

# The New Pakistan

Satish Kumar - 1978



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# THE NEW PAKISTAN

SATISH KUMAR

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*To my father,*

*the late Shri Ram Nath Agarwal,  
veteran freedom fighter  
and an incorrigible optimist with regard to  
Indo-Pak friendship*

## PREFACE

Pakistan is a major concern of Indian foreign policy. Understanding the internal dynamics of Pakistan is indispensable to the formulation of a viable policy with regard to this country. The ebb and flow of domestic politics in India and Pakistan have a greater impact on each other's foreign policy, than could be said about most other countries in the contemporary world. I had the opportunity to closely observe the politics of Pakistan, first as a policy analyst in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi (from 1967 to 1972), and then as the contributor of a regular column on Pakistan in the *Hindustan Times* (from 1972 to 1977). While writing the column, I was privileged to visit Pakistan for a period of 15 days in December 1973, as a guest of the Government of Pakistan. It was during this visit that the idea of capturing the exciting drama of Pakistani politics in the form of a book occurred to me.

The period covered in this book is 20 December 1971 to 5 July 1977 – from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's assumption of power in the wake of the secession of East Pakistan, to his ouster by General Zia-ul-Haq, Chief of the Army Staff. The choice of this period was dictated not merely by the fact that December 1971 marked a point of departure in Pakistani history, and July 1977 the end of a phase. It was also governed by my desire not to write a book of history, but to pen down my analysis of the Pakistani situation as viewed by a keen contemporary observer. Therefore, the emphasis in this book is not so much on factual detail as on analysis and comment. The objective is to examine how far Bhutto succeeded in building a "new Pakistan", which he promised on the day of assuming power.

I am grateful to the Editor, *Hindustan Times*, for allowing me to draw from the material used in my columns. I appreciate the help rendered by B. Udayashankar, Research Assistant in the Diplomatic Studies Division, School of International Studies, in going through a substantial portion of the typescript. The tedious task of typing out the manuscript was very gracefully undertaken by Miss Sudesh Ghai.

*New Delhi*

Satish Kumar

## INTRODUCTION BY TRANSCRIBER

This book was first published in India by Vikas Publishing House in 1978. Satish Kumar, the author, has covered the events that spanned the period between December 20, 1971 and July 5, 1977. The time frame, according to the author, was determined by his desire to examine how far Bhutto succeeded in building a new Pakistan, which he promised on the day of assuming power.

This book provides an authentic blow-by-blow account of the developments in Pakistan under Bhutto for good or evil. The blurb describes the book as dealing with the "rise and fall of Bhutto - builder and destroyer, great ideologue and reckless demagogue - who also became the biggest single cause of the erosion of democratic culture in Pakistan".

The question, however, remains whether this turbulent period in Pakistan's history can be discussed and evaluated entirely in reference to Bhutto? Or, has the country been overtaken by the fall-out from the conduct of her affairs by successive rulers with a very large measure of acquiescence, if not willing consent, and ready participation, by an overwhelming majority of people drawn from the various strata of society?

The author has recorded enough material for the analysts to draw their own conclusions without necessarily having to depend upon his views in respect of every single issue and that is this book's principal merit. But there are some issues on which his views cannot be accepted. For example, the author puts his entire trust in a highly controversial and dubious view propounded by Bhutto's opponents that "a major share of the responsibility for the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971, must rest on the shoulders of the former prime minister."

The author interviewed Z. A. Bhutto on 28th December 1973 in Rawalpindi which is also part of this book as appendix.

Sani Panhwar  
May, 2020.



## CHAPTER I

### SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL SYSTEM

On 20 December 1971 – 24 years, four months and six days after its creation – Pakistan was struggling for a new lease of life. It was once again faced with the perennial question: what constitutes Pakistan?

Its disintegration on 16 December 1971 was a historic verdict on the ideological foundations of Pakistan. Therefore, if the residual State was to survive, it was to be a new Pakistan.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, chosen as the instrument of destiny for building the new Pakistan, was conscious of this when, on 20 December, he said in his first broadcast to the nation as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator:

I have come in at a decisive moment in the history of Pakistan. We are facing the worst crisis in our country's life, a deadly crisis. We have to pick up pieces, very small pieces; but we will make a new Pakistan.

The task of building a new Pakistan was not easy, for the country was still without a political system. The task was full of challenges. The redeeming feature, perhaps, was that the East Wing, whose incompatibility with the West Wing had proved so far the strongest obstacle to the emergence of a political system, no longer existed. Nevertheless, the task involved the evolution of a consensus between the remaining four provinces of Punjab, Sindh, North Western Frontier Province and Baluchistan. That the consensus was in favor of a democratic system of the parliamentary model, had been indicated by the election results of December 1970. Nearly all parties contesting the elections had demanded the restoration of parliamentary democracy, and one of these was the Pakistan People's Party, thrown up as the West Wing majority party. Bhutto's claim to the headship of the Government was in fact derived from his headship of the People's Party. He had the mandate to introduce a parliamentary democracy. But the circumstances in which he took over the reins of government demanded a perpetuation of martial law for some time.

#### Democracy Was Distant

Almost six weeks after Bhutto took over as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator, martial law was still in force. Opposition parties which had initially accepted martial law were now getting impatient with it. On 10 February 1972, Bhutto, in the face of their increasing pressure, announced that elections to newly constituted

local bodies would be held on 15 March, and the provincial assemblies convened about a week later, on 23 March. This announcement did not carry conviction with Opposition parties, however, which were still not sure that a complete structure of parliamentary democracy at the national, provincial and local levels would be put into operation soon. Indeed, this was what happened, such being the magnitude and complexity of problems awaiting to be resolved first.

Foremost among these problems was how to get rid of Bangladesh, and exclude it from the scope of the future Constitution of Pakistan. Bhutto knew as well as anybody else that there was no meeting ground between Bangladesh and Pakistan, except as sovereign States. And yet, he wanted to uphold the myth of a united Pakistan for some time more, for he was afraid of the loss of political prestige and popularity if he immediately conceded the fact of the separation of Bangladesh. To perpetuate this myth he resorted to various devices, including a warning to other countries against any "precipitate act" of recognizing Bangladesh, breaking diplomatic relations with some of them, and quitting the Commonwealth. He repeatedly expressed the hope that his talks with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman as and when they were held, would result in a reunification of the country. He even offered to step down from presidency in favor of the Sheikh— if the latter cared to accept that— on terms of maintaining "one country".

All this was intended to establish his sincerity in trying to keep the country united, and to gain time until his people were reconciled to the reality of Bangladesh. The fact that he could not yet afford to concede the secession of the East Wing, was frankly admitted in a Radio Pakistan commentary which said: "He [Bhutto] cannot convene a meeting of the National Assembly without the members from East Pakistan. If he convenes one without them, that would be tantamount to admitting that he is prepared to let East Pakistan go and he does not want that." How much time would lapse before he would be prepared to admit the East Wing's separation was difficult to guess, but obviously, the National Assembly could not be convened and a Constitution could not be adopted until then.

Again, martial law could not be lifted unless there was a valid constitutional framework from which the Government could derive its power. Before the draft of such a constitutional framework could be prepared for the National Assembly, a number of thorny issues had to be resolved. With the loss of East Bengal the new Constitution had, of course, to serve the needs of a territory not only smaller in size but also culturally more homogenous and geographically more compact. But the level of development in NWFP and Baluchistan being much lower than that of the other two provinces, the extent of provincial autonomy was one issue to be resolved carefully during the making of the Constitution.

Another ticklish issue facing the Government was how to make a provision in the Constitution for giving a socialist orientation to the economic structure. While the 88-member-strong Pakistan People's Party (in a house of 144) was committed to socialism, most of the remaining 56 members were known to represent vested interests and anxious to preserve the status quo. It was partly in anticipation of the difficulties that might arise in the National Assembly, that Bhutto started implementing some of the most radical economic measures before it was convened.

Yet another issue that defied easy solution was the Islamic content of the Constitution. That Bhutto's love of Islam is based on expediency is well known. But there are certain elements in Pakistan's National Assembly who have strong, definite views on what an Islamic Constitution should be like. Such elements were expected to assert themselves, even though the irretrievable loss of East Bengal left much less political justification for the insistence on Islam as a basic fact of Pakistani life.

There was also, perhaps, a lurking fear in Bhutto's mind of being exposed for his role in the disintegration of Pakistan, if an open discussion took place on the subject; this was bound to happen if the National Assembly was convened soon. Bhutto did not want to countenance the possibility of things getting out of hand – including the possibility of the army trying to reassert itself – if he permitted the proverbial Pandora's box to be opened, by giving a free hand to democratic forces before he had consolidated his position. In this context, his announcement of dates for local body elections and for provincial assembly meetings was of a very limited value as a step towards the restoration of democracy. This was at best a sop to democratic opinion within and outside the country, and at worst a diversionary move to keep the people's attention away from real issues.

### **Some Forward Moves**

Nevertheless, Bhutto was aware of increasing pressure, from political leaders of all shades, for the lifting of martial law and the introduction of democratic institutions. He could afford to ignore this pressure – and near peril – to himself. Therefore, even if slowly, he started responding and taking steps to improve his credibility with the people.

In the beginning of March 1972, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, told a news conference that the Government had been "giving top priority to national defence, internal security, and economic stability". While managing these aspects, Bhutto no doubt gave the impression that because of the adjustments and compromises to be made with the forces of obstruction, whose interests were adversely affected by his moves. To balance that, one could clearly discern a process of forward movement.

To take internal security first, Bhutto's government successfully met the challenge of the police strike which occurred suddenly in the key cities of Peshawar, Lyallpur and Lahore in the month of February. In his broadcast to the nation on 3 March 1972, Bhutto described this as "the most unpleasant development", "the first of its kind in the subcontinent," and said that "in plain and simple language it was a mutiny", and not a "strike". He added that he knew the inspirations behind the mutiny, and the elements that had been working towards it for over a month.

Bhutto somehow tackled the situation, but a major component of his response to the police challenge consisted of an announcement of new pay scales for all non-gazetted employees, including the police. Announced by the Central Finance Minister on 27 February 1972, these scales benefited 1,25,000 Government employees, including the police in all provinces. According to the scheme, the existing 500 pay scales were reduced to 15 national scales. The benefits to Government servants ranged from 40 percent to 10 percent in the case of the lowest categories, and the maximum of Rs 800 in the highest categories. The minimum pay scale was fixed at Rs 125. What was significant about the scheme was that a Government servant having reached the maximum in these scales would be entitled to the next higher scale, whether promoted to a higher post or not. In addition, fringe benefits like house rent, washing, conveyance and local compensatory allowances were continued.

As regards economic stability, some long-term measures had been initiated earlier with the announcement of industrial and labor reforms. On 1 March, Bhutto announced very drastic land reforms. The ceiling on individual holdings was reduced from 500 to 150 irrigated acres and from 1000 to 300 unirrigated acres. Unlike the 1959 reforms, no land was exempted from these ceilings, except historical *shikargahs*. Land acquired by Government servants which exceeded 100 acres during their tenure of office, was to be confiscated on their retirement. This, however, did not apply to the armed forces. The consequences of these measures were that 6,50,000 acres of irrigated land could be available for distribution among landless farmers – free of cost. Further, Rs 1,000 crores were allocated for agricultural development and supporting programmes in the remaining Fourth Five Year Plan period.

In some respects, Bhutto did have to face setbacks, for instance in the repatriation of 3000 million dollars held abroad by Pakistani nationals. He had constrained to return the passports of leading businessmen (confiscated earlier to prevent their travel abroad), as a measure of compromise so that the national economy, in which the private sector still played a leading role, was placed on an even keel. But at the same time, by proving the supply position of essential commodities (by his industrial, labor and land reforms) and with the help of Pakistan-Aid Consortium in rescheduling Pakistan's foreign debt repayment, Bhutto had shown that he was trying to control the situation, rather than becoming a victim to it.

The third major concern of the Bhutto Government was national defence. On 3 March, it brought about the major reshuffle in the armed forces, which could be directly related to the needs of gearing up national defence in consonance with the dictates of democratic political development. Superficially, one could view the promotion of General Tikka Khan to the position of army chief, as symbolizing the revival of military ascendancy *vis-a-vis* civilian leadership. But it would be more reasonable to interpret this as a compact of coexistence between the best of military and civilian leadership, both agreeing to play the rules of the game faithfully. After all, the country could do without neither at that moment. Besides, there were indications that the army had agreed to function within the political framework which might be prescribed by elected representatives of the people, and play the role which it normally should.

To begin with General Tikka Khan was not appointed the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Armed Forces, but Chief of the Army Staff, at par with chiefs of the air and naval staff. Secondly, all the chiefs of staff were to have fixed tenures. And thirdly, they were to be parts of a system in which, according to Bhutto, professional soldiers would not be allowed to turn professional politicians. General Tikka Khan, aware of his limited role in the new dispensation, did prove to be an asset in the task of reconstructing the armed forces after the humiliating defeat of 1971, by virtue of his qualities as a soldier.

Last, though not the least, was the timetable agreed upon by Bhutto with the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam on 6 March, to convene the National Assembly on 14 April and lift martial law on 14 August. The announcement of this timetable was another step forward by Bhutto, to bring to his country political stability and progress.

In accordance with this Tripartite Agreement between the PPP, NAP and JUI, Bhutto issued a presidential order summoning the National Assembly to meet in Islamabad for a three-day session on 14 April. Set out in the order itself, the four-point agenda for this short session included voting on a motion of confidence in the President, voting to approve the continuance of martial law till 14 August, approval of an Interim Constitution and the appointment of a committee of the assembly to prepare a Draft Constitution for submission to the assembly, not later than 1 August.

While the presidential order laid down various procedural details, an interesting clarification issued along with it said that the National Assembly Secretariat had issued summons to each member of the assembly "as far as practicable". This was obviously to explain the inevitability of having to convene the National Assembly without the presence of members from the erstwhile East Wing. This could be taken to imply a recognition of the reality of separate Bangladesh.

## **Retirement of Officials**

Bhutto took another significant step which was potentially controversial. This was the premature retirement from service of more than 1300 officials – with immediate effect – brought about under Martial Law Regulation No 114, issued on 12 March 1972. The retired officers included 11 members of the Pakistan Civil Service and five members of the Pakistan Foreign Service, some of them serving as ambassadors. In addition to these Central Government officials, provincial governors also announced the premature retirement of 281 officials in Punjab, 165 officials in NWFP and 75 officials in Sindh. In the words of Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Federal Minister for Political Affairs, who made a special announcement in this regard over Radio Pakistan, this large-scale purge was meant "to tone up the administration". According to the minister, despite the purges of the past, "there still remained considerable deadwood, and many corrupt officials lived beyond their means". The minister added that "corruption in the Civil Service had reached incredible proportions". He, however, assured protection to good and honest servants and said that there would be no further round of cleaning up.

A familiar method of easing out inconvenient officials, such purges had been undertaken on a large scale earlier too, when General Ayub Khan took over and when General Yahya Khan was given power. Charges of corruption had, of course, been the main pretext for singling out those to be retired. But personal antagonisms and vindictiveness for past behavior cannot be ruled out as possible explanations for action against some of them. This could be particularly true of Bhutto, whose party had been one of the strongest critics of the Yahya government throughout 1970-71, and must have earned the displeasure of quite a few officials whose continuance in office could not be tolerated now.

This partly explains why the summary removal of such a large number of officers did not go entirely uncriticized. Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the NAP chief, expressed the view that public servants, retired prematurely, should be publicly tried to establish their guilt. And also, that they be granted the basic right to appeal against the decision. On another occasion, he suggested that the cases of provincial employees would also have to be reviewed after elected governments came to power in the provinces. Maulana Mufti Mahmud, General Secretary of the JUI, also suggested the setting up of a special tribunal, consisting of a high court judge, to decide the cases of retired civil servants.

## **Nationalization of Life Insurance**

A measure universally welcomed was the nationalization of life insurance business, brought about by a presidential order in the middle of March. Trustees were appointed to take over the management of all life insurance business. Prior to nationalization, according to Radio Pakistan, the business of life insurance was in the hands of 39

indigenous and four foreign companies. There were 12 companies dealing only in life insurance business. At the end of 1969, the total life fund of all companies was Rs 106 crores, not including the Rs 14 crores of postal life insurance. Annual receipts amounted to Rs 34 crores and the annual outgo to Rs 17 crores. The annual increase in the life fund was Rs 16.39 crores. That, said Radio Pakistan, was quite a large sum. The funds were flowing through the arteries of big business, which was adding to the concentration of wealth and economic power. Nationalization of life business, according to the broadcast, "has not come a moment too soon. It was a matter of economic policy to be considered in the framework of the country's economic philosophy."

Nationalization of life insurance business was welcomed by Mahmudul Haq Usmani, Secretary-General of the NAP, as "a great step forward towards the general good". Others who welcomed the measure included Rahmatullah Durrani, President of the All Pakistan Federation of Labor.

Nationalization was also extended to privately managed schools and colleges as a part of the new education policy announced by President Bhutto in mid-March. It was effected without payment of compensation within two years, from 1 October 1972 in the case of schools and from 1 September 1972 in the case of colleges.

Commending some of these measures, Khan Abdul Wali Khan told newsmen in Rawalpindi: "Now that the President has introduced reforms in many spheres, all disturbances must be stopped so that the people can coordinate their effort to bring stability in the country and improve its economic conditions."

### **Political Question-marks**

Despite these positive trends in Pakistan's political scene, the political landscape of the country was still full of significant question-marks. President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was introducing an endless series of important measures through martial law regulations and executive fiats, even though he enjoyed comfortable majorities in the National Assembly and the Punjab Provincial Assembly, and a working majority in the Sindh Provincial Assembly. The three parties which had concluded a vital political agreement in March, started blowing hot and cold at each other again, giving rise to serious uncertainty about the future of Pakistani politics. And Sindh, the homeland of Bhutto, came into the news in a big way, posing a serious challenge to the unity of the country.

President Bhutto's party had 88 seats out of 144 in the National Assembly (excluding the seats allotted to the erstwhile East Wing), plus the permanent support of seven independents from Tribal Areas, 119 out of 186 seats in the Punjab Assembly, and 36 out of 62 seats in the Sindh Assembly. He should normally have found it possible to get most of his measures passed in the assemblies without any obstacles. But to introduce drastic reforms immediately in some crucial fields, he decided to resort to martial law

regulations, offering this as a major justification for continuing martial law for such a long time.

This argument was valid as far as drastic and controversial steps like nationalization of industries, imposition of ceiling on land holdings or nationalization of life insurance were concerned. But other measures, like the introduction of new pay scales for government employees, the announcement of labor reforms, the premature retirement of Government officials and the nationalization of schools and colleges, could certainly have awaited the convening of the assemblies, particularly because some of these measures are normally the concern of provincial governments, which should have been permitted to exercise their rights. The fact that this was not done suggests that Bhutto was a man in a hurry. The last of his regulations in this series was MLR No 119, providing for a revocation of the sale of enemy property made by the custodian at any time after 6 September 1965.

How does one explain Bhutto's hurry? Surrounded by problems political, economic and international, Bhutto gave the impression of being a desperate man out to prove his credibility as a person who could deliver the goods. Conscious of his past image as an undependable, power-hungry politician, he faced the problem of creating the right image. He was aware of the dangers to his position internally and externally, and was in a hurry to establish his credentials by doing so many "good things", lest he be overtaken by events.

Another possible explanation for the way he was functioning is that by disturbing the status quo in so many fields of life internally, he could keep the people's attention away, for a while, from the sensitive and difficult questions he was facing abroad: the prisoners of war, the loss of territory or the conditions of Pakistanis in Bangladesh.

Whatever the reasons, Bhutto was running serious risks in committing himself to so many sudden changes in the socio-economic structure. The risks were both economic – for most of the reforms involved expenditure of money and skills, both of which are scarce in Pakistan – and political – in terms of a loss of prestige if all reforms were not implemented successfully.

### **Tripartite Agreement**

There were straws in the wind also with regard to the Tripartite Agreement reached between the Pakistan People's Party, the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam on 6 March.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the signing of the agreement, the NAP and JUI

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<sup>1</sup> The Tripartite Agreement was a major "political settlement" reached between the three parties. The details of this agreement, announced personally by President Bhutto over Radio Pakistan, are as follows:

(i) The Pakistan National Assembly would be convened for a limited purpose session, lasting for three days only, on 14 April.

had frequently been speaking the language of the regime. Assured of power in two provinces and desirous of sharing it at the Centre too, they had behaved like establishment groups having stakes in the preservation of the status quo. For instance, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, talking to newsmen in Peshawar, said: "The reforms introduced by the President have defined the rights of various sections of society and it is now imperative that peaceful conditions are created for their implementation." He emphasized the need for ensuring the supremacy of law, and said: "The tendency towards violence has to be given up and problems solved in a civilized manner." Elsewhere, Maulana Mufti Mahmud, General Secretary of the JUI, said: "The President realizing the gravity of the situation has joined hands with other parties to evolve a common, acceptable, formula which has saved Pakistan."

The Tripartite Agreement was based as much on political expediency as on ideological affinity between the three parties. And yet, unpleasant exchanges started occurring between the PPP and the other two parties, on questions like the swearing-in of governors in NWFP and Baluchistan and the interpretation of the agreement with regard to the duration of martial law and vote of confidence in Bhutto's government. Whether the discordant note was struck initially by NAP and JUI to pressurize Bhutto into giving them a share of power at the Centre too, or by the PPP, governed by a desire not to part with complete power even in NWFP and Baluchistan, was difficult to say. But Bhutto should have known that any alternative to NAP and JUI as allies would be worse. Such an alternative would have to be a combination of right-wing forces, which

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- (ii) The government of the country would be carried on the basis of an Interim Constitution while a committee of the National Assembly Drafted a permanent one.
  - (iii) Martial law would be lifted with effect from 14 August, the day when the National Assembly would be convened to consider the Draft Constitution.
  - (iv) The limited purpose session of the National Assembly, to be held on 14 April, would have three items on its agenda:
    - (a) to vote on a motion of confidence in President Bhutto's government;
    - (b) to vote on a proposal that the Interim Constitution be passed on the basis of the Government of India Act, 1935, and the Indian Independence Act, 1947, "with consequential amendments" and
    - (c) to vote on a proposal that martial law be continued till 14 August.
  - (v) Those elected as members of more than one assembly would be permitted to retain their seats in both Houses till the Constitution was finally adopted.
  - (vi) The President, the Vice-president, governors, ministers and advisors, both at the Centre and in the provinces, would remain members of—the assemblies to which they were elected.
  - (vii) Until the permanent Constitution was framed by the National Assembly, the Central Government would continue to have the right to appoint governors in the provinces. As a compromise, however, the Centre would appoint governors in consultation with the majority party in the two provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan.
  - (viii) The governments at the Centre and in the provinces would be formed on the basis of parliamentary majorities. The three parties settled for PPP rule at the Centre and in Punjab and Sind, and NAP-JUI rule in NWFP and Baluchistan.
  - (ix) The state assemblies would be convened on 21 April, a week after the meeting of the National Assembly.
  - (x) The Constitution Drafting Committee would present its report on 1 August, and the National Assembly reconvened on 14 August, the day on which martial law would be lifted.

would pose for him a greater threat. The NAP and J CH should also have known that a better chance of wielding power, even in NWFP and Baluchistan, might not come. And yet, as the date (14 April 1972) for the inaugural session of the National Assembly meeting approached, it was still uncertain whether the assembly would meet according to the Tripartite Agreement.

In fact, for the second time in less than four months the People's Party earned the accusation of having gone back on an honorable political agreement, arrived at with the NAP and JUL. The NAP and JUI had no special advantage in wriggling out of this Tripartite Agreement, which provided to these two parties the most convenient framework for exercising power at least in two provinces. Bhutto, on the other hand, must have visualized corresponding gains if he really allowed the agreement to break, or consciously worked in that direction. Earlier too, in February 1972, the People's Party had broken the tripartite alliance by putting up candidates to oppose NAP nominees in elections to women's seats in the provincial assemblies of Baluchistan and NWFP, contrary to mutual agreement in this regard. But this time the breaking of the agreement had serious implications, for it was pointer to the kind of forces working on Bhutto, with inevitable repercussions on the entire course of Pakistani politics.

The controversy over the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement of 6 March began when Bhutto delayed the appointment of new governors acceptable to the majority parties in two provinces –NWFP and Baluchistan—after having announced the names of the new incumbents. The Tripartite Agreement had not fixed a particular date for their appointment. It had only provided that the Central Government appoint the governors in consultation with the majority party in those provinces. But the undue delay in appointing them raised doubts in the minds of NAP and JUL. The delay was explained as a reaction to a not-so-harmful statement made by Khan Abdul Wali Khan, that the new governors would review all actions of the previous governors. However, it led to a chain of arguments, culminating in the breaking up of the agreement.

What were the possible factors behind Bhutto's willingness to allow things to come to such a pass? A significant factor could be pressure from the army—and the socio-economic interests that it represents—in not allowing power in the two provinces to pass into the hands of radical elements over whom it would have no control. That Bhutto could not yet afford to function independently of the army was obvious. The economic policies of the NAP and JUI, both committed to eradication of feudalism and the establishment of an egalitarian society, would certainly not be palatable to the landed aristocracy, which is heavily represented in the higher echelons of the army. Besides, to such elements, Bhutto was himself a necessary evil. He would be beyond redemption if he was allowed to join the undesirable company of the NAP and JUI.

Bhutto's preparedness to do without the support of NAP and JUI in the National Assembly might also have been prompted by the fact that a breakaway faction of the

People's Party, which in February had set up the MNA a separate party under the leadership of Ahmed Raza Kasuri, decided to rejoin the parent body. The breakaway faction was believed to have the support of a substantial number of PPP MNAs critical of Bhutto on various issues, including the continuance of martial law. Announcing the decision to wind up the group, Kasuri said "The political maladies and other problems gripping the country and India's threatening posture on Pakistan's borders makes it imperative for everyone to extend his support to the President." Besides, all the seven independent MNAs from Tribal Areas had assured Bhutto of their support in the National Assembly. Such developments naturally reduced Bhutto's keenness to win the support of other parties in the National Assembly.

A somewhat far-fetched—though not entirely irrelevant—explanation of Bhutto's behavior could also be his reduced need for political compromises at home, when he was hopeful of some sort of settlement of the tricky problems with India. If he had made up his mind about resolving the thorny issues with India in a spirit of give and take, he should have had much less justification for making concessions to political opponents at home.

### **Politics Without Opposition**

The violation of the Tripartite Agreement by the People's Party had again brought the NAP and JUL along with other Opposition parties, on the warpath. Bhutto was quick to realize that in the existing phase of the country's political development, it was essential that Opposition parties were not antagonized too much. A sense of survival had the better of his political ambitions and through a series of swift and clever moves, Bhutto successfully brought around his political opponents. So tactful was his handling of the situation that he virtually eliminated all viable Opposition—for the time being, at any rate—and retained the essence of power in his own hands. The most vocal Opposition parties were somehow absorbed into the political system either at the Centre or in the provinces, and they developed vested interest in preserving the status quo. Bhutto thus successfully created a facade of national unity and strength, which enabled him to get over the existing difficult phase in national life.

The first clever move to rally the nation around himself was Bhutto's offer to the Opposition parties that he would lift martial law on 21 April rather than on 14 August, if the National Assembly approved the Interim Constitution by 17 April. The minority parties were so attracted by this offer that despite many reservations with regard to the Constitution, they did not think it proper to stand in the way of its final adoption by 17 April. The lifting of martial law with effect from 21 April, was profusely welcomed by all minority parties in the National Assembly. Maulana. Mufti Mahmud, General Secretary of JUL said that "the lifting of Martial Law has been received by the entire nation as the happiest occasion". Mian Mumtaz Daultana, a Muslim League leader, described the lifting as "sagacious and far-sighted act". Other important leaders who

welcomed it as a step towards the consolidation and unity of the country were Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Sardar Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo and Professor Ghafoor Ahmed. In the bargain, Bhutto not only had the Constitution approved without much difficulty, but also earned credibility in the nation as a democratic leader.

The second important move to minimize the role of Opposition in national politics was the inclusion of Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, President of All Pakistan Muslim League, in the Central Cabinet as Minister for Home and Frontier Affairs. That Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan and Bhutto had always been at opposite ends of the political spectrum was well known. The only things common to the political programme of their parties had been the need for a strong Centre, and hostility towards India. And yet, Khan Qayyum agreed to be in Bhutto's cabinet, for otherwise he would never have wielded power. To make the entire thing look less ridiculous, Khan Qayyum was at pains to assert the identity of interests and outlook between the Pakistan People's Party and his own. The Khan told newsmen in Lahore at the time of joining the cabinet, that his party and the PPP were "working practically as one party". Elsewhere, he said that both had "the same economic programme".

To those familiar with the fierce rivalries and exchange of polemics between the two parties during the election campaign of 1970, these remarks of the Khan would sound amusing. But they amply served Bhutto's purpose. By keeping him in the cabinet, Bhutto not only neutralized his immense mischief-making potential, but also eliminated from Opposition ranks the single largest party—after the PPP—in the National Assembly.

Yet another significant move by Bhutto was the eventual acceptance of the demands of the NAP and JUI with regard to the appointment of governors of their choice in NWFP and Baluchistan, and the actual transfer of power to these parties in the two provinces. After prevaricating for weeks together Bhutto yielded, for not only did the parties jointly hold majorities in the two sensitive provinces, they also constituted the largest Opposition group in the National Assembly.

The economic programme of the two parties was not basically different from that of the People's Party. But they had always differed with the latter on the question of provincial autonomy. Besides, their leadership posed the only potential threat to the supremacy of PPP leadership in the country. This explained Bhutto's repeated attempts to obstruct the growth of their influence, by not letting them have positions of power. But had this course been pursued beyond a limit, it would have proved dangerous. Therefore, the safe alternative of containing them within the political system was tried.

To achieve this end. Bhutto went one step further and offered these parties one seat each in the federal cabinet. The offer, however, was rejected by the NAP and JUI after

some consideration. But the trick seemed to work for a while, for the NAP and JUI leaders started not only reiterating endlessly the need for national unity and solidarity, but also lavishly praising the President for having "opened a new chapter of fair deal" by all these steps.

So strong had become the sense of identification of these parties with the interests of the ruling party, that they were tending to forget their normal functions of keeping a watch on which way democratic forces were moving. Not once did they comment on the suspension of fundamental rights by the President shortly after the Interim Constitution had been adopted. The job was left to Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan of the Council Muslim League and Maulana Noorani of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, both of whom described this act of the President as "unnecessary".

By suspending fundamental rights, by continuing a state of emergency, by combining in himself the offices of head of the ruling party, head of the assembly as well as head of the government and State, and by eliminating from the political spectrum all worthwhile Opposition, Bhutto could have the satisfaction of having proved himself the unchallenged ruler. He could also claim to have established a sort of national unity, which could help him in the delicate task of negotiating with India. But this unity did not have a sound foundation.

Some of the contradictions inherent in this scheme of things were obvious. The foremost among them was how long Bhutto's Islamic socialism would pull together with the dead-weight of Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan's "Islamic Feudalism". Surprisingly, they pulled together much longer than expected, perhaps because power was dearer to Bhutto than his principles. And Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan was found useful by him for safeguarding against "high-handed" attacks of the Opposition. Similarly, if the NAP and JUI had joined the Central Cabinet, they would have found it difficult to coexist with their arch enemy—the Qayyum Muslim League, whose leader at that time wielded the powerful Home portfolio.

### **Linguistic Violence**

Having made his political base secure, Bhutto went ahead with restructuring Pakistan's relations with India and had concluded the famous Simla Agreement on 2 July 1972. The agreement—by laying down the procedure for withdrawal of Indian troops from occupied territories in Pakistan and for normalization of relations with India in other fields—had given rise to a sense of satisfaction and achievement in Pakistan. But this sense of achievement was brutally impaired when language riots broke out on a large scale in the key towns of Sindh in the first week of July. The magnitude of violence and destruction was serious. President Bhutto's repeated appeals for ending mutual strife had been to no avail. The state of destruction in Karachi itself was shocking. The

situation, involving one of the two provinces which formed the President's political base, posed a real challenge.

The problem arose because the "New Sindhis", as the refugees from India who migrated to Sindh after 1947 were known, felt adversely affected by the language policy of the Government of Sindh. Their worst fears were proved true when, on 7 July, the Sindh Provincial Assembly passed, by 50 votes in favor (out of a total of 62), a bill making Sindhi the official language of the province. Although demonstrations in Karachi started in the morning as soon as discussions on the bill had begun, the passing of the bill in the evening led to riots which, in the next two days, spread to Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Dadu, Sukkur and other areas, taking a heavy toll of life.

The total number of refugees who left India for Pakistan till the year 1957 is estimated to be around 8.4 million, most of them having gone from East Punjab, UP and Bihar. About 90 percent of these are supposed to have migrated to the then Western Wing of Pakistan, unevenly distributed over the entire area. Most of them settled either in the irrigated areas of southern Punjab and Sindh in the hope of acquiring productive agricultural properties, or in the large urban centers which offered better prospects of employment. Consequently, in the Karachi capital area, according to 1951 figures, the refugees constituted 49 percent of the total population. In Sindh they were 12 percent but in Hyderabad a proper 71 percent. In the Lahore and Multan divisions they were 32 percent. In the NWFP districts they were Less than two percent, while in Baluchistan, a near five percent.<sup>2</sup>

The immigrants, who were mostly Urdu-speaking people and were a very small percentage in NWFP and Baluchistan could have posed no problem in these two provinces. But any possibility in this regard was obviated because both provinces adopted Urdu as the official language. Pushto and Baluchi were regarded as insufficiently developed for the purpose. Punjab the heartland of the Urdu-knowing population of Pakistan, also adopted Urdu as the official language, even though it liked Punjabi. The real problem arose in Sindh.

The Sindhis inhabiting the lower Indus basin were among the poorest, and politically the weakest, segments of Pakistani population. The influx of refugees from India affected the demographic ratio in Sindh more significantly than anywhere else in the country. With the re-inclusion of Karachi as a part of Sindh, the New Sindhis began to claim nearly half the population of the province. More important, they constituted an important factor in the economy of the province, being well entrenched in industry and

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<sup>2</sup> According to the information given to the author by the editor of a Karachi English daily in December 1973, during the author's visit to Pakistan, the Mohajirs, as the refugees from India came to be known, constituted 50 percent of the total population of Sindh, which was about 6.7 million. The approximate number of Mohajirs living in the city of Karachi was given as roughly 1.5 million out of 4 million, and in Hyderabad and Sukkur as roughly 0.2 million out of the total population of 0.4 million each.

commerce. The "Old Sindhis" regarded them as a potential economic and political threat, and therefore tended to protect their own interests by adopting an exclusive attitude.

The New Sindhis, anticipating such an attitude, had been pleading for adoption of both Urdu and Sindhi as official languages of Sindh ever since the provincial governments were formed in April 1972. Until then their approach was non-violent, In June, the students of Karachi University stood up in the midst of the annual convocation and demanded an assurance that Urdu would also be declared an official language of the province, along with Sindhi. Besides, 63 eminent intellectuals of Karachi, including a former vice-chancellor of the university, asserted that in a province in which the mother-tongue of nearly 50 percent of the people is not Sindhi, "it is neither just nor politic" to make only Sindhi the official language. To top it all, the Governor of Sindh, Mir Rasul Bux Talpur, categorically asserted, on 29 June in Lahore, and while trying to remove misgivings on the subject, that Sindhi would be the official language of Sindh along with Urdu. And yet, when the language bill was actually passed, it provided for Sindhi alone as the official language.

The entire situation, therefore, was allowed to develop in such a way that the New Sindhis felt betrayed. The protagonists of Sindhi said that they stuck to the assurance that the position of Urdu as the national language would not be jeopardized in the province. But this explanation was hardly adequate, for the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, who piloted the bill under Article 267 of the Constitution, said that the bill was needed because it was felt that there was no protection for the Sindhi language, where Urdu was already the official language in the Constitution.

What was. amazing was that President Bhutto, who was undoubtedly aware of the viewpoint of the sizeable New Sindhi population, should have chosen to grapple with the problem after the mischief was done, rather than before it. The lapse could have been misunderstood by the New Sindhis, who knew that the President derived his political support in the province from the Old Sindhis. However, the President undertook a hectic tour of the entire province to calm down tempers. Eventually, the bill had to be revised to declare both Urdu and Sindhi as official languages of the province.

### **Kasuri's Exit**

Bhutto faced the next important political challenge when Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Federal Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Leader of the House in Pakistan's National Assembly and Vice-chairman of the People's Party, resigned in October 1972. Kasuri's resignation has to be seen in the context of Bhutto's commitment to parliamentary democracy, and his inability to live up to it. Bhutto had the wherewithal for ushering in an era of democratic stability when he assumed power in December

1971. But because of his zest for power he allowed things to drift, until a stage came when he was finding it difficult to control the events. One such event was the resignation of Kasuri.

Considerations of practical politics had impelled Bhutto to allow men of all shades – with leftist ideology or with no ideology – to contest the 1970 general elections on the PPP ticket. Because of its radical manifesto, relatively young and leftist elements constituted the hard core of the party. But quite a few feudal lords also thronged it, hopeful of its prospects. Those who genuinely believed in the party line and those who were in for sheer opportunism coexisted peaceably enough as long as the moment of decision did not arrive. Meanwhile – and unfortunately for the believers – the party chief himself underwent a metamorphosis, he altered his commitments. The nature of the Interim Constitution was itself an evidence of this. Instead of a purely parliamentary form of government at the Centre and in the provinces – as promised at the time of elections – he preferred a presidential government at the Centre, with heavy concentration of powers in the chief executive. In economic policies too, he made substantial concessions in favor of vested interests, which directly conflicted with his socialistic promises.

Mian Kasuri and others of his thinking were hoping to retrieve the party's original commitments by persistent efforts from within. But for him, the moment of decision came when he found Bhutto condoning the "outrageous statement" of Malik Ghulam Mustafa Khar, the Punjab Governor and PPP strongman in the province, whereby he criticized the first resignation of Mian Kasuri on "paltry grounds" and threatened him of serious consequences. Even after accepting Kasuri's resignation, Bhutto said in Lahore. on 6 October, that he was against a presidential form of government, but "the British type of parliamentary system cannot succeed in Pakistan, as we must learn from the past experiences". Therefore taking into account Kasuri's past, his association with Mian Iftikharuddin, the Azad Pakistan Party and the National Awami Party, and his known views on constitutional and other matters, his departure from the Central Government was expected to mark the polarization of political forces within the ruling party, which was hitherto an ideological jumble of different hues.

### **People's Party and the Nation**

The polarization did not, unfortunately, take place. The fears that Kasuri would be able to take away with him nearly 35 MNAs and 50 members of the Punjab Provincial Assembly, as was speculated in a BBC commentary, proved untrue because not more than about half a dozen MNAs openly expressed differences with the leadership, and not all of them left the party. Further, the expectation that Kasuri's exit from the PPP (and his possible joining hands with the National Awami Party) would contribute to a polarization of political forces in the country at large, was also belied when Kasuri actually joined the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal of (retired) Air Martial Asghar Khan.

However, there was enough in the People's Party's functioning and behavior to spoil its image as a responsible national party, and dilute its credibility in the nation. Being the ruling party at the Centre and in two provinces, the People's Party was placed in a specially responsible position in national life. It had also shown courage and foresight in arriving at a constitutional accord with Opposition parties on 20 October 1972. It had also the responsibility of maintaining a climate of decency and dignity in intra-party and inter-party affairs. In this, unfortunately, the party was gravely defaulting. Consequently, the political atmosphere of the country was charged with puerile argument, coarse polemics and unseemly abuse.

Differences within the PPP had become known within a few months of its coming to power, when its members (like Mukhtar Rana and Ahmed Raza Kasuri) were found openly criticizing the leadership, and being penalized for it. But these differences were dramatized only with the resignation of Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri. Mian Kasuri occupied a very important position in the party hierarchy. He was Vice-chairman of the party, and Leader of the House in the National Assembly. Perhaps his resignation could have been averted if the provocative remarks of the Punjab Governor, Ghulam Mustafa Khar, were either withdrawn or condemned by Bhutto in time. However, the fact that Mian Kasuri felt constrained to resign from ministership on constitutional and other grounds was unfortunate enough for the party. What made it worse was that unseemly aspersions were allowed to be cast on him after his resignation was accepted, and his former colleagues were tempted to indulge in endless argument about his role in the party, the merits of his resignation, and so on.

No sooner had he resigned than a news item appeared somewhere that he had been involved in a criminal case some years ago in Kasur, his home-town. Bhutto, in his letter of acceptance, had already pointed out that Mian Kasuri had expressed a desire to resign some months ago, because of his inability to pay the large amount of income tax charged on him. Ghulam Mustafa Khar continued his attack on Mian Kasuri even after the resignation had been accepted, and went to the extent of arranging demonstrations in front of Governor's House, Lahore, wherein people from Kasur complained against excesses allegedly committed on them by Mian Kasuri. According to the APP report, the Governor "gave them a patient hearing and later ordered the police to inquire into the allegations".

Meanwhile, another senior member of the party joined the fray. Sheikh Mohammad Rashid, Central Minister for Health and President of the Punjab PPP, in a statement from Rawalpindi, demanded an explanation from Mian Kasuri with regard to his stand on the future Constitution. Besides, he questioned the importance of Kasuri's role in the party and ridiculed his views, expressed earlier, on government policy regarding the retirement of civil servants and the termination of martial law. Sheikh Rashid's

statement provoked a rejoinder from Mian Kasuri, who reiterated his views on various matters and concluded:

The atmosphere in our country is not very conducive to dissent. Unfortunately, those in authority do not take a particularly liberal view towards the dissenters. Indeed, the sharp hostility which I am encountering from official journalists as well as friends like Sheikh Rashid convinces me that some good has already emerged.

The irony of the situation was fully brought out when, within a day of this rejoinder, Sheikh Rashid himself threatened to resign" from the ministership if a particular piece of "progressive legislation desired by him was not pushed through by the party leadership. After that, however, the resignation of another minister—Mairaj Mohammad Khan, Minister of State for Public Affairs—was accepted by Bhutto. The crisis in the People's Party was thus fairly deep. The discontent was widespread. The reason was not merely ideological differences or failure of the leadership to live up to its election commitments, though these factors could not be ignored. There was something basically wrong with the standards of behavior set by the leadership *vis-a-vis* its own members, and members of other parties. Besides, the party also suffered from lack of experience, organization and maturity.

The PPP was worst in its dealings with other responsible parties. It had never reconciled itself to the fact of NAP and JUT ruling in the Frontier and Baluchistan. Two central ministers (including Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, who did not even belong to the PPP) were constantly used as bullies to cow down the leadership in the Frontier. The campaign of slander and insinuation against the integrity of the leaders of the two provinces was allowed to be kept up, and this despite an initial agreement of the PPP with the two parties to live and let live.

Accusing the Central Government of creating law and order problems in Baluchistan, Sardar Ataullah Khan Mengal, the Chief Minister, said in the middle of October that the NAP was being forced by the PPP leadership to "reach a point of no return". He expressed the hope that "PPP leadership would at least draw a line to its adventurism." Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the Baluch Governor, also referred to "our unwise friends in PPP" who, in league with "certain vested interests", were trying to create disturbances. Ajmal Khattak, Acting President of the NAP, referred to "a bold, quarter-page display-advertisement spilling venom and hatred against Mr. Wali Khan in the front pages of some leading newspapers" on the eve of the constitutional conference held in Rawalpindi in the first week of October, and asked:

Can the Governors and Ministers of the two provinces shut their eyes and ears to this provocative propaganda against Wali Khan? We believe that the climate being created is certainly not conducive to goodwill and understanding. What

we are seeing is confrontation all around. After all what is this game? Why is it being played? Do we see any notable difference between this state of affairs, and the one that was created in East Pakistan?

That was the political climate prevailing about nine months after Bhutto assumed power. That the PPP leadership was largely responsible for it could not be denied. If the PPP was to play its larger role in the nation, it was necessary for it to set the right standards of political behavior.

### **Other Political Parties**

The National Awami Party made some temporary political gains, meanwhile. In NWFP, the support of Aslam Khattak's United Front raised the strength of the NAP-JUI alliance in the Provincial Assembly from 22 to 31 in a House of 42. In Baluchistan, Maulana Mufti Mahmud successfully resolved political differences between the NAP and JUL which were threatening to weaken the alliance. In Punjab and Sindh, in the wake of language riots and inter-provincial tensions, the decline of the PPP had been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the influence of the NAP.

On the other hand, there was some evidence of a consolidation of right-wing parties, partly as a reaction to the NAP's increasing influence and partly encouraged by weaknesses in the People's Party. Feeling helpless at the Government's professed adherence to the Simla Agreement, and afraid of the possibility of normalization of Pakistan's relations with India and Bangladesh, the right-wing parties thought of defending their interests in unison. In the first week of October, the Sindh provincial branches of the Qayyum Muslim League and Council Muslim League merged into one party. The Council Muslim League and Convention Muslim League of All Pakistan were unified under the nomenclature of Pakistan Muslim League and they set up an organizing committee under the presidentship of Hassan A. Sheikh. The retired Air Marshal Asghar Khan was echoing the sentiments of all these parties when he opposed normalization of relations with India and Bangladesh, and threatened to demand fresh elections if the Government did not yield. The intrusion of Pakistani troops in the Rajouri Sector of Jammu and Kashmir was partly a vindication of the desire of these elements.

Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, the most reactionary of Pakistani politicians, was already a member of Bhutto's cabinet and a consistent supporter of his internal and external policies. Therefore, to compensate for the loss of Mian Kasuri's support, Bhutto might have found it irresistible to fall back entirely on the support of right-wing consortium. This could imply a swing back to authoritarianism, with an increasing role in politics of the armed forces, and those foreign powers which were opposed to normalization of the situation in the subcontinent. What might, however have prevented such a complete

throw-back into the authoritarian-confrontationist past was Bhutto's deep concern for getting his territories vacated of Indian troops, and the revival of pressures on him for a speedy return of prisoners of war. Besides, the students and radical elements in Punjab, and the autonomy-minded people of Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP would have rendered any attempt by Bhutto to reverse the democratic process, too hazardous and costly an exercise.

## CHAPTER 2

### POLITICS OF POWER

A year after assuming power, Bhutto could look back with satisfaction for having pulled the country through a most difficult year in its history. He had more or less succeeded in re-establishing the legitimacy of civilian rule in the country, and acquired a viable equation with the armed forces. He had stabilized internal politics a great deal by reaching a working partnership with leading Opposition parties, namely the NAP and JUI, and by promulgating an Interim Constitution which had the support of Opposition parties (consequent upon a constitutional accord reached with them on 20 October). Some progress had also been made in retrieving the losses of war through the withdrawal of Indian troops from the occupied territories of Pakistan. Besides, quite a few countries had agreed to re-schedule foreign debt recoveries from Pakistan.

But all this was not enough to put Pakistan back on the road to stability and progress. A number of intricate problems were still raking the minds of the rulers, which could have set at naught all the achievements of one year if they were not resolved very soon. The foremost of these problems was the decision with regard to the recognition of Bangladesh. In December 1972, a fierce debate was raging in the country on the pros and cons of recognizing Bangladesh. The right-wing parties and individuals were pitted against the joint stand of the PPP, NAP and JUL and the campaign was launched by the official media, that Bangladesh be recognized soon. In Lahore, anti-recognition students' rallies caused violent clashes, In Rawalpindi, thousands from Jhelum, Gujarat, Campbellpur and other towns assembled to demonstrate in favor of recognition, so that their relatives, held as POWs in India, could return soon. Bhutto, for mysterious reasons, had announced that he would not take a decision on the subject until the following March.

A problem which was equally urgent and ticklish pertained to Constitution-making: The all-party constitutional accord reached on 20 October 1972 had led to a belief that the greatest feat in Pakistan's constitutional history had been performed. But the return of Khan Abdul Wali Khan from London in early November, and the National Council meeting of the NAP held a little later, made the difference. The National Council disapproved the provisions of the accord pertaining to a no-confidence vote against a prime minister or chief minister, and the powers of the Upper House of the federal legislature. Consequently, Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the Baluchistan Governor and NAP representative on the Constitution Committee felt constrained to resign from the Committee's membership. Bizenjo had closely identified himself with these provisions. Explaining his resignation he said: "My continuing to associate myself with the

Constitution Committee in such circumstances would serve neither my party, nor the Constitution Committee, nor the process of constitution making."

A substitute for Bizenjo was no doubt found, but the NAP was no longer committed to the accord in its entirety. Besides, some leading PPP members seemed to share the NAP views, as was obvious from some statements of Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, the former Law Minister. During this phase, the Constitution Committee was continuing its proceedings—amidst hard bargaining—on controversial issues. A compromise was to be obtained between the dictates of stability and democracy.

A further obstacle in the way of the evolution of a viable political system was the increasing intolerance of political dissent by the ruling party. It was feared that if the ruling party continued to behave in this manner, the country would not experience democratic growth even if an agreed Constitution was eventually adopted. For instance, in the detention of political opponents the record of Bhutto's government during the one year of its existence had been no better than that of President Ayub Khan. Many arrests were made during the Sindh language riots and the Karachi labor trouble. Repressive action was taken against many newspapers. The latest to be threatened was the *Dawn*, for the outspokenness of its editor on problems in the subcontinent.

Bhutto's government did not spare the dissident members of his own party. Mian Kasuri, Vice-chairman of the party, had been allowed to resign from federal ministership for holding non-conformist views on constitutional matters. Further, he was victimized and defamed by the party's strongman Ghulam Mustafa Khar, the Governor of Punjab. Much worse was the fate of another dissident, Ahmed Raza Kasuri of the MNA, who was arrested in the middle of December for questioning the policies and behavior of PPP leadership.

In this context, it is pertinent to recall the case of Altaf Gauhar, Information Secretary during Ayub's regime and Editor-in-Chief of the *Dawn* group of papers, since February 1972. Gauhar was released on 7 December, after nearly ten months in detention. The release followed a decision of the Sindh and Baluchistan High Court to allow the writ petition filed on his behalf by his wife. The detention, which could be explained only in terms of rabid personal and political hostility, was declared by the Chief Justice in his 269-page judgment as "unlawful". The Altaf Gauhar case was a classic reminder of how political repression and democratic pretension go ill together.

Apart from the problems of political growth, there were the problems of economic growth—accentuated by gruesome effects of the 1971 war which Bhutto was yet to tackle. In an attempt to do so, a high-level meeting, presided over by Bhutto in the middle of December, reviewed the supply position of scarce commodities like wheat, sugar and *vanaspati*. To meet the sugar crisis created by misdistribution rather than

under-production, the Government decided to procure all the sugar produced by factories—as against 80 percent procured hitherto—and to introduce total rationing. The import of sugar was completely banned. The wheat shortage was sought to be met by importing another 500,000 tones. But this was only a fringe of the total problem, whose dimensions included an overall price rise, and a shortage of jobs too. It was, however, being realized widely that the immensity of these problems, whether political or economic, could be met by Bhutto only if the gap between his professions and practice was narrowed the following year.

### **Frontier Gandhi's Return**

As Bhutto entered the second year of his assumption of power, he was presented with an excellent opportunity for national consolidation and political growth, by the return of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to Pakistan on 24 December. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the beloved leader of the Pathans who had returned to Pakistan after eight years of self-imposed exile in Kabul, made an unconditional offer of cooperation to President Bhutto on his return. He was given a historic welcome by people of the Frontier Province. He, in fact, deserved a national reception. But looking at the record of treatment meted out to him in Pakistan in the past, and the circumstances in which he had left for Afghanistan in December 1964, it was enough that Bhutto's government allow him to come back. Further, his willingness to return was also an indication of the fact that he regarded the existing political system as less repressive than the previous ones.

An important attribute of the political situation in which Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan thought it fit to return home, was that the demand for Pakhtoonistan was no longer relevant to the politics of NIVFP. Whatever may have been the shades and dimensions of this demand previously, the installation, in NWFP and Baluchistan, of elected governments with the National Awami Party as its major component, had made this demand redundant in many ways. The leaders of NAP are on record as having stated that the Pakhtoonistan of their dreams was never meant to be an independent state outside the confines of Pakistan. Presenting his welcome address on the occasion of Badshah Khan's arrival, Maulana Mufti Mahmud, Chief Minister of NWFP, said that the Pakhtoonistan envisaged by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been achieved. The Pakhtoons had their own government and they had won their rights.

This being the political context in which the Frontier Gandhi returned home, his presence in the country could have been utilized to strengthen the forces of stability and democracy. He declared his resolve to contribute to the building of a new Pakistan, and said: "I will stand firmly by President Bhutto even if everyone else does not." Besides, he rejected the charge that he had ever opposed the creation of Pakistan, declaring, also, that he would work to end violence in the world.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's declared support to Bhutto and his explanations about his past should have increased his acceptability and utility to the Pakistan Government. Besides, the presence of the oldest, most experienced and selfless political leader on the, Pakistani scene should have had a sobering effect on the authoritarianism of the Centre as well as on the emotionalism of the provinces. Further, his indication of a desire to raise a peace corps from Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and Iran, if allowed to be implemented, would have provided an additional and welcome bond to the people of this battered region. Unfortunately, however, all this was not allowed to happen. Badshah Khan's hopes about the new political system and his faith in Mr. Bhutto's commitment to democracy were shattered when he found the new Government as reluctant to allow freedom of speech and expression as the military regimes of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan had been. Badshah Khan could not resist his urge to condemn the denial of freedom in any part of Pakistan. This proved unpalatable to Bhutto, who prevented Badshah Khan from entering Quetta in support of the democratic rights of the people of Baluchistan in early 1973. Eventually, Badshah Khan's movements were confined to Charsaddah, his native place some 40 miles from Peshawar. The hopes thus aroused by the return of Badshah Khan were completely shattered.

### **Khwaja Rafiq's Murder**

The political culture which Bhutto was building up in Pakistan was evidenced by a series of assassinations and acts of political victimization which had started towards the end of 1972. They were in fact the Government's response to the increasing challenge of the Opposition, which had by then begun to sense the style of Bhutto's government and had had a glimpse into his political philosophy. Khwaja Mohammad Rafiq, a prominent political leader of Punjab, was shot dead in the afternoon of 20 December 1972, near the assembly chambers in Lahore. He was the President of the Pakistan *Ittehad Party* and a former leader of the Pakistan Democratic Party. He was fired upon when he was returning home after participating in Air Marshal Asghar Khan's procession to observe a "black day". No clue was readily available as to the cause of his assassination and the persons responsible for it. But impartial observers and analysts, including the Karachi daily *Dawn*, pointed out that the responsibility for such murders rested with "a passive administration and the conniving police force".

The murder of Khwaja Rafiq connected up with the series of incidents of political violence committed in those days. There was a tribal attack near Quetta. There was an armed threat to Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, a member of the Baluchistan government. Dr Nazir Ahmed, an Opposition MNA, had been assassinated. A lawyers' procession in Lahore had been attacked. All these were symptomatic of a political culture which did not tolerate democratic dissent and freedom of expression. They were reminiscent of feudal politics, which was the anti-thesis of what the People's Party was committed to obtain. (This will be dealt with in detail in a subsequent chapter.)

## Political Tensions

By January 1973, therefore, Pakistani politics could be said to be marked by a high degree of tension again. The misfortune was that the parties which held the political balance of the country and whose willingness to co-exist was a necessary prerequisite to democratic stability in the country, were cutting each other's throats. While the Pakistan People's Party was flaunting its majority in the National Assembly to impress upon others that they did not matter, the National Awami Party was obsessed by the fact that it ruled in two of the four provinces, and could not therefore be ignored. As, a consequence, a number of Opposition parties which had been behaving with restraint, on the assumption that the PPP-NAP power partnership and shared politico-economic values did not leave much scope for mischief, raised their ugly heads again and lent uncertainty to an otherwise not so pessimistic situation.

