamental rights at last came to prevail in the country. General elections were held according to a schedule. Such measures induced a large section of the people to participate in political activities inspite of the avowed reservations of many people against Ayub's constitution. Freedom of the press was restored in a fair measure. It was generally accepted that the best way to change and democratise the constitution was to participate in the system which came to prevail and proceed in a lawful manner. The memories of political crisis of the past and the intervention of Martial Law for their solution were perhaps not wasted on the politicians. Except for the die-hards, most of them were prepared to avail themselves of the new opportunities and give a fair trial to the Second Republic ushered in by the Constitution of Ayub Khan. The new ministry therefore had an auspicious start.

The involvement of the government with the welfare sector, such as education and health, was as yet very limited in scope before implementation of the Second Five Year Plan began. Education perhaps suffered the greatest set back after independence. By far the majority of the teachers were non-Muslims who had migrated to India after partition, creating a serious problem of shortage of teachers at all levels of education. Premises of important educational institutions were taken over for other purposes reducing accommodation for holding classes. Besides one high school and a college at district headquarters set up by government, all other institutions were under the management of non-official agencies. They were depending largely on the munificence of the rich people such as the landed gentry for financial support, which practically disappeared when the zamindars were disposed of their estates. Adequate provisions could not be made for their rehabilitation yet. While over the years, other sectors of the economy managed to recover from the trauma and disruptions of parti-

tion, education failed to develop in a way which was expected in an independent country. The greatest hindrance in the way of modernisation was the high rate of illiteracy. Elementary education hardly reached more than 20 per cent of the population yet. The quality of education deteriorated since independence. The high rate of drop-out at the primary level and failures in public examinations at higher levels were causing a great deal of wastage of resources devoted to education. Arrangements for the study of science and technology were far short of demand creating a scarcity of skilled manpower required for the economic development of the country.

Medical and public health facilities in the country were rudimentary outside the provincial headquarters and a few important towns. Measures for control of preventible diseases like malaria and small pox were only beginning to get under way and were yet to produce their impact on the people. The chief hindrance in the way of expansion of medical facilities was shortage of doctors. While a number of new medical colleges were opened some time ago, their turn out were still far short of requirement.

Conscious of the magnitude of the problem, the Planning Commission got down to work out a strategy to deal with them in a feasible manner. Scarcity of resources set severe limitations on the choice of priorities in the plan and their implementation. A perspective plan spread over twenty years from 1965 beginning with the third five year plan was drawn up which, inter alia, contemplated to attain universal literacy and provision of medi-care for all, at the same time increase per capita income more than two folds by the end of the perspective plan. It was as good a working hypothesis as could be worked out at that stage.

The two ministries of the entre which were placed in my charge, were concerned with subjects pertaining to the domain of the province. The Constitution prescribed that legislation relating to planning and

economic coordination shall rest with the centre, while operational and executive functions were vested in the provincial government. The centre was responsible for broad policy matters, a job in which the ministry had to collaborate with the Planning Commission. There could be no policy other than what the Commission thought it fit to formulate. In this way the new administrative relationship between the centre and the province was laid down to maintain the strong character of the central government. Implementation of development programme was made the responsibility of the province. However, such administrative arrangements as were made to give effect to the provisions of 1962 constitution failed to bring about real decentralisation of power. It was a delegated power, which the province could exercise. The centre could intervene in any subject on the plea of coordination and uniformity of policy. Control over the province could be exercised through the functions of policy making and financial planning, which were vested exclusively with the centre. Hence the provincial government was virtually made the agent of the centre in all matters in which it had to depend on central finance. As a matter of fact, there was very little which the province could do without the financial support from the centre.

Disparity in economic growth of the regions since the creation of Pakistan, became the principal cause of tension in the relations between East Pakistan and the Central Government. It gave rise to a growing sense of deprivation among the people of this province. It was the avowed objective of the central planning to ensure uniform development of the two regions so as to remove the grievances of East Pakistan as early as possible. Such an obligation was clearly laid by the constitution on the central government which could be implemented through appropriate formulation of national policy. The key to achievement of such an objective was equitable distribution of resources at the disposal of government, and their proper utilisation.

Although implementation of the Second Five Year Plan was about to be completed, there was no indication yet of reducing the disparity in economic growth between the two regions. The problem had so far eluded the grasp of the Planning Commission. There was hardly any indication of change of policy yet, which could reverse the divergent trends and enable East Pakistan catch up with the other region in economic growth. Requisite political will for redirection of resources to clear the back log of economic growth of East Pakistan was manifestly lacking. In spite of the declared objective, there was hardly a sense of urgency for tackling the problem by the central government.

Policy making is essentially a political function around which arise most of the conflicts and controversies on public affairs. Distribution of power and management of economic affairs under the new system practically removed the function of policy making from the purview of the political institutions and placed it in the hands of the bureaucracy. As representation of Bengali officers in the various branches of the civil service began to increase, the inter-regional conflict over policy making and sharing of resources began to come to a head in the central agencies such as the National Economic Council, the Development Working parties, that is, within the bureaucracy, in the early sixties. Thus the conflict which should have been resolved through discussions in the political arena in a spirit of give and take, began to generate a spirit of tension within the bureaucracy. It could not but compromise their political neutrality, necessary as a framework for national integration. Having suppressed the political parties which could provide the forum for resolving conflict, politicising the bureaucracy at last began to reduce its efficiency as an integrative force. In the National Finance Commission appointed in 1961, to examine and recommend allocation of resources between the centre and the Provinces, opinion among the members of East and West Pakistan was so sharply divided that two separate reports were ultimately submitted.

It was in such a climate of political exigencies that the preparation of the Third Five year Plan was taken up. The draft was ready for consideration of the National Economic Council in June 1965. But other pressing events compelled postponement of consideration of the draft till December 1966.

While the government of the day remained pre-occupied with the danger of aggression threatening the security of the country, diplomacy could do very little to remove or reduce such a danger and improve the climate of security. Fruitless negotiations for a settlement over Kashmir had the effect of keeping the dispute alive compelling both the countries waste huge amount of resources on military build up ; resources which were needed to alliviate the poverty of the people, were thus diverted for expanding the defence establishment. In her internal affairs, her relations with India remained the prime consideration in the formulation of her policy. Steps taken to ensure her security had the effect of aggravating tension and reduce the possibility of a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Unfortunately, forces within the country compelled the government to keep up a bellicose posture in their own interest, driving the contry to the verge of a pecipice.

It was evident, both the powers had realised that no one could dislodge the other from the portion of the dispute territory under its occupation. The proposal of a plebiscite to resolve the issue of accession of the state was as dead as a door nail. So, partition of the state along the cease-fire line was the only feasible way for a settlement ; but such a proposition was an anathema and could not be raised by either party.

Confronted by the menacing attitude of a much bigger neighbour, Pakistan was compelled to seek defensive alliances with other countries, whose support and help could ensure security against external aggression. Such a policy helped a great deal to strengthen her military capabilities, The armed forces became too strong for the civil government to control, ultimately leading to military take over. The Trea-

ties of Mutual Security with the U.S.A. and membership of military pacts under which Pakistan obtained military expertise and hardware, were intended by the donors to strengthen the defence capabilities of the countries of this region against communist expansionism. This was the time when the western powers and the communist hegemony were trying to build up their own spheres of influence. However, it served the purpose of Pakistan, enabling her to build up and improve her defence capabilities. To what extent her allies were prepared to come to her assistance in case of an attack by her neighbour threatening her security, still remained to be seen.

India all along maintained her posture of non-alignment, steering a middle course between importuning of the two super-power. Pakistan by her alignment with the west, lost the support of the communist block and became more and more dependent on the western powers. Membership of the military alliance virtually pushed her into the enemy camp so far as the Soviet Union was concerned. India along with a number of developing countries, such as United Arab Republic, Yugoslavia and Indonesia, became the leaders of the new non-aligned group of nations. This third group of nations was growing in power and influence in the U.N.O. Both the super-powers were anxious to see India assume the position of leadership of the Asian group and obtain her commitment to one side or the other ; but India firmly adhered to her own stand in her international relations and was getting in return the best of both worlds. Membership of military pacts aimed against the Soviet Union alienated their support which ultimately became a hindrance in the way of mobilising the Security Council for the fulfilment of its obligations. This was aptly expressed by the Soviet Ambassador in an interview with the press in Pakistan, when he stated that his country was prepared to support her friend India, whether she was right or wrong ; but the allies of Pakistan failed to support her even when she was right.

The rise of China as a great power since the communist take over in 1949, at last created a new problem of balance of power in Asia. By the end of the first decade of her emergence, both the super-powers thought it fit to build up India as the leader of Asian countries as opposed to China. Progress of reconstruction as a nation, her success with parliamentary democracy, together with her socialistic policy for economic development, all combined to invite admiration and support of both the super-powers. Their anxiety to improve military capabilities of India so as to enable her to defend herself against any possible threat from China, became more and more evident since the Chinese take over of Tibet in 1958-59, which placed her in direct confrontation with India. The forward policy of China and her drive towards undemarcated mountainous borders with India inhabited by tribes of mongolian origin, foreshadowed dispute and clash over the actual border separating the two countries. In the mean time China denounced the agreement between British India and Tibet, known as the "Macmahon line", she invited India to reopen negotiations for the determination of the borders between the two countries, which India was reluctant to do. Forward border patrols came into clash in remote mountain regions ultimately leading to a serious clash between the armed forces of the two countries in the North-Eastern Frontier Areas (NEFA) in Oct-Nov. 1962. After a sharp engagement the Indian Army was defeated, which soon turned into a rout opening the way to the Chinese forces to descend into the plains of the Assam valley. The Chinese however did not proceed further following up their victory. Having dislodged the Indians from their forward positions, the Chinese forces unilaterally withdrew beyond the "Macmahon Line", and again called upon the Indians to open negotiations for the settlement of the border dispute.

Chinese military incursions and the debacle of Indian armed forces in the border war, produced quick response in U.S.A. and the U. K., who were looking up to India as a power for containment of China.

They offered India military aid on a massive scale to reorganise her armed forces on modern lines without entering into any pacts of commitments. It at last broke down the resistance on the part of India to accept military aid from western powers which was supposed to compromise her status as a non-aligned country. Military aid to be given to India was calculated to expand her defence establishment from eleven divisions to twenty two divisions, at the same time equip them with the latest devices to improve their system of communication.

The strong protest lodged by Pakistan against such a policy of the western powers, disturbing seriously the balance of military forces which had prevailed over a decade in the sub continent, was, ignored. Modern weapons and equipment were delivered to India to expand and strengthen her war machine at a rapid pace. Relationship of Pakistan with the superpowers therefore had to undergo agonising reappraisal with a view to retrieve her position under the new alignment of forces as far as possible.

Negotiations between Pakistan and communist China had already started, leading to an agreement on border demarcation and civil aviation, linking China with the rest of the world by the Pakistan civil airline. President Ayub at last made up his mind to open a dialogue with the Soviet Union, with a view to arrive at an understanding with the leaders of the communist block. Soon after swearing in the new cabinet, President Ayub paid a visit to Moscow in April '65, launching his new diplomatic move to normalise relationship with the Soviet Union. This was the first visit of the head of the State of Pakistan to the Soviet Union since independence.

Lal Bahadur Shastri became the new Prime Minister of India after the death of Pandit Nehru in 1964. The new Prime Minister free from personal commitments, thought it fit to take a new look at the Kashmir problem. The State of Kashmir was given a special status in the Indian constitution in view of the dispute over her accession. In a surprise move the government of India abolished her special status by an amend-

ment of the constitution, making integration of the state complete as a part of the Indian Union. The appeal of the Security Council issued early in the year to exercise restraint in order to avoid a open conflict was completely ignored.

As the armed forces began to expand and strengthen with the help of Anglo-American military aid, the government of India began to take more and more an aggressive posture towards Pakistan. One such example was cited above. Another disputed area was the Rann of Kutch, an uninhabited desert where the border between the two countries remained undefined since partition. While the northern half was claimed by Pakistan being under her administration, India claimed the entire area as her territory. Early in January '65, Indian military forces began to advance in order to occupy the area so as to present her case as a fait accompli. They came into serious clash with Pakistani armed forces when they tried to enter the grounds under their control. President Ayub made an appeal for a negotiated settlement of the dispute, which was ignored resulting in serious fighting between the armed forces of the two countries. The Pakistani forces got the better of the Indians in the encounter and the latter were thrown out with heavy losses. The retreat of the Indian forces soon after their debacle in their encounter with China in 1962, crated a frienzed reaction in India. Prime Minister Shastri threatened military action on battle fields of their choice, in order to achieve their objective.

Timely move on the part of the British government to induce the two countries to disengage their forces prevented escalation of the trouble. An agreement was signed at the end of June by which both sides agreed to withdraw their forces and refer the dispute for arbitration to an independent tribunal. Although a major armed conflict was averted, the tension in the relationship between the two countries created by the incident continued to remain at a dangerous point. It was evident that the Indian armed forces were intching for a fight with the Pakistan army at

a time and place where they could retrieve their reputation and establish their superiority over their adversary.

The dispute over Kashmir had reached a stalemate in which neither party could make a fresh approach for a settlement. The U.N.O. failed to do anything to induce the disputants to move closer to an agreement. The member nations began to lose their interest in the case hoping that the status quo would lead to a settlement in course of time. The Indian move to abolish the special status and its integration into the Indian Union revived the case with a sense of urgency in Pakistan. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, late Z.A. Bhutto took a leading part in fanning the flame of resentment in the country to compel the government to take some action to prevent its obliteration from the international forum. An imaginative and resourceful young man, his position in the central ministry over six years enabled him to create a position for himself at the highest level of government. He was able to establish a rapport with the corps of officers of the defence services, particularly the younger section, who came to be known as the "Hawks", who were getting impatient to fight the Indians, as opposed to the "Doves", who preferred a sober course in military affairs. The former group blamed the politicians from the beginning of their timidity, preventing the armed forces from occupying Kashmir which they claimed they were capable of doing. Foreign minister Bhutto must have made an assessment of the situation as a splendid opportunity to put to test the capabilities of the armed forces vis-a-vis the Indians. He calculated, whatever happened, he would be able to utilise the outcome of such a conflict to promote his own political ambition. He worked his way into the confidence of President Ayub and could convince him that his position as the unchallenged leader of the people, had given him a unique opportunity to settle the issue over Kashmir which may never come again. He was confident enough about the capabilities of the Pakistan army which he had built up over the last fifteen years. The

discomfiteure of the Indian army in their clash with the Chinese in 1962, and their poor show in the clash in the Rann of Kutch a short time ago, might have emboldened him to think, that whatever happened in Kashmir, India would not risk an all out war with Pakistan. Recent developments within Kashmir encouraged him to approve of Foreign Minister Bhutto's plan to escalate the trouble with the help of guerilla hands secretly pushed across the border to assist the rebels fight against the government. Secret preparations were already in hand to work out a plan to start insurgent operations inside Kashmir before the end of summer. Originally the plan contemplated to send about 500 infiltrators to start their guerilla operations. Although the cease-fire line was guarded on both sides, there were many mountain trails left unguarded which could be utilised for infiltration from both sides. Violation of the cease-first line was not uncommon. The guerilla bands began to move into Indian held territory toward the end of July. Early in August when guerilla operations began inside Indian occupied Kashmir, Pakistan propaganda described them to be a revolt against the oppressive rule of the Indians ; while from the Indian side, the rresponsibility was laid on Pakistani infiltrators for causing all such trouble in Kashmir. It was alleged that more than a thousand armed infiltrators had crossed into Kashmir and were indulging in shooting, arson and sabotage of all sorts.

As the batches of guerilles began to cross into the Indian held Kashmir, a lot of other adventuers joined up soon after the campaign started, swelling the ranks of the insurgents. One of the, main routes through which they were pouring over to the other side was the Haji Peer Pass. Failing to stop the invasion of infiltrators from the control points on their side of the border, the Indian forces made an assault on the defence posts guarding the pass, along with a few other posts further north. They could reduce those defensive posts easily as their mountain batteries were now trained and equipped with modern

weapons acquired by India under the western military aid since their border clash with China. Military hardware supplied by the western powers to arm the Indian army against China, were thus successfully tried out against Pakistan at the first instance. Never before a retreat could be turned into such advantage as the Indians could do, since their debacle in the border war with China three years ago.

The occupation of Haji Peer Pass by the Indians opened the way to attack and advance into the territories of Azad Kashmir close to the borders of Pakistan. So far, the Pakistani army desisted from crossing the cease fire line, although the Indians had done it on several occasions. The Indian Prime Minister threatened to invade Azad Kashmir and make war on battle fields of their choice where ever necessary, So, something had to be done to relieve pressure of Indian attack across the cease-fire line. At the beginning of Septemeber, Pakistan Army at last launched an attack across the cease fire line and occupied Chamb. The Indian air force immediately went into action in support of the counter-attack against the Pakistan forces, who threatened to cut the main line of communication along a road, linking India held Kashmir with their base. Thus the border skormish escalated into regular warfare, bringing the airforce into action on both sides.

In the cabinet meeting held immediately after Pakistan army went into action in Chamb area, the Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in course of his briefing, stated that the crossing of the cease fire line in the territory under dispute, did not amount to an act of war and in the judgement of the foreign office, there was very little possibility of India indulging in an attack across the international border against Pakistan, as that would amount to open war, which India would not dare to commit. What effect such wishful thinking produced in the minds of those responsible for the defence of the country was not known. Perhaps it created a false sense of security on the international border. As it turned out after a few days when the Indian army ope-

ned a full scale attack on the Lahore front, there was very little preparation to meet the attack. A contingent of East Bengal Regiment which was holding their annual exercise in the area, was the only unit to hold the enemy in check for a few hours, until additional units could move into their position to dissipate the thrust of the Indian forces heading to occupy Lahore. Defence intelligence failed to gather information of the movements of Indian troops advancing towards the border. A counter attack by mechanised units further south completely bogged down in muddy grounds caused by cutting the dykes of a canal by the Indians, whose existence was not yet known to the Pakistan army. The place was later came to be known as the grave yard of "Paton" tanks which were lost in that fruitless campaign.

While the Indian capital was agog with anticipations about the capture of Lahore, we were looking forward to the much talked about trust of Pakistan army towards Delhi, the strategy by which security of Pakistan was supposed to be assured ! Nothing like it took place anywhere. In the cabinet meetings held every morning President Ayub bemoaned the lack of military intelligence about the movements of Indian forces since the closure of the border. With anxiety writ large on the face of the army and airforce chiefs, they came to brief the cabinet about the latest situation on the front and speculations on the next move of the enemy. Pakistan army seemed to have lost their initiative completely ; they were waiting to observe the next move of the enemy for their operations.

While relating the story to a select gathering after the end of the war, President Ayub described how a fortuitous incident saved the country from a situation which could have spelt military disaster. While the army was watching for the next move of the enemy, a forward patrol ambushed a messenger inside Indian territory driving a motor cycle and recovered some documents containing the battle order for the Indian military force drawn up for their next move. It disclosed preparations

for a big burst in the Sialkot sector within the next twelve hours. That was enough to enable Pakistan army mobilise their forces which successfully held the onslaught of the Indians and frustrated their plan to isolate Lahore and Rawalpindi. Failure of the Indian army to break the defenses of both Lahore and Sialkot sectors, created a stalemate in fighting for the time being and both sides dug in to hold their positions with grim determination.

The western powers, as well as the Soviet Union were anxious to prevent escalation of the war and compel India and Pakistan to stop fighting. Combined move in the Security Council, together with the stoppage of supply of military hardware, and the threat to suspend economic aid which none of the contestants could afford to lose, brought about the cease fire on 24th of September after seventeen days of fighting. Early in January, '66, an agreement signed at Tashkent under the mediation of Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin, brought about disengagement of forces and the restoration of status quo that prevailed before the fighting started. The Soviet Union, which all along been lending her support to India in the dispute over Kashmir, was at last persuaded to take a neutral stand and mediate in the dispute as an honest broker. President Ayub's efforts to come to an understanding with the Soviet Union had therefore produced good results. The only unhappy incident was the sudden death of Prime Minister Sastri at Tashkent soon after signing the agreement.

Although the Tashkent Agreement brought an end to the state of war, there was no progress towards a settlement of the dispute. On the other hand the war had the effect of aggravating the bitterness in the relations between the two countries, and reduced the possibility of a peaceful settlement. The illusion of superiority of the armed forces so fondly cherished in Pakistan was at last dispelled. As the Indian army proved themselves more than a match in relation to their adversary and their ability to hold Kashmir by force of arms was established, there

was no necessity on the part of India to make any concession in the negotiations to come to terms for a peaceful settlement. The damaging effect of defeat in the border war with China three years ago on the morale of the Indians was at last removed. The war had the effect of hardening the attitude of India towards the dispute.

A balance sheet of the seventeen day war would perhaps be an appropriate conclusion to this crucial episode in the history of Pakistan.

Taking advantage of the growing discontent of the people of Kashmir, the authorities in Pakistan thought it fit to stir up revolt in the Kashmir Valley with the help of armed infiltrators, in order to revive attention of the UNO to the dispute. The mis-adventure got out of hand and soon escalated into an all out war between the two countries. The position of the Indians in the conflict enabled them to maintain the initiative most of the time. Although the Indians failed to destroy the Pakistan armour which was apparently their intention, they were able to achieve their immediate objective of eliminating the infiltrators and restore order in the valley.

The Indian army at last proved themselves to be more than a match for the Pakistan armed forces and the delusion about the ability of the latter to make deep penetration into India was dispelled completely. Having failed to force a military solution of the dispute, it became apparent that partition of Kashmir along the cease fire line was the best bargain which Pakistan could ever hope for ; but no one was in a position to broach the subject yet.

Although the UNO took prompt action to stop the fighting and bring about the disengagement of forces, it failed to take a new look at the dispute and allowed the status quo to prevail. In spite of colossal waste of resources in the war, Pakistan failed to attain any of her objectives ; it ultimately turned out to be an exercise in futility. The "hawkish" elements in the armed forces under the inspiration of the foreign

minister Bhutto, launched an insidious propaganda to the effect that the Army was prevented from obtaining the fruits of victory due to the timidity of President Ayub Khan, who stopped the campaign for liberation of Kashmir, when victory was almost within their grasp ! This sensitive issue was taken up by the opposition groups with a view to damage the reputation of the President. It led to the resignation of Bhutto from the cabinet after a short time. The image of Ayub Khan as the strong armed leader was damaged beyond redemption and could no longer be sustained.

Though a propaganda offensive was launched describing the results of the war as a victory for Pakistan, the inability of the Pakistan armed forces to stop the advance of the Indian army and their failure to make any note-worthy inroads into Indian territory, at last destroyed the delusion of invincibility of the Pakistan army. Above all, it exposed the vulnerability of East Pakistan against enemy action and destroyed the illusion of West Pakistan based defence strategy to ensure her security. The readiness of President Ayub to undertake such an useless gamble over Kashmir exposing the Province to the danger of military invasion, undermined the confidence of the people in his leadership. A demand for locally based defence strategy was soon added to the prevalent demand for administrative and fiscal autonomy, to make East Pakistan a self-contained and autonomous unit of administration.