The most crucial problem that the nation was faced with was the adoption of a permanent Constitution. It was a strange reflection on the character of the Opposition that, having appended their signatures on 20 October 1972 to the constitutional accord which formed the basis of the Draft Constitution submitted to the Constituent Assembly on 31 December 1972, they had raised fundamental objections to it. Nearly all Opposition parties had appended notes of dissent to the report of the Constitution Committee presented to the Constituent Assembly on 31 December. The objections covered a wide range of substantial and inconsequential questions. What was particularly striking was that Pandora's box had been opened by the National Awami Party when its National Council reviewed the constitutional accord after Khan Abdul Wali Khan's return from London. The cue had been taken by other Opposition parties who challenged the various provisions of the accord, particularly those pertaining to the election, tenure and powers of the prime minister.

A complex situation became further complicated with Bhutto's threat, repeated by his spokesmen, that the PPP, with its majority, would get its own Constitution passed in the National Assembly if the constitutional accord was broken by its signatories. To this, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Maulana Mufti Mahmud and other Opposition leaders responded by saying that a Constitution drafted by the PPP would not be acceptable to the nation. The PPP represented only two of the four provinces of Pakistan. Thus, what should normally have been an occasion for frank debate and mutual accommodation on constitutional matters, turned out to be an occasion for national confrontation between warring political leaders representing narrowly conceived interests.

It was in such an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred that an incident took place in the National Assembly in which Khan Wali Khan was alleged to have assaulted and threatened to shoot Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister. Different versions of the incident were given by opposite sides, but the incident was followed by a boycott of the National Assembly by all Opposition groups, until they

were assured that the "People's Party is prepared to cooperate with us in bringing about a democratic way of life in the country and submit to the rule of law". The incident also became the subject of a privilege motion moved by Sheikh Mohammad Rashid, Deputy Leader of the House. Further, it was in the wake of this incident that Khan Wali Khan disclosed having "undeniable proof" that Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Home Minister, had been instructed by Bhutto to murder Wali Khan and 31 other political opponents. Wali Khan, however, rejected the Government's offer of a judicial inquiry into the alleged murder plan, on the plea that there was enough evidence to prove his charge.

Pakistani politics was thus in a state of chaos. It is difficult to attribute responsibility for this chaos. Perhaps all major parties were equally to blame. Nevertheless, the National Awami Party, which was usually the champion of the rule of law and decent political behavior, could not be absolved of a major share of this responsibility. It could at least have responded differently to Constitution making, having initially allowed its representative to sign the constitutional accord. A possible explanation of its behavior lay in its inability to sort out various problems in the two provinces ruled by it—or in frustration born out of a failure to make much headway in Punjab and Sindh. But by allowing itself to be involved in the controversy of the kind stated above, it was making the situation worse, and perhaps playing into the hands of its greatest rival—the PPP.

The position of the PPP was no more enviable. Constitution-making remained still a Herculean task despite the threatened use of its majority in the National Assembly. But its worries were compounded by an increasing demand for fresh elections after the Constitution had been adopted. The first to make this demand was the ex-Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Chief of the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal. Later, various other Opposition leaders, including Wali Khan, endorsed it. The demand had been justified on many grounds.

To begin with, the existing assemblies were elected in a different context when Pakistan was united. And further, the existing National Assembly had only 144 members, whereas the Draft Constitution provided for 200 members. Besides, Bangladesh provided the most pertinent example, having chosen to go to the polls after its Constitution had been adopted. But Bhutto turned down the demand. Instead, he extended the term of the existing National Assembly to 14 August 1977. Among the election hazards which he probably did not like to face at that time—apart from other reasons—was the possibility of his strength being reduced even in Punjab and Sindh because of the split in his own party.

In such circumstances, it was tragic for Bhutto to have rejected Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's unconditional offer of cooperation for building a new Pakistan. In a painful rejoinder, Ghaffar Khan said: "In a country where selfless service of people is considered a crime, it can never be developed for the benefit of the people."

## Demand for Lifting the State of Emergency

A fresh controversy was injected into the political scene by a statement from Mubashir Hasan, the Central Finance Minister, that the state of emergency in the country would not be lifted before the Constitution was adopted, and national security and democracy ensured. Dr Hasan added that the demand for lifting the emergency came from the propertied class whose intention was to challenge the takeover of their industries in courts of law after the emergency was lifted.

For some time the Press and Opposition leaders had been demanding that emergency be lifted, so that politics, including Constitution-making, could be conducted in a freer atmosphere. For some reason the Government chose Dr Hasan to convey its viewpoint on the subject, who, on this occasion, referred to the property rights as enshrined in the Draft Constitution and said: "It was scandalous that many of the MNAs writing notes of dissent to the Constitution Committee Report had got panicky like rabbits and had sold much of their property lest it should be acquired by the Government after the enforcement of the new constitution."

Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, Opposition leader in the National, Assembly who claimed to be the only member to have appended a note of dissent on property rights, took serious objection to the minister's remarks and attributed them to his desire to "distract attention from the basic issues over which his party has departed from the constitutional accord". What incensed him most was the minister's charge that "the question of property rights lay at the root of the decision by certain elements to go back on the constitutional accord".

Irrespective of who was departing from the constitutional accord, and in what respects, the indefinite suspension of all the fundamental rights through a proclamation of emergency was hardly justified by the need to maintain control over industrial units taken over by the Government. As the *Dawn* pointed out in a well-reasoned commentary on the subject: "It is not necessary that a Presidential order suspending the right of a citizen to move a court should apply to all the fundamental rights. If what Dr Mubashir says is correct, then the object could be achieved by including such fundamental rights in the suspension order as relate to private property, but not those which ensure civil liberties."

It was for restoration of these liberties to the large number of students, laborers and political workers under preventive detention that the demand for lifting the emergency had been made from time to time. The last to join this demand was Mian Tufail Mohammad, Amir, Jamaat-i-Islami, who said that after the Simla Agreement and the withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani troops, there was no justification for continuing the emergency. Nevertheless, what continued to disturb the Opposition was Dr Hasan's remark that the emergency would not be lifted until the permanent Constitution was

adopted. And the fact of the matter was that the Government was merely offering pretexts for its real desire to perpetuate the state of emergency, so that it could continue to rule arbitrarily as long as it wished. While the demand for ending the state of emergency continued to be made from time to time, the Government has steadfastly rejected this demand and has maintained the country in a state of emergency until now.

### **Violation of the Constitutional Accord**

While the People's Party had been accusing the National Awami Party and other Opposition parties of having gone back on the accord, the record was set straight by Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan's disclosure of the extent to which the People's Party itself had violated the accord. Among other things, a serious violation allegedly committed by the PPP was the retention of both the Political Parties Act and the provision of a two-thirds majority for a no-confidence vote on the Draft Constitution. *The Political Parties Act* put a check on crossing the floor by members of various parties. The October accord envisaged that if the provision of a two-thirds majority was to be retained, the *Political Parties Act* would go.

Besides, the Opposition parties came out with the novel interpretation that the accord was not binding. It was subject to confirmation by the parties, and the leaders had signed it in their individual capacities. The NAP leaders gave the misplaced analogy of the Simla Agreement, which had to be ratified by the National Assembly. Tragically, however, the Opposition parties continued to boycott the session of the Constituent Assembly for many weeks.

Many voices had been raised pleading immediate reconciliation between the PPP and the Opposition on Constitution-making. One very plausible suggestion for breaking the deadlock was made by S.M. Zafar, a former Central Law Minister. According to him, the impasse could be broken if the PPP withdrew the two-thirds majority in return for which the NAP, JUI and others should withdraw their notes of dissent on issues like the powers of Senate, provincial subjects, fundamental rights and so on.

### **Demand For Fresh Elections**

Meanwhile, more leaders of various hues demanded fresh general elections in the country after the new Constitution was adopted. The demand, however, was firmly rejected at the highest level. The Bangladesh parallel was described, by Law Minister Pirzada, as irrelevant. Pirzada said that Bangladesh was a new country which wanted to disown everything of the past, whereas Pakistan was not. Referring to the election demand, Bhutto said: "We are not afraid of election. In fact, we are the product of elections." He advised "the defeated politicians to wait and learn the lessons of politics for at least five years". Further, he said that the more pressing problems had to be sorted out before he could decide about the elections "at the appropriate time".

## Disruption of Political Balance

While the debate on the constitutional accord of October 1972 was still inconclusive, and the political atmosphere of the country full of controversies like whether or not the state of emergency should be terminated, or fresh general elections held, the delicate political balance in the country maintained by the PPP rule at the Centre, in Punjab and in Sindh, and the NAP-JUI rule in the two provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan, was suddenly disrupted by the dismissal and replacement of the governors of Baluchistan and the Frontier Province by Bhutto on 14 February 1973, and the dissolution of the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan on the same day. The NAP-JUI government in NWFP resigned in protest on 15 February 1973. This was the climax of various moves made by Bhutto from time to time in the course of the preceding year, to establish unrivalled power in the country.

One explanation for the timing of this act could, of course, be his desire to have favorable governments at the Frontier and in Baluchistan, so that the Constitution of his choice adopted during their tenure had greater legitimacy. Another could be the discovery of arms in the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad, at a time when it could be usefully exploited to malign the parties ruling in Baluchistan. There is absolutely no doubt that in this process Bhutto allowed the compromise of a good many principles of democratic behavior.

Observers of the scene advanced two theories to explain Bhutto's action. According to one, the replacement of two governors and the dismissal of the Baluchistan government represented a victory of the Qayyum Khan-Tikka Khan clique and symbolized the attempt of the military to stage a comeback. General Tikka Khan's visit to Peking a few weeks earlier which, according to this view, was undertaken at his own initiative, was also regarded as a link in the chain. The trend unfolded by these developments, therefore, caused concern as much to lovers of democracy as to Bhutto himself. But there were too many assumptions behind this reasoning, the biggest of which was that Bhutto had lost grip over the situation – which he had definitely acquired within a short while of coming to power. Another was that Bhutto was being used by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, rather than the other way round. Both these assumptions are extremely difficult to substantiate. In the case of the second, it was more likely that Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan would be dropped as soon as he had outlived his utility to Bhutto.

The other theory being advanced was that a repetition of "Bangladesh" was in the offing. A parallel was being drawn between Bhutto's attitude towards Baluchistan and the Frontier, and Yahya Khan's attitude towards the East Wing in 1971. The proponents of this theory were falling prey to the NAP-JUI propaganda line in Pakistan which was obviously motivated. It was not that Bhutto's attitude towards the two minority provinces was not step-motherly. But the parallel ended here, for the response of the

two provinces was not likely to be similar to that of the former East Wing. Besides there were many other ways in which the objective realities of the situation were different from those of Bangladesh; however, one might wish them to be otherwise. NWFP and Baluchistan offered little prospect of satisfying the fancy of those who would want Pakistan to disintegrate further.

The simple, though not very palatable, explanation for Bhutto's action seemed to be his desire to establish loyal constitutional alternatives in the two provinces, until his People's Party found its feet there. The means resorted to by Bhutto in achieving this goal were grossly unfair. It was a case of blatant interference by the Centre in the affairs of the provinces, especially when it commanded support of the entire State machinery, had the army and mass media at its disposal as well as the language of persuasion, threat and deceit. In fact the situation, in a sense, bore resemblance to earlier unwarranted dismissals of civilian governments of Pakistan by the then heads of State, in 1953 and 1958. Bhutto tried to outwit his political opponents. But what were the chances of his success?

In the first place Bhutto took sufficient care to see that the situation did not precipitate a crisis. He left both provincial assemblies intact even though their composition was not very favorable to him. Besides, he only dismissed the Government of Baluchistan, allowing the Frontier government to continue if it wanted to. In fact, he tried to persuade Frontier Chief Minister Mian Mufti Mahmud, to continue even after the latter had submitted his resignation. Further, Aslam Khattak, the man appointed by Bhutto as the Governor of NWFP, was a mild, middle-of-the-road individual capable of creating a following, rather than the venomous Qayyum Khan or Hayat Mohammed Sherpao, the two Central Ministers who evoked hatred in many parts of the province. Among other things which accorded with Bhutto's scheme was the lack of a very violent reaction, in the two provinces, to what Bhutto had done to them. Fortunately for Bhutto, Baluchistan and NWFP could not be impictured as solid political entities, which—inter alia—had made Bangladesh a success story. In Baluchistan, Bhutto had already weaned away Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, Mohammed Akbar Bugti, Mir Nabi Baksh Zehri and Jam Saheb of Lasbela—each with a considerable following among the tribal population. In the Frontier Province, Bhutto was already assured support by the ten-member United Front, which was headed by Aslam Khattak, the newly appointed Governor. Efforts were made to break the JUI away from its erstwhile coalition partner, the NAP. That these efforts were not entirely misdirected, was obvious from a statement by Hakim, the Information Secretary of JUI, who said that the President had the constitutional right to appoint governors in whom he had full trust.

### **The Opposition's Response**

Moved by a series of provocative acts by Bhutto, eight leading Opposition parties of Pakistan joined hands in the beginning of March 1973 and constituted themselves into a

United Front to evolve ways and means "to restore democracy, check dictatorship, and work for a truly Islamic, democratic, and parliamentary constitution". The United Front issued a 12-point Islamic Declaration. The formation of the United Front was no doubt a desperate reaction to the ruling People's Party's high-handedness, which had assumed intolerable proportions and wide ramifications. It could also be regarded as a somewhat important development in the post-1971 politics of the country. But to what extent it carried the promise of basically affecting the situation in favor of democracy, remained to be seen.

The eight parties which undertook to send four representatives each to constitute the United Front, were the NAP, United Muslim League, JUP, JUL Jamaat-i-Islami, PDP, Khaksar and the Independent Group. Their Islamic Declaration, expressing collective determination "to provide the nation with the true blessings and fruits of freedom", covered a wide range of political problems to be tackled—from the achievement of an Islamic, democratic, federal and parliamentary Constitution to the protection of national unity and a revocation of the proclamation of emergency in the country.

The Declaration was a natural response to an entire series of provocations offered by the ruling clique in the PPP. It was not merely the habitual manifestation of a collective frustration at their inability to wield power then or in the foreseeable future, because even those wielding important positions within the PPP hierarchy, like Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Ali Ahmad Talpur and Rasul Bux Talpur, had revolted against the "undemocratic" policies and methods of the ruling clique. The foremost among the provocations was the kind of Draft Constitution introduced in the Constituent Assembly, and the PPP's insistence that it would see it through with the help of its majority. Some provisions of the Draft Constitution, particularly those pertaining to various aspects of the office of the prime minister, had evoked the condemnation of the entire nation—excepting the PPP of course. The Opposition feared that these provisions would make the Prime Minister a "Shahanshah" of Pakistan, rather than an elected and "responsible" leader. The most mischievous provision, for instance, was the requirement that a vote of no-confidence against the Prime Minister would require at least a two-thirds majority to be passed. The PPP was doggedly insisting, in the face of criticism from the entire nation, that it would stick to this provision.

Another provocation for the Opposition parties to come together was the dismissal, by the Centre, of the two governors of NWFP and Baluchistan belonging to the NAP, and the dissolution of the representative government of the latter province. The reasons advanced in justifying, this action convinced no one except the Central Government itself, or those who had directly benefited from this sudden coup. What made things worse was the arrest of Sher Mohammed Marri who belonged to the NAP or the allegation that he had, with the connivance of the former provincial government, organized a 20,000-strong guerilla force to stage a revolt against the Central Government at the opportune time. The allegation bore some resemblance to the

Agartala conspiracy case of 1968 and the so-called London Plan of 1972, of which the Opposition leaders were reminded time and again.

Yet another provocation which caused serious concern to all political individuals in Pakistan was the unashamed suppression of personal liberties and the complete denial of freedom of speech and expression by the Government. The extraordinary high-handedness shown by the police in arresting Altaf Gauhar, editor of *Dawn*—by breaking open the door of his living-room and taking him into custody without even a warrant of arrest—would have cowed down even the most determined opponents of the regime. Gauhar's fault was merely the independent expression of views on problems facing Pakistan. The low-class treatment given to Gauhar and Tufail Ahmed, the Jamaat-i-Islami chief, the arrest of the editor, publisher and printer of *Jasarat*, another independent daily, and various other steps of this nature created a wide credibility gap between the ruling party on the one hand and all articulate sections of society on the other. At about this time, Bhutto also declared that the state of emergency in the country would continue indefinitely, which further shook the confidence of the Opposition.

It was in these circumstances that Opposition parties founded the United Front. The Opposition also felt strengthened in its resolve to face the challenge of PPP despotism by the big revolt that had occurred against Central leadership in the Sindh unit of the PPP. Despite the dissolution of all provincial PPP committees by J.A. Rahim, the Secretary-General of the party, the Sindh PPP held a convention under the chairmanship of Mir Rasul Bux Talpur, the former Provincial Governor. The convention, attended by 1200 delegates from all over the province, demanded the expulsion of Rahim himself from the party. Besides, the Jamaat-i-Islami, which was a member of the United Front and was strongly entrenched in Punjab, had intensified its criticism of the PPP, incensed as it was at the arrest of its chief, Tufail Ahmed.

Nevertheless, the United Front suffered from serious limitations in the fulfillment of its objectives. The foremost was the numerically insignificant position that it occupied in the National Assembly. All the constituent parties of the Front added to about 40 seats in the National Assembly, out of the total of 146. It could not, therefore, influence Constitution-making effectively. Outside the assembly, too, the Front could not hope to carry things too far because of a lack of agreement among its constituents on basic socio-economic issues. For instance the Jamaat-i-Islami and NAP could never agree on the role of religion in politics, or socialism as an economic philosophy. That explains why the Islamic Declaration was a statement of vague intentions couched in generalities which would be acceptable to all shades of opinion. Besides, the United Front found it extremely difficult to choose a common leader who could be its unquestioned voice in all matters. The only hope for the United Front to make its presence felt could be a complete merger of all the parties that composed it. That being out of the question in

the given situation, Pakistan has been inching towards a single-party system, on the Indian pattern, whether or not there was a United Front.

### **Setbacks to Bhutto**

While the United Democratic Front did suffer from inherent limitations, Bhutto's plan of extending his party's rule over the entire country, and steamrolling a Constitution of his choice through the National Assembly, also received setbacks—even though temporarily. The setbacks resulted from his miscalculations about political imperatives in the Frontier and Baluchistan, as also from the unduly partisan and selfish attitude adopted by his party leadership in Constitution-making. It was generally believed that Bhutto might still succeed in depriving the NAP-JUI alliance of its rightful place in the country's politics, and might get away with a Constitution which was very close to his desired model. But in the process, it was suspected, he would prove too obviously the charge—as he really did—that he was as ruthless a dictator as the generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan had been, except that he was doing the job with a far greater sophistication and finesse.

Bhutto's inability to institute alternative governments after he had dismissed the one formed by the NAP-JUI alliance in Baluchistan, and accepted the resignation of the other in NWFP, constituted the first major setback to his strategy. Judging by his statements soon after these political coups in the middle of February, he was very hopeful of Governors Akbar Bugti and Aslam Khattak being able to manipulate the requisite majorities in the two assemblies within a period of about 30 days. Much of this hope was based on assessments made by the two governors that they would succeed in creating big dents in the NAP-JUI alliance. Thanks to their firm commitment to democracy, the members of this alliance resisted all temptations of switching their loyalties to the new rulers, and thus frustrated Bhutto's hopes. Mrs. Aslam Khattak's inability to wean away the Jul from the NAP, as promised by him earlier, was particularly noted by the PPP High Command. What added to Bhutto's discomfiture was the tussle between Khattak and Sherpao, the PPP's provincial chief, about headship of the prospective government.

However, Bhutto was constrained to extend President's Rule in Baluchistan for another 30 days. Apart from other things, it clearly amounted to an admission of the fact that the NAP-JUI coalition still commanded a majority in the provincial assembly. The extension of President's Rule thus legitimately boosted the morale of these two parties, and also enhanced their anger against the Central Government. To mobilize opinion in their favor; they organized 16 March as a Protest Day throughout Baluchistan, and it went off well. In the Frontier too, protest meetings were held by these parties on the same day.

Meanwhile, the United Democratic Front of eight Opposition parties had organized itself rather well, perhaps beyond its own expectations. The collective fear of being reduced to virtual extinction by Bhutto's ruthless measures drove them together, relegating mutual contradictions to the background for a while. They elected a ten-member Action Committee with the Pir of Pagaro as its head, and two vice-presidents, a general secretary, and a chairman of the Finance Committee as other office-bearers. The Action Committee soon appointed four provincial conveners to organize UDF activities in the provinces. The organization of the UDF would not, in itself, have been significant, but for the unanimity achieved by it on fundamental matters. The first remarkable achievement of the UDF was its unanimous stand on the question of provincial autonomy. The argument that the Opposition elements, particularly the NAP and JUI, were demanding the kind of provincial autonomy which would render the Centre "ineffective", often proved handy to the PPP to malign its opponents. To deprive the PPP of this "malicious" tool, the components of UDF resolved whatever internal differences they had on this subject, and announced their decision "in unequivocal terms" and "without any reservations", to "accept the list of subjects given in the draft Constitution".

The UDF then proceeded to formulate its minimum demands with regard to the Constitution undergoing a clause-by-clause discussion in the National Assembly. The speed with which various articles of the Constitution were being passed without any respect for Opposition susceptibility, unnerved the UDF. The UDF, which was projecting itself as the champion of democracy, lost no time in agreeing on the minimum which Bhutto would have to accept with regard to amendments in the Draft Constitution. The charter of demands submitted to Bhutto on 16 March contained proposals for the independence of the judiciary, the Election Commission, fundamental rights, and the powers and functioning of the prime minister. Bhutto was given about a week's time to respond.

There was no comment from Bhutto for quite a few days. The UDF decided to explain its position at a public meeting in Rawalpindi on 23 March, which was National Day. It had also announced its decision to boycott the National Assembly if Bhutto did not yield by the weekend. But the public meeting was not allowed to be held. Gun shots intervened, resulting in a dozen people dead and a number many times more, as injured. Not much evidence was needed to identify the source of the disturbance. The PPP would obviously have been the party most affected if the meeting was allowed to be held, and fulfill its purposes. The UDF naturally responded by announcing next day that it would boycott the National Assembly session.

The UDF's decision certainly upset the People's Party. A Constitution adopted by the National Assembly, when the entire Opposition was boycotting it, would have had much less sanctity than if the Opposition was present, even if it had voted against the Constitution. Bhutto and Pirzada, his Law Minister, appealed to the Opposition to

return to the National Assembly. The Constitution had to be adopted by 21 April. The choice before Bhutto was either to accommodate the Opposition and produce a Constitution which reflected national aspirations, or impose a Constitution which reflected his personal aspirations.

### **Other Problems**

A permanent Constitution was finally adopted by Pakistan's National Assembly and this was undoubtedly a major achievement by Bhutto. The country celebrated it with jubilation and excitement. But the completion of this fundamental task only highlighted the importance of other problems, hitherto submerged under the din and distraction of Constitution-making. The foremost of these problems was the question of prisoners of war, which cannot be understood except in the perspective of Pakistan's basic attitude towards India and Bangladesh. That Pakistan's clamoring for POWs was entirely unrelated to its desire to have them back soon, was obvious from the fact that Pakistan had been postponing the recognition of Bangladesh on one pretext or the other. In fact, the POW question seemed for quite some time as just another instrument of anti-India propaganda in the hands of Pakistan. (However, more on this subject in a later chapter.)

The other problems to which Bhutto referred, as the ones he wished to devote his attention to, were poverty, hunger and disease. But these were long-term problems, not admitting an immediate solution. There was, however, a problem which did deserve and admit an early solution, and that pertained to the political climate within the country. Even if the Opposition parties had given a last-minute support to the Constitution, they had not shown as much excitement about this historic event as the ruling party had. Their participation in various functions celebrating the adoption of the Constitution had been on a low key. One got the impression that Opposition parties felt outmaneuvered by Bhutto during the negotiations. They had been persuaded to support the Constitution on the basis of a political settlement, which, perhaps, was not being lived up to.

At any rate, a crisis of confidence persisted between the ruling party and the Opposition, which wanted to be satisfied on two counts. To begin with, the large-scale political victimization had to be brought to an end. There was no justification for it after the Constitution had been adopted, even if there had been one earlier. Khan Abdul Wali Khan had pointed out that the number of political detenus in the country in April 1973 was the largest ever. The indiscriminate ban on a large number of newspapers, along with arrests of journalists, had invited wide condemnation from various journalists' associations. The last was the Punjab Union of Journalists which expressed concern over "increasing official interference in the day-to-day functioning of the Press".

The other assurance demanded by Opposition parties was that they be given their due share in the politics of the country. The immediate context was the formation of

governments in the Frontier and in Baluchistan, from where the NAP-JUI coalition had been ousted in the middle of February 1973. The announcement that the People's Party, Qayyum Muslim League and United Front would jointly form a government in the Frontier Province, confirmed the Opposition's fears that Bhutto was determined to suppress democracy and deny provincial autonomy in practice, irrespective of what the permanent Constitution laid down. Unless these fears were allayed, Bhutto could not succeed in creating the political atmosphere necessary for fighting the problems of poverty, hunger and disease.

### **Dialogue With Opposition**

Early in July 1973, Bhutto at last had a dialogue with Opposition leaders. The leaders belonging to the parties constituting the United Democratic Front were invited to Murree to hold talks on crucial issues ranging from the democratization of politics to the recognition of Bangladesh. As a consequence of these talks, high hopes were aroused among some of them that majority governments would be restored in NWFP and Baluchistan. Wali Khan went to the extent of declaring that he felt satisfied that at last the proper method of solving these disputes had been adopted by the Government. But these hopes were short-lived. The Opposition realized within a few days that the Murree talks were nothing more than an attempt to placate them on the eve of certain moves which the Government might be thinking of making with regard to the recognition of Bangladesh.

The last such dialogue held by the Government with the Opposition had been in April 1973, on the eve of the adoption of the permanent Constitution. Deadlock on some fundamental aspects of the Constitution had continued for many months. The Opposition had been huddled into last-minute talks with the Government, and had come out with the hope that in return for their cooperation in Constitution-making, the Government would allow them a due role in the country's politics and would restore democratic governments in the Frontier and in Baluchistan. But the Opposition had been completely outmaneuvered. After the Constitution had been adopted with full Opposition support, Bhutto had resorted to his usual politics of repression and suppression.

By July, the Opposition had become wiser. Undoubtedly, it had made the initial mistake of assuming that for some special reasons, the Government would now concede many of its demands, like the dissolution of the National Press Trust, the release of all political prisoners, the withdrawal of cases against them, the non-partisan use of radio and TV, the freedom of the Press, the restoration of fundamental rights, the removal of emergency, an early enforcement of the new Constitution and, of course, restoration of the NAP-JUI governments in the Frontier and in Baluchistan. But that was because the Opposition, being at the receiving end, always thrived on hope, and liked to avail of any opportunity of parley with the powers that be. However, within a few days of the

Murree talks, the Opposition discovered that Bhutto did not mean any compromise. The UDF consequently stuck to its decision that all its constituents would be free to take any stand on the question of the recognition of Bangladesh.

This uncertainty of the Opposition's likely attitude in the event of a resolution on the recognition of Bangladesh (which was coming up in the National Assembly) made it necessary for Bhutto to refer the matter to the Supreme Court. While the NAP and JUI had earlier expressed themselves in favor of recognition, the Jamaat-i-Islami, JUP, Council Muslim League and Tehriq-e-Isteqlal were known to be opposed to the recognition. The advisory opinion of the Supreme Court was sought to preempt any constitutional objections to the adoption of a resolution on the recognition of Bangladesh from any of these parties, or from Punjabi members of the PPP, some of whom had created trouble when the question came up in August 1972.

Article 1 (3) of the new Constitution provided<sup>3</sup> that the Constitution would be appropriately amended so as to enable "the people of the province of East Pakistan, as and when foreign aggression in that province and its effects are eliminated, to be represented in the affairs of the Federation". It could be argued that this was a impediment in the adoption of any resolution favoring recognition of Bangladesh. But Bhutto, in his reference to the Supreme Court, had assured that he would seek from the National Assembly the consequential legal and constitutional measures when the resolution giving recognition to Bangladesh would be given effect to. On this and other assurances, the Supreme Court unanimously opined that there was no legal bar to the National Assembly adopting the requisite resolution.

The Supreme Court's opinion facilitated the adoption of a resolution by the National Assembly, that the Government of Pakistan might accord formal recognition to Bangladesh when, in the judgment of the Government, such recognition was in the best national interest of Pakistan. Bhutto thereby scored an important victory on the eve of his proposed visit to the US, and at a time when the stage was being set for a crucial round of talks with India on sub continental matters. The Opposition, by staging a walkout when the resolution was being discussed, only made a fool of itself because parties like the NAP and JUI, earlier committed to the recognition of Bangladesh, gave the impression that they were now opposed to it.

The net result was that Bhutto outsmarted the Opposition once again. What with the Murree talks, the Opposition's continuing protests against PPP rule in NWFP and Baluchistan, and against the Government's desire to steam-roll the recognition resolution through the National Assembly, Bhutto finally had his way. This was accompanied by his spectacular victory in the Senate elections where the PPP secured

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<sup>3</sup> This Article was deleted by a constitutional amendment on 23 April 1974, subsequent to the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan in February 1974.

30 out of 45 seats. Bhutto thus got further entrenched, better than ever before, in the politics of the country.

But all this was not without its baser side. For, as Wali Khan said, Bhutto's victories were achieved through the use of "gold and guns". This had not only degraded political standards in the entire country, but also eaten the foundations of his own party. The PPP was rapidly passing into the hands of reactionaries. This was alleged by no less a person than J. A. Rahim, the party's Secretary-General, who raised serious objections to Aziz Ahmed, the Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs, being included in the PPP because of his past associations with Ayub Khan's regime. There were fears of further defections from the PPP. The crisis of confidence which characterized Bhutto's relations with the Opposition, it was feared, might well destroy his own party if his political style remained unchanged.

### **Drifting Politics**

A week before the new Constitution of Pakistan was to be enforced, the politics of the country was to be seen drifting along unforeseeable lines. A modicum of consensus and conciliation that should pervade the political atmosphere on the eve of effecting a new Constitution, framed by representatives of the people, was starkly lacking. The entire Opposition was sulking under the series of humiliating and repressive acts of the Government. It decided not to hold further talks with the ruling party until the hard core of its demands were met. Within the Opposition ranks, there were interesting permutations which made it still more difficult to discern the future shape of Pakistani politics.

The most significant development was the belated realization by the United Democratic Front that Bhutto had no particular desire to allow the Opposition parties a role in the politics of the country. This should have been obvious to them long ago. But they vainly kept hoping, after every round of talks in which Bhutto involved them, that they would in return get concessions like the withdrawal of emergency, the non-imposition of Section 144, the release of political prisoners, the dissolution of the National Press Trust and so on, including, of course, the restoration of democratic governments in NWFP and Baluchistan.

Bhutto had invited the Opposition leaders for consultations on the eve of his departure for the Simla talks in 1972, and again on the occasion of the adoption of the new Constitution in April, and the passing of the National Assembly resolution on the recognition of Bangladesh in July 1973. Opposition's support had been of great help to Bhutto, except on the last occasion when the Opposition boycotted the National Assembly at the time of voting. Besides, the momentary sense of participation thus given to the Opposition in the decision-making process, had neutralized its anger and

had blunted the sharpness of its anti-Government attack. But frustration overtook the Opposition when the promises made by Bhutto were not fulfilled.

According to Opposition claims, the most important of these promises made on the eve of the adoption of the new Constitution was that democratic governments would soon be restored in the Frontier and in Baluchistan. But far from restoring these governments, the PPP resorted to all conceivable methods to cause defections from the NAP-JUI ranks – with the result that a PPP government in coalition with a United Front of independents and Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Group) was successfully established in the Frontier on 29 April 1973. Besides, the PPP also got a substantial number of seats from the share of these two provinces in the Senate, even though the PPP had hardly a member in the two assemblies. In Baluchistan, Akbar Khan Bugti, Bhutto's hand-picked Governor, persistently refused to convene a session of the provincial assembly for quite some time, despite a written demand by 12 out of 21 members. Further, large parts of the province were subjected to army action, resulting in frequent confrontations between the army and the tribals.

The Opposition was sore on many other counts, particularly the "atmosphere of force and violence foisted on the country", which led to the disruption of many of their meetings, a cancellation of others (due to the imposition of Section 144), and incidents of murder, firing and arson, all directed at political opponents of the Government. And yet, because of the heterogeneity of its constituents, the UDF was lying low and confining its protest to closed-door resolutions. It was woken out of this inertia only when Attaullah Khan Mengal, the former Chief Minister of Baluchistan, and some other leaders protested that drawing-room politics would not do and that the UDF might break if it did not act.

A series of high-level meetings was climaxed by a UDF National Convention in Lahore in the first week of August, where it was declared that the UDF would launch a nationwide movement "in a manner suiting the situation" if the fundamental rights and civil liberties of the people were not restored in the country by 24 August, and if curbs on freedom of expression under Section 144 were not removed after the enforcement of the permanent Constitution. Besides, 14 August was fixed as the deadline for the acceptance of its seven-fold demand by the State head. The demands included the lifting of the emergency; the release of all political detenus, including students and labor leaders, and the withdrawal of cases against them; complete freedom of the Press and the repeal of Press ordinances; the lifting of restrictions on the import of newsprint; bringing the prices of essential commodities down to the 1971 level; sending back the armed forces to the barracks by removing them from Baluchistan and the restoration of the previous Baluchistan government.

The UDF resolutions assumed pertinence in the light of the Liaquatabad riots which had just occurred in Karachi. These riots began with an attack by PPP supporters on the

new office of the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal, which was to be inaugurated that evening by its chief, Air Marshal Asghar Khan. The attack provoked a counter-attack by Tehriq supporters on the PPP office. The incidents continued for three days, resulting in arson, injuries to about 100 persons on both sides, and arrests of a similar number.

The Tehriq and its leader had been victims of the Government's wrath ever since the PPP came to power. The Air Marshal and his relatives had been subjected to various harassments; his property had been damaged. (This has only added to his popularity and prestige as the focal point of determined opposition to the Government). The Tehriq had been joined by former PPP stalwarts like Mahmud Ali Kasuri and Ahmed Raza Kasuri, and this had strengthened its base in the Punjab. Soon, the Tehriq had been joined by quite a few defectors from the NAP also, including its former Secretary-General, Mahmudul Haq Usmani.

Thus the Tehriq, which was not a part of the UDF but fully supported its objectives, was gaining strength all over the country. The NAP, on the other hand, had already lost support of its 13 lawyer members in Peshawar, and quite a few leaders in Karachi, including the Joint Secretary of the Karachi unit. Whether the Tehriq would emerge as a viable alternative to the PPP, and whether the NAP would suffer decline as a socio-political force, was yet in the realm of speculation. What was important for the present was that the Tehriq as well as the UDF (of which the NAP was a part), were disgusted with the code of conduct being followed by the PPP, and could not be expected to resist for long the temptation of paying it back in the same coin.

### **Dawn of a New Era?**

The twenty-sixth anniversary of Pakistan's coming into existence was endowed with special significance because of the enforcement of the country's permanent Constitution on that date. This could well have been regarded as the beginning of a new era in the history of Pakistan. because the Constitution was the first ever framed by directly elected representatives of the people, and provided for a parliamentary system of government. Besides, the country was put back on democratic rails after 15 years of interregnum, which witnessed periods of extreme frustration in regard to possibilities of the revival of democracy.

But unfortunately the signs of a new era ended here. As far as the People's Party rule was concerned, the only difference made by the new Constitution was the creation of the new office of prime minister, and the assumption of this office by Bhutto. For the rest, the structure of the government was the same, and in all probability its style of functioning as well. What was more disappointing was that the People's Party Government, whether before or after the enforcement of the permanent Constitution, shared many characteristics of the governments which had gone before it, and which had no claims to a representative or democratic character.

For instance, an utter disregard for the civil and political rights of the people, which was characteristic of the governments of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, was also an attribute of the Government run by the People's Party. Similarly, the People's Party Government shared with its predecessors a scant regard for political opponents, irrespective of their stature or service to the nation. On the whole, the ethos of the country was as full of suspicion, recrimination and lack of values as it was during the martial law regimes. This is what deprived the new era of special meaning. This is what deprived the people of any excitement which should otherwise have fired their imagination on entering the era of a permanent and democratic Constitution.

The most outstanding testimony to the vicious attitude of the Government was the prevailing situation in Baluchistan. No one would ever suggest that the NAP-JUI coalition government in the province was most efficient or incorruptible. But it certainly was a constitutional government, having a majority support in the provincial assembly. It was trying to do good to the people with almost as much sincerity and speed as the People's Party governments. Why then it was dismissed (following which the NAP-JUI government in NWFP resigned), was baffling. The only explanation was that these two governments were composed of parties opposed to the PPP.

While the PPP successfully maneuvered the installation of its government in the Frontier within a few weeks, its attempts to do so in Baluchistan did not bear fruit for a long time. The federal government, therefore, felt the need for repression, so that the political forces which represented the majority in the province were broken and humiliated. No well-wisher of Pakistan would like to draw a parallel between what was happening in Baluchistan with what had happened in East Bengal two years earlier. But one would be blind to the realities if one did not notice the existence of similar elements in the Baluchistan situation, all of which were the Government's own creation.

Four divisions of the army were supposed to be dealing with a so-called secessionist movement. The disruptive elements were said to have imported large quantities of arms from abroad. Bizenjo and Mengal, the former Governor and Chief Minister respectively of the province belonging to the NAP, and Khair Bux Marri, the party chief, were arrested. Six months after their dismissal from power they were facing trial on charges of smuggling, misappropriation of public funds, unauthorized purchase of arms and their distribution for subversive purposes, and instigation for lawlessness. What added further poignancy to the drama was that a petition was filed before the Sindh and Baluchistan High Court challenging the dismissal of Mengal's government by Bhutto.

The situation in other provinces was only a little less frightening. The number of political murders was already a legend. Political harassment was a daily occurrence. The closure of newspapers and the arrests of their editors and other "inconvenient"

individuals under Defence of Pakistan Rules was resorted to without the least inhibition. It was due to the utter helplessness of the Opposition to demand an improvement of the situation through normal means, that it decided to launch civil disobedience from 24 August. The People's Party might not have been responsible for all individual acts of repression and harassment. But it certainly had the over-all responsibility for creating the right climate and setting proper standards of behavior.

The fact that it did not do so, and the fact that it was to be at the helm under the new parliamentary dispensation, created a deadly staleness in the entire atmosphere. It rendered the change brought in by the enforcement of the new Constitution merely symbolic and formal. For this change to be real and effective, the People's Party and its leader should have given immediate evidence of responding to the needs and aspirations of the people. It should have dispelled the impression that it was, after all, a party of feudal and big business interests. There was enough scope in the field of domestic politics for the People's Party to act. But there was scope also in the field of foreign relations.

That confrontation with India had played havoc with the lives of Pakistani people did not need to be proved. But Bhutto had failed to establish his credibility with regard to his occasionally professed desire that confrontation with India should end. Even if some of the humanitarian problems facing the nations of the subcontinent since the last war had been resolved as a result of negotiations, there was no guarantee that the basic confrontationist posture of Pakistan would come to an end in the near future. In fact, the inference that could be drawn from Pakistan's new alliance with Iran and its continuing search for arms on the plea of threats from India, was quite to the contrary. The spirit of the welfare State, which the new Constitution sought to establish, demanded that steps were initiated by Bhutto's Government to lay the basis of positive cooperation with India.

In itself, the establishment of a parliamentary system of government in Pakistan within the framework of the democratically-adopted Constitution was a very welcome development, and certainly no less welcome for India. It offered scope for the evolution of Pakistan as a homogenous and stable State, which was itself a prime condition for peace in the subcontinent. But this development could be reduced to a ritual if considerations of power politics were not subordinated to the good of the people at large.

### **III-conceived Agitation**

As mentioned earlier, the United Democratic Front of eight Opposition parties had launched a civil disobedience movement on 24 August in protest against the ruling party's behavior. But the movement proved to be a flop. Many of the demands on which the movement was based had, in any case, become redundant with the passage

of time. Whatever chances of success it had were spoiled by the devastating floods which made the agitation appear ill-timed and rendered it somewhat counter-productive.

The civil disobedience movement was really the culmination of a non-violent protest which had started taking shape after February 1973, when the democratic governments in NWFP and Baluchistan, composed of NAP-JUI elements, were summarily dismissed. The protest began with a demand for the restoration of popular governments in the two provinces and included, among their things, demands for early enforcement of the new Constitution, ending the state of emergency, restoration of fundamental rights, freedom of the Press, release of all political prisoners, early repatriation of prisoners of war, and so on.

As time passed, many of these issues had been resolved in some manner or the other. Even if their solutions were not to the liking of the UDF, they were put beyond the realm of controversy, for the time being at least. In NINFP, defections from the NAP made it possible for the PPP to institute a majority government (in coalition with the United Front and Qayyum Muslim League) within a few weeks of the dismissal of the earlier government. As regards the new Constitution, it was adopted in April with the support of the Opposition, and enforced on 14 August. In mid-September, Government sought the sanction of Parliament to extend the emergency by another six months. Correspondingly, the Government also got Parliament's sanction to suspend the right of the people to move the courts for any violation of fundamental rights during the period of the emergency. And further, the demand for an early return of the POWS was also met, with the signing of the Delhi agreement between India and Pakistan on 28 August 1973.

Thus, all that remained to constitute what could be regarded as the essence of a civil disobedience movement was the Baluchistan problem, and dissatisfaction about denial of civil liberties, freedom of speech and expression, etc. by the Government. Both of them were long-term problems, admitting no easy solution. There was no doubt that democracy had been suppressed in Baluchistan. But the situation had a different meaning for Bhutto, who looked upon it as an area of vital importance to Iran. And friendship with Iran had, of late, acquired a deep significance for Pakistan's territorial integrity, and for its future role in the Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean region. Therefore, considerations of democracy (or the lack of it) appeared small and sentimental as compared with the vital national necessity of having in Baluchistan an administrative environment in which Iran should find it easy to function.

Similarly, the problem of the restoration of fundamental rights and complete freedom of speech and expression did not admit an easy solution. To begin with, it is difficult to visualize a society—even with the best claims to democracy—in which there is complete freedom of speech and expression. But in Pakistan, which has had hardly a

day of political stability since its creation, it would be impossible for any ruler to allow a considerable measure of freedom for years to come.

There is in Pakistan a constant fear of threat to the established order, whether from inside or outside the country. For instance, even after sufficient evidence of India's intentions was available through the Simla and Delhi Agreement, Aziz Ahmed thought it necessary to justify the continuation of a state of emergency in his country on the plea that India still had a confrontationist posture towards Pakistan. Addressing the National Assembly of Pakistan in mid-September, Aziz Ahmed said that this was evident from the continued deployment of the bulk of Indian troops on Pakistan's borders, increased military expenditure by India and the receipt of military equipment by India from the Soviet Union.

This being so, a civil disobedience movement launched in the best of circumstances would have had a limited chance of success. But even this was thwarted by floods, which were tentatively estimated to have caused the country a damage of over Rs 250 crores in various sectors. A total of 10 million acres of land was affected, out of which 3.5 million acres was under cultivation. The floods hit about 10,000 villages, affected about eight million people and destroyed over 500,000 houses.

The floods affected the civil disobedience movement in two ways. Logistically, the UDF leadership found it difficult to coordinate the movement all over the country because of disruption of communications. Politically, this sounded ridiculous, talking of democracy and fundamental rights when the Government, functioning within the larger framework of democracy, was engaged in the colossal task of meeting a great national disaster.

Another factor which led to the virtual collapse of the movement was the anomalies within the UDF. The NAP-JUI coalition was supposed to be the strongest and most articulate component of the UDF, apart from the Jamaat-i-Islami. Much had happened to darken the image of NAP-JUI since the days of their rule in NWFP and Baluchistan. It was not certain how far the coalition still survived, judging by the defections in NWFP. Besides, many leading lights of the NAP had defected to join the ranks of the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal or other parties in Peshawar, and in other towns in Punjab and Sindh. And further, the departure to Kabul of Ajmal Khan Khattak, the former Secretary-General of the NAP, only strengthened the enemies of the party in their propaganda that the party was anti-national. Matters had been made worse by Afghanistan's denunciation of Pakistan at the Algiers non-aligned conference in September.

Bhutto drove the last nail into the coffin of this movement by ensuring the return of Pakistani prisoners of war through the Delhi Agreement. The agreement could not but be welcomed by most of the Opposition parties. Simultaneously, Bhutto conducted an extensive tour of turbulent Baluchistan. While he utilized the occasion to size up the

situation, he tried to win the people's admiration through announcement of various relief and reform measures. According to some accounts, he successfully neutralized a certain amount of opposition in the province.

In a broadcast to the nation on the eve of his departure for America in the third week of September, Bhutto called upon the Opposition to enter into a dialogue with the Government. He was once again speaking from a position of strength.

### **Opposition's Decline**

In the next few weeks, sensational events took place in Pakistan—without, however, creating a ripple on the surface of the country's politics. An attempt was made on the life of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, President of the National Awami Party and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, perhaps for the fourth time during a period of two years. While Wali Khan escaped unhurt, one of his servants was killed. But the country's expression of anger was confined to a few sympathetic statements made by some political leaders. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan was not allowed to proceed to Quetta. His movements were confined to his own province of NWFP. And yet, no visible demonstration of protest took place in the country. The Baluchistan Provincial Assembly was, at long last, convened when nine of its 21 members were absent, most of them under detention. It passed important legislation. But no one dared question its propriety in a telling manner.

These were developments which proved that the Opposition in Pakistan was fast declining, if not already dead. Normally, in a democracy, such things would have stirred the nation to its roots, and would have led to a great deal of soul-searching among all men. There was no doubt that the prevalence of martial law and its concomitants, for a period of 14 years, had so habituated the nation to methods of repression that occurrences of the sort mentioned above appeared quite permissible. Nevertheless, the Opposition's inability to effectively mobilize public opinion against them through constitutional means was a serious reflection on its future role and relevance.

The Opposition had made a valuable contribution to the growth of democracy in the country since the fall of Yahya Khan. But it's the Opposition's continuing pressure, which forced the Government to enter into a dialogue with it on many occasions, martial law would not have been lifted and replaced by an Interim Constitution in as early as April 1972. Again, the country would have got something other than a parliamentary system of government if the Opposition had not been steadfast on it. Furthermore, the Constitution which was given to the country would have been far less democratic and federal than it turned out to be if the Opposition were relaxed during the making of the Constitution. But having contributed to the emergence of democracy, the Opposition was not able to protect it, although the fault was not entirely its own.

A party in power may seldom be bothered about democratic norms. But this is especially so in Pakistan, where the People's Party has been ruling in a reckless manner. Bhutto and his party have made the maximum contribution to the decline of the Opposition and, in the process, have weakened democracy.

The dismissal of the governors in NWFP and Baluchistan in February 1973 had been absolutely uncalled for, and could be understood only in terms of Bhutto's attempt to extend his domain to these two provinces also. The imposition of Section 144 in Punjab and Sindh and the connivance in the disruption of Opposition meetings in early 1973, sometimes involving brutal assaults on Opposition leaders, were intended to demoralize and defeat the Opposition by underhand means. The arrests of political leaders and newspaper editors, along with the ban on the publication of papers, also muffled the voices of protest.

The limits to which a government could go in suppressing Opposition was illustrated by the classic case of Baluchistan. When "gold and guns" failed to convert a minority into a majority in the provincial assembly some members of the majority party had to be arrested so that the minority appeared to be in a majority when the assembly was convened. There were rumors in as early as 1973, that the National Awami Party, whom the Government considered as the main source of trouble in Baluchistan, might eventually be banned, although this ban materialized in February 1975.

Apart from the willful destruction of Opposition inherent in these acts, the ruling party also contributed to Opposition decline through the success of some of its policies at home and abroad. Economic stability brought about at home, and the way in which it was the flood disaster, had earned dividends for the PPP. Similarly, the evacuation of territories occupied by India during the last war and the agreement on the repatriation of prisoners of war did not have much to be said by the Opposition in the realm of foreign policy.

But the Opposition can also claim enough credit for the plight in which it finds itself today. Rarely has it presented a picture of unity, so as to be taken seriously as an alternative to the ruling party. The formation of the United Democratic Front by eight Opposition parties was a golden opportunity. But the Tehrik-e-Isteqlal headed by Air Marshal Asghar Khan, with a lot of influence in urban Punjab and a great political potential, chose to stay out. After a time, the conservative Jamaat-i-Islami—which is an important constituent of the UDF—also developed differences with the Front with regard to methods of agitation.

The biggest undoing of the Opposition, however, has been the mistakes committed by the NAP. This was one party which was talked of as being, potentially, a viable alternative to the PPP. But in political acumen and maturity, its leadership did not

prove a patch on its adversaries. Its foremost blunder was its resignation from the government of NWFP in February 1973—on the misplaced assumption that it would generate pressure in the country in favor of the restoration of a NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan, and a NAP government in the Frontier.

But the NAP spoilt its image in other ways too. It cannot disown responsibility for contributing to the crisis connected with the constitutional accord of October 1972. Besides, it never completely succeeded in washing out the charge that it had extra-territorial links and secessionist aims. The fact that Ajmal Khattak, its former Secretary-General, escaped to Afghanistan and functioned from there, seen especially in the context of the new Afghan regime's hostile posture towards Pakistan, made the NAP's position still more vulnerable. Further fuel to the anti-NAP fire was provided by the remark of Arbab Sikander Khan, the former NAP Governor of NWFP, that the Afghan delegate's statement in regard to Pakistan at the Algiers non-aligned summit meeting of 1973, was intended to be harmless.

The ill-timed civil disobedience movement launched by the Opposition when floods were ravaging Pakistan. was the last act of stupidity which contributed to the Opposition's decline by the end of 1973. A meager Opposition with a bleak future thus characterized the pattern of democracy in Pakistan at the end of two years of existence of the new Pakistan.

## CHAPTER 3

### DYNAMICS OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING

#### The Third Consenbly

The first ever directly elected Constituent Assembly of Pakistan met on 14 April 1972 – the third assembly engaged in the task of Constitution-making.

Its brief, three-day session was meant primarily to clothe the country in a democratic-political structure which would derive strength and sustenance from the will of the people, so that the possibility of the armed forces again imposing their will over the nation could be preempted. This was sought to be achieved by passing a vote of confidence in Bhutto's Government, by adopting an Interim Constitution, and by appointing an all-party committee to draft a permanent Constitution. In the process, an assurance that martial law would be lifted on 21 April was also obtained from the Government. These were momentous developments with long-term implications.

The Interim Constitution presented to the Constituent Assembly was a 112-page document comprising 290 clauses and seven schedules. The most striking aspect of this document was that it combined the presidential system at the Centre with the parliamentary system in the provinces. While there was no provision for the office of prime minister, there was a provision for chief ministers in the provinces responsible to provincial legislatures. At the federal Centre, the president was both head of Government and head of State. Objecting to this arrangement, Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, President of the Council Muslim League, suggested that the presidential council of ministers should be made responsible to the National Assembly in the same way as provincial ministers were responsible to provincial legislatures.

The Government did not see any anomaly in this arrangement for, as Radio Pakistan explained, the National Assembly could overrule the president if, upon refusal by him to give assent to a bill, it passed the bill again after reconsidering it, with 75 members voting for it. Besides, one of the amendments introduced in the Draft Interim Constitution, provided for the impeachment of the president if he took any unconstitutional step. Further, the absence of a provision for the office of the prime minister was sought to be explained by the Law Minister, by saying that even during 1947 and 1955 the country had had a prime minister without a specific provision for this office in the constitutional documents on which the Government was based. If the National Assembly wanted this office, it could still have it after normal constitutional life was resumed on 21 April.

Theoretically, the argument was not disputable. But the omission was obviously deliberate. Evidently, Bhutto had learnt a major lesson from Pakistan's constitutional history, which was full of instances of arbitrary behavior by heads of State, in absolute disregard of the majority support enjoyed by a particular prime minister in the National Assembly. In choosing to combine the offices of head of State and Government in one person, Bhutto had eliminated the possibility of dual authority existing at the top, realizing that parliamentary traditions had not yet taken root in the country.

Another innovation in the Interim Constitution (introduced again in the light of past experience), was the provision that a vote of no-confidence in a chief minister would not be moved in the provincial assembly unless the name of another assembly member was put forward as that of successor. This was intended to guard against disruption of constitutional life in a province for an unduly long period.

There was, however, one important aspect with respect to which Pakistan did not appear to have learnt any lesson from the past: namely, the relationship of religion with the polity. According to the Constitution, the State was to be known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. One of the policy principles stated that no law would be repugnant to the teachings and requirements of Islam, and all existing laws be brought in conformity with the Holy Quran and Sunnah. The Constitution also provided for an Advisory Council of Islamic Ideology to ensure that the laws conformed to the teachings and requirements of Islam.

However, broadly speaking, these provisions were contained in earlier Constitutions too. In other words, Bhutto's Government wanted to attach the same degree of importance to Islam as an element in Pakistani nationalism, as was attached by earlier governments, despite the breakaway of East Pakistan and the near-total disappearance of the Hindu minority from the country's demographic map. This importance to religion in the country's political structure was neither necessary in the changed context, nor desirable if Pakistan was to develop as a modern state. Realizing this, Malik Mohammad Zafar, a People's Party MNA, proposed that the country be named the Socialist Republic of Pakistan. Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi, leader of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, which sees the role of religion differently, desired that the word "Muslim" be defined properly in the Constitution.

With regard to the quantum of provincial autonomy, the Interim Constitution provisions broadly conformed to the position that existed till October 1955, on the basis of the *Government of India Act of 1935*, as modified by the *Independence Act of 1947*. These Acts were heavily biased in favor of a strong Centre. That the provinces were far from satisfied under this dispensation was obvious from the fact that East Bengal's demand for autonomy became increasingly articulate and forceful during this period. Therefore, the distribution of subjects between the Centre and provinces was a question whose

settlement called for a great deal of statesmanship during the drafting of the permanent Constitution.

A redeeming feature, however, was the provision, introduced as an amendment, that the provincial governments would be empowered to use provincial languages, although provincial legislation and statements would be issued in both the national and provincial languages. This assuaged provincial feelings a great deal, for it was one issue which had violently disturbed peace and order in Sindh a few weeks earlier.

### **The National Assembly**

After holding a brief session on 14 July to ratify the Simla Agreement, Pakistan's National Assembly met again on 14 August 1972. According to the original scheme, the August session was to be devoted to the discussion and adoption of a permanent Constitution. This was not possible because the report of the Constitution Committee had been delayed. The question of the recognition of Bangladesh was therefore expected to take precedence in the National Assembly proceedings, also because the issue should have been resolved before the next Indo-Pakistan summit, scheduled for September. The assembly, in addition, had to approve about 20 ordinances promulgated by the Central Government on important subjects.

A decision on the recognition of Bangladesh had been delayed because it involved national susceptibilities in a way no other issue did. At the same time the urgency of recognition was dictated by the fact that the release of Pakistani POWs could not be negotiated with Bangladesh unless it was recognized. In an attempt to prepare the nation in favor of recognition, the Pakistani Information Minister Maulana Kausar Niazi said that when the question was to be discussed in the forthcoming session of the National Assembly, it could be approached in two ways: "One is of adopting an attitude of hatred, and the other is to establish our relations with Muslim Bengal and pave the way for gradual removal of misunderstandings." Niazi pleaded for the adoption of a realistic stand, rather than their being "swayed by emotions".

The National Awami Party and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam had also indicated their desire to recognize Bangladesh in the course of the National Assembly debate on the Simla Agreement in July. But opposition to the recognition issue had been expressed by the Council Muslim League, Jamaat-i-Islami and other like-minded parties. It was to this irrational sector of opinion that a number of seasoned and sober commentators addressed themselves, urging the adoption of a reasonable attitude. For instance, dwelling on some of the dangers of not recognizing Bangladesh, M.D. Naqvi wrote in the *Dawn*:

Our men may keep on languishing in Indian camps; the trials [of war criminals] would be certain to take place in a manner that would do us the maximum

damages, and the situation in Kashmir would stay where it has been since December 1971, with the impact on Kashmiris of the loss of East Pakistan becoming harder still.

Writing in the same paper Syed Najiullah, the influential columnist, castigated the "uninitiated ones, or those who have been victims of their own propaganda and prisoners of slogans they have heard over the years" for opposing the recognition of Bangladesh, and said:

The majority part of what once was Pakistan insists that it should be recognized as a separate State and its Government as that State's lawful government. Like the six points of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, this is less than what they could demand if they intended mischief.

Independent and articulate opinion was thus gradually veering the nation towards recognition, and it was being speculated that the National Assembly, driven by a collective realization of the immediate stakes involved, if not the long-term interests to be served, might, without much difficulty, vote in favor of recognition.

The National Assembly had to take up some aspects of Constitution-making also, judging by the ongoing debate with regard to a permanent Constitution between the Central Government on the one hand and the NAP-JUI alliance on the other. A mild controversy had been created when NWFP Chief Minister Maulana Mufti Mahmud alleged that the Government of Pakistan was delaying the framing of the new Constitution because the ruling party wanted to make the Interim Constitution permanent. The provocation for this allegation was an earlier statement by Central Law Minister Mahmud Ali Kasuri, that the draft of the new Constitution would not be ready for presentation to the National Assembly on 14 August, as originally scheduled, and would have to be presented by October, or latest by the year's end. Despite the fairly reasonable and elaborate explanation for this delay given by Kasuri, the controversy had left behind some bitterness.

More fundamental, however, was the controversy about basic features of the Constitution. The Minister for Law, who was also Chairman of the Constitution Committee of the National Assembly, divulged that the Constitution was likely to provide for an elected president at the Centre, the Central Cabinet being made responsible to the National Assembly to give it a parliamentary character. The assembly, it had been stated, would be able to exercise control over the cabinet through refusing, if necessary, to grant the salaries of ministers.

This was certainly not the parliamentary pattern, even if the law minister had chosen to call it by this name. Mahmudul Haq Usmani, General Secretary of NAP, had immediately reacted by stating that his party "will oppose tooth and nail every attempt

to deprive the country of a true federal parliamentary system". Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the NAP chief, had also reminded the People's Party of its agreement with NAP for the restoration of a "federal parliamentary system" in the country. The People's Party was perhaps trying to eliminate the dangers of a dual authority at the top—*i.e.* a real head and a constitutional head—because of the havoc played by such a structure in Pakistani politics in the past. But the centralization of authority, implicit in the presidential system, aroused justifiable fears among Opposition parties with regard to its impact on democracy.

Controversy had also arisen on the question of provincial autonomy *vis-a-vis* the new Constitution. While Frontier Chief Minister Maulana Mufti Mahmud had said that the provinces should have "complete autonomy and full control over their means of income", the *Morning News*, a Trust paper, had editorially questioned the wisdom of such demands being made at this juncture.

The National Assembly met on 14 August and extended, till the end of the year, the time limit for the Constitution Committee's submission of the Draft Constitution. Further, the National Assembly approved 22 ordinances which had been promulgated since it met last. The assembly adjourned on 16 August, to meet again on 25 August as the Constitution-making body.

The assembly session on 25 August turned out to be the noisiest one. Desks were thumped; threats, insults and insinuations were hurled around. There was a virtual revolt by the vocal section of the Peoples Party against its own leadership.

The simmering discontent in the People's Party had come to the fore. The occasion was the law minister's motion to introduce a bill to amend the Interim Constitution. The amendments pertained to extending the life of the Interim Constitution, curtailing the powers of the judiciary, making the process of impeachment of the president more difficult, and provisions enabling the Government to disqualify members of the National Assembly. So fierce was the attack by PPP rebels and other Opposition members that the law minister was forced to withdraw the motion. The speaker abruptly adjourned the assembly without fixing a date for its recall.

### **Fearful Ordeal**

The task of Constitution-making in Pakistan was aptly described as a "fearful ordeal" by the *Dawn* in an editorial in October. The problem had been highlighted by the resignation of Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri. President Bhutto, while accepting the resignation, explained his earlier reluctance to relieve Mian Kasuri, by stating that he did not want Constitution-making to be delayed by even a day. One could appreciate his anxiety to ensure that the Constitution was adopted by the prevalent deadline, *i.e.* 23 March or 21 April 1973. But the delay was

being caused not by the change of a minister but by the stand taken by Bhutto on two basic issues involved in Constitution-making.

One of the two issues was whether the pattern of government be parliamentary or presidential. That nearly all political parties advocated a parliamentary system of government in the 1970 elections, was a measure of the country's disgust with the presidential system of government, one variety of which had been introduced and operated by General Ayub Khan. The Awami League, which now ruled in Bangladesh, had already drafted the country's Constitution on the parliamentary pattern. But Bhutto, equally committed to this system until he assumed power, had tended to change his preferences with the passage of time. He squarely told an audience in Lahore in early October, that in the light of past experience, the Westminster model of government could not be adopted in the country. This confirmed the fears of his critics that in the name of political stability, Bhutto was trying to perpetuate personal power.

Right-wing politicians, however, had chosen to remain ambiguous, if not quiet, on this issue. Their most reactionary colleague, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, had been expressing unqualified support for everything that Bhutto did. But the NAP-JUI coalition, ruling in the two provinces of the Frontier and Baluchistan, had been most vocal and forthright in demanding a parliamentary government on the Westminster model. Besides, an influential section of the PPP, led by former Law Minister Kasuri, favored this model.

What the supporters of this model wanted was that the Constitution explicitly recognize the absolute sovereignty of Parliament, so that unmitigated executive power did not play havoc in the country. But perhaps they would have been satisfied with an alternative model, had they been assured that it would provide for proper checks and balances on executive power – as was the case with the American constitutional system. On this Bhutto continued to remain blissfully silent. The suspicion that naturally arose was that he wanted to have a parliament without its sovereignty, and a president without requisite legislative and judicial checks on his authority.

The second issue that divided Bhutto and his opponents was the quantum of provincial autonomy that the new Constitution was to provide. Here again the PPP and NAP, in their election manifestoes, were almost equally committed to maximum provincial autonomy. But Bhutto had gradually veered to the idea of a strong Centre, and had firmly rejected the repeated view of the NAP-JUI alliance that the Centre be responsible only for defence, foreign affairs, currency and communications. In this, Bhutto had the definite support of right-wing politicians, who went to the extent of colluding with Bhutto's ministers in concocting what was termed as the "London Plan". Evidence of how out of tune with reality these politicians were, was provided by a statement of Hassan A. Sheikh, President of newly-formed Pakistan Muslim League, into which had merged the former Council and Convention Muslim Leagues. Sheikh, in his first Press

conference, said that "East Pakistan was an integral part of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Muslim League was dedicated to work for the unity of East and West Pakistan".

To the dismay of these elements, the London Plan did not get off the ground. No one could produce evidence to support the insinuation that NAP and JUI loyalty to the country was questionable. Frontier Chief Minister Maulana Mufti Mahmud, Baluchistan Governor Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, and other leaders belonging to the NAP-JUI alliance, had endlessly stated that the future of these two provinces could not be conceived of except as integral parts of Pakistan. Besides, objective conditions in these two provinces—*vis-a-vis* the rest of the country—were quite different from those in the former State of East Pakistan. Khan Abdul Wali Khan took cognizance of these conditions in an interview to the London correspondent of the *Dawn*. Referring to the question of provincial autonomy, he said:

Pakistan Army's surrender in East Pakistan last December, and the fact that Pakistan today is geographically contiguous should make us think anew about the issue of provincial autonomy. Our party would be prepared to concede more powers to the Centre provided we have a proper parliamentary Constitution.

This modification in Wali Khan's stand on the question of autonomy, which had been welcomed by responsible sections of Pakistani opinion, should have further satisfied Bhutto that the demand for provincial autonomy was not related to secessionist goals. Besides, Bhutto should have had sufficient faith in the ability of his Government to keep the country united, given its then compactness, which made it logistically possible for the army to extend its long arm to all corners of the country without any obstacle. In the interest of democratic stability in a plural society, he should have also, therefore, tried to resolve the question of autonomy in a spirit of utmost mutual accommodation. If, however, Bhutto had failed to find acceptable solutions to these two problems of Constitution-making, the gulf between the PPP-dominated Centre and the NAP-JUI-ruled provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan would have grown wider—much sooner than it eventually did.

### **New Constitutional Scheme**

But on 1 November, details were available to enable an assessment of the new constitutional formula agreed upon on 20 October by ten leaders of seven parliamentary parties of Pakistan. In view of the fundamental differences on Constitution-making that had divided the Pakistan People's Party from the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, it is necessary to examine the nature of compromise arrived at between their apparently irreconcilable views. How the demands for maximum provincial autonomy on the one hand and a powerful Centre, verging on a one-man authoritarianism on the other, had been stitched together, and how viable the accord could be, are pertinent questions.

While conceding, in deference to Opposition wishes, a parliamentary system of government, implicit in which is the executive's responsibility to the legislature, Bhutto succeeded in introducing a set of unusual provisions which more than made up for the weaknesses feared by him in a parliamentary system. These provisions were: (a) in order to be valid, a motion expressing want of confidence in the prime minister must also name his successor; (b) such a motion cannot be moved during the budget session; (c) once a motion of want of confidence is defeated, a subsequent one cannot be tabled within a period of six months and (d) for a period of 15 years or three general elections thereafter, whichever is longer, such a motion has to be passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the National Assembly.

These provisions would undoubtedly have ensured ministerial stability, which was the prime consideration in Bhutto's mind. This also explained his preference for a presidential system on the French model. But, as a seasoned commentator, M. B. Naqvi, pointed out, in its anxiety to avoid making the fall of governments an everyday affair, "it looks as if the ruling party has overshot the mark". The scheme contained quite a few anomalies. The foremost was that it would enable a minority government to stay put until the term of the National Assembly had expired. Opposition leader Air Marshal Asghar Khan put it dramatically, by stating that a government enjoying 34 percent support in the National Assembly could go on ruling for a pretty long time. Besides, an anomaly would arise if 51 percent of the National Assembly members threw out a money bill, or even a budget, and the Government still went on ruling.

Looking at the distribution of power between the Centre and the provinces, one found a federal list containing 60 subjects, and a concurrent list containing 47. The residuary powers vested in the provinces. The federal list was striking. It included a wide range of subjects—much more than defence, foreign affairs, currency and communications—which constituted the charter of autonomy originally demanded by the parties ruling in NWFP and Baluchistan. For instance, it included foreign trade, railways, mineral oil and natural gas, industrial development (including the Water and Power Development Authority and the Industrial Development Corporation), nuclear energy, taxes on income other than agricultural income, national planning and economic coordination, and so on. These were certainly not "subsidiary subjects", as claimed by Baluchistan Governor Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, who was trying to defend the constitutional formula as being in accord with the NAP stand.

Besides, the formula was silent on which law was to prevail (in the event of a conflict between central law and provincial law), on any subject in the concurrent list. If the usual practice of the superiority of central law held good, it would amount to a further accretion of strength at the Centre. The provinces had undoubtedly the satisfaction of having residuary powers with them. Besides, their financial needs had been taken care of by the provisions that the net proceeds from excise duty and royalty recovered at

wellhead on natural gas would be paid to the province where the wellhead was situated, and the net profits derived by the federal government or the WAPDA from the bulk generation of power at a hydro-electric station located in a province, would be paid to that province. But in the overall scheme of things, one would tend to agree with *Dawn's* editorial comment that "the Centre envisaged will be as strong as the one the Indian Union possesses." And if the NAP and JUI leaders regarded this scheme as satisfactory, even if it meant a modification of their original demands, they seemed to have deserved the nation's felicitations.

A few more aspects of the constitutional scheme deserve attention. The Senate, which was visualized as the Upper House of the Central Legislature, was devoid of power. It would have nothing to do with money bills. In all matters on the federal list—with the exception of three—it would only have recommendatory and delaying powers. In the three subjects excepted here, and in all matters on the concurrent list, if the Senate differed from the National Assembly, the matter would be resolved by a joint session of the two Houses, through a majority vote. Thus even the Senate had hardly a role to perform as the watchdog of the interests of the provinces.

The constitutional accord mentioned that "fundamental rights shall be guaranteed". But it was silent on how this was proposed to be done. There was scope for mischief here, if the ruling party so desired. Even though there was provision for an independent judiciary, it remained to be seen whether it would be empowered to act as a guardian of fundamental rights.

Besides, there were the usual Islamic provisions. The name of the republic would carry the adjective "Islamic". No law would be made which was repugnant to the Quran and the Sunnah. There would be an Islamic Advisory Council. Islam would be the State religion of Pakistan. And finally, the head of State would have to declare in a suitable form that he was a Muslim. This unnecessary needling of the minorities could have been avoided, and Pakistan at this stage could have been salvaged from its medieval ethos, but for the compulsion to satisfy right-wing parties.

A notable feature of the constitutional scheme was that it was specifically designed for West Pakistan alone. The sovereign existence of Bangladesh had thus been recognized implicitly, even if its formal recognition took more time.

The constitutional accord was obviously an evidence of the spirit of compromise and accommodation shown by the parties starkly aware of the need for national survival. The accord could certainly be viable if this spirit continued to sustain the behavior of political parties till the Constitution Bill was adopted by the National Assembly.

The Constitution Committee of the National Assembly completed the draft of a permanent Constitution in accordance with the agreed formula and formally submitted

it to the Constituent Assembly on 31 December 1973, the revised deadline laid down for the purpose. The Committee took 48 sittings to complete this task. While adequate details of the Constitution were not yet available, the fact that the draft was completed was in itself a laudable achievement.

However, some members of the Constitution Committee had appended a note of dissent. The controversial clauses, which included provisions pertaining to the election of the prime minister by the National Assembly, the vote of no-confidence against the prime minister, and powers of the Upper House of the federal legislature, were bound to be actively debated in the National Assembly. Meanwhile, Bhutto had stated that wherever difficulty arose, he would invoke his party majority to get such clauses approved. However, for the time being it was important that a task which appeared to be supremely difficult (particularly after the resignation from the Constitution Committee of Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the NAP representative, and open criticism of the constitutional formula by some leading lights of the PPP, like Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri), had been achieved.

### **Opposition's Dissent**

Within a few weeks of the submission of the Draft Constitution, the country was faced with a serious crisis. As stated in the second chapter, the Opposition behaved in a funny manner. Having appended their signatures to the constitutional accord of 20 October, which formed the basis of the Draft Constitution, they had now raised fundamental objections to it. They had appended notes of dissent to the report of the Constitution Committee. The objections covered a wide range of questions. Pandora's box had been opened after the National Awami Party's National Council reviewed the constitutional accord on Wali Khan's return from London. Other Opposition parties followed suit. They challenged various provisions of the accord, particularly those pertaining to the election, tenure and powers of the prime minister.

Bhutto and his spokesmen repeated the threat that the PPP, with its majority, would get its own Constitution passed in the National Assembly if the constitutional accord was broken by its signatories. Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Maulana Mufti Mahmud, and other Opposition leaders responded by saying that a Constitution given by the PPP would not be acceptable to the nation. The PPP represented only two of the four provinces. The occasion for frank debate and mutual accommodation on constitutional matters had thus been turned into a national confrontation between warring political leaders representing narrowly conceived interests.

In this atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, an incident took place in the National Assembly in which Khan Wali Khan was alleged to have assaulted and threatened to shoot Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada. The incident was followed by a boycott of the National Assembly by all Opposition groups, until they

were assured that the People's Party was prepared to cooperate with them in bringing about a democratic way of life in the country and submitting to the rule of law. In the wake of this incident, Khan Wali Khan disclosed having "undeniable proof" that Home Minister Abdul Qayyum Khan had been instructed by President Bhutto to murder Wali Khan, as well as 31 other political opponents.

Pakistani politics was in a state of chaos, with all major parties equally to blame. Even the National Awami Party, which was usually the champion of the rule of law and decent political behavior, could not be absolved of a large measure of responsibility for this. It should have responded differently to Constitution-making, having initially allowed its representative to sign the constitutional accord. The position of the PPP was no more enviable. Constitution-making remained still a Herculean task, despite the threatened use of its majority in the National Assembly.

While the PPP had been accusing the NAP and other Opposition parties of having gone back on the accord, it was left to Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan to disclose the extent to which the PPP itself had violated the accord. Among other things, a serious violation allegedly committed by the PPP was the retaining of both the *Political Parties Act* and the provision of a two-thirds majority for a no-confidence vote in the Draft Constitution. The *Political Parties Act* put a check on crossing the floor by members of various parties. The October accord envisaged that if the provision of a two-thirds majority was to be retained, the *Political Parties Act* would go.

The Opposition parties had come out with the strange interpretation that the accord was not binding unless confirmed by the parties, and that the leaders had signed it in their individual capacities. Despite many joint meetings of the Opposition parties to consider the question, they had not been able to decide, until the beginning of February, whether to resume attending the Constituent Assembly session which they had boycotted in early January. The need of the hour was an immediate reconciliation between the PPP and the Opposition on Constitution-making. The most realistic suggestion in this respect had been made by S. M. Zafar, former Central Law Minister. According to him, the impasse could be broken if the PPP withdrew the two-thirds-majority clause, in return for which the NAP, JUI and others would withdraw their notes of dissent on issues like the powers of the Senate, provincial subjects, fundamental rights, etc. A series of talks were held between Bhutto and Wali Khan to resolve the deadlock.

### **A Constitution At Last**

Pakistan ultimately had a Constitution adopted for the first time by representatives of the people. The permanent Constitution was adopted by the National Assembly on 10 April, and authenticated by President Bhutto—amidst enormous celebration—on 12 April. It was to come into force on a date to be fixed by the Government, but not later

than 15 August. The bitter controversy attending the process of its adoption apart, the mere fact of adopting the Constitution was of historic importance, not only for Pakistan but for the entire subcontinent, inasmuch as it promised less political instability in the region.

By the time the Constitution Bill went through the second reading, the gap between the official and Opposition viewpoints had been narrowed considerably by the amendments unilaterally introduced by the ruling party. And yet the Opposition was insisting on the boycott of the Constituent Assembly, perhaps more out of pique at the political humiliation suffered by it earlier than out of any fundamental differences. However, the situation was saved by a last-minute compromise move. The Constitution was finally adopted by 125 votes out of 128 present and voting in a House of 144.

Nobody would ever doubt that what Bhutto wanted to give to the country was a completely authoritarian political system under the facade of democracy, and whatever concessions he made had been forced out of him by a determined Opposition. It must, however, be acknowledged that Bhutto displayed an uncanny instinct of survival and a highly pragmatic approach in agreeing to some fundamental modifications in his original proposals. For example, in October 1972, he agreed to have a parliamentary system of government rather than the presidential one, which he was known to have preferred. In April 1973 he agreed to withdraw the *Political Parties Act of 1962*, which had been protected under the Draft Constitution. Thus, by making modifications in the initially extreme positions taken by him on all basic issues, he sought to create for himself the image of a genuine democrat—although what emerged in the process was a document half-way between democracy and dictatorship.

Broadly, the Constitution could be said to have provided for a parliamentary form of government with a federal structure, an independent judiciary to protect fundamental rights of the people, and a statement of the principles of policy which should guide the formulation of laws. It should be interesting to note the concessions made by Bhutto to the Opposition in Constitution-making, and the extent to which they would make the Constitution democratic.

The foremost concession was the withdrawal, from the Constitution, of protection given to the *Political Parties Act of 1962*, which provided that a member of the National Assembly would have to resign and seek fresh election if he voted against his party whip. The Opposition members had been complaining that they had agreed to the two-thirds-majority clause in the constitutional accord of 20 October on the condition that the *Political Parties Act* would no longer be held valid. The ruling party allegedly violated this commitment while presenting the Draft Constitution. A related concession was the reduction of the validity of the two-thirds-majority clause from a period of 15 to ten years.

The ruling party bowed to Opposition wishes in regard to two other extremely controversial articles, and amended them accordingly. According to one amendment the president, instead of the prime minister, would have the power to raise and maintain armed forces and the reserves, to grant commissions, to appoint the chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air force, and to determine their salaries and allowances. According to the other amendment, the judges of superior courts would be removable by Parliament in a specified manner, rather than by the Supreme Judicial Council.

Another Opposition demand conceded by the ruling party was that the voters' age be reduced from 21 years to 18—provided that this would not be obligatory for the first general election under the new Constitution. Yet another amendment provided that the president, on the advice of the prime minister, dissolve the National Assembly. But the assembly was not to be dissolved as long as a resolution on a vote of no-confidence being discussed in it was not disposed of. Other amendments intended to liberalize the political structure, provided for ten more seats for women in the National Assembly, three more seats for Tribal Areas in the Senate (disallowing those who were not members of the assemblies to hold ministerial office), and the requirement of an oath to be taken by members of the armed forces to uphold the Constitution and not to engage themselves in political activities of any kind.

A major Opposition demand was that fresh elections be held within a period of six months of the commencement of the Constitution. Although Bhutto turned down the demand on the plea that it had nothing to do with Constitution-making, he gave sufficient hints that he would not be averse to holding fresh elections if the situation so demanded. Pirzada, his Law Minister, went to the extent of saying that if the Opposition did not cooperate, the ruling party would have the Constitution passed, and then go to the people. The Opposition, having been defeated inside the assembly, would be defeated outside too, said the minister.

A survey of Constitution-making in Pakistan would not be complete without reference to some odd provisions which lent to this Constitution a distinctive Pakistani character. The preamble provided that "sovereignty belongs to the Almighty Allah", and the authority exercised by the people of Pakistan would be "within the limits prescribed by Allah". Further, reserved seats in all provincial assemblies were provided for specific minority communities, namely Christians, Sikhs, Parsecs and Scheduled Castes, the notable exception being Hindus. And finally, there was a provision that the Constitution be appropriately amended "so as to enable the people of the province of East Pakistan, as and when the aggression in that province and its effect are eliminated, to be represented in the affairs of the Federation",

By no stretch of imagination could this Constitution be regarded as fully democratic. Nor would it be fair to dub it as providing for an entirely authoritarian political system. It stood somewhere between the authoritarian models of the Muslim world and the

undiluted democracy provided for in the Indian Constitution. And to that extent it conformed to the social structure in Pakistan, which itself is in painful transition from feudalism to democracy.

### **After the Constitution**

When the United Democratic Front of Opposition parties ended its boycott of the Constituent Assembly on 10 April, giving wider acceptability to the Constitution which in any case would have been adopted, it appeared for a while that politics in the country had turned a new leaf. It was hoped that the ruling party's acceptance of Opposition demands with respect to the Constitution also implied that the ruling party was willing to allow the Opposition to exist and play its due role in national politics. But subsequent developments belied this hope.

As soon as the Constitution had been adopted, the Opposition parties lost the temporary respect they had been granted by the ruling party. They were subjected to insinuation, allegations and downright humiliation. The result was that within a few days, the old pattern re-emerged, characterized by mistrust, hatred and a confrontation between the ruling and Opposition parties.

The mistrust could be traced back to the constitutional compromise itself. No one is clear as to what the Opposition gained in return for ending the boycott of the assembly. The amendments to seven odd Articles which were said to have been introduced as a gesture to the Opposition's willingness to attend the assembly, do not measure up to the seriousness and persistence with which the Opposition had continued its boycott. Referring to this compromise, M.B. Naqvi, the well-known Pakistani columnist, wrote in the *Dawn*:

One keeps on wondering about this understanding: What precisely had transpired? What were the terms of the agreement? And whether there were any understandings over political questions?

It seems that the Opposition was overtaken by the aura of Constitution-making as a supreme and sacred activity and allowed itself to be outmaneuvered by Bhutto for paltry gains. It was afraid of the verdict of history if it did not join the National Assembly on this solemn occasion. Therefore, when an invitation came for the last round of talks with the ruling party, the Opposition seized this pretext and settled for the seven amendments without waiting to think whether it had won on all the basic points. The UDF members voted for the Constitution, signed the document and joined the authentication ceremony, but refused to join the nationwide celebrations. Some of them said that while the adoption of the Constitution was a historic event, it did not deserve large-scale celebrations. Obviously, they had reservations about the final document.

Pointing to some of the inadequacies of the Constitution, S.M. Zafar, a former Law Minister in the Central Government of Pakistan, said: "In so far as the Constitution purports to be parliamentary, it is not for a period of ten years. A prime minister is more or less as 'fixed' as a president in the USA." Blaming the Opposition in this respect, Zafar asserted:

Let there be no doubt that the Opposition has not been able to highlight this aspect, and has either intentionally or in ignorance allowed the Government to have its way. It seems that some of the concessions given to the Opposition are due to their not objecting to or not noticing this bias of the Constitution in favor of the ruling party. To my mind, the Opposition has paid a heavy price, and this bias of the Constitution requires reconsideration and amendment in due course of time.

Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur, an MLA who had defected from the ruling party some time earlier, and was one of the five MLAs who opposed the Constitution, accused the Opposition of "sordid bargaining", and of being "a party to palace intrigues" culminating in the UDF's support to the new Constitution. He described the adoption of the Constitution as "a drama par excellence in opportunism", and said that the amendments accepted by the UDF were "only an eyewash and fall gravely short of the aspirations of the people of Pakistan". That was why, he said, he completely dissociated himself from the UDF decision.

No wonder the Opposition realized, within a few days of appending their signatures to the Constitution, that they had certainly not got the best of the bargain. Their only hope was that Bhutto would at least honor the spirit in which they had agreed to be a party to the Constitution, and would allow them elbow room in the nation's polity. But even this hope was dashed when Bhutto and his colleagues described the Opposition's decision to end the boycott of the National Assembly as the result of the pressure of public opinion.

Bhutto's political style did not admit any regard for legal norms, political commitments or personal susceptibilities. He was mainly concerned with promoting political objectives and exploited the euphoria built over the adoption of the new Constitution for this purpose.

After a triumphant tour of the four provincial capitals, he announced the formation of governments in Baluchistan and NWFP, with PPP participation therein. This was the fulfillment of his dominant ambition. And this was also the undoing of the Opposition, particularly the National Awami Party, which was fond of considering itself as the only viable alternative to the PPP.

As soon as the United Democratic Front recovered from the illusion of having forced Bhutto to make concessions on Constitution-making, it sat down to draw up its political agenda. It began with the demand that the new Constitution be enforced immediately. In a major drive to throw a consolidated challenge to the Government, it held a massive rally at Peshawar where all the Opposition stalwarts spoke. The 12 resolutions adopted at this rally demanded, *inter alia*, the promulgation of the new Constitution, the immediate lifting of the emergency, the restoration of NAP-JUI governments, the release of all political detenus, freedom of the Press, radio and TV, the publication of the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report, a judicial probe into the Iraqi arms recovery and restoration of jobs to all compulsorily retired officials.

This was a formidable charter of demands, and Bhutto had no special reasons to oblige the Opposition by accepting them. After the Constitution had been adopted with Opposition support, he need not have bestowed his favors on it. The Opposition swore by democracy and the rule of law. Bhutto considered it enough that he was the product of a democratic process, and wanted to be regarded as a law unto himself. He would promulgate the new Constitution and lift the emergency only when it suited him. He would perpetuate the non-NAP governments in Baluchistan and in the Frontier, even if they appeared to be lacking majority support in the respective assemblies. It was the same case with other demands.

Bhutto swore by stability, and his concept of stability was based on an unhindered rule of his party in the entire country. Wali Khan described this kind of functioning as "beyond politics, logic, and constitutionalism". In any case, the hard political fact was that Wali Khan could not prevent defections from his coalition partner, the JUI. Whether it was logical or constitutional was immaterial in the pattern of politics that had come to stay in Pakistan.

## CHAPTER 4

### POLITICS OF FRAGMENTATION

The new Pakistan was just two years old when this author had a chance to visit it for a period of two weeks. That Pakistan was by this time a going concern, despite the events of 1971, was noteworthy. It had been able to lay the infrastructure of a parliamentary democracy. A political stability of sorts had been established and this had re-instilled hope among the people. But there were some crucial problems which could still overthrow the entire fabric of stability unless tackled in time and with deftness.

The biggest of them, according to Bhutto himself, was the question of Baluchistan where, for the last many months, a kind of civil war had been going on. Both the Government and the Opposition had contributed to the confusion that existed outside Pakistan about the reality of the Baluchistan situation, although the picture projected by the Opposition had greater truth in it. There was no doubt, as the Government pointed out, that the "*sardars*" in Baluchistan were slow in accepting social change, and this was true as much of the Bugti chief as it was of the Marri and Mengal chiefs. It was being said that a bulk of Rs 40 crores, sanctioned as federal grant for the development of Baluchistan, had remained unspent even during Bugti's rule. But the federal government was wrong in accusing the NAP-JUI provincial government of having refused to abolish the *sardari* system, for the requisite bill in this connection had been passed by the provincial assembly during the NAP-JUI rule, and was still awaiting presidential assent—long after the NAP-JUI government had been dismissed.

The Opposition, on the other hand, was right in asserting that the verdict of the 1970 elections was being smashed under the heavy hand of an authoritarian federal government, and the situation would not take a day to be normalized if power in the province was restored to the NAP-JUI majority. But the Opposition had confused the situation by allowing it to get mixed up with the question of Pakhtoonistan, and creating the impression that it had secessionist ramifications.

However, the secessionist intentions were strongly disclaimed by the Opposition. For a population of 2.5 million inhabiting Baluchistan, secession does not constitute a plausible objective—according to Opposition leaders as well as many independent observers. The area, inhabited mainly by the Marri and Mengal tribes, which was affected by the discontent following the dismissal of the provincial government in February 1973, comes to about 40,000 square miles out of the total provincial area of 1,00,000 square miles. Bugti himself is on record as having admitted this. But the population, whose density for the entire province is 18 people per square mile, is too

small for the quantum of military force deployed. Despite persistent official denials, four to five divisions of the army are generally believed to have been on duty in Baluchistan, including one along the Durand Line. Besides "enforcing law and order", the troops have been engaged in road-building, having built about 200 miles by the end of 1973. Still, troop concentration was too heavy for the political challenge that existed. As a perceptive Pakistani journalist put it, they were trying to "kill flies with sten guns".

The other serious challenge to democratic political growth was inadequate freedom of thought and expression. A certain degree of violence as an instrument of politics had become an accepted part of the behavioral pattern in Pakistan, although (for obvious reasons), the ruling party had more occasion to wield this instrument. The Government liked to explain it off in terms of the political ethos that had prevailed in the country during the long years of martial law. According to the Opposition, it emanated from the highest source of power in the country, in its preservation of personal power. Basically, however, it was a function of inadequate institutionalization of parliamentary democracy, and could be expected to vanish as the institutions took root.

It is partly for the same reason that the Press in Pakistan was found to be timid and dull. The Government-owned National Press Trust covers a major segment of the national Press, which therefore cannot be expected to be very imaginative. But other papers too did not show any boldness or freshness in reportage or commentative writing. However, one could feel that the younger generation of Pakistani journalists had not grown in the suffocating atmosphere of martial law. It was painful that the change should have been so slow in coming, even during the previous two years. The only hope lay in the abolition or restructuring of the National Press Trust, about which there was some talk in the Government.

A relieving dimension of Pakistan's political dynamics was the declining role and relevance of the armed forces. Still smarting under the humiliation of 1971, they did not want to embroil themselves again in the uncertainties of politics. Nor would the people accept them so soon. Their relevance would, in fact, diminish in proportion to the strength the democratic institutions acquired. But they still seemed to hold a veto on the question of 195 prisoners of war, awaiting trial in Bangladesh. Besides, it was believed that they were a factor in the politics of Baluchistan too, where they would not be happy with a Pathan-dominated government. But their challenge to the democratic order could be contained if these problems were soon resolved.

At the administrative front, the reforms introduced in 1973 had set in motion a process of rejuvenation of the administrative structure, under the able stewardship of the cabinet secretary. A large-scale lateral entry of officers at various levels and from different walks of life was expected to make a dent in the traditional bureaucratic hold over the power structure, and affect its approach towards administration also. There

were, however, certain reservations among the existing cadres about the merits of the new entrants.

The hope of the country, as well as the fountainhead of all power and inspiration at this point of time, was Prime Minister Bhutto. He was supreme in the party and in the country. Although politics was much too personalized, with a yawning gap between him and the levels below, Bhutto was nevertheless looked upon as Pakistan's man of destiny.

### **Extending the Emergency**

A special joint sitting of the two houses of Pakistan's Parliament was held in March 1974, and debated two important resolutions; the first was an extension of the state of emergency for a period of six months, and the other for a continuation, in suspension, of certain fundamental rights for another six months. The reasons produced by the law minister in support of these resolutions included, among other things, a continuation of the state of emergency by India, difficulties in normalization of the situation in the subcontinent, and new complications in the international situation created by the West Asian war.

How phony the reasons and how concerned the nation at the continuation of the state of emergency is obvious from the proceedings of the two-day Pakistan Jurists' Conference, which had been held in Karachi in February. Presenting the welcome address to the Prime Minister, Yahya Bakhtiar, the Attorney-General of Pakistan, made a strong plea for an early termination of the state of emergency. Until then, he said, the use of Defence of Parisian Rules should be restricted strictly and, if possible, the powers delegated under the DPR to functionaries of the provincial governments, be withdrawn.

Yahya Bakhtiar, who was also Chairman of the Pakistan Bar Council, regretted that some functionaries of State, who had been vested with powers under DPR, had been misusing or abusing these powers. In this context he deplored the incidents that had occurred in Lahore, Multan and Sanghar, affecting fellow jurists. While admitting the need for security and integrity of the State, he concluded: "There is a feeling that we have reached a stage where the disadvantages of the emergency might be greater than its advantages," and reminded the Prime Minister of his earlier views that "the sooner it is lifted the better".

The conference thus turned out to be an interesting forum for debating the exercise of fundamental rights by the citizens, the prevalence of the rule of law, and the executive constraints under which even the judiciary felt hampered. Joining the debate, Justice Hamoodur Rahman, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, said that the principles which should govern the interpretation of a written Constitution "are agitating our minds" because, while the Constitution gave to superior courts the power to judicially review all

executive Acts, it also "empowered the Executive to suspend fundamental rights, of which the Executive was the sole judge".

But unfortunately, the Prime Minister and the Law Minister, in their replies, could not go beyond repeating the platitudes. Bhutto said that the state of emergency would not be allowed to last a day longer than was "absolutely necessary". Justifying his stand, he said that India was also persisting in a state of emergency since 1971. The Law Minister, referring to the remarks of the Chief Justice, expressed the hope that the judiciary would interpret the Constitution in the light of objective socio-economic conditions obtaining in the country. However, the Prime Minister seized the occasion to announce an increase in the salaries of the Supreme Court and high court judges, and thus mollify them.

The entire episode was significant for the infant democracy of Pakistan. While the highest custodians of law publicly expressed reservations about the way democracy was being practiced in the country, the repositories of executive power insisted that no change was called for in the Governmental style for the present. In early 1974 it was not possible to identify the internal challenges to national security, if the Government's claim about the Baluchistan situation being under control was to be accepted. As for the three other provinces, they were under firm control of the Central Government.

And the external challenges were being unduly exaggerated by the Pakistan Government. The politics of the subcontinent presented a far more stable picture than that in 1971, particularly after Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh in February. Whatever problems remained between the three countries of the subcontinent did not lend themselves to a military solution, and did not necessitate the continuance of an emergency in any part of the region. Emergency provisions were being unduly resorted to by the Government of Pakistan as an instrument of exercising unmitigated power. The warnings of jurists were not heeded. And so began an erosion of the credibility of Pakistan's democracy, which did not have the distinction of being deep-rooted.

### **Turbulent Events**

After a period of apparent tranquility, Pakistani politics had become turbulent again. Two important events that occurred in the middle of March were the replacement of Punjab Chief Minister Ghulam Mustafa Khar by Haneef Ramay, the erstwhile Finance Minister, and the assassination of Maulvi Shamsuddin, Deputy Speaker of the Baluchistan Assembly. Both had significant implications in Pakistan's political system.

Ghulam Mustafa Khar, the right-hand man and personal friend of Prime Minister Bhutto, was Governor of Punjab until November 1973. He was then made its Chief Minister, for this office was the real source of power under the new parliamentary Constitution. His claim to power had always been the confidence of the Prime Minister,

more than a political base among the masses. In this respect, Khar resembled the Prime Minister's "talented cousin", Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, who had been eased out of the chief ministership of Sindh in December.

Mustafa Khar always allowed his feudal origins to reflect in his political behavior. He was never a lover of the party manifesto, except for the sake of record. He was used to strong-arm methods, which evoked violent protests not only from Opposition parties but also from his own party men. The antagonistic climate which had thus been created around over a period of time was accentuated by the sustained and lately public attacks of party stalwarts like Sheikh Rashid, Haneef Ramay and Khursheed Hasan Meer, who were regarded as relatively more genuine socialists, with claims to a mass base.

Added to this was the pressure from Mumtaz Ali Bhutto who, ever since he had been relieved of the Sindh chief ministership, insisted that his counterpart in Punjab, whose political qualifications and attributes were nearly the same, should also receive similar treatment. Anticipating what was in store for him, Mustafa Khar had submitted his resignation before the Lahore Islamic Summit. But the Prime Minister announced the acceptance of the resignation after the Summit, thereby eliminating, under the impact of the Summit euphoria, any possibility of pro-Khar demonstrations in Punjab.

Khar's replacement by Haneef Ramay had interesting implications. It amounted to an acceptance by the Prime Minister that people would not tolerate the politics of violence and gangsterism for long. It also meant that any leadership superimposed from the top did not prove viable in the long run. And further, it was a victory of those forces which demanded that discrepancies between the People's Party's professions and actions be removed. Haneef Ramay, an educated and cultured person and a product of grass-root politics, amply suited the requirements. The annual budgets for Punjab, which had been presented by him as Finance Minister during the preceding two years, had been acclaimed by all as budgets for the poor man.

But a trusted man like Mustafa Khar, it was hoped, would not be wasted. There was speculation that while Mumtaz Ali Bhutto might join the federal cabinet (which was to be reconstituted soon), Mustafa Khar might be sent as Pakistan's first ambassador to Bangladesh. It may be recalled that Khar had been sent as first personal envoy by Bhutto, to negotiate with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman on the future constitutional setup after the general elections of December 1970. Uneducated beyond the high-school level, Khar had at that time the distinction of being a close confidant of the Prime Minister.

The murder of Maulvi Shamsuddin underlined the urgency of democratizing the politics of Baluchistan. Closely following the murder of Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai three months earlier, this murder had been caused by Bhutto's prolonged indifference to the urges of the people. One got the impression that a state of anarchy had been

deliberately created by putting various local interests against each other, so that the Centre retained the upper hand.

If there was a local man who had been serving the Centre in this game, it was Mohammed Akbar Khan Bugti, Governor of the province for about a year after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI government in February 1973. Akbar Bugti held the key to many a mysterious drama in Baluchistan politics; without permanent loyalties, he had only permanent interests. Towards the beginning of 1974, he had turned actively anti-Bhutto. He had been particularly piqued by the defeat of his son, Salim Bugti, in the National Assembly by-election (caused by the resignation of Khair Bux Marri), at the hands of a PPP-QML candidate by 20,000 votes. It was not beyond him to cause another murder, thereby not only diluting the strength of the NAP-JUI combine to whom Shamsuddin belonged, but also creating another crisis for the Centre. It was, however, for the Centre to realize that the foundations of democracy would erode before they had taken root, if politics was not played according to the rules of the game. The PPP could not disown responsibility in the matter.

### Frictions and Factions

Within two years of the People's Party coming to power at the Centre and in Punjab and Sindh, and later in NWFP, cracks had appeared in all units of the party. Factions headed by former chief ministers in Punjab and Sindh, and a former federal minister in NWFP, were threatening to weaken the hard-built hegemony of Prime Minister Bhutto.

In Punjab, Chief Minister Ghulam Mustafa Khar had been replaced by Hanif Ramay. Mustafa Khar had earned his dismissal because of the high-handedness and terror through which he ruled. He had been tolerated for long because of the purposes he had served during the consolidating phase of PPP rule. Even after his dismissal he continued to profess eternal loyalty to Bhutto, but he was not reconciled to the loss of power.

For some time Khar was talked of as a prospective ambassador to Bangladesh. Shortly, however, there was a demand in the Punjab Assembly that charges of corruption against him be inquired into. He was also accused of having connived at the murder of a labor leader in Lahore, for the labor leader had refused to work against Ramay, the new Chief Minister. To be saved of consequent embarrassment and humiliation on May Day, he dramatically disappeared for a day from Lahore, and charged the police of having kidnapped him. As he re-emerged on the scene, he resorted to new tactics in a bid to resurrect his image and re-establish his presence in politics. In May 1974, he claimed a substantial following in the Punjab Assembly and threw a challenge to Ramay. He started projecting himself as the defender of the rights of the Punjabis, and in this he gained the support of some lobbies. One of them was the *vanaspati* lobby, because 18 out of 22 *vanaspati* concerns, which had been nationalized by the federal

government, happened to belong to the Punjabis. The other was the cotton trade lobby, because the taking over of cotton trade by the federal government had also affected some prominent Punjabis.

Some right-wing Opposition papers were supporting Khar, and his lieutenants were reported to have established contacts with returning POWs and disaffected, mostly retired, army officers, *i.e.* all those who were unhappy with the slashing down of the powers of the military brass. This was the structure of support with which Khar was throwing his weight about. In a public statement, he said that the interests of the country and the province must take precedence over the interests of the party.

In Sindh, the Prime Minister's cousin, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, appeared to be repeating the performance. Mumtaz Bhutto had been replaced by Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi as the Chief Minister of Sindh, in December 1973. Mumtaz was hoping to be given a respectable assignment abroad in the Central Government. But that did not come off. He therefore launched a campaign against the new Chief Minister. In this he had the support of Syed Qaim Ali Shah, a former minister and then chief of the Sindh PPP, who had started attacking the bureaucracy.

In the Frontier Province, Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, who had resigned some time back as Federal Minister for Natural Resources, was on the warpath. The Frontier Ministry, constituted through a great deal of bargaining after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI coalition in 1973, was already a delicate combine of Independents, the Qayyum Muslim League, and the PPP headed by Mr. Gandapur. But real power rested with Governor Aslam Khattak, an Independent. Sherpao was keen to topple him and had been seizing every opportunity to attack him, including the occasion of some landlord-tenant clashes which had occurred in the province. Waiting in the wings was Federal Interior Minister Qayyum Khan, who wanted to be Chief Minister.

In Punjab and Sindh, the struggle seemed to symbolize a conflict between the feudal lords whom the former chief ministers represented, and the emerging middle classes. The feudal lords were still strong and kicking and were not happy to be told that they had outlived their utility to the regime. In the Frontier everything was feudal. It was the personalities which clashed. Bhutto faced the problem of building a viable alternative to the NAP-JUI, and wanted to back the least controversial man.

### **Hamoodur Commission Again**

The commission which had been originally appointed by Bhutto on 26 December 1971, to inquire into the circumstances in which the (Pakistan) Eastern Command Commander had surrendered to the India-Bangladesh forces, and a ceasefire ordered along the borders of West Pakistan and India, came into the news again in the month of June. The commission was headed by Chief Justice Hamoodur Rahman. This news was

of more than academic interest, for what was also being questioned was Bhutto's role during the critical days of December 1971, if not earlier.

The commission had submitted an interim report in July 1972, in which it had observed that its findings, with regard to the causes of surrender in East Pakistan, were only tentative. It had recommended that as and when the Eastern Command Commander and other senior officers (who were in India at that time) were available, a further inquiry be held into the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan. Now that all the prisoners of war and civilian internees were back, the Pakistan Government had asked the commission to complete the inquiry and submit its report within two months.

In the eyes of the public, however, it was necessary to examine not merely the military causes of the secession of the East Wing but also the political causes, and in the absence of any other agency, it was expected of the Hamoodur Commission to look into this aspect also. The political causes were to be traced back to the stormy events of January-March 1971, when the West Wing leaders did not allow Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to be Prime Minister of Pakistan, nor the West Wing MNAs to visit Dacca to attend the National Assembly session for drafting a Constitution for united Pakistan.

Many subdued but articulate voices had been raised in the past, including those by former close associates of the Prime Minister, suggesting Bhutto's direct responsibility for creating the political climate which led to secession. Possibly conscious of the implications if such suggestions were allowed to catch on, Bhutto had been trying to focus the nation's attention on military defeat as the primary factor responsible for the breakup of Pakistan. The first attempt in this direction was the commissioning of a book called *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership* by (Retd.) Major-General Fazal Mugeem Khan, who took over as Defence Secretary of Pakistan in 1973. The book tried to lay the entire blame for the 1971 tragedy on Yahya Khan. And now the War Inquiry Commission was supposed to delve deeper into the military aspect.

Voices were being raised again to suggest that the scope of the inquiry be widened. The lead in this respect had been given by *Outlook*, an influential, independent Karachi weekly. In a well-documented ten-page staff study, the paper had raised certain fundamental questions. One of them asked for reasons as to why the draft resolutions tabled before the Security Council on 4 December 1971 by the Soviet Union, and on 14 December 1971 by Poland, had not been accepted. The Soviet resolution called for a political settlement in East Pakistan, which would "inevitably result in the cessation of hostilities". The Polish version, which was tabled only two days before the surrender, called for a peaceful transfer of power to the legally elected representatives of the people in East Pakistan, an initial ceasefire for 72 hours, the withdrawal of Pakistani Armed Forces to pre-set locations, and the simultaneous withdrawal of Indian forces from the Eastern theatre of war.

According to *Outlook*, if the Polish resolution had been accepted the humiliation of surrender could have been avoided, the civilians and even possibly the soldiers could have been directly repatriated (under UN supervision) from East Pakistan; there would have been no occupation of territory in West Pakistan, and no new line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. The resolution was never voted upon, but if Pakistan had shown interest, it could have been discussed and passed. The paper demanded an inquiry into whether the stand taken by Pakistan at the UN was justified, and pointed out that it was Bhutto who was then representing Pakistan at the UN, being also Yahya Khan's chief adviser on political matters.

Other connected issues into which an inquiry was being demanded were the decision by the Pakistan Government to disown and declare as "unauthorized", the appeal made by Major-General Rao Farman Ali to the Security Council on 11 December, to arrange for the evacuation of Pakistani troops, and the assurance by the Pakistan Government to the Eastern Command on 5 December, that "Chinese activities" had begun. In the latter issue, again, Bhutto's name was being dragged in.

### **Bhutto's "DS Plan"**

While talking of responsibility for the disintegration of Pakistan, it should be interesting to recall certain evidence that this author found during his visit to Pakistan in December 1973. It was the youthful Ahmed Raza Kasuri, a member of the National Assembly and a founder-member of the Pakistan People's Party, who was discussing the subject spiritedly while sitting in his room in the MNA's hostel in Rawalpindi. Kasuri is one of the eight stalwarts of the People's Party who had been awarded the Nishan-e-Peoples Party for distinguished service rendered to the party on 21 February 1971. In May 1972 Kasuri was expelled from the party for holding independent views. In December 1973, therefore, he was speaking as a rebel.

According to Ahmed Raza Kasuri, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held a major share of responsibility for the disintegration of Pakistan. Being a power-hungry politician, he was anxious to come to power in West Pakistan, where his party had emerged as the largest party in the December 1970 elections. If in the process the unity of the country was harmed, Bhutto was not bothered. In a bid, therefore, to prevent Sheikh Mujibur Rehman from becoming the Prime Minister of Pakistan on the basis of his majority support in the National Assembly, Bhutto devised a plan, in February 1971, known in code language as the "Directing Staff Plan" (DS Plan). According to this plan, no member of the National Assembly was to be allowed to attend the session of the National Assembly in Dacca on 3 March, convened by Yahya Khan for the purpose of framing a Constitution. Bhutto's famous declaration made in Peshawar on 15 February, that the People's Party would not attend the National Assembly session on 3 March, was in furtherance of this plan, said Kasuri. Bhutto repeated in Karachi the next day,

that the PPP decision about not attending the session was irrevocable: "Anyone who goes to Dacca from West Pakistan, whether in Khaki or in black-and-white, does so at his own cost." This served as a warning to all West Pakistan members of the National Assembly. This, in fact, was the first concrete step in the process of the disintegration of Pakistan. According to Kasuri again, the DS Plan would be exposed fully if ever the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report was made public.

### **Anti-Qadiani Stir**

The strength and stability of Pakistan's political fabric was under a test once again, when the country was overtaken by large-scale anti-Qadiani riots in mid-1974. A crisis, involving a population of merely three lakhs, had turned a nation of 65 million people upside down. Prime Minister Bhutto was constrained to postpone his Moscow visit by three months. And what is more, Pakistan feel it necessary once again to attribute her internal crisis to the machinations of external powers like India and Afghanistan.

It is understandable that a nation whose sole *raison d'être* is Islam, should not tolerate within itself a community which questions the finality of the prophethood of Mohammad. This is what the Ahmadiyyas were doing. The question acquires more than religious dimensions when such a community tends to be economically powerful too. But why this question was allowed to be blown out of all proportion, is incomprehensible.

Different explanations were being offered. Mirza Nasir Ahmed, the then Caliph of Jamaat-i-Ahmadiyya at Rabwah in Pakistan, told the Associated Press of America in an interview: "I in convince that due to many reasons Prime Minister Bhutto's PPP has engineered the riots. One reason is that PPP wants to prop up its crumbling prestige by winning over the support of the extremists of other sects." According to Nasir Ahmed, the members of his sect had sworn that when their property was being burnt to ashes, the Federal Security Force stood by as silent spectators. Something to this effect was also alleged by Chowdhry Zafarullah Khan, the former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, in his statement from London.

Bhutto, on the other hand, tried to blame the Opposition parties and foreign powers for having fanned the agitation. Speaking in the National Assembly on 3 June, Bhutto said that the Opposition had been looking for opportunities to create fresh trouble. Replying to the Opposition demand that Ahmadiyyas be declared a non-Muslim minority, Bhutto said that the categories of minorities had been defined in the Constitution, and all parties, including the Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, had agreed to it. They could have "walked out" at that time if they did not agree. Bhutto referred to the oath prescribed for the president and prime minister, incorporating belief in the finality of the prophethood of the holy Prophet Mohammad, and said he thought this would have ended the issue.

In his broadcast to the nation on 13 June, Bhutto said that not only he but the people could also see the hands of foreign powers behind the anti-Ahmadiyya trouble in Pakistan. One could link it, he said, with the Indian nuclear blast, the visit of Afghan President Daud to Moscow, and the presence of a political leader of Pakistan (Wali Khan) in Kabul as a "State guest". These were, according to him, part of a chain of conspiracies which had been taking place against the solidarity and integrity of Pakistan.

These were bizarre observations to be made by any head of government. However, the Opposition wanted Bhutto to come to brass tacks. According to the Opposition Press, Bhutto had showered many blessings on the Qadianis in the past, particularly their large-scale appointment in sensitive military posts. The Qadianis had supported the PPP in the last general elections. Bhutto might also have thought that the secular outlook of the Ahmadiyyas and their valuable contacts abroad could be helpful in modernizing the Pakistani State. But the Opposition wanted nothing of the sort.

Majlis Tahaffuz Khatum-e-Nabuwat (Association for the Protection of the Finality of Prophethood of Mohammad), composed of 18 politico-religious parties, accused Bhutto of displaying an extremely partisan attitude, and demanded his resignation if he could not resolve the problem in the light of the national consensus. The demands of the Majlis included the declaration of Rabwah as an open city, the removal of Ahmadiyyas from key posts, a ban on their paramilitary organizations, the arrests of persons responsible for the Rabwah railway station incident on 29 May, including the Caliph Mirza Nasir Ahmed, and the trial of Chowdhry Zafarullah Khan for making anti-Pakistan propaganda, well as the impounding of his passport.

Prime Minister Bhutto gradually gave way to right-wing pressures. He appointed a tribunal to enquire into the Rabwah incident. The tribunal examined anti-Ahmadiyya witnesses, and leaked out their statements to the Press. The "Azad Kashmir" Assembly had already, in 1973, passed a resolution declaring the Qadianis a non-Muslim minority. The NWFP Assembly did so in June 1974. Bhutto converted the National Assembly into a Special Committee to resolve this issue. A resolution was moved in the National Assembly and was discussed in the Special Committee, recommending suitable amendments in the Constitution, to declare Ahmadiyyas as a non-Muslim minority of Pakistan. The resolution was signed by representatives of nearly all Opposition parties, and was welcomed by the ruling party also. It was subsequently passed unanimously by the National Assembly and requisite amendment was made in the Constitution through the Constitution (Second Amendment) Act on 7 September 1974.

This, however, was another major comment on the value-system of the Pakistani State, which had failed to accommodate within its fold first the Hindus and Sikhs, then the

Bengali Muslims, and now the Ahmadiyya Muslims who, by virtue of being declared as non-Muslims, would be prevented from occupying some of the highest offices of State.

### **Wali Khan's Interview**

That Pakistan's political life suffered from a deep schism, became obvious from Khan Abdul Wali Khan's long interview to the influential Karachi weekly *Outlook*, in mid-July 1974. Wali Khan broke his long silence and spoke candidly on a number of crucial issues. Wali Khan was not only the leader of the Opposition in Pakistan's National Assembly, but also the most fearless and selfless leader, whose contribution to national life is second to none. Individually, he offered a credible alternative to Bhutto. His views, therefore, on the state of the nation could not be dismissed lightly.

In Pakistan, a sort of national consensus had been reached by the middle of 1973 on basic domestic and foreign policy issues. But Bhutto's exclusive approach to politics and utter intolerance of the Opposition had led to a process of erosion of this consensus. The resulting disarray in national life was reflected in Bhutto's increasingly aggressive external postures.

Speaking on external aspects, Wali Khan reiterated the views he had earlier expressed to this author in December 1973, on Pakistan's relations with Iran, and blamed Bhutto squarely for the "recovery" of Russian arms from the Iraqi embassy in Pakistan in February 1973. He said: "If an opportunity arises, I am prepared to produce evidence that the arms plot was all manipulated by Bhutto. His agents went to Iraq, got these weapons and they were recovered from the Iraqi Embassy to alarm the Shah of Iran." According to Wali Khan, the idea was to alarm the Shah out of his wits and to convince him that the NAP, in collusion with the Baluchis in Iran and in Pakistan, was trying to encircle the Persian Gulf and land-lock Iran.

On the other hand, Bhutto told Wali Khan that he had dismissed the NAP government because the Shahanshah of Iran did not approve of it. The objective was to create mutual suspicion.

On relations with India, Wali Khan recalled Bhutto's claim that he would fight India for 1,000 years, and said that he had already ordered Pakistani flags for the Red Fort. And then he talked of changing the color of the Ganges and the Indus, and said that he would not let the hockey team from India set foot in Pakistan. After all that, it was a big somersault for him to have signed the Simla Agreement. But then he went to "Azad Kashmir" and declared that he would call for a strike in the neighboring country, and asked the people on the other side to send volunteers to be trained as saboteurs. This was direct provocation, and amounted to a going back on the Simla accord. "Obviously the whole spirit and sense of the Simla accord now for all purposes is dead and buried," concluded Wali Khan.

Lamenting on Bhutto's attitude towards India, Wali Khan said that there was disengagement everywhere—in East and West Europe, in Vietnam, in West Asia. But Bhutto "does not know what he is talking about, does not know what he is doing, and we do not know in which direction he is taking us". He was "not looking after national interest, but something that will keep him in saddle, something that will keep him in his chair". Expressing bewilderment at Pakistan's foreign policy, Wali Khan asked: "Are we with the Afro-Asian bloc, are we with the non-aligned bloc, or are we with the Muslim bloc?" He pointed to the obvious inconsistency between having good relations with the Muslim bloc, and still being a member of CENTO: "We are running with the hare and hunting with the hound."

Pointing to Bhutto's pattern of ruling the country, Wali Khan said that the Prime Minister's first attack was on the armed forces—he had dismissed many generals. After that he had turned to the civil servants. In all, 1,400 of them were dismissed without being given a chance to be heard. Then he started working on political parties. He finished the Muslim League and weakened the JUI and JUP by causing defections in them. It is only the NAP which survived intact, despite his best efforts. (Later, of course, even the NAP was finished.) Besides, he was precipitating a kind of confrontation within the country, by pitting the Urdu-speaking people against the Sindhi-speaking people, the Pakhtoons against the Baluchis, the Punjabis against the Pakhtoons, and so on. What was important to Bhutto was that he ruled over the entire country.