The bogey of Indian aggression was often used to impress upon the people of East Pakistan the prime necessity of maintaining the unity of the country to ensure survival. The isolation of East Pakistan left defenceless without adequate means to protect herself against enemy attack, compelled the people of the Province to make a reappraisal of their relationship with India. It could no longer be the same as that of West Pakistan having capabilities to defend herself. It became more and more evident that East Pakistan could exist as an independent entity, only with the good will of her neighbour.

Taking advantage of this dichotomy in the new approach in her relations with her neighbour, Indian propaganda mounted a vigorous campaign to alienate East Pakistan from the other region, creating a rift in the way of national integration.

Warfare usually lets loose forces which cannot be anticipated. The seventeen days war had set new trends in the ideas and thinking in many fields, both at home and abroad. U.S. military aid which had a great deal to do with building up the army as well as its operational maintenance, was suspended following the outbreak of the war when their continued supply was needed most leaving the country in the lurch. The government had to spend money out of the cash earnings of the country to replenish her armoury which was a big drain on her limited resources; reducing substantially the funds available for her economic development. The refusal of her allies in the military pacts to come to her assistance in the hour of her need indicated clearly the futility of such pacts ; hence a reappraisal of her old military strategy was necessary. But, there was little indication yet of such realisation. It was given out in knowledgeable circles that President Ayub was practically compelled against his better judgement, to allow the armed forces to launch a limited operation in Kashmir, But intrigues of foreign minister Bhutto with the restless armed forces, ultimately pushed across four to five thousand guerillas over the border, which precipitated all out war with India. Ayub almost became a prisoner in the hands of his armed forces after the war, whose demand for more and more resources become insatiable. The author was informed by the Finance Minister Shoaeb that the entire amount of foreign exchange earnings of the country was spent on defence and the requirements of civilian imports were dependent entirely on foreign aid and loans.

Ayub was no longer able to have as firm a grip on the administration as he could exercise during the first seven years of his rule. Fundamental Rights guaranteed under the constitution which were suspended dur-

ing the war were not restored and remained suspended indefinitely in apprehension of rising popular discontent which might have to be suppressed to enable the regime to remain in power. The star of President Ayub which reached its zenith following the general elections, now set a course of rapid decline, as active opposition to his regime began to raise its head.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Ayub's success in the Elections and its consequences-increasing frustrations among the politically motivated groups and the intelligentsia—aftermath of war with India. The Awami League came up with their Six Points programme as the basis of political settlement—Agartala Conspiracy case and its trial-popular uprising against Ayub Khan—his resignation from the office of President—handing over Government to the C-in-C of the armed forces in contravention of the constitution.

The success of Ayub Khan in the elections defeating the strongest candidate possible, whom the combined opposition groups could put up for the office of the presidency, seemed to clear the political horizon for the time being. It opened up the prospect of stability after years of turmoil and uncertainties which had afflicted the country for more than a decade since independence.

The Government could now turn its attention to the pressing task of long term planning for development with a view to improve economic condition of the people. The new emphasis on improving the quality of life in a country where the majority of the people were living close to subsistence level, at last began to generate a renewed hope for a better life in the near future. The second plan apparently, was able to achieve its objectives in a large measure which created a climate of optimism with the new policy of planning for development.

The draft of the third five year plan, beginning from 1965 was ready for consideration of the government soon after the elections. The new plan contemplated a strategy for the removal of disparity in economic growth in an attempt to tackle an issue

straining the relationship between the central government, and East Pakistan. It made a larger allocation of resources for the public sector in East Pakistan to accelerate her economic growth. The opposition could not suggest an alternative policy by which they could assail the government of Ayub Khan yet.

It has been mentioned earlier in chapter xxxi, how Ayub's land reforms and other institutional innovations like the Basic Democracies and indirect elections, sought to eliminate the land owning elite as well as the urban intelligentsia from the power structure, and bring up a new class of leaders amenable to his wishes. In the sequence of historical evolution, the middle class town dwellers are considered to be the natural successors to the feudal nobility for leadership in the modern political milieu. President Ayub's endeavour to replace the leadership of the urban middle class by his devise of the Basic Democracies, brought up a new lot of politicians who failed to provide and maintain requisite support of the people for his regime. Dissatisfaction of the urban elite with his regime was indicated by the result of the elections in the constituencies of cities like Dhaka and Karachi, the nerve centres of the political life of the country, where majority of the votes were cast against Ayub Khan. This was the outward expression of their opposition to the regime in which they had no commitment. 36 percent of votes polled by the opposition candidates were made up by a large section of the intelligentsia, swelling the number of those who rejected Ayub's constitution. They wanted the return to parliamentary form of government and direct elections. Those institutions became ingrained as a political ideology ; any other system according to their concept was negation of democracy. The sense of belonging which is the test of notionalism, comes from participation of the people in collective endeavours in various levels of national life. In a

democratic society the intelligentsia play the leading role in political activities, through an institutional device created by general agreement and not by imposition. from above. In this age of science and technology they have assumed the dominant position in society everywhere. Ayub's political strategy thus prevented the new generation of leadership to develop who could pursue the task of nation building. He refused to share power with his colleagues so as to enable them to come up in the next line of leadership, who could strengthen his hands and take over the task in his absence. The party which he was compelled to accept as a necessary evil, was dependent more on his charisma, than political standing for its existence. It ultimately became a millstone round his neck, instead of developing into a base for political support. The progressive alienation of the urban middle class and the failure of political institutions to develop, so as to enable them to provide a continuous line of succession in leadership, began to create a climate of uncertainty regarding the future of the country.

The benefits of stability and promise of economic betterment could work up to a point to keep political aspirations in check, so long as the regime could command the confidence of the people in the wisdom of its policy and action. Ayub was in power over seven years in an era of rapid change. It was bound to generate a lot of tension in society, while seeking adjustments to changing conditions. The economic policy of the government, successful as it was to step up production, at the same time led to skewed distribution of wealth, making the rich richer and the poor poorer, denying the benefits of growth to those wallowing in poverty. The land reforms failed to bring about much hoped for revolution in agriculture. The resulting changes also caused much hardship to the poorer section of the peasantry. At the same time continuous increase in the

cost of living, increased the hardship of the fixed income groups particularly the lower middle class and the industrial workers, who were drawn into the vortex of political agitation over the redress of their grievances. Instead of trying to understand the causes of such tension and agitation with a view to devise the proper remedy, the regime thought it fit to declare them as the result of instigation by subversive elements and suppress them by force. The resultant conflict between the people and the regime thus began to get aggravated with the passage of time.

While the country was in such a process of transition, when mounting tension and new forces were seeking adjustment, the unfortunate war with India in 1965 had the effect of aggravating the situation and upset the political balance as well as the economic programme of the government. As mentioned in the last chapter, Pakistan had very little to gain and everything to lose in such a conflict with India. Even the limited objective of reviving the interest of the U.N.O. in the old dispute failed to achieve any result. India not only managed to maintain the grip on her occupied territory, it also had the effect of strengthening her hold on the Kashmir valley. The old myth of superiority of Pakistan arms over the Indians was at last dispelled. It exposed the vulnerability of East Pakistan in such a conflict with her neighbour. Whatever interest the people of West Pakistan might have had in Kashmir, East Pakistan found it completely against her interest to keep the dispute alive. The proclivity of the regime to provoke a war with India over Kashmir having little prospect of success, exposing East Pakistan to the risk of military invasion, undermined the confidence of the people in the intentions of the regime and their concern over the welfare of this province. It had the effect of strengthening

the demand for autonomy, adding further a new demand for local arrangement for her defence.

The propaganda mounted on behalf of the regime that Pakistan army had emerged victorious in the conflict, failed to carry much conviction. It only encouraged the opposition to ask the pertinent question—"if it was a victory, then what did the country gain by winning the war?" "On the other hand the involvement of the armed forces with internal struggle for power, began to generate forces of opposition within the establishment who joined hands with the group led by the foreign minister Bhutto. They blamed President Ayub for his supposed timidity which, it was alleged, prevented the fight to a finish when the armed forces were supposed to be in a position to occupy Kashmir, if they were allowed to do so. Such was the stand taken consistently by the Commanders of the armed forces ever since the dispute over Kashmir pushed the two countries into armed encounters from time to time. Hence the capability of President Ayub to remain the leader of the nation at last came to be questioned. He was no longer the unchallenged leader of the people as he had emerged after the elections.

Modern warfare is an expensive business. It is a total war drawing away the resources from all sectors of national life. President Ayub, while eulogising the army, once told the cabinet that the "fire power" of the army had improved to such an extent, that an infantry division would require "fifty two tons" of ammunition per minute, to make it fully operational. Thus, while indicating the destructive capacity of the armed forces, it also underscored the high cost of sending them to battle. It was amply proved in 1965 war, that the fire power of the Indian Army was no less than what is mentioned above. Hence the fire power could not possibly give an edge to the Pakistan army

over their adversary. On other hand the wasteful conflict compelled the government to divert more and more resources of the poor country for the upkeep of a large standing army, resources which could otherwise be utilised for amelioration of poverty. A conservative estimate calculated the cost of 17 day war with India to be one thousand eight hundred million Pak rupess, equivalent of about four hundred million U.S. dollars, which had to be replenished from the cash earning of the country. This was only one part of the expences of warfare. The country was spending round about 75 percent of her national budget for the upkeep of her armed forces. They were also amply supplemented by American military aid. Such aid was promptly suspended with the outbreak of hostilities, when they were needed most for defence of the country. What purpose such military pacts could serve, was anybody's guess. Now the government had to spend more from her cash earning to replenish her armoury. It was apparent that mutual defence treaties which Pakistan thought fit to conclude with the western powers, could be operative only when fighting a common enemy. The western powers were anxious to maintain friendly relations with both Pakistan and India. How could they assist one against the other? They refused to take sides in a localised conflict between the two. As was natural, they wanted to put pressure on both side to stop fighting by suspending supply of military hardware, so as to prevent extention of the conflagration. Even without the benefit of "hind sight" it was difficult to comprehend, how the policy makers could assume that the partners in the military pacts could come to her aid in an armed conflict with India, when they were on such friendly terms with that country. Since both the power blocks thought it fit to build up the military capabilities of India as

a non-aligned power in the interest of their global strategy, military balance had tipped heavily in favour of India. No one knew better than Ayub himself that any possibility of occupying Kashmir by armed intervention was beyond the range of possibility. Then why take such a risk causing enormous waste of valuable resources of the country in useless warfare ?

The all powerfull military lobby which Ayub himself had done so much to build up, at last became a hindrance to peace and prosperity. They compelled the government to divert more and more resources for the benefit of an ever expanding armed forces, relegating other pressing requirement of government to the background. Under pressure from the top brass of the armed forces, relations with the big neighbour had to be conducted in a manner which would "keep the pot boiling". The large military establishment had all along been seeking an outlet for their energies, for which the Kasmir valley provided the most attractive playground. It was becoming more and more evident, that relations with India could not be normalised so long as the military lobby could maintain their predominant position. As mentioned before, President Ayub in the end found himself almost a prisoner in the hands of his own army, which more than ever remained the real power behind the throne. Nevertheless, it also suited his predilections. He could not contemplate any other source of power to rule the country.

My association with government as a Cabinet minister and access to high society brought to my notice the predominant position the military oligarchy was enjoying in West Pakistan. They however, did not grudge maintaining a facade of democracy to give legitimacy to the government of the day. Whenever his position was assailed by the politicians, Ayub sought to meet the challenge by threats, saying, that his substitution would

only make matters worse for them and bring in a regime more arbitrary and ruthless, than what he could bestow. The armed forces continued to expand. Their emoluments and retirement benefits were increased to keep them contented. The ever expanding officers corps ensured rapid promotions improving their career prospects. There were already more than fifty officers in the rank of generals ; according to another source, there were over seventy of them in command of the armed forces. Pakistan virtually became a name of an "Army, having a state attached" for its maintenance, a maxim by which Prussia was characterised since the day of Frederick-the-Great. President Ayub also loved to compare his regime with that of Prussia and emulate her example if he could.

Beginning from April '65, the rest of the year was spent in warlike activities in Pakistan. It was not until the signing of the Tashkent agreement early in January '66 that the military forces began to withdraw from their respective positions in the battle fields and adverse possession of each others territory was vacated. The flight of civil air-crafts over each others territory which was suspended when hostilities started was resumed at the same time.

The baneful effect of such war-like activities on civil administration was evident from the fact that the consideration of the draft of the third plan, which was ready in June '65, had to be postponed. The plan could not be approved until December '66, i. e. eighteen months after the date it was due to commence. This was necessary because the estimate of real resource on which the plan was formulated, were all upset due to their diversion for the prosecution of the war and replenishment of the armoury. The optimism with which the new plan was prepared expecting a significant growth in the economy of the country, disappeared

almost overnight. Finance minister Shoaib bemoaned the lost opportunities when he observed that at long last when the country could expect to enjoy some benefits of economic growth, everything went up in smoke.

The Stoppage of military aid compelled Pakistan to spend almost the entire amount of her foreign exchange earnings for procurement of military hardware, making the implementation of the plan dependent entirely on foreign aid and loans. Such a predicament put a great deal of constraint on economic activities of the country. It reduced substantially the real resources available for development, at the same time increased the cost of implementation of the projects. The downward revision of the plan was inevitable. As a face saving device, the objective of the plan were maintained as given originally, placing greater emphasis on economy and strict financial control to reduce cost and changes in priorities in favour of the projects having shorter period of gestation. Taking an overall view of the revised strategy for the administration of the plan, the period of achieving the targets had to be stretched in any case, due to shortage of resources. As was inevitable, the welfare sector had to suffer the largest measure of reduction. Severe constraint on resources made it impossible to attain the objectives set by the plan, and gave rise to a scramble for allotment of funds, in which the strength of the lobby and personal influence tended to get the upper hand. Steps for reduction of inter-regional disparity contemplated in the plan was postponed, to be considered in future after the crisis was over. The new post war strategy of planning gave a great deal of edge to the private sector in which West Pakistan with its better developed infrastructure, was far ahead of East Pakistan. Hence inter-regional disparity continued to increase,

putting this province at a greater disadvantage. At the same time it increased the concentration of wealth and power into the hands of a small number of families. Failure of the government to bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities gave rise to a new source of discontent. The regime failed to comprehend its causes and preferred to follow a policy of drift, hoping that the situation would correct itself so long as the economic activities could be maintained at a high level.

The shortage of resources induced the government to take recourse to deficit financing. Although it could relieve the shortage of funds for the time being, it began to produce an inflationary pressure on the price level, increasing the hardships of the fixed and lower income groups. The benefits of economic growth which produced huge profits for a small number of industrial magnates and businessmen, seemed to by pass the vast masses of the people.

While the social change whose tempo began to get accelerated since independence, was seeking adjustment in a new emerging society, the imposition of martial law and Ayub's political innovations only retarded the process and suppressed the movement for the time being, at the same time compounded the difficulties of their accommodation with the passage of time. The growing inter-regional disparity, the skewed distribution of wealth, and lastly impact of recent war with India, all combined to let loose new forces.

The most vocal manifestation of those forces was a radical change in the demand for autonomy in East Pakistan. As yet the demand remained only a political ideal and could not be formulated into a constitutional devise, partly because, the mechanics of the scheme could not be worked out clearly, but mainly

because the people of the province could not be mobilised yet to obtain a favourable response from the rulers and press for its realisation. The isolation of East Pakistan and her vulnerability demonstrated during the recent war and futility of the defence strategy on which so much store was laid by the rulers, at last compelled the leaders of East Pakistan to seek a remedy by which the interests of the province could be safeguarded by their own effort. There was no alternative after what the military rulers had done by a fruitless war with India. The impression that grew in the Province was that in a calculated move, the military obligarchy wanted to keep the dispute alive in order to maintain themselves in power, oblivious of the interests of East Pakistan. There was no end to their arbitrary rule in sight yet. The intervention of the armed forces reduced participation of the East Pakistanis in the political management of the country to a mere formality. The political development following the war, at last took a different turn from a demand for competitive participation of the Bengalis in the Central Government, to a radical change in the East-West relationship. This demand found its expression in the "SIX POINTS" manifesto of the Awami League under the leadership of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. The demands contained in the Six Points taken together, sought to create a confederation of the two regions in place of the federation of the two provinces, virtually making the constituent units independent of each other in all matters, except for foreign affairs and defence. All powers of taxation were to be vested in the units of the confederation, the former having complete control over their respective fiscal and monetary affairs. The centre was made dependent on the units for the contribution of funds to meet the expenses of its establishment and was divested of all powers to raise taxes.

While the "Six Points" gave rise to a lot of controversy, unfortunately, no one thought it fit to find out who could be the author of such an outlandish scheme, calculated to bring about a radical change in the structure of the government of the country. Apart from the question of merits, a lot of thought and political acumen must have been devoted in the preparation of such a scheme which prima facie not only looked simple, but calculated to provide answers to many of the political and economic problems besetting the Province. The scheme did not ask the central government to do more for the Province; on the contrary, it contemplated a change in the constitution to enable the Province to do more for herself and relieve the centre of such functions which it was not in a position to perform to the satisfaction of the Province.

Although the demand for autonomy was not anything new in the political firmament of the country, there was no indication that the Awami League or any other party ever devoted itself to work out a feasible scheme of a new set up as an alternative, in keeping with their ideas. The exercise itself would have generated a lot of discussions and attract attention of the intelligentsia before the scheme could be finalised. No one could imagine that such a scheme could be the brainchild of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman; it could not be an exercise from which others had to be excluded until it emerged in the form of the Six Points. None came forward to claim its authorship. The Six Points manifesto thus dropped into the political arena as if from no where. The scheme was designed to meet the requirements at a psychological moment, when the people were thrown into a state of perplexity regarding the future of their Province and were in search of a panacea for their emancipation.

The Six Points manifesto was passed by the Council of the Awami League early in February '66. They soon launched a vigorous campaign in the province to mobilise popular support. The following month when the Awami League was invited to participate in an all parties' conference at Lahore, Shaikh Mujib got a splendid opportunity to publicise his manifesto in West Pakistan as the demand of his party. He stole the lime light at the Lahore conference by his Six Points, symbolising the first open opposition to the Regime which was growing in both the Regions of the country. No other Party could match the Six Points in their political aspirations. Ayub's regime came increasingly under attack, and the demand for democratising the constitution began to grow more and more vocal in the political circles.

It is unnecessary to go into the merits of the Six Points. What is perhaps important is the response of the President and its impact on the people. The Six Point Manifesto dropped like a bombshell at a psychological moment when the prevailing political set up was no longer found to be suitable. A demand for autonomy for East Pakistan could not be brushed aside any more castigating it as a move towards secession which the ruling coterie was accustomed to do. It became the creed for survival in East Pakistan since the war of 1965 and caught the imagination of the people.

Soon after his return from Tashkent concluding the agreement with India, and before the disengagement of the armed forces could be completed, much harassed Ayub Khan was confronted with a situation which forebode trouble with political agitation on a sensitive issue around Awami League manifesto. He lost no time in coming over to East Pakistan and launched a campaign in the province, decrying the "Six Points" as a move towards disruption of the country and warning the people against the propaganda of those working towards its disintegration.

This was the first campaign in the province since the presidential election held more than a year ago, when a huge crowd of people came to listen to him in his election meetings. The change in the political climate that took place since the September war, made the people less and less receptive to his exhortations and warnings, because, he was unable to offer the province anything in the shape of an alternative, to assuage the feeling of the people after their unhappy experience with his indulgence in warfare. There was no sign of any improvement in the stagnant condition of the economy of the province; neither could he indicate any measure for its recovery. His angry invectives against the "Six Points" failed to arouse the people against the Awami league as he had expected. The characteristic response of the Regime was the use of force to suppress Awami League in order to prevent the propagation of their 'doctrine.' By the middle of the year almost all the important leaders of the party were arrested and cast into prison. Criminal cases were instituted against Shaikh Mujib, who was prosecuted on charges of sedition. As usually happens, the use of force for suppression of freedom of expression gave more publicity to the "Six Points" programme than what all the efforts of the party could do.

There were other opposition parties who did not subscribe to the Six Points manifesto. As yet, there were very few groups who did. But the angry mood in which Ayub thought it fit to look at the situation seems to have blurred his vision and prevented him from realising the possibility of rallying all those parties who did not agree with the Awami League, and thus create a broad based united stand against such a radical demand. His dislike of politicians got the better of his political acumen and stood in the way of making a common cause along with the other like minded parties on this important issue. In the mean

time, Shaikh Mujib in a surprise move declared his Six Points to be negotiable. The timely rejoinder opened the door for negotiations and increased his stature in the eyes of the people.

The war swept aside many old misconceptions, and created a new urge for greater participation of the people in the political affairs of the country. The manner of prosecution of the war and its consequences which left many questions unanswered, at last gave an opportunity to the critics of the President to tarnish his image in the country.

In west Pakistan where the opposition parties, which were anxious to organise agitation against the dictatorial regime, and compel the President to democratise the constitution, were however, taken aback by the radical nature of the demand contained in the new doctrine of the Awami League. They demurred for time being in order to watch developments in East Pakistan before organising their movement.

The economy in West Pakistan had already reached a high level of growth due to her better developed infrastructure, and huge investments in public works such as the Mangla Dam irrigation system and similar works of public utility designed to boost production and employment. The policy of the government to encourage and build up the private sector helped the recovery of their economy a great deal, soon after the war. As the private sector assumed dominant role, it also began to mobilise resources of the country to the region where the facilities were better developed in preference to the backward areas of the country. Expanding opportunities in a buoyant economy, encouraged the people of West Pakistan to avail themselves of increasing opportunities in the economic life of the province and desist from political agitations which might hamper its growth.

As indicated earlier, the diversion of resources of the country from economic development for the prosecution of the war and military build up, perforce reduced substantially the resources available in the public sector for implementation of the Third five year plan. Thus the war, more than anything else produced a crisis of real resources no less than a crisis of confidence in the Regime. In the scramble for resources that followed, East Pakistan got a raw deal. Midterm review of the Plan that took place towards the end of 1967, indicated continued increase of disparity in the economic growth of the two regions of the country. The glimmer of hope created by the measures for the reduction of inter-regional disparity contemplated in the Plan was thus frustrated even before its implementation could get under way.

The political strategy invoked by Ayub contemplated maintaining stability at the cost of freedom, in order to ensure uniform economic development. It could have some sense in a poor country like Pakistan. But when it failed to achieve the desired results in East Pakistan it also lost its *raison d'etre*. Having grasped all the powers in his own hand, he ipso facto assumed the responsibility for the consequences, when the exercise of such powers was ultimately arrogated by the central bureaucracy. With the best of intentions he could not possibly ensure transfer of resources so as to step up economic development of this province. It became more and more evident that under the prevailing system, East Pakistan could never expect to obtain an equitable share, so long as the allocation of resources was controlled by the central bureaucracy at Islamabad. The skewed distribution of power in a country geographically separated into two regions, inevitably led to skewed distribution of resources.