Wali Khan's most telling comment was made in a subsequent Press conference at Islamabad on 17 July: "The present government has lost the political war in Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and NWFP, and hence people's attention is being diverted from the real issue by raising the bogey of troop concentrations on the borders." Whether or not one agreed with Wali Khan fully, his views undoubtedly made the task of understanding Bhutto somewhat simpler.

### **Three Years of Bhutto**

In an interview with Radio Pakistan on the occasion of the third anniversary of his administration, Prime Minister Bhutto said: "I am satisfied, more than fairly satisfied, at the present state of national unity." The fundamental cementing factor for this unity, he said, was Islam, and added, "I am proud of this." Referring to the external field, he claimed to his credit two major achievements of considerable significance. The first was the vacation of territory which had been occupied by India, without compromising national interest. The second, the bringing home of over 90,000 prisoners of war. It should be interesting to examine the validity of these claims in the context of Bhutto's overall performance during the three years.

In a relative sense, Pakistan acquired national unity on the day East Bengal broke away from it in December 1971, for the greatest structural contradiction in former Pakistan was the presence of East Bengal in it. The residual Pakistan was obviously more homogeneous, and Bhutto could not be denied the privilege of claiming some credit for this, if he so desired. But the most pertinent question is whether the state of national unity in January 1975 was better than it was when Bhutto took over as Prime Minister. Unfortunately, the answer cannot be positive.

The saddest comment on any claim of improved national unity was the continuing discontent in Baluchistan, and to a considerable extent in NWFP. The situation in these two provinces was not a threat to national unity to the extent that they continued to be willing partners in the federal polity of Pakistan, as they were in December 1971. This was so despite the fact that Bhutto, ironically, often liked to propagate that these provinces had been harboring secessionist movements. But what constituted a serious blow to the spirit of national unity was the widely prevalent feeling in Baluchistan and NWFP that the trust reposed by their leaders in Bhutto at the time of signing the new Constitution in April 1973, had been betrayed.

There was no doubt a semblance of stability in NWFP. But this was brought about by converting the PPP minority in the provincial assembly into a majority through dubious means. The frequent bomb explosions in the province were a continuous reminder of the fact that the people had not accepted the contrived majority. And in Baluchistan, the armed confrontation between large bands of Baluchis and the federal army, which had been continuing-for nearly two years, was itself a verdict on the existing administration of the province, which replaced the government of elected representatives. In other words, it was not merely "Islam" but also military power which was acting as a cementing factor in promoting national unity.

While the Pakistani nation did not appear to be any more united than it was three years earlier, the People's Party, through whose instrumentality this facade of unity was sought to be kept up, presented still less a united picture. Most of the stalwarts who had founded the party with Bhutto, were out. It began with Mahmud Ali Kasuri and Ahmed Raza Kasuri. Another on his way out was Khursheed Hasan Meer, a Federal Minister and acting Secretary-General of the party. There had been sharp differences within the top leadership of the party in Punjab and Sindh, the party strongholds.

And what could be a greater slur on the sentiment of national unity than the decision to declare a large and distinguished section of their co-religionists, namely the Ahmadiyyas, as a non-Muslim minority—and all this in the name of Islam. The irresistible conclusion is that the Pakistani leadership was deluding itself if it believed that its policies had promoted national unity. The nation, possessed with a modicum of inherent unity, had been held together by an equilibrium of regional and international

forces. But this could not continue if the leadership persisted with divisive policies, governed by the pursuit of unmitigated power.

As regards Bhutto's two achievements in the subcontinent, these have to be viewed in the context of regional equilibrium mentioned above. India has been the prime mover on the chessboard of sub-continental politics, not only because she was the victor in 1971, but also because she is the largest and most powerful nation in the region. India agreed to vacate the Pakistani territories occupied in 1971 as part of a larger objective: that of bringing speedy normalcy to the region and thereby expediting its development. In return, Pakistan had promised to recognize Bangladesh, but delayed it as long as it could.

Similarly, Pakistan got its 90,000 prisoners back. Bangladesh agreed to their release in a spirit of forget and forgive, in order to promote a climate of cooperation. Pakistan, in return, had promised to take back its nationals from Bangladesh, and settle the question of assets of the undivided country. But Pakistan had yet to satisfy Bangladesh on these issues.

In other words, Bhutto had been the beneficiary of a broader outlook displayed by India and Bangladesh. His own response, in the initial stages, was slow and obstructive. Of late he had responded positively, and had contributed in ample measure to the spirit of detente. But he should have done so consistently, which was not the case.

### **The NAP Banned**

"I will not do what Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had done to democracy in Bangladesh," said Bhutto in January 1975, while addressing a huge public meeting in Campbellpur. The reference was to the introduction of a presidential system by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, and the assumption of power by him to outlaw all political parties except his own. And yet this is, in effect, what Bhutto himself did, by imposing a ban on the National Awami Party in the beginning of February. This had grave implications for the future of democracy in Pakistan.

The National Awami Party held a glorious record in the fight for democracy in Pakistan. In 1970, it was because of NAP'S pressure that Yahya Khan had been persuaded to hold the general elections. If only the NAP's moderating and sobering influence had a greater chance to prevail, the separation of the East wing could perhaps have been avoided. Again, it was primarily because of NAP's persistent campaign that Pakistan's present Constitution narrowly escaped being given a presidential and more authoritarian content at the hands of Bhutto.

NAP was the only party as much committed to socialism as the People's Party, if not more. NAP had also the distinction of having the largest following in the two turbulent

provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan during the 1970 elections. It, therefore, held the balance of power in the country as a whole as long as it was allowed to exercise power, *i.e.* until February 1973. It was a measure of the NAP's political importance and ideological affinity with the People's Party that Bhutto was once tempted to offer two seats in the federal cabinet to nominees of the NAP. The offer, however, was declined by Wali Khan—perhaps because he sensed in it a device to finish the separate role of his party, the fate that had befallen the Qayyum Muslim League.

That the NAP Chairman, Wali Khan, was also the leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly despite its small numerical strength, was another measure of the importance of NAP. It had, in fact, all the potentiality of providing a credible national alternative to the People's Party, if the game of politics was played according to the rules of democracy. NAP was, indeed, apart from the People's Party, the only forward-looking party in the socio-economic sense. No wonder it should have been an eyesore to Bhutto, who was bent upon destroying it on one pretext or the other.

Unfortunately, the pretext chosen was the murder of Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao. Sherpao's chief importance was that he was the main instrument of Bhutto's "gold and guns" politics in the Frontier Province. That was why he was also the main target for those angered by the dismissal of the elected government in the province in February 1973. Quite a few attempts had been made on Sherpao's life in the past few months. And if one succeeded, none was to be blamed for it except Bhutto himself, who allowed the cult of violence to gain respectability during his regime.

This was not the first time that apolitical murder had taken place. Apart from four attempts made at the life of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, at least half a dozen eminent political persons had been done to death, including Khan Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, the "Baluch Gandhi". Why were no remedial measures taken, no political party banned, or an eminent leader arrested on these occasions? Perhaps because in all these cases the victims were people belonging to parties other than Bhutto's. Unfortunately, Bhutto had been allowing a liberal use of violent means to achieve his so-called democratic ends, and in this respect he has been no different from his military predecessors.

From the point of view of the promotion of democratic stability in Pakistan, the death of Sherpao was not as much of a loss as the arrest of Wali Khan and the ban of his party. As stated earlier, the NAP, despite its numerical smallness, provided an ideologically progressive and politically effective Opposition. Its disappearance from the scene was a source of strength to right-wing, undemocratic, militaristic elements, particularly at a time when the country was likely to receive a fresh dose of US arms. The ban on the National Awami Party has had serious implications for Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan, which suddenly registered a downward curve. Besides, it had adverse

repercussions on the process of detente with India, for the National Awami Party was a potent force working consistently for peace and cooperation in the subcontinent.

It is a strange irony of Pakistani politics that in Baluchistan, where the problem is deeply political, Bhutto tried to meet the challenge with a purely administrative response, in a "law and order" framework, while in NWFP, where the issues raised by Sherpao's murder could have been met with an administrative response, at least in the shorter run, Bhutto's actions gave them a deeply political dimension.

### **Politics of Violence**

The National Awami Party, banned within two days of the murder of Frontier Minister Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, was accused of indulging in the politics of violence. A very intensive propaganda war against the NAP was unleashed on these lines. This despite the fact that no conclusive proof had been found of the complicity of NAP in the murder of Sherpao. But the Government gave the impression that it had suddenly woken up to the phenomenon of widespread violence in politics. Ironically, it seemed determined to establish the illegitimacy of violence through recourse to further violence.

It must be remembered that the People's Party government had outdone its predecessors in legitimizing the role of violence in politics ever since it came to power. It was the People's Party *goondas* who disturbed with firing the Opposition meeting in Rawalpindi in March 1973, which drove away Ajmal Khattak in despair to Kabul. It was again a series of murders of MNAs and MPAs, which went uninquied into and unpunished, that served as a sanction for more political murders. The greatest contribution to the legitimization of violence was made by assassination attempts, and acts of terrorism and harassment against political opponents, including dissidents within the PPP. Such acts, by all accounts, had the sanction of the highest source of power.

But this hysterical violence was now being compounded by violence of the spirit of the Constitution, the democratic norms on which it is based. Through the exercise of its brute majority, and in the face of a boycott of the National Assembly by the Opposition, the People's Party government, in February 1975, adopted a series of measures which seriously compromised fundamental rights and liberties. By the adoption of the Constitution (Third Amendment) Bill, the Government was empowered to continue the state of emergency in the country, without having to go to Parliament, before the expiry of every six months. Besides, the period within which the Government had to refer the cases of political detainees to a review board, was extended from one month to three months.

Apart from this amendment, the National Assembly adopted three other bills, by two of which the Government was empowered to detain MNAs and MPAs during the sessions of their respective legislatures, for reasons connected with defence, external affairs, or security of the State. The third bill amended the *Political Parties Act of 1962*, and permitted the Government to declare a "foreign-aided" political party as an unlawful organization. This was subject to the constitutional provision of placing the case before the Supreme Court within 15 days of the action. The law also enhanced the penalty for office-bearers of a party declared unlawful from two to three years. The laws, although enacted after the NAP had been banned and a number of legislators detained, were enforced with retrospective effect.

Having provided itself with the legal instruments to wipe out all Opposition from the land, the Government referred the NAP case to the Supreme Court to decide the constitutionality of the ban imposed on it. But the Government was still faced with the problem of finding evidence to establish the fact that the NAP was "foreign-aided", and that the activities of NAP legislators were against the security of the State. Therefore, the "discovery" of a big haul of arms in universities and colleges of NWFP, Punjab and Sindh in February, and those of Baluchistan later, was resorted to. The objective was not only to establish the nationwide character of the NAP's subversive activities, but also its systematic infiltration of student bodies all over the country.

From Peshawar University, the search was reported to have yielded 380 pistols and revolvers, several sten guns, sub-sten guns, and about 2800 cartridges of rifles and pistols. From Baluchistan, the seizures yielded one sten gun, ten rifles, 31 hand grenades, and about 60 other pieces. From Punjab and Sindh, the total haul was about 260 revolvers, pistols and shotguns, and some rounds of ammunition. In a country where two of the four provinces, namely NWFP and Baluchistan, were forced to fight for their rights outside the constitutional framework, the discovery of this quantity of arms should not have been surprising at all. But still less surprising would be the possibility that the drama of arms discovery had been enacted to justify severe repressive action against the NAP and its friendly parties.

One must remember the discovery of "foreign" arms in the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad in February 1973, which proved the harbinger of the dismissal of Baluchistan and NWFP governments. But the objective now was deeper. Whether or not the quantity of arms mentioned above justified the allegation of foreign complicity in the situation, the discovery of pamphlets written allegedly by Natal Khattak (formerly Secretary-General of NAP and later living in Kabul), certainly did. The case was thus completed for obtaining the Supreme Court verdict that NAP was a "foreign-aided" party, deserving to be outlawed for all times to come.

## Wali Khan's Trial

The Pakistan People's Party, headed by Prime Minister Bhutto was successfully spreading its tentacles in the provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP too, where it had been deprived of the electoral verdict in 1970. The party was gloating at the success of its candidates in the Senate elections of all four provinces. But at what cost to the values and institutions which characterize a rule of law, should be obvious from the following details about Wali Khan's trial, which was in progress in August 1975.

Khan Abdul Wali Khan had been detained and his National Awami Party banned in February 1975. Necessary legislative and constitutional amendments were soon brought in to legitimize the detention. Trial proceedings against Wali Khan were begun in the Supreme Court in the middle of June. Wali Khan was constrained to withdraw from the proceedings of the court on 19 June. While the trial was proceeding without the presence of Wali Khan or his counsel, the court at one point observed that Wali Khan "will not be permitted to appear in the court unless he apologized first for his walkout". This made it necessary for Wali Khan to make an application to the court, seeking to clarify that his conduct in withdrawing from the court did not amount to a disrespect of the court which warranted an apology from him.

Wali Khan in his application gave reasons for his withdrawal, which throw useful light on the manner in which the trial was being conducted—apart from the politics of the trial, which is a separate story. Recalling the proceedings of the court on the day he withdrew, Wali Khan said that he had raised one objection and made two requests, as instructed by the Party Central Committee. The objection was to the Constitution of the Bench, whereupon two judges sat who, as law secretaries to the Government, had previous connection with the case in question, and were obviously a party to the Reference on the applicant's side. One of the two judges sits on the Federal Review Board and Wali Khan had appeared before him in person on 3 July 1975 in connection with his detention under the DPR, wherein the grounds of his detention were almost the same as in this Reference. The said judge had already expressed his opinion by extending the detention period.

Apart from this objection about the Constitution of the Bench, Wali Khan had made two requests. The first was about engaging a counsel of the status and caliber of those employed by the applicant. The court was kind enough to grant the request, and Wali Khan was asked to submit a list of names of lawyers of his choice. He said: "I was greatly impressed and encouraged and made a request, in the light of the order of the court for giving facilities to defend the case, that the Attorney General may kindly be asked not to proceed with the opening of the case but to await the arrival of our lawyers. After all it is the respondent who would suffer if the case takes longer—the party stands banned and the leaders remain behind the bars."

The second request was that the court may kindly reconsider its earlier decision about the presence of the five principal respondents during the hearing of the cases, because there was no single respondent in the case. When Wali Khan was told that the court would not reconsider it, he suggested that the court may kindly release those five persons on bail for the duration of the trial at least, so as to enable them to put up a proper defence.

The court, there and then, passed orders turning down the request for the postponement of the proceedings till such time that the NAP counsel arrived. The other request for the production or release on bail of the five respondents was also rejected, and the objection to the presence of the two controversial judges also overruled. "I honestly felt", said Wali Khan, "that my hands were tied, and feeling absolutely helpless, there was hardly anything I could do except to withdraw. But I am positive that I did not say or do anything that could amount to disrespect shown to the court, and withdrew." Wali Khan's faith in Pakistani judiciary was shattered by this experience, for he had submitted to the court on the opening day that:

After the executive power had passed onto the hands of a single individual, and the legislature had been corrupted and totally neutralized and made subservient to the whims and caprices of one man, the one and only institution to which the whole country looks for protection from this fascist and dictatorial one-man rule is the judiciary.

### **Stability: Pakistan Style**

Bhutto, in an interview to *Kayhan International* in November, claimed: "Recent developments in other parts of the subcontinent have, shown Pakistan to be an element of stability in a volatile region." Earlier, in the same interview, he said that growing confidence in Pakistan's stability had led to more investment in the private sector. How misleading and self-deceiving both these assumptions were, should have been clear to any discerning and honest observer of the South Asian scene.

To begin with, the least that could be said about the internal scene was that it contained within it, the stability of the graveyard. Bhutto had outwitted all his predecessors, even those who were heads of avowedly authoritarian regimes, in molesting State machinery to his own ends. The manner in which Pakistan's Supreme Court had been made to uphold, *ex-post-facto*, the ban imposed on the National Awami Party nine months earlier, would put to shame the worst of dictators on earth.

Though a small party, the National Awami Party was the most effective Opposition party. Its contribution to the adoption of a somewhat democratic Constitution in Pakistan was truly historic. A measure of its importance in Pakistan's political structure

was the offer of two federal cabinet seats made to it by Bhutto in 1972. It had earned the right to rule two of the four provinces of Pakistan by virtue of its success in the 1970 elections. Getting banned in February 1975 was not a new experience for the NAP, such had been the attitude of ruling cliques towards democratic elements deriving their power from areas other than the heartland of Pakistan. But legalization of this ban through the Supreme Court was certainly a new experience, and that too in contemptuous disregard of established judicial norms.

However, the ban on the NAP was bound to serve as an object lesson to other Opposition parties, who, in utter helplessness, decided to end the boycott of assemblies. Maulana Mufti Mahmud, Acting Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, said in a statement that the Opposition decided to end its boycott because it was having no effect on the Government. However, the disappearance of NAP, and large-scale assassinations, arrests and ill-treatment of other Opposition leaders had virtually led to the emasculation of Opposition in the country. And whatever scope there was for non-conformist opinions within the People's Party, was ended by a gradual expulsion of those of its leaders who were capable of any independent thinking.

This was the framework of "stability" in Pakistan. And further manifestation of this "stability" lay in a ruthless suppression of the voice of Baluchistan, and a disgusting humiliation of NWFP. Ironically, even Punjab and Sindh, the strongholds of the ruling PPP, were no longer devoid of a sense of alienation.

As for Pakistan's claim to "an element of stability in a volatile region", the less said the better. If there is a state whose policies and operations have had the most destabilizing effect on the region, it is Pakistan. But to confine our analysis to recent developments, Pakistan's jubilation, if not connivance, at the 15 August coup in Bangladesh was more than obvious. This was apparent from the hasty recognition accorded to the new Government of Bangladesh by Pakistan. Bhutto exhibited his belated realization of this hasty step when he made a vain bid to explain it on flimsy grounds, in the course of an interview to *Le Monde*. However, Pakistan's discomfiture at the counter-coup of 3 November put the entire thing in better perspective. In a very revealing comment *Jung*, the influential Urdu daily of Karachi, said: "After the military coup in August under the leadership of seven majors, it was thought that everything would work out alright. But the possibility of surprise developments ...."

Pakistan's immense satisfaction at the instability in Bangladesh was understandable for a variety of reasons, the simplest of which was that it pleased those who were chagrined by the audacity of Bangladesh to secede. There was, however, an added reason: that it enabled Pakistan to undermine the system of security and stability being built by the countries of the region, with India playing a prominent part therein. The chief pillars of this system are secularism at home and non-alignment abroad, with heavy emphasis on mutual economic cooperation, and keeping the region free from big-power interference.

The countries which share this system, by and large, are Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Pakistan is the odd man out, and that because of its lopsided approach to problems of national and international existence. *Musawaat*, for instance, an official organ of the PPP, blamed India for a border clash between Chinese and Indian troops, which had taken place in November, and said that it had been caused by India's deployment of troops, which in turn was related to the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman.

Destabilizing the region is a bigger conspiracy, of which Pakistan allowed itself to be a part. Going slow with India with regard to the normalization of relations was also related to this conspiracy. India has been warning about the role of foreign powers in the region. While the powers that be should do well to stay away, it is important that Pakistan stops playing their game in the region.

### **New Dimensions**

The political struggle between the ruling party and the Opposition groups acquired some new and potentially significant dimensions in November 1975. After a validation of the ban on the National Awami Party through the Supreme Court, and the easing out of inconvenient individuals from the People's Party, Bhutto might have thought of relaxing under the sunshine of his unchallenged extending over five corners of the country – Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, NWFP and "Azad Kashmir". But this was not to be. The Opposition was being revitalized with the emergence of new forces, or the realignment of old ones, thanks to the existence of a sizeable political elite in the country.

Before this process of revitalization is examined in detail, reference may be made to the worst act of political repression at the hands of Bhutto's government, which in any case can claim the credit of having outdone its martial law predecessors in molesting democratic institutions and suppressing civil liberties. The occasion was the discussion, in the National Assembly, of the Constitution (Fourth Amendment) Bill which, *inter alia*, sought to curtail the powers of the high court's with regard to an issuance by them of orders against certain unlawful or unconstitutional acts of the Government.

A measure of public resentment against this bill (which was eventually passed by 102 votes to nil) was passed by the general body of the Karachi High Court Bar Association, "reverently appealing to our legislators to please refrain from further weakening our courts", and urging fellow lawyers of the country "to unite in their ranks" to "shield our judiciary from this onslaught". The Opposition protested against the "indecent haste" with which the bill had been introduced and wanted adequate time to prepare for their participation in the discussions. The price that it had to pay was that 12 of its leading members were bodily lifted by security men from the National Assembly hall and

thrown outside, quite a few of them incurring injuries in the process. And the bill was passed in their absence.

One can imagine the sense of humiliation felt by the Opposition, from the fact that it started thinking of resuming the boycott of assemblies (which had been ended only a few weeks earlier), after a period of nine months. It may be argued that it matters little to Bhutto whether the Opposition attends the assemblies or not—so scant is his regard for political propriety and decency. But then such a disregard begins to tell, sooner or later, on the credibility of one's political behavior. At any rate, it sharpens the determination of the Opposition to seek revenge.

It is this determination which gave rise to two significant developments in the politics of Pakistan. One was the decision of Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Haneef Ramay, former chief ministers of Punjab and subsequently disillusioned with the PPP, to join the Pakistan Muslim League. The other pertains to the formation of a new party, the National Democratic Party, by Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari, an independent MNA from Dera Ghazi Khan.

The Muslim League will continue to seize the imagination of the people of Pakistan in a manner that the other party can, irrespective of its poor record during the last fifteen years. It can acquire fresh relevance sooner than other parties can, the moment it is provided with a dynamic programme and a live-wire leadership. All the factions into which the Muslim League split some years ago have been virtually without a leader after Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan joined the federal cabinet, and Mian Mumtaz Daultana went to London as Pakistan's ambassador. As for its programme, the very success of the PPP in the 1970 elections was a manifestation of the utter irrelevance of the Muslim League programme, which had overemphasized Islam and completely neglected socio-economic aspects.

Now, when the people's disillusionment with the PPP was more than obvious, particularly as regards its socio-economic achievements and its political style, a party which would care to own the PPP programme and promise its implementation could have a decisive appeal amongst the people. More so, if it had a historic past which could evoke respectful chords. As for the leadership, nothing could be more live-wire than Khar and Ramay put together. The fortified Muslim League, with its roots deep in Punjab and Sindh, could perform a viable Oppositional role in these two provinces, which were Bhutto's strongholds.

The National Democratic Party floated by Sardar Mazari could, perhaps, take care of the other two provinces eventually. Sardar Mazari, even though independent, is known to be a close friend and admirer of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the detained Chairman of the banned National Awami Party, Coming from a district of Punjab which borders on Baluchistan, he has open sympathies with the Baluchistan people's struggle for

democratic rights. Being a highly educated and poised individual, he attracts friends and followers easily.

Because of these antecedents, a sizeable section of the moderates from amongst the former NAP's membership were expected to join the NDP. In fact the lead in this respect was given by Begum Nasim Wali Khan, the wife of Khan Abdul Wali Khan. She addressed some meetings under the auspices of this party, welcoming its programme, which included non-alignment and the safeguarding of the democratic rights of the people. Significantly, the party did not believe in "the so-called Pakhtoonistan", proclaiming that "Kabul's interference in Pakistan's internal affairs would not be tolerated".

These were developments which could not be dismissed lightly. If the forces which underlined them tended to stabilize, prospects for parliamentary democracy in Pakistan were not too gloomy, despite what Bhutto was doing to make them so.

### **Four Years of Bhutto**

Bhutto completed four years of rule in December 1975. The period was eventful. At the same time, it was adequate to warrant an assessment of his performance, particularly in the light of his promises in December 1970.

Bhutto's strongest attack against Field Marshal Ayub Khan's government was based on the need for democratizing the politics of the country. In his election campaign, therefore, Bhutto had promised the introduction of a completely democratic system, subscribing to federal and parliamentary principles. Such a constitution was, in fact, promulgated in Pakistan in 1973, and Bhutto can legitimately claim the credit for having achieved the impossible, although his task had been greatly facilitated by the exit of East Pakistan. Besides, his temptation to insert a heavy dose of authoritarianism in the political system had to give way to the pressure of the combined Opposition in favor of a normal parliamentary system, and the National Awami Party had played a leading role in it.

However, the task of establishing democratic stability does not end with the making of a Constitution. It is the manner and spirit of its implementation which are equally important. It is here that Bhutto revenged, and deliberately so. One by one, he allowed all principles of federal and parliamentary behavior to be thrown overboard. He dismissed the NAP-JUI governments in Baluchistan and NWFP even when they had comfortable majorities in the two provincial assemblies. He did not allow the Opposition to function freely, whether outside or inside the legislative assemblies. He banned the most effective Opposition party, the NAP, and had the ban approved by the Supreme Court. He changed the entire complexion of the NWFP and Baluchistan assemblies through bribery, assassinations, and rigged by-elections. He gagged the

Press more severely than ever before. He allowed the injection of large-scale violence into politics. To top it all, he resorted to institutionalizing the denial of civil liberties through amendments in the Constitution.

In other words, the methods pursued by Bhutto to exercise unmitigated power in all corners of the land were no different, and perhaps more shameless, than those of his predecessors. Members of the Opposition, including non-conformists within the PPP, were driven to the wall more than once during these four years in their futile attempts to open a meaningful dialogue with the leadership of the PPP. In frustration, when the Opposition threatened once again that it would launch a massive agitation against the Government, and would demonstrate in front of foreign missions in Islamabad to draw the attention of other countries to politics in Pakistan, Bhutto warned them of dire consequences.

And thus, at the end of four years of Bhutto's rule, the political system in Pakistan approached a state of near collapse.

In the field of foreign policy, Bhutto had promised a radically different structure. He was opposed to military alliances, and titled his first major book as *The Myth of Independence*, to ridicule the existing foreign policy pattern of Pakistan. After coming to power he, of course, took the country out of SEATO, which had partly lost its relevance to Pakistan after the secession of the East Wing, and which eventually died a natural death. But he consistently strengthened Pakistan's relations with CENTO, and for the same reasons for which Pakistan had originally joined these alliances. Further, Pakistan under Bhutto felt constrained to beg for arms from the same sources from which it did earlier—for the ostensible purpose of buttressing its independence. The net result, however, was that Pakistan no longer remained independent of foreign influences than it did in the pre-Bhutto period.

Among the consequences that followed from Pakistan's continuing tie-up with foreign arms-givers was also the continuing confrontation with India which, it must be said to the credit of Bhutto, was consistently advocated by him since the time he became Foreign Minister under Ayub's government. The game of confrontation was now being played on a lower key for reasons traceable to the 1971 debacle. But it could be raised to a higher key as and when it suited Pakistan. Qualitatively, no change was discernible in the foreign policy objectives of Pakistan, or the mode of their implementation.

Could Bhutto be blamed for the continuously dismal character of Pakistani politics and foreign policy? Perhaps not entirely. The blame lay partly with the premises and values on which the State of Pakistan is based. Bhutto's passion for power apart, much of the crisis in Pakistani politics stemmed from a lack of clarity as to what constituted the Pakistani nation. Pakistan has yet to find a viability of its own, pending which its behavior—whether internally or externally—will remain wayward.

## CHAPTER 5

### STEPS TOWARDS BETTER ADMINISTRATION, STABLE ECONOMY

All was not well with Pakistan's administrative and economic structure in the beginning of 1972, and for obvious reasons. It was enough that the country had survived the shock of 1971. For Bhutto's government, overhauling the administration and gearing up the economy were as important as building up the political system.

Pakistan was suffering from an acute shortage of essential commodities like *atta*, sugar, kerosene oil, vegetable oil and tea, in the period following the war with India, which led to a sudden spurt in their prices. While the shortage could have occurred as a natural consequence of war, the disruption of communications, the strain on the administrative machinery and the stoppage of certain supplies from the erstwhile East Wing, were all largely attributed, by the Government, to hoarding and other malpractices by the business community. The Government's attention towards this shortage and price-rise was repeatedly drawn by the Jamaat-i-Islami and other political parties. A meeting of secretaries, under the chairmanship of the Central Finance Minister, was held to review the situation. The provincial governments were directed to increase the release of wheat from Government stocks for public consumption.

The situation did not improve and the presidential cabinet thereupon met and discussed the entire question in detail. An official spokesman stated in February that in addition to 260,000 tons of wheat already held in reserve by the Government, 300,000 tons would be imported in March. It was also pointed out that the Government had 400,000 tons of rice in reserve. Bhutto gave personal attention to the problem and set up a sub-committee of his party under the chairmanship of the finance minister to examine the matter of prices, and streamline the distribution of food grains and other essential commodities. At a meeting attended by several central ministers, it was decided that the responsibility for distribution should be taken over by the deputy commissioners of Rawalpindi and Sargodha. The Controller of Rationing (Rawalpindi Division), and the District Controller (Sargodha), were suspended. The Food Secretary (Punjab government), was transferred. In other provinces, the governors issued special orders for immediate and effective steps to check hoarding, black-marketing and the raising of the prices of essential goods. Judging by the Government's concern, the situation could well be described as critical, with obvious political overtones.

Another aspect to which the Government was compelled to pay urgent attention was working conditions of labor, which had been a neglected sector of economy during the

military regimes. Air Marshal Nur Khan, who formulated a new labor policy in July 1969, had admitted in his statement that "in the past the worker has not had a fair deal". But the labor reforms of Nur Khan were not of much avail because of general industrial stagnation during the political instability of the following three years. The dormant unrest erupted frequently in the form of strikes and *gheraos* in the first two months of 1972. Early in February, the port and dock workers at Karachi harbor went on strike. They resumed work after they were assured of wages of not less than Rs 240 a month, exclusive of overtime. Later, a labor clash was reported in a textile mill in Karachi, resulting in the death of one worker.

Bhutto announced his much-publicized labor policy in April, to satisfy the working class, and thereby hoped to earn rich political dividends in the midst of widespread criticism for not lifting martial law. He provided for effective participation of workers in the management of industry, and raised their share in the companies' annual profits from two to four percent. If the productivity was increased, they were to receive an additional 10 percent of the increased profit. He also provided for better housing, education of children, reform and expansion of the social security scheme, etc. But the reforms had little impact, for the feeling was that in the absence of a democratic political framework, they would have no chance of being implemented.

The Pakistan Government had lost face in another area of vital importance to its prestige. It had threatened to take severe action against those who did not declare their assets abroad by 15 January 1972. The Government estimated such assets to be of the order of 3000 million dollars, and expected to ease the foreign exchange crisis by ordering their repatriation. Even after the last date for declaring them was extended by one month, the response had been poor. At the expiry of the extended date, the Government announced the payment of rewards to those who gave information leading to the discovery and repatriation of foreign exchange, or assets illegally held abroad.

Pakistan, however, announced steps which would tend to make up for the loss of certain commodities earlier imported from the East Wing. Food and Agriculture Minister Malik Miraj Khalid told a news agency that the experiment of growing jute in West Pakistan had been successful and the country would be self-sufficient in jute production in three years. About 20,000 acres of land in Muzaffargarh district and a certain area of the Lyallpur district were to be brought under jute cultivation during 1972. Cultivation of jute on 200,000 acres would be enough to meet the country's requirements. The minister claimed that the experimental production of tea had also been successfully carried out in the Neelam Valley in "Azad Kashmir". And, according to another report, a feasibility study was under preparation for setting up a newsprint plant with an annual capacity of 35,000 tons.

But Pakistan was again faced with the perennial problem of a steel mill, the Soviet Union having withdrawn its offer to help build a steel plant near Karachi. Besides,

interprovincial rivalries over the use of irrigation waters of the Indus system were being revived and were threatening to become another headache for Bhutto.

### **Unrest and Administration**

While Bhutto was heading a supposedly democratic system, the administration continued to function in feudal style. This was demonstrated in Pakistan in the middle of June when the administration displayed a high-handedness reminiscent of martial law regimes. The country witnessed serious labor trouble in the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) of Karachi, which involved the deaths of many workers and the closure of the entire industrial complex. Besides, there were jail riots in Quetta, Sukkur and Peshawar. But the administration responded in each situation with firing, and still more firing, provoking counter-riots, which led to further firing and deaths. And this despite the fact that the welfare of workers and down-trodden sections was supposed to be the primary concern of the socialist-oriented People's Party, which ruled at the Centre, Punjab and Sindh.

The labor trouble started when the workers of Feroze Sultan Industries – one of the 600-odd industrial units in SITE – demanded wages along with the 2.5 percent profit, as laid down in the new labor policy. The management expressed its inability to pay the salaries and their share from the workers' participation fund. The workers confined the mill executives to their rooms. This forced the management to talk to the workers' representatives. Meanwhile, the management had also called the police, which came and arrested some workers for having "gheraoed" the mill executives. When the news of arrests spread in labor colonies, thousands of laborers came and encircled the mill. The police opened fire, in which at least three laborers were killed, and many injured.

The next day, however, was to witness still greater tragedy. When the administration learnt of the laborers' intention to take out, next day, a funeral procession of one of the workers killed in firing, it imposed Section 144 in the SITE area. The procession was moving peacefully and had covered quite some distance when its way was blocked by the police. When police tear-gas shells were replied to with stones, the policemen opened fire, killing ten persons, including a woman and an infant, and injuring many. It was later admitted by the local administration that the scene of police firing on the outskirts of SITE was outside the areas covered by Section 144, of the *Criminal Procedure Code*.

The incident had raised issues of grave importance, apart from the stoppage of work which resulted from it in all the industries of Karachi, the country's biggest industrial centre. What particularly angered the workers was that Sindh Governor Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, instead of taking prompt action against defaulting officers or mill-owners, took shelter under the plea that the police had to maintain law and order, and expressed routine sympathies with the families of those who lost their lives. The episode shook

the workers' confidence in President Bhutto's labor policy. Amidst wide condemnation of police firing by all sections of society, Usman Baluch, President of the Mutahida Mazdoor Federation, demanded the withdrawal of the labor policy, which he described as "a shield provided to the capitalist class of the country by the Government". The demand was supported, among others, by Mahmudul Haq Usmani, General Secretary of the National Awami Party, who, in addition, also demanded the resignation of the Sindh Governor and Chief Minister for mishandling the situation. Looking at the totality of the situation, one would tend to agree with the assessment of *Dawn*, which wrote editorially:

Among the factors responsible for the present state of affairs, it seems that the Government's desire to establish industrial peace and prevent acts of violence has been interpreted by local officials as the re-introduction of a strong arm policy which has found expression in tough statements followed by tough action. There has also been some suspicion that certain mill owners taking advantage of a presumed change in the Government's attitude, are deliberately creating situations that would enable them, with Authority's help, to put the workers "in their proper place" and weaken the trade union movement.

The police gave evidence of its high-handedness again while dealing with striking prisoners in the Quetta, Sukkur and Peshawar jails. As a result of police firing, 14 prisoners were killed in Sukkur Central Jail, and 83 injured in Peshawar Central Jail. The series of jail riots started when some prisoners in Quetta Jail demanded the transfer of some among themselves to another jail, the transfer of the Deputy Superintendent of the jail, a provision of better quality rations, and the speedy disposal of prisoners under trial. While the Quetta authorities handled the situation with the intervention of some city notables, the repetition of similar demands by the Sukkur Jail inmates eventually led to police firing and deaths. The Sindh Chief Minister, while ordering an inquiry, attributed the situation to a lack of discipline and patience on the part of the prisoners. The NWFP administration also described the prisoners' demands as illegal and unjustified, and upheld the police action of using tear-gas, leading to large-scale injuries.

As if the incompatibility between social urges and governmental response was destined to be a constant feature of Pakistani polity, even though a representative Government was now at the helm, the language policy of the Sindh government again aroused loud protest from articulate sections of the people. The annual Karachi University convocation ended half-way through, when students rose up to demand an assurance from the Sindh Governor that along with Sindhi, Urdu would also be declared as an official language of the province. Sixty-three intellectuals in Karachi, including Josh Malihabadi and Dr I. H. Qureshi, had said that in a province in which the mother-tongue of nearly 50 percent of the people was not Sindhi, "it is neither just nor politic" to make only Sindhi the official language. But the Sindh Chief Minister, Mumtaz Bhutto,

also justified the Government's decision in favor of Sindhi as the official language, thus leaving to President Bhutto the difficult task of reconciling governmental policy with popular aspirations on more than one ticklish issue.

### **The 1972-73 Budget**

The budget for 1972-73, presented on 17 June 1972, was not only the first one after half the nation had seceded, but also the first prepared by the People's Party.

Pakistan's Economic Survey for 1971-72, released with the annual budget, provided a frank and faithful picture of the state of the economy in the aftermath of the country's disintegration. Identifying the sort of problems created for economic growth, it said that by the loss of the East Wing, a common market built over a quarter century of growing economic and financial integration had been disrupted, and eventually destroyed, forcing urgent changes in the production and trade patterns of the economy. Furthermore, while the obligations assumed and commitments made by the country as a whole remained intact, the resource base for meeting them had become restricted to one part of the country. Diversion of domestic resources to defence requirements, interruptions in the flow of foreign trade, and localized shortages resulting from temporary disruption of transport and distributary services had put a strain on the already sluggish process of production. As a result, in 1971-72, the gross domestic product in real terms registered a growth rate of a mere 1.7 percent. This, according to the survey, meant that "for the second year in succession per capita incomes declined as the growth rate fell below the growth of population".

The economy had received its most serious setback in the industrial sector. As against the growth rate of 8 to 10 percent in recent years, its contribution to GDP declined by 5.6 percent in 1971-72, as the production of several major industries fell. This was the result of the industry's inability to utilize existing facilities anywhere near capacity, due to immediate market constraints arising from the strangulation of inter-wing trade, power shortages in the northern region, and growing labor unrest in the latter part of the year.

Another consequence of the birth of Bangladesh was that because of rising expenditures on account of military operations and virtually no revenues from that region, deficit financing of Rs 166.2 crores had to be resorted to in the first half of the year. The expansion of monetary assets reached the massive figure of Rs 478.4 crores, although Rs 296.4 crores represented the phased exchange of the high denomination currency demonetized in June 1971, and adjustment for looted currency. In the second half of the year, however, till April 1972, monetary assets rose by Rs 73.7 crores only.

The inflationary impact of deficit financing was quickly felt in the western region. Coupled with shortages in the supply of sugarcane and a virtual stagnation of the

wheat crop—two items of mass consumption—it led to a rise in the wholesale price index by 12.4 percent between July 1971 and April 1972, as against 4.4 percent over the same period last year.

Disintegration of the country also dislocated the framework of planning. Public sector development expenditure in (West) Pakistan decelerated by 13 percent over the estimated expenditure in 1970-71, as a result of the lower availability of resources.

Separation of the East Wing, however, was not an unmitigated evil. Pakistan's total exports no doubt suffered on account of the elimination of jute and jute manufactures from the export list. But West Pakistani exports were expected to increase by one-third, and reach the level fits 280 crores (in pre-devalued rupees), due in part to the higher quantum and better prices for raw cotton, and in part to the switching of inter-wing exports to the international market.

The East Wing's separation was also expected to stimulate the growth rate in (West) Pakistan. As the *Pakistan Times* put it, "the development effort now will not be inhibited by the need to level up disparities between the two wings". In the new budget, the Central Government therefore found it possible to allocate to the four provinces for development purposes, a sum of Rs 108.34 crores as against Rs 85.75 crores allocated in the previous year. In the 197 172 budget all five provinces had been allocated Rs 127.40 crores, the East Wing's share being Rs 41.65 crores.

What did the budget mean in terms of the viability of the economy, and the political message that it intended to convey? A striking feature was the size of the estimated revenue receipts. At Rs 851 crores, it substantially exceeded the previous year's combined East and West Pakistan figure of Rs 718 crores. The main reason, perhaps, was devaluation, which would, for instance, nearly double the customs duty. But the figure of Rs 851 crores still reflected the Government's assessment that as a result of its various measures the economy was possessed with necessary strength and buoyancy. Further, the proposed expenditure of Rs 415 crores on development also compared well with the Rs 271 crores' programme for West Pakistan provided in 1971-72, although the dependence on external resources, of the order of Rs 301 crores, seemed excessive.

The budget was claimed to be a welfare-oriented one, as per the party manifesto. Some of the eye-catching measures that were generally welcomed were the allocation of Rs 23 crores for low-cost housing; Rs 24 crores for providing 5,000 trucks and buses; the provision of 1,000 scholarships for the children of peasants, working and other low-income groups; the provision of Rs 5 crores for a People's Finance Corporation to provide easy loans for purchase of taxis, auto-rickshaws, and for financing other small businesses and the provision of Rs 25 crores for a massive works programme to create new jobs.

The Government also claimed that most of the burden of new taxes, meant to yield Rs 26 crores, had been passed on to the higher income groups. For instance the tax-holiday for new industries in underdeveloped areas had been withdrawn. The exemption limit of dividend income had been brought down to Rs 2,000. Rates of death duty had been raised in all the slabs. And the duty on imported liquor increased by 50 percent.

More such peripheral items could be listed. But a vital sector which was omitted from taxation, and for which the Government was legitimately criticized, was agricultural incomes. In an elaborate defence of this decision, the Finance Minister said: "It by no means meant any concession to any particular lobby." But this would not hide the truth, which is well known, that the big agriculturist lobby provides sustenance to the People's Party to a not inconsiderable extent.

### **Exports Do Well**

By 1972 fall, Pakistan's economic performance did not appear as bleak as it was feared, as a consequence of the secession of the East Wing, thanks to a fortuitous combination of various factors. The real achievement was made in the export sector, where gains were beyond expectation. There were problems still—slow production, rising prices, educated unemployment—and Pakistan was grappling with them. But she had survived the initial challenge.

According to Pakistani sources, while the export earnings of (West) Pakistan during July-December 1971 were of the order of Rs 108 crores, they went up to 231 crores during January-June 1972. In all, the export earnings during the 1971-72 fiscal year amounted to Rs 339 crores, which was 69.5 percent more than earnings in the previous year. The reason, according to these sources, was Pakistan's ability to divert exports successfully from the international market to the international one. Besides, cotton—whose production registered a rise of 33 percent during the year—was supposed to have made a major contribution in this increase, for cotton and its manufactures constitute the biggest sector of Pakistani exports. The devaluation of the Pakistani rupee by 131 percent in May 1972 was expected to intensify this trend further.

Despite the gains of 1971-72, certain sections in Pakistan pleaded for more vigorous efforts to increase exports. A leading daily of Karachi, in an editorial, wrote that exports constituted only 5 percent of the GDP of Pakistan, as compared with a rate of 5.0 percent in some West Asian and African countries. Further, it said that Pakistan's share in world exports declined from 0.87 percent in the fifties to 0.28 percent in 1970. Besides, Pakistan could meet only 65 percent of its import requirements from its own exchange earnings. This explained its heavy dependence on foreign aid, whose availability now tended to shrink. About 30 percent of exchange earnings were taken away by annual debt servicing, which was far above the usually acknowledged safe limit of 20 percent. Therefore, the paper suggested a series of immediate export promotion measures and

warned that "the breathing time that we have got owing to the moratorium on debt repayment up to January 1973 should not lull us into complacency".

In this context, it was extremely interesting to find an elaborate case being made for "economic peace with India" in the *Morning News*, a Trust paper of Pakistan. In an article in this paper, Mohammed Tariq Waseem proved the desirability of restoring trade relations with India by stating that Pakistan's overall balance of trade with India, from 1947-48 to 1967-68, had been favorable to the extent of Rs 172.5 crores. Pakistan's regular trade with India was suspended during the 1965 conflict. Making a vigorous plea for its resumption, Waseem said:

Pakistan will recapture the market of 600 million people which was not available for the last six years. Both the countries are going to benefit from the law of comparative advantage .... Because of geographical proximity, trade between India and Pakistan can stand the challenge of the present world trade situation caused by the international "monetary crisis", dollar devaluation, trade cuts, tariff walls, etc.

Another important daily, the *Dawn*, drew attention to bottlenecks in exports to socialist countries, for which inventories of goods worth Rs 19 crores had piled up. Exports to these countries constituted about 20 percent of Pakistan's total exports, and were crucial because they mainly consisted of manufactured items. In return, these countries made available sophisticated machinery and equipment on reasonable terms. But as this paper pointed out, trade with these countries "does not find favor with sections of big business and of the officialdom, both of whom cherish the traditional links with old trading partners".

The industrial sector had received a setback during 1971-72, as expected. Its contribution to GDP declined by 5.6 percent during the year. Scarcity of imported raw material and continued labor trouble had been largely responsible for an under-utilization of installed industrial capacity. Karachi, where more than 50 percent of the country's industrial capacity is concentrated, had been constantly plagued by industrial or political disturbances. Labor-management confrontation, police excesses and the resultant strike in June had necessitated a tripartite conference on labor problems, which took place towards the end of August. On the basis of its recommendations, the Central Government announced a new set of reforms which brought significant gains to industrial labor. Thus a number of existing labor laws were to be revamped to bring them in conformity with existing requirements. Provisions of the *Factories Act*—relating to health and safety measures, annual holidays, medical leave, etc.—were to be liberalized. The rate of gratuity and workers' share in profit was to be increased from 4 percent to 5 percent. These and numerous other benefits were expected to have a salutary effect on the production process.

An interesting development in the field of industry was Chinese interest in the crucial steel sector. Japan, West Germany, the United Kingdom and other advanced countries had, at one time or the other, been involved in Pakistani efforts to develop a steel industry. Ultimately, the Soviet Union agreed to help establish a steel mill near Karachi, and considerable spade work had already been done by it in the preceding three years. In mid-1972, a six-member Chinese survey team completed a three-month tour of Pakistan, examining iron ore in Punjab, Baluchistan and the Frontier, and promised to submit a report for a 100,000-tonne capacity pig-iron-cum-steel plant. This added a significant dimension to the existing Sino-Soviet balance in the region. Not much, however, has been heard of the Chinese project since then.

Pakistan was also faced with the acute problem of educated unemployment, particularly among technicians and other specialists. Some studies had revealed unemployment ratios of 24 percent among polytechnic diploma holders, 18 to 48 percent among Technical Training Centre certificate holders, 16 percent among agricultural graduates, 31 percent among M.A.s in economics and Commerce, 40 percent among M.Sc.s in natural science, and 58 percent among M.Sc.s in applied science. There were, in all, about 1.7 to 1.9 million jobs needed, both in urban and rural areas. Among other measures, the Government was resorting to a massive people's works programme to create employment opportunities. The rigors of unemployment were accentuated by a continuing price rise, particularly of essential commodities like sugar, kerosene, vegetable oil and *atta*. These and other problems still posed an economic challenge to Bhutto.

### Labor Unrest

By November end, 1972, Pakistan was settling down after serious and prolonged labor trouble in the Landhi-Korangi industrial areas of Karachi, wherein nearly 60 percent of the country's industry is concentrated. Labor riots involving labor-police clashes, strikes, lockouts and *gheraos* had led to hundreds of workers being arrested, and quite a few of them being killed. The closure of mills, which persisted for well over a month, had cost the country Rs 40 lakhs in foreign exchange every day, and an additional Rs 20 lakhs of internal revenue per day. President Bhutto was known to have devoted a great deal of attention to improving labor conditions since he came to power. What, then, could explain this second major eruption in industrial relations in a period of less than six months?

The Pakistan People's Party rose to power on the mandate of Islamic socialism. Protection of labor interests constituted an important part of its manifesto. Labor support played a significant role in its victory. Correspondingly, the PPP, by all accounts, tried its best to provide a legal framework for better labor conditions.

Labor was among the most suppressed sectors of society during the rule of President Ayub Khan. Sympathetic attention, however, started being given to labor in the days of Yahya Khan, when Air Marshal Nur Khan initiated some reforms. The PPP government continued the process consistently. One of the first things the PPP government did after assuming power was to release the labor leaders detained by the previous regimes for trade union activities. This was followed, on 10 February, by the announcement of a comprehensive labor policy which introduced some basic changes in the existing labor laws and gave new privileges and benefits to workers. Following a tripartite labor conference in Islamabad in August 1972, further reforms were announced which were introduced through ordinances issued from time to time.

The first ordinance promulgated on 12 October brought about an amendment in the *Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923*, to enlarge its scope and to increase the quantum of compensation. The Act henceforth applied to workers drawing wages up to Rs 1,000, instead of Rs 500 per month, as previously. Besides, the amount of compensation payable in case of the death of a minor was increased from Rs 400 to Rs 4,000. In case of the total disablement of a minor, the amount of compensation was increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000.

The rates of compensation with respect to adult workmen had been enhanced in April. The compensation admissible previously, in the event of death, varied from Rs 750 to Rs 9000, depending on the monthly wages of the worker. The limits were raised from Rs 750 to Rs 6,000 and from Rs 9000 to Rs 15,000. Similar increases were made in compensation rates for permanent disablement.

The second ordinance, promulgated on 15 October, provided that the sickness benefit would henceforth be allowed for 121 days in a year instead of 91 days, as previously. The minimum amount of death grant for funeral expenses etc., in case of a secured worker, was raised from Rs 50 to Rs 500. By an earlier ordinance in April, the workers' contribution of 2 percent to the Social Security Scheme had been abolished. Instead, the employers' contribution to the scheme had been raised from 4 percent to 6 percent.

By a third ordinance promulgated on 20 October, the Government amended the *Factories Act of 1934*, and thereby extended the benefits under this Act to workers employed in small factories. Earlier, the *Factories Act* applied to units employing 20 workers or more. Now it was made applicable to factories employing ten workers or more, whether carrying on their manufacturing process with or without the aid of power. The number of annual holidays under the Act was raised from ten to 14. For the first time, provision was made for the grant of ten days' annual leave with full pay, and 16 days' sick leave on half pay. In addition, factory workers would now enjoy all festival holidays admissible to Government employees.

The fourth ordinance promulgated on 4 November, raised the share of workers in the annual profits of companies from 4 percent to 5 percent. This share had been increased from 2.5 percent to 4 percent in April 1972. Besides, by this ordinance, the scope of the *Companies Profits (Workers Participation) Act of 1968*, was extended to units employing 50 or more workers. Earlier, the Act applied to companies employing 100 or more workers in any shift. Yet another ordinance promulgated subsequently, provided protection to office-bearers of trade unions against victimization, and effected further improvements in the industrial relations system.

This entire range of reforms, introduced in a short span of time, should have gone a long way to satisfy the workers. Yet the workers had been restless for nearly two months now, the last wave of unrest among them having occurred only in the previous month of June.

Various explanations were offered for this phenomenon. Opponents of the regime pointed out that even these reforms fell far short of the expectations raked by PPP slogans during the elections and afterwards. Others blamed the trigger-happy police for shedding the blood of innocent workers or the arrogant old style management for refusing to be reasonable with them. The Government media blamed the Opposition politicians of the extreme right or left-wing varieties for instigating labor troubles with a view to weaken the Government in every conceivable way. President Bhutto and his Labor Minister were once tempted to attribute these troubles to a "foreign hand".

The truth, however, is that the Government itself cannot escape responsibility for these troubles. Being firmly entrenched in power at the Centre and in Sindh, its task did not end with issuing ordinances only. It should have ensured their implementation too. And this is where it failed. A close scrutiny of how the Government handled the whole course of negotiations in the crisis between labor and management, suggested that it hesitated exerting necessary pressures on the management. Perhaps this was dictated by the class composition of the ruling party, which represents the entire spectrum of socio-economic interests in the country. But it has been paying the price in terms of a constantly under-utilized industrial capacity, and retarded growth rate.

### **Economic Survey, 1972-73**

In June 1973, Pakistan could look back with some satisfaction at the year that had passed, from the point of view of its economic performance. Such was the impression one got from the annual economic survey released by the Government of Pakistan, on the eve of its 1973-74 budget.

To have survived the disastrous consequences of a lost war was in itself no mean achievement for Pakistan. But to have registered an overall growth by 6.5 percent over the preceding year was something to be satisfied with, particularly if measured by sub

continental standards. Undoubtedly, the political stability (of sorts), provided by Bhutto's rule, was largely responsible for this growth.

The increase of 6.5 percent in GNP during 1972-73 was reminiscent of the days of President Ayub Khan, when the much-talked-of economic miracle brought about the growth rate of 7.5 percent in 1967-68. But the growth rate dropped to 5.2 percent in 1968-69, due to floods and a reduced agricultural production in East Pakistan, as also due to political disturbances and the stoppage of industrial production in both zones of the country. The low point of the economy was reached in 1970-71, when the GNP actually declined. In 1971-72, the GNP picked up by 1.4 percent, although even this was much less than the growth rate of population.

The year 1972-73 was the first full year after the secession of the East Wing. It was also a year free from large-scale political and other disturbances. Besides, it coincided with the year of the "Simla spirit," which promoted economic revival in a relatively confident mood. Therefore, the growth registered by Pakistan's economy during this year could be taken as a measure of its potential, given normal conditions, although one must remember the economic slump of the preceding two years which made the jump of 6.5 percent possible.

Perhaps the most important contribution to the revival of the economy was made by the country's exports of 750 million dollars, showing an increase of 27 percent over the preceding year. The cumulative increase in exports during the preceding two years was of the order of 80 percent. The ratio of exports to GNP in 1972-73 was 14.5 percent. The foreign trade deficit during the year, however, was of the order of 100 million dollars, since the volume of imports was estimated at about 850 million dollars.

It was the spurt in industrial production, coupled with the diversion to the international market of goods meant earlier for the East Wing, which contributed to the growth of the export sector. Industrial production in Pakistan had reached alarmingly low levels in the preceding two years, due to under-utilization of installed capacity, caused by continuing labor troubles, non-availability of raw materials, power shortages and the strangulation of inter-wing trade. In 1971-72 the contribution of the industrial sector to GNP actually declined by 5.6 percent. Production started picking up in the second quarter of 1972-73, and the actual during July-December 1972 showed an increase of 6.3 percent over the same period in 1971. Going by the trend in the second half of 1972-73, the rate of growth of industrial production for the entire year was expected to be still higher.

Agriculture showed a slight edge over the previous year, recording a growth rate of above 3 percent during 1972-73, as compared with 2.8 percent in 1971-72. But the production of wheat and sugar was encouraging, showing an improvement of 9 percent and 7 percent respectively, whereas in the previous year both had suffered heavily on

account of adverse climatic conditions. On the other hand cotton, which in 1971-72 had given a bumper harvest of over 4 million bales, made a poor showing in 1972-73, due to pest attack.

According to the Pakistani Government, investment activity showed definite signs of revival. Investment in construction activities increased by 13 percent. Development expenditure in the public sector was raised to Rs 415 crores, implying an increase of 59 percent over the implemented programme in 1971-72. The net utilization of foreign aid was roughly 200 million dollars in 1972-73 which, according to the Government, implied a substantial reduction in the rate of net borrowing abroad. The foreign exchange reserves of the country increased from 170.9 million dollars in December 1971 to 341.7 million dollars in March 1973.

While the general economic recovery made by Pakistan was to be welcomed, the situation was not free from serious problems. Even with a bumper wheat crop of 74 lakh tons harvested in May 1973, the survey itself admitted that the country would need to import substantial quantities of food grains from abroad. The investment ratio was still considerably below that attained in 1964-65, while domestic savings financed 69 percent of the gross domestic investment. Most serious, however, was the problem of rising prices. The wholesale price index increased by as much as 18.5 percent during July 1972 and March 1973, over the corresponding period of 1971-72. The consumer price indices at different places recorded increases of 10 to 16 percent. The average price of food items like wheat, sugar, gram and *vanaspati* went up substantially during the period.

According to the survey, the unexpectedly large increase in exports contributed to the surfacing of latent inflationary pressures in the economy, and partly resulted in pressure on prices. And this did not satisfy the consumer, whose sorry plight was the subject of anxious discussion in newspaper columns and on political platforms. As the *Dawn* put it, "the rising prices have helped, as they always do, the big manufacturers, major growers, middle men and traders, but it would be most unusual that an inflationary situation should prove of any benefit to the masses". This was a rejoinder to the official argument that the increase in prices had benefited a much larger section of the population, meaning peasants and farm workers, than the ones who had been affected adversely by it.