The suspension of fundamental rights during the war enabled the regime to take drastic action against the Awami League and

suppress their movement to mobilise public support in favour of their manifesto. The arrest and detention in prison of almost all their important leaders, prevented escalation of political agitation for the time being. Failure of the regime to offer any alternative to the limited popular participation and demand for provincial autonomy, only postponed the inevitable clash between the ruling coterie and the rising aspirations of the people. Political climate in the country was already destabilised due to causes mentioned before. Relative calm that prevailed after the drastic action taken against the leaders of the Awami League, was only a lull before the storm.

The experience with indirect elections and the manner in which they were conducted, convinced the opposition parties that the system was so heavily loaded against them, that they could never expect to contest the elections on equal terms with the Regime, which could manipulate the process in a decisive manner in their own favour. The war of 1965, gave rise to fresh tensions, setting up new trends in the political arena and the relations between the ruler and the people.

The foreign minister Bhutto, who had to quit the cabinet shortly after the Tashkent Treaty due to disagreement with Ayub, joined hands with the opposition to damage the reputation of President Ayub by his adroit propaganda and writings. He sought to mobilise the people of West Pakistan, particularly the youth and students to whom he soon became a hero. At last he launched his new party under the name of Pakistan Peoples Party—the P.P.P., aligned in opposition to the Regime.

The years 1966 and 1967, were a period when internally the country remained relatively calm. At the same time, the opposition groups were busy to put their house in order and prepare their next programme of action. The curb on political activities imposed by

the suspension of fundamental rights, prevented much outward expression of discontent which was none-the-less brewing in political circles. They were awaiting a favourable opportunity to launch their movement for the restoration of their rights and privileges. While the opposition parties were getting restless to give vent to their feelings, the party supporting the regime, the Muslim League was getting moribund and losing its zest for political work. What I could make out from my contacts with the leading members at party meetings and in informal talks, was the progressive erosion of their morale, presumably due to the change in the Political climate in the country smirching under an authoritarian rule. It has been mentioned before how the group of politicians whom President Ayub gathered round him in the form of a political party, was dependent largely on his charisma for maintaining their status and influence which was shaky all the time.

Although President Ayub decried demand for autonomy, calling it a move towards secession, such thoughts did not find a place in the minds of the intelligentsia of East Pakistan yet. This was confirmed by foreign observers, who made a survey of the relationship that prevailed between the centre and the province before 1965. In spite of all the discontent that prevailed, people were fully conscious of their dependence on West Pakistan for defence. That alone made any active thought of secession out of place. The experience of the war of 1965 at last changed that position. It became clearly evident that East Pakistan could not be defended from the other Regions; that a radical change in the relations with India was necessary for the welfare of the province. The interest of the centre and West Pakistan in Kashmir affairs, which had created the strained relations between the two countries, turned out to be inimical to the vital interests of East Pakistan. This question became the subject of frequent discussions.

among the educated circles, at times leading to exchange of hot words between the groups representing the two different points of view. Such views even spread among the rank and file of the armed forces. It must have attracted the attention of the observers in India and their intelligence sources, who at last found an opportunity to fan the flame of discontent in the province against the centre in various manner. Indian propaganda offensive at last provided an opportunity to the regime to hatch a case of conspiracy against their political adversaries, mentioned hereafter.

The governor of East Pakistan, Abdul Monem Khan completed his term of five years tenure in oct. 1967, when a change was expected in the normal course. While his political tactics and intrigue helped to keep the opposition in check, his methods increasingly alienated the people from the regime. His crude methods not only made him unpopular among all sections of the people, it also damaged the reputation of the President a great deal. But, for reasons best known to himself, he made a different assessment of Monem Khan and thought it fit to extend his term of office. Such a decision ultimately aggravated the difficulties of political management and pushed the uncommitted groups to join hands with the opposition.

It was in such a climate of discontent and turmoil, that a criminal case of conspiracy to wage war against the country was instituted in January '68, against thirty-two accused persons. The case came to be known as the Agartala Conspiracy Case. The accused persons were charged with entering into a conspiracy with Indian agents to bring about the secession of the province from Pakistan by armed uprising. The only commissioned officer among those accused persons, was an officer of the navy with the rank of commander. Three belonged to the civil service. Among others,

there were a few non-commissioned officers of the armed forces, The name of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman was added to the list some time later, increasing the total number of accused persons to thirtythree. Shaikh Mujib had been in jail for more than a year and one of the civil officers, namely K. S. Rahman was serving on a foreign assignment in Indonesia when the case was instituted. The fact that Shaikh Mujib was in prison when the alleged conspiracy was hatched, the heterogeneous background of the persons involved, and the scattered stations where they were posted, all combined to give an air of unreality to the charges levelled against them. Apart from the facts mentioned above, the status of the accused persons could not possibly enable them to create any material threat to the integrity of the country for which they were prosecuted. To make the case look much more serious than what it possibly could be, the government thought it fit to set up a Special Tribunal of three judges, presided over by a retired chief justice of the Supreme Court to try the case against all the accused put together. Although the trial was held inside the jail, arrangements were made to admit reporters from the press into the court room to give publicity to the proceedings of the tribunal, It was believed that the disclosure of conspiracy with Indian agents would whip up hostile reaction against Shaikh Mujib and his associates and destroy their political standing.

The proceedings of the tribunal provided a good opportunity to publicise the grievances of the province and generally highlight the harassment of those who attempted to protest against the unjust treatment meted out to the province by the Central government. The prosecution of the accused was apparently instituted to silence the voice of discontent in the province over such issues, but it produced just the opposite effect. As the trial dragged on day after day. The attention of the people was drawn more and more to

the grievances of the province against the centre, rather than the merits of the charges against the accused.

The opposition parties of the moderate school of thought in both the provinces in the mean time entered into an alliance towards the middle of 1967 under the name of Pakistan Democratic Movement (The P. D. M.). They came to an agreement on a formula which provided greater measure of autonomy to the Provinces than the constitution of 1956, but did not go as far as the Six Points of the Awami League. There was thus polarisation of approach on the issue of autonomy among the opposition parties. Shaikh Mujib's declaration that his Six points were negotiable created a climate of optimism for a settlement of the vexed question which embittered the relations between the centre and the Province. But Agartala Conspiracy case came as a bolt from the blue and at last destroyed all hopes for a settlement.

Bhutto and his followers consisting of the younger section of the people and industrial workers of west Pakistan, took an independent line, building up opposition to Ayub. In this way when all the opposition parties were getting organised to launch a movement against the the Regime, President Ayub was taken seriously ill in February or March '68. His illness kept him out of office for more than two months. It created almost a constitutional crisis. The constitution laid down that during the temporary absence or incapacity of the President, the Speaker of the National Assembly would act in his place to conduct the affairs of the state. Although Ayub was confined to bed in a semi-conscious condition for more than a fortnight, the speaker was not called upon to assume his responsibilities in the absence of the President. Ceremonial functions which could not be postponed, such as the Republic Day parade was performed by the Home Minister, a retired admiral of the navy. Earnest discussions were

held among the higher echelon of the military and civil establishment to arrive at a decision on the subject of a successor, in the life time of President Ayub. It became evident that none but the military high command could decide who could be the successor in case Ayub failed to resume his office. The provisions of the constitution on this behalf were completely ignored.

On the political front, the opposition parties were going ahead with their organisational work mentioned before. They were not in a position to start their united movement yet. They wanted to initiate negotiations with President Ayub before launching any agitation for fulfilment of their demand. President's illness created a state of uncertainty ; so they thought it fit to wait for the time being to see how the situation unfold itself. On the other hand there was virtual paralysis in the Pakistan Muslim League Party, the political front of the Regime. They could neither open negotiations with the opposition nor deal with the question of succession.

When Ayub Khan recovered from his illness and resumed his office, he was no longer in his old self. He lost a lot of his mental and physical vigour. He could devote less time on his official work, leaving much of his task to higher officials to manage. He could hardly pay adequate attention to political work. Interview with politicians and party workers were reduced to the minimum, which adversely affected the sagging morale of his party at a time when the opposition was making fresh inroads into the political arena and gaining in popularity. He was compelled to suspend his mass contact tours. His occasional address to the nation became fewer and far between. Under such circumstances no one could broach the subject of opening negotiations with the opposition on constitutional issues, at a time when it could still be discussed in a calm and reasonable frame of mind.

President Ayub thought it fit to take a tough line with the opposition. He was adamant on the issue of constitutional reforms. Finding no other alternative the opposition groups at last launched their agitation early in the cold weather with their usual device of public meetings, procession and strikes. Unlike previous occasions when East Pakistan usually took the lead, this time the agitations were started first in West Pakistan beginning from Rawalpindi and Karachi. Bhutto, who was taking a leading part, was arrested early in November. Firing on the demonstrators occurred in Peshawar following trouble with the students at Rawalpindi. Important personages like General Azam Khan, Justice Morshed and Air Marshal Asghar Khan announced their decision to enter politics against Ayub Khan, providing an added impetus to the movement which was daily gaining in momentum. Early in December '68, the agitation extended to East Pakistan, where among other, the students and journalists observed their protest day, followed by similar call by other political parties. The different opposition groups who were organising strikes and demonstrations separately, at last formed a coalition early in January '69, under the name of Democratic Action Committee (D. A. C.). It soon assumed the role of an united movement, in which the middle class, the students, and industrial workers combined to bring down the regime from power by direct action.

Neither the ruling coterie, nor the administration could realise the magnitude of the pent up feelings behind the opposition movement. In course of briefing on political situation given by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the cabinet was told that the agitations were confined among political malfactors seeking to establish themselves and were not of a serious nature. They would soon be put down by the law-enforcing authorities. It was a misleading assessment and it encouraged President Ayub sit tight

and refuse to have anything to do with the opposition. The continued rise in the cost of living, particularly since the September war, had increased the economic hardship of the people. The government failed to take effective measures to relieve such hardship, which generated increasing discontent among the people. Finding the scope for participation in politics limited under Ayub's constitution, the urban middle class became discontented and readily lent their support which heightened the tempo of agitation against the regime and began to spread in different parts of the country.

In a surprise move to relieve the economic hardship, President Ayub announced unilaterally, twenty-per cent increase in the wages of industrial workers and all low paid employees. As was inevitable, increase of pay without ensuring increase of supply of essential goods immediately set a price hike, setting at naught any benefit sought to be given by such increase of remunerations. Far from pacifying the agitation, the announcement of the award only heightened its tempo, and encouraged other group to step up their demand and launch fresh agitation. The teachers of educational institutions organised hunger strikes to press their demand for upward revision of their pay. The clerks and messengers in the government offices, became restless seeking to ventilate their grievances and press for improvement in the terms and conditions of their employment.

In East Pakistan, the movement soon spread into the rural areas in the form of agitation against the corrupt and oppressive officials. The trial of the Agartala conspiracy case, which failed to create the desired impact began to generate protests against the manner in which investigation was conducted. Grave doubts were created about the alleged guilt of the accused. To make matters worse, one of the accused namely Sargeant Zahoorul Haq was shot

dead while in military custody and another seriously injured under mysterious circumstances which touched off violent demonstrations in the city in protest against the killing of the accused.

The administration thought it fit not to take a hard line against the agitators. In spite of directions given by General Musa, the Governor of West Pakistan to shoot to kill, there were very few cases of firing. In many places, both the police and the military forces stood by allowing the demonstrators to have their way. It became evident that the armed forces would not open fire and shoot down the agitators, unless they were provoked. The knowledgeable circles began to wonder whether President Ayub was at last losing the support of his armed forces. As the movement of the opposition began to spread and gain in intensity, it undermined the morale of the administration which let things take their own course.

The agitation all over the country soon turned into a united movement under the leadership of the Democratic Action Committee and belied the assessment of the Home Ministry mentioned before. President Ayub was at last persuaded to open negotiations with them to arrive at a settlement of the political issues and invited them to a Round Table Conference. While accepting the invitation in principle, the leaders of the D.A.C. came to the conclusion that such a conference would be fruitless without the presence of Shaikh Mujibur Rahaman; hence they refused to attend unless he was also invited. But how a person accused in a case of conspiracy against the regime could be invited to participate in a conference with the head of the State? Still, time was running out and something had to be done to break the deadlock and clear the way for negotiations.

On the 21st of February, '69 the day of the anniversary of the Bengali language movement, President Ayub announced he would

not stand for the next presidential election and he would retire after the expiry of the current term of office. The next day government announced the withdrawal of the Agartala conspiracy case. Shaikh Mujib along with the rest of the accused persons were all set at liberty. The rebels against the regime fighting for freedom and democracy, were at last turned into heroes in the eyes of the people. It is significant that there was no demand for immediate resignation of president Ayub. The opposition parties, individually or jointly, were not in a position to assume the responsibility of forming a government. They wanted their demands fulfilled by putting pressure on him. Hence his presence as President was still necessary to settle the dispute between him and the opposition parties as well as working out an agreement on constitutional reforms.

The Round Table Conference opened at Rawalpindi on the 26th of Feb. After preliminary talks it was adjourned till the 10th of March to enable Shaikh Mujibur Rahman to attend. Except for Moulana Bhasani and Bhutto, the leaders of the opposition parties agreed to participate. Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, on behalf of the opposition parties of West Pakistan, and Shaikh Mujib on behalf of East Pakistan, presented their respective demands for a radical change in the constitutional set up of the country. While Ayub was prepared to relent on the issues of parliamentary government and direct elections, he turned a deaf ear to the demand for provincial autonomy. Such a decision eased the tension in West Pakistan a great deal, because the purpose of their movement was achieved. But the announcement did little to cool down the temper in East Pakistan, where provincial autonomy was the main issue agitating the mind of the politicians which was by-passed by the President.

The C in-C. General Yahya Khan came to attend a cabinet meeting, when the agitation took a serious turn. The question of imposing martial law was discussed. There was a difference of opinion about

the position of the President under martial law, should its imposition become necessary. Contrary to the stand taken by him in Oct. '58, when he accepted the position of the Chief Martial Law Administrator under an elected President, he expressed the view that he could not continue to be the President, where the Chief Martial Law administrator must assume the full responsibilities of the government. It disclosed for the first time his reluctance to remain President any longer.

The administration in East Pakistan almost collapsed following the round table conference, and control was virtually taken over by the leaders of the movement, notably by the students' action group, who took the leading part in the agitation. It became evident that civil administration could not be restored without a satisfactory political settlement. The uneasy truce was allowed to prevail in the midst of chaos and confusion, when in an attempt to restore confidence, both the governors were changed. Abdul Monem Khan quietly fled the province and betook himself to Rawalpindi to escape the wrath of the people. Dr. M. N. Huda was sworn in as the new governor of East Pakistan.

The inactivity of the armed forces in relation to political agitation undoubtedly provided a lot of encouragement to the latter, particularly in West Pakistan. They had the ostensible reason not to get involved in a clash with their own kith and kin over political issues with which they were not concerned. But there could be other reasons for their masterly inactivity.

West Pakistan was more or less free from political agitations until the recent troubles. Even the dissatisfaction over the amalgamation of smaller provinces into one unit failed to whip up any agitation over the issue. The principal reason for keeping the Region free from anti-government agitations was the presence of the big military establishment, which could easily

suppress them. No one was more conscious of this truth than the armed forces themselves. They would not allow any body other than their own choice to be the head of the state. This position became clear when the question of succession came to be discussed during Ayub's last illness as mentioned before. People at large were wondering why the armed forces were indifferent to the political agitation of the opposition parties causing such embarrassment to government. It was undoubtedly a manifestation of the same old phenomenon, when a large standing army—like the Pretorian Guards of ancient Rome—was seeking a change of the ruler, so, that they could embark on new conquests, Having recovered from the shock of the war of Sept, '65, they were again becoming restless to find an outlet for their energies for which the government of the country was the most attractive target. Field Marshal Ayub Khan had enjoyed undisturbed fruits of power over ten years. There were other powerful generals who wanted to emulate his example and step into his shoes.

The last action of President Ayub, changing the governors of the provinces was apparently not approved by the military establishment, who had already started preparations for a coup under the martial law to take over the government. The opportunity to capture power was far too attractive a proposition to be given up any case. It could be done so easily when the administration was on the verge of collapse, providing ample justification for such action. So they could not allow restoration of normalcy before taking over the government of the country. Soon after Dr M. N. Huda was sworn in as the governor, President Ayub in a broadcast to the nation announced his resignation, on the 25th of March '69. He also added at the same time that power had been handed over to the

Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, General Yahya Khan. Thus he ignored the provisions of the Constitution of his own making under which the only person who could legally take over as the president, was the Speaker of the National Assembly. Ayub Khan violated the supreme law of the land not only once but twice, destroying the sanctity of law, making constitutional government difficult to sustain in the country. It so happened that those who were in the best position to help build the requisite institutions in order to set the country on the road to democracy were least concerned with the attainment of the cherished ideal. After more than two decades' experiment with representative government, the possibility of establishing democracy remained as far removed as ever in Pakistan.

The next morning, General Yahya Khan announced the abrogation of the constitution and the imposition of martial law, making himself the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Thus ended the experiment with democracy in Pakistan.

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Pakistan placed again under Martial Law—Abrogation of Ayub's constitution—General Yahya Khan's promise to hold general elections and convene a National Assembly to frame a new constitution—Shaikh Mujibur Rahman emerges as the undisputed leader in East Pakistan—Success of the Awami League, winning absolute majority in the election, upset military rulers' plan and calculations—end of national consensus and leadership—final break and civil war—Liberation of Bangladesh.

I left Islamabad soon after the dissolution of the Cabinet of Ayub Khan and returned home to Dhaka early in April '69. Four years at Rawalpindi and Islamabad I spent like a camp life ; so there was hardly any problem and little concern about settling down in our home at Dhaka. I had spent long thirty-six years in public service which took me around as many as eighteen different places, making an average of two years at each station. Setting up a new establishment and dismantling the same ones every two years involved both physical as well as mental strain specially for the housewife, which only those who had gone through the process can appreciate. Although we had built a house in Dhaka we did not have the good fortune to live in it as yet. My wife felt much relieved at the prospect of settling down for good in a home of her own.

For the first time I had the taste of retirement, which usually conjures up the picture of a life having very little to do. In course of my service life, the affairs of running a home attracted very little attention. That was entirely the task of the housewife, which she had to do with the help of such aids as she could gather to assist her. But now

the task of setting up a home without the aid of willing hands of my personal staff who were of such help in the past, at last called for my attention and kept me busy for the time being. But soon the task was reduced to humdrum business of daily life, leaving me a lot of leisure to devote to such work as I liked to do. While on active service the days seemed to be too short for all the work to be done; now time began to hang heavy while I could find so little to keep myself engaged. It was about this time I got the idea of writing my reminiscences to fill my leisure hours. I found little difficulty recalling past events. Actually the difficulty was created in the process of picking and choosing - what to put in and which to reject. It has been my endeavour to write on such events which were likely to be of general interest and reject those which were more or less of personal concern. Thus I began to gather my recollections based on a time table beginning with childhood memories across my academic life through school, college and university and lastly my service life, which provided the framework of these reminiscences.

About the end of August '69 five months after leaving Islamabad, I was offered the job of resident director of the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company, stationed at Dhaka. The incumbent, Dr. A.M. Malik was invited to join the central council of ministers set up by President Yahya Khan. The managing director Mr. R.A. Bhimji, an old friend from Karachi was good enough to call and offer the the job. It came at a time when I was looking for something to do and I willingly accepted it.

The new job brought me in close touch with the world of business, in which we usually find ourselves at the receiving end. The Insurance company I joined managed to obtain a large share of the business transacted in the country in recent years and was planning further expansion in the form of new schemes. One of the new projects the company had undertaken was a twentyfour storey building, designed to be the tallest

in the city with a revolving restaurant on the top. A team of local architects and engineers was commissioned to prepare and implement the project, which was a pioneering venture. I was also invited to join the Board of Directors of a number of other companies, a Hotel a jute mill and was elected a Director of the "Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation" (PICIC), an important institution in the country for the promotion of modern industries. Early in 1970, the Central Government appointed me Chairman of the "Equity Participation Fund", another agency for financing small and medium size industries. In this way I again found myself engaged almost full time in the semi-official and the business world.

Let me now revert to the important events which were destined to determine the shape of the things to come in the country.

The constitution of a country prescribes a procedure for changing its provisions as they become necessary in course of time ; but it does not provide for its abrogation. It could only be destroyed by a revolution or a military coup by which the new rulers could secure effective control over the state. This position was confirmed by a ruling of the Supreme Court of Pakistan soon after the imposition of martial law in 1958. In a leading case known as "The State vs. Dossa", the court held that "a victorious revolution or a successful coup-d' etat is an internationally recognised legal method of changing the constitution. The ruling of the court recalled the dictum of Karl Marx, where he wrote that force was the ultimate arbiter of all issues. The truth underlying the dictum of Marx was amply demonstrated in our lifetime by the course of events that took place in Pakistan. The Constitution, rule of law, fundamental rights which are supposed to regulate living conditions in modern society, repeatedly became casualties, and were discarded as scraps of paper under pressure of the politics of weapons.

Basically, the motivation behind the imposition of martial law by General Yahya remained the same which had prompted General

Ayub to assume power in 1958, i.e. to establish and maintain the preponderance of the armed forces in the country. The instability of popular government and weakness of the political parties provided favourable opportunity to General Ayub to capture power through martial law, although no one could foresee a state of emergency by any stretch of imagination, which could justify such a drastic action. This was perhaps the first time when a popular government was overthrown by a coup-d-etat staged by the army on the plea of alleged incompetence. General Ayub successfully struck at a time when the stage was set for the first general elections under a new Constitution prepared by an elected assembly. His action thus frustrated the next logical step in political development towards building the institutions of democracy. It reversed the process and established an authoritarian regime, which never hesitates to employ any means at its disposal to perpetuate itself.

Having successfully grasped the reins of government, the military junta was not prepared to give up their power and privilege so easily. The popular agitation against President Ayub was directed to compel him to change the constitution so as to bring it in line with the prevailing concept of democracy ; not to destroy if Acceptance of such a demand would have increased popular control over the government and reduce the power of the armed forces over the civil administration. Such a development on the political front the military junta could not possibly have tolerated. The procedure laid down in the constitution to bring about a change in case of resignation of the President, would have defused the prevailing tension, as it would have achieved the immediate purpose of agitation and restore normalcy. But this was not allowed to take place. While the popular demand had to be contained, at the same time the position of the armed forces had to be maintained in tact. The imposition of martial law could achieved both the purposes simultaneously. It immediately stopped all agitation, as well as

postponed the issue of popular government to be considered in due course.

Politicians who hardly, if ever cared to abide by the principles and conventions of constitutional government in their struggle for power, were perhaps too naive in assuming that while they considered themselves free to adopt any means at their disposal to achieve their purpose, the military junta would conduct themselves according to the rules of the game which were outside their vocation. It was a fact of life that they were assuming a political role in the country outside the purview of popular control. But they were not bound by any custom or convention except those which they thought fit to observe. Those who could capture power by the force of arms were not usually inclined to conduct themselves on the basis of a self-denying ordinance. Even after living a number of years under the suffocating atmosphere of martial law, the politicians still failed to realise the consequence of unconstitutional action in pursuit of their objective. When an opportunity came to clear the deck for the realisation of popular government, agitational tactics and recourse to violence defeated their purpose and brought down the same old martial law once more for their suppression. The politicians could not adapt themselves to a situation which called for a guarded approach towards their goal and desist from provoking their adversary who had command over vastly superior forces at their disposal. Having pulled down the edifice of civil administration by unconstitutional methods, they allowed themselves once again to be deluded by renewed promise of withdrawal of martial law and restoration of democracy, as was done in the past by Ayub Khan when he captured power in 1958. In the last analysis, democracy is a form of government where policies are formulated through discussions among the representatives of the people and public affairs are conducted under their supervision. Each time this was sought to be achieved by force and violence, the objective

receded further and further from the grasp of the politicians and their ilk.