### **Administrative Reforms**

Pakistan lags far behind India in democratic traditions, which partly explains the relatively severer jolts to which democracy is subjected in Pakistan from time to time, than is the case in India. But Pakistan can claim to have gone ahead of India at least in one respect, namely, the rationalization of her administrative structure, and for this the credit goes to Bhutto. By a stroke of the pen he brought about a revolutionary change by

unifying, into one cadre, a multitude of services, cadres, classes and grades, which constituted the administrative structure of Pakistan. This stands in glaring contrast to India, where the acceptance of this principle is yet far away.

Explaining this measure in a broadcast to the nation on 20 August 1973, Bhutto said that he was introducing this reform on the recommendation of an Administrative Reforms Committee, which he had appointed immediately after his Government assumed office. The committee had been entrusted with the task of "overhauling the bureaucracy" which, according to Bhutto, had itself become "a powerful vested interest concerned more with its own good than with the good of the public". The first step recommended by the committee in this direction was the replacement of the existing structure by "a modern and scientific system based on professional competence and performance, and attuned to the challenges of a fast moving scientific and technological world".

Correspondingly, the reforms introduced by Bhutto's government had the following features: (a) All the services and cadres would be merged into a unified grading structure, with equality of Opportunity for all who entered the service at any stage, based on the required professional and specialized competence necessary for each job; (b) all "classes" among Government servants would be abolished, and similarly replaced by a unified grading structure: a peon or his equivalent at the bottom, a secretary or departmental head at the top. The existing classification of services into class I to class IV would no longer operate. The road to the top would be open to all on merit; (c) the use of "service" labels would be discontinued forthwith; (d) the unified structure would enable promotions to higher posts throughout the range of public service, through horizontal movements from one cadre to another, including the movement of technical personnel to the cadre of general management. There would also be scope for out-of-turn promotion to exceptionally able officers; (e) the correct grading of each post would be determined by job evaluation and (f) there would be provision for entry into Government service for talented individuals from the private sector in fields such as banking, insurance, industry and trade.

The administrative philosophy underlying these reforms could be summed up as follows: first, Bhutto seemed determined to change the mental outlook of his civil servants. According to him, "no institution in the country has so lowered the quality of our national life as what is called *naukarshahi*". He referred to appalling corruption in the country, which he said had become a way of life with officials in some departments, and pointed out that officials should become "workers and professionals" rather than "gentlemen and amateurs" – "as they are now". Second, Bhutto wished that technocrats make a fuller contribution to policy-making. Referring to the requirements of a people's government, he said: "It cannot condone a system which elevates the 'generalist' above the scientist, the technician, the professional expert, the artist, or the teacher." Third, Bhutto did not like public service to be a close preserve of the permanent civil service. The Government's rapidly changing tasks required maximum utilization of all available

talent in the country. That explains the provision for lateral entry into Government services from the private sector. This, he hoped, would also reverse the process of brain-drain.

The issues inherent in these reforms had obvious relevance for India. In fact, coming at a time when some of these issues were already the subject of close examination and debate in India, the Pakistani reforms assumed added significance. India and Pakistan both inherited the same administrative structure. But the political ethos in which Pakistani administrators functioned was more conducive to an unbridled exercise of power by them, than it was in India. In fact, quite a few administrators in Pakistan found it possible to rule the country through the acquisition of political offices. In India, the administrators did not molest the political system in order to acquire power for themselves, thanks largely to the hold of the politicians themselves. Nevertheless, there is a strong case even in India for the unification of the large number of services and cadres under one body.

The case for such unification has been made out well from time to time. The jealousy, friction and loss of efficiency caused by the parallel existence of "superior" and "inferior" cadres, with different pay scales, promotion prospects and ancillary benefits, is well known. If Pakistan, where the civil service was very well entrenched, found it possible to equalize the terms and privileges of all classes of civil servants, which would naturally follow the merger of all cadres into one, it is astonishing why India should not be able to do so too. Judging by the prevailing resistance to the idea of a unification of multiple cadres in India, not to speak of the Government as a whole, even in one crucial department like the Foreign Office, there is scope enough for India to learn from the Pakistani example, as regards the mechanism of bringing about this unification. Similarly, the Pakistani example had something to offer with regard to the controversy between doctors, engineers and other technocrats on the one hand, and generalist administrators on the other, which was also raging in India in those days.

An equally compelling development in Pakistan related to the rationalization of pay scales of civil and military officers announced earlier by the Finance Minister of Pakistan. In Pakistan, as in India, hundreds of pay scales existed for various categories, classes and departments as far as federal and provincial gazetted employees were concerned. Discarding these numerous pay scales, the Government of Pakistan decided to introduce only seven new national pay scales for civilian officials and nine pay scales for defence personnel. According to the Finance Minister, the reduction in the number of pay scales would also lead to a reduction of the disparity between the highest and lowest paid employees. While the pay scales of lower gazetted employees were increased significantly, there was no increase at the top. Besides, the disadvantages of those who operated in the field, as compared with those who worked in the Secretariat, were sought to be removed.

That Bhutto announced these reforms was a measure of his bold and imaginative approach to administration. It was necessary, however, for him to safeguard against possible pressures to prevent him from implementing these reforms. After all, he had to whittle his intended revolutionary reforms on quite a few occasions in the past. Fortunately, he withstood these pressures and successfully implemented the reforms.

### **The Economy Deteriorates**

By the fall of 1973, Pakistan was in the grip of serious economic problems, not all of which were man-made. The worst ever floods had hit the country in August, not only creating a colossal problem of human rehabilitation, but also playing havoc with the economy. The Government was forced to ban the export of quite a few items, including cotton, the biggest exchange earner. The general shortage of goods tempted businessmen to resort to hoarding and black-marketing. The Government felt constrained to nationalize the *vanaspati* industry. While engaged in ameliorating human suffering, the Government at the same time took no chances with Opposition of any kind. Whether it was a politician indulging in "civil disobedience", or an editor espousing an "independent cause", they were subjected to detention or deprivation, so that the evil of "subversion" did not spread.

Because of the sharp and continuing spurt in the prices of essential commodities, the Government had thought it necessary in early August to make selective cuts in the items earmarked for export. These included beef, mutton, poultry and vegetables. And in September, the export ban covered raw cotton, which had made the maximum contribution to increasing the level of Pakistani exports to the prestigious figure of Rs 825 crores in 1972-73, as compared to Rs 356 crores in 1971-72. It was claimed by the authorities that Pakistani cotton constituted 33 to 40 percent of world cotton exports during 1972-73. This trend could not be maintained during 1973-74, for the floods were estimated to have destroyed about one-fourth of the cotton crop, nearing 4.3 million bales.

While the ban on the export of cotton did seriously affect the none-too-easy foreign exchange position of Pakistan, it was welcomed as a step to fulfill the priority needs of the domestic market. In addition, it was being suggested that the export of rice, which had emerged as a promising new earner of foreign exchange, should also be banned, particularly because of the reported loss of vast quantities of wheat stocks in floods, and the increasingly limited availability of imported food grains. Yet another item whose export was affected was fish, more of which was now needed to make up for the shortage of mutton and beef.

Pakistan had planned to register an increase of 12.5 percent in its exports during 1973-74, over the previous year's figure of Rs 825 crores. The achievement of this target became extremely difficult, particularly because of the ban on cotton export.

Suggestions were, however, being made in the Press to compensate these shortfalls by making special efforts to increase the export of manufactured goods. In this respect, items like cloth and other varieties of textile goods, and the entire range of machinery, equipment, spare parts and light engineering products were said to offer scope, provided incentives were given by the Government.

In the month of August, vast areas of Pakistan had experienced the worst floods in 80 years. The colossal destruction of crops and food grains, accompanied by large-scale disruption of communication lines, created a serious problem of availability of essential items like wheat, *vanaspati*, sugar, kerosene and vegetables. But the problem was made far worse by certain elements in the business community, who were manipulating prices through hoarding and black-marketing. Bhutto, while touring the flood-affected areas, issued a warning to the business community and said that it was shocking that even at a time when the people were suffering from flood devastation, the black-marketers were hoarding commodities of daily use in their shops and houses.

The Government responded to the situation by nationalizing the *vanaspati* industry. Through an ordinance promulgated in the first week of September, the Government took over 27 factories with immediate effect. The factories with foreign participation were, however, exempted. Announcing the decision, Law Minister Abdul Hafeez Pirzada said that the Government had been forced to reverse its earlier assurance of not further nationalizing any industry, because certain industries producing essential commodities were not cooperating with the Government in increasing production, and were creating artificial shortages.

Referring to the *vanaspati* industry, Pirzada said that the Government had gone to the extent of agreeing to an increase in the price of *vanaspati* from Rs 4.75 per seer to Rs 6 per seer, and to procure soya bean oil and supply it to the industry at subsidized rates. And yet, the owners of this industry tried to make the situation more grave, in league with the wholesalers. If this attitude on the part of businessmen persisted, the Government would not hesitate to take over more industries.

While the Government's strong measures on the economic front were understandable, it was not clear why it should have insisted on conformity in political life. A large number of political leaders in all provinces were arrested for participating in the civil disobedience movement launched by the United Democratic Front. The Government's view was that they should not be indulging in the luxury of political protest, while the country was in the grip of floods. The merit of this contention apart, the Government's response to the movement, which was being conducted nonviolently and peacefully, certainly did not help the task of meeting the flood havoc.

The Government added to the existing provocations for protest, by taking repressive action against a large number of newspapers. In early September, the publication of

*Hurriyet* and *Jasarat* was prohibited for a period of 30 days, with the editor of the former as well as both the editor and publisher of the latter arrested. The printing press of *Mehran* (Hyderabad) was sealed, and its editor arrested. Earlier, the supply of official advertisements to *Jang* and *Nawa-i-waqt* was stopped and the newsprint quota to *Alfatah* weekly denied. All these were influential language papers, and action against them was widely resented. The newspapers' fault lay simply in their expression of independent opinion.

The Government's intolerance of criticism, even after the enforcement of the new Constitution, thus disappointed many. As a reader of the *Dawn* put it in a letter to the editor, Pakistan was in the midst of two calamities, one caused by nature and the other man-made.

### **The Steel Mill**

Pakistan at last reached the stage where work on its first steel mill was to begin. The foundation stone of the Karachi Steel Mill was to be laid by Prime Minister Bhutto in December 1973. This followed the signing of protocols between the Pakistan Steel Mills Corporation and the USSR Tyazhprom-export in October, for the construction of a 1.1 million tone steel plant at Pipri, near Karachi.

Pakistan has a long and tortuous history of efforts to establish a steel mill. Being endowed with very inadequate low-grade iron ore resources at places where commercial exploitation is not feasible, Pakistan had for some years been toying with the idea of a mill on the basis of imported ore. Efforts to utilize indigenous ore were made in the initial years with the help of German, Japanese and other foreign experts. In 1968, the Soviet Union entered the field with an undertaking to prepare a feasibility report for the construction of a mill at Kalabagh. The mill, to be based on Kalabagh ore, was estimated to cost about Rs 160 crores, with a foreign exchange component of Rs 88 crores. But the Kalabagh ore was found to contain an iron content of only 34 percent. The plan was, therefore, abandoned in favor of a mill near Karachi, on the basis of imported ore.

The signing of protocols for this mill was regarded by Pakistani officials as a major achievement. Preliminary work in connection with the construction of the mill was to start in the second half of 1974. The first blast furnace would be fired in 1978, with the plant scheduled to go into full production in 1980-81. The Soviets gave due recognition to the need for the employment of indigenous manpower and material. Out of the total requirement of about 1,35,000 tons of steel structures, nearly 70,000 would be procured locally. Part of the 7,000-strong work force needed would be trained at a Metallurgical Training Centre to be set up at Pipri by 1975.

The Pipri mill shall have the most advanced and modern technology and production methods, as compared to the Bhilai plant put up in India in 1956, according to Litvinenko, leader of the Russian expert team which visited Pakistan in this connection. Even though the total capital cost of the mill had not yet been determined, the rate of interest for Soviet credits was mutually agreed at 2.5 percent. While the establishment of this mill would be a major land-mark in Pakistan's industrial development, it would also mean a significant increase in the Soviet presence in Pakistan. The Soviet Union was already involved in a heavy electrical complex at Taxila, apart from various minor projects.

### **Cotton Export Resumed**

Another significant development in the economic field was the decision of the Government in October to resume the export of cotton with immediate effect. The ban on cotton export had been imposed in August to avoid a critical shortage of raw cotton for the domestic textile industry. It was feared that the floods had done extensive damage to the cotton crop in both Punjab and Sindh and had completely wiped out the export surplus. In fact, there were doubts even about the availability of cotton up to the estimated minimum requirements of the domestic market. This, along with the manipulations of traders, had led to a serious crisis in the cotton market by the middle of August, when the price of raw cotton reached an all time high of Rs 500 per maund.

The ban on cotton export had come in this background. But it had serious implications for Pakistan's foreign trade, looking at the fact that the previous year's impressive export performance had been primarily due to the share of cotton in it. According to official claims, Pakistan had captured 33 to 40 percent of the world cotton market. The removal of the ban on the export of cotton was therefore expected to sustain the previous year's export performance to a great extent. Even though the exportable surplus for the remaining part of the prevailing cotton season was significantly less than the pre-flood estimate, the earnings from overseas sales were still expected to be of the order of 200 million dollars—the same as in the previous year—as a result of a sharp rise in cotton prices in the world market.

The Government's decision to permit export of cotton had favorable implications for the price situation at home. It dispelled some of the worst fears about the extent of damage this principal cash crop had suffered as a result of the floods, and thereby discouraged speculation. Dr Mubashir Hasan, Federal Finance Minister, announced various steps in pursuit of his objective, that the Government would not permit any manipulation of cotton prices "to make them fall at the time when the farmer has to part with his crop, and to be raised only when seed cotton has left his hands".

## Price Rise

By the end of 1973, the country had witnessed a phenomenal price rise in an entire range of consumer goods. The latest in the list was the price hike in petroleum products, including motor gasoline, kerosene, aviation petrol, high speed diesel and others. Balancing the family budget became a tormenting experience for an average housewife.

According to the annual economic report of the State Bank of Pakistan, the 12-month average of the general index of wholesale prices stood higher by 19.5 percent in 1972-73, as compared to the 1971-72 level. According to the report, the increased pressure on prices could be attributed mainly to a much larger increase in the aggregate demand, as compared to the increase in available goods. The aggregate demand rose sharply, due partially to the exceptionally large increase in monetary assets in 1972-73, amounting to Rs 611.78 crores, or 23 percent, as against a 12 percent rise in the previous year.

Other factors exercising an upward pressure on prices, according to the State Bank report, were the upsurge in prices in the international commodity markets, increases in prices of imported consumer goods and raw materials following the devolution of the Pakistani rupee, inflationary pressures abroad and the revaluation of certain currencies. The unauthorized movement of goods across the border and localized bottle-necks in transport and distribution also accentuated inflationary pressures.

The question of price rise came up at the tripartite labor conference addressed by Prime Minister Bhutto in early December. Bhutto took cognizance of the fact that the price spiral was the talk of the day, and attributed it mainly to three factors. First, prices had not risen in Pakistan alone. This was an international phenomenon. Secondly, prices rose because Pakistan had to devalue its currency, and thirdly, industrial production in the country had also declined.

Petroleum prices were the subject of utmost concern. The consumer prices of petroleum products had been revised by the Government of Pakistan in the middle of November. The price of aviation petrol (100 octane) had been increased by Rs 3 per gallon, and of motor gasoline by Rs 1.25 per gallon. The price of high speed diesel oil had been raised by 95 paise per gallon, and that of kerosene by 50 paise per gallon. The light diesel oil consumed by tube wells had been more expensive by 55 paise per gallon. The price of furnace oil had been raised by Rs 100 per ton.

According to the Government the prices of some of these products had last been revised in 1971. An idea of the prices structure, as compared with India then, could be had from the fact that after the revision of prices in both countries, motor gasoline was sold in India at Rs 13.65 per gallon and in Pakistan at Rs 7.50 per gallon. It may be noted that

the prevailing exchange ratio between the two currencies was 1 Indian rupee to 1.3 Pakistani rupees, approximately.

Irrespective of the fact that the price rise in these products was relatively smaller in Pakistan than in India, the common man felt the pinch of it in equal measure. The taxis and auto-rickshaws increased their fares immediately by 20 paise and ten paise respectively. The bus owners urged the Government to nationalize bus services in the urban areas, on the plea that after the latest increase in the prices of petroleum products, it was not possible for them to remain in business. They also revised their demand for an increase in bus fares, pending with the Government for the last three years. The Petroleum Dealers Association, on the other hand, threatened to close down all petrol pumps in the country if their demands for an increased profit margin were not accepted by the Government.

The Government responded to the bus owners' demand by agreeing to increase the fares at the rate of 25 paise per mile per passenger in Karachi. For the students, however, a single flat rate of 15 paise per ticket was fixed, irrespective of the distance involved.

The Government on its part was taking steps to curb the price rise in essential commodities. By the end of November, it issued an order under the Defence of Pakistan Rules, freezing the prices of seven varieties of cotton cloth which were in common use. The order, which covered specified varieties of coarse, medium and fine cloth, said that their prices could not be increased without the prior approval of the Government. Similarly, the Government asked the Monopoly Control Authority to investigate into the exorbitant prices of eggs and poultry products in the country. After an initial inquiry the MCA was authorized, if it so decided, to start judicial proceedings against people found responsible for over-charging and black-marketing.

Basic to the situation, however, was the slackness in industrial production, and Bhutto had specially drawn attention to it while addressing the tripartite labor conference. One of the reasons for this slackness was the confusion as regards the scope to be allowed to private and public sectors in the scheme of industrial development. Bhutto turned down the demand made by industrialists that the Government give them a categorical commitment that no industry would be nationalized in future. Such a commitment, he said, could not be made before the next general elections. Separately, however, the Finance Minister assured them that the private sector would be given every opportunity, if it abided by the rules of the game.

## Two Years of Bhutto's Rule<sup>4</sup>

At the end of two years of Bhutto's rule, the economic situation could be regarded as a mixture of hopes and frustrations. "This is a terrible thing. It has eaten up so many of our achievements." This is how Bhutto took cognizance of the price rise in the course of his 65-minute public speech in Rawalpindi on 20 December 1973, the second anniversary of his assuming power. The wholesale price level had gone up sharply in August and September, perhaps because of the floods. In August, prices went up by 16 percent over the July level. In September, the increase over the July level was 18 percent. With June 1970 as the base, the general price level in September 1973 stood at 159.30.

Apart from international causes, there were reasons peculiar to Pakistan which were responsible for inflation in the country. The foremost among them was the exorbitant defence expenditure which, in 1972-73, came to 53 percent of the total revenue expenditure, and in 1973-74 was estimated at 45 percent of the revenue budget. Another important reason was the heavy subsidization of food items. Wheat, whose international price was Rs 101 per maund, was being sold on as ration at the rate of Rs 23 per maund. The country was said to be nearly self-sufficient in food grains. The shortfall in wheat requirements was met through imports, which was almost balanced by the export of surplus rice.

A great deal of satisfaction was derived in the country from the excellent export performance. Exports had gone up from 600 million dollars in 1971 (both wings) to an estimated 1,000 million dollars in 1973 (West Pakistan only). The spurt was caused by the export promotion policies of the Government, including a massive devaluation of the Pakistani rupee in May 1972. The sudden increase in the international price of cotton was also responsible for the higher value of Pakistani exports. In fact, according to one well-informed source, the volume of exports in 1973 had come down by 20 percent over the preceding year, indicating a shortfall in production in the country.

However, the export promotion climate had so gripped the country since May 1972 that everything conceivable was now being exported, including onions, tomatoes, eggs and meat. Most of these items found their way to the neighboring Persian Gulf region, fetching good prices to the exporter, but creating a scarcity for the domestic consumer. Meat in Rawalpindi was not available, even at Rs 9 a seer. Lately, the Government had to impose a ban on the export of poultry. Looking at the export of onions and eggs, some people were pinning high hopes on the vast untapped potential of the West Asian market which, they thought, would also bring Pakistan economically closer to West Asia.

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<sup>4</sup> This section was written on the basis of the author's visit to Pakistan in December 1973.

Industrial production was still the big question-mark. The industrialists had constantly been feeling the squeeze of the Government's socialistic measures. They were a pampered lot during Ayub's time, being allowed to reap a 33 percent profit on their investments. The first important step towards tightening public control over industry was the taking over of the administration and management of ten core categories of industries of strategic or basic importance, in January 1972. The 31 major industrial concerns which were put under a Government-appointed Board of Industrial Management, were reported to have shown significant profits as a result of the takeover.

In August 1973, an ordinance was issued authorizing the Government to take over a majority of shares in 18 companies. Simultaneously, the *vanaspoti* industry was completely nationalized, with the exception of foreign-owned concerns. This set in a fresh wave of uncertainty among the industrialists, who were already demanding cast-iron guarantees with regard to further extension of public control, or nationalization. Of late, fresh investment had been very sluggish. There had been a flight of capital to West Asia, or else a switch over to the foreign trade sector.

Matters had been made worse for the industrialists by the Government's latest new-year-eve ordinance, nationalizing the banking industry and assuming power to take over the management of any company engaged in the marketing of petroleum products, as well as maritime shipping industry. This was done despite the Government's previous commitment that no further nationalization would be resorted to until the next general elections. But the Government seemed confident of increasing production despite—and perhaps because of—these measures. According to an official source, cotton yarn, cotton cloth, sulphuric acid, urea, vegetable oil, cigarettes and cycle tires had shown increased production during the first five months of 1973-74. On the whole, there was said to be much less idle capacity now.

The price hike in petroleum products was likely to cause a serious strain on the foreign exchange resources of Pakistan too. According to Dr Baqai, Economic Adviser to the Pakistan Government, Pakistan was able to meet about 16 percent of its requirements from internal production. For the rest, Pakistan's special relations with West Asia could not be of much help. After the last price hike, Pakistan expected about 38 percent of its foreign exchange earnings, of over 1,000 million dollars, to meet the oil bill. As regards the consumer, the second hike had taken the price of gasoline to Rs 9 a gallon, as compared with Rs 14 in India.

On the whole, however, the prospect could not be said to be very bright. The Government could derive consolation from promising exports and marginal increases in some sectors of industrial production. But among the people in general, widespread dissatisfaction could be discerned on account of galloping prices and the scarcity of consumer goods.

## Export Promotion

During 1972-73 the value of Pakistani exports, placed at about Rs 1,000 crores, was supposed to be a magnificent improvement over the maximum combined figure of the two wings, *i.e.* Rs 327 crores reached in 1969-70, even if an allowance was made for the massive devaluation of the Pakistani rupee in May 1972. The export target fixed for 1973-74 was still higher, *i.e.* Rs 1,100 crores. The efforts to achieve this target were directed not only towards increasing the output of cotton and rice, which were together expected to account for nearly 75 percent of the total export earnings during 1973-74, but also towards eliminating malpractices in the export business, about which quite a few complaints had been heard lately.

Of the estimated target of Rs 1,100 crores earmarked for 1973-74, Rs 280 crores was expected to come from rice exports and a total of Rs 620 crores from the sale of cotton and its manufactures. These projections were claimed to be realistic in view of the stable position of these commodities in the past. The export of basmati rice had earned for the country a sum of Rs 112.9 crores in 1972-73, recording a three-fold increase over the performance in 1958-59. Similarly, Pakistan claimed to have emerged as one of the leading exporters of cotton yarn, accounting for over one-third of the total world exports in 1972-73.

The 1973-74 projection for rice had been placed at 3 million tons, as against 2.3 million tons in 1972-73. Cotton output was expected to be of the order of 38 lakh bales and could even go up to 42 lakh bales, in which case it would be an increase over the previous year's finally assessed output of 39.47 lakh bales. Any shortfalls in these expectations could, however, be attributable to the massive floods of August 1973.

The measures which had recently been announced by the Agriculture Committee of the Government of Pakistan to ensure the attainment of these targets, included steps to improve pest control and expand storage facilities. For instance, four more aircraft were to be provided, to strengthen the existing fleet of eight available to the Plant Protection Department for crop spraying. Similarly, with regard to storage facilities, the existing capacity for 7,64,000 tons in the Punjab was to be raised to 11 lakh tons during the 1973-74 financial year.

But these measures were woefully inadequate for the total requirements. For instance, in Sindh the existing arrangements for crop spraying were barely adequate to provide plant protection cover to less than 20 to 25 percent of the total crop area. Again, the Government-built godowns for cereal storage were so far concentrated in port-cities and major towns, leaving the actual centers of crop production completely neglected.

The other dimension of export promotion to which the Government was paying attention, was the elimination of unethical trade practices. The Secretary-General of the Libyan Chamber of Commerce had lodged a complaint with the Pakistani embassy in Tripoli, pointing out the malpractices indulged in by a section of the Pakistani exporters. An instance was cited of the supply of cloth rolls measuring 30 yards instead of the contracted 40 yards length, thus causing a loss of 25 percent to the importer. In another case, it was alleged that the actual quantity supplied turned out to be only 30,000 yards when the obligation was to supply 80,000 yards.

Similar unhappy experiences in the past had prompted several Gulf states to issue a gentle reminder about the observance of elementary rules of the game. Sri Lanka had gone to the extent of publicly airing a sense of disappointment at the failure of certain private rice exporters from Pakistan to fulfill the terms of the contracts.

The Government was first seized of this problem in 1972. In October, the Central Minister for Commerce and Industry had observed that a law was being framed to penalize and punish the defaulters. Earlier, a seminar arranged by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry had urged the introduction of several reforms in this sector, including the appointment of an export commission and the institution of a code of conduct for exporters. In early 1974, suggestions had been made in the Press for pre-shipment inspection by authorized and unimpeachable agencies, for the institution of an Arbitration Council conforming to international practice and for a National Testing Authority for more sophisticated and precision-oriented products. In the light of complaints made by importers, Government was once again waking up to the situation and considering various remedial measures.

A report of considerable interest to the Pakistani middle class was the Government's decision to import 3,000 cars during 1974, to meet the needs of "the administration and the public representatives". In a country which depends entirely on imported cars, the report had caused some consternation as to the urgency and relevance of this import for "administrators and public representatives" only, in a society which was deemed to be "socialist", at a time when the rising oil prices were already a serious challenge to the foreign exchange position.

### **Cotton Crisis**

In April 1974, Pakistan's economy was gripped by a crisis of formidable proportions in the field of cotton. Huge stocks of cotton were lying unlifted. Prices had shown sharp fluctuations in the course of the previous year. Exports had declined drastically. There was a genuine anxiety on this score because the previous year's export miracle was largely on account of cotton whose contribution to export was more than two-thirds of the total.

The cotton trade had received its first jolt when, in the wake of devastating floods, particularly in the cotton belt in both Sindh and the Punjab, the prices had crossed the Rs 200 per maund ceiling in August 1973. It became difficult to contain the forces of speculation and in the process the cotton prices touched an all-time high of Rs 275. Consequently, the export trade of staple cotton remained at a standstill, despite the fact that there was an exportable surplus of about seven lakh bales after meeting the home demand, out of the estimated production of about 37 lakh bales during the year 1973-74.

The big rise in cotton prices made it difficult for Pakistani cotton to compete in the world market. By February 1974, no export of staple cotton had been made, as against over two lakh bales exported during the same period in the previous year. Speculative forces were out to keep the prices well above the export parity, so that the Cotton Export Corporation could not make purchases from the local market. The inevitable outcome, they thought, would be the de-nationalization of the cotton export trade. The other motive behind the game was that the growers would get such a high price, that if Government took any corrective steps to stabilize prices, the grower would feel disappointed.

The situation being grave, the Government had to step in, as it was committed to hold the price line between Rs 180 and Rs 200 per maund. There came the Bank Nationalization Ordinance, followed by a credit squeeze, which contained the speculative forces. Prices suddenly began to fall in the wake of persistent liquidation. The net fall was of the order of Rs 83, as prices fell from Rs 275 to Rs 192.00 per maund. The other contributory factor was a substantial rise in cotton production in China and Russia, which found outlets in the deficit areas.

But the steep fall in prices created problems for the growers of cotton. According to the *Aiwan Zirrat*, an association of cotton growers of Multan district, the market price of cotton fell from Rs 110 to Rs 80 per maund. Even at this price, no cotton-ginner or mill-owner was lifting the stocks against cash payment. At the end of March, 30 lakh maunds of cotton was lying in the godowns of the farmers and there was no one to buy it against cash. Textile mills did not have funds to purchase cotton and they owed about Rs 2 crores in the cotton market in Multan city alone. The mill-owners' stand was that yarn and cloth valued at Rs 100 crores was dumped in their godowns, which could not be exported due to high, *i.e.* 75 percent export duty.

The cotton export trade had been nationalized in October 1973 to cut down the middleman's profits. Against a normal export of nearly one million bales per year, the Cotton Export Corporation managed to export, by early April 1974, only 80,000 bales since it stepped into the arena. The Corporation was buying cotton at an average of 82 cents and selling it abroad at a rate of 62 cents, thereby incurring a substantial loss to the national exchequer.

There had been large adulteration of *desi* and staple cotton and this had led to inferior quality seeds for the next crop. And thus the vicious circle went on. The whole question was raised in the Punjab Assembly in early April. A resolution was unanimously passed, asking the provincial government to take up the question of prices with the federal government. But the question concerned both Sindh and the Punjab, their growers, traders and mill-owners. And the question also concerned the nation as a whole, for it had serious and disturbing implications for the export sector.

### **Agrarian Riots in NWFP**

Towards the end of April, the NWFP witnessed serious clashes between landlords and tenants. A large number of casualties and a considerable loss of property was reported from the rural areas of Mardan, Swat and Malakand Agency.

The origins of the trouble could be traced back to the election campaign of the People's Party, when it gave slogans like "land for the peasants" and "mills for the laborers". The slogans were found attractive by the NWFP peasants, who started implementing them on their own, having waited for the Government to do so. The peasants started occupying land belonging to small landowners. The big Khans were left untouched, as they were equipped with automatic weapons.

Over the years, the discontented tenants had organized themselves with the encouragement of political agitators of all kinds. They formed village committees, each with a code number and a secretary in charge, who was answerable to the chairman of his particular zone. It was decided that each tenant family provide itself with a rifle, and if did not have the means, the others make a collection to buy it one. At the committee secretary's call, each family was to produce a rifleman and in the case of default, the family was fined. Discipline and rules were strictly enforced. This is what kept the tenants ever prepared. As soon as there was the report of some trouble, or the apprehension of a show of strength with the owners, the various committees mustered up the peasants, who rushed towards allotted positions and mounted pickets wherever needed. The main task of these pickets was to prevent reinforcements from reaching the landlords.

The peasant movement had its inevitable reaction in provoking the landlords to organize themselves. Having despaired of the law's ability to help them, they decided to help themselves. The idea caught on. There emerged a landowners' organization, calling the *Ittehad Party*. All other farmers' bodies were merged into it. Rallies and clarion calls became a regular feature. At times there were attacks on the strongholds of the more recalcitrant tenants. It was thus no more a one-sided affair.

The situation landed the Government in a dilemma. While its sympathies were with the landlords, the dictates of politics necessitated that it keep its eyes closed when lands

were seized by the tenants. Consequently, the police, when summoned, played an anomalous role; it reached the trouble spot and tried to disperse the combatants. If occasion demanded, it made token arrests of an equal number from both sides. There was no question of whose interests were infringed, or who attacked whom. The rioting was temporarily stopped, but no effort was made to solve the problem.

Conditions were bad in Swat district, where travelers were asked by the authorities to give an undertaking that they would travel through the troubled areas "at their own risk". The situation in Malakand Agency also continued to be grave, according to a *Dawn* report. Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, chief of the Frontier PPP, blamed the *Ittehad Party* and said that some defeated politicians, including the Hoti brothers of Mardan, were at its back.

But independent quarters blamed the Central Government for the situation prevailing. The Pakistan People's Party, which promised to distribute land among the tenants if returned to power, was now saddled with the responsibility of having to fulfill the pledge. Perhaps its self-interest in Sindh and Punjab prevented it from fulfilling this pledge. But how long could it stall?

### **Economic Survey, 1973-74**

Pakistan's economy had undergone various ups and downs since Bhutto assumed power in December 1971. The pre-budget economic survey released by Pakistan's Finance Ministry in June 1974, however, revealed a not-so-gloomy picture of the economy, particularly if adversities like the massive floods of which Pakistan was a victim in 1973, were taken into account.

The economic growth of the country was circumscribed by a number of difficulties, some peculiar to Pakistan—like the needs of August-September 1973—and some of an international character, like the energy crisis and world-wide inflation. The energy crisis, following the 1973 war in West Asia, made a big difference to Pakistan also, which is a net importer of oil. Pakistan's domestic production of crude oil meets hardly 15 percent of its total requirement of crude and finished production. The oil import bill increased from 225 million dollars in 1973-74, and was placed at 385 million dollars in 1974-75.

Similarly, fertilizer prices were affected and the country had to spend 150 million dollars on fertilizer imports, as against 40 million dollars in the preceding year. The same was true of wheat, edible oils, chemicals, metals and machinery. Among Pakistan's exports, however, the exportable surplus of cotton was drastically reduced by floods. Its gain from increased world prices was, therefore, confined only to rice. The export of yarn also faced difficulties because of reduced world demand and a decline in prices.

According to official estimates, Pakistan lost nearly 500 million dollars the year after adjusting the gains due to the high export price of rice, against losses due to the high import prices of petroleum, fertilizers, machinery and raw materials. The import bill was estimated to have gone up to 1,450 million dollars in 1973-74, as against 797 million dollars in 1972-73, without any significant increase in the quantities imported. The year was likely to close with a balance of payments deficit of 165 million dollars.

It is in this perspective that the performance of Pakistan's economy during 1973-74 can be seen. The overall growth rate of over 5 percent recorded by the agricultural sector could be regarded as reasonably impressive, particularly in the light of flood damage caused to the *kharif* crops of cotton and rice. The major crops, however, were claimed to have recorded an increase of roughly 8 percent. As regards the industrial sector, the initial estimates placed the growth rate for 1973-74 at 7 percent, which was expected to be exceeded.

As the survey put it: "Thus there is evidence that the development strategy adopted in 1972 has produced results." Agriculture was given primary emphasis, and adequate incentives were maintained by way of support prices and by ensuring a regular supply of essential imports. In the industrial sector, the emphasis was on better utilization of capacity through the liberalization of raw material imports.

Some important structural changes in the economy were accomplished during the year. The vegetable oil industry was nationalized in September 1973. Nationalization was extended to banking, shipping and distribution in January 1974. Public sector control of foreign trade was enlarged through the nationalization of raw cotton exports.

The population, meanwhile, appeared to be increasing by 15 percent per annum. Thus, roughly half the growth in income recorded during the two years at the rate of over 6 percent, had been absorbed by a rise in population.

Despite claims of industrial growth at the rate of 7 percent, the survey admitted that investment in the economy had to be accelerated, particularly for import-substitution in the fields most seriously affected by the energy crisis and by world-wide inflation. The sluggishness of investment was largely attributable to nationalization measures adopted during the year, and posed a serious challenge to the Government.

According to revised estimates, the growth rate in real terms for the year 1971-72 was placed at 7.6 percent. As compared with this, the estimated growth rate of 6.1 percent for 1973-74 was at a decline, though by itself it was an achievement not to be ignored. What caused anxiety, however, was the price level, which continued to increase. The consumer price index recorded an increase of 26.5 percent during the first nine months of the fiscal year.

## Heavy Dependence on Foreign Aid

In March 1975, the *Dawn* carried an exclusive interview with a high-ranking official of the Pakistani Government, about the state of Pakistan's economy. The interview revealed the soundness of the budgetary position and the buoyancy of the export sector, despite the world inflationary pressures. But at the same time it brought out the heavy dependence of the economy on foreign aid, particularly from the Muslim world.

According to this interview, Pakistan had undertaken no deficit financing during the current fiscal year up to December 1974. At the end of the first half year of the fiscal year, *i.e.* December 1974, the budget showed a surplus of Rs 28 crores. But this, the official admitted, could be attributed to the Iranian loan of 250 million dollars received by Pakistan in September 1974.

In a reference to the Government's non-developmental expenditure, it was pointed out that out of a total expenditure of Rs 1,350 crores, administrative expenditure amounted to Rs 250 crores only, inclusive of the cost of living relief provided on two occasions to public servants. The balance of Rs 1,100 crores on the non-developmental side was being utilized as follows: defence, Rs 535 crores; debt servicing, Rs 200 crores; subsidies on wheat, Rs 225 crores; edible oil, Rs 75 crores and POL, Rs 65 crores.

More interesting, however, was the effect of these subsidies on the price structure of essential commodities. While the actual cost of importing 15 lakh tons of wheat came to Rs 300 crores in foreign exchange, the Government incurred an additional expenditure of Rs 225 crores in order to sell wheat at the subsidized rate of Rs 21.50 per maund, as against the actual cost of Rs 52.50 to Rs 55 per maund. Similarly, the Government spent Rs 150 crores in foreign exchange to import 150,000 tons of edible oil. But the subsidy of Rs 75 crores enabled the Government to sell it to the consumers at the rate of Rs 5 a seer, as against the cost price of Rs 12.50 a seer, which included the import price plus cost of conversion.

The same was true of sugar, fertilizers and POL products. Sugar was being sold at the rate of Rs 3.50 a seer, as against the international prices of Rs 8 to Rs 9 per seer. Fertilizer was being sold at the rate of Rs 1,000 per tonne, as against the international price of Rs 3,000 per tonne. The government imported 5 lakh tones of fertilizer at a cost of Rs 150 crores, and subsidized it to the extent of Rs 75 crores.

With regard to the country's drive for self-sufficiency in wheat, the wheat production capacity of 7.5 to 7.6 million tons was expected to be enhanced to 9 million tons with the coming into operation of the Tarbela Dam. In the export sector too, there were hopes of exports reaching the target of 1,200 million dollars by the end of the fiscal year. Since 1971-72 the exports were claimed to have risen by about 60 percent, from 595 million

dollars to 800 million dollars in 1972-73, and to 41,030 million dollars in 1973-74. Partly, of course, this was attributable to the rise of prices in the international market. In addition, a number of items which were formerly supplied to East Pakistan, like rice, raw cotton, cotton cloth, cement and footwear, were now exported.

It should, however, be realized that Pakistan's skilful cultivation of Muslim countries was making a significant contribution to the shoring up of Pakistan's economy. As was admitted by the Pakistani official, the country's mid-year surplus of Rs 28 crores was largely attributable to the Iranian loan of 250 million dollars. Besides, Pakistan had been offered interest-free loans amounting to 187 million dollars during the prevailing fiscal year, out of which 100 million had been offered by Saudi Arabia. Even the favorable export performance of Pakistan owed itself to the phenomenal expansion of Pakistan's trade with Muslim countries during the preceding three years. The exports of over Rs 2,000 million to 36 Muslim countries constituted 24 percent of the total exports in 1973-74. Pakistan's drive to expand its trade with Muslim countries was said to have received special impetus from the successful holding of the Second Islamic Summit in Lahore in February 1974.

Pakistan was also one of the beneficiaries of the special treatment which OPEC countries were apparently giving to Muslim countries with regard to allocation of aid, to redress their difficulties created by oil prices. According to a survey compiled by the 24-nation Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), OPEC committed about 9,600 million dollars in development assistance during 1974, and actually disbursed only 2,600 million. Among the recipients, Egypt, Syria and Pakistan together got more than 70 percent of the total disbursements, while India occupied the fourth position, receiving 3.7 percent of the aid actually disbursed.

### **Price Hike**

The Government of Pakistan increased the prices of three essential commodities of mass consumption in April 1975, giving rise to a wild-cat strike by railway workers, followed by violent demonstrations, in which students and industrial workers also joined later. The agitation died down as a result of the Government's heavy hand. The Press, which was mostly controlled, kept silent on these developments. The Prime Minister gleefully thanked the nation for not having responded to the Opposition's call for a strike in protest against the price hike. There was, however, a heated debate in the National Assembly of Pakistan on this issue, even though the Opposition was boycotting the assembly.

The price hike, which affected wheat, sugar and vegetable oil, exploded the image of economic revival, which was being successfully built by Pakistan over the previous two years. Pakistan was said to be nearing self-sufficiency in food production. Industrial production had picked up after the first year of sluggishness, in the wake of the

Bangladesh war. Exports claimed to have risen by about 60 percent, from 595 million dollars in 1971-72 to 1,030 million dollars in 1973-74.

During 1974, however, a number of factors continued to depress the economic situation. There were, of course, the international factors, because of which prices of most of the essential imports like food-stuffs, fuel and fertilizers were under severe strain. In addition, the lowest-ever water flow in the country's rivers led to serious drought and power shortages in the country. Besides, there was a heavy diversion of resources to defence. The prices of essential commodities were sought to be maintained at a convenient level through a heavy dose of subsidies, which had to be reduced, necessitating the price rise.

The issue price of wheat, which was hitherto available at Rs 21.50 per maund, was raised to Rs 32 per maund. The price of sugar sold at ration shops was raised from Rs 3.50 a seer to Rs 4 per seer. And the price of vegetable oil was raised from Rs 7.50 per seer to Rs 9 per seer. The Government took elaborate steps to explain the decision through a detailed Press note and a number of radio and TV interviews and statements by influential ministers.

It was pointed out that the Government was procuring wheat at home at the rate of Rs 37 per maund, and was importing it at the rate of Rs 60 per maund. During 1974-75, the country had to import 15 lakh tons of wheat, in addition to 75 lakh tones of indigenous production. At the previous issue price of Rs 21.50 a maund, the Government was spending Rs 264 crores a year on subsidy. At the new price of Rs 32 a maund, it still had to spend Rs 140 crores on subsidy. The Prime Minister lamented the fact that the off take of wheat for rationed areas in the country had jumped from just over 11 lakh tons to over 24 lakh tons over the past four years, while wheat production had registered a nominal increase of 4 lakh tons: "The continuation of total subsidy in this situation of astronomical increase in consumption would have claimed all the resources of the nation."

Similarly, the price of sugar was increased to restrict consumption. The output of sugar had declined from 5.89 lakh tons to 4.75 lakh tons since the last season. While the sugar quota had been reduced in 1974-75, the Government had decided not to import any sugar, thus saving a likely expenditure of Rs 60 crores in foreign exchange and a sizeable expenditure on subsidy to sell it at the domestic price. In vegetable oil also, the price rise was expected to enable the Government to save a part of Rs 40 crores in subsidy and Rs 123 crores on the import bill of edible oil.

Bhutto tried to justify the decision mainly in terms of reducing the subsidy, and said: "In a budget ten times larger than Pakistan's India was spending only Rs 300 crores on subsidies against this country's Rs 355 crores." But Bhutto failed to highlight the fact that Pakistan was spending Rs 615 crores out of Rs 1,200 crores of its revenue budget on

defence. The amount was in fact increased during the year, for the 1974-75 budget, when presented, had ear-marked Rs 558 crores for defence. Hafeez Pirzada, Minister for Provincial Coordination, in a bid to evoke the people's sense of patriotism, went to the extent of claiming that more than 80 percent of the country's revenue was being spent on defence.

The Government tried to lessen the blow of the price hike on the consumers by increasing the salaries of its employees by Rs 25 a month, and promising similar increases for employees of all industrial and commercial establishments through legislation. But this did not mitigate the impact on the landless laborers and millions of small farmers and tenants. Besides, it had already contributed to the inflationary psychology, despite Government's efforts to impose a price-freeze on other commodities. The Pakistan Government was thus not out of the vicious circle in which many other governments of developing countries were entrapped.

### **Depressing Prospect**

In July 1975, a glance at the economic and political situation in Pakistan suggested a depressing prospect. The country had suffered a general economic and political deterioration during the previous year. There had been severe economic stagnation. There had been a further erosion of democratic values and institutions. The political system was under terrible strain because of the Opposition's continuing non-participation in it, and recurring factional fights within the ruling party.

In a somewhat frank admission of the country's economic failure, the economic survey for the financial year 1974-75 presented by the Government in June, acknowledged that this had been a bad year. The two main indicators were the price rise and unsatisfactory production. Price rise in the first ten months of the year was of the order of 20 percent. The price rise might have been higher still "but for the fortunate arrival of new wheat crops in the market", which somewhat stabilized the prices. Even so, the year as a whole recorded a good 25 percent overall increase in the price level.

The Government advanced three reasons for the price rise, all beyond its control. First, the vagaries of the weather. There was a severe drought. Second, the hopes pinned on the Tarbela Dam, coming into operation during the year, were belied because of the disaster that overtook this project in August 1974. And third, insufficient domestic production necessitated imports of wheat at the exorbitant rate of nearly 100 rupees per maund. As for stagnant industrial production, it was mainly caused by the setback suffered by the industry on account of very poor exports of cotton, cotton yarn and cotton goods. The total imports exceeded the exports by 1,100 million dollars during the year. The rate of growth was nowhere near the above 5 percent of the last few years. The figure was not mentioned.

As against this, the political scene had been equally dismal. Factional fights within the Punjab PPP, the mainstay of Bhutto's power, had been causing him concern. Ghulam Mustafa Khar, who had been eased out of chief ministership in 1974 and replaced by Haneef Ramay, was brought back early in 1975 as the Governor of the province. Bhutto perhaps needed both—the strong-arm methods of Khar, and the ideological appeal of Ramay—to sustain his power in the province. But the two always found it difficult to coexist. This necessitated Bhutto's spending many days in Punjab in July on a patch-up mission, but with no great success.

At the national level, politics continued to be a unilateral game ever since the entire Opposition boycotted the national and provincial legislatures in protest against the ban on the National Awami Party and the arrest of Wali Khan in February 1975, on the pretext of the murder of Sherpao. The entire budget session in the federal and provincial assemblies had been gone through without the presence of the Opposition. While the legislative and financial proceedings had been reduced to a farce, the Opposition had been demanding a removal of the ban on the NAP as the condition for ending its boycott of the assemblies.

It was a sad commentary on the "democratic" practices of our times, that instead of releasing Wali Khan, or lifting the ban on his party, a stage-managed trial against him was conducted in the Supreme Court under the *Political Parties Act*. One of the trumped-up charges that had been formulated against the NAP by the Attorney General of Pakistan was that the NAP was never reconciled to the creation of Pakistan, that its ultimate aim was to disintegrate Pakistan, that its leaders referred to Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah as the "*Gumashtha* and *Ghulam* of Imperialism", and hurled similar indignities on Quaid-e-Milat Liaquat Ali Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin and Abdul Rab Nishtar, and that the NAP had been colluding with Afghanistan against Pakistan.

It is ironic that the party which was allowed to contest the general elections and was a signatory to the present Constitution of the country was being tried for "sins" committed before the partition of the subcontinent. However, nobody could deny the Pakistan Government the privilege of fabricating charges against one of its political foes. But the dictates of justice demanded that Wali Khan be given the necessary freedom to organize his legal defence. When this was denied to him, Wali Khan had no choice but to walk out from the court.

This trial was thus conducted without the presence of the defendant. It was, therefore, quite consistent with the traditions of Pakistani "democracy" that the *ex parte* verdict that emerged led to the political extinction of NAP and its leadership.

## Tarbela Dam

Pakistan rejoiced at the completion of repair work in the Tarbela Dam, which had caused nightmares to the Government in 1974. The service spillway of the dam went into operation on 7 August 1975, when its seven steel gates were opened in the presence of hundreds of Pakistani and foreign engineers and technicians. The opening of gates was the beginning of the actual operation of the 470-foot high and 9,000-foot long rock and earth-filled dam, the largest in the world.

It was in the third week of August 1974, when the dam was being tested for the first time, that major construction defects were discovered in it, causing fears that the dam could be breached. Millions of farmers who had hoped to irrigate their parched lands by this dam, feared that they might be the victims of a huge man-made flood. The Pakistan Government had issued flood warnings stretching to towns more than 750 kilometers away. Engineers from several European countries and the United States, who had hoped to give finishing touches to the darn, got busy instead with saving the structure, which is three times larger than the Aswan Dam.

The defects were pin-pointed in four 0.8 kilometer-long tunnels intended to draw water from the dam's 129 sq. km. reservoir and feed it into the carefully regulated irrigation system. When the water started gushing through the tunnels, large chunks of the tunnels' concrete and steel linings were ripped off. Also, several gates to control the water flow were found jammed. Prime Minister Bhutto, after an inspection of the site in October 1975, declared that the structural damage to the dam and its operational shut-down had deprived the country of 105 million tons of food, on which it was banking to make up the shortfall.

The Tarbela Dam project envisaged the construction of a storage reservoir on the Indus River, about 32 miles above Attock. The reservoir created by the 470-foot high and 9,000-foot long dam extends nearly 50 miles upstream, with a gross capacity of 11.1 million acre-feet, of which initially 9.3 million acre-feet will be available for irrigation and power development. The dam will also provide hydroelectric power, the ultimate potential of which will be 2.1 million kw, produced through 12 generating units with a capacity of 175,000 kw each. The project involves a total expenditure of Rs 10,403.7 million, of which some 500 million dollars was required in foreign exchange. While 300 to 320 million dollars were available from the Indus Basin Fund, the IDA and the World Bank have been associated with arrangements for providing the balance. The construction of the dam started in 1968.

The federal government had told the National Assembly in 1974 that repair work would cost Rs 50 to 60 crores. All repairs to the damaged portions of the dam, the tunnels, etc., were completed, with the exception of minor repairs to the stilling basins of tunnels

number 3 and 4, which were to be undertaken after the area had dried up. In addition to the repairs, four service gates in the middle of tunnels 1 and 2 had been installed. The 45-foot high service gates had been installed to ensure complete safety of the tunnels, as water would be regulated through them. The inlet gates of these two tunnels, which were found jammed in 1974, were closed to avoid any mishap. They were plastered with a thick layer of cement and concrete and would never be opened except to save the main dam in case of an emergency. After the repairs were over, the dam was put to test for a few weeks, with the water level rising to 1450 feet, about 13 feet below the 1974 mark, at which the mishap had occurred.

Special consultants, consisting of the finest international experts who had visited Tarbela in 1974, held a special meeting in New York in July 1975 and expressed their satisfaction over the repair work. Bernard Chadenet, Vice-President of the World Bank, and C.G. Melmoth, the Bank's Assistant Director for South Asian Development, visited Tarbela in early August to review the progress, and attended a meeting of the Special Cabinet Committee on Tarbela. While expressing complete satisfaction over the progress of the repair work, and describing it as a "creditable engineering feat of major proportions", Chadenet announced that the World Bank would provide 8 million dollars to Pakistan as its contribution towards the cost of repair and additional work on the Tarbela Dam project. Since the test filling of water in the Tarbela reservoir was to continue till the end of the year, the Tarbela waters were expected to be available only for the second and third watering of the next *rabi* crops.

Reports of further damage to tunnels 3 and 4, however, came in October 1975. Because of this damage, it was said that water from only the spillway would be made available for the *rabi* crops. The spillway water was about 1.5 million acre-feet, which was about 17 percent of the water originally expected for *rabi*.

On 29 April 1976, the Pakistan Government disclosed another major setback to Tarbela. Irrigation tunnels 3 and 4 had to be closed on 31 April after the first four days of testing, because of damage in the stilling basin outlets. Foreign experts were again summoned for inspection and repairs. Closure of the two tunnels meant that 75 percent of water stored by the dam could not be released for irrigation during the vital sowing period for summer crops over the next few weeks. Engineers privately hinted that the design of the stilling basins might have to be changed. This could delay its becoming fully operational for another two or three years. The dam was already two years behind schedule.

### **Economic Revival: Mid-1976**

As mentioned earlier, 1974-75 had been a bad year for Pakistan's economy. In an interview to *Kayhan International* in October 1975, Bhutto said: "Let's make no bones about it, we are facing a serious economic situation. The nightmare is receding into the

past. But we still have numerous difficulties to overcome." During 1974-75, the GDP had grown by 2.6 percent as against the population growth rate of 3 percent. The regression in per capita income, which had been caused as a consequence, was projected at 4 percent. There had been a general decline in both agricultural and industrial production, as compared with the previous year. On the other hand, the expenditure on defence continued to rise. The budget allocation for 1975-76 registered a rise of 25 percent over the previous year's figure of 560 million dollars. The wholesale price index maintained an upward trend and rose by 25.9 percent in 1974-75. The deficit in the balance of trade increased to an all-time high of Rs 1038.3 million. Exports during the year increased by 1.2 percent, while imports went up by over 53 percent. The gross domestic savings rate came down from 7.5 percent in 1973-74 to 6.8 percent in 1974-75. The gross domestic investment rate remained static at 15 percent. Foreign economic assistance reached 10.6 billion dollars by the end of 1974-75, having begun in 1950. This included 2.6 billion dollars as grants and grant-type assistance, which is loans repayable in convertible rupees. The balance of 8 billion dollars represented loans repayable in foreign exchange. Debt servicing was eating away a big chunk of foreign exchange earnings, having gone much beyond the safe limit of 20 percent per annum.

Against this depressing situation at the end of 1974-75, the economic revival made by Pakistan during 1975-76 was a minor miracle. According to the Government's economic survey released in June 1976, the country's GDP recorded a growth rate of 5 percent during 1975-76, the agricultural sector registering a 4 percent increase. Much of it was due to "the benevolence of weather gods than to the government's effort", as a perceptive Indian writer put it. Nevertheless, the country got the much-needed respite from shortages and soaring prices. Inflation came down to less than 5.7 percent. Investment, in both public and private sectors, went up to Rs 22,500 million from Rs 17,350 million in the previous year, marking an improvement of nearly 30 percent. Despite the heavy damage to Tarbela Dam, wheat production went up to 8.1 million tons, a half million ton more than in the previous year. The country also registered increase in the production of maize, rice and sugarcane. Substantial increase was also recorded in sugar, vegetable oil and fertilizer.

## CHAPTER 6

### UNEASY FEDERALISM

After the secession of East Bengal, which constituted the East Wing of Pakistan, the two border provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan had become trouble spots in Pakistan. Economically and politically, the two provinces had problems somewhat similar to those faced by East Bengal. In both provinces economic development has been retarded, with participation in the power structure of the country disproportionately small. Both have consequently been fertile soil for a strong dissident movement called *Pakhtoonistan*, which also evoked sympathetic responses from a neighboring country – Afghanistan. Both again posed to Bhutto, whose People's Party did not have much following there, the same kind of problem that East Bengal posed in its time. Yet, it would be wrong to presume that it is as possible for these two provinces to secede, if they want to, as it was for East Bengal.

Bhutto's party had secured four out of the 40 provincial assembly seats in the last general elections in NWFP, and none out of the 20 seats in Baluchistan. In the National Assembly, the People's Party took one out of 18 seats from NWFP, and none out of four from Baluchistan. The party which took the largest number of seats in the two provincial assemblies was the National Awami Party of Wali Khan, with 12 seats in NWFP and seven in Baluchistan. Bhutto was conscious of this when he offered two cabinet posts in the Central Government to NAP members – Arbab Sikander Khan and Khair Bux Marri – shortly after assuming power. His failure to secure NAP's cooperation and give it due importance would have meant strengthening the position of his arch enemy, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, whose Muslim League was the second largest party in the NWFP Assembly, having nine seats.

But Bhutto did not allow his trust in the NAP to be taken to its logical conclusion. He appointed in Baluchistan a governor who was not only a non-Baluchi, but in whom the NAP had no confidence. The appointment of Ghaus Baksh Raisani as Governor of Baluchistan on 25 December 1971, set off a series of disturbances in Quetta, which snowballed into a veritable wall of suspicion between the NAP and Bhutto. The first consequence was the decision of the NAP not to allow its two members to join the Central Cabinet for the time being.

The NAP which, together with the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, had initially offered cooperation to the People's Party to form governments in NWFP and Baluchistan, became reticent when it saw Bhutto not keen about democracy going too far, at any rate not too soon. Both the NAP and the JUI took the position that the People's Party had no

seat in the Baluchistan Provincial Assembly, and had, therefore, no right to participate in the government there. Wali Khan, the NAP chief, whose regard for Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was well known, tempered Bhutto's continuing enthusiasm for a united Pakistan by reminding him of its inevitable logic—that in such a case Sheikh Mujib should be the President and Martial Law Administrator. Wali Khan and his colleagues asserted that the cooperation of the JUI and the NAP would be available to the Government only if martial law was lifted immediately, "undiluted democracy" restored in the country, provincial autonomy granted and land reforms introduced. The Working Committee of the Baluchistan NAP went to the extent of passing a resolution, calling on its MNAs and MPAs not to take part in the meetings of the committees or institutions set up by the local administration.

It was in this broad political context that Bhutto's sudden dash to Kabul for talks with the Afghan king (lasting a couple of hours in the second week of January 1972), can be viewed. Before the Indo-Pakistan war started on 3 December, Afghanistan was reported to have asked Pakistan to clarify its stand regarding the people of Pakhtoonistan. In the course of the war, Afghanistan was not known to have made any statement which could be construed as favorable to Pakistan. And yet, Bhutto told newsmen in Lahore on his return from Kabul, that he had gone to Kabul "to thank King Zahir Shah and Afghan people in appreciation of that country's role during the recent war". The real purpose was obviously to tone down Afghanistan's sympathies for the NAP, and to ensure that in the given situation, peace prevailed on the border with Afghanistan. How far Bhutto achieved this purpose could be inferred from the fact that Kabul Radio, in a commentary after the President's visit, expressed the hope that Pakistan would now address itself to the Pakhtoonistan issue.

However, Bhutto sought to reduce the punch of the NAP in the two provinces by asking his Governor to take certain dramatic steps in the field of economic reforms. For instance, NWFP Governor Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao announced in Dir that all private lands of small holders evicted by the former ruler of Dir state would be restored to them. Further, Governor Sherpao ordered all forest and PWD contractors in NWFP to declare, within ten days, their assets both then and at the time of independence. He also warned the *jagirdars* of Malakand Division against the sale of their properties, lands, shops and houses, and put a ban on their transfer which, he said, would defeat the very purpose of the land reforms to be introduced shortly.

### Questions of Survival

Nevertheless, doubts were being expressed by many watchers of the Pakistani scene as to whether Pakistan would survive its present troubles with all four provinces intact. The doubts emanated from their assessment of the continuing internal problems (some of them very similar to those which led to the secession of East Bengal), as also some external factors. Such an assessment was, of course, based on a rather superficial

understanding of the circumstances in which Bangladesh emerged, as well as India's role in it. There was, perhaps, an element of wishful thinking too on the part of those who took a simplistic view of things and did not realize that a further disintegration of Pakistan would not be in India's interests either. On the contrary, to fall prey to such an assessment would have amounted to playing the Pakistani game.

In the internal situation of Pakistan there were, broadly speaking, two factors which could be regarded as carrying the germs of disintegration within the country. One was the general unrest in NWFP and Baluchistan, and the other, problems connected with the perpetuation of martial law and the delay in the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. The unrest in NWFP and Baluchistan, which, in February, had manifested itself in a series of demonstrations and strikes by students, workers and policemen, was quite similar to that in the erstwhile East Wing, in the sense that both these provinces, like East Bengal, had been victims of political and economic domination by the Punjabis. Both were also inhabited by an ethnic minority, which is not only different from the dominant majority but also looks abroad sometimes for moral and material support. This ethnic minority had the additional advantage of possessing a martial tradition, which could enable it to raise an armed corps much better and quicker than the East Bengalis could.

But the parallel would end here. These two provinces do not make a sizable contribution to the economic life of the country, as the East Wing did. Unlike the East Wing, which was separated from the mainland by a thousand miles of alien territory, these two provinces are physically an integral part of the mainland, and logistically much easier to control from the Centre. Unlike the East Wing again, they do not exercise much demographic weight on the political structure of the country.

Nevertheless, they have a tremendous potential for mischief, and were largely responsible for giving to the countrywide agitation for the lifting of martial law and the restoration of democracy, its viable dimensions. There was no doubt that the Muslim League factions, the Jamaat-i-Islami and individuals like (Retd.) Air Marshal Asghar Khan had also been demanding the immediate lifting of martial law and the convening of the national and provincial assemblies. But the parties that had been most vocal in this respect were the National Awami Party of Khan Abdul Wali Khan and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam of Maulana Hazarvi. They together constituted a majority in the provincial assemblies of NWFP and Baluchistan, and had been asking for the same rights for themselves as enjoyed by the People's Party at the Centre and in Punjab and Sindh.

The more powerful of the two, *i.e.* the National Awami Party, had strong links in Afghanistan and traditionally a soft attitude towards India. Many of its leaders had, in the past, been interned from time to time for "anti-national" activities. The party had lately been suggesting the recognition of Bangladesh, and early negotiations with India

for settling various issues. It had also raised its armed guards (composed of militant Pathans). NAP flags were reported to be flying on housetops in large areas of the two provinces, These were the sort of signs that led some observers to believe that the situation was threatening a further disintegration of Pakistan.

Whatever the potentialities of the situation, Bhutto's government showed some awareness of them, and responded to pressures bit by bit. The essence of the matter was democracy. Bhutto tried to convince the various parties—whether in these two provinces or elsewhere—that he did not intend to deprive them of their democratic rights for ever. He blunted a good deal of their criticism by yielding to some vital demands. For instance, he agreed to postpone the elections to local bodies, scheduled for 15 March, until after the provincial assemblies had been convened on 23 March. Elections to provincial assembly seats reserved for women were also held in a free and fair manner, paving the way for convening the assemblies on the due date. And further, to satisfy the police which went on strike in Peshawar, Lyallpur and Lahore, their pay scales were revised. These steps were welcomed by nearly all parties. The police also called off its strike before irreversible damage was done to its relations with the Government. Khan Wali Khan reasserted that he supported the integrity of Pakistan, and for good reasons, for he knew that NWFP and Baluchistan would stand to gain more by remaining parts of Pakistan than by becoming independent entities.

There were practical difficulties in convening the National Assembly immediately, and the political leaders knew them. Bhutto tried to dispel suspicions about his desire to cling to power through martial law by stating, in an interview with the BBC, that he would prefer to be "in a position of respectable responsibility" through "a Constitution hard-earned through elections". Internally, therefore, it was hoped that Bhutto would succeed in stabilizing the situation.

Externally, India and Afghanistan are the only two factors which could contribute to the disintegration of Pakistan. For India, the proposition is neither feasible nor desirable. It does not have a common border with NWFP or Baluchistan. No spillover of international disturbances in these two provinces could affect its economy or security. Therefore, it did not have a credible basis of intervention, even if it wanted to. Besides, such intervention was least desirable, for any further disturbance of the status quo in this region can put severe strains on India. As for Afghanistan, it is doubtful if it was capable of intervening militarily—even if it wanted to—without foreign help. And no foreign power would like to contribute to a further break-up of Pakistan.

### **Strains on Federalism**

In April 1972, Bhutto allowed the NAP and JUT to form coalition governments in NWFP and Baluchistan. But he at the same time Khan, included in his federal cabinet, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan Muslim League leader, and gave him the crucial Home

portfolio. This had inevitable repercussions on the Central Government's relationships with the provinces, and tended to circumscribe the nature of federalism that ought to have developed as a necessary concomitant of political stability in a pluralistic society.

The political balance in the country was really held by the Pakistan People's Party on the one hand and a combination of the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam on the other. The odd man in the situation was Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, head of one faction of the Muslim League, whom Bhutto, for mysterious reasons, gave the important Home portfolio in the Central Cabinet. To make the confusion worse, the NAP and JUL considered by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan as his arch-enemies, were also being induced by the President to join the Central Cabinet.

The transfer of power to the NAP and JUI in the NWFP and Baluchistan took place on the understanding that while the NAP-JUI governments would allow nothing in the two provinces which would jeopardize national integrity, or undermine central jurisdiction, the Central Government too would not allow anything which would interrupt the normal flow of life in the two provinces. The two provincial governments, being a minority in the country's power structure, had obvious stakes in preserving the political status quo, for the time being at any rate. In an effort to fulfill their part of the bargain, the two governments started normalizing political and social life in the provinces immediately after assuming power.

For instance, a day after being sworn in, the Baluchistan Governor, Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo of NAP, withdrew Section 144 from Quetta and Pishin districts, and ordered Baluchistan University, along with all other educational and vocational institutions, to be reopened. A few days later, the Baluch government announced Urdu as the official language of the province. It also announced that anybody giving information leading to the arrests of smugglers would be rewarded in cash to the extent of one-third of the value of seized goods.

Similarly, almost the first thing that the NWFP government did was to lift the ban on the *Khudai Khidmatgars*. Further, the Frontier government imposed a ban on the drinking, storing, selling and distillation of liquor in the province. It imposed, with immediate effect, a ban on strikes, lockouts and go-slow movements at the Tarbela Dam project. It appointed a committee to go into the law and order situation in the province. It was also reported to be considering the imposition of a ban on the dowry system.

Thus, if allowed to function unhindered for some time, the NAP and JUI would certainly have consolidated their positions in the two provinces. Besides, their position in Punjab and Sindh would also have tended to improve. This was not a pleasant prospect either for the PPP or for its ally in the Central Government—the Qayyum Muslim League. Therefore, the first shots to discredit the NAP-JUI alliance were fired by spokesmen of the Qayyum Muslim League, who questioned the right of the Frontier

government to lift the ban on the *Khudai Khidmatgars*, and criticized the decision. Bhutto himself supported the League's indictment of the provincial government on this account, in his Press conference of 7 May. The NWFP Governor, Arbab Sikander Khan, defended the decision on the ground that if a provincial government was competent to impose such a ban, it was as much within its jurisdiction to lift it. Besides, the Governor maintained that this decision would help stabilize the political situation in the province.

Some PPP leaders also blamed the NAP for the deteriorating law and order situation in the province. As a ruling party, the NAP had nothing to gain from a breakdown of law and order. In fact, Khan Abdul Wali Khan had accused Mairaj Mohammed Khan a former adviser to President Bhutto, and Tariq Aziz, another PPP leader, of having made inflammatory speeches in the province which led to peasant-landlord clashes. The PPP leaders, including the former Governor Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, while denying the allegation blamed the ruling parties for the clashes.

Of greater significance for Centre-provincial relations, however, were the incidents which took place in Quetta and Dir in the month of May. The Quetta incident in which one man was killed was, according to NWFP Governor Arbab Sikander Khan, sparked by 40 armed men brought to Baluchistan by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan on the occasion of a State visit by Princess Pehlavi of Iran. The Baluchistan government once took away their arms, but restored them at the intervention of President Bhutto. These men boarded a loudspeaker-fitted truck and raised anti-NAP slogans, which led to clashes. Commenting on the incident the Baluchistan Governor, Bizenjo, said that this was "neither an isolated event nor an accident". According to him, some elements "taking undue advantage of their affiliation with the country's ruling party" were causing such incidents to defame the Baluch representative government, and to drive a wedge between provincial and Central governments.

In the other incident which took place near the village of Bandai in the Dir district of NWFP, two persons were killed and five injured when a party – including Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Khan Shahabuddin Khan of Jandool and Afzal Khan, Provincial Minister for Information and Agriculture – was intercepted on the road and fired upon. It was said that the chief target of the gunmen was the Khan of Jandool, for reasons of personal animosity. The *Dawn*, in an editorial, ridiculed the suggestion, saying that animosities were as old as 1959. Wali Khan blamed Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan again for engineering the attack.

The fact that the name of Central Cabinet Home Minister Qayyum Khan occurred in the two incidents, was significant. Qayyum Khan's love for violent politics was as unconcealed as his hatred for the NAP. By allowing his name to be dragged in, Qayyum Khan indirectly implicated the Central Government too in the situation. In a sense, it amounted to a violation of the agreement which Bhutto had arrived at with the NAP-JUI alliance, stipulating that "there should be no political vendettas, as this would not

only affect the law and order situation in the province but would have serious national repercussions". Bhutto should therefore have ensured that either the charges against Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan were disproved, or he was ousted from the Central Cabinet.

After 14 years of completely authoritarian rule and with no worthwhile experience of representative government, Pakistan was having to go through the inevitable pains of democratic growth. In the wake of the language riots in Sindh, which involved the democratic rights of more than 40 percent of the provincial population, which had shaken the entire nation out of its wits in July 1972, a number of other issues cropped up which put to test the Pakistan Government's regard for rights and liberties in a free society. The manner in which these issues were handled, indicated that Pakistani leadership was still not used to the norms of democratic behavior.

Just when the turbulence in Sindh was beginning to subside, the Election Commission announced that by-elections to two vacant National Assembly seats from NWFP (Swat and Peshawar), due to be held on 20 and 23 July, had been postponed and would now be held in September. The Commission's announcement added that elections in a constituency of Dera Ghazi Khan had also been deferred. The official reason given for the postponement was the "prevailing situation", which was later elaborated upon, by the Central Minister for Provincial Coordination, to mean the law and order situation in Sindh, and the forthcoming National Assembly session scheduled to discuss, among other things, "future relationship with so-called Bangladesh". Explaining the decision further, the Central Minister of the Interior, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, said: "President Bhutto wants the election to be held in a peaceful atmosphere."

The explanation was not convincing. The ruling parties in the province, NAP and JUI, took out a protest procession in Peshawar. The Provincial Governor alleged that neither he nor the Chief Minister had been consulted by the Centre before reaching this decision. Strongly opposing this move, both the Governor and the Chief Minister, in pursuance of the decisions of an emergency meeting of the NWFP cabinet, sent telegrams to the President and the Chief Election Commissioner, pointing out that the responsibility for law and order in the province was directly that of the provincial government, and that the Central Government had been specifically assured in this respect. The Chief Minister told newsmen that there was no justification for postponing the by-election, and hoped that the decision would be reviewed.

And yet, the decision remained unaltered. It was obvious that the situation in Sindh or the forthcoming National Assembly session had nothing to do with the smoothness of elections in NWFP. Still, if the Central Government chose to insist on the decision, it must have been for strong reasons. Perhaps the ruling parties at the Centre, namely the People's Party and the Qayyum Muslim League, were not sufficiently prepared for the elections at this stage. Perhaps the prevailing climate in Peshawar and Swat was not favorable to them. But by its thoughtless attitude towards a sensitive province, being

ruled by Opposition parties, the Central Government needlessly invited the charge from Khan Abdul Wali Khan that "the postponement of the by-election despite the opposition of the Provincial Government is an interference in democracy".

### **Role of National Press Trust**

There was another way in which the NWFP felt the pinch of Central authoritarianism: namely, the constant needling by Trust papers, led by the *Pakistan Times*. Early in July, the NWFP Assembly passed a resolution recommending to the Central Government, the abolition of the National Press Trust. In support of this resolution, the *New Times* of Rawalpindi wrote: "Notoriety thy name is NPT," and described its role as "incorrigibly, irrepressibly super-partisan". The Khyber Mail of Peshawar referred to "the consistent campaign" carried out by Trust papers against the NWFP government, and said: "The intent is only too obvious,; *i.e.* to stoke the fires of disunity and discord in NAP's bastion. The *Nawa-i-waqt* of Lahore said: "When a list of those who have destroyed democracy in this country is prepared, the name of the National Press Trust would come at the top."

The National Press Trust, with an ownership of 12 newspapers in English, Urdu and Bengali, was created in 1964 with the purpose of promoting "sound and healthy journalism with a truly national outlook, untainted by parochial, partisan or sectarian inclinations". But the Trust's performance had belied the hopes of its charter, for it always functioned as the mouthpiece of dictatorships at the Centre. The irony of the situation was that Bhutto who, while in Opposition, had been the most vocal critic of the Trust, should have allowed it to function in the same questionable manner when he came to power.

While the controlled Press functioned as the Government's hand-maid, the free Press was sought to be stifled by arbitrary action against many independent papers. *The Sun*, a leading independent English daily of Karachi, was deprived of its Declaration under Section 7 of the West Pakistan Press and Publication Ordinance of 1963, on the ground that it published a news item pertaining to the language controversy in Sindh, in contravention of the Press Censorship Order of the Sindh government. On somewhat similar grounds, show-cause notices were issued to three leading Urdu dailies of Punjab – the *Nawa-i-waqt* of Lahore, the *Imroze* of Multan and the *Jung* of Rawalpindi.

The action aroused nationwide protest. The Executive Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society demanded withdrawal of the restrictions and show-cause notices. Journalists and Press workers in the entire country struck work on 24 July, in response to a call by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists. Condemnatory resolutions were passed by the working committees of the Convention Muslim League and the Council Muslim League. The matter was raised in the Punjab Assembly through an adjournment motion.

The intensity and magnitude of protest against governmental action had raised issues of grave importance, particularly because it was known that all the papers under fire had been critical of the Government, either on the Urdu-Sindhi question, or on other vital matters, including the Simla Agreement. The Opposition view was that for the mere fault of having published "exaggerated accounts of happenings in Sindh", which could easily have been contradicted by the Press Information Department, the action taken against the newspapers was too harsh. What was essentially at stake was the freedom of the Press, which the Bhutto Government was to learn to respect if democracy was to be allowed to grow in Pakistan.

### **At the Crossroads Again**

Pakistan was at the crossroads again. By allowing himself to be persuaded by elements opposed to the recognition of Bangladesh right now, President Bhutto had once again brought the country to a situation of uncertainty with regard to the pace of its progress—internally and externally. The influence of such elements, whether inside or outside the country, could have been checkmated if the President had clinched the issue in favor of recognition immediately after his return from Simla, in the wake of the euphoria over the success of the Summit. Excessive caution, leading to a postponement of the decision until the National Assembly met again, proved helpful to the forces opposed to recognition, for they could exploit in their favor certain developments which would not have appeared to be of as much consequence if recognition had preceded them.

Irrespective of the public explanation given by Bhutto against the recognition of Bangladesh by August, what obviously must have been pointed out by members of the People's Party Central Committee, while opposing recognition, were developments in the country during July-August, and their repercussions on national integrity if Bangladesh was recognized in these circumstances. Language riots in Sindh, demands for separation of Karachi as an Urdu homeland, demands for exclusive control over their resources by the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan, tension between local Sindhis and local non-Sindhis, frequent exchange of polemics on various issues—between central ministers belonging to the PPP and the Qayyum Muslim League on the one hand and leaders of the NAP and JUI ruling in the Frontier and Baluchistan on the other—all proved handy to the diehards who succeeded in camouflaging their deep-seated prejudices against Bangladesh under the veneer of protecting national integrity, by keeping at bay secessionist influences.

The fundamental difference between the nature of internal tensions originating in Pakistan now, and the cleavage that severed Bangladesh from (West) Pakistan, were known to Bhutto better than anybody else. Societies with sharp diversities have always had to undergo tensions before they could reach an optimum level of nation-building. To have a balanced view of the Pakistani scene, one must also take note of the positive

utterances of leaders supposed to be disgruntled, and therefore dubbed as disruptionist. For instance Arbab Sikander Khan, the NWFP Governor, in his message on the occasion of Pakistan's independence anniversary, said: "We have to shoulder great responsibilities today, as for the first time truly representative governments are functioning at the Centre and in the Provinces." Maulana Mufti Mahmud, the Chief Minister, said: "The solidarity of the country will be protected at all costs." Ataullah Khan Mengal, Baluchistan Chief Minister, said: "The nation should rededicate itself on this auspicious day to uphold the glory of Pakistan with equal opportunities for all provinces."

Discontent of some variety or the other had been manifest in Pakistan ever since Bhutto had assumed power in December 1971. If the past record of how he had been controlling such discontent through democratic means was any guide, management of prevailing tensions should not have been beyond Bhutto's ingenuity. What posed a challenge to Bhutto, however, were the vested interests having stakes in the maintenance of tension in the subcontinent. Such interests abounded within Pakistan and abroad. Inside the country, there were powerful economic and political interests which owed their eminent status to conditions of complete hostility with India, and dreaded any prospect of normalcy in the subcontinent, which was bound to be facilitated by Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh. Bereft of convincing arguments against recognition, they resorted to subterfuges. Typical of their approach was the plea made by *Jang*, the Urdu daily published from Rawalpindi, which said:

We should wait patiently till such time when the six crore people of East Pakistan are able to extricate themselves from the Indian clutches, the puppet Government in Dacca is dethroned, and the people of East Pakistan are able to express their will freely and decide their future.

Outside the country, again, there were friends of Pakistan who felt that their interests would be adversely affected if normalcy returned to the subcontinent—so soon at any rate. China, for instance, had resorted to the similarly fallacious approach that the Dacca administration had violated UN resolutions of 7 and 21 December 1971, Colluding with India in refusing to release more than 90,000 Pakistani POWs.

What was regrettable was that Bhutto should have digressed from the Simla path, even if as a victim of the factors and circumstances described above. One could understand Bhutto's desire to sort out some ticklish issues pertaining to "the future of economic and commercial relations" with Bangladesh before he recognized it. But Bhutto's claim that Bangladesh had nothing to do with the release of Pakistani POWs in India amounted to a complete rejection of the framework of negotiations at Simla. If Bhutto's assumption was valid, India would have thought it less burdensome for its conscience to agree to release the POWs first, rather than evacuating occupied territories. In this context, Bhutto's interpretation of the "principle of bilateralism" was absolutely questionable, for

the release of POWs had always been regarded by India as a tripartite matter.

It was hoped that Bhutto's sense of realism would outwit the influence of forces opposed to recognition, so that the process of normalization in the subcontinent was at worst delayed, not prevented. There were indications that wherever possible he was allowing the process to develop along positive lines. His initiative to release Indian civilian internees, the successful conclusion of the Suchetgarh talks with regard to the delineation of the line of actual control in Jammu and Kashmir, as on 17 December 1971, and his insistence that the next Summit-level meeting with India would take place within two months, were hopeful signs. Finally, what put a limit to his capacity to delay recognition was the need to describe in cold print the territories that constituted Pakistan, whenever Pakistan's National Assembly adopted a permanent Constitution.

### **"London Plan"**

It was around September that Maulana Kausar Niazi, Pakistan's Information Minister, accused Khan Abdul Wali Khan and his colleagues of hatching a conspiracy to disintegrate Pakistan during their sojourn in London, claimed to be for medical treatment. The alleged conspiracy, played up by Pakistan's publicity media as the "London Plan", was said to be directed towards two interrelated objectives. The first was to prevail upon India, through Sheikh Mujibur Rehman (whom the NAP leaders were supposed to have met in London or Geneva), to delay the withdrawal of troops from Pakistani territories and thereby weaken Bhutto's government; the second was to evolve in Pakistan a loose nonfederal structure comprising four semi-independent states.

The charge-sheet included some of the observations made by the NAP chief with regard to secularism and the two-nation theory, in the course of his interviews with the BBC and an Indian correspondent. The minister said that he accepted the responsibility for giving publicity to this Plan because the reports regarding it were first published in British papers, and these were "disturbing the mind of the people". Since Wali Khan occupied a responsible position in Pakistani politics, and his party shared power in two of the four provinces, it was necessary to explore the truth about the so-called "London Plan", and find out the motives of those who took pains to "expose" it.

Conspiracies have a special place in Pakistani political tradition. While some were really found to have existed, others were manufactured to malign political opponents. The Rawalpindi Conspiracy of 1951, and the conspiracy which led to the assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, can be said to have belonged to the former category. The Agartala Conspiracy of 1968, involving Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, belonged to the latter. The present London Plan, on closer scrutiny, would also appear to belong to the second category.

The occasion was provided by the simultaneous presence in London of Khan Abdul Wali Khan (for eye treatment), Ataulah Khan Mengal, Chief Minister of Baluchistan (also for medical treatment), and Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, Finance Minister of Baluchistan (on leave) in the beginning of September. Radio Pakistan alleged the presence in London of Opposition leaders from all four provinces, but no other names were given out. However, while the official Press and radio played up the "Plan" in headlines and put out elaborate commentaries on it, the political leaders belonging to the Pakistan People's Party, the Qayyum Muslim League and others opposed to the National Awami Party, went berserk in condemning the Plan and questioning the patriotism of the NAP leaders, with reference to their past and present behavior.

Adjournment motions on the subject were proposed by these leaders in the National Assembly, and were disallowed on the plea that it was a delicate matter. President Bhutto summoned the Baluchistan Governor, Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, for an explanation. Bizenjo and other eminent leaders of NAP and JUI denied the existence of any such "Plan", described it as a "figment of the imagination", and reasserted their continuing commitment to Pakistan's integrity and sovereignty, as well as to Bhutto's leadership at the Centre.

Looking at the situation objectively, the accusation that the National Awami Party wanted Pakistan to disintegrate, makes little political sense. The NAP was at that time a part of the political system, holding a delicate political balance in two of the four Provinces. The power being exercised by it was in adequate proportion to its political strength. It could be interested in a disruption of the status quo only if, in the alternative situation, it hoped to increase its power. This, it knew, was not possible in the foreseeable future. All that the NAP seemed to be really interested in was greater provincial autonomy and less interference by the Central Government in day-to-day administration.

On the other hand, the Pakistan People's Party of Bhutto, despite the tripartite accord by which the NAP-JUI alliance was allowed to rule in NWFP and Baluchistan, seemed never to have reconciled itself to the absence of its own control over these two provinces. In a bid to extend its power to these provinces too, and evolve a sort of one-party system in the country, the PPP first sought to induct the NAP and JUI as coalition partners at the Centre, so that they could be used to promote its own influence in the two provinces. When this did not work out, its efforts were directed towards discrediting these parties in various ways.

One obvious means of obstructing the governments of NWFP and Baluchistan, keeping them on tenterhooks and maligning them, was the inclusion in the Central Cabinet of individuals whose main value was their known hostility to the NAP. No two parties could be ideologically as apart as the PPP and QML. And yet the QML chief, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, was included in the Central Cabinet and allotted as important a

portfolio as that of Home and Frontier Affairs, because he belonged to the Frontier Province, and had been a sworn enemy of Khan Abdul Wali Khan. Similarly, by a queer political mechanism which allowed a person to be simultaneously a member of the national and provincial assemblies, Bhutto appointed Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, Opposition Leader in the NWFP Assembly, as Central Minister for Natural Resources. These two ministers, and a few others in the Central Government, hardly let go a day without interfering in provincial matters, making allegations and issuing threats. Quite a few cases of riots, firing and shooting in the two provinces took place at the instigation of these leaders.

Besides, the Central Government was making liberal use of the newspapers owned by the National Press Trust to criticize and malign the two provincial governments, which had frequently demanded that the Trust be banned. The Centre did not hesitate from resorting to the diabolical design of creating a rift between the Pakhtoons of Baluchistan and NWFP, by encouraging Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai to attack Wali Khan.

The London Plan was thus a culminating point in the process of maligning the NAP, and its partner, the JUL. It was no doubt a conspiracy. But the conspirators were Bhutto's ministers, rather than Wali Khan and his colleagues. Bhutto allowed his ministers to indulge in this luxury of political blackmail. But he himself stopped short of accusing Wali Khan, in the course of an address to the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, for he knew that unlimited terrorization could boomerang and lead to consequences beyond his control. Bhutto too could not afford to disturb the status quo for quite some time yet, without serious risk to his own power.

### **Tribal Attacks**

Baluchistan, the largest though least populated province of Pakistan, witnessed unprecedented political coercion and violence at the hands of armed tribals in December 1972. The incidents which took place in Quetta and its surrounding areas were of fundamental political importance. That the situation was controlled by joint efforts of the Central and provincial governments is commendable. But the fact that such incidents took place, was an indication of the low level of political development in certain parts of Pakistan, and its repercussions on the incipient democracy.

According to Pakistani Press reports, about one thousand local tribesmen attacked Goth Mohammad Hussain, a village of Punjabi settlers in the Pat Feeder area in Katchi district, about 170 miles from Quetta. The marauding tribesmen, who belonged to the Marri, Kahloie and Lehri tribes, inflicted casualties on the inhabitants of the village and forcibly evicted them from their dwellings and lands. One villager was killed and many injured. Fifty women were alleged to have been abducted.

In another incident, an armed party of about 125 Bugti tribals headed by Salim Akbar Bugti, visited the office of Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, Baluchistan's Minister for Finance, and demanded his resignation. They carried placards criticizing the National Awami Party for "having gone back on its commitments". The Bugti tribesmen were armed with sten guns and rifles. Simultaneously, there were reports of armed bands of Bugtis moving towards Quetta in order to disrupt law and order.

Both situations were controlled by the provincial government with the help of adequate force placed at its disposal by the Central Government. In the case of tribes of the Pat Feeder area, the show of force was combined with the persuasions of Khair Bun Marri, the Marri chief, who was also President of the Baluchistan NAP. The result was that the marauding tribesmen accepted the terms of surrender offered by the provincial government. They agreed to hand over the culprits, return the booty and evacuate the areas in their possession. The Bugti attack was repelled by the development of adequate force in and around Quetta, and by the firm refusal of Ahmed Nawaz Bugti to resign.

Various explanations were offered for these usual developments. The Baluchistan Chief Minister, Attaullah Khan Mengal, blamed vested interests for these incidents and said: "This was the last battle between the NAP and the vested interests in Baluchistan." The Governor of the province, Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, remarked: "These agents of vested interests had been exposed thoroughly by now and everyone knew who was doing what. They would be meeting their fate very soon if they continued to create trouble for the provincial government."

According to one account, Punjabis had been settled in five villages of the Pat Feeder area for the last eight years. One of these villages, to the west of Temple Dera, was Goth Mohammad Hussain, where the tribesmen had attacked. The Punjabi settlers had Kahloies, Lehris and Marris as their tenants. These tribesmen move down to the plains of Katchi with the setting in of winter every year. This time their number had been high because of drought conditions in their mountainous areas. The immediate reason for this incident was that the Kahloies and Lahris wanted to forcibly occupy their lands, with the introduction of land reforms.

As for the Bugtis' demand for the resignation of Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, the provincial Finance Minister, the reasons could be traced to political differences within the Bugti tribe. The head of the tribe, Nawab Akbar Bugti, self-exiled in London for the last few months, was said to be opposed to the NAP. The Finance Minister, who was a younger brother of the tribal chief, told the threatening tribesmen of the rival faction that "he was elected by diverse tribes, and not a handful of tribesmen, and so the question of his resignation at this stage did not arise". Governor Bizenjo warned that this method of demanding resignation from an elected representative "might lead to further complications taking the country away from the path of democracy".

Given the socio-political backwardness of Baluchistan, the obstacles put by affected elements during its transition to socialism and democracy should not have been entirely unexpected. Since the advent of democratic rule, these elements had initiated a series of intrigues to topple the Government established by law. Every sensible step taken by the Government had been opposed, whether it was the abolition of *sardari* or measures to stop smuggling, or an effort to rationalize the leasing of coal mines. Attempts had been made to pit one racial or linguistic group against another. All previous attempts to topple the Government having failed, the two incidents under discussion were staged more or less simultaneously. In an editorial comment, the *Dawn* indentified the elements responsible for these incidents as "megalomaniac Sardars of dissatisfied contractors, and hungry tribesmen encouraged by elements bent on mischief".

The question that the Central Government should have addressed itself to was the implications of such incidents for the political future of the country. What were at stake were not merely democratic traditions which had yet to acquire sanctity in Pakistan, but also the political stability of the two sensitive provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP. The activities of "tribal marauders", if unchecked, could also create problems on the country's borders with Afghanistan and Iran, which the three governments had been trying to avoid.

### **Plural Politics**

Pakistani politics really centered around two foci of power, the PPP and its allies ruling the Punjab, Sindh and the Centre, and the NAP-JUI alliance ruling in Baluchistan and the NWFP. Each claimed to be deeply concerned with the interests of the nation as a whole, and accused the other of partisan politics. But the actual behavior of each reflected a deep commitment to the preservation or extension of its own power, irrespective of the illegitimacy of means which might have to be employed to do so, and the disastrous effects they might have on the political development of the country. The impression conveyed by this parallel and plural political activity was that there were two sovereign entities existing side by side, each competing for power and influence at the cost of the other.

The most obvious example of this sort of politics was the armed clashes in Baluchistan. in January-February 1973. This was not the first time that such an incident had been engineered in that province. In December 1972, as stated earlier, similar clashes had occurred in the Pat Feeder area, along with an armed threat to Ahmed Nawaz Bugti, the provincial Finance Minister. The new incident involved a clash, in the Lasbela district, about 60 miles from Karachi across the Hub River, between 400 to 500 tribal riflemen on the one hand, and men of the District Levies and the Militia on the other. The build-up for this incident had really begun some weeks earlier, when the Central Home Minister, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, and Nawab Mohammed Akbar Bugti, a tribal leader

opposed to the provincial government, had started accusing the Baluchistan government of allowing the import of arms into the province.

The Baluchistan Governor, Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, blamed Khan Qayyum Khan of having hatched this conspiracy "to overthrow the elected and constitutional government of Baluchistan" in complicity with representatives of vested interests like Nawab Akbar Bugti, Mir Nabi Baksh Zehri, Sardar Doda Khan and Jam Sahib of Lasbela. In a resolution, the Central Working Committee of the National Awami Party elaborated this charge to point out that:

The vested interests of Baluchistan that have been hit hard by the progressive reforms initiated by the Provincial Government, such as remission of revenue up to 12.5 acres, end of the Sardari system, stoppage of allowances and privileges to ex-rulers and others, implementation of measures for distribution of the Pat Feeder land to the peasantry, rectification of mine leases for the benefit of the mine laborers, etc. have in sheer frustration resorted to an armed rebellion in order to underline the authority of the legally constituted Government of the Province.

Khan Qayyum made haste to deny these charges, and attributed the revolt to internal dissatisfaction with the Government of Baluchistan.

For one acquainted with the antecedents and style of Khan Qayyum, it should not have been difficult to discern the truth. It is a fact that he represented the vested interests. It was also widely known that he made many attempts to discredit the governments of the NWFP and Baluchistan, and to dispossess them of power which they acquired in April 1972. Again, the import of arms into Baluchistan, if it was true, could have been prevented by him, for the watch and ward of national borders was a Central charge. There was no reason why the Baluchistan government should have allowed an activity which would eventually threaten its own existence. Qayyum Khan's insinuation that import of arms was being allowed by the Baluch government to ultimately stage a revolt against the Central Government, was crude vilification. There was no reason to believe that Bhutto should be ignorant of the source of mischief. What was disquieting was that he chose to remain silent, on this and similar other occasions.

It was a reaction to the Central leadership's continuing indifference, to acts of harassment of the NWFP and Baluchistan governments by Khan Qayyum and Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, that these two provincial governments also started allowing highly irresponsible activities to be directed against the PPP and its supporters. Members of the *Pakhtoon Zalmi* and the Pakhtoon Students' Federation were allowed to burn copies of *Musawat* and attack the office of *Mashrig*, newspapers either owned by or sympathetic to the PPP. The provincial committee of the Sarhad PPP passed a resolution condemning these acts.

Similarly, Mirza Tahir Mohammad Khan, a member of the Central Committee of the PPP from Baluchistan, and Ghulam Tahir, a local correspondent of the *Pakistan Times*, were arrested in Quetta. A provincial government source explained these arrests as connected with a news item which appeared on the front page of the *Pakistan Times* of 23 January, in which the PPP leader was reported to have said that about 2,000 political opponents had been arrested in the province since the present Government took over. Of course the provincial government was sore about the shelter given by the Sindh government to Mir Nabi Baksh Zehri and the Jam Sahib of Lasbela, against whom warrants issued by the Baluchistan government had been lying unimplemented for many weeks. But the Quetta arrests were hardly a commendable response. Tahir was later released on the orders of Governor Bizenjo.

In another incident at Peshawar University, the Pakhtoon Students' Federation demonstrated against the National Press Trust and banned the entry of the *Pakistan Times* and other Trust papers into the campus. They shouted down Central Minister Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao and warned another Central Minister, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, not to enter the campus.

These incidents revealed a pattern of politics. The PPP, which was well-entrenched at the Centre and in two provinces, was anxious to extend its influence to the other two provinces. The NAP-JUI were anxious to prevent the PPP from making inroads into their preserves. The consequence was an increasing dichotomy between the two foci of power, which sometimes had familiar over-tones, and could assume dangerous proportions.

### **Elected Governments Dismissed**

In February 1973, the NAP-JUI governments in Baluchistan and NWFP were dismissed. This was a climax to various developments, including the discovery of an arms cache in the Iraqi embassy at Islamabad. While the Central Government replaced the two governors and dismissed the Government of Baluchistan, the Government of NWFP resigned on its own in protest.

A closer look at these developments suggested that Bhutto himself was the prime mover in this drama. This was in fact the culminating point of various moves made by him from time to time during one year to establish unrivalled power in the entire country. The main explanation for its timing could perhaps be his desire to have favorable governments in the Frontier and Baluchistan, so that it was easier for him to have a Constitution of his choice adopted during their tenure. The ultimate goal, however, was to extend the PPP rule there too.

But the means resorted to by Bhutto to achieve this goal were grossly unfair. It was a case of blatant interference by the Centre in the affairs of the provinces, with the support of the entire State machinery at its disposal, the power of the army and mass media, and the language of persuasion, threat and deceit. In fact the situation, in a sense, bore resemblance to earlier unwarranted dismissals of civilian governments of Pakistan, by the then heads of State, in 1953 and 1958.

Bhutto no doubt took sufficient care to see that the situation did not precipitate a crisis. He left both provincial assemblies intact, even though their existing composition was not very favorable to him. Besides, he dismissed the Government of Baluchistan only, although he also accepted later the resignation of the Frontier Chief Minister, Mufti Mahmud, after his attempts to persuade him to withdraw it had failed. Further, Aslam Khattak, the man appointed by him as the Governor of NWFP, was a mild, middle-of-the-road individual, quite capable of creating a following, rather than the venomous Qayyum Khan or Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, the two Central Ministers who evoke hatred in many parts of the province.

Bhutto nevertheless could not rest assured about the success of his gamble. He would have shown craftiness of a high order if he went through it unmauled. His proven dictatorial capability could accentuate the process of disaffection within the PPP, already started by the resignation of Sindh Governor Talpur, the exit of former Law Minister Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, etc. The internal split, if it assumed dangerous proportions, could sabotage the adoption of the Constitution, in which Bhutto had vital stakes. This possibility had to be weighed against increasing political victimization by Bhutto in the country at large—the arrests of Altaf Gauhar, editor of the *Dawn*; Tufail Mohammed, Jamaat-i-Islami chief and Chaudhary Zahur Ilahi, Muslim League NMA, being the latest illustrations.

For quite some time after the political coup, the situation in Baluchistan and the Frontier remained calm. It belied the hopes of even those who thought that the arbitrary and sudden dismissal of NAP governors would perhaps create conditions for the army to make a re-entry into national politics. For this, the credit would go as much to Bhutto for an adroit handling of the situation, as to the NAP-JUI alliance for having responded to the provocation with restraint. But whether Bhutto would succeed in establishing a stable government of his choice in Peshawar and Quetta, or continuing political instability would lead to a prolonged suspension of the constitutional machinery and eventual fresh elections, was anybody's guess at that point of time.

These two provinces distinguish themselves from the rest of the country in many ways. Most of Baluchistan and large parts of NWFP have yet to acquire the level of economic and political development reached by Punjab and Sindh already. Politics in these provinces centers around tribal and family loyalties rather than socioeconomic issues. The social base of all political parties is about the same. That explained the dominance

in these regions of either the NAP, which was an old and established party representing the aspirations of the Pathans, or individuals with narrow loyalties. The PPP, with its base in the urban middle class, did not have a following here. It was with this realization that Bhutto had thought of entering into an alliance with the NAP-JUI coalition, soon after coming to power, so that a convenient political equilibrium could be maintained in the country. As a part of this scheme, he agreed to have NAP governors in the two provinces, and also offered two seats in the Central Cabinet to the NAP.

The NAP, while accepting the governorships, rejected the offer of cabinet posts, perhaps with the hope that it would thus be able to play an oppositional role more effectively, and emerge eventually as a viable national alternative to the PPP. Bhutto then included in his cabinet Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, who also hailed from the Frontier, and was known for his unscrupulous politics, as also for his enmity with the Badshah Khan family. Bhutto's obvious purpose was to use Qayyum Khan as a check on the power and influence of Wali Khan, the NAP chief. Bhutto used him, and another Central Minister from the Frontier, Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, with good effect. Wali Khan was thus, willy-nilly, cast into an oppositional role *vis-a-vis* Bhutto, not only in the National Assembly, but also in the entire federal scheme of the country. The NAP-dominated provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan often found themselves in confrontation with the Central Government. There was no dearth of provocations offered by either side, although in absolute terms the pin-pricks administered by the Centre were certainly more numerous and cruel. Bhutto's patience was subjected to the maximum strain by Wali Khan's stand on Constitution-making. At the first available combination of favorable circumstances, for instance the Lasbela incidents and the discovery of the arms' dump at the Iraqi embassy, Bhutto struck to deprive the NAP from power, even in the Frontier and Baluchistan.

Bhutto's aim was simple. He had to extend his power base to these two provinces too, even if initially he sought the support of non-PPP elements. It is a measure of his perceptiveness of the situation in these provinces, and particularly his assessment of the extent of NAP's hold, that his action did not evoke a violent response. Confident of the success of his strategy, he visited the two provinces during the first week of March and addressed large gatherings and receptions. He utilized this occasion to establish rapport with the people, to whom he tried to explain his recent actions as justified by the misdeeds of previous governments. Further, he confabulated with important tribal leaders in Baluchistan, and provincial assembly members of the PML, PPP and United Front in the Frontier. He also issued a statement in Quetta that the people of Baluchistan would soon have their own government. In other words, he threw his full weight behind ministry-making efforts in the two provinces.

Success in this respect was, however, not easy to achieve. Sherpao, the erstwhile Leader of the Opposition in the Frontier Assembly, and provincial chief of the PPP, claimed in

early March that jointly, the PPP, PML and United Front had the support of 21 out of 42 members of the assembly. This was later denied by Aslam Khattak, the newly appointed Governor, and leader of the United Front. A spokesman on his behalf added that rift within the United Front had widened between those who still wanted to support the NAP-JUI alliance, and others who wanted to break away from it. Besides, PPP efforts to win over the JUL had also reached nowhere so far.

In Baluchistan too, hectic political activity was reported in March. Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai openly asked the MPAs to cooperate with the Governor, Sardar Akbar Bugti, in forming the government. Achakzai met the Governor in this connection, along with G.B. Raisaini, Jam Sahib of Lasbela, and three other members of the assembly. Besides, two deputations from the powerful Math tribe, which had hitherto been mainly a supporter of the NAP, also met the Governor. But the Governor's main hope lay in weaning away the XI from the NAP, and there was no sign of success in this respect, while there was just a week left within which the Government had to be formed, for the constitutional machinery in Baluchistan had been suspended only for 30 days.

As the picture in Baluchistan was not very clear, there was wide-spread speculation in the two provinces that failure to institute loyal constitutional governments might provoke Bhutto to suspend the constitutional machinery and impose President's Rule indefinitely, and hold fresh general elections at the opportune time. Maulana Mufti Mahmud in the Frontier and Sardar Ataullah Khan Mengal in Baluchistan had voiced strong opposition to the idea of fresh elections. On the other hand, there was also speculation about Bhutto subjecting the whole country to a fresh round of elections after the new Constitution was adopted by 21 April.

By the end of March, Bhutto's plan of extending his party's rule to the entire country had received a setback. This resulted from his miscalculations about political imperatives in the Frontier and Baluchistan.

Bhutto did not succeed in instituting alternative governments in the two provinces, after he had dismissed the one formed by the NAP-JUI alliance in Baluchistan and accepted the resignation of the other in NWFP. Judging by his statements in the middle of February, he was very hopeful of Governors Akbar Bugti and Aslam Khattak being able to manipulate the requisite majorities in the two assemblies within a period of 33 days. The governors had thought that they would succeed in creating big dents in the NAP-JUI alliance. The members of this alliance resisted all temptations of switching their loyalties to the new rulers, and frustrated Bhutto's hopes. Specially irksome to Bhutto was Aslam Khattak's inability to wean away the JUI from the NAP. What added to Bhutto's discomfiture was the tussle between Khattak and Sherpao, the PPP's provincial chief, about headship of the prospective government.

Bhutto extended President's Rule in Baluchistan for another 30 days. This really amounted to an admission of the fact that the NAP-JUI coalition still commanded a majority in the provincial assembly. It boosted the morale of these two parties, as also enhanced their anger against the Central Government. On 16 March they organized a Protest Day in Baluchistan and it went off well. In the Frontier too, they held protest meetings on the same day.

### **Troubled Baluchistan**

In May 1973, Baluchistan was in the news again, following disturbances in Tribal Areas, necessitating the intervention of federal troops. There was a welter of accusations and counter-accusations between the ruling tribe and those to whom Governor Akbar Khan Bugti was opposed, rendering it difficult to discern the truth. The special interest shown by Iran in the politics of Baluchistan introduced an extraneous element in the already complex situation. Thus, for reasons of national and international politics, Baluchistan had almost become the soft underbelly of Pakistan.

As stated earlier, the government of Baluchistan, comprising the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, which still commanded majority support in the provincial assembly, had been dismissed by Bhutto on charges of lawlessness, and noncompliance with Central directives in the middle of February. One of the pretexts for this dismissal was the discovery of a large cache of Soviet arms at the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad, which had been sought to be linked with the alleged secessionist activities of NAP-supported elements in Baluchistan. For more than two months after that, the newly appointed Governor Akbar Khan Bugti tried, but failed, to mobilize enough support to constitute an alternative government. Ultimately, a minority government, having the support of nine out of 21 MPAs, was formed. But the Governor hesitated to hold a session of the provincial assembly for a long time, for fear of the government being outvoted.

Meanwhile, the Shah of Iran stepped into the situation in a significant manner. In an interview to Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, the Shah categorically stated that there would be a "protective reaction" from Iran in Baluchistan if there was any threat to the integrity of Pakistan. This confirmed the worst fears of those in Pakistan who suspected that Bhutto had dismissed the elected government of Baluchistan on the advice of the Shah of Iran. About then, Wali Khan also disclosed that Bhutto had once confided to him that he would not be able to reinstate the NAP-JUI governments in the Frontier and Baluchistan, for fear of annoying the Shah. However, the collaboration between Bhutto and the Shah was strengthened during the former's visit to Iran on 10 May, when the two leaders agreed to have "extended defence cooperation". It was more than likely that a common approach towards the politics of Baluchistan had been arrived at as an essential ingredient of this cooperation.

Despite these developments, people were hoping that Bhutto would invite the majority grouping to form the Government, in the interest of political harmony, when fresh eruptions took place. A Press note issued by the Baluchistan government said that eight *jawans* of the Dir Scouts were killed when they were ambushed by Marri guerillas at Tandori, near Sibi. According to the note, the scouts were shot at ruthlessly, without any provocation. The note further alleged that "the NAP-trained guerillas have stepped up their sabotage activities for the separation of Baluchistan from Pakistan". The various subversive activities attributed to NAP guerillas, which included men of the Marri, Mengal and Bizenjo tribes, included burning and cutting telephone wires, blowing railway tracks, removing fishplates, firing on trains and various acts of looting and arson. All this, according to the provincial government, made the intervention of federal troops necessary.

The situation looked different if the version of the accused was taken into account. Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, the eminent NAP leader who had been ousted from the governorship of Baluchistan in February, issued a detailed statement in this respect. Bizenjo pointed out that it was the "dismal failure" of Bugti as Governor that had led him to embark upon "a diabolical scheme to translate his theory of disintegration into action". According to Bizenjo, the sequence of events, since mid-February 1973, had followed a familiar pattern, "conforming in its details to the theory of the inevitable disintegration of Pakistan boldly and openly propounded by Mr. Bugti and published in Afghan, Iraqi, British and Pakistani Press last year". Bugti could see the writing on the wall whenever the provincial assembly met, and was doing his best, meanwhile, to spread total unrest, uncertainty and chaos throughout the province, under cover of which he could ask for "a direct showdown between the Federal forces and the starving people of Baluchistan". What else could explain the official suspension of food supplies in several areas, and the state of siege-imposed there? Bizenjo said that, there was no secessionist movement anywhere in Baluchistan, and the so-called armed guerillas were the dispossessed and disgruntled officials, students, workers and common men worked up at the scarcity of food and spiraling prices.

The whole thing has to be seen in the perspective of Bugti's character and style of politics. He is a tribal leader given to ruthless methods. In 1961, he was convicted of murder and served a term in jail. In 1972, he was in London at a time when some other leaders like Wali Khan and Mengal were also there. Being himself a member of the NAP then, he confabulated with them on the prevailing situation in NWFP and Baluchistan, and the Central Government's attitude towards them. When he fell out with the NAP leaders, he accused them of having conceived of a confederation of Afghanistan, Pakhtoonistan and Baluchistan. On his return journey he stayed in a few Muslim countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan, allegedly in search of arms. Back home, he threw his lot with Bhutto and started accusing the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan of smuggling arms into the province for an ultimate showdown with the Centre. This

suiting Bhutto, who rewarded him at the first available opportunity by making him Governor of Baluchistan.

In contrast, NAP leaders Wali Khan, Bizenjo and Mengal had a far cleaner record of public service. As signatories to the new Constitution, they were committed to the integrity of Pakistan, unless they were driven to the secessionist path by the continuously distrustful and step-motherly attitude of the Central Government. It was amazing that Bugti's accusations against them should have carried conviction with Bhutto. When the NAP-JUI government ruled the province, it was accused of creating deliberate lawlessness by Bugti, the Jam Saheb of Lasbela, and Qayyum Khan. Later, when Bugti and the Jam themselves were ruling, they again accused the NAP of creating lawlessness and promoting secession. Bugti also sought to link the arms discovered at the Iraqi embassy with NAP designs in Baluchistan, although Bhutto would have lost no time to put the NAP leaders on trial if there was an iota of evidence to support it. (Bhutto did so much later, on the basis of false evidence.) On the contrary, as the testimony of (Retd.) Major-General Ghulam Jilani revealed, Bugti himself believed that the destiny of Baluchistan lay in Greater Baluchistan, which would include Pakistani Baluchistan and Iraqi Baluchistan.

The essence of the matter is that Baluchistan was not an area to be trifled with by leaving its control in the hands of a reckless and unprincipled man like Bugti. Bhutto realized this much later and dismissed him too. If Bhutto's motive was simply to deny power to the NAP, in which he saw the only nucleus of a potentially rival party to the PPP, he would not mind keeping the province under President's Rule as long as a pro-PPP government did not attain majority support.

### **Crisis or Contrivance?**

By June, developments in Baluchistan assumed the proportions of a first-rate crisis which, according to most Opposition leaders, evoked memories of the bitter events of March 1971, which had led to the secession of East Pakistan. The crisis pertained to the disturbances continuing in Baluchistan. The Opposition was unanimously of the view that the crisis was contrived by the powers that be, to serve ulterior purposes.

That the situation was really grave was obvious from the fact that confrontation between tribals of the Kalat and Sibi districts of Baluchistan on the one hand and the army and air force on the other, went on for more than two weeks, although the purpose of inducting the federal forces into the situation, according to official sources, was merely to capture the handful of marauders who attacked and killed a party of eight Dir Scouts on 18 May.

Because of his hostility towards Bhutto, one might not attach importance to Wali Khan's allegation that this was the Government's plot to push the Frontier and Baluchistan out

of Pakistan. But one could not lightly dismiss the remark of Jamaat-i-Islami Chief Tufail Ahmad, that the "situation may aggravate, posing a threat to the existence of the remaining Pakistan", or the statement of Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur, a rebel PPP MNA, that the military action in Baluchistan was the "state of the process of disintegration of the whole country". Many MNAs deplored the intervention of the army. The United Democratic Front as a whole demanded the dismissal of Governor Akbar Bugti. The seriousness of the situation appeared magnified when read with reports about disturbances in "Azad Kashmir" where, as an NINA disclosed, telephone lines with Islamabad had been cut, and the President, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, arrested.

Going by the Opposition version, to what end had the crisis been contrived? Bizenjo and Mengal, the former NAP Governor and the Chief Minister of Baluchistan, had emphatically said that Bugti was pressurizing opponent tribes into submission by subjecting them to army attack, and denying them food and other supplies. Mengal gave specific instances of half a dozen NAP-JUI MPAs who had been subjected to persuasion, threat and blackmail to win over their loyalty to the Government. It was also reported in a section of the Press that attempts were made to merge the Dera Ghazi Khan district of Punjab with Baluchistan. so that all the six MPAs from Dera Ghazi Khan belonging to the PPP could add to the strength of pro-Bugti MPAs in the Baluchistan Assembly, swelling their number to 15, as against the 12 belonging to the NAP-JUI, thus enabling Bugti to claim an absolute majority.

It stood to reason, therefore, that Bhutto was frantically trying to extend his power to Baluchistan through the reckless instrumentality of Bugti, and would like to see the PPP government firmly established there before the widely speculated general elections were held by that year-end.

It was said that the armed forces, the hard core of whom are Punjabis, had deliberately been sent to suppress the Baluchi tribes, so that the Baluchis developed a hatred for the Punjabis. The alleged attack by Marri tribesmen on the Dir Scouts was interpreted as an attack by Baluchis on the Pathans, and in the National Assembly a Pathan MNA repeatedly threatened that the Pathans would not rest until this attack was avenged.

Some MNAs decried the political role being allowed to be played by the army, and cautioned about its likely consequences, drawing attention to the East Pakistani parallel. An influential party chief pointed out that democratic processes in Baluchistan and "Azad Kashmir" were being strangled on the plea of disturbed law and order, which was in no sense better in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

One is inexorably led to the conclusion that Bhutto allowed a crisis to be created where none existed. If it was seen along with the continuous denial of democratic freedoms in the country—the suppression of the Press and Opposition parties—it fell into the pattern of politics bequeathed to the country by Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan.

The essence of this pattern is subordination of democratic institutions and values to the dictates of personal power. While maintaining the facade of democracy, Bhutto was really playing to the tune of the armed forces, whom he feared and respected for legitimate reasons.

The army was not prepared to shoulder the entire blame for the disintegration of Pakistan, and Bhutto knew it. That is why he was reluctant to publish the Hamoodur Rahman Commission's Report, which deals with this subject. Bhutto was also not sure of the loyalty or friendship of younger elements in the army, after the recently discovered plot against him and the service chiefs, in which the ranks involved were mostly majors, lieutenant-colonels and squadron leaders. The best bet for Bhutto was to share power with the army, and for the army to resist the temptation of civilian roles as long as its wishes were fulfilled. It could be in the interest of both to contrive situations which would enable them to postpone the promulgation of the new Constitution, or at last to prolong the continuation of the state of emergency.

### **Bhutto's Frontier Trip**

Prime Minister Bhutto made an extensive trip to the Frontier Province in November, covering the far-flung Tribal Areas never before reached by a head of Government. The trip, lasting seven days, was aimed at achieving multiple objectives in the realm of foreign and domestic policy. From Bhutto's angle the trip might have been considered a success. But the vigor and pungency of his speeches directed at a neighboring country, as well as political opponents at home, did not serve any positive purpose in the long run.

Accompanied by NWFP Governor Aslam Khattak and Federal Ministers Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao and (Retd.) Major-General Jamaldar, Bhutto visited Khar and Nawagai in Malakand Agency, Darosh near Chitral, Ekkaghund in Mohmand Agency, Jamrud near the Khyber Pass, Miranshah and Razmak in Northern Waziristan, apart from places like Dera Ismail Khan, Wana, Jandol and Peshawar proper. Generally, large crowds were reported to have turned up to hear him everywhere. There were occasional slogans too in support of Pakistan and the visiting leader. But how far did Bhutto achieve what he wanted to?

An important purpose of his visit to these places, some of which are within five miles of the Durand Line, which marks the Frontier with Afghanistan, was to give a bit of his mind to Afghanistan, which had assumed a "hostile" posture since the advent of Sardar Mohammed Daud Khan in July 1973. Sardar Daud, in his very first speech on assuming power, had singled out Pakistan as the only country with which Afghanistan had a dispute. The Pakhtoonistan question had been activated since then. The climax was

reached when the Afghan representative told the UN General Assembly that the Pushto-speaking areas of Pakistan would have to be merged with Afghanistan.

The Afghan attitude was essentially connected with the fortunes of the National Awami Party, which espoused the cause of Pakhtoons within Pakistan. The party had been in bad shape since February 1973, when it was divested of power in NWFP by Bhutto. While Afghan anger against Pakistan had been sustained partly by the treatment meted out to the NAP, Afghan "interference" in Pakistan's internal affairs had in turn been responsible for Bhutto's wrath on the NAP. Bhutto's utterances during this trip were therefore directed against both Afghanistan and the NAP.