Soon after assuming power as the Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Yahya in his broadcast assured the nation that the sole purpose of imposing martial law was to assist the civil administration restore peace and order and enable people to resume their normal way of life which was disrupted by civil commotion over the last six months. He promised to pay immediate attention to the pressing problems confronting the different sections of the people, such as the students and the industrial labour, and initiated a round of consultations with the leading citizens to ascertain ways and means for the restoration of popular government.

Unlike General Ayub, who had engineered his coup-d-etat after careful formulation of his plans which he wanted to implement, President Yahya did not seem to have any pre-conceived ideas of his own regarding the political issues, other than the restoration of normal process of government. He realised the necessity of keeping both politics and politicians on his side for running the government of the country. He did not take any penal action against the politicians as Ayub had done to make his position secure. In an effort to find out the prevailing mood of the politicians and the leaders of public opinion, he undertook an extensive tour through out the country with a view to obtain first hand knowledge of the consensus that prevailed. It was not until the end of November 1969., that he thought it fit to make an announcement and address the nation in a broadcast to indicate his findings on the problems confronting the future constitution. Although there was a large measure of agreement on the basic issues, there were still divergence of opinion on the detailed provisions of the constitution which had to be sorted out before a consensus could be established. The points on which there was no disagreement were the dissolution of West Pakistan into its four constituent provinces as they

existed before their amalgamation into one unit ; the federal parliamentary form of government ; the principle of one man one vote ; direct elections on the basis of adult franchise and the fundamental rights enforcable by law. The Islamic character of the constitution was to be maintained, but its nature and extent were not spelt out.

Although the constitution was to be framed by a National Assembly elected by the people, the President though it fit to lay down certain basic principles called the "Legal Framework Order" within the limits of which the provisions of the constitution were to be formulated. A time limit of 120 days was laid down, within which the National Assembly was to complete its task. The Constitution Bill passed by the Assembly was to be presented to the President for authentication. The Assembly would stand dissolved in case the President refused to authenticate the Bill. The ultimate power for promulgating the constitution was therefore retained by the President himself. The ruling coterie thus made sure that no constitution could be promulgated unless all the provisions conformed with the pattern set by the "Legal Framework Order" (L.F.O.)

On the crucial issue of provincial autonomy the L.O. laid down the following principles :-

"—all powers, including legislative, administrative and financial, shall be so distributed between the federal government and the Provinces, that the Provinces shall have maximum autonomy ; that is to say maximum legislative, administrative and financial powers ; but the Federal Government shall also have adequate powers including legislative administrative and financial powers to discharge its responsibilities in relation to external and internal affairs and to reserve the independence and territorial integrity of the country".

The L.F.O. which provided the basis on which the political parties were expected to participate in the elections, was announced by the President in a broadcast to the nation towards the end of March

'70. At the same time the date of general elections was fixed for the 5th of October the same year.

In spite of all the limitations placed on the powers of the National Assembly, the political parties agreed to participate in the elections. Only one section of the National Awami Party (N.A.P.), who were close associates of Moulana Bhasani refused to participate. They thought it fit to adhere to their doctrine of all out opposition to the established authority of any kind.

In the campaign for general elections that followed, the Awami League was far ahead of other parties right from the beginning. The groundwork of the Awamis was prepared by their propaganda on "Six Points" over the last four years. Prosecution of Shikha Mujib in Agartala Conspiracy case which made him a hero in the eyes of the Bengalis, improved the position of the party which he represented. As the date of the general elections drew near, other parties except the A.L., combined in a move to postpone the elections on the ground that monsoon rain and floods in the months of Aug. Sept. would disrupt communications, creating difficulties in the way of their campaign as well as for the voters travelling to the polling stations immediately after the floods. Actually they found themselves left far behind in the election campaign by the A.L. They wanted more time in the hope of improving their prospects in the elections. Disregarding the protests of Shaikh Mujib who wanted the elections to be held according to the schedule already announced, the President thought fit to shift the date from the 5th of Oct. to the 7th of December to accommodate the other parties.

The election campaign of 1970, at last revealed the trend of political development since the later part of Ayub regime, making the two regions drift apart and away from the national consensus. The nine political parties who took part in the elections could be divided into two broad categories - (a) those who claimed national status and were

supposed to command support in both the regions of the country, such as the several groups of the Muslim League, and the Jamate Islami and (b) those who were predominantly regional in character, such as the Awami League in East Pakistan and Bhutto's Peoples' Party in West Pakistan, who had no pretensions of having much to do with the region other than whose interest they could claim to represent. As the election campaign got into its strides, it became more and more evident that the parties claiming a nationwide status had very little standing in the country particularly in East Pakistan, where the only party enjoying mass support was the Awami League.

This was the first general elections as such, after long twenty three years since independence which was going to decide the fate of the country. Far from making any progress towards national integration, the political parties which provided the forum as well as the instrument for nation building, began to disintegrate and settle down into regional organisations. An attempt to analyse the causes which possibly retarded the process of political development in the line desired by most people, has been made in the foregoing chapters. Where fresh attempts were going to push the country, was yet to be seen.

When the fate of the country was thus hanging in the balance and the situation called for close watch and exercise of all the wisdom which the leaders could command to keep the country on an even keel, President Yahya thought it fit to go abroad on a tour of China towards the beginning of November. The lack of wisdom in leaving the country at such a juncture was soon revealed by the unexpected developments at home. While abroad he received information that a conspiracy was being hatched to stage a coup by some ambitious generals which compelled him to cut short his tour and return in a hurry. At home he was confronted with a host of angry senior officers, demanding promotion to the higher ranks. The President was compelled to concede to their demand, al-beit in part, to satisfy the

higher echelon of the defence service officers, although there were no vacancies.

While the President was busy trying to pacify the top brass of the armed forces, the off shore islands and the coastal areas of the Province were struck by a severe cyclone and storm surge early in November. It was one of the worst natural disasters the Province had ever suffered, inflicting untold suffering, in which nearly half a million lost their lives. The magnitude of the disaster called for prompt action and extensive relief operations to alleviate hardship and rehabilitation of the survivors. The news of the calamity mobilised many international agencies to extend their assistance. The British government was good enough to send a large amount of relief materials on board an air-craft carrier and mobilised the personnel of the ship to distribute relief in the stricken areas. In marked contrast to the response of foreign agencies and the needs of the situation, the response of the government of Pakistan was of routine nature and inadequate in every way. Although the President came to see for himself and made a survey of the stricken area from an air-craft, his erst while confrontation with the armed forces, and the pre-occupation of the leaders in West Pakistan with the elections made them unresponsive to the needs of this region in such a situation. Apparent indifference of the Central government in such an emergency could not but create an adverse reaction in the Province on the eve of the elections. It strengthened the position of the Awami League demanding autonomy on the basis of their Six Points manifesto. Moulana Bhasani after a tour of the afflicted area, where he found very little effort on the part of the government to provide relief, openly declared his support for autonomy and called upon the people to vote for the Awami League. No more evidence or arguments were necessary to induce the voters to exercise their choice.

The ruling coterie was more concerned with their plan for dealing with the post election situation, than the question of relief for the victims

of natural disaster. They visualised the Awami League to emerge as the single largest party in East Pakistan and Bhutto's Peoples Party to be the biggest group from West Pakistan in the National Assembly. The possibility of any one of them obtaining an absolute majority in the National Assembly did not pass their mind. It was estimated that in a multiparty house, coalition of two or more parties would be necessary to adopt any important decision. Such a situation would enable the ruling junta to balance the different groups in a manner which would induce the house take decisions in keeping with their wishes. The constitution could thus be framed on the basis of a consensus of the conservative sections of the House, putting the extremist elements out of the way as they thought fit.

The National Assembly was made up with 300 members elected from general constituencies and 13 seats for women. East Pakistan was allotted 162 general seats in proportion to her population. In the elections the Awami League won 160 seats from the general and seven from the women's constituencies, giving the party absolute majority in the House. The Peoples Party of Bhutto emerged as the largest Party in West Pakistan capturing 81 general seats. Other parties, including those claiming national status, could obtain only a small number of seats who could not possibly exercise much influence on the proceeding of the Assembly. Almost the same pattern of membership was repeated in the Provincial Assembly elections.

Three parties thus emerged after the elections in the political arena who could make or mar the future of the country, namely, (a) the Military Junta headed by President Yahya Khan, (b) Bhutto and his Peoples Party and (c) Shaikh Mujib and his Awami League. The ultimate power was retained by the President under the L.F.O., to make sure that the constitution conformed with the ideas of the ruling coterie. After their victory in the elections, the general mood among the Awami League was of confidence and there was little indication yet of a move towards sece-

ssion. In view of the time limit of 120 days set under the L.F.O. to complete the task, the Awami League appointed a committee of parliamentarians to go ahead with preparations of a draft of the new constitution which put the wind up in the corridor of power.

Bhutto at last found himself in a quandary. Although his party, the P.P.P. could secure the majority of seats from West Pakistan in the National Assembly, as a group they were in a minority in the House which deprived him of the opportunity of capturing power at the centre and forming his ministry, Finding himself out of office and his party reduced to the position of permanent minority, Bhutto thought it fit to adopt pressure tactics to compel Shaikh Mujib to share power with him as a price for allowing the normal constitutional process to operate.

The result of the elections also upset the calculations of the military junta who were reluctant to allow Shaikh Mujib and his Awami League to dominate the Central Government. They found Bhutto too willing to co-operate in a plan to compel the Shaikh to come to terms over the issue of constitution making and power sharing before summoning the the National Assembly, so as to prevent the Awami League to carry everything as they wished by virtue of their absolute majority in the House.

As the leader of the majority in the House, Shaikh Mujib had the right to advice the President to summon the N.A. He proposed the middle of February ; but under pressure from Bhutto, the date was fixed on the following 3rd of March, to allow him adequate time he needed to bargain with the Shaikh.

The first step to put Yahya—Bhutto plan into operation was taken by the former soon after the elections, when he announced publicly that the leaders of the political parties should get together for discussions with a view to arrive at a consensus over the draft of the constitution before the N.A. was summoned. The headquarters of the N.A. was located at Dhaka during the Ayub regime ; hence the members had to

come to Dhaka for their business. Early in January, Bhutto along with his aids arrived Dhaka for their talks with Mujib and his associates.

The discussions bogged down on the question of power sharing. How could power be shared between two parties in a parliamentary form of government, except in a ministry formed by a coalition of the different parties ? The A.L. had obtained an absolute majority in the House. So there was no necessity for coalition with other parties to conduct the business of the House. They were returned on the basis of an election manifesto—the Six Points—wihich they were duty bound to implement. A coalition on the basis of a compromise on the burning political issues was therefore out of question. On the other hand Bhutto made no secret of his opposition to the “Six Points”, which he now made his point of departure for bargaining with the Shaikh and his party. The political doctrine of the latter was maximum provincial autonomy, as opposed to a strong centre prefered by Bhutto which turned out to be harmful to the interest of this region. The “Six Points” were formulated to give shape and form to the new scheme of government in keeping with the vital interests of the Province. The commitments of the ruling coterie and the results of the general elections at last gave an opportunity to the A.L. to implement their mandate, an opportunity which might not come again. The rise of Shaikh Mujib and his party to the predominant position was based on their doctrine ; hence any compromise on the basic issues was likely to push them into political wilderness. Earlier, announcement of the Shaikh that the Six Points were negotiable had some validity before the elections ; but having obtained the mandate by the verdict of the electorate, it ceased to be negotiable. Shaikh Mujib was therefore unable to oblige Bhutto, who returned home without the prospects of sharing power in the central government. It is note worthy that the other minority parties of West Pakistan except one were prepared to participate in the N.A. without prior agree-

ment. The nation could thus look upon the freshly elected N.A. to thrash out a constitution to resolve the political deadlock and restoration of popular government, even without the collaboration of Bhutto and his Party.

The issue of provincial autonomy was not confined to East Pakistan alone. Since the dismemberment of West Pakistan into four provinces as they had existed before their integration, the question of their relationship with the centre also became a live issue. The constitution could not possibly provide different quantum of autonomy to different provinces. Distribution of powers between the centre and the province contemplated in the scheme under the "Six Points" would leave very little functions with the Central Government and virtually reduce the country into the position of a confederation, where the centre would be dependent for its existence on the contributions from the constituent units to pay for its establishment. It was indeed an anomalous position, consequences of which were difficult to foresee. The ruling coterie as well as Bhutto and his party found themselves in a situation in which the provinces could assume almost all the powers of government leaving the centre with very little to do. They were thus confronted with the unhappy prospect of getting squeezed out of the corridor of power.

As could be expected, none of the losers was prepared to accept such a position in silence. Unfortunately negotiations that followed, failed to work out a compromise and resolve the impasse. In a desperate bid to force the Shaikh to relent, Yahya and Bhutto combined in an unholy alliance to block the session of the N.A., until the former agreed to come to terms with them.

It has been mentioned above that President Yahya summoned the N.A. on the 3rd of March in order to give Bhutto sufficient time to negotiate with Shaikh Mujib, disregarding the advise of the latter who wanted an earlier date. Having failed to induce the Shaikh to share power with him at the centre, Bhutto announced that he and his party

would boycott the N.A., at the same time he told the other members from West Pakistan to do the same. He threatened dire consequence to those who disobeyed his directions. The country was still ruled under martial law and it was apparent that such threats could not be held out by a politician without the blessings of the military junta. This was revealed when on the first of March, barely forty-eight hours before the N.A. was due to meet at Dhaka, Yahya announced postponement of the N.A. since die.

In the past, although thwarted in their endeavour to obtain the necessary measure of autonomy to safeguard the interest of the province, the politically motivated groups hardly if ever thought in terms of secession. When the war with India in 1965 demonstrated that East Pakistan could not be defended by a military strategy based on West Pakistan, the demand for autonomy per force was stepped up including separate defence establishment for the protection of the Province. The "Six Points" demand for autonomy was chiefly the result of this predicament. The logical consequence of their implementation would have converted a federal state into a confederation of autonomous states. Hence it gave rise to a vague sense of identification with Bengali nationalism. It was a new phenomenon in the political horizon of the country, which began to cause a lot annoyance to the rulers who were unable to comprehend the causes and failed to take appropriate measures for its containment. The Agartala case was one such example which ultimately back fired, demonstrating the prevailing mood of the people. Looking at the apathy of the government of Pakistan toward the needs of the victims of the cyclonic disaster previous November, Moulana Bhasani for the first time gave a call for independence to enable the province to look after herself. Such incidents provided the fuel to the fire kindled by the new aspiration for freedom through secession. Though small in number, the secessionists became very vocal, highlighting the anomalies of a country divided into two regions, where one part was consistently getting an unfair deal. Never-the-less the intelligentsia was still seeking a political settlement

on the issue of autonomy, for which fresh hopes were encouraged by President Yahya by his apparent conciliatory policy since he assumed power two years ago. In the end, his conduct of political affairs leading to postponement of the N.A. since die barely two days before it was scheduled to meet, proved to be an open betrayal of East Pakistan.

The response among the political circles in the Province against such an arbitrary action on the part of the President was as prompt as it was widespread. There was a spontaneous strike in both the government and private establishments in the city. Shaikh Mujib gave a call for province wide strike next day in protest against the action of the President which paralysed the life of the province. As the prospects of a political settlement began to recede, the extremist elements who were yet hovering on the periphery, could now push their way to the forefront and put pressure on the leaders to declare independence. The next episode of the struggle was spearheaded by the students League and the Sramik League, the front organisations of the A.L., and the Students Union affiliated to the communist Party. The former called a public meeting on the 3rd of March and invited Shaikh Mujib to address the masses to give a new direction to the political development.

Almost all sections of the people responded whole—heartedly to the call of Shaikh Mujib to observe the general strike. Those who wanted to dissent did not dare expose themselves as such. The public meeting on the following day swelled into a gathering of over two hundred thousand people. Shaikh in his forceful speech called upon the people to continue a non-violent struggle until their purpose was achieved. There was a clear hint in his address that this time it was going to be nothing short of a struggle for liberation of the people of this province. At the same time he announced that he would address the people again on the 7th of March to tell them what to do next in case the authorities failed to respond. The general strike and non-cooperation of the people that

followed completely paralysed the government. Contingent of the armed forces sent out on patrol frequently came into clash with the demonstrators causing loss of life and injury. Such action however failed to suppress the agitation. It was nothing less than a revolt of the people against the rulers as yet non-violent, trying to induce them to restore freedom and popular government.

The seriousness of the situation did not fail to attract the attention of the rulers. President Yahya next proposed a round table conference of the leaders of different parties on the 10th of March to resolve the deadlock, at the same time fixing the date of the N.A. on the 25th of the month.

The change of policy was signalled by the replacement of both the Governor Admiral Ahsan, and the martial law administrator General Yakub, who all along were trying to maintain a conciliatory approach towards the issue. They were succeeded by General Tikka Khan, who proved to be a complete misfit in a situation which called for a political solution of the impasse threatening the integrity of the country. The new governor also assumed the functions of the M.L.A. It was perhaps an irony of fate that the literal meaning of the name of the new governor also reflected his nature. The words "Tikka Khan" translated into English language means "Red Hot Khan". His subsequent conduct amply demonstrated his real nature trying to subjugate the people of this province with fire and sword.

The military contingent stationed in East Pakistan hardly ever exceeded one division of the armed forces. West Pakistan based strategy for the defence of the country did not call for stationing a large military force in this region. There was no separate arrangement for her defence apart from destruction of the enemy on the western front. Now, when internal troubles threatened to tear the country asunder, one division was found to be too inadequate for its task of containing the growing

tempo of discontent. Reinforcements along with supply of arms and ammunition began to arrive, ferried across from West Pakistan by air as well as by ship. The steppage of over-flight of Pakistani air-craft across Indian territory following the hijacking and destruction of an Indian air-craft at Lahore, compelled the military flights to take the much longer route round Srilanka; but the Boeing aircraft could do it without much difficulty. Reinforcement increased visibly since the arrival of the new governor, General Tikka Khan.

While the general strike continued to paralyse the government, Shaikh Mujib addressed a huge public meeting on the grounds of the race course on the seventh of March, as announced earlier. This time it was his turn to lay down pre-conditions to be fulfilled by the President before he would agree to participate in the N.A. which was called on the 25th of March. His demands announced in the public meeting were immediate transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people, withdrawal of martial law and return of the soldiers to their barracks.

Intense activities for political settlement which characterised the negotiations since the general elections began to lose their force; when mass agitation took the basic issues to the streets of Dhaka for their settlement. President Yahya failed to arrive on the 10th of March, the date he fixed for a round table conference. He arrived on the 15th accompanied by some of the minority party leaders of West Pakistan when he began his last round of talks with Shaikh Mujib.

While the details of Shaikh—Yahya talks remained a secret, and perhaps will never be known, it was given out that the President was prepared to accept the demands of the Shaikh in principle, raising hope for a compromise. While discussions at the expert level continued, the political advisers of both sides were asked to get together and prepare a draft in the form of a manifesto to be issued setting forth the terms of the agreement, so as to clear the way for a political settlement.

The leader of the majority party of West Pakistan, Z.A. Bhutto arrived Dhaka on the 21st of March, when the advisers of the Shaikh and the President were engaged on drafting the terms for the proposed agreement. Next day it was announced that the meeting of the N.A. scheduled to begin on the 25th of March was again postponed. No reason was given, but it was believed that it was done to allow the prevailing tension to subside, and enable the President and the leaders of the political parties to come to an agreement on the question of transfer of power and lifting of martial law. The Shaikh in his meeting with the press following his interview with the President also thought fit to strike an optimistic note, saying that the talks were making progress.

With the arrival of reinforcements on a large scale, the movement of military forces increased correspondingly which did not fail to escape the notice of the people. The leaders of the Awami League were warned by some Bengali officers about the unusual movements in the cantonment which looked rather ominous. The country was ruled under martial law more than once and there was no sign of any apprehension of trouble among the people. The general impression was that the worst that could befall their lot was further extension of the martial law and postponement of popular government. By and large they were concerned more about the general strike causing disruption of normal life of the city, than increase in troop movements in the country.

The period of suspense that followed after the postponement of the N.A. was relieved partly by the information to the effect that expert level talks were taking place and that they were engaged on finalising the draft of a manifesto to be issued by the leaders. It is now difficult to recount what actually took place in course of following three days. The city was agog with all kinds of rumours ranging in its purport to raise an expectation of a settlement around the corner, to a break down of negotiations likely to be followed by whole sale arrest of the leaders and a military crack down, as had happened in the past.

Beginning with the sunset on the 25th of March, heavily armed military contingents began to move out of the cantonment towards the heart of the city. Without any notice or warning, Yahya and his aids suddenly left Dhaka for Karachi. There was no announcement either of the President's departure or of the termination of negotiations.

From midnight, heavily armed Pakistani military forces let loose such a program of destruction and murder on the unsuspecting population of the city which defy description. Beside general massacre, the attacks were launched simultaneously on three specific targets, the residence of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, the headquarters of the East Pakistan Rifles and the police lines. Myself along with the members of my family were in our house situated on the road just north of the Shaikh's residence, less than three hundred yards away. We were awakened by the sound of sudden rush of military columns through the roads followed by bursts of automatic weapons from all sides. Although the Shaikh's place was an ordinary residential house without any armed guards, it was surrounded by the soliders and attacked in a manner as if laying a siege to an enemy fort. Shaikh Mujib who was present in his house was placed under arrest and whisked away to an unknown destination. They, however failed to arrest any other leading member of the Awami League. The Shaikh could escape if he wanted ; but he did not. Why ? was he still hoping against hope for a political settlement ? There was no resistance but indiscriminate firing by the soldiers left at least a score of people dead round about the place including a watchman asleep under a porch across the road from our house. Sound of frequent bursts of automatic weapons filled the air throughout the night coming from all parts of the city, far and near. Small arms fire were interjected with the booming of heavier guns, apparently from tanks, sound of whose movements could be heard coming from all directions. Surprisingly enough, one of the targets of the attacking army was the Dhaka university campus. More than a hun-

dred students, and a number of teachers were dragged out of their beds and executed by machine gun fire within the campus.

In the small hours of the morning announcers were sent out in jeeps to notify the imposition of curfew for an indefinite period. It was thus clear that indiscriminate attack on the civil population took place without any warning or provocation. They were taken completely by surprise, resulting in heavy casualties in the city estimated to be several thousands, in the first night of the general massacre.