Bhutto's strategy was a mixture of threat and persuasion. In his very first speech he said: "Pakistan wants good and friendly relations with Afghanistan, but in no circumstances will we tolerate interference in our internal affairs," In support of his desire for friendly relations with Afghanistan, Bhutto pointed out that Pakistan had recognized the new regime of Afghanistan in the shortest possible time, and had refrained from inviting King Zahir Shah to stay in Pakistan and tour the Tribal Areas to mobilize opinion against Daud Khan's regime, despite many suggestions to this effect.

Having said this, Bhutto warned Afghanistan that Pakistan was capable of paying back in the same coin, and that if Afghanistan could keep Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan for eight years, why could not Pakistan request King Zahir Shah to come and stay, if it wanted to. Besides, the majority of Pathans lived in Pakistan and it was not for the majority to join the minority, but the other way round. Afghanistan, Bhutto said, was not inhabited by Pathans alone, but also by Turkmans, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Hazaras, etc. Finally, Bhutto asserted that Pakistan was now much stronger than two years before, and would not allow its integrity to be touched by anyone.

This was accompanied by a downright denunciation of the National Awami Party for the substance and style of its politics. The NAP was criticized for always looking abroad for its sustenance. Wali Khan was castigated for his statement about redrawing the map of Pakistan and shifting its frontier from Attock to Margalla, near Rawalpindi. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was condemned for having "opposed" the creation of Pakistan first, and for having "endorsed" the separation of East Pakistan later. Bhutto also clarified that Aslam Khattak would continue as Governor of NWFP.

Bhutto attributed the secession of the East Wing to its physical separateness by 1,000 miles, the dictatorial policies of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan as well as India's hostile propaganda, and said that the process would not be allowed to repeat itself in the present Pakistan. Further, Bhutto tried to win over the various tribes by offers of socio-economic reforms, including the abolition of 10 percent agricultural tax recovered in kind.

These were laudable utterances from the viewpoint of the PPP regime, which might have rejoiced at the success of this "historic" trip. But the approach adopted by Bhutto was that of brow-beating and sermonizing from a high pedestal, and its efficacy was extremely doubtful in terms of reconciliation with the NAP. How far Afghanistan had been provoked to its present posture by the policies of the People's Party, was uncertain. But there was absolutely no doubt that the NAP had been driven to the wall largely by the policies of the PPP, although its own mistakes in this respect could not be condoned entirely.

The NAP as a factor in Pakistani politics could not be ignored, at least for the reason that it belonged to the soil of NWFP and Baluchistan. It might be weakened for a while, but could not be wiped off. Even when it was banned later on, it reemerged under the name of the National Democratic Party. Bhutto's approach during this trip, coupled with the ordinance promulgated later, authorizing the Government to ban any organization believed to be indulging in "anti-national" activity, only intensified the confrontation between the PPP and the NAP. It jeopardized the process of rapprochement, which for a while had been initiated with the NAP leadership in Baluchistan.

Bhutto's objective of extending PPP rule to the whole of Pakistan could not be achieved by completely eliminating the Opposition, but by accommodating it within the political structure of the country. Similarly, the Afghan challenge did not call for a military response (as Bhutto knew very well), but only a political response, of which reconciliation with the NAP should have been an integral part.

### **Achakzai's Murder**

The none-too-happy situation in Baluchistan deteriorated and became more complicated with the assassination, on 20 November, of Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, a leader of pre-Partition eminence and head of the Pashtoonkhawa National Awami Party, founded before the 1970 general elections of Pakistan. The position was not clear about the motives of his assassination and the persons responsible for it. Equally shrouded in mystery was the reality of the political situation in Baluchistan where, since February 1973, Government troops had been confronting the disgruntled tribes.

The political situation in Baluchistan had been variously described as a denial of democratic rights, a law and order problem, and an insurgency. The National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, whose coalition government had been ousted from power in February, regarded it as a continuing denial of democratic rights of the people by the use of brute force. The Baluchistan government, headed by Governor Akbar Bugti and Chief Minister Jam Saheb of Lasbela, liked to describe it as mere lawlessness in a few pockets inhabited by Marri and Mengal tribes. The situation, according to them, was fast being brought under control. To some foreign

correspondents, however, the situation looked like regular insurgency, which the federal government was trying to meet with a heavy deployment of troops.

Involved in this situation were also the neighboring countries of Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan. Iran's interest arose from its common border with Baluchistan, inhabited on both sides by Baluchi tribes not very sympathetic to the political order in Iran. Iraq was said to be hosting a movement, referred to as the Baluchi Liberation Front, aimed at fanning discontent among the Baluchis within the borders of Iran. Afghanistan, particularly the Daud regime, advocated that the Pathans inhabiting the Frontier and Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan should break away from Pakistan.

This was the complicated situation in Baluchistan, to which the murder of Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai added another tricky dimension. Achakzai, also known as Baluchi Gandhi in pre-Partition days because of his conformity to Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent approach, was a prominent leader of the National Awami Party of Khan Abdul Wali Khan, until the general elections of 1970. Because of his radical, anti-establishment views, he had spent about 20 years in jail since the creation of Pakistan.

About the time of the 1970 elections, Achakzai dissociated himself from the NAP because of his differences with Wali Khan. Achakzai felt that Wali Khan was not giving due consideration to the interests of the Pathans in Baluchistan, who constituted more than 40 percent of the provincial population. Perhaps he wanted the Pathan areas of Baluchistan to be merged with the Frontier, which was not acceptable to Wali Khan. Besides, Achakzai was not very happy about Wali Khan's political links with Baluchi leaders like Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, Ataullah Khan Mengal, and Khair Bux Marri. He therefore founded the Pashtoonkhawa (pro-Pashtoon) National Awami Party, and got elected to the Baluchistan Assembly in 1970 on his party's ticket. Even though a lone member from his party, he wielded influence as an opponent of *Sardar* Mengal's government. Of late, he had turned a supporter of Bhutto, and consequently of the Baluchistan government headed by Governor Akbar Bugti.

There was a lot of speculation about the possible motives of his assassination. A rather simplistic explanation, given possibly by those who would not mind the enquiry being misdirected, was that the crime was committed by pro-NAP elements, because of his differences with the NAP. According to another view, Achakzai was about to be offered a high Government office – most probably the governorship or chief ministership – but the Baluchi community disliked it. They would not agree to sharing power with the Pathans. Governor Bugti told a BBC correspondent that in his view the aim behind the assassination of Achakzai was to fan hatred between the Baluchis and Pathans in Baluchistan: "And if the assassins had this objective in view", "they seemed to be succeeding in their objective." Earlier, Bugti was reported to have suggested that the Central leadership was involved in the entire situation.

It is difficult to say which of these explanations was nearer the truth. It may, however, be suggested that promoting conflict between the Baluchis and Pathans could not be in the interest of the NAP, whose mainstay in Baluchistan were the Baluchi tribes—Mengal, Marri and Bizenjo. On the other hand, Bugti himself could not be said to have done much to promote harmony between the Baluchis and Pathans during the nine months of his rule, despite the support of Achakzai enjoyed by him. Besides, the perspective becomes somewhat clearer if it is recalled that the murder of Achakzai took place almost simultaneously with the failure of talks between the PPP Central leadership and NAP's arrested leaders, for a political solution of Baluchistan's problem. This was followed by the news that Bugti's resignation would be kept pending and there would be no change in the governorship and chief ministership of Baluchistan for the time being. The justification for continuing the existing setup was strengthened with the assassination of Achakzai.

The situation in Baluchistan was fairly grave. According to some observers, the area under campaign had increased from about 15,000 to 40,000 square miles. The Pakistan Government had deployed three to four divisions of the army to meet the situation. The reported use of Iranian arms and helicopters was said to have antagonized the local people further. The casualties in this campaign ran into hundreds dead and wounded on both sides. And yet there was no prospect of a change in the political setup of the province. Jam Saheb Ghulam Quader's government was to stay in power despite its doubtful majority.

In this situation, further aggravated by Achakzai's murder, the Central Government had a special responsibility and role. The facility with which Achakzai had been murdered was a direct outflow of the politics of violence, which had been allowed to pervade the country during the previous two years. The murder had obviously been committed by those who were not particularly fond of stability returning to Pakistan.

### **Some Political Moves**

By January 1974, some steps were taken by the Government of Pakistan with regard to the Baluchistan question, which gave reasons to hope that a political solution of this problem was perhaps not possible. These included acceptance of the resignation of Governor Akbar Khan Bugti, and the appointment of the Khan of Kalat as the new Governor.

The problem, by its very nature, was too complex to admit an easy solution. Nor did it fall neatly into the known categories of political conflict to which developing states are accustomed. The Government described it as the developmental problem of a backward society. The *sardars*, according to the Government, were resisting political modernization. Political leaders belonging to the NAP-JUI, as well as some Independents, held the view that this was basically a problem of safeguarding

provincial autonomy and democracy. According to them, the rest of the country was no less feudal than Baluchistan. Change everywhere was bound to come slowly. The only difference lay in the fact that the People's Party was not privileged enough to get a majority support in Baluchistan and the Frontier in the 1970 elections. While it had succeeded in maneuvering such a support since February 1973 in the Frontier, its efforts in Baluchistan had failed.

The Opposition leaders countered the Government's charge against the *sardars* with respect to a resistance to political change, by recalling that the NAP-JUI government had a bill adopted by the provincial assembly abolishing the *sardari* system, but the bill was still awaiting presidential assent. Besides, Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo was the first non-*sardar* Governor of the province, and he owed allegiance to the NAP.

There were some other dimensions to the problem also. Sardar Akbar Khan Bugti had propounded the theory that the Mengal and Marri tribes were fighting a war of secession with the help of foreign arms. That he had never been able to establish the source or quantum of these arms was a different matter. Yet another explanation of the Baluchistan phenomenon offered in some quarters was that the Pakistani army, headed for the first time by a Punjabi general, did not relish the idea of 40 percent of the country being governed by Pathans.

And finally, there was the Iranian angle too. According to an authoritative source in Pakistan, NAP Governor Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo had to be dismissed by Bhutto at the instance of the Shah of Iran. The Shah's anger followed Bizenjo's refusal to surrender wanted fugitives from Baluchi areas in Iran.

The means adopted by Bhutto to solve the problem to his satisfaction did not deliver the goods. In fact, they were proving counter-productive. Therefore, the necessity of making fresh moves. The first of these was an acceptance of the resignation of Akbar Khan Bugti, which had become all the more necessary after the murder of Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai. The murder and the continuing civil war was indeed a reflection on his political competence. But more than that, in some quarters his name had been dragged into the murder conspiracy itself.

The next step was the appointment of Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, the Khan of Kalat, as the new Governor. The 70-year-old former ruler of Kalat was a non-political and a non-controversial figure, held in esteem by all sections.

The new Governor said emphatically that none of the Baluchistan NAP leaders was unpatriotic. The Khan posed a question to newsmen, asking them which Baluch leader had ever said that he wanted an "independent Baluchistan". "Lapses, if any, could be because they had to shoulder a responsibility much beyond their capacity." Any ill-feeling, he said, was the creation of bureaucracy during the one-unit regime.

The Khan also hinted at the possibility of a dissolution of the provincial assembly and the holding of fresh elections, but said that he would recommend these steps to the Prime Minister only after reaching an agreement with "the people who matter".

Bhutto had been promising a statement on the future of Baluchistan for the last few months. The statement came in early April 1974, announcing that all military operations in Baluchistan would cease from 15 May, since the task of restoring tranquility in the province had largely been accomplished, and there was a steady improvement in the law and order situation. It also said that all detenus would be granted amnesty, except those implicated in serious criminal cases.

What was the nature of this tranquility which had been restored, and how? Baluchistan had undergone a grueling political experience. At the time of its dismissal, the NAP-JUI coalition commanded a majority of 14 out of 21 seats in the provincial assembly. After the dismissal, the province was placed under the governorship of Akbar Khan Bugti, an unprincipled politician. His main qualification was that he was the sworn enemy of the Wali Khan-led National Awami Party, and was willing to serve as a pliable instrument at the hands of Bhutto.

Bugti subjected the province to inter-tribal warfare and invited the Central army on his side, on the plea that the Marri and Mengal tribes were secessionists. But that did not help matters. The tribes could not be subdued; nor could their loyalty to the nation be disproved. The house-arrests of Khair Bux Marri, Ataullah Khan Mengal and Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, further aggravated the situation. Ultimately, political murders were resorted to, the latest being that of Maulvi Shamsuddin, Deputy Speaker and member of the NAP. Besides, some members of the provincial assembly were convicted on false criminal charges and declared disqualified from membership of the assembly.

The by-elections thus held, proved helpful to the PPP. Pro-PPP Chief Minister, Ghulam Qadir Khan, stated that his government now enjoyed the support of at least 13 members of the assembly. The replacement of Akbar Bugti by the Khan of Kalat as Governor also removed a major irritant from the political scene. This was how a tranquility of sorts had been achieved, on the basis of which the Central army was proposed to be withdrawn from the province. But with regard to the future, much depended on how the three NAP leaders under detention – Marri, Mengal and Bizenjo – would react after they were released. Despite frequent reports that the Government had been consulting them, it was not quite clear how they would fit in the new situation.

### **New Setup in POK**

Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), described by Pakistanis as "Azad Kashmir", was another area where the People's Party had been struggling to establish itself. The party

had not been allowed to contest elections in 1970, because the Yahya regime had maintained a ban on non-Kashmiri parties operating in the area. The ban had since been removed by Bhutto, and now the PPP and Tehriq-e-Isteqlal functioned in POK.

For almost a year, Bhutto had been suggesting a closer integration of POK with the rest of Pakistan. Among the alternatives he suggested in November 1973 were merger (as the fifth province), representation in the National Assembly, and provincial status. His party men had also been suggesting that the constitutional structure of POK be brought at par with that of other provinces, and fresh elections be held there. A demand had been made that the elections be held on the basis of a revised and updated voters' list.

The PPP saw in these measures the only hope of dislodging the party in power, *i.e.* the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference led by Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan. Strong opposition had lately been voiced to some of these proposals, particularly the proposal to merge POK as a province of Pakistan, by K. H. Khurshid of the J and K Liberation League, and Amir Zaman Hanafi of the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal. But prospects for the People's Party were nevertheless high when the next elections were held in POK.

The constitutional changes which would inevitably result in a closer integration of "Azad Kashmir" with the rest of Pakistan, were at last introduced. The proposals in this regard were announced by Pakistan Law Minister Pirzada in June 1974, after they had been agreed at a conference between Bhutto and the POK leaders. The new constitutional arrangement, when implemented, was likely to have repercussions on a final solution of the Kashmir question too.

A fundamental restructuring of the constitutional arrangement under which POK was being governed, had been demanded by POK leaders for quite some time. The causes of dissatisfaction were the strict control of federal bureaucracy resulting in lack of autonomy, inadequate participation of the people in the POK government and a consequently hampered economic development.

The proposed constitutional scheme visualized that the "Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly" would pass suitable legislation, by an amendment of the "*Azad Jammu and Kashmir Act of 1970*", to establish an institution for the coordination and working out of all arrangements involving Pakistan and "Azad Kashmir". The institution would take the shape of an "Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council" in which the majority, consisting of seven members, would be the elected representatives of the "Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly".

Interestingly, Pirzada's statement said: "The Kashmiri leaders have requested that this Council should be headed by no less a person than the Prime Minister of Pakistan and that it should include five of his nominees who should be Ministers or members of the Parliament of Pakistan." This council would frame policy and have all powers,

legislative and executive, to deal with subjects which were reserved exclusively neither for the Government of Pakistan under the responsibilities assumed by it under the UNCIP resolutions, nor for the "Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly".

According to the agreement between the POK leaders and the Prime Minister, said Pirzada, the existing Constitution of "Azad Kashmir" would be amended along the following lines: (a) The system of government would be parliamentary; (b) the constitutional head would be the president, to be elected by a two-thirds majority of the "Azad Kashmir" Assembly; (c) the chief executive would be the Prime Minister, to be elected by the assembly and (d) the legislature of "Azad Kashmir" would consist of 40 members elected on the basis of adult franchise, plus two women members elected indirectly through the legislature.

A notable feature of the arrangement was that decisions of the "Azad Kashmir" Council would issue in the name of the president of "Azad Kashmir" and they would be implemented through a secretariat under the control of a federal minister. It had also been agreed that action for the formation of this council would be taken well before the next elections in "Azad Kashmir", which would be held not later than the first week of November 1974.

It was obvious that even if the new arrangement promoted whatever objectives Bhutto had in mind, it would certainly not promote the autonomy and freedom from federal control so keenly demanded by the people of POK. If anything, federal control would be tightened, for it would pass directly from the hands of bureaucracy to the Prime Minister. In this respect, the status of POK would henceforth be less than provincial.

What lent a farcical character to the arrangement was that decisions of the "Azad Kashmir" Council, which would be headed by the federal prime minister, would issue in the name of the "Azad Kashmir" president. No wonder that Pakistan's influential daily, *Nawa-i-waqt*, should have described this experiment as "more artful than Ayub Khan's basic democracy", and "a glaring murder of the principle of self-determination". The paper also suggested an element of federal coercion behind this arrangement.

The new arrangement was indicative of Bhutto's desire to integrate POK much closer with Pakistan. This had legal as well as political implications for a final solution of the Kashmir question.

### **Truth About Baluchistan**

Thanks to the daring Karachi weekly *Outlook*, some insight was now available into the tangled Baluchistan situation, on the basis of an extensive investigation carried out for this paper in July 1974 by D. Shah Khan. This was perhaps the last act of "calumny committed by *Outlook* before its publication was banned in the last week of July, for a

period of two months. The reason for the ban was given out later as the publication, by this paper, of "an objectionable interview of Mr. Yusuf Lodhi with Khan Abdul Wali Khan", which was critical of Prime Minister Bhutto.

The Baluchistan situation had been a mystery to the outside world for the last 17 months. The National Assembly of Pakistan had deputed a committee of MNAs under the leadership of Federal Minister Pirzada some months earlier, to do some fact-finding. But the findings of this committee were never disclosed. The Government had always given garbled versions of the situation. The report by D. Shah Khan, therefore, acquired special importance. Its merit lay in the fact that it did not seek to justify the role of any party or person, but put them all in perspective.

The most sensational disclosure of the report was the emergence of PFAR (Popular Front of Armed Resistance against National Oppression and Exploitation in Baluchistan), a body of militant young men who claimed to be conducting the struggle of the "men in the mountains". The origins of this body were still not clear, but it was gradually becoming the rallying point of all such elements as were disillusioned with the moderate and constitutional approach of the National Awami Party. And what was more, the PFAR following cut across tribal lines. Said a bulletin of the PFAR, issued in May:

We are not members of this or that tribe fighting the Pakistan army at the behest of this or that Sardar. We are fighting for our national rights.

The PFAR claimed 100 successful actions against the Government between 1 March and 30 June 1974. These included sniping, ambushing, attacks, sabotage of communication lines and destruction of Government property. The details of casualties and destruction mentioned in the report made a formidable list. Accordingly, the military action in Baluchistan was estimated to have cost the federal government more than Rs 200 crores.

The PFAR had a political wing too, which worked out its political thesis, and operated through issuing periodic bulletins. Its political objectives for the time being were confined to securing "solid constitutional insurance against interference by Islamabad in the affairs of Baluchistan", and that "the people of Baluchistan, through their chosen representatives, shall run the government of Baluchistan without let or hindrance". Fortunately, the PFAR said, it had not yet thought of secession. But it warned: "Let them not push us to the brink. It is likely to be suicidal."

The June 1974 bulletin of PFAR, however, sounded an ominous note. It talked of the "law of inevitability of destruction", and said:

We have repeatedly said that we went to mountains to defend ourselves against a military action launched by the Bhutto regime, that we are fighting for our

democratic and national rights. The idea of separation had never occurred to us, though the Bhutto regime has provoked us for 16 months to take that road. But now we see a different picture unfolding itself before us. We see law of inevitable destruction beginning to operate in Pakistan.

The bulletin also lamented the lack of support from the rest of Pakistan to "achieve the noble goal we have set for ourselves".

While there was still much to be known about the antecedents of PFAR, and the authenticity of its claims, the political objectives outlined in its bulletins seemed to represent the aspirations of the Baluchi people fairly closely. According to Khan's report, the conflict in Baluchistan was still at an inconclusive stage. The Centre's efforts to paint the situation as the doing of a few misguided supporters of some selfish Baluch *sardars* out to preserve vested interests, had failed. And so had its efforts to generate mass support behind the puppet government installed in Baluchistan.

About the time of D. Shah Khan's enquiry, elements from almost all Baluch tribes were believed to be joining the men in the hills. And they included the young Baluchis, the young Pathans, and finally the non-locals, or settlers from other provinces, including Punjab. What made the situation miserable was the disillusionment of the Khan of Kalat, the Baluch Governor, who was ready to quit because his ideas of a settlement had not found favor in Islamabad. According to him, the NAP still held the key to a settlement.

The fifteenth day of December 1974 marked the expiry of the second deadline for the surrender of hostiles in Baluchistan. Obviously, they had not surrendered so far. Otherwise, the Prime Minister would have said so while speaking in the Senate debate on the subject on 16 December. And even if they had, it would not have solved the problem, for guerilla hostility was a symptom and not one of the causes of the Baluchistan problem.

Bhutto's government had always been trying to confuse the world by projecting the problem wrongly. It had been suggesting that guerilla activity had arisen mainly from feudal resistance to governmental efforts at modernization. This had been compounded by foreign instigation. Fortunately, in his latest speech in the Pakistani Senate, Bhutto seemed to have absolved India and the Soviet Union of any role in the Baluchistan situation. That left Afghanistan, whose interest in the situation was obvious. But such an interest had followed, not preceded, the eruption of the Baluchistan problem.

Bhutto had made his long-promised statement on Baluchistan on 15 October. All that he said was that the "organized resistance to Legal Authority in Baluchistan" had come to an end. And yet, he called upon those who still constituted the "remnants of resistance" to lay down their arms by 15 December, telling them that if they did so their case would

be considered sympathetically, in the hope that it would enable them to lead an honorable and peaceful life as citizens of Pakistan. This was followed by a White Paper issued by the Government on 19 October, denying allegations with regard to aerial bombardment of villages, and under-rating the role of military operations.

The magnitude of the problem could be gauged from the Government's own admission that nearly 5,000 insurgents had surrendered until October, and there were many more to surrender. Again, according to the White Paper, ever since the hostilities started, they had resulted in nearly 500 incidents of sniping and looting, and over 600 casualties, killed and wounded, on both sides. All this, according to Opposition leaders, was a "bundle of lies". The NAP chief, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, threatened to publish a "red paper" in reply to the Government's White Paper. (Retd.) Air Marshal Asghar Khan, the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal chief, said that the White Paper was 80 percent lies and 20 percent exaggeration.

That the situation was far from normal was obvious from the fact that Bhutto had been greeted by a series of bomb blasts on his last visit to Baluchistan in October. The Government felt impelled to carry foreign diplomats on a conducted tour of Baluchistan, because the official viewpoint was lacking credibility. Of late, the Government had resorted to vigorous publicity on Baluchistan, highlighting the number of surrenders every time they were made. The official media carried full-length stories on Baluchistan. The Opposition sought to counter all this by taking a delegation of select foreign envoys, and apprising them of their viewpoint.

All this took things nowhere nearer a solution, for the Government refused to accept the realities. These were highlighted again during the hearing of a habeas corpus petition filed on behalf of the four NAP leaders of Baluchistan, who were detained at Sihala, a suburb of Rawalpindi. The petition was heard in early December by a Division Bench of the Lahore High Court.

The petitioners were Mir Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, former Governor of Baluchistan, Ataullah Khan Mengal, former Chief Minister, Khair Bux Marri, NAP provincial chief, and Sultan Mohammad Mengal, former Commandant of Dehi Muhafiz, a rural volunteer force which had been created by NAP. They had been detained after the dismissal of the NAP-JUI government in Baluchistan in February 1973. They stated that their detention was nothing but political victimization. Bizenjo said that since his detention in August 1973 he had not been allowed to write, or see any of his relatives or friends, or to engage a counsel of his choice. They pleaded that they should not be tried by a *jirga* since the cases against them involved charges of working for secession, in collusion with a foreign power.

They also stated in the course of the hearing that the federal government had been sending special emissaries to contact them and request them for a settlement, but the

terms offered were humiliating. The Government obviously realized that these leaders held the key to a settlement. And yet it persisted with military means to try and solve the problem. Even a contrived majority in the provincial assembly in favor of the PPP did not help the Government with popular support.

### **Federal Rule in Baluchistan**

By a proclamation issued by the President of Pakistan in January 1976, the federal government assumed the functions of the Government of Baluchistan. The powers of the Baluchistan Assembly were taken over by the federal Parliament. The federal government was to function through the Governor of Baluchistan, who would be assisted by five advisers, including former Chief Minister Jam Mir Ghulam Qadir Khan.

This was an intriguing development, looking at the persistent claims made by Bhutto's government during the previous two years or so, that insurgency in Baluchistan was largely under control. On the other hand, it confirmed the worst fears of those who always held the view that the Baluchistan situation would not lend itself to an easy solution after the popular government had been arbitrarily dismissed in February 1973.

The province had been in revolt since then. The magnitude of tribal revolt had increased in proportion to federal suppression, which in course of time involved the arrests of important provincial leaders belonging to the NAP and JUI. Since then, nearly four divisions of the federal army had been fighting the revolt, amidst frequent claims by the Government that the situation was under control. On the other side, a bulletin called *People's Front*, issued from London and voicing the views of the rebels, claimed towards the end of 1975 that 7,000 officers and men of the federal army had been killed or wounded till then, with over 1,100 women, children and old people murdered and more than 500,000 heads of sheep and cattle stolen. The armed struggle for democracy, according to this bulletin, was continuing.

Be that as it may, the law and order situation in Baluchistan was reviewed at a high-level meeting in Quetta, presided over by Prime Minister Bhutto on 30 December 1975. The meeting was attended by five federal ministers, the Attorney General, two ministers of State, the Governor and Chief Minister of the province, a Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, some provincial ministers and government officials – and what is significant – the Chief of Army Staff, General Tikka Khan. The decision to impose Federal Rule in Baluchistan was presumably finalized at this meeting, for it was announced the very next day. And the gravity of the situation in Baluchistan should have been the obvious provocation for the decision.

However, the official Press note explaining the decision with regard to Federal Rule, said that it had been imposed not because of the insurgency which had been overcome, but because of the administrative weaknesses and economic problems of the province.

To illustrate the point, it said that the provincial government had failed to make good use of the sizable allocations made by the federal government for the development of Baluchistan.

The emphasis was on the economic argument, which was not convincing. But it was ridiculed effectively by A. T. Chaudhri leading Pakistani columnist in a piece in the *Dawn*. He recalled the fact that until lately, the federal government had been publicizing the fact that the economic scene in this "feudal backwater" had undergone a phenomenal change. and that there was rapid progress in all fields. What had happened suddenly "to change the gear of Federal policy.", he questioned. Besides, he said. that economic or social backwardness could hardly serve as a criterion for the functioning or suspension of democratic institutions, for the fact was that one-third of Punjab, half of NWFP and two-thirds of Sindh were economically as backward as some of the not-so-backward areas of Baluchistan.

In administrative efficiency, there was no doubt that Baluchistan lagged behind other provinces, for historical reasons. But the solution did not lie in depriving its people of administrative experience still further. for they would never be able to catch up with other provinces in this manner. They had to learn to administer themselves.

The real reasons for Federal Rule seemed to lie elsewhere. One possible reason was that the insurgency had acquired grave proportions. The Provincial Governor. Mir Ahmad Yar Khan. almost admitted this when he told a correspondent after the imposition of Federal Rule, that his prime job would be to tell the hostile groups to come down from the mountains. This could have led to pressure from the army which demanded that it be nix en a freer hand in tackling the situation. And since the area has strategic importance. the sensitivities of certain foreign powers may also have been taken into account while imposing Federal Rule.

### **Baluchistan: A Summing-up**

Prime Minister Bhutto concluded his 15-day visit to Baluchistan in the beginning of August 1976. His total visits to Baluchistan since he assumed power had already outnumbered the combined total visits paid to that area by all his predecessors. This was only a measure of his anxiety to control the situation and solve the problem on a long-term basis. But the visit came as a climax to a series of measures introduced by him in the recent past, the most important of which was the abolition of the *sardari* system on 8 April.

There was no doubt that when Bhutto dismissed the provincial government, composed of the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, in February 1973, he was governed largely by considerations of power politics. But a total view of the

situation since then suggests that the Baluchistan problem was far too complicated to admit a unidimensional analysis in terms of power politics alone.

Baluchistan's biggest problem was its deeply entrenched feudalism, which perpetuated its socio-economic backwardness far longer than in the rest of the country. The next problem was almost a complete lack of communications in a province which occupies over 40 percent of the area of Pakistan. Thirdly, Baluchistan suffered from lack of finances, despite the fact that it has valuable resources. And fourthly, it did not have adequate political and administrative skill and experience to make a proper use of finances for developmental purposes.

Feudalism was uprooted with the legal abolition of the centuries old *sardari* system, through an ordinance on 8 April 1976. Bhutto had announced the measure at a public meeting in Quetta on the same day. With this went the judicial and administrative privileges of nearly 400 tribal *sardars*. Bhutto will no doubt claim the credit for this drastic reform. In fact, the NAP-JUI government, during its short tenure, had wanted to adopt this measure but was opposed in the assembly by PPP supporters, as a NAP leader told this writer in the course of his visit to Pakistan. Nevertheless, the abolition of the *sardari* system was done not a day too soon, and will remain a revolutionary step in the history of Baluchistan. What was important now was to implement this measure without fear or favor. Some supplementary steps, however, were announced by Bhutto during his trip mentioned above, like the conferment of proprietary rights to occupancy tenants of State land in Lasbela district, and similar rights to tillers of the soil over five lakh acres of land commanded by Pat Feeder in Nasirabad district.

In the field of communications, nearly 600 miles of roads were built by the army since 1974. The federal government was generous in providing developmental funds, so much so that more than Rs 1,000 million were given since 1971-72. This is in contrast with the meager Rs 30 million a year which the province used to get till 1971-72. But these massive funds have obviously been spent through the federal machinery, leaving unresolved the problem of lack of political and administrative skills.

The province experienced a short-lived experiment in democracy when the NAP-JUI coalition government was allowed to rule from April 1972 to February 1973. The coalition had the support of 11 out of 20 MPAs. A continuous rule by this popular government might have gradually led to the emergence of a political elite well versed in the game of parliamentary democracy. But the federal government, in its anxiety to capture power in the provinces where it did not have parliamentary majorities, dismissed the elected government and appointed a Governor and Chief Minister acceptable to the Prime Minister. Of course, tribal rivalries which continued under the NAP-JUI regime also contributed to lawlessness, and provided an additional pretext to the federal government. But these rivalries and the resultant lawlessness continued even afterwards.

While the federal army was inducted into the province following the dismissal of the NAP-JUI government to meet the threat posed by those tribesmen who had turned hostile, a political process was simultaneously started to somehow convert the PPP minority in the provincial assembly into a majority. This process witnessed large-scale political violence, a series of assassinations (including those of members of the provincial assembly), and by-elections. The NAP called it the politics of "gold and guns". In course of time, the PPP did succeed in acquiring a majority support in the provincial assembly. But even this did not help resolve the Baluchistan problem.

After the removal of the NAP-JUI government in February 1973, Nawab Mohammed Akbar Khan Bugti and Jam Ghulam Qadir were appointed Governor and Chief Minister respectively. In January 1974, Governor Bugti stepped out and Ahmad Yar Khan, Nawab of Kalat, filled the seat. In April 1974, the federal government announced that from 15 May all military operations in aid of civil power in Baluchistan would cease. On 2 August, those holding out in the mountains were asked to come down. By 15 October, some 5,000 Marri tribesmen were claimed to have surrendered, and on this day, the Prime Minister declared in Quetta that insurgency against the State in Baluchistan had come to an end. On 19 October, the federal government issued a White Paper, asserting that the Government was resolved that "Baluchistan be an equal partner in Pakistan's national enterprise".

Despite these claims and assertions, the situation in Baluchistan remained disturbed. This was obvious from the fact that on 31 December 1975, the federal government was constrained to assume the functions of the provincial government. Meanwhile, in February 1975, the assassination of Sherpao, NWFP's PPP leader, had provided a pretext to the federal government to ban the NAP and arrest its leaders. The ban was upheld by the Supreme Court after a somewhat unusual trial in October 1975. Obviously, banning the NAP also did not help the Baluchistan situation. Perhaps it contributed to its deterioration.

Imposition of Federal Rule on 31 December 1975 was therefore the climax of a series of desperate moves on the part of Bhutto to control the situation. And the abolition of *sardari* on 8 April 1976, seen in this context, was a much-needed sop to the common man who had constantly been deprived of a share in political power. But as pointed out earlier, the promulgation of this measure is not enough. Its implementation is of the essence, for which cooperation of the people is indispensable. Decentralization of power is therefore necessary.

It was perhaps in awareness of this need that the latest constitutional change in Baluchistan was announced on 30 June 1976, at the expiry of six months of Federal Rule. The direct President's Rule was replaced by Governor's Rule. The Governor assumed

the functions of the provincial cabinet. The Chief Minister and other ministers ceased to function, while the Legislative Assembly stood revived.

This arrangement may have been a shade better than Federal Rule. But it was far short of the requirements of provincial autonomy, as laid down in the Constitution. It obviously meant that the situation was not yet normal in Baluchistan, and that the federal government could not still trust the political leaders of the province, even those who provided the basis for PPP majority in the provincial assembly. The solution of the Baluchistan problem therefore still seemed to lie in rapprochement with the genuine representatives of the people. There cannot be a half way between provincial autonomy and Central rule. It was hoped, however, that the dialogue initiated between Islamabad and Kabul in June 1976 might facilitate the task in Baluchistan.

### **PPP Rules the NWFP**

North Western Frontier Province, the most strategically located of Pakistan's four provinces, and inhabited by 13 percent of its population, was fast in the process of becoming integrated into the mainstream of Pakistani life by 1976 end. The politics of this province during the five years of Bhutto's rule was a classic example of how development and stability can continue, even in modern times, in complete disregard of democratic norms—as long as there is a Central authority to provide funds for development, and a coercive mechanism to ensure stability.

In NWFP, a complete transformation of the power structure had taken place during the five years, and that too without any fresh general elections. The Government, by a coalition of the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, had been replaced by that of the Pakistan's People's Party, which originally ruled only at the Centre and in Punjab and Sindh. In the process the National Awami Party, whose stronghold was the NWFP, was banned, its leaders, including Khan Abdul Wali Khan (who was also Opposition Leader in the National Assembly), arrested and put on trial, and its members debarred from participating in the elections for the next five years.

When a popular government was first formed in NWFP in early 1972, the coalition partners, namely the NAP and JUL had 15 and five members respectively in the provincial assembly, whose total strength was 42. They could rule the province with the support of a few Independents, till February 1973, when they resigned in protest against the dismissal of the NWFP Governor belonging to the NAP, along with the dismissal of the Baluchistan Governor shortly after the "discovery" of a cache of arms in the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad. This was a boon to the opponents of NAP, who started the process of altering the composition of the provincial assembly with the help of "gold and guns", as Khan Abdul Wali Khan often described it.

It was not easy going for the PPP to establish its undiluted power in the province. In the beginning it had to share power with other parties and with Independents. There were also intervening spells of Governor's Rule. For instance, the Government formed after the resignation of NAP-JUI coalition in this manner, was the one in April 1973. It was headed by Inayatullah Khan Gandapur, an Independent, and consisted of a United Front of Independents (14), Qayyum Muslim League (4) and the PPP (4). The total support of the Government was 22, in a House of 42, and PPP membership consisted only of four members.

The pretext for the dismissal of this Government was provided by the assassination of Hayat Mohammed Khan Sherpao, NWFP People's Party chief and Provincial Home Minister, while addressing a meeting in Peshawar University in February 1975. Although the assassination of Sherpao was in itself evidence of the resentment against PPP and its policies in the province, the occasion was used by the PPP High Command to further crush the forces hostile to it. While the NAP was banned in the entire country and its leaders arrested, the NWFP was placed under the direct rule of Provincial Governor Sher Ghawas.

Simultaneously, a process of inducing defections from the former NAP ranks and winning over Independents was begun. While the process was on, Nasrullah Khan Khattak, who had been appointed the provincial PPP chief after the death of Sherpao, got elected to the provincial assembly in April 1975, from the seat vacated by Sherpao. In May he was installed as Chief Minister at the head of a coalition cabinet, consisting of PPP and Qayyum Muslim League ministers. The extent of the following that this cabinet enjoyed in the provincial assembly was not yet clear, as the process of defections was still on. However, the PPP party position in the assembly emerged distinctly favorable by September 1975, when the PPP had the support of 21 members in a House of 42. Its coalition partner, the Pakistan Muslim League (Qayyum Group), had the support of four members, while the former NAP members, reduced in strength to 12, sat on the Opposition benches.

The PPP ambition of ruling the Frontier Province was thus fulfilled. This had been accompanied by a process of the extension of PPP rule in Baluchistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir also. Since the chief PPP rival in NWFP and Baluchistan was the NAP, it was necessary to eliminate this party from the political scene not only internally, but also in terms of its external leverage. Internally, the party was sought to be finished by getting an *ex-post facto* approval of the ban imposed on it through a Supreme Court decision, arresting its leaders and putting them on a protracted trial. Externally, an attempt was made to improve relations with the Government of Afghanistan, which was regarded as the main external inspiration behind dissident activities of the NAP in NWFP and Baluchistan.

A dialogue with Afghanistan, conducted since June 1976, was dictated by the needs of regional international politics also. But it certainly proved handy in curbing the force of NAP, and boosting PPP morale within Pakistan. It was for no flimsy reasons that Bhutto, during his tour of the NWFP in November 1976, made the extremely unusual categorical statement that Afghanistan had no hand in the tribal uprising in Dir district which occurred in the months of August-September, and that Pakistan would not support any anti-Government forces in Afghanistan. He praised Afghanistan for what he called its "good neighborly attitude".

While noting the fact that Bhutto's party resorted to all conceivable means in grabbing power in the NWFP, one must not ignore or underestimate Bhutto's passionate concern for the development of backward areas of NWFP. This was vividly revealed during Bhutto's ten-day tour of NWFP in the first fortnight of November 1976. In the first five days he visited some of the remotest Tribal Areas – untreated by heads of Government so far. These included Mohamand, Bajaur, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram and the North Waziristan and South Waziristan Agencies. During the second part of his trip he visited the settled districts, including the formerly independent state of Dir, which had witnessed clashes between tribesmen and the army on account of a dispute concerning forest rights only a couple of months earlier, resulting in a few hundred deaths on both sides. Apart from Dir, Bhutto's tour covered the Mansehra, Abbottabad, Mardan, Kohat, Peshawar and Bannu districts. This was Bhutto's fourth visit to the area since he assumed power.

There is no doubt that there had been a manifold increase in developmental expenditure incurred in this area during the five years of Bhutto's rule. Quite a few feudal laws and practices were done away with. Communications had improved. Education had spread. But the gains could perhaps have been greater and more widespread if the norms and institutions of democracy had not been butchered, and if the Central Government had operated in this area in cooperation with the duly elected provincial government, rather than by eliminating it.

### **The Kashmir Accord**

"Pakistan has grievously suffered at the hands of two Sheikhs", wrote *Pakistan Times*, the semi-official daily, in an editorial in March 1975, while commenting on the accord reached between Kashmir leaders and the Government of India. Elaborating upon it, the paper said that while Sheikh Abdullah prevented the process of Pakistan's completion, "initially in 1947 and finally now", Sheikh Mujibur Rehman had accomplished the division of Pakistan. This is how the Kashmir accord was presented to the people of Pakistan, in an attempt to divorce their minds once again from the realities of their existence.

A close look at Pakistan's reaction reveals how phony the totality of Pakistani behavior was on this occasion. It was at odds with realities in the subcontinent—with realities in Jammu and Kashmir, including Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. It was also at odds with Pakistan's own designs in Kashmir, particularly as conceived after 1971.

Pakistan had to go through motions of protest against the accord in a literally religious manner. Given the nature of the police raj that prevailed in Pakistan, and the emotional responses that the Kashmir question historically evoked in Pakistan, it was not surprising that Pakistan, and areas of Kashmir occupied by it, should have observed a nearly complete *hartal* in response to Bhutto's call on 28 February 1975. Bhutto also endorsed Pakistan Awami Action Committee Chairman Mir Waiz Maulvi Ahmed's call for observing 17 March as "Self-Determination Day". Pakistan also lodged a protest with India, as also with the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council, against this accord. China, Pakistan's traditional supporter on this question, also reiterated its support to "the Kashmir people in their just struggle for the right of self determination",

All this admirably served the purpose of the Pakistan Government, which was facing a crisis of credibility at home with regard to its Kashmir policy. There was still a hard core of opinion in Punjab (the only province that matters in Pakistan politics), which still believed in a hard line against India on the Kashmir question. The Pakistan Government's reaction to the Kashmir accord was intended to satisfy this section of opinion. Besides, it also served the purpose of focusing people's attention against India at a time when internal problems like Baluchistan and NWFP were cutting at the roots of Pakistan's political stability and national integrity.

But one has to understand Pakistan's real and long-term Kashmir policy in order to realize the phony character of its reaction to the Kashmir accord. Pakistan was not oblivious of power realities in the subcontinent in consequence of the 1971 war. The use of force was no longer considered an available option with regard to the Kashmir solution, more so when Baluchistan, NWFP and Afghanistan were headaches of no mean importance. Soon after the 1971 war, the Pakistan Government was convinced that the only solution admitted now by the Kashmir question, was on the basis of a rationalization of the status quo, irrespective of what it had been constrained to put in the Simla Agreement. What was important for the Government was to gain time until it was possible to clinch the settlement, and to keep the issue alive until then for possible internal use. One found enough evidence in the Pakistan Government's behavior since 1971, to suggest that this could be its real policy.

In one of the statements on the subject made in early 1972, Bhutto said something to the effect that the Kashmiris must conduct their own fight for self-determination, and that "revolution" could not be exported. In his first official and extensive tour of the area called "Azad Kashmir" in November 1973, Bhutto offered to its people three options with regard to its future relationship with Pakistan. They could become a fifth province

of Pakistan, they could acquire a provincial status, or they could send their representatives to the Pakistani Parliament. In either case, the net result would be to integrate them closer with Pakistan rather than to preserve their separate character, pending final settlement of the Kashmir question.

Subsequently, in June 1974, constitutional changes were announced in "Azad Kashmir", by which the administration of the area was brought under more intimate control of the Prime Minister, rather than that of a joint secretary of the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, as hitherto. Simultaneously, Bhutto had been working towards extending the control of the People's Party in "Azad Kashmir", which, in March 1975, was being ruled by the Muslim Conference leader, Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan. In fact, one of the reasons why elections in Occupied Kashmir, which were scheduled to be held under the new Constitution in November 1974, had been postponed from time to time was the convenience of the People's Party, which needed more time to acquire a foothold in the area. Elections were now scheduled for May 1975, and there were already reports of clashes between People's Party and Muslim Conference workers.

There was thus a systematic drive not only to fully integrate the area with Pakistan, but also to bring it within the mainstream of Pakistani politics, by imposing PPP rule there. If the elections would not serve this purpose, other means could be used, as in NWFP and Baluchistan. These steps were being taken in consciousness of the ultimate "destiny" of the people of this area, and to ensure that things didn't get out of hand whenever there was political unrest here on account of economic difficulties.

In this scheme of things, where did Pakistani reaction to the Kashmir accord fit in? Obviously, nowhere. On the contrary, the accord should have facilitated Bhutto's task. He should have found it easier to convince his people that Sheikh Abdullah's action had further reduced his own options, and the sooner they reconciled themselves to the realities, the better for them.

### **PPP Rule in POK Too**

Within a year of the announcement of constitutional changes in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), Bhutto succeeded in establishing: PPP rule there too. This was done on the basis of PPP's "electoral success", plus its alliance with and support of the three leading political parties already established in the area. The three parties with which Bhutto's People's Party (POK branch) sought an alliance, were the ruling All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation League, and "Azad" Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. In the process, it also became necessary for Bhutto to topple the existing President of POK, Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan, and subsequently to bar him from contesting the elections.

As has been pointed out earlier, the elections in POK under the new constitutional scheme were postponed from November 1974 to May 1975. In March 1975 all four political parties of POK decided to nominate Sardar Mohammed Ibrahim Khan as their joint candidate for the POK presidential elections. This nomination obviously had the blessings of Bhutto. It was stated on behalf of the four-party alliance that this step had been taken as a reaction to the Delhi Agreement between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

The only serious candidate opposing Sardar Ibrahim Khan was Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan, the existing President of POK. Sardar Qaiyum maintained that he was the official candidate of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC). This was denied, by Sardar Ibrahim, in his capacity as the President of AJKMC. Sardar Ibrahim, on the other hand, stated that he would welcome Sardar Qaiyum to join the movement for a united candidate, and withdrew from the contest.

According to subsequent reports, Sardar Qaiyum was barred from contesting the elections, which were due on 18 May 1975. In April, the POK Assembly passed a no-confidence motion against Sardar Qaiyum (as POK President) by a two-thirds majority. While the speaker of the assembly took over as the President, Sardar Qaiyum, in a news conference, held Prime Minister Bhutto responsible for the measures which led to his ouster from the POK presidentship.

Sardar Ibrahim won the presidential elections, according to results announced on 19 May. The four-party alliance, with Sardar Ibrahim as its leader, was inducted into office for a tenure of four years on 5 June. Sardar Qaiyum boycotted the presidential and assembly elections. Bhutto rejoiced at this political feat, congratulated Sardar Ibrahim, and said: "No power can stand between the Kashmiris and Pakistanis." In the assembly elections, the People's Party alone had won 22 seats out of 42, and the other three parties, which were allies of the PPP, had together secured 12 seats. The PPP was thus placed in a commanding position.

Towards the end of June, the POK switched over to a "parliamentary" system of government. Abdul Hamid Khan, head of the POK branch of the PPP, was elected as the first "Prime Minister" of POK. Under him, a four-man cabinet was installed in Muzaffarabad on 1 July. This was followed by elections to the "Azad Kashmir" Council. All six candidates agreed upon by the four-party alliance were declared elected unopposed to the council on 10 August, after the seventh candidate withdrew from the contest. On 13 August, Bhutto nominated five Parliament members to this council, which was headed by him, thus completing its 14-member composition (the other three being the Federal Prime Minister, the President of "Azad Kashmir", and the Prime Minister of "Azad Kashmir"). As expected, the Opposition parties of Pakistan criticized the way in which the elections were held in POK. At a two-day convention held in

Lahore in the middle of June, the United Democratic Front, consisting of eight Opposition parties, denounced the elections as "rigged", and demanded fresh polling.

However, Bhutto had succeeded in establishing a strongly entrenched PPP government in "Azad Kashmir". But within a few weeks of the installation of this government, there were reports of growing disenchantment of its electoral allies with the "Azad Kashmir" PPP, and the alliance was said to be on the rocks. Therefore, it became necessary to begin the familiar process of inducing defections from other parties to the PPP. In October 1975, Chaudhury Raj Mohammed, an MLA belonging to the Liberation League, resigned from his party and joined the PPP. In February 1976, Raja Mohammed Aslam, another MLA of the Liberation League, resigned and joined the PPP. In March, there was a report about Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan, the former President of POK, having been detained for three months under the "*Azad Kashmir*" *Public Safety Act*. This was obviously done to neutralize his potential for mischief.

Apparently, this was not enough to improve the situation for the PPP, for the federal government felt constrained to take further steps to impose federal control over the POK. Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Federal Minister of Pakistan for Kashmir and Northern Affairs, had already been appointed in February as a member of the "Azad Kashmir" Council. In May, Bhutto had brought in a new Secretary to the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs – Brigadier B.A. Malik.

As the year 1976 came to a close, there were reports of utter political and administrative confusion in POK. According to one report, the President of POK had appointed dozens of his own men in the Secretariat, and the same was being done by the POK Prime Minister, even though there was no work for these men, nor any vacancies. While the annual revenue of POK was Rs 6 crores, the expenditure amounted to Rs 30 crores. Although the federal subsidy filled the gap, it also provided an obvious justification for federal intervention in the politics and administration of the area. This was, however, a sad commentary on the induction of the parliamentary system in so-called "Azad Kashmir", and the imposition of the PPP to steward it.

## CHAPTER 7

### PAKISTAN AND THE SUBCONTINENT – I

Writing in *The Myth of Independence* in 1969, Bhutto said:

A foreign policy based on recognized universal principles influences other states, while an expedient or opportunist policy adversely affects the image of a state in its relations with other countries. If Pakistan's policies remain consistent and moral, other states are bound to be favorably influenced.

Bhutto obviously forgot all this after he came to the helm of affairs, or else he was not bothered about favorably influencing other states. His policies, as soon as he took over as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator on 21 December 1971, were anything but consistent, and certainly characterized by opportunism.

Bhutto's lack of consistency first became apparent in his attitude towards the countries recognizing Bangladesh. Within a few days of his assuming office, he had told a gathering of diplomats at his house in Islamabad that he would not insist on the Hallstein doctrine in the context of Bangladesh. And yet, he broke off diplomatic relations with a number of countries which recognized Bangladesh. By doing so Bhutto wanted to preempt recognition by other countries; but when he found that they were too powerful or important to be thwarted, he gave way.

Bhutto's decision, on 30 January 1972, to leave the Commonwealth was another evidence of his expedient approach to foreign relations. Leaving the Commonwealth was of no great consequence in itself, particularly when some of the advantages connected with Commonwealth membership were gradually withering away. The fact that Pakistan decided to maintain bilateral relations with Britain, Australia and New Zealand, made the decision sound hollow. In fact during his visit to Peking in January-February 1972, Bhutto made a special mention of his desire to maintain good relations with Britain, while Chou En-lai had welcomed his decision to quit the Commonwealth. Bhutto's announcement of leaving the Commonwealth was meant primarily as a dramatic assertion of national self-respect and independence. The objective was to make an emotional impact on his people, which was unrelated to national gains or losses.

The need for making such an impact was felt by Bhutto constantly, because it seemed that after the *de facto* loss of East Bengal he began to suffer from a sense of nervous isolation. He undertook a frantic tour of Iran, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria in January 1972. He said that he wanted to convey his gratitude to

these countries for the excellent support given by them during the war with India. But an expression of gratitude could certainly have waited for a more opportune moment, after the pressing problems at home had been somewhat sorted out. On another occasion he said that he visited these countries to ask them to prevail upon the Soviet Union not to take "precipitate action" in regard to the recognition of Bangladesh. This again was a somewhat naive way of influencing a country whose capacity for the independent assessment of a situation like this, was not unknown. Radio Pakistan was nearer the truth when, in a commentary, it referred to President Bhutto's whirlwind tour and said: "The main purpose of his tour is to save Pakistan from getting isolated." It identified the main problems facing Pakistan in the external field as:

To reach an agreement with India on the question of overall peace, get the release of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers from India and have negotiations between "East" and "West" Pakistan.

All the countries visited by Bhutto were asked to pronounce on these subjects. Most of them called for an implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the situation in the subcontinent, the return of POWs without delay, and a re-establishment of peace and stability in the subcontinent. Some favored negotiations between "East and West Pakistan" without interference by foreign countries. The results of Bhutto's visit were paraded at home with great gusto and must have uplifted the dampened spirits of the people to some extent, particularly when the frame in which they were set was that of "Islam in danger", as a result of a conspiracy by "International Zionism". But they made little difference to the hard realities prevailing in the subcontinent.

A very interesting aspect of the situation was Bhutto's hint that he might change his earlier attitude towards military alliances like CENTO. He was known to have opposed such alliances throughout his political career. Pakistan was gradually moving away from them. But addressing a news conference in Ankara, Bhutto said: "The Indo-Soviet Treaty of August last year had introduced a new factor in the subcontinent and in the light of this Pakistan might have to review its attitude to CENTO and other collective security arrangements." His talks with the Shah of Iran and the President of Turkey during this trip were perhaps not unconnected with this thinking.

It is in this context that the results of Bhutto's visit to Peking mentioned above could be assessed. Platitudinous assertions of support to the Pakistani viewpoint on the situation in the subcontinent apart, the only tangible gain could be said to have been the Chinese Government's decision to change into grants, the four loans amounting to Rs 55 crores already provided to Pakistan. But this gain was of doubtful value, for there was little hope of its repayment in any case—Pakistan's unilateral moratorium on her foreign debt repayments, imposed in May 1971, being still in force.

## Attitude Towards India

By February 1972, Pakistan seemed to be slipping away into its traditional pattern of behavior with regard to India, forgetting the catastrophic results of that behavior in the past. The first few weeks of the new era in Pakistan under Bhutto's presidency, had raised hopes that the past would be forgotten, and the future built on new foundations. But unfortunately, Bhutto was allowing himself to be overtaken by familiar compulsions. And he was finding an escape from them in the past-time, which was again familiar – namely, confrontation with India.

It was with a note of realism that Bhutto had begun his career as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator. Addressing a gathering of intellectuals in Lahore, he had said: "Pakistan is a small country and wants to have friendly relations with India, the Soviet Union, Bhutan, Nepal and Ceylon." On another occasion, when questioned on the speculation about a confederation between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, he was reported to have said: "If Pakistan wanted a confederation, then the obvious move would be for it to seek a confederation with India, for it was once part of India." To this Bhutto had further added: "Pakistan wants peace with India not because it is afraid but because peace is necessary for the progress of the two countries." The release of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was also a significant evidence of Bhutto's realistic approach to the situation in the subcontinent. It was a positive and studied response to India's efforts in this respect, with the purpose of fast normalizing the situation.

Unfortunately, however, the positive note in Bhutto's utterances proved to be short-lived. Somewhere along the line, while trying to grapple with problems at home and consult friends abroad, Bhutto got stuck and decided to postpone the introduction of full democracy at home and the normalization of relations with India abroad. He resorted to the easier, though discredited, course of blaming India for the various ills of his country and seeking to procure arms for another confrontation.

The largest single component of his India policy became hostile propaganda against her on various counts, so that the climate of opinion within the country and around was not favorably disposed towards India. For instance, some of the themes of persistently hostile propaganda through Radio Pakistan were: Indian troops were in occupation of "so-called Bangladesh", which therefore did not qualify for recognition as an independent State; Indian troops were responsible for the large-scale massacre of non-Bengalis in "so-called Bangladesh"; India had committed 93 violations of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir; India was building up military pressure on Pakistan's borders and had aggressive designs on "Azad Kashmir" and West Pakistan", after having captured "East Pakistan"; India was delaying the return of 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war, despite Pakistani willingness to negotiate their return; the brutal Hindus of India were killing the Sikhs, depriving them of human rights, preventing

them from getting a "Khalistan", and the oppressive leaders of North India were keeping in slavery the people of South India.

Propaganda of this nature had been a constant handmaid of Pakistani designs against India since 1947. By sticking to it, Bhutto was not only treading the dangerous path pursued by his predecessors, whom he endlessly decried, but also making for himself a cobweb of constraints from which he would find it difficult to extricate himself even if he wanted to at a later stage.

Another component of Bhutto's posture towards India at that time was his reluctance to hold direct talks with Indian leaders, while blaming India for delaying the solution of Indo-Pakistan problems, the most important of which, according to him, was the return of Pakistani prisoners of war and the evacuation of territories held by Indian troops. The people of Pakistan were repeatedly being told by Government spokesmen that urgent attention was being given to arrangements for the return of POWs. The outside world was being told that India was delaying the return of POWs in violation of the Geneva Convention. But the fact was that Pakistan had not given the slightest evidence of accepting India's repeated offer, made at the highest level, for bilateral negotiations to resolve this and various other issues. This again was in line with Pakistani behavior since the Tashkent Declaration and before.