The following morning Mr. Bhutto, who was putting up at the Inter-Continental Hotel, was taken round the city by the military command to show what they were doing to put down the rebellion. He returned to Karachi the same evening, where he met the representatives of the press with these words, "Thank God, Pakistan is saved."

The conduct of the ruling junta thus proved they were never in a mood to come to terms with the Awami League since their victory in the general elections was although, the latter was prepared for a settlement. The negotiations undertaken since the beginning of the month, turned out to be a subterfuge on the part of the rulers, to buy time necessary for their military build up in the Province. They were determined to suppress the popular agitation by force of arms. The democratic process of elections and the rule by majority having turned decisively in favour of East Pakistan, created a political situation which they refused to accept. The West Pakistani rulers at last decided to scuttle the National Assembly and impose a military solution of the problem. Thus the movement for re-establishing political rights and democracy at last turned into a civil war.

Having abandoned their attempt to reach a political settlement, the military rulers were confronted with two major problems. General strike had paralysed the functions of government ; how to overcome the passive resistance of the people and restore normal functions of the administration ? Secondly, popular discontent, had assumed such pro-

portions that it could not but affect adversely the morale of the Bengali elements of the armed forces and undermine their loyalty and discipline. Effective measures had to be taken to prevent or forestall any possibility of mutiny. The military high command took recourse to a massive attack on the unarmed civil population with a view to break their spirit of resistance ; at the same time liquidate the Bengali elements in the armed forces by a surprise attack in the middle of the night.

The armed forces in the province were of three categories namely (a) regular army units including the East Bengal Regiment ; (b) the East Pakistan Rifles (E.P.R.), a para-military force about fifteen thousand strong having largely non-Bengali army officers in command, but the Bengali personnel constituting more than 80 per cent of the other ranks. Their chief task was guarding the border, and stand-by as an emergency force to assist the police. Their headquarters was Dhaka, and lastly, (c) the civil police about 30,000 strong, made up almost entirely of Bengali personnel of all ranks. The airforce and the navy had small units stationed at Dhaka and Chittagong respectively.

While the newly arrived reinforcements from West Pakistan were concentrated in the Cantonments, the Bengali elements of the armed forces were largely scattered throughout the province in the normal course of their duty and disposition. The headquarters of the E.P.R. and the police situated as they were within easy striking distance of the cantonment, the inmates were killed by the military forces deputed to subdue them. Very few could escape.

The police wireless and the tele-communication system which was largely in the hands of the Bengali personnel was able to flash the news of military action in Dhaka before they could be put out of action by the army. The dissemination of the news helped a great deal to alert the civil armed forces scattered round the province, to escape similar fate which had befallen their comrades in Dhaka. At some places they killed their officers and took over control of the areas where they were

posted. But such gains were shortlived until they were forced to flee under assault by heavily armed military forces.

After the war, some of the Bangladeshi officers who took part in the liberation war admitted they could not anticipate that in case of failure of negotiations, civil war was inevitable. In such an eventuality the Bangladeshi elements in the armed forces would have no option but to cast their lot with their kith and kin. At the same time they would also become the first target of Pakistan army. The deadlock over negotiations for a political settlement since the beginning of March put them on the alert. Some of the senior Bangladeshi officers got in touch with one another to prepare their plan of action in such a contingency. As the message of military crack down went round, the Bengali personnel promptly deserted their posts and took up defensive positions against their adversary. Those who failed to take cover and defend themselves were all killed mercilessly. Places where they were in a strong position, the Bangladeshi units could take preemptive action and secure control over limited areas for the time being as it happened initially at Chittagong. Major Ziaur Rahman, who was in command of an unit of the East Bengal Regiment (E.B.R.), was one of the first officers to defect with his contingent and declare in the name of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman the independence of Bangladesh on the 27th of March in a broad-cast from the radio station of Chittagong. But, as elsewhere, the initial advantage by which they could establish their control was short-lived. In the counter-attack launched by the Pak army after a short time, they were all pushed out of their possessions and for the next two or three months, the Pak army could reoccupy all their strongholds. Many of them were compelled to seek shelter in the neighbouring territory of India.

The strategy of the military rulers was to terrorise the people into submission and destroy the Bangladeshi elements in the armed forces so as to eliminate the possibility of armed resistance against their action.

While outwardly it succeeded to put down open agitation, it failed to suppress country-wide passive resistance. After a few days when curfew was relaxed and the offices were reopened, the attendance of workers and office staff remained thin. People began to leave the city and take refuge in rural areas considered relatively safe from attack by the hostile armed forces. Transport facilities were reduced, hampering the movement of the people. Civil administration remained almost suspended and failed to revive. After the attack on their headquarters, the police force disappeared from the city. Army pickets armed with machineguns were placed at strategic points to maintain law and order.

The thinking of the Pakistani military command could be gathered from an observation of the area commander of Dhaka, who called a meeting of the officials of government and chambers of commerce and industries at the cantonment soon after military crackdown. In an attempt to reassure them he observed that it was a fact of history that the country was once conquered by a band of seventeen Muslim horsemen ; where as now there were no less than 60,000 trained soldiers to maintain the integrity of the country. With an air of supreme confidence he asked the members of the gathering to get on with their jobs without worry. The army would ensure that normal conditions were restored before long.

Actually they had very little control outside their cantonments yet. Their next plan of operation was to occupy the district headquarter and important towns and then fan out towards the border in their mopping up operations. As they began to advance, they came into clash with armed groups of deserters who managed to escape and organise themselves into units of resistance forces now called the "Freedom Fighters". In their initial encounter with the enemy in open combat, they failed to hold their position against the attack by much more heavily armed Pak army and were forced to retreat. Experience of their open combat with the enemy at last compelled them to change their strategy and adopt the tactics of guerilla warfare.

As the Pak army began to fan out into the country-side they employed the same tactics of mass killing, arson and terror of all sorts with a view to subdue the people. Their main targets were the political activists, the students, youths and the members of the Hindu community. Helpless and terror stricken, the people had no option other than to flee their hearth and home and take shelter in places beyond the reach of the enemy. Thus started the movement of refugees across the border for safety and shelter in the neighbouring country, India, which soon assumed massive proportions.

The skirmishes between the resistance forces and the Pak army that took place initially were isolated incidents. While the operations of the Pak army were organised and supported by their head-quarters with plenty of resources at their command, the resistance forces had to fend for themselves in every way. They had to depend entirely on their own wits and such supplies of arms and ammunition as they could collect from the armoury before they escaped.

The resistance movement could not possibly be sustained for long under such circumstances. For over two months the Pak army continued their campaign of mass murder and destruction unchecked, driving millions of refugees across the border into India. The position at last began to change with the formation of the Provisional Government of Bangladesh in Exile following the declaration of independence made by Major Ziaur Rahman from Chittagong mentioned before.

The main body of the resistance forces was also compelled to retire across the border into India under the pressure of attack of the Pak army. Their sanctuary in India at last provided them with the much needed respite, to enable them to organise the scattered groups of fighters into guerilla units who could return and resume their offensive against the enemy. A retired Bengali officer, Colonel Osmani was appointed by Provisional Government to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Freedom Fighters as they were called henceforth with the rank of Major-

General. A strategy of the ensuing struggle had to be worked out in collaboration with the Indian authorities, who were good enough to provide the much needed shelter and support to the Freedom Fighters along with the refugees. The shortage of trained personnel was the main problem faced by the Provisional government in the way of stepping up the war of liberation. About one hundred thousand trained guerilla fighters were needed to launch an effective counter-attack and subdue the enemy, who were estimated to be a force of ninety thousand strong. Willing recruits were found not only among the refugees but also from a continuous stream of new comers from Bangladesh, who came to join the army of Freedom Fighters.

The struggle soon assumed the character of a war of national liberation and began to attract all the attention it deserved from the foreign press and news media. The Provisional government with headquarters in Calcutta, mounted a propaganda offensive in foreign countries as well as the U.N.O. calling for recognition of Bangladesh as an independent country, at the same time accusing Pakistan army of committing genocide in their attempt to suppress a war of national liberation. Although censorship over the local information media managed to suppress relevant news about the war, they were regularly put out over the foreign radio broadcast keeping the people informed about the activities of the Provisional government and fighting in the different theatres of war. Soon "Free Bangladesh" Radio situated somewhere near the border took over the task. There was very little control over the border and people could easily cross over without trouble, if they were only watchful to avoid encountering Pak forces on patrol. Messages came round that a large number of young recruits was undergoing intensive training in guerilla warfare in India who would soon join the army of Freedom Fighters. They would soon launch offensive operations against the enemy throughout the country.

In the wake of general massacre, the Pak army had killed and scared away so many policemen and other government officials that the

civil administration failed to revive due to shortage of personnel. In a desperate bid to restore the administration, the military rulers requisitioned the services of a number of non-Bengali civil servants and five thousand policemen from West Pakistan. They began to arrive towards the beginning of June. The Chief-Secretary to the provincial government, the Inspector-General of Police, the Divisional Commissioners were all replaced by senior non-Bengali officers from West Pakistan. A new civilian force, called the "Razakars", composed largely of local personnel was raised to supplement the Police, and employed to maintain law and order.

Across the border the newly raised guerilla forces were getting trained and equipped with handy automatic weapons who began to join the freedom fighters to fight the enemy inside the country. News of attacks on Pak army patrols reached the city from the month of June and began to increase in frequency with the passage of time. Transport and communications were disrupted by the destruction of bridges and culverts hampering movement of troops and increasing casualties among the Pak soliders. Soon infiltration of the freedom fighters was signalled by the explosion of mines and bombs inside the city and attacks on army pickets. The arrival of the monsoon rains, which per force restricted the movements of the army with their heavy equipment, facilitated the lightly armed guarillas to spread out and occupy the countryside. They began to harrass the enemy more and more. Spontaneous cooperation of the local people provided ideal cover for the guarillas for which the enemy wrecked terrible vengeance, destroying whole villages and indiscriminate murder of villagers in retaliation. But such tactics of terror and oppression failed to subdue the people or break the morale of the freedom fighters who relentlessly pressed forward. Soon terrific explosions in daylight shook the closely guarded Hotel Inter Continental and the heart of the Motijheel, the commercial centre of the city.

Frogmen began to harass shipping with limpet mines in Chittagong and Mangla harbours, enforcing partial blockage of the ports.

By the beginning of September the movement of the Pak army was restricted during day light only. They dared not move out except in strength of a company or more and take cover behind fortified positions and bunkers after dusk to save themselves from guerilla attacks, which began to increase in strength and persistence every day. The Freedom Fighters practically took control over the entire countryside from dusk to dawn. From the beginning of October, they could infiltrate with such strength south of Dhaka, that the Pak army patrols dare not cross the R. Buriganga in pursuit of their enemy. Area away from easy striking distance of the army encampments were falling increasingly under the control of the Freedom Fighters.

I happened to meet some of the civil officers from West Pakistan who came over to rehabilitate the administration. They came on deputation in the hope of finding a way out of the unhappy situation. But having seen for themselves what the army had done, they could no longer conceal their surprise and despondency. One of them an old friend confessed, there was little hope and the game was up. The army was losing heart. They were using the members of the West Pak police contingent as their spearhead while searching for guerilla hideouts and in the process the poor policemen were suffering heavy casualties. There was something like a revolt among the expatriate police force, when they refused to allow themselves to be used as a shield by the army in this manner.

With the advent of the monsoon rains in June when there was a lull in military operations and the freedom fighters were not yet in a position to launch their counter-attack, President Yahya issued an appeal promising general amnesty and called upon those who took shelter in India to return home. Very few responded to his appeal. A few deserters who thought it fit to surrender, were promptly taken into military custody and never seen again.

Towards the beginning of September '71, General Tikka Khan was replaced by Dr. A.M. Malik as governor and General Niazi took over as the G.O.C. and martial law administrator. The new governor appointed a council of ministers in an attempt to restore civilian administration. The change however made very little difference in the political situation. Civil administration ceased to exist outside principal towns, where the army could maintain their hold. The freedom fighters were in control over large tracts of rural areas where neither the administration, nor the army could extend their sway. The new governor and his cabinet were dependent entirely on the military forces to maintain their position and failed to organise political support.

Throughout the months of the rainy season, i.e. June, July and August, when movement of Pak army was restricted by natural obstacles created by the inundation of the countryside, the Freedom Fighters were organising and turning out youthful soldiers in increasing numbers, trained and equipped for guerilla warfare. With the end of the rains and the coming of fair weather from September, fighting was stepped up. The table was at last turned and the guerillas now snatched the initiative. They began to press forward into the occupied areas of Bangladesh, harassing the enemy in every way. The personnel of the Pak army at last began to show signs of fatigue and deterioration of morale. They began to withdraw into their strongholds and stopped entering guerilla held territories except in large portions during daylight when the latter retired into their hideous. The prisoners of war captured by the Freedom Fighters disclosed how the morale and discipline of the Pak army were cracking up. They were virtually reaching the end of their resources. They were compelled to live on the country which meant robbing the poor people. Their communication and supply lines having been disrupted by increasing guerilla activities, their plan of operations was at last getting upset. As the initiative passed out of their hands, the Freedom Fighters increasingly

stepped up their offensive. Encouraging news of encounters between the guerrillas and the Pak army were broadcast from the radio stations across the border and were listened eagerly by the people inside the country.

In the mean time a number of Bengali foreign service officers defeated from Pakistan Embassies and declared their allegiance to the Provisional Government of Bangladesh. Other important persons like Justice A.S. Choudhuri and a number of intellectuals had also detected soon after army crack down and transferred their allegiance in like manner. The stature of the government in exile began to enhance in the international community. With their assistance, the government in exile could step up publicity in foreign countries, calling their attention to indiscriminate and large scale killing by Pakistan army verging on genocide in Bangladesh and approached for recognition as a sovereign independent country.

The stream of refugees driven out of the country by the attack of Pak army, who were compelled to seek sanctuary in India, soon assumed alarming proportions. They exceeded eight millions by the end of September and the exodus was continuing. The task of looking after millions of refugees suddenly driven out of their homes and without any means of livelihood to sustain themselves, could not but create a serious problem for the host country. In spite of generous assistance provided by overseas humanitarian agencies to supplement the resources which the government of India could devote for their welfare, the refugees were compelled to live under sub-human conditions, suffering such hardship which begger description. Reports filed by journalists and other foreign visitors, who were taken round refugee camps began to draw the attention of the international community to the enormity of the situation and discredit the assertion of President Yahya that it was their internal affair and did not call for the attention of foreign agencies. How long the government of India could live with such a problem having no end in sight, was anybody's guess. A very significant statement ascribed

to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the effect that a war would perhaps be a less cruel remedy than leaving the refugees to their fate, at last indicated the way in which the situation was moving.

The following month Prime Minister Indira Gandhi decided to go on a tour of some countries of Europe and America. The purpose of her tour at such a juncture can better be imagined than described. A way must be found to stop genocide by the Pak army and create conditions to enable millions of refugees leave India and return home in Bangladesh.

The community of nations, particularly the great powers had to take steps to induce President Yahya Khan to take back the refugees, or allow her to take such steps as she thought fit to find a solution.

India had already taken steps to strengthen her border defences, as was evident from their response to encounters with the Pak army from time to time. General mobilisation of the Indian forces for the final act to subdue the Pak forces started soon after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's return from her tour of the western countries. Protestations of President Yahya against warlike preparations by India failed to elicit any response from the international community. The confrontation had reached the point of no return.

Pak military forces were deployed along the border to stop infiltration of the freedom fighters which they failed to do. So long, the freedom fighters were acting as the spearhead of attack with the support of Indian arms. From the beginning of November, their tactics began to change. The units of Indian army began to take part directly, leading attacks against the concentration of Pak army along the border while the guerillas were engaged in harassing the enemy from the rear. The report of a big clash between the Pak and Indian forces near Noakhali-Chittagong border was circulated in Dhaka early in November. News of similar clash in other sectors were broadcast by radio stations across the border the following weeks, in which the Pak armed forces were forced to retreat with heavy losses. As the enemy was pushed back, the

Freedom Fighters took over control of the liberated areas. Thus began the undeclared war between the two countries which could be brought to an end only by the surrender of one side or the other.

As the Pak army spread out along the borders to maintain their hold on the territories of the country, they were compelled to split up into relatively small units operating in specified areas. With poor logistics while operating among hostile population, they could expect little support from headquarters and even less hope of reinforcements. Initiative soon passed into the hands of the combined forces of the Freedom Fighters and the Indian army. The disposition of the Pak army made it easy to isolate their field units from one another and from their headquarters. They soon found it impossible to hold on to their position and at last they began to surrender one after another.

In the early hours of December '73, the Pak airforce in West Pakistan made a pre-emptive attack on the Indian airforce establishments, thus opening a new theatre of war in the western front. The Indians were not taken by surprise. They were fully prepared to meet such an eventuality and the Pak air-crafts were driven away without achieving any objective. The upshot of such an air attack was escalating a localised conflict into general warfare on all fronts. In the early hours of the following morning Indian airforce made a determined attack on the enemy strongholds including Dhaka airport. Pakistan had only one squadron of F-86 fighters based at Dhaka. We could watch one dog-fight in the sky over Dhaka early in the morning, but could not see the ultimate result. The Pak airforce was soon put out of action and the Indians assumed complete control over the sky within two days.

Now it was the turn of India to take the fateful step, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced in Indian Parliament their decision to recognise Bangladesh as a sovereign independent country, on the 6th of December 1971.

The location of Pak forces was all known on the basis of which the combined forces could work out their strategy of war. The opera-

tion of the allied forces was helped a great deal by the willing cooperation of the people and information supplied about the latest disposition of the enemy. At a few places like Hili in north Bengal where the Pak army had built strong defensive positions, they could put up stiff resistance. But it was a hopeless task and was soon abandoned. At Jessore, where they build strong defenses, they evacuated without a fight. When they were hard pressed on all sides, General Manekshaw, the C-in-C of Indian Army in a radio broadcast called upon the Pak armed forces to stop fighting and surrender, at the same time assuring them the status of prisoner of war according to the Geneva Convention. Following General Manekshaw's call, there was a strong rumour that the Pak army was about to surrender. Such a prospect however got a set back when information was given out that the American Seventh Fleet, along with their nuclear powered aircraft carrier "Enterprise" was ordered to sail into the Bay of Bengal. What could be the purpose of such a display of sea power was not known. If it was taken as an encouragement to the Pak armed forces to continue fighting, it was soon dispelled.

Out numbered and out manoeuvred by the massive attacks of the combined forces, the remnants of the Pak army were soon compelled to cease fire and surrender on the 16th of December. Thus came to an end nine months' war of liberation and the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign independent country.

The victory celebrations were marred by despicable murder of a number of university teachers and intellectuals shortly before the surrender of the Pak army. They were killed by two fanatical groups called the Al-Badr and Al-Shams organised by a Pakistani general, Rao Farman Ali. They were employed for killing important men suspected of collaboration with the Freedom movement. The victims were picked up city and killed mercilessly. Rao Farman Ali planned another programme to liquidate the senior Bengali officers with a view to cripple the new from their homes by groups of armed men, taken to the outskirts of the

government of Bangladesh. Fortunately, Governor Malik came to know of the dastardly conspiracy in time to cancel the meeting of the senior officers called at his residence, where the planned execution was arranged by Forman Ali.

Shaikh Mujibur Rahman, who by popular acclamation acquired the personal appellation of "Bangabandhu"—i.e., "Friend of Bengal", was in custody and lodged in a prison somewhere in Pakistan, ever since the military crack down. He was accused of treason and was reported to be under sentence of death after a secret trial. Earlier, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi issued an appeal to different heads of state to exercise their good offices to save his life. General Yahya resigned and handed over the office of President to Bhutto soon after surrender. In a rare act of generosity on his part, Bhutto thought it fit to release the Shaikh from prison and allow him return home. He was sent to London by air immediately after release. From London he travelled in a special aircraft provided by the Government of U.K. and arrived in Dhaka via Delhi on the 10th of January '72. Thus began a new chapter in the life of the people in independent Bangladesh.

CHAPTER—XXXVIII

Bangladesh under the Regime of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman

The instrument of surrender which brought an end to the nine months war of liberation was signed on the 16th Dec. '71, by General Aurora, the G.O.C. in Chief of the Indian and Bangladesh forces, and Lt. General Niazi the Martial Law Administrator of Zone 'B' and commander Eastern Command. Group Captain Khondkar was present in the ceremony on behalf of the freedom fighters. None of the ministers of the Provisional government was present in the country at the time of surrender of the Pak Army. Nearly a week elapsed without any news of the Ministers. People began to ask what was preventing them from coming over to the capital city of Dhaka immediately to take over the administration of the country. Thus followed a period of interregnum, when there was no lawful government in the country.

In the evening following surrender, my next door neighbour, Mr. Wahedul Karim, a retired police officer came over to my house, accompanied by an Indian Military officer Lt. Colonel Gurbaksh Singh. Col. Singh and a leader of the Awami League were driving in a motor car on their way to the residence of Begum Mujibur Rahman in Dhanmondi residential area, when they were fired at by the guard stationed at her house. So, they had to beat a hasty retreat under cover of darkness without visiting Begum Mujib. A bullet hit the shoulder of the other occupant of the car who was taken to a doctor near by for first aid. Leaving his injured companion in Mr. Karim's house the Indian Colonel came over to my house to discuss what steps could be taken for restoration of civil administration which had totally collapsed in the city.

Plunder and loot had already started in the city. There was none to check the miscreants who got a free hand to do what they liked. A shop across the main road from our house belonging to a non-Bengali, was ransacked before the close of the day. The restoration of a semblance of law and order was the first task for the administration to take up. Fortunately, the telephone service was working partially and I could get in touch with Mr. Taslim Ahmed; a senior police officer who was the chief of police shortly before Pak military crack down. It was arranged that Mr. Ahmed with his colleagues whom he could gather, would meet Col. Singh and his aids the following morning in the secretariate to work out a provisional scheme for restoration of police administration in the city. The Indian army command had the foresight to look ahead and lost no time to take steps for dealing with the post war situation and restoration of civil administration. They did not take recourse to martial law, the favourite instrument of the rulers of Pakistan to maintain themselves in power.

The Provisional Government in exile formed in the second week of April, was composed of a President, Prime minister and a small cabinet of ministers. Shaikh Mujib was elected President. In his absence Nazrul Islam was made the acting president till his return. Tajuddin was the Prime Minister. They arrived Dhaka in an Indian aircraft from Calcutta a week after surrender of the Pak army. As mentioned before, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman who as detained in Pakistan since military crack down, arrived in Dhaka later on the 10th of January '72. He set up the first National Government of Bangladesh.

Enforced absence of Shaikh Mujib, the party chief, throughout the period of liberation war gave rise to unhappy tension and a crisis in the leadership of the Party. Nothing could be more damaging to the unity of the party, than internal rivalry among the top echelon for leadership. The Provisional government in exile practically lost control over the activities of the "Freedom Fighters", the nucleus

of the future armed forces. They were left to themselves to fight their battle as well as they could. The question of logistics as well as advice and guidance for conducting the war were taken over entirely by the Indian authorities. They were dealing directly with the field commanders of the Freedom Fighters. Initial lack of rapport between the Provisional government and the freedom fighters created a hiatus between the two, which could never be removed. Such a crisis in the critical months of the war forebode trouble for the future, hampering smooth development of popular government in the new country.

After his return from forced exile and installation as President, Shaikh Mujib found it necessary to organise a separate unit of the armed forces called the "Rakshi Bahini" (Security forces) independent of the army or the civil police. They were trained and equipped abroad and placed directly under the command of the President. They practically became his private army. It was reported the "Rakshi Bahini" were provided with ration and amenities of a better standard than those of the regular armed forces, giving rise to discontent among the latter. In the task of maintaining law and order, they soon assumed precedence over the civil police, but without assuming any responsibility. It created an anomalous position, undermining the authority of the civil police. Their relationship with the military forces also remained undefined.

The status of East Pakistan was elevated overnight from a province into a sovereign independent state. Hence, a new constitution had to be framed befitting her new status. The Awami League was a committee to adopt the multiparty parliamentary form of government. Four principles were laid down as the basis on which reconstruction of the new country was to take place. They were Nationalism, Secularism, Socialism and Democracy. Collectively they came to be known as "Mujib-bad", or "the Doctrine of Mujib". The task of constitution making was completed within a short time. The Constitution Bill was

passed by the National Assembly on the 4th of November 1972, and fresh elections were held in March 1973. Justice A.S. Choudhuri was elected President. As the leader of the majority party, Shaikh Mujibur Rahman became the Prime Minister.

But more difficult tasks lay ahead. They were rehabilitation of the administration and reconstruction of the economy of the country. The magnitude of the former could be gauged by the fact that out of a total strength of 30,000 officers and men of the police force, nearly half of them failed to return to duty. Maximum number of casualties was in the ranks of Inspectors and sub-inspectors of police, who constituted the back-bone of the force. Many of the station houses were destroyed in course of fighting between opposing forces. There were a number of senior officers of other departments who were non-Bengalies and opted to be repatriated to Pakistan. On the other hand senior Bengali officers serving with the government of Pakistan were trapped at Islamabad and Karachi who became the victims of an unseemly quarrel between the two sides. The Bengali officers were detained as hostages by the government of Pakistan until the issue of Pakistani prisoners of war was settled. A large number of recruitments had to be made to fill the vacancies in the public service. Preference had to be given in the selection of candidates to the freedom fighters for obvious reasons ; but this could be done only at the cost of efficiency. A balance had to be struck to maintain a minimum standard for appointments. Unfortunately all considerations of standards had to be disregarded under political exigencies and the public services were packed with a large number of men who could hardly come up to the desired level of competence. Far from clearing the way to build a sound administration, the personnel policy adopted by the new government began to undermine its morale and efficiency. A drastic measure called Presidential Order No. 9 (P.O.9), abolished the security of tenure making government employees liable to be removed from service without

showing any cause for their dismissal. At the same time the ceiling of salary was reduced from Tk. 3,000 - to 1,000 per month, as a step towards reduction of inequality of income. Such an arbitrary measure could not be maintained for long. The government was compelled to raise the ceiling to Tk. 2,000 after a short time. Soon, perquisites were added to salaries raising gross benefits almost to the old level. The rehabilitation of the administration could be taken up on the basis of the prevailing system. Drastic changes could not be introduced without running the risk of a breakdown. But the way in which the new government began to dabble with the affairs of personnel management, caused more harm than good.

Ultimately, a number of Commissions and Committees was set up to examine and report what changes in the structure of services and administration were necessary to enable them to deal with national affairs. They made detailed study of the problem and offered useful recommendations for reforms. But the government soon became involved with such urgent problems for sheer survival, that the question of reforms had to be postponed for the time being. The breakdown of law and order created a serious problem for the government. Antisocial elements in possession of fire-arms were roaming in gangs; looting and terrorising people all over the country. They hardly, if ever, displayed any compassion for their own countrymen, a fact which the zealots who indulge in politics of violence, seems to ignore. The police force, decimated in course of the civil war and yet grossly understaffed, was unable to check their activities ; neither could they provide the much needed protection to the people against the depredation of freebooters. Complaints were heard from many quarters that armed gangs, who often called themselves "freedom fighters" were oppressing the peace loving people in a manner which recalled the activities of the Pakistani soldiers during the war. There was no end of it in sight yet. The Prime Minister at last

issued an appeal for the surrender of unauthorised fire arms. A large number was surrendered in response to his appeal. But the miscreants who wanted to use their weapons for looting and robbing the people were not in a mood to give up their weapons. The unauthorised possession of automatic weapons by antisocial elements became a grave menace to the society, because such arms could give a tremendous advantage to the aggressor when ever he wanted to use them against an adversary.

A probable reason for the reluctance to surrender unauthorised arms, was a deliberate policy of the Party in power, to build up a cadre of armed party workers with a view to browbeat the opposition and hold them in check. Hence the response from the other side was equally a determination to hold on to their weapons to meet force with force. Such a short sighted policy had a lot to do with the deterioration of the situation and increased the difficulties faced by the government in the way of restoration of law and order in the country.

In spite of shortage of trained manpower, rehabilitation of the administration could be taken up with the help of such personnel who could be collected hastily on the basis of the existing set up. It was more or less a repetition of the post partition situation with its shortages of personnel and resources. Combined with the movement of refugees, they created almost a similar situation in Bagladesh immediately following the liberation of the country.

An important deviation from the old policy was the decision of the new government of Bangladesh, to nationalise almost all the major Industries, Banks and Insurance Companies, Trading in jute was also nationalised. Admittedly it was necessary to take over those industrial units belonging to nonbengali owners who left the country, in order to look after abandoned properties; but there was little justification in taking over those belonging to Bengali entrepreneurs who were competent enough to run their industries. At a time when public administration was short

of capable hands, it was highly indiscreet to put additional burden on the bureaucracy with a task which they were not in a position to perform efficiently. The net result of wholesale nationalisation and restrictions on private enterprise was severe constraints on development of industry and trade, setting a limit to those which only the public sector could undertake. Considering the condition of the truncated administrative apparatus inherited by the country, there was not much the bureaucracy could do for the management and development of industries. The lack of understanding of the problem involved in a policy of nationalisation and its consequences, was soon manifested by the result of such action. Far from recovering from the ravages of war, almost all the nationalised industries began to run at a loss and their deficit began to accumulate year after year. In a desperate bid to improve management, a new service called the "Industrial Management Service" was created and the recruits were sent to the Soviet Union to learn the art of managing industries owned by the government. After their return from training when they were sent to various industries, they could not fit into the structure of industrial management. Within a few years the service had to be disbanded. Thus the project failed to achieve its purpose. The export of raw jute and jute goods, the principal articles in overseas trade, reached the lowest level ever within a short time. Due to irregularities of supply, overseas customers began to change over to the substitutes of jute or look for other sources of supply.

The major industries were nationalised with the avowed purpose of progress towards "socialism", one of the four tenets of the new political philosophy of "Mujib-bad", mentioned before. This was advocated with a view to build a new society free from capitalist exploitation. But the general impression among knowledgeable circles in the city was that the Awami League was bent upon grabbing all sources of wealth and power, so as to prevent any opposition to raise its head, and help consoli-

date their position as far as could be foreseen. A senior member of the League once confessed to the author, they were making sure that no one could throw a challenge to their authority for the next twenty years.

There could not be a more inauspicious occasion for the nationalisation of industries. The public administration was yet to be rehabilitated to enable the bureaucracy to perform its traditional functions. The entire economy of the country was shattered by nine months of protracted warfare in which both sides indulged in senseless destruction of physical assets of the country. It was necessary in such a situation to mobilise all the resources at the disposal of government as well as the public at large, in order to make a combined effort for reconstruction of the economy within the shortest possible time. But the economic policy which the new government thought fit to adopt, prevented mobilisation of human and material resources which the private enterprise was in a position to do in order to supplement the efforts of government.

With relatively small capital stocks and having very little reserves of essential goods in a country with so large a population, the economy could not possibly provide any cushion against widespread loss of resources caused by natural calamity, followed by the ravages of civil war. The inevitable consequences of such happenings were famine and pestilence, which did not escape the notice of the international community. A "Mission of High Level U.N. Consultants to Bangladesh" under the leadership of Ambassador Erna Sailer arrived in March '72. The U.N. Mission offered the first detailed assessment of relief and rehabilitation requirements of the war ravaged country.

The U.N. Mission reported that "The events of the past year have imposed an almost total hiatus on the economy of Bangladesh. Economic activity has declined in all sectors ; development has been reversed ; there has been massive movements of population, and over all, the economic situation is worse than at any time in the past history of

the country. The ten months of confusion and disruption between March '71 and January '72, have brought additional physical, social and political difficulties and have given to long standing problems of chronic poverty, an additional dimension in immediate human suffering".

For the first time "the war had a deep impact on the rural life of Bangladesh, where 80 per cent population are found. Many deaths occurred ; many people became refugees, and many more were deprived of their productive assets. Villages were burned and cattle were slaughtered for food. The agriculture economy was affected in four principal ways. First, there was an immediate and substantial decline in the production of rice, jute and tea. Second, stocks of food, seed and inputs were run down. Third, production capacity including draft animals and implements, fishing boats and nets, irrigation pumps and handles were destroyed or damaged, particularly in border areas. Four, transport facilities and workshops, and building of agricultural and administrative services were lost. Finally, a number of important land and water development projects were interrupted....."

"Damages to the transportation sector are very serious. Sea-port operations have been curtailed because of mines and several sunken ships. Railways and highways have been fragmented by the heavy damage to the principal bridges over the Meghna and Ganges rivers, and the sinking of many vehicle ferries"—"A total of 287 large and small railway bridges were damaged'... "the complex inter-communication imposed by the geography of Bangladesh between sea-port and inland waterways, railways and roads, which made up the traffic system in 1970, has been seriously disrupted, and the effort to rehabilitate the economy are being jeopardised".

The U.N. Mission estimated the cost of reconstructing the major sectors of the economy for the period up to 30th of June '73, including food relief and industrial inputs, at round one billion U.S. dollars. This estimate did not include the loss of income which occurred during 1971;

and which would continue to take place until the productive and distributive system returned to normal. "The overall cost of events of 1971 to the people, was estimated to be near about two billion dollars. Spreading this over a three years period, would be equivalent to about 15 per cent of the G.D.P. per annum."

The United Nations Relief Organisation in Dhaka (UNROD) played an important part assisting the government in their task of relief and rehabilitation. They lost no time making an overall assessment of requirements for relief soon after the war was over. Their timely report followed by Sailer mission confirming their assessment, enabled the UNROD to obtain prompt response from friendly countries and other donors. Contributions to the tune of 160 millions were received by the end of June 1972.

The most important task accomplished by UNROD was drawing up a programme of foodgrains import requirements and ensure their timely arrival. Thanks to prompt international response and the efforts of the UNROD, the threatened famine could be averted for the time being. Pledges for supply of two million tons of food grains were made, out of which nearly one million tons were received during the first half of the year. Initially, supplies had to come mainly from India by rail and road, as both the sea-ports of Chittagong and Mangla were blocked by mine and wreck. With the reopening of the ports the arrival of food grains increased, enabling the Ministry of food to step up distribution in the deficit areas and the off take of stocks increased correspondingly.

Such was the situation with which the government of Bangladesh was confronted immediately after liberation. The returning refugees, estimated to be between seven and ten millions had to be resettled, and provided with appropriate relief to get them through until the next harvest. Law and order had to be re-established ; the euphoria resulting from independence was threatening to veer into anarchy, encouraged by the ample supply of weapons left over from the war period. Adequate supp-

lies of food and other essential goods had to be obtained and distributed through the damaged transport system to avert the threat of famine. The political and administrative structure had to be reconstituted. The tasks had to commence and the economy restored to the pre-war level as early as possible. Such objectives were to be achieved with what was previously a provincial administration, unused to many of the functions of the national government. The magnitude of the task was indeed a daunting one and there was no occasion for complacency.

The programme of food grains imports which could be lined up, ultimately turned out to be inadequate to compensate for the short fall of 1971-72 harvest which was inevitable due to the upheaval of the war. The short-fall was officially estimated to exceed 20 per cent of normal annual production, perhaps more. It was reflected in the rapidly rising price of rice which increased more than 50 per cent between June '71, and June '72' inspite of additional imports to the tune of about one million tons.

A Planning Commission was set up with professional leadership at the highest level, consisting of prominent economists drawn from the Universities. The Commission however remained under-staffed. It took a long time to fill the vacancies with qualified personnel. In spite of the initial handicap, the Commission was able to produce the First Five Year Plan within eighteen months which was submitted in November '73. The Prime Minister announced that it was decided to launch the First Five Year Plan at an early date. On the question of its implementation, the Commission made a significant remark saying' . . . "a plan, however well designed, is as good as the seriousness with which its discipline and policy prescription are observed, the extent of political commitment behind it and the efficiency with which it is implemented. History of planning in many countries indicates that a plan easily degenerates into an academic exercise, if political leadership and administrative machinery are not seriously committed to its implementation". Indeed, history

did not fail to repeat itself as far as the implementation of the first five year plan of Bangladesh was concerned.

What the Planning Commission perhaps omitted to mention was, that it was equally important for the planners to take cognisance of the capabilities of the public administration to deal with the new task which they proposed to assign to them ; otherwise the objectives of the plan could not be achieved. It was not long before they could realise the impracticability of bringing about such wide ranging changes contemplated in the plan. Finding themselves in an untenable position, the planning members began to quit one after another leaving the Commission in the lurch.

There was no lack of sympathy or understanding of the difficulties faced by the new government of Bangladesh in the international community. This was evident from the fact that generous aid was promptly pledged by many foreign countries to enable Bangladesh to tide over her initial post liberation problems. Pledged aids increased rapidly and reached nearly \$ 900 millions by the end of June 1973. It was now upto the government of Bangladesh to utilise such aid for the relief of distress and reconstruction of the country. Unfortunately the manner in which such aids were utilised left much to be desired. Aid could be utilised for import of goods of all kinds to relieve shortages of essential commodities and check escalation of prices, so as to keep them within the reach of common man. But foreign aids were misused to such an extent, that its benefits could hardly reach the people at large. The report of the World Bank Mission stated clearly that "... imports of maintenance and consumers goods of only \$100 millions were authorised, compared to a full import level of about \$200 millions (available) for a half year". The report went on to say further'...."as could be expected, in the unsettled situation there have been instances of political favour and corruption in the issue of import licenses and prices paid for imports". The statement of the mission was a stricture in a mild form on the way in which

foreign aid was utilised. Corruption and nepotism became the order of the day all round, undermining the morale and efficiency of the public administration. As a result of nepotism and corruption, imports were far short of what could be obtained, leading to serious shortages of almost all consumers goods, including such basic items as cloth, medicine, soap etc. Thus the people had to suffer hardship unnecessarily, which could be avoided in a large measure, had the resources available in the form of aid been properly utilised. A condition of scarcity was created enabling those favoured few who could obtain import permits, to make huge profits at the cost of helpless consumers.

Wherever appropriate steps were taken to deal with a problem, the results were impressive. The Prisoners of war consisting of over 80,000 officers and men of Pak army were quickly disarmed and evacuated under the charge of the Indian authorities without any hitch, relieving government of Bangladesh from a big burden at a critical point of time. If the original demand to hold some of them for trial on charges of war crime was insisted upon, the government would have surely landed itself in endless trouble. Fortunately, better sense prevailed and the idea of such trial was given up.

Simultaneously, between seven and ten million refugees could return home before the middle of March, and resettle themselves with the minimum of government assistance. The Indian army whose disposition helped such a lot to keep a semblance of order until the administration was in a position to take over the task, withdrew from the country before the end of March. Timely assistance from the UNROD rescued the country from immediate threat of famine which was the usual aftermath of war.

The restoration of law and order in the country was the task of highest priority before the government could pay its attention to other areas of administration. One single factor which could jeopardise peace and order was the unknown quantities of fire arms in unauthorised possession

as indicated earlier. A large quantity of arms and ammunition left behind by the Pak army lay scattered all over the country. The failure of timely recovery of arms enabled miscreants to get hold and use them to commit depredations all over the country. Unsettled condition of law and order became the greatest hindrance in the way of restoration of normalcy and rehabilitation of the country.

The Political leadership of the Awami League which attained such success in the elections and in building up a spirit of resistance in 1970-71, at last failed to measure up to the task of political management after independence. Their failure to deal with the primary task of restoration of law and order has been mentioned above. The way in which the party leadership fumbled with the affairs of government indicated their inability to comprehend their task, and prepare their future plan of action.. Faced with the responsibilities unprepared, many of the decisions which they thought fit to adopt, instead of helping recovery and progress, pushed the country towards anarchy and confusion.

It has been mentioned before how the personnel policy which government thought fit to adopt, undermined the morale of the bureaucracy at a time when bold and decisive action on the part of government functionaries was necessary for rehabilitation. Such a policy virtually reduced it to what was known as the "spoils system", long since abandoned as unsuitable for good administration by the country where it originated. It encouraged nepotism and corruption to a degree never known before. Economic policy adopted by the government expanded its share of activity beyond the capacity of the bureaucracy to deal efficiently, with the result that the nationalised industries, instead of earning profits and augment revenue, began to incur heavy losses. At the same time it killed initiative and enterprise which could be mobilised in the private sector in order to step up economic activities in the country. The upsurge of enthusiasm among the most enterprising section of the people who could make

their contributions to the task of reconstruction and development, was ripped in the bud in this way.

The most critical problem faced by the post liberation administration was how to make adequate supply of food grains available to feed the people. The shortage of stocks immediately following liberation was relieved largely by imports promptly made from India and other sources arranged by the UNROD mentioned before. The food grains production programme outlined in the annual plan for the first year 1972/73 aimed at a total quantity of 12.97 million tons. This was an increase of about 10 per cent over and above of what could be obtained in a year immediately before liberation. Considering the fact that in the past, food grains production could hardly keep pace with the increase of population at the rate of 3 per cent per annum, such an upward revision of the quantity to be produced immediately after the war, was a very unrealistic target. Fixing such a high target for internal production reduced proportionately the estimated quantity to be imported. It reduced overall availability of stocks in the coming years, when internal production failed to achieve the target set in the annual plan. In the meantime the UNROD was scheduled to wind up its relief mission in June '73.

In spite of the best of conditions which the government could expect to obtain in order to put their house in order, things started going wrong almost everywhere. The administration failed to revive and make any significant progress with its task of reconstruction. Far from keeping up with the rising expectations of the people following liberation, even the attainment of preliberation standards of production and general well-being still appeared to be a far cry and only a distant possibility. Agricultural plan failed to achieve its target. It could not possibly be achieved as the administration was not in a position to provide requisite supply and service necessary for its attainment. Fertilisers and other agricultural inputs at subsidised rates which could be supplied, were

smuggled out in large quantities because it was more profitable to sell them at the higher prices obtainable in India, than use them for cultivation within the country. Conditions of anarchy which continued to prevail, created such a sense of insecurity, that those who could do so preferred to transfer and build up their assets in India rather than use them for productive purpose at home. Components of machinery, imported medicines, even goods supplied for relief of distress were smuggled out and sold for cash. The lack of preventive service and border security following the liberation war facilitated smuggling, which aggravated the shortage of essential goods within the country. The Shortfall of production compelled the draw down of stocks of food grains resulting in rapid escalation of price, which nearly doubled between June '72 and December '73.

Thus goods, including food stuffs of various kinds supplied by friendly countries on a liberal scale for relief of privation and hunger, failed to reach the poor who needed them most due to corruption and maladministration in the process of distribution. Large quantities of such goods were displayed openly for sale at places like Calcutta and Dhaka which could be purchased from roadside shops.

Soon destitutes driven out of their homes by hunger from the country side, began to stream into the towns in search of relief and employment. No body seemed to take any notice of the movement of starving emaciated people who soon began to die of hunger on the streets of the city of Dhaka in large numbers. A religious association called the "Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam" concerned with burial of unclaimed dead bodies picked up hundreds of corpses every week from road side in the city, during the summer months of, 1974.

As the general conditions in the country began to deteriorate dissatisfaction against the ruling coterie began to grow both within the party as well as in other opposition groups, demanding remedy. But what could be the remedy ? The failure of political leadership to stop the

rot and fulfil the basic obligations of government, gave rise to increasing protests and demonstrations, leading to outbreaks of violence and frequent clash between opposing forces disturbing the life of the city.

Discontent over the manner the government was conducting its business; at last began to spread among all sections of the people. The armed forces were no exception. The military guard stationed at the residence of the Prime Minister was accommodated in a building close to our house. In course of a talk one day with the guard commander, I was surprised to find how bitter he was over the state of affairs that prevailed and the inability to the government of the day to deal with the situation.

It was gathered from knowledgeable sources in the city that discussions were taking place among the higher echelon of military command how to replace the regime. It was also reported that they desisted from carrying out their plan, because of their apprehension that such a move might set in motion a chain reaction, inviting intervention by foreign powers, in case the armed forces did anything to topple the regime. Rumbblings of discontent even reached foreign countries. In course of one of his visits to Delhi, Shaikh Mujib was reported to have been warned by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, that "something terrible was going to happen unless he was careful" ; but he did not think it necessary to pay any heed to such warnings.

It would be a travesty of truth to say that famine could not be prevented because of disruptions caused by the war, as some apologists of the regime used to say. If that was the reason, then famine would have come in 1972 immediately after the war and not until 1974 as it happened. Very few deaths from starvation were reported in 1972 and '73. Relief operations and aid on a liberal scale from the U.N. and many foreign countries did a lot to help rescue the country from the consequences of war. By 1974, the government should have been in a position to go ahead with its task of reconstruction and development.

It was largely a man made famine, bought about by corruption and mismanagement of public affairs.

Unattended dead bodies of men women and children, who died of hunger and privation, lay scattered by the roadside in the city, recalling the harrowing scene of the 1943 famine. That was another man-made famine brought about by the confusions of the World War. The devastations of the famine moved such artists like Zainul Abedin to produce his remarkable famine sketches, which not only made him famous as an artist, but produced a deep impression on everybody who had seen them. They helped a great deal to induce the war time alien British government to take special measures for famine relief. The Famine Relief Emergency Hospitals set up at that time, became the nucleus of the public health service in the post war era in Pakistan and India.

The repetition of the scene of destitution and death on the streets of Dhaka, however failed to resurrect the spirit of artists like Zainul Abedin whose telling sketches of '43 famine produced such a profound impact on the mind of the rulers. As demonstrations and agitation on the part of the opposition groups began to mount in intensity and violence, the ruling coterie thought it fit to take other measures for their containment.

The multiparty parliamentary system of government introduced by the post liberation Constitution, prescribed freedom of expression and political activities as fundamental rights of the citizens. Such freedom at last became a growing source of embarrassment for a government which were at their wits end to tackle the post liberation tasks of administration. Having come to power riding on the crest of a wave of political discontent, the ruling party was shaken thoroughly when faced with mounting agitation, not knowing what could be done to defuse the situation. At last they thought fit to curtail freedom of political activities as well as the freedom of the press, with a view to bring

down the tempo of agitation and prevent the situation from getting out of hand, as it threatened to do.

It was necessary to amend the Constitution if the people were to be deprived of their rights of freedom of association and the press. This was at last done by the 4th Amendment of the constitution adopted on the 25th of January '75. It brought about a radical change in the party system. All political parties were abolished except one, which was brought into existence under the name of Bangladesh Krishak, Sramik Awami League (the BAKSAL). The name of the single official party signified amalgamation of a number of parties contesting for power under the multiparty system. The intention of the authors of the new system apparently was to introduce a version of "democratic centralism" in the political management of the country, a system by which the Socialist countries established their monolithic one party rule. All the public servants were compelled to sign a pledge enlisting themselves as members of the official party the BAKSAL, and subject to its discipline. This measure was adopted early in February 1975.

Powerful mediums of public relations such as the radio and television were under the control of government. The only independent agency for dissemination of news and views were the newspapers. The Awami League government at last thought it fit to abolish their independent ownership and nationalise the news papers. Only four of them were maintained for publication and the rest suspended circulation. This measure came into effect on the 15th of June the same year. Although the news papers were returned to their owners and the restrictions on freedom of the press were withdrawn soon after the regime was over-thrown, the occasion is still observed as the "Black Day" by the journalists throughout the country.

The unchallenged position of the Awami League in the political arena after liberation enabled their leaders to do what they liked for the time being, irrespective of consequence. After under-going hardships

for five years of strife and war since 1968, the people were desperately wanting a government which could rescue them from anarchy and help return to an orderly and peaceful life. They were in no mood to bother about changes in the system of government. At the same time control over the press prevented building up agitation over the loss of freedom and fundamental rights. Hence amendment of the law seeking the desired changes could be passed without encountering much resistance. But large number of political activists who had taken part in the struggle for freedom, could not give up their cherished ideal so easily. Having failed to live up to their expectations, the action of the Party in power to choke the voice of the people at last began to erode their confidence in the ability of the government to usher in better days for the country. Conditions of scarcity and general anarchy that prevailed provided ample grist for the opposition to exploit. Finding no way to give vent to their opposition and resentment created by their suppression, they were compelled to seek recourse to other means to find a way out of a suffocating political climate.

In an era of rising expectations, no government could possibly live up to their promise particularly in a developing country. The gap between expectations and achievement could be narrowed down only through experience gathered over a period of time. Hence they are in need of a "safety valve" which could let off pressure of frustration and grievances as well as help renew hopes and aspirations of the people. The mechanism of such a process is provided in periodical elections in a democracy. Admittedly, it is far from a perfect device for political management. Even so, in the countries where elections could be held regularly, the institution of democracy could strike root, and an orderly change came to prevail. Moreover, change of government by peaceful means at regular interval is the only way to make the government responsible to the people; at the same time assure the people that everything possible was being done for their welfare. When

such a mechanism is interfered with, destroying the relationship which elections seek to establish between the government and the people, orderly administration becomes impossible. It is bound to give rise to unpredictable forces, making it impossible to anticipate the future course of events. One of the consequences of repressive action by the ruling regimes which seek to suppress normal functions of democratic institutions, is the rise of secret activities often inclined to violence, which make political development on rational lines impossible to achieve.

Far reaching changes one after another, without allowing time for adjustment were preventing the administration from settling down and putting the house in order. The Suppression of opposition and restriction on freedom of the press could do little to bring about an improvement of the situation. On the other hand anarchy and corruption were allowed to prevail without eliciting protest which a free press could do. Far from strengthening the hands of the government, they began to weaken its control over the situation. It soon came to such a pass that the ruling coterie had to rely more and more on the "Rakshi Bahini", their private army, and an irresponsible party organisation to sustain themselves in power. The changes by which they calculated to strengthen their hands, in effect pushed them into a blind alley, increasing the difficulties of either retreat or advance.

It would be too naive to assume that the ruling coterie was ignorant of what was happening outside. But there was very little they could do to stop the slide towards the abyss they were drifting headlong. They were confronted with a revolutionary situation which released new forces seeking accommodation. But as yet, they were unable to guide and integrate them into an orderly administrative process by which the new forces could be utilised for constructive purpose. The situation was at last getting out of hand.

Every government must have a power base to sustain itself and carry its behest. It is created either by the consent of the people, or with

the support of the armed forces. Democracy seeks and tries to build up its power base on the consent of the governed. Their strength lies in the support of the people which they enjoy. The built-in device to bring about a peaceful transfer of power, obviates any necessity for use of force to change the government when they lose popular support which sustain them. An authoritarian regime on the other hand, seeks to destroy it with a view to keep itself in office. The only alternative source of power which they can possibly utilise is the armed forces. But when the armed forces are inducted into the vortex of politics, the politicians are bound to be thrown out sooner or later. Rule by the military forces is inevitable, when the institutional device of democracy is suppressed. Once this happens a return to democracy is postponed almost indefinitely.

The growing discontent among the armed forces over the failure of government to restore peace and order in the country has been mentioned before. Since the enactment of the fourth amendment of the constitution seeking to perpetuate one party rule, a change of government virtually became impossible without a revolution or a coup-d-etat of some sort. But a revolution which calls for participation of the masses was out of question under the prevailing mood of the people. The only way a change could be brought about, was by a coup by those who had the requisite means to do it. The subsequent events should be viewed in this light to find an answer to the question, how such a popular leader like Shaikh Mujibur Rahman could be overthrown so easily by a small group of military officers, who apparently had no political ambition of their own to fulfil.

Enduring leadership is built on the capability to set an objective embodying hopes and aspirations of the people, together with the ability to mobilise them for their realisation. Having attained a spectacular success in the struggle for liberation from the yoke of the Pakistani military rule, when the leadership of the movement was faced with post -

liberation problems, they faltered, and at last failed to rally the people for the task of reconstruction on which depended their welfare. The failure of the Awami League government to live up to the expectations which they raised, could not but alienate the people, who only a short time ago gave them their unstinted support. What would have happened if "Bangabandhu" was allowed more time to go ahead with his task was anybody's guess. But it is no gainsaying the fact that the Awami League having come to power, thought it fit to take a line of policy completely different from what they were all along advocating while they were in the opposition camp. Political ideals which they professed and promised to uphold were abandoned, when time came for their practice and implementation. It looked almost like poetic justice, when they were overthrown by the same old process of coup by a group of Bangladeshi army officers following betrayal of their own political ideals. His sworn enemies spared Shaikh Mujibur Rahman when he was in their custody, only to end his life in the hands of those who had taken part in the struggle for liberation under his inspiration only a short time ago.

CHAPTER—XXXIX

Bangladesh Since The Death of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman

The unfortunate assassination of President Shaikh Mujibur Rahman on the 15th of August 1975, closed the first chapter in the history of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. His removal from the turbulent politics of the country was as sudden, as his rise to the pinnacle of power was rapid and spectacular. What surprised most neutral observers was the absence of any noteworthy reaction among the people over the assassination of such a popular personality, who provided the inspiration in the liberation movement.

Victory in the War had endowed Shaikh Mujib with a charisma which sustained his leadership through all the troubles which afflicted the country one after another since liberation. There was no question of having an agreed order of succession yet, who could take over as the leader of the Party and Head of the State, in the absence of the Shaikh. He was too confident of himself to allow any such thought to pass his mind. So, there was a real crisis in the Party over the selection of his successor. None of his associates could attain a stature comparable to that of the Shaikh who could take over the responsibilities on the basis of a consensus. The constitutional method of election was apparently ignored. As usually happens in such a situation, there was more than one aspirant who wanted to take the place of the departed leader, setting in motion internal dissensions. Such rivalry over succession, demolished the image of a monolithic party structure which was sought to be created after promulgation of the fourth Amendment to the Constitution.

Ultimately, Mushtaq Ahmad, an old associate of Shaikh Mujib, was installed as the President. It would be stretching the point too far to say that he was the choice of the Party. Mushtaq Ahmad all along maintained close links with the armed forces. In any case, no one could possibly become the Head of the State in such an unstable situation, without the active support of the armed forces. The political base of the Awami League which later became the BAKSAL — began to erode even before the death of Shaikh Mujib. The public support which sustains a ruling elite, creates the political power base and provides the moral support to the regime to govern. When the regime forfeits such public support, the power base must necessarily erode and release other forces to assert themselves.

However, the installation of Mushtaq Ahmad as the President, resolved the immediate problem of succession and gave a semblance of government to the country. The avowed champion of democracy declared Martial Law, to enable him to govern the country. Thus, the Sovereign National Assembly disappeared like the morning mist before the rising Sun. Out in the country, there was very little protest against the murder of democracy.

But it failed to eliminate the problem of struggle for power, which is the usual phenomenon in such an unstable, political situation. The shift in the focus of power from the political party to the armed forces was indicated by the declaration of martial law by the civilian President, Mushtaq Ahmad mentioned above. However, the attempt of Mushtaq to govern with the help of martial law only repeated the same old story of elimination of the civilian ruler by the military within a short time.

The growing tension and restlessness among the armed forces over inept political management and mal-administration, have been mentioned before. Things at last came to a head early in November '75 when there was a simultaneous uprising of the public and the armed forces to

topple the regime of Mustaq Ahmad. In the uprising of the armed forces, two senior officers of the army took the leading part. They were Khalid Mosharaf, and Ziaur Rahman. However, they turned out to be rivals, - not comrades. Initially, Khaled Mosharaf was able to put his rival out of the way by placing Ziaur Rahman under house arrest. Hence the former seemed to emerge victorious. But within a few days, the supporters of Ziaur Rahman, who turned out to be the stronger group, managed to rescue Zia and restore his command. Khalid Musharaf and his associates were promptly eliminated. Thus Ziaur Rahman ultimately emerged victorious in the struggle for power.

Four former ministers of Shaikh Mujib's cabinet, who were arrested and put in prison soon after Mushtaq Ahmad assumed power, were shot dead inside the jail by a group of army officers, as the former were suspected of conspiring to invite foreign intervention in order to secure their release. Mustaq Ahmad was removed from office, convicted and sent to prison to put him out of the way.

The latest clash in the power struggle eliminated a number of officers of the armed forces having revolutionary leanings, which provided a much needed respite to the administration to settle down with the business of government.

Chief Justice Sayem was installed President of Bangladesh, Initially, he set up a small council of Advisers (ministers) with the three armed services chiefs as Deputy Administrators of martial law. General Ziaur Rahman was the leading figure in this group. After a few weeks, the council was enlarged by including a number of civilian Advisers. I was invited to join the council towards the end of November (1975), and entrusted with the work of four ministries. The other members of the council, as well as most of the senior officials were old friends and acquaintances. So, I could look forward to an agreeable team work in running the administration of the country.

I have tried to give a pen-picture of the life that prevailed in the country covering the period of liberation war and the interregnum

that followed. The upheavals which the country had to pass through the last twenty eight years since 1947, could not but leave their scar on the society. Institutions those which suffered the greatest damage were perhaps the public administration and its functionaries, collectively known as the bureaucracy. It began to manifest itself in the increasing incidence of corruption in public life. Although some corruption has prevailed ever since man began to live in organised society but moral values cherished by the society were able to keep corruption within tolerable limits. Something or other had happened since the Second World War, which helped to increase corruption beyond measure, making it a part of life almost everywhere.

It has been mentioned in an earlier section of this memoir, that although the purpose of the state vastly changed with the transfer of power to the people, the post 1947 administration had to be built up on the basis of the same old pattern inherited by the emerging country. Its reconstruction was hampered by the turmoil and uncertainties through which the country had to pass before settling down with the business of government. Before the administration could be rehabilitated it had to assume new responsibilities which it was not in a position to discharge properly yet. New functions and responsibilities vested the "soft" administration with greater and greater power and discretion in the performance of its tasks, which became the principal source of corruption. Procedure and ethics failed to develop hand in hand with the increasing powers vested in the bureaucracy, thus opening the flood gate of corruption besetting public life.

But the real significance of corruption in the emerging democracies was the fact, wherever a political regime had crumbled, the chief, and often the decisive cause has been the prevalence of official misconduct among the administrators and the politicians, and the resulting spread of unlawful practices among the businessmen and the public in general. Shortly before the military take over of the government of

Pakistan in 1958, a foreign journalist observed that probably no other symptom of Pakistani public life had contributed more to the demoralisation of the common man, than corruption. Illicit practices had reached such proportions, that their effect was likely to wipe out what ever benefits the new economic policy might have secured for the common man. (quoted in the Asian Drama, by Myrdal). The same phenomenon repeated itself after liberation in Bangladesh, albeit in a much wider scale producing similar results.

Those who had the opportunity to see the consequences of the partition on the administration in the initial years of independence, would agree, that, inspite of the damage caused by the war, the condition in which Bangladesh was placed after liberation was much better in every way as compared with those, in which the country was placed after partition of India in 1947. East Pakistan, as this region was called, was developing into a separate administrative entity ever since independence, albeit under a centralised government, which was slowing down the development of the country.

The rehabilitation of the administration on the existing pattern, which was the immediate task, should not have created any serious difficulty. The main problem was upgrading a provincial administration into a National government. Sheer dictates of prudence should have indicated that a flexible approach was necessary, so that the new administration was not overburdened with responsibilities which it was not in a position to assume yet. An attempt has been made in chapter XXXVIII to describe how the far reaching changes placing additional burden on the administration, created serious difficulties hampering rehabilitation of the country, inspite of assistance obtained on a generous scale from the international community. It may not be out of place to mention that the rehabilitation of the new country of Pakistan after the trauma of the partition of India in 1947, could be achieved without external aid in any form. Bangladesh was surely in a

much better position to resuscitate herself after liberation within a short time, provided the government could initiate a policy befitting the occasion.

Since all political activities were banned, the armed forces ipso facto became the power behind the throne. General Ziaur Rahman, the Chief-of-Staff, emerged as the real head of the government. Hence the new Regime produced an image which was not much different from those of its predecessors, who happened to rule the country from time to time with the help of martial law. But unlike the latter, now the ruling junta as well as the members of the armed forces were all Bangalies. One may legitimately ask a question—did it make any difference ? Very little, really ; except perhaps, psychologically.

The armed forces of Bangladesh were organised only after liberation. While the nucleus of the forces was provided by the small Bengali elements of the Pakistan Army, the main body of the forces was largely composed of young post liberation recruits. Their active involvement with political turmoil right from the beginning, introduced an unstable element in politics. Once the armed forces get a taste of power, it is indeed very difficult for them to forget it. This is an universal phenomena ; it would be against the lessons of history to ignore it. Unfortunately, the greatest lesson of history is, that no one would take a lesson from history. Bangladesh is no exception.

General Zia did not come to power riding on the crest of a wave of political turmoil ; he had to fight for it. He was fully conscious of the source of his support to maintain himself in power, He did not work out a man ifesto, or organise a party yet, with the help of which he could build up his base of political support. He had to do something to gain legitimacy for his action and obtain a mandate to go ahead with his task. The memory of Shaikh Mujib the departed leader was still fresh in the minds of the people. His doctrine could still provide the basis of action for the successor government. The referendum held in

1977 to obtain popular support for his installation as the President, was taken as the mandate for such a policy.

With this end in view, he decided to adhere generally to the policy and programme of the government of Shaikh Mujib. While such a strategy could fill the vacuum of political objectives, it introduced an element of rigidity in economic affairs at a time, which called for a review of the past policy, in order to rectify some of the mistakes of the previous regime. The purpose of continuity of policy was maintained by the First Five Year Plan which was in course of implementation. In spite of many a deviation and shortfall in its achievement, it provided a framework of policy, within which the new government could prepare its programme of activities.

The disruption of public administration defy description. Since 1970, the country was afflicted with natural disasters such as cyclonic storms and floods, alternating with man-made calamities such as Civil War and political upheavals. Before the ravages of one could be repaired, a fresh disaster struck the people, inflicting terrible hardship. Crime with violence increased all over the country, against which the helpless people were left to fend for themselves without succour. The public administration failed to measure up to their primary task of maintaining law and order, which began to deteriorate day by day. The administration lost the confidence of the people in this way at a time when they were prepared to do their best to cooperate and assist the government in their task of reconstruction. No wonder, the scepter of public wrath at last descended on the political leaders, who were supposed to run the government of the country.

Soon after the formation of the Council of Advisers, a number of Council Committees were set up to look into the various problems confronting the government, and generally to gear up the administration. At the same time, a Commission was also set up to examine the pay scales and the service structures for their adaptation to the changing require-

ments of the public services. The Continuous rise of prices was causing hardship to the fixed income groups, of whom the government employees were the largest in number. The pressure for revision of pay scales was rising everywhere. The mounting tension created by such demands was defused with the appointment of the Commission.

I was placed in charge of a Council Committee, dealing with the current problems of the administration and the services. The first point which struck me soon after the committee started its work, was the enormous increase in the number of government employees since liberation. It was equally significant that while the number of employees went on increasing, the performance of the administration began to deteriorate day by day. Overstaffing became a chronic problem. Even the number of public sector corporations increased in number without producing any improvement. An enquiry into the conditions of the jute and cotton textile industries disclosed there were 25 to 30 per cent excess of employees, needed to run the mills to their full capacity. Since nationalisation of the jute trade, the number of corporations dealing with trading, increased from two to five without bringing any benefit either to the trade or to the producers of jute. On the other hand, due to bad management, the export of jute declined progressively, piling up losses year after year. In the first meeting of the Council Committee it was decided to free the jute trade from unnecessary restrictions to enable the private trading to resume, at the same time reduce the number of corporations from five to three. The export of jute began to revive steadily since the resuscitation of private trade under the new policy.

A new class of entrepreneurs was coming up among the Bengali businessmen since the early sixties. They were able to set up modern industries with the help of facilities provided since the Second Five Year Plan of Pakistan. They included such enterprise as jute and cotton textiles, Bank and Insurance Companies, and others, which were able to come up inspite of severe competition they had to face with the old established

houses. My association with the Equity Participation Fund as the Chairman, and the Eastern Federal Union Insurance Company, gave me an opportunity to observe the progress of the enterprise undertaken by the Bengali entrepreneurs. The way in which they devoted themselves to set up and run their industries, left no room for doubt in my mind, that they could do as well as any of the old hands in this job for the progress of industry in our country.

The modern sector of industries was largely in the hands of the non-Bengalies at the time of liberation. Most of them left the country, when the defeat of the Pakistani armed forces became inevitable. Government was therefore faced with the problem of taking over the management of a large number of industrial units, abandoned by the non-Bangali owners. Hence the government could take over such industries for their management without recourse to indiscriminate nationalisation, depriving the Bengali entrepreneur of their ownership of industries. In this way, the most enterprising class of people who could make a significant contribution to the progress of industry, werethrown out of their business. The nationalised industries began to incur heavy losses year after year as indicated earlier and piled up their debts in the Banks, thus depriving the country of real resources which the industries could generate.

My colleague in the Advisory Council and an old friend Hafizuddin who was placed in charge of industries, and myself decided to initiate a policy of restoring the industries to the Bengali owners, and progressive disinvestment of others as far as possible, with a view to revive private enterprise whose scope was restricted within narrow limits of small industries only. We found other members of the council generally in sympathy with the idea, but general Zia thought it fit to take a stand against such a proposal. Although generally a rightist in his outlook on society, his commitment to so called "Mujib bad", which initially provided him with the grist for his political mill, seemed to have induced him to take such a stand on the policy of private ownership of industries,

at least for the time being. However his attitude towards the subject began to change along with his ascendancy in the political arena and growing disappointment with public ownership.

Early in 1977 President Sayem was persuaded to resign, making room for General Zia to take over as the President. Thus the game of hide and seek in the political arena came to an end. I was at Bagdad, negotiating with the Iraqi government to allow diversion of a portion of a loan given to Bangladesh, for setting up a jute carpet mill. The news of the change of the head of the state made my position rather anomalous in the negotiations with a foreign government. Leaving the conclusion of the agreement in the hands of our ambassador, I returned home, where much to my relief, I found myself holding the same position in the Council of Advisers as before.

Soon after assuming the office of the head of the state, General Zia decided to build up the political basis of his power, as a prelude to the withdrawal of martial law and restoration of representative government. A political party was necessary for this purpose, for which he began negotiation with the politicians. A party was set up which ultimately came to be known as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (the B.N.P.), with himself as its President. As soon as he felt himself strong enough for a show-down, the office of the President of the country was thrown open to election, with himself as the nominee of his party. His principal opponent was the nominee of the combined opposition groups, General Osmani, the Commander of the Freedom fighters during the Civil War.

Although General Zia won the election with a large majority, votes polled by his rival was quite significant, which could be taken as an indication of competitive political process found only in countries having a democratic government. It was indeed a very rare example of a military ruler voluntarily transferring power to the people.

The Council of Advisers was reconstituted by inducting a number of politicians, now called Minister. One of them, namely Shah Azizur

Rahman was designated Prime Minister. Retired Justice Abdus Sattar was appointed Vice-President. Later on general elections were held on multi-party basis, in which the B.N.P. was returned with a large majority in the National Assembly. Martial law was withdrawn transferring power to the elected representatives of the people ; but the presidential form of government was maintained. General Ziaur Rahman remained head of the State as well as the head of the government.

I was asked to tender my resignation, but was simultaneously appointed an Adviser to deal with the work of reorganisation of the services and the pay structure, following the Report of the Pay and Services Commission. I was again inducted into the Cabinet as a minister a few months later.

The people of this country had demonstrated more than once, that they were capable of uniting for the pursuit of a national objective, or tide over a crisis. The conditions which combine to bring about political integration were all in favour of Bangladesh developing into a viable nation state. Now, the all important task after liberation of the country, was how to set up a sound instrument of public administration, which could take the country along the path of peace and prosperity. Unfortunately, any semblance of success in this part of the endeavour was yet eluding the grasp of the leaders of the country. The debasing effect of corruption on public life has been mentioned above.

Politics in a free country can never remain static. Restoration of freedom brought back memories of all the unrequited promise which eluded fulfilment. The rising expectations of the people has created the modern concept of welfare state. The drive for a welfare state has made politics largely secular in character. The existence of a political party in an open society is dependent on the basis of its socio-economic programme; in keeping with the aims and aspirations of the people. Their programme of work may differ, but their objective remains the same, namely promotion of welfare. They are able to enlist support

to the extent they can demonstrate their commitment to their manifesto, with which they can approach the people.

The acquisition of a homeland free from non-Muslim domination, fired the imagination of the people for the achievement of peace and prosperity. But the politicians of Pakistan were cast into a quandary over the purpose of the State since they became free. Their failure to develop a sound policy of welfare in an independent country, prevented consolidation of political power, until they were swept aside by the intervention of the armed forces. Ultimately, the failure of the military rulers of Pakistan to bring about a political solution of the relationship between the central government and the province of East Pakistan, broke up the country and brought about the creation of Bangladesh.

The liberation of Bangladesh from the yoke of Pakistani rule, created similar euphoria, which swept over the Muslims following the creation of Pakistan, holding out promise of peace and prosperity. The ruling party, the Awami League sought to give the country a new ideology and a programme which came to be known as the "Mujib bad", mentioned before. But they failed to live up to their promise and were swept out of power in less than four years, leaving the country in the lurch.

General Ziaur Rahman stepped into the political vacuum, steering a middle course, or rather leaning right of the centre. A man with a vision and ability he was able to consolidate his position within a short time. His policy, particularly restoration of democratic system of government and handing over power to the representatives of the people, combined to win for himself a wide measure of public support. After going through a period of turmoil stretching over thirty years bringing crisis after crisis in its wake since 1947 the country at last seemed to be entering an era of political stability.

A climate of optimism generally prevailed since the election of General Zia as the President and restoration of constitutional government. Public administration, which became all but moribund, began to revive.

The revision of the First Five Year Plan so as to make it closer to realities, and release of trade and industries from crippling restrictions, brought about an improvement in the economic activities. A new programme of agricultural development opened up the prospects of self-sufficiency in the production of food-grains within a short time.

The supremacy of the non-Bengalies having ended with liberation, the people could look forward to a steady improvement of economic condition and general welfare. The rising expectations of the people were heightened further by the oft-repeated declarations from high quarters, that there were unlimited possibilities of economic growth ; money was declared to be no problem ; only hard work and cooperation were necessary to bring about an improvement in the quality of life of the people. President Zia undertook extensive tour of the country, with a view to reassure the people and supervise implementation of the government plan and programme.

In a country like Bangladesh where the majority of the people were still living below the subsistence level, whatever could be done for the alleviation of poverty would still leave vast areas untouched. The eradication of poverty is a task whose performance has got to be spread over a long period of time for its achievement. Political stability and good administration are essential for progress in such an endeavour. But hunger and privation do not respond to theories or appeal for patience. The Containment of rising expectations and holding the line of priorities, were thus becoming a difficult problem for the government to tackle. This is the crucial task of political management, whose Judicious handling has a lot to do with stability and success of planned development of the country.

The restoration of constitutional government created the necessity of organised political activities with the help of political parties. The party set up by President Zia, namely the B.N.P., was organised by amalgamating a number of minor parties and splinter groups of the

old Muslim League and the Awami League. Their only binding force was that they claimed to be Nationalists, under the leadership of President Zia.

The usual trouble with a party of heterogeneous elements, having little relation with an ideology, soon began to manifest itself in the shape of internal tension and intra-party rivalry for the positions of power and privilege. This was sought to be resolved by having a large Council of Ministers, so as to provide representation from all the important groups, and by general Zia's personal intervention in all party affairs by holding frequent meetings and prompt arbitration of disputes. The programme of development was freely rearranged according to the commitments made by the President in course of his extensive tours, which gave him a firm hold on the Party, and enabled him to influence the electorate in a large measure. In this way power and patronage were freely used in the interest of party politics.

But the more potent source of support for President Zia was perhaps his close association with the armed forces. His reputation as a freedom fighter was still high among them. As long as they remained his supporters, he could keep control over the fluid political situation and enforce some semblance of discipline on the amorphous party organisation. But clouds began to gather on the horizon, no sooner the deck was cleared for a new leap forward. The revolt of a section of the air force soon after his assumption of the office of the President, who shot dead a number of their own officers for no purpose other than looting a number of shops gave an indication that all was not well with the armed forces. Although the revolt could be suppressed easily, it was evident that the armed forces were yet to develop into a stabilising agency in the country.

Political management, therefore, assumed a two-fold task - namely the party organisation and its utilisation as an instrument for obtaining popular support, and secondly, containment of the political ambition

of the armed forces. While the former could be done with the help of the hierarchy of party functionaries, the latter became the responsibility of President Zia himself, keeping the party out of its purview. So far, the party as such, had very little to do with the repeated change of regime since the assassination of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. Whether the party was yet in a position to ensure peaceful change of regime by constitutional method was still a matter of conjecture. If it was at all considered in the light of what had happened before, there was little room for complacency.

The question of reorganisation of services and pay structure was hanging fire and could not be postponed. Discontent over inadequacy of pay scales in public services and the prevailing elitist service structure, undermined the efficiency of the bureaucracy. A special Cabinet Committee was set up to examine the report of the Pay and Services Commission, and recommend necessary changes for their adoption. Their recommendations failed to satisfy any one. The members of the technical and specialist services in a body launched protest and agitation for their modification. After a great deal of negotiations it was decided to consider the recommendations by the cabinet committee. The task was entrusted to me as its Chairman. The entire question of the pay structure, and the relationship between the generalist civil service and the technocrats were reopened for further examination.

The exercise took the best part of two years to complete. In the process, the prevailing distinction in the status, pay scale and prospects for promotion between different services was removed in a large measure, so as to ensure equality of opportunity depending on the qualifications and competence of the incumbent. Government employees of all categories were organised into an integrated Civil Service, having a clear line of advancement covering the entire service life of the incumbent. The Change on such an extensive scale could not but affect adversely the working of the bureaucracy for the time being,

slowing down their output. Their results could only be assessed over a period of time, after adjustments to their new status and relationship were completed. Similar exercise was undertaken for the employees of all public sector corporations, autonomous bodies and nationalised industries of the country, providing uniformity in the conditions of service as far as possible.

The political party has become the symbol of freedom, providing a linkage between the government and the people. It is their responsibility to ensure that the government is run according to the wishes of the people, at the same time assure them that the government set up by the party was doing everything possible to fulfil its commitments. The party is organised and run by the intelligentsia. They have become the dominant group by virtue of their education and training. Society can be modernised only under their leadership. The principal instruments of modernisation, namely, science and technology, have placed enormous powers in the hands of those who have learnt how to use them. The welfare of the society depends largely on how such powers are exercised. Their proper use can promote welfare and happiness ; their misguided use have inflicted untold hardship and suffering on countless millions of people. How power shall be exercised, has become the central subject of politics.

Freedom can be enjoyed only under a political regime ; but it also has its simy side like many other institutions created by man to regulate social living. While, striving for a cleaner political life must go on till the end of time, it would be futile to blame party politics and the politicians for all the misdeeds and corruption with which our society is afflicted. The hard fact reminds us again and again that no other system has yet been devised by which participation of the people can be ensured in the political management of the society. In spite of all its shortcomings, people still prefer to live under a democratic form of government run by the politicians, because, it is the only devise which

can possibly provide a linkage between the government and the people ; at the same time make it possible to bring about a change through the peaceful process of election. Philosophers have upheld the notion, that a good government is no substitute for self-government. History replete with examples which uphold the truth underlying this observation.

It would perhaps be no exaggeration to say that political developments since the general elections held in 1978-79 at last created a hope among the people to live under a democratic form of government. Unfortunately such a hope was soon dispelled by the assassination of President Zia in the last week of May 1981. The source of such violence was again misguided group of the armed forces. It started another round of uncertainties and arbitrary rule, putting the clock back in the process of democratic reconstruction of the country.

CHAPTER XL.

Epilogue

Almost all the former colonial countries had to pass through a traumatic period of transition after independence. Pakistan was no exception. Foreign powers, mostly Europeans, when they acquired their colonies in the 18th and 19th centuries had already developed themselves into nation states based on racial and cultural identity of the people. But they did not draw the boundary of their colonial acquisitions keeping in view, the differences of race or culture among their subjects. Though they exploited economically, their evenhanded justice and control over inter-group conflicts enabled the rulers to win acquiescence of their subjects and maintain hold on their possessions for a long time. Living under the rule of the colonial power, the subnational groups developed a semblance of unity which they had never known before. But, such unity could last so long as they were held together by the strong arm of their rulers. Withdrawal of the ruling power following upheavals of the world War, suddenly removed the chief unifying force which held them together. In the post independent era, the ex-colonial countries therefore, had to go through a period of turmoil and confusion, before they could settle down with the business of government. Those who could adopt a wise and conciliatory policy in a spirit of give and take, were able to adjust themselves with the changing conditions and maintain their unity after independence, which paved the way for the development of a nation state. On the other hand those countries where one or the other subnational groups tried to arrogate all powers and dominate over the rest, the conduct of the dominant group began to erode the sense of unity and they drifted towards disintegration.

In spite of severe stress and strain through which Pakistan had to pass her early days of independence, the politicians of the day could run the government without serious mishap. They were able to come to an understanding over important political issues and they produced a Constitution on the basis of a national consensus, which could possibly lay the foundation for national integration. Looking back across the time span of a generation, one can easily comprehend that those were no mean achievements for a new country in search of her national identity.

The task of nation building is essentially a political problem, calling for a mutual understanding and a climate of public opinion in which disparate groups of people can realise that living together under one government was better for them than secession. This is the underlying spirit of nationalism. As a political phenomena, nationalism is a distinctive feature of modern industrial civilisation. One nation, one state, one economy provide their basis. Living in freedom, modern nation states have emerged in this way. But the ex-colonial countries had to go through a different kind of experience in their development towards a nation state. They were conquered and subjugated by the colonial powers before the spirit of nationalism had developed among the subjects of the colony. As a matter of fact, it was the absence of such a spirit, which enabled the colonial powers to subjugate them. The spirit of nationalism began to grow at a later stage as an upshot of resistance movement against the foreign rulers. It was the common struggle for liberation and shared sacrifices, which engendered the spirit of unity. Such a spirit had to be nursed and developed for the purpose of nation building.

Pakistan was faced with the unique problem of a country divided into two segments, trying to find a basis of her national integration. She had to contend not only with the problem of forging a number of sub-national groups into one nation, her geographical division into two

separate regions created a difficult problem of national integration. While religion could provide a spiritual bond of unity transcending racial differences, it could do little to solve the economic and political problems in Pakistan which usually dominate the government of a nation state. The solution of such problems called for understanding and accomodation among various groups, which could be achieved only by a representative government working in a spirit of give and take. Such a fruitful endeavour was demonstrated by the National Assembly of Pakistan, when they produced the constitution in 1956. The process of nation building was, however thwarted by other events mentioned in the foregoing chapters of this memoir.

Dealing with the problem of national integration, contemporary scholars have tried to differentiate between two aspects of the task namely "state building" and the other "nation building". They are complementary, but separate fields of endeavour in an emerging state. The expression "state building" indicate setting up the requisite administrative apparatus by which the functions of government are performed. This is not enough to integrate the people into a nation when they are divided into subnational groups. This was amply demonstrated by nearly two hundred years of British rule over the subcontinent which failed to integrate the different racial and cultural groups into a nation. The other task, "nation building" denotes developing institutional devise by which people can acquire a sense of belonging and participate in the management of the collective affairs of the country. Since her creation, Pakistan could go ahead with the task of "state building". But geographical division of the country into separate regions made nation building a difficult task; at the sametime making it a pre-condition for her survival as a nation. This important aspect of the politics of Pakistan seems to have escaped the attention of those presiding over her destiny. Instead of guiding political activities on right lines towards nation building, they though it fit to suppress them with the intention

of keeping themselves in power. Struggle for power is a universal phenomena ; Pakistan was no exception. But there are universally accepted principles and conventions to regulate such a struggle, if the country is to survive as a nation state. The institutional devise of democracy is supposed to take care of such problems by providing checks and balances for their containment as far as possible and ensure peaceful transfer of power. So long as such struggle is confined within the "rules of the game", democracy can survive and proceed with its task of nation building. Admittedly, democratic institutions were not functioning properly in Pakistan ; but they were the only devise by which she could survive as a nation. Unfortunately, instead of helping to build up those institutions which could provide the framework of unity, powerful groups set themselves to destroy them for their own selfish ends.

As a state, Pakistan presented a picture of disparate groups of people living under one government. Religion was their only bond of unity. The fact that it was brought into existence with the consent of the people concerned, demonstrated their desire to live under one government. That was a noteworthy step towards nation-building. But it could not alter the realities of the situation, which called for careful handling of political affairs for attainment of the desired objective. The people who cast their lot to live together in Pakistan, did so in the hope of becoming a nation through the process of democratic management of government. That was the only device by which the people could be integrated into a nation. It began as "a nation in the hope" ; its realisation depending on the wisdom and foresight of those incharge of the "ship of the State", and their ability to weather the stress and storm of an unchartered sea, which lay between the hope and its fulfilment.

Every country must have its military establishment for maintaining freedom and territorial integrity. In Pakistan they were dominated by

the people of one subnational group to the exclusion of the rest. East Pakistan having more than half the population, had only a nominal representation in the armed forces. Thus replacement of democratic regime by arbitrary military rule had the effect of depriving the people of this region from having any say in the government of the country. Hence it could not but undermine unity of the people.

The military regime set up by Ayub Khan, ostensibly seeking to overcome the alleged weakness of the democratic government, only set the clock back in the process of nation building. The promise of a better government with which General Ayub Khan so clamourously landed with his military regime on the stage of civil administration, soon proved a delusion. It only imposed an arbitrary military rule on the country with little prospect of improvement. His action destroyed the relationship between the government and the armed forces, which modern democracy had built up after many years of struggle, to keep the military establishment out of politics.

More than twenty years after independence, the people still found themselves living under the yoke military rule. Perhaps far more damaging effect of Ayub Khan's coup-d-etat, was the destruction of the ideal of democracy as a way of life. Perpetrators of the coup had no alternative to offer. The best that they could do was promise of return to democracy as they thought fit. Their over riding motive was to capture power and maintain their predominant position, which they could do without meeting with much resistance. The power base created by political consensus was replaced by military power. They took over the task of political management with the help of the bureaucracy. Such a combination could perhaps work up to a point in a culturally homogeneous society, a condition which was not obtainable in Pakistan. Removed from control and direction of civil authorities, the junta was free to indulge in military adventures which soon proved disastrous for the country. It recalled the oft repeated dictum of a war

time Prime Minister of Britain, that war was too serious a business to be left to the generals alone.

The Centralisation of government hampered development of the provincial administration in the eastern region. It did not materially affect West Pakistan, particularly since amalgamation of the four provinces into one unit. There, the secretary to the provincial government could pick up the telephone and get the point at issue settled by discussion with the official concerned at the centre. The eastern region found herself at the receiving end and had to be satisfied with whatever fell to her lot. More than eighty per cent of the economic benefits arising out of the activities of the centre remained confined to West Pakistan. In spite of the declared policy to ensure uniform economic growth by planned endeavour, disparity in development between the two regions of the country continued to increase year after year.

As central planning made progress, it increased enormously the power of the centre, at the expense of the province, because administration of economic affairs of the country rested with the former. Right from the beginning, East Pakistan reacted against central control by her oft repeated demand for provincial autonomy. It ultimately gave rise to the demand based on the "Six Points" Manifesto of the Awami League. It was a desperate bid to safeguard the interests of the eastern region following the senseless war with India in 1965 exposing the province to the risk of enemy aggression, without adequate arrangements for her defence. The lack of foresight on the part of the central authorities was demonstrated by their ambivalence over the issue of autonomy. The lesson of the upsurge of popular discontent which toppled the government of Ayub Khan, was completely lost on the new set of military rulers. Although Shaikh Mujib declared that the "Six Points" were negotiable, the military junta did not think it fit to enter into negotiations before the elections while there was still an opportunity to come to terms on such an important issue.

It was reported that a large body of public opinion in West Pakistan was in favour of separation of the two regions of the country. A political settlement over such an issue could not possibly be more difficult than the issue of partition of the sub-continent which brought into existence the two independent countries India and Pakistan twenty-four years ago. Whether it was a question of preserving unity, or bringing about secession, a peaceful settlement of the issue could only be brought about by negotiations among politicians. Such a delicate task placed in the hands of the military, was nothing less than asking for trouble. It is also an anomaly of history, that while the Hindus and the Muslims of the subcontinent after living 180 years under British rule, could come to an agreement on the question how they wanted to live in freedom and parted company as friends, the Muslims of the two regions of Pakistan had to fight a war over the issue and parted company as enemies. Politics is supposed to be "the art of the possible". Given the good-will, it can achieve a lot more peacefully than what the use of force can possibly do. When the country was looking for a political settlement, the ruling coterie thought it fit to impose a military solution, ending in total defeat and surrender. Thus it so happened, that while Pakistan came into existence by virtue of a movement launched under the leadership of the politicians, it rested with the military rulers to break her up. The anecdote that in a war the "right cause shall win", could not perhaps be better illustrated than the result of the war which broke up Pakistan in 1971 after senseless destruction of life and property.

The liberation from Pakistani military rule was expected to open up new opportunities to the people of Bangladesh. The people being culturally homogeneous, there was no problem of "nation building", a task which loomed so large in Pakistan and could never be resolved. The problem in the newly created Bangladesh was the other task of "State Building" i.e. setting up an administrative apparatus befitting a nation state. This was essentially a task of reconstruction by upgrading the

provincial set up into a national government capable to take over the new areas of responsibilities, which so long rested with the central government at Islamabad. Initially, this was hampered by shortage of trained personnel. The situation was almost similar to that faced by Pakistan after partition in 1947. If it could be solved at that time, why could it not be done equally well in Bangladesh in 1972/73? There was no cause for despondency.

The victory in the war and liberation from Pakistani military rule were earned at a great cost to the people. It took place within twenty-five years after the trauma of partition which divided the subcontinent, inflicting similar hardship to the people and damage to the country. Such an upheaval for the second time within the span of less than a generation, could not but create unusual difficulties for the government of the new country. But there were other factors which could have helped both the government and the society to settle down with the task of reconstruction without loss of time.

The liberation from the oppressive Pakistani military rule released tremendous enthusiasm among the people. They were awaiting utilisation by the government for such purpose as they thought fit. The Awami League had obtained undisputed political leadership of the country. People were looking up to the leaders for their call and guidance for such work which they thought was necessary, befitting the time and opportunity. Popular enthusiasm which can release tremendous energies for collective endeavour has to be organised and guided into constructive channel by the leaders; otherwise they could veer into harmful and destructive activities, creating fresh problems for both the government and the people. After more than three years (1968-72), of continuous turmoil and destructive war, people were anxiously looking up to the leaders to usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. It was for the leaders to take up the challenge in right earnest in response to popular expectations.

Unfortunately, a vocal section of the party thought it fit to press the new government to take a vindictive line to prosecute those suspected of collaboration with the Pakistani army. It was a new offence created after liberation, transgressing principles of jurisprudence which prohibit criminal law having retrospective effect. The term 'collaborator' was couched in such language, that almost anybody who remained in the country could fall within its definition. Journalists and writers raised their strong voice of protest saying that such a blanket indictment would make sixty-five million Bangladeshis namely, those who failed to leave the country, as "collaborators". Only those who could migrate were considered to be patriots, the rest were traitors. But the government thought fit to pursue their policy of prosecuting the alleged offenders. Nearly 40,000 were arrested and put on trial.

Such a policy made the entire body of government employees who remained within the country, feel insecure in their office and jittery over their future at a time, when whole-hearted attention and firm action on their part were necessary, for rehabilitation of the administration. Presidential order no. 9, made matters worse as mentioned before.

As mentioned earlier, the police force perhaps suffered the largest number of casualties, including Inspectors and sub-inspectors, who constitute the backbone of the force. A large number of them failed to return to duty after liberation. The services of such a decimated force was urgently needed for the re-establishment of law and order in a war ravaged country. Other branches of administration were also seriously disorganised and were short of personnel. The diversion of time and energies of the reduced police force and the administration, from their primary task of rescuing the country from anarchy and confusion, to that of chasing and prosecuting thousands of alleged collaborators, only delayed return of normalcy and prolonged the hardship of the people. The prosecution of so many people prominent in public eye, who had their friends, relations and followers all over the country, for an offence

which they might not have committed, created a new source of tension, and split the society into separate camps at a time, when united effort was the prime need of the hour. It would not be far from the truth to say that such a course of action soon began to alienate the people, when they were prepared to give their best and cooperate with the government in a policy directed towards resuscitation of normal life of the country. After conviction of the ex-governor Dr. Malik and a few others, the government thought it fit to abandon prosecution and release the rest except those who had specific charges brought against them under ordinary law. But good sense came to prevail too late after the mischief was done. The aftermath of war was bound to keep the political and social climate charged with tension and violence. The lack of security due to the breakdown of administration, aggravated the situation.

It does not call for much wisdom to realise that normal life could not be restored until the administration was geared up to resume its functions under the prevailing condition. The government failed to recover promptly fire arms from the possession of the guerilla hands and miscreants, who now began to turn their weapons against their own countrymen. Nepotism and favouritism became so rife, that people were split into hostile camps and lined themselves up against one another for safety and protection. The value of law enforcement and normal art of administration was ignored and replaced by coercion and violence. The Rakshi Bahini, the private army of the ruling coterie and the stall warts of the party, became the de facto agencies for running the administration of the country.

The defeat of the Pak army and installation of the Awami League government, made the latter undisputed master of the situation who could make or mar the future of the country. Prompt action on the part of the U.N. Mission in Dhaka, obtaining a large quantity of food grains and other necessities of life for relief of hunger and privation, averted immediate crisis of famine and pestilence. A more auspicious situation

for rehabilitation of the country and return to normalcy could hardly be imagined. Then what could go wrong with the government of Bangladesh which brought about crisis after crisis; until the heroes of only the other day were swept away by a wave of public wrath in the bloodiest of coup the country had ever seen ?

The war stretching over nine months, causing death and destruction on an unprecedented scale, bequeathed a legacy of violence in the society. The usual response to violence was counter violence, suspicion and resentment on the part of the victims and the creation of a tendency to use more violence. This was inevitable in the wake of the Civil War, in which it was difficult to draw a line between friend and foe. The restoration of peace and order was the foremost task of the government under such a condition, before reconstruction of the war ravaged country could be taken up. An active policy of reconciliation and rehabilitation was necessary to remove the causes of bitterness and suspicion, which could restore normalcy within the shortest possible time. It has been mentioned before how the policy pursued by the post-liberation government of Bangladesh, far from helping restoration of normalcy, had the effect of creating fresh bitterness and tension, almost perpetuating the conditions of the war. Usual precautions to contain violence were also neglected.

It was not until president Zia took over the task of political management that deliberate steps were taken for restoration of normal process of democratic government. The response of the people was equally encouraging. Over the period of a generation since liberation from the colonial yoke, the people of the developing countries have been learning the art of democratic management of government. But the politics of weapon, which has no law or morality, has turned up a new menace to society. It has released a chain reaction of forces, frustrating progress towards peace and democracy. The promise of "government of the people, by the people, for the people..", with which the post-liberation era had opened, has yet remained a dream, awaiting fulfilment.



THE AUTHOR

After his graduation from Dhaka University he was selected for appointment in the Indian Police Service in 1933. He served as District Superintendent of Police in both East and West Bengal during the British Regime. He rose to the rank of the Inspector General of Police in Pakistan, in 1958. Afterwards he was transferred to the administrative service where he was appointed Chief Secretary to the Govt. of East Pakistan in 1961. He also served for about two years as the Chairman of the Central Public Service Commission of Pakistan before his appointment in 1965, as Minister for Education, Health, Labour and Social Welfare in the Pakistan Federal Cabinet in which capacity he served for four years. Leaving public service in 1969 he was associated with a number of business enterprises. In 1975, after liberation of Bangladesh, he was again invited and joined the Council of Advisers and Ministers of Presidents Sayem, Ziaur Rahman and Abdus Sattar and served for six years.

During his tenure in public service he was closely associated with political and administrative development in Pakistan and Bangladesh. After his retirement he undertook writing his memoir "Under Three Flags".