Other aspects of Pakistan's posture of continuing confrontation were: its attempts to line up the Muslim world against India; its attempt to seek further military aid from China and the US, and if possible, to enter into military pacts with them; its attempt to keep the Kashmir question alive; and its occasional threats of war. Pakistan's Minister for Political Affairs, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, told a news conference in Rawalpindi: "Although Pakistan is keen to have peace, it will not consider any sacrifice too great if a war is thrust on it:"

What were the compulsions driving Bhutto to old-style diplomacy *vis-a-vis* India, and preventing him from recognizing the new realities of which he had shown some awareness earlier? Given the nature of things, one could only speculate. The foremost compulsion seemed to be Bhutto's need to consolidate his personal power throughout Pakistan, and his unpreparedness to lift martial law until then. Bhutto apprehended many dangers to his position if he lifted martial law immediately—dangers in the NWFP and Baluchistan, dangers from right-wing politicians, from the 22 families, from feudal interests, and from elements within his own party. But he thought that the only cognizable justification for continuing martial law could be India. That was why Bhutto told the correspondent of London's *Daily Telegraph* in the middle of February: "The series of constant violations of the ceasefire agreement by India is one of the reasons for not immediately lifting the Martial Law."

Bhutto's inability yet to admit the fact of Bangladesh's separate existence was another compulsion, for an admission of this fact would have to be implicit in any settlement with India. Yet another compulsion could perhaps be his vision—nurtured by some interested foreign powers—of conquering the Kashmir valley at some future date.

### **Climate of Peace**

Creation of a climate for durable peace in the subcontinent was as important for Pakistan as it was for India and Bangladesh. And yet Pakistan, as pointed out earlier, seemed to be the least anxious in contributing to the creation of such a climate, by changing old habits and recognizing new realities in the region. The most conspicuous old habit to which Pakistan was clinging hard was that of distorting every development in India. And the most obvious reality which Pakistan was refusing to recognize was the existence of a sovereign, independent Bangladesh, which could not be ignored in any calculations of war and peace in the subcontinent.

In its search for issues on which India could be taken to task Pakistan, in early March, seized on the POWs incident which occurred somewhere in Eastern India, where about 12 Pakistani prisoners were killed, and blew it up out of all proportion. Pakistan's Foreign Secretary told newsmen: "Pakistan holds India entirely responsible for the inhuman and brutal incident reported this afternoon about the killing of a number of Pakistani prisoners of war in an Indian camp." The Foreign Secretary described this incident as "nothing but a cover for the brutal and inhuman treatment being given to Pakistani prisoners of war by India". The cue was taken by political leaders who, one after another, condemned India in full measure.

Mahmud Ali, a presidential adviser, said: "The Indian Army firing on Pakistani POWs in India has surpassed all records of barbarity on helpless people." Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, President of a faction of the Pakistan Muslim League, said: "The people of Pakistan and all those who believe in decency of conduct will condemn the killing of Pakistani POWs now held in India," and urged the people "to remain united to meet the threat to the country". Malik Mohammed Qasim, General Secretary of the Convention Muslim League, condemned India for killing the Pakistani POWs and said: "Seldom do we find such acts of barbarism in history." Mahmudul Haq Usmani, General Secretary of the National Awami Party, demanded: "India should submit to scrutiny by an international inquiry commission the crimes committed on Pakistani POWs." And Mian Tufail Mohammed, Acting Emir of Jamaat-i-Islami, suggested that the Security Council take a serious view of the killings of Pakistani POWs in India.

As a whole Pakistani attitude on this question raised important issues. How were Pakistani POWs being treated in India, and why were some of them killed? On the first question, nothing could be more reassuring than the report of Dr Testas, Chief of Mission of the International Committee of Red Cross in Pakistan, who said in February:

"Pakistani prisoners of war in India are being well treated, and anxiety on this score should come to an end." This report was broadcast by Radio Pakistan to satisfy internal unrest on account of the delay in the repatriation of POWs.

As regards the killing, it was obviously the result of a situation in which some prisoners had tried to escape. Therefore, the real question was: why did Pakistan blow up this issue? Possibly because this was the only conceivable pretext for rallying all segments of political opinion behind the Government; when the entire nation was sore about the Government's inability to have the POWs repatriated. In doing so the Pakistan Government had resorted to the traditional device of seizing any stick to beat India with, as long as it served an internal purpose, irrespective of its impact on the political climate in the subcontinent.

In some other ways too, Pakistani behavior reflected the continuation of an old attitude of hostility and confrontation, with the difference that at the receiving end, in addition to India, there was now Bangladesh also. Radio Pakistan, Pakistani spokesmen and political leaders had been harping constantly on India's responsibility for delaying the release of POWs, irrespective - of India's standing offer of talks. Indian intellectuals had been blamed for not sufficiently pressurizing their Government in this respect. Besides, India had been accused of exploiting the Bangladesh economy to further its own interests. The Indian Prime Minister's well-meaning offer of a no-war pact had been ridiculed. India was daily projected as having aggressive designs against neighboring countries. India was accused of instigating revolt in the Frontier and in Baluchistan. Stories of India disintegrating under the weight of the secessionist demands of various states were manufactured and played up by Pakistan's publicity media.

In regard to Bangladesh, the persecution of pro-Pakistani elements was a constant allegation by Pakistan, despite evidence to the contrary given by impartial observers and UN officials. Similarly, Pakistan's official media had been criticizing Bangladesh for not responding to Pakistan's offer of food grains, or Pakistan's initiative for talks, irrespective of the position clearly stated by Bangladesh, that it would be willing to deal with Pakistan only if it was recognized as an independent State.

These were the attitudes which Pakistan was used to since its very inception. But they were hardly conducive to viable peace in the subcontinent, and were not consistent with the requirements of the new situation. The most outstanding requirement of the new situation was the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan. Unless this was done, the question of the repatriation of nearly 100,000 military and civilian POWs, so vital to normalization in the subcontinent, as also to Pakistan's internal stability, could not be settled. On recognition also depended the exchange of ethnic minorities between Pakistan and Bangladesh, a factor which would further contribute to a relaxation of tensions in the region.

Another requirement of the new situation, as regards Pakistan, was that it should stop looking outwards for friends and partners, and instead establish friendly relationships with countries of the region, namely India and Bangladesh. Hitherto, Pakistan had been cultivating the Muslim countries, in addition to some major powers, as allies in the fulfillment of her national objectives. Even lately, Bhutto had been sending high-level delegations abroad to line up Muslim countries against India and Bangladesh. But such an approach had proved to be of no special advantage even to Pakistan in the past. Therefore, Pakistan should now have identified and utilized the areas and opportunities of cooperation within the region.

The giving up of old attitudes and the recognition of new realities by Pakistan alone, would have enabled it to sit across the table with India and Bangladesh, and contribute to the evolution of a structure of peace and stability in the subcontinent.

### **Talks at Murree**

The subcontinent appeared to have reached a turning point in its history, when emissary-level talks were held between India and Pakistan in Murree in the last week of April. The events of December 1971 should undoubtedly have caused a drastic change in the traditional Pakistani approach to India-Pakistan questions. But whether all the conventional determinants of Pakistan's attitude had changed, was doubtful. Pakistan's willingness to come to terms with realities had to be seen in the light of its immediate and ultimate objectives, formulated in the light of these determinants.

Pakistan's immediate objective was to secure the release of 93,000 prisoners of war, then in Indian camps. Pakistan did not want any of these prisoners to be handed over to Bangladesh, and tried for war crimes. The farthest that Bhutto had yielded in pursuance of this objective was to unilaterally offer to release the nearly 600 Indian prisoners in Pakistan, even if India did not release the Pakistani prisoners unconditionally. But he would certainly not like the POW question to be linked with other issues. "I want to tell the Indian Prime Minister", said Bhutto, while addressing the Rawalpindi public meeting where he was sworn in as President on April 21, "that she is committing a blunder if she wants to detain our prisoners of war as hostages."

What were the variables which had a bearing on the achievement of Pakistan's objective? The foremost was the views of the Bangladesh Government, which had to be a party to any decision with regard to the prisoners of war. But even if Pakistan refused to recognize Bangladesh for the time being, a mechanism could perhaps be found for ascertaining the views of the Bangladesh Government. One could also imagine the possibility of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman being persuaded to join the Indian Prime Minister in a summit meeting with the Pakistani President, without the prior recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, in the larger interest of peace in the

subcontinent. Therefore, difficult though it was, Bangladesh might still not have been an insuperable obstacle.

The second set of variables involved India's objectives in going to the conference table. On behalf of India, it had been made amply clear that she would like to utilize the occasion to evolve a structure of durable peace in the subcontinent. Such a structure, according to India, should have had two components at least: namely, a lasting solution of the Kashmir question, and an agreement about not using force in resolving mutual problems. Once these two were achieved, other aspects of normalization of relations between the two countries could follow in the normal course. But without achieving these, India did not consider it likely that any purpose would be served in releasing the POWs. Herein lay the real test of statesmanship for both Pakistan and India.

The establishment of lasting peace in the subcontinent had occasionally been stated as Pakistan's ultimate objective also. But Pakistan had never spelt out what it meant by this. It would be far-fetched to believe that Pakistan's concept of a lasting peace was the same as India's. Pakistan had always wanted a settlement of the Kashmir question, but on different terms. Again, Pakistan had always ridiculed the idea of a pact renouncing the use of force. These two attitudes had, in fact, constituted the essence of Pakistani confrontation against India all these years. Was there reason to hope that the factors and forces which had determined these attitudes had now disappeared – and if they had, to what extent?

One may enumerate the various determinants of Pakistan's earlier policy of confrontation against India as follows: the need to keep in subservience the province of East Bengal, and other disgruntled areas; plans to forcibly seize Jammu and Kashmir; fear of economic, cultural, and eventually political domination by India, if uninhibited intercourse was permitted with India; fear of the two-nation theory being disproved if very close relations were permitted to develop between the two countries; the vested interest of the armed forces, which had come to occupy an important position in the country's political system, in maintaining a high degree of tension with India and the interest of powerful foreign countries in maintaining tension between India and Pakistan.

One can be reasonably sure that after the loss of East Bengal and after the defeat of December 1971, some of these determinants were no longer valid. But whether the politically and economically dominant West Punjab would tolerate a sudden reduction of tension with India – which was bound to follow a settlement of the Kashmir question – with all the economic implications which would undercut its dominance – was doubtful. Would Pakistan, which set so much store by "Islam" as its *raison d'être* even after the secession of East Bengal, tolerate a further attrition of the two-nation theory by permitting its people to be genuinely friendly with "Hindu India"? Would the armed forces of Pakistan tolerate a reduction of expenditure on themselves, which

would be the inevitable consequence of anything like a "no-war pact"? And would interested foreign powers reconcile themselves to the inevitable loss of their influence in South Asia if the two perpetual enemies in the region became friends?

Set against these doubts was the paramount consideration of the happiness of wives, parents, brothers and sisters of 93,000 prisoners which Bhutto had so much emphasized, if not the consideration of lasting peace and prosperity of the 680 million people inhabiting India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Given the background and stated positions of the contending parties, the process of negotiations was bound to be hard. A breakthrough could be achieved only if both India and Pakistan showed flexibility in approach and a willingness to compromise, even if it took another round of emissary-level talks to establish mutual rapport and draw up an agenda for the summit.

Fortunately, however, the talks between the special emissaries of the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India were successful. In the words of the joint statement issued by them on 30 April:

The special emissaries have accomplished the task entrusted to them. They have settled the modalities for the forthcoming meeting between the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India and have defined the subjects to be discussed by them.

As the joint statement said, they had considered several matters, including in particular those bearing on the establishment of durable peace in the subcontinent. They agreed that the meeting between the leaders of the two countries would be held towards the end of May or the beginning of June at New Delhi, and a mutually convenient date would be announced in due course.

### **Bhutto's Intention**

Despite the legitimate air of optimism which pervaded when the joint statement, after emissary-level talks between India and Pakistan, was released in the two capitals on 30 April, quite a few things happened within the first two weeks to cause concern as to the real intentions of Pakistan's President Bhutto. The pressures and considerations which prompted the two governments to come to the negotiating table and agree on an agenda for the Summit meeting were well known to each other. It was incumbent on both sides, for the success of the proposed Summit, not only that they did not give the least cause for suspicion as regards their desire that the Summit succeed, but also that they took positive steps which would contribute to its success. Pakistan, unfortunately, did not live up to it, as was evident from a series of later developments.

A striking feature of Pakistan's behavior was the sort of propaganda being mouthed by Radio Pakistan even after the successful conclusion of emissary-level talks. The constant

themes of anti-India propaganda were: India had designs to establish its hegemony over the countries of the subcontinent; India had been trying to undo Pakistan ever since its creation; the Indian Hindus created trouble in "East Pakistan"; India had deprived Pakistan of its Eastern Wing; India had a dual policy towards Pakistan – while posing that it wanted to establish friendly relations; it was perpetrating inhuman atrocities on Muslims of "Occupied Kashmir"; Indian armed forces had been violating the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir; why was India detaining the POWs, and wanting to hand over some of them to the Bangladesh Government? In doing so, India was violating the Geneva Conventions, and deceiving the world: it was not Pakistan but India which had been committing acts of aggression, and India's anxiety was not to keep the Indian Ocean free of dominance, but to impose its own dominance on the Ocean.

Propagating its convictions is one of the sovereign rights of a nation, and Pakistan had been exercising this right *vis-a-vis* India with great abandon. But the content of these convictions, and the timing of their expression, are also the measure of a country's intentions at a given time. Some of the themes of Pakistani propaganda were, in fact, likely to be the subject matter of negotiations at the proposed Summit. In a way they were already "sub judice". Diplomatic ethics demanded that none of the parties pronounce anything on such subjects until they were settled one way or another. And yet, Pakistan Radio paid scant regard to this requirement. Besides, by allowing its media to harp on traditional Pakistani themes in regard to India, the Government of Pakistan was hardly contributing to the evolution of a changed atmosphere so essential to the success of the proposed Summit.

More important than propaganda, were official utterances on basic issues which were bound to be the subject of negotiation. Bhutto was reported to have "emphatically declared", during an interview to a correspondent of London TV News, that "only the Kashmiri people can determine the future status of Kashmir". "No power on earth", he added, "can usurp the Kashmiri people's right to self determination." The same day, Radio Pakistan reiterated: "The Kashmir issue is of international significance and India cannot ignore and forget the history of the freedom struggle in Kashmir and back out of its commitments." And by a tragic coincidence, the very next day Pakistani troops in battalion strength attacked Indian positions in the Kaiyan area of Kashmir, ten miles south of Tithwal. Bhutto, in his news conference two days later, accused India of having committed "serious" violations of the Kashmir ceasefire line, and said: "This kind of thing is likely to arise again, when you confront each other in an eyeball to eyeball situation."

The situation arising from the Tithwal incident, and from Bhutto's remarks on it and on the Kashmir question in general, was too important to be dismissed lightly. Kashmir was inevitably an item on the agenda of the proposed Summit. India's desire to utilize the occasion for a final settlement of the Kashmir question was well known. That India

regarded the 1949 ceasefire line as invalid, and was in no mood to withdraw from the Jammu and Kashmir areas occupied in December 1971, had also been stated firmly. Therefore, one could understand the anxiety among certain sections of the Pakistani power structure which had thrived on the Kashmir bogey, and which were legitimately concerned at any prospect of the Kashmir settlement. But Bhutto, by forcefully endorsing the traditional Pakistani view on Kashmir at this crucial juncture, and by permitting the Tithwal incident to occur, had allowed himself to play into the hands of those, whether inside or outside the country, who had everything to lose and nothing to gain from a rapprochement between India and Pakistan.

Another aspect on which one would have expected Bhutto to strike a positive note was the recognition of Bangladesh, without which, Bhutto knew, a settlement of the question of the repatriation of POWs was impossible. But in his Press conference of 7 May, Bhutto ruled out the possibility of recognition before the Summit, and said: "There are some cogent reasons why we find it difficult to do this." Bhutto explained these reasons to the editor of the Indian *Hindustan Times*, who met him early in May. The essence of his argument was that he needed more time, and an informal meeting with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, before he could sell the idea of recognition to his people. But did he mean that the Summit meeting should be postponed until such time as he was able to recognize Bangladesh, for a summit in which the POWs issue could not be discussed in its entirety, was of no use?

Viewed in this perspective, Bhutto's decision to visit West Asian and North African countries from 29 May to 10 June, in violation of the agreement arrived at with the Indian emissary that he would be available for talks with India's Prime Minister towards the end of May or early June, appeared quite understandable. But what was still intriguing was how long. Bhutto proposed to wait, given the rigidity of Bangladesh's position that recognition must precede any direct contact between the two countries at a responsible level. And somewhat alarming, was the not too improbable prospect, evident from developments outlined above, that while keeping up the facade of a desire for rapprochement, Bhutto might meanwhile be trying various means to strengthen his bargaining position, not caring much for whether or when the Summit took place.

### **By Bluff and Bluster**

To achieve maximum gains at minimum costs in international relations is a normal function of diplomacy. This can be done as much through negotiations based on mutual trust and confidence, as through bluff and bluster, which gives rise to mistrust even if none existed earlier. Bhutto seemed to have opted for the latter style of diplomacy to achieve his objectives *vis-a-vis* India in the weeks following the Murree talks.

Bhutto's primary concern was to get the release of Pakistani prisoners, of war held in India. To an extent, he was also keen to have the disengagement of troops facing each other on the borders, and evacuation of territories in adverse possession of either side. But he knew that the price he would have to pay in return was heavy. Whether for lack of national consensus, personal diffidence or external pressure, he was not finding it possible to pay the desired price straightaway. He was at the same time not in a position to reject bilateral negotiations as the means of resolving the India-Pakistan tangle, for alternatives were either not available, or not feasible; therefore, the necessity for resorting to dubious means which would enable him to gain time, and improve his bargaining position.

The first questionable move by Bhutto in this respect was the deliberate violation of the timetable agreed upon with D. P. Dhar at Murree, for talks with the Indian Prime Minister. It did not need excessive insight into Pakistan's foreign relations to know that countries of West Asia and North Africa hardly posed a serious crisis which needed Bhutto to visit them immediately, overriding the proposed crucial talks with Indira Gandhi. The visit to Muslim countries would not even serve the purpose of invoking their influence or pressure on behalf of Pakistan, for none of these States had any leverage with India sufficient for that purpose. The only reasonable justification for this trip could have been a desire on Bhutto's part to gain a few weeks of extra time before he confronted Indira Gandhi.

How would Bhutto utilize this extra time? To begin with, he could hope to sort out the problems pertaining to the recognition of Bangladesh along the lines spelt out by him in an interview to the editor of *Hindustan Times*, as mentioned earlier. Further, he could also hope to cause some embarrassment to India by propagating that she was "inhumanly" continuing the detention of POWs to wrest political concessions from Pakistan. But more important than this seemed to be his desire to improve his bargaining position on Kashmir in various ways.

Bhutto's political strategy with regard to Kashmir started unfolding itself distinctly towards the beginning of May. After a period of comparative lull since the ceasefire of December 1971, major incidents took place on the ceasefire line, enabling Pakistan to recapture two posts in the Tithwal sector. Pakistan used the occasion to not only alter the status quo in its favor, but also to involve the United Nations in a situation where, according to India, it had no *locus standi* any longer. A measure of Pakistan's success in this respect was the UN Secretary General Dr Kurt Waldheim's report to the Security Council, blaming India for "withholding cooperation from the [UN] observers originally sent to Kashmir to watch over the 1949 cease fire".

Further, after a period of diluted importance attached to the Principle of self-determination in Kashmir, Pakistan suddenly and vigorously revived its commitment to this principle. Since the beginning of May, Bhutto himself repeatedly emphasized the

continued relevance of self-determination by Kashmiri people to any solution of the Kashmir question. Speaking to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Bhutto had said: "The Kashmir question involves the right of self-determination of the people of the state. If they want to exercise their inherent right, Pakistan cannot take away this right from them." Besides, there had been a spate of commentaries put out by Radio Pakistan during the first two weeks of May, pointing out the need for giving to the people of Kashmir their right of self-determination.

It would thus seem that Bhutto, aware of the slippery hold that he would otherwise have over Kashmir, decided to strengthen his position before he went to the conference, table by internationalizing the Kashmir question, by refocusing attention on self-determination, and by altering the position on ground in his favor as much as possible. During the extra time he was gaining, his effort was directed to these ends, irrespective of the extent to which he might eventually succeed.

Apart from trying to strengthen his position on basic issues which were going to be the subject of negotiation, Bhutto, in characteristic manner, was also eliciting world sympathy by raising the bogey of an "unequal treaty" which, he suspected, India would impose on Pakistan. An unequal treaty presupposes an element of coercion underlying the process of negotiation, of which India had not given the least evidence. And yet, in his Press conference of 7 May, Bhutto said: "I am not made of the wood who will subscribe to an unequal treaty and secondly, if we have an unequal treaty it will not bring about durable peace." The theme was harped upon by official media endlessly since then, questioning the very spirit in which emissary-level talks between the two countries had been held and concluded.

Lastly, Bhutto, in an effort to prove to India that Pakistan, because of its military defeat, could not be taken for granted in any process of give and take, had occasionally been using language which was absolutely uncalled for, and could raise eyebrows in India and circumscribe its flexibility *vis-a-vis* Pakistan. For instance, in his news conference of 7 May, Bhutto said: "We will not disarm. That is out of the question." And then, dwelling on Pakistan's existing strength, he said: "Our back is not to the wall any more .... The army today has signs of morale .... We have genuinely turned the corner." This was climaxed by a Radio Pakistan assertion that Pakistan "will not sign a no-war pact with India as suggested by Mrs. Gandhi several times".

The various moves, statements and assertions outlined above appeared to be parts of a design. They could not be dismissed as of little consequence, just because Pakistani attitude during emissary-level talks was positive. In fact, they were more in tune with Bhutto's known style and character, and should have made India wiser while planning its policy towards Pakistan.

### **The Simla Accord**

At last an agreement was reached, a historic landmark in Indo-Pak relations called the Simla Agreement. The two heads of Government, Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, aided by an array of advisors, met in Simla in the last week of June, and after days of excruciating negotiations, succeeded in producing an agreement on 2 July. As is usual when chronic enemies meet, an agreement was salvaged at the last moment, when failure of the talks had virtually been announced, and some of the aides had already left Simla in despair.

The agreement committed the two countries to the principles of the UN Charter, and bound them to the resolution of their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of troops by both countries to their respective sides of the international border. It laid down various steps to be taken by the two countries for normalization of relations among themselves step by step, in the field of communications, economic interaction and cultural contacts. It provided for the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, resulting from the ceasefire of 17 December 1971, to be respected by both sides. Both Governments also agreed to have further meetings to discuss the question of the repatriation of prisoners of war and of civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir, and the resumption of diplomatic relations.

The most pertinent question that arose about the Indo-Pak agreement of 2 July 1972, was how long it would last. The question assumed importance because the celebrated Tashkent Declaration, the predecessor of the Simla Agreement, had been violated by Pakistan within a few months of its signing. Some in India were prone to believe that the Simla Agreement would last no longer. The question can be examined not only from the point of view of the substance of the agreement, but also the politico-military environment in which it had been reached, and its essential differences from the Tashkent Declaration.

To come to the environment first, the most obvious fact was that Pakistan had signed this agreement as a defeated and dissected nation closer than ever before to realities in the balance of power in the subcontinent. Bhutto, while preparing his nation for the Summit, admitted frankly that although Pakistan had fought many wars with India, this was a decisive one which Pakistan had lost. No Pakistani leader could say so in January 1966. An agreement signed in such a sobered mental frame was likely to last longer.

Another factor which lent far greater sanctity to this agreement was that President Bhutto was a genuinely elected leader, with mass appeal in the country and a substantial majority in the National Assembly, while President Ayub Khan, who had signed the Tashkent Declaration, could claim a sort of popular support which was only fake and contrived. Critics of this agreement in Pakistan would have found it extremely

difficult to organize large-scale agitations against it, unlike those in 1966, who mobilized student demonstrations against the Tashkent Declaration within a few days of its conclusion.

Unlike Ayub Khan again, Bhutto tried to evolve a national consensus on the basic issues confronting the Summit, and operated in Simla within the limits of this consensus. In the process, he gave to national and provincial political leaders, students, lawyers, *ulemas*, labor leaders and other articulate sections of society, a sense of participation in the decisions agreed upon at Simla, and virtually eliminated internal opposition to the Simla accord. The presence of eminent NAP leaders in Simla as members of the Pakistani delegation, further lent a sort of national unanimity to the agreement.

Ratification of the Simla Agreement by a special session of Pakistan's National Assembly, beginning on 10 July, was likely to be a formality whose completion would pose no problem. With the support of members belonging to NAP and JUI parties in Baluchistan and NWFP—and QML and PDP—coalition partners at the Centre—Bhutto was likely to command more than 80 percent of votes in favor of the agreement. In such circumstances, it would have been difficult for anyone to obstruct the implementation of the agreement, even if there were provocations to do so.

Another feature that distinguished this agreement from the Tashkent Declaration was that it had been reached without external pressure or persuasion. Perceptibly or otherwise, big power influences had been potent factors in making India and Pakistan agree to the Tashkent Declaration. To that extent Pakistan's sense of commitment to the Tashkent Declaration was far less serious than it was to the Simla Agreement, signed entirely by its own volition after a painful process of reconciliation with existing realities.

And finally, it should be reasonable to believe that the agreement was not "imposed" on Pakistan, and therefore, was likely to be durable, for President Bhutto had asserted on the eve of his departure for Simla, that "peace cannot be imposed and yet remain durable". The fact of military defeat could have been in the consciousness of Pakistani delegates at Simla, but the strategy and style of negotiations adopted by the Indian Prime Minister and her colleagues would convince even the hardest Indian critic that negotiations took place in a spirit of absolute equality and mutual respect.

As regards the substance of the agreement, Bhutto had the satisfaction of having achieved one of the two main objectives of the Summit—namely, the withdrawal of troops to their side of the international border. The other objective of getting POWS and civilian internees repatriated, had been mentioned in the agreement as the subject of subsequent negotiations. On the question of Kashmir, the Pakistani position had, for the time being, been safe-guarded by the clause that the line of control, as on 17 December 1971, would be respected by both sides "without prejudice to the recognized position of

either side". An additional source of satisfaction to Pakistan, acknowledged by some Pakistani papers, was that the agreement did not provide for any cut in the defence budget. Bhutto could, therefore, sell the agreement to his people as having successfully vindicated his promise that he would not sacrifice any principle for the sake of peace.

The present agreement was different from the Tashkent Declaration with regard to certain basic features. It spoke for the inherent strength and durability of this agreement that the principle of "bilateralism" as a means of settling mutual differences had been explicitly recognized in it as mandatory or obligatory for both sides, whereas in the Tashkent Declaration, it was merely recommendatory and implicit in the undertaking that the two sides would continue meetings at various levels on matters of direct concern to both countries (Article IX). Further, the obligation to refrain from the threat of force, under the present agreement, was more specific and comprehensive than it was under the Tashkent Declaration. While ensuring the "territorial integrity or political Independence of each other", it specially provided against the use of force to alter the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, as on 17 December 1971. This was a provision whose significance for the evolution of durable peace in the subcontinent was obviously enormous.

A striking feature of this agreement, which was expected to contribute to its durability, was its shape and design. The basic decisions had been so formulated and put together that at the time of implementation, it would be difficult to deal with them in isolation from each other. In the case of the Tashkent Declaration, Pakistan developed cold feet after implementing the provisions that suited it—namely, Article II, V and VII, relating to the withdrawal of troops, the return of diplomatic envoys to their posts, and the repatriation of POWs. The present agreement seemed to be designed to preclude such possibilities, so that decisions on basic issues mentioned in the last paragraph of the agreement were reached and implemented as a package, giving to the agreement an inherent durability.

The Simla Agreement was ratified by Pakistan's National Assembly on 15 July 1972, and it was a source of satisfaction as much to the Government of India, as to the Government of Pakistan. The agreement was thoroughly debated in Pakistan by its public, Press, and the National Assembly. President Bhutto, his cabinet colleagues, and other leaders of public opinion worked hard to sell the agreement, because they were conscious of the stakes involved if it did not get through. But the ratification could at best be regarded as a small beginning, for the two countries had yet to go a long way to achieve durable peace.

The Government's strategy while selling the agreement to the people was bold and imaginative. The official media tried to make the people aware of the tragic consequences for the nation if the agreement had not been reached. Members of Bhutto's cabinet, and other responsible leaders of the PPP, NAP and RH indulged in

sweet reasonableness to justify the cooperative attitude adopted by Bhutto at Simla. President Bhutto himself wound up the National Assembly proceedings by doing a lot of plain speaking about the irrelevance of past attitudes, and the need for a positive outlook.

Dwelling on what might have happened if the Simla accord had not been reached, Sultan Ahmed wrote in the *Morning News*, a Trust paper:

There would have been extreme uncertainty in Pakistan, despondency and gloom. There would have been fear of the resumption of war. . . . The stock market would have slumped further, investment would have slowed down even more, unemployment increased and prices risen higher. Foreign investment would have become even more scarce, and foreign aid might have been cut down further.

To these negative advantages, Sultan Ahmed added a positive one, namely the gain of 5,130 square miles of territory under occupation of the Indian army.

Among Pakistani leaders, Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Central Law Minister, while commending the agreement, said in the National Assembly: "When the other country wants to have peaceful relations, Pakistan should also reciprocate." Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, Home Minister and Muslim League leader, said: "Realization on the part of India to have a friendly instead of hostile Pakistan as its neighbor is a constructive step forward." Information Minister Maulana Kausar Niazi said: "Pakistan being a Muslim country cannot ignore the offer of peaceful talks." Finance Minister Mubashir Hassan said: "The Agreement provides for peace which will help in the diversion of resources to better the lot of the common man who had been poverty stricken for years." Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo, NAP leader and Baluchistan Governor, said: "There has to be change in the outlook of the people of the two countries. Solution of the problems facing the country cannot be found through confrontation with India." Maulana Hazarvi of the JUI asserted: "Pakistan wants peace just like India to reconstruct itself."

There could not be a more reasonable approach, and it certainly had its effect. But the real difference was made by President Bhutto, who made no bones about how he would like the country to behave. He told his people:

[First:] If you want to be jingoistic, or Bonapartistic, someone else will have to come and do it. I cannot do it; [second:] It is for the people of Pakistan and India to decide what kind of relationship they want between themselves. For too long, their leaders have spoken for the people. It is time that people speak for themselves; [third:] We live in the same geography, we cannot change this geography. But since we live here, let us find some method of a *modus vivendi*. It

means live and let live; [fourth:] The United Nations has been of no avail in resolving the question of Kashmir; [fifth:] Twenty-five years of history has told us that no right of self-determination can be achieved by proxy; [and sixth:] If our bilateral negotiations fail, there is nothing to stop us from the processes of going to the United Nations.

The ratification of the agreement thus achieved was certainly reassuring to India, as regards Pakistan's intention to work on the path charted at Simla. But throughout the debate on this agreement in Pakistan, could be discerned a deep national commitment to the cause of Kashmir, which did not seem to admit a dilution in the near future. Even President Bhutto was constrained to promise: "If the people of Kashmir start a freedom movement, if tomorrow Sheikh Abdullah starts a people's movement, we will be with them, no matter what the consequences." The Finance Minister categorically told the assembly: "We do not accept the ceasefire line as the international boundary." The Law Minister said: "It is Pakistan's stand that the right of self-determination belongs to the people of Kashmir. Pakistan has not given up this right." Other ministers and political leaders of all shades echoed this line.

It may be argued that these statements did not reflect the real views of the Pakistan Government, but were resorted to merely as gimmicks to ensure that the Simla Agreement got through the assembly. But the agreement can be misleading, for it can equally be maintained that having secured the return of lost territories, Pakistan would not be in a mood to make any concessions on Kashmir whenever negotiations took place in this regard, even if it meant a postponement in repatriation of the prisoners of war. The prevailing Pakistani view on the question of POWs seemed well conveyed by the following words of Bhutto:

Prisoners cannot be kept indefinitely. Territory can be kept indefinitely. Israel has not yet left an inch of Arab territory but they have returned the prisoners. For territory is more sacred, more important, more permanent. But once withdrawal takes place [from occupied territory] what is the rationale or reason for India to keep the prisoners. Once we get withdrawals we can again mobilize international support on the question of prisoners of war.

This is what posed a challenge to Indian diplomacy at the time of the next Indo-Pak meeting, for other than prisoners of war, India had no lever left to make Pakistan behave on all questions pertaining to the normalization of relations, including that of Kashmir, with a view to evolving a structure of durable peace.

### **Normalization Thwarted**

On 25 August 1972, China vetoed the entry of Bangladesh into the United Nations. By this negative vote in the Security Council, the process of normalization of the politics of

the subcontinent had undoubtedly been thwarted, even if India and Pakistan managed to make progress on two issues which had become contentious, *i.e.* the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, and the withdrawal of troops from territories in adverse possession of either side. The mere fact of Pakistan having stalled the recognition of Bangladesh, and of China having vetoed its entry into the United Nations, had put the clock back by many months. Despite the bilateralist spirit of Simla, a third party had reentered the field in a big way, threatening to convert the subcontinent again into an arena of big-power conflict. Why President Bhutto allowed himself to go astray from the Simla line was a question that troubled many a mind.

Quite apart from the personal assurances given by Bhutto to Mrs. Gandhi at Simla in this regard, there was ample circumstantial evidence to prove that Bhutto had made up his mind to recognize Bangladesh by the end of August. Shortly after the Simla Agreement was signed on 2 July, a Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman was reported to have told some foreign newsmen that Pakistan was likely to recognize Bangladesh in August. The spokesman added that the step would give a new turn to the question of the release of prisoners of war, which had not been disposed of in the Simla Agreement. The question of recognition was not discussed in the special session of Pakistan's National Assembly, convened on 10 July to ratify the Simla accord, on the general understanding that the next session due to meet on 14 August would be seized with it.

Pakistan's Information Minister Maulana Kausar Niazi confirmed this impression while talking to newsmen on 27 July. He, in fact, went to the extent of saying: "It is the desire of the People's Party that the people of Pakistan should adopt a realistic stand on the question, and should not be swayed by emotions. The people of Pakistan should bear in mind that they have to maintain their relations with Muslim Bengal to save it from foreign influence."

Bhutto himself delivered a carefully prepared address in defence of the Simla Agreement at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs in Karachi, on 31 July. While concluding his address, Bhutto referred to Pakistan's relationship with "the authorities in Dacca" and said:

I will point out what should be our state of relations with the authorities in Dacca? That will be my duty but if the people feel differently for the time being then I will wait for some more time because they will realize if not today, then on some other occasion, what really should be our state of relations with Muslim Bengal. We are directly involved in that relationship. And in this direct relationship we will come to the right conclusion.

The entire speech was intended to be a reply to right-wing Opposition, which had criticized the Simla Agreement and opposed the recognition of Bangladesh, within the National Assembly and outside. There was general expectation that the National

Assembly session, beginning on 14 August, would decide in favor of recognition, when suddenly a reversal of the position was announced by Bhutto at a Press conference on 10 August. The only known factor that had intervened was a meeting of the People's Party Central Committee held on 8 and 9 August, in which the question of recognition was discussed. It was possible, as had been suggested by some analysts of the Pakistani scene, that in this meeting some PPP members from Punjab, Bhutto's power base, put their foot down and opposed recognition on the plea that it would directly endanger the integrity of whatever remained of Pakistan, taking into account the situation prevailing. But what appeared to be far more likely was the role of a hidden external factor which felt its vital interests at stake if Pakistan recognized Bangladesh at this stage. This factor did not take many days to reveal its identity.

Pakistan had no difficulty in explaining its attitude in terms of Bangladesh intransigence. Bhutto's efforts to persuade Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to talk to him prior to the recognition, were well known. He had employed direct emissaries as well as third country leaders towards this objective, but to no avail. One could also appreciate the problems which Bhutto would have liked to resolve with Bangladesh before recognition. For instance, the *Morning News* of Karachi had reported that some of the Aid-Pakistan Consortium members were insisting that Islamabad accept the debt liability of Bangladesh before they resumed economic assistance to Pakistan. According to this paper, Bangladesh could be asked to share about 35 percent of Pakistan's total debt liability of about 4,350 million dollars. The World Bank's efforts to bring about an amicable settlement of debt liabilities among the two former wings of Pakistan having failed, Bhutto would have liked to settle it directly before he recognized Bangladesh.

Again, Bhutto had often referred to certain special relations which should exist between Pakistan and "Muslim Bengal". The motive was obviously to try to wean Bangladesh away from its special relationship with India, which was based not on religion but on an identity of interests. Bhutto almost said so when, in an interview with Swiss Television in late August, he observed: "Bengal, whether it is a part of Pakistan or not, is Muslim, and if it chooses to separate from Pakistan or not, is Muslim." To this Bhutto added: "Our thinking will be guided by Islamic principles as Muslim states. We are trying that we should retain some links between our two parts."

It was about these links too that Bhutto wanted to talk to Mujibur Rehman. And besides, there was the question of the trial of war criminals, on which Bhutto would have liked to plead for a less rigid attitude on the part of the "Dacca authorities", before he recognized their sovereign status.

It was one of the most tragic coincidences of history that at the time when Bhutto was doing some rethinking about his decision to recognize Bangladesh, for reasons stated above, he found China, for much stronger reasons of its own, offering him support in the form of a veto in the Security Council. China's reasons were not mysterious. It cast

its veto on 25 August, despite its statement a day earlier that it did not want to act as a super power. Stability in South Asia, with the existing balance of forces, was not in Chinese interest. Besides, China needed to restore its prestige with Pakistan, which it had lost in 1971, because of its inability to live up to its proclamations. China also thought that by delaying Bangladesh's entry into the United Nations and also its recognition by Pakistan, it would be helping Pakistan to reach the much-needed "special relationship" with Bangladesh.

With these and similar other motives, the Chinese action conformed to its conventional policy, that political balance in the subcontinent should not emerge in favor of its adversaries, *i.e.* Soviet Union and India, and countries of the region not being allowed freedom from external influences. What was disturbing was that Bhutto, having rejected such influences at Simla, should have again succumbed to them.

### **Doubtful Partner**

That Pakistan was a doubtful partner in the search for durable peace in the subcontinent was being proved for India again in so many ways, despite India's constant desire that it should be otherwise. The credulous Indian mind had allowed itself to believe, after the Simla Agreement, that Pakistan was as keen as itself to bury the hatchet and lay the foundations of a new subcontinent.

The belief was based on the hope, generated in no small measure by Bhutto himself, that the politics of Pakistan had now sufficient resilience to allow the subcontinent to be built on the foundations of friendship and cooperation. But these hopes and beliefs—being the essence of what was known as the Simla spirit—met their first casualty when Pakistan announced a postponement of the recognition of Bangladesh. Soon after that, differences on delineation of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir came to the surface because of Pakistan's reluctance to accord it a new status. Even after these differences were said to have been resolved at Delhi, the overall perspective seemed to have registered no improvement.

Many in New Delhi had got into the habit of dismissing unfavorable utterances in Islamabad—sometimes of a grossly unfriendly character—as "meant for internal consumption". Such indulgence was permissible to a limit. But mature statesmanship demanded that all important utterances and developments in the country concerned were taken cognizance of, and an evaluation was made in the total perspective of history. There was no doubt that Pakistan still swore by the Simla Agreement, the last such assertion at the highest level being Bhutto's categorical statement at the Lahore airport on 3 September. But quite a lot was still being said and done in Pakistan to raise doubts as to its intentions, after Indian troops had withdrawn from territories under their occupation.

The foremost that should be mentioned in this connection was the Defence of Pakistan Day, celebrated again in 1972 on 6 September. The day had been celebrated regularly since 1966 "to pay homage to those martyrs who laid down their lives for preserving the integrity and security of the country", when "on September 6, 1965, a preplanned naked aggression was launched against Pakistan". Presidents Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan had always utilized this day to keep alive in Pakistani minds the need for vengeance and hatred towards India. The fact that Bhutto chose to maintain this tradition was itself a significant reflection of existing Pakistani psychology.

More important, however, was the refrain of speeches made on this day. Speaking in the National Assembly, Law Minister Kasuri and Information Minister Niazi both emphasized that what had happened in 1971 was not the defeat of armed forces but the result of "conspiracy of power-hungry Generals". The Council Muslim League leader, Shaukat Hayat Khan, added that they "had lost a battle, not a war", and that "they should pledge that the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain". In a special commentary over Radio Pakistan on this day, Sultan Ahmed, editor of the *Morning News*, referred to the Rs 423 crores being spent by Pakistan on defence and reminded his countrymen that President Bhutto was now "rebuilding the armed forces to make them one of the finest fighting machines in the world". These were fine patriotic sentiments but conveyed a specific meaning to the Pakistani mind, given the context in which they were expressed and the age-old belief that India was "the enemy".

Pakistan's attitude on Kashmir could be taken as another index of the shallowness of its commitment to the "Simla spirit". Except for a few days immediately after the Simla Agreement, Pakistani propaganda in regard to the Kashmir question had not exhibited any qualitative change from the traditional pattern. On 7 September Radio Pakistan, in its Urdu Programme, said: "It will be foolish to talk of a lasting peace between India and Pakistan without a just and amicable solution of the Kashmir issue." In its Kashmiri programme on the same day, it accused India of having supplied to Kashmiri people "the food grains received from the United States in charity", and said: "It has spread various diseases among the people."

One could have condoned such statements as a hangover of the past, and sought satisfaction from the fact that Pakistan had, after all, agreed to uphold the sanctity of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir as on 17 December 1971, and this in itself should constitute a major advance towards a final solution of the Kashmir question. But even this could not be an unqualified satisfaction, for Pakistan refused to disengage UN observers from this line, and said so publicly many times. Answering questions on foreign affairs Pakistan Education Minister Pirzada told the National Assembly on 7 September: "The President had categorically stated that Pakistan is not bound to the withdrawal of U.N. observers under the Simla Accord, and the Government has no intention to ask the U.N. to withdraw its observers."

This again was a patent case of violation of the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement, which had provided for a bilateral framework within which disputes were to be resolved. And it would be naive to imagine that Pakistan did not realize this. What was gradually becoming manifest about Pakistan was a throw-back into the past, the pre-Simla style of diplomacy with occasional lip-service to the Simla spirit. This was particularly evident in Pakistan's approach to the prisoners of war issue.

India had hoped that even after its troops had vacated Pakistani territories, the 93,000 prisoners in its possession would be a sufficient lever to force Pakistan into not only recognizing Bangladesh, but also making further progress towards a final solution of the Kashmir question. But the fact that Pakistan had chosen to delay the recognition of Bangladesh was one indication of the scant importance it attached to the POWs as a lever in India's hands.

Besides, Pakistan had made it known that it was making vigorous efforts "to mobilize international opinion against holding the trials [of POWs by the Dacca authorities] and for immediate repatriation of Pakistani POWs". As a part of these efforts, high-level Pakistani special missions had been visiting the Muslim nations of Asia and Africa to bring down pressure on the Bangladesh Government. Pakistan had been actively pursuing the matter at various international forums too. A resolution of the International Commission of Jurists on this subject was a direct consequence of these efforts. The 21-member top-heavy delegation which was to represent Pakistan at the forthcoming session of the UN General Assembly, was also a pointer to the Pakistani approach on this subject.

### **Peace in Doldrums**

The exchange of fire between Indian and Pakistani troops in the Rajauri sector of Jammu and Kashmir on 30 September, followed by President Bhutto's statement that if the fate of the Simla Agreement was in the balance, "that balance has not been tilted by Pakistan", gave rise to fears that peace in the subcontinent was in the doldrums again. It was unfortunate that things should have been allowed to come to such a pass. Pakistan's responsibility in the situation was obvious enough. Its internal politics was largely to blame. But it would be unreasonable to presume that India had made no contribution to this stalemate in Indo-Pak relations.

Further progress in the implementation of the Simla Agreement had been held up because of the unexpected delay in delineating the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman had complained that troop withdrawal was being delayed "from day to day and week to week", and said: "Neither in the accord reached in Simla nor at the official discussion held in New Delhi was the troop withdrawal made dependent upon or linked to the finalization of delineation of line of control." This was contrary to facts which the Pakistani spokesman need not

have disowned, for the Delhi Agreement of 29 August between the officials of the two countries had clearly stated that troop withdrawal would take place by 15 September, *i.e.* 11 days after the delineation of the line of control was completed, for which the last date agreed upon was 4 September.

However, the damage had been done—not as much by the Pakistani allegation that India was deliberately delaying the withdrawal of troops, nor its denial that the two things were ever linked, as by the very fact of the delay having occurred in delineation, and consequently in troop withdrawal. During the Delhi talks which ended on 28 August, it was incumbent on the two sides, and more so on India in the interest of preserving its self-respect and credibility, that a proper assessment was made of the time required for delineating the line of control, with a safe margin for likely delays on account of the intricacies of the job and the resolution of conflicting claims. It was absolutely unpardonable that the time limit fixed had to be overstepped by more than a month. If, however, there were unavoidable and valid reasons for this delay, the people of the subcontinent should have been kept informed of them, so that the adversary did not have the opportunity to make propaganda gains from it.

In Pakistan, the delay in delineation was attributed to India's intention to postpone the withdrawal of its troops from occupied Pakistani territories as punishment for Pakistan's non-recognition of Bangladesh. Public opinion in Pakistan became restive when troop withdrawal did not take place by 15 September, the deadline agreed upon at Delhi. *Nawa-i-waqt*, a popular Urdu daily, wrote: "India's real aim was to force Pakistan to recognize Bangladesh and accept the new line of control in Kashmir as a permanent boundary. It was as a penalty that India was evading the vacation of Pakistani territories and was unwilling to return the Pakistani POWs." Sultan Ahmed, editor of the *Morning News*, wrote: "The Simla Accord did not say that the withdrawal of Indian troops would take place only after Pakistan recognized Bangladesh." Bhutto himself remarked, in as early as 19 September, while talking to newsmen in Lahore: "There has been violation of the UN resolution as well as the Simla Agreement as far as the withdrawal of troops is concerned. But this has not been from the Pakistani side."

If India's commitment to the Simla accord was deep and consistent, and there was no reason for it to be otherwise, it was unfortunate that the contrary impression was allowed to be created in Pakistan. Particularly deplorable was the fact that the Pakistanis had found it possible to link the delay in delineation and troop withdrawal to India's displeasure with Pakistani non-recognition of Bangladesh. This could easily have been avoided if the whole question of delineation was handled by India more carefully.

It was also necessary to understand better, the Pakistani position with regard to the recognition of Bangladesh. It was basically related to the dynamics of its internal politics. Given Bhutto's stakes in getting his territories vacated and the prisoners

repatriated, his own willingness to recognize Bangladesh and ensure that further implementation of the Simla Agreement took place, could not be doubted very much. But he failed to realize that an unreasonable delay in this direction in the hope that every step should be approved by the National Assembly, would prove counter-productive. The rightist Opposition, representing the monopoly interests of Punjab, and chagrined at a complete denial of power, was looking for the slightest opportunity to weaken Bhutto and defeat his objectives.

Mazhar Ali Khan, writing in the *Dawn*, described this Opposition as "the right-wing political consortium—headed by the Jamaat, aided by its well-to-do patrons, supported by the PDP and other remnants of various political groups, and abetted by some rather odd individuals", and said that it was "getting more and more agitated and working more desperately for a showdown with the ruling parties—mainly the PPP, and secondarily, the NAP-JUI coalition". He continued: "This motley group of leaders is opposed to every policy that seeks a sensible basis of relationship with our neighbors, and thus, the opportunity for Pakistan to revive its economy and rebuild itself."

This right-wing consortium had been agitating against the recognition of Bangladesh on the ground that it would sound a death-knell to the two-nation theory which was the bedrock of Pakistan, and that it would signal the dismemberment of whatever remained of Pakistan. It had also been accusing Bhutto of having signed a secret clause at Simla, committing himself to the recognition of Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Khan Abdul Wali Khan's interview to the *Hindustan Standard* of Calcutta, suggesting that Bhutto did not deserve India's trust in the normalization of relations with Pakistan, proved handy for right-wing Oppositionists, who had been attributing "India's delay" in delineation and troop withdrawal to Wali Khan's advice. Thus, sharpening the differences among democratic and like-minded parties, weakening them, and in the resultant political vacuum, hoping to acquire political power, if necessary with the support of the armed forces, was the goal of elements which constituted the right-wing Opposition. The recent intrusion of Pakistani troops in the Rajauri sector, which resulted in an exchange of fire, might not have been entirely unrelated to this goal.

In this context, it was necessary for India also to examine whether it was playing into the hands of these elements by rigidly sticking to its attitude on the whole question of recognition of Bangladesh and release of POWs, and by continuing the delay in delineation of the line of control, and whether its interests were really being served by the situation prevailing.

## A Tainted Perception

In an interview with Van Rosmalen, Chief Editor of *Elseviers Magazine* (Amsterdam), some time, in October 1972, President Bhutto gave a candid expression to his views on a large number of domestic and foreign policy issues. In view of the complexity and importance of problems facing the subcontinent, it may be worthwhile to examine Bhutto's view with regard to India and Bangladesh at that time, as expressed to a distinguished foreign journalist.

While talking to Rosmalen Bhutto undoubtedly expressed the sentiment that Pakistan and India had to live in the same world, and since there was no choice in this respect, why should they not live as good neighbors? These sentiments were publicly welcomed by the Indian Prime Minister. But a close study of Bhutto's world-view, as expounded in this interview, revealed that India still figured in his imagination as the villain in the entire drama. While pointing out that there was no contradiction between Pakistan having good relations with China and the Soviet Union having good relations with India, he said that it was for India to improve its relations with China too.

In this context, he claimed that Pakistan's relations with China were very good, with the Soviet Union good, with Afghanistan normal and friendly, with Nepal very good, with Bhutan, Sikkim and Burma also very good. Ceylon and Indonesia were Pakistan's friendly neighbors. And relations with Iran, Turkey and Iraq were of course good. It was India which had unfortunately strained relations not only with Pakistan, but with China, Ceylon, Burma, etc. "That again shows", said Bhutto, "how difficult it is to have negotiations with India", and added, "We are not the only country which has found it difficult."

This line of argument was in keeping with Pakistan's traditional attitude towards India, extricating itself from which had apparently to be a slow and difficult process. This was further borne out by Bhutto's insinuation that India had a hand in the language and labor troubles of Pakistan, which had played havoc with the country's political and economic life during the past few months. When questioned on the language and labor troubles, Bhutto said: "I do not want to go into details. But there have been foreign fingers." Repeating what he had earlier told Karanjia, an Indian journalist, he said: "Yes, this had been done during the last 25 years, but may be after Simla you have stopped: I do not know, but I do not think so, because old habits die hard." He concluded with the assertion: "In both these problems, the language issue and labor unrest, there were foreign fingers."

Bhutto also dealt at length with the drain on the economy of Bangladesh, because of the machinations of the entrepreneurs of West Bengal. These and other remarks of Bhutto with regard to India, gave one the impression that for quite some time yet, India would

continue to play the role of an external focus for diverting people's attention from the internal problems of Pakistan. As the magnitude and severity of these problems diminished, India would tend to occupy its proper place in the Pakistani perspective.

There was, however, a refreshing change in Bhutto's attitude on the question of the recognition of Bangladesh. In his interview with *Rosmalen*, Bhutto avoided giving a negative answer to the question about whether Bangladesh could be regarded as a sovereign State. Even on the question about whether Bangladesh was economically viable, he said: "To my mind, there is no state which cannot be made viable." However, in a subsequent public speech at Lyallpur, Bhutto clearly asked his people to recognize the reality of Bangladesh, for that was the only way to "bring the people of Muslim Bengal in their fold again". Expounding his views on this issue further, Bhutto said that "if the people of East Pakistan had not wanted separation India could never have dared to launch aggression against Pakistan. They were fed up with the rulers of Pakistan during the last 25 years."

Thus, in the face of stiff opposition from ring-wing parties, Bhutto had launched a nationwide campaign to convince the people of the necessity of recognizing Bangladesh. In this campaign, which he planned to intensify after Ramzan, he was being supported by Ghaus Baksh Bizenjo and other leaders of NAP and JUI. The bait being offered by him was the possibility of "Muslim Bengal" desiring to rejoin Pakistan, if it was recognized now. Why, one might ask, had emerged this sudden adoption of a positive attitude by Bhutto, on the question of the Bangladesh recognition?

One obvious explanation was Bhutto's realization that Pakistani prisoners of war could not be repatriated through any other means. During the last few months Bhutto had tried to activate world opinion on the question of POWs. While he raised the question in various forms at the United Nations and its numerous bodies, he also sent high-level delegations to all parts of the world to bring down pressure on India and Bangladesh, to the effect that the question of POWs be isolated from the question of the recognition of Bangladesh. Many special envoys, including Adam Malik of Indonesia, some foreign ministers representing the Islamic Conference, and some Pakistani journalists, had personally tried to plead with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to relent on his precondition for negotiations with Pakistan on various issues, including the question of POWs. Having realized the futility of all these means, Bhutto had now set himself on the task of taking a national decision on the subject.

Normalization of relations with Bangladesh was of crucial importance for Pakistan. Apart from the solution of immediate problems like POWs, settlement of foreign debts, resumption of trade, etc., there was the long-term and fundamental consideration of not allowing Bangladesh to shelter too much under the Indian fold. Besides, Bhutto also wanted to ensure, with an eye on the forthcoming general elections in Bangladesh, that

pro-Pakistan elements were gradually strengthened there. This could happen only if the flow of traffic between Pakistan and Bangladesh was normalized soon.

Whatever the motives, any step towards an early recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan was welcome to India, for it would expedite the process of transforming India too from a "foe" to a "friend" in the Pakistani perception.

### **Muslim Bengal**

In December 1972 the most crucial, as also the most difficult issue facing the Government of Pakistan was that of its relationship with Bangladesh, which was often referred to by Bhutto as "Muslim Bengal". A series of forceful speeches on the subject by Bhutto in the NWFP and other parts of the country, counter speeches by leaders of right-wing parties and a vigorous debate in the national Press, were a measure of the importance this question occupied in the country's ethos.

There was ample evidence to suggest that Bhutto, in its own mind, was convinced of the finality of "Muslim Bengal's" separation. since the day he assumed power. Whether he worked for this goal, as was held by many even in Pakistan, was for historians to decide. But he was certainly not one of those who, after December 1971, ever thought that Bangladesh could be a part of Pakistan again. He always knew that the reality of Bangladesh had to be recognized one day, for the solution of a number of problems was contingent upon it. He was waiting for a proper occasion. and the Simla Summit provided one. But his desire to carry the nation with him even in a formal sense, made him postpone the decision until the National Assembly approved it.

However, the unambiguous impression conveyed by him at Simla was that he would recognize Bangladesh at the latest by August, for it was an integral, though unstated, part of the scheme of things visualized in the Simla Agreement. His failure to keep this commitment, because of the intervention of a number of internal and external factors, came as a rude shock to the people of India and Bangladesh. But now we found him up in arms against the opponents of recognition.

In Peshawar, he declared that those who opposed the recognition of Bangladesh were the enemies of Pakistan. Earlier, at a PPP workers' meeting, he asked: "If Pakistan recognized tiny Muslim states like Mauritania and Timbuktu, then why should it not accept the biggest Muslim state of the subcontinent?" He clinched the issue by stating: "Will Pakistan wage a war and conquer India, and then Bangladesh, to reunite the country?"

These and various other arguments constituted the armory with which Bhutto was attacking the opponents of Bangladesh. A number of important factors explained his anxiety that resistance to recognition be demolished soon. The foremost continued to be

the need to get the 93,000 POWs repatriated. During the past four months, Pakistan had made vigorous diplomatic efforts to get the question of POWs isolated from the recognition of Bangladesh, and to pressurize India to release the POWs. Having failed in these efforts, Pakistan was now beginning to perceive the realities as they were.

The trials of Pakistani prisoners and internees begun by the Bangladesh Government had also sent shivers down the spines of the Pakistani rulers. They still hoped that recognition, followed by a dialogue with the Bangladesh authorities, might dissuade them from going ahead with these trials the whole hog. Speaking in favor of recognition at Abbottabad, Bhutto referred to the trial of Malik, former Governor of East Pakistan, and said that if there had been any contact between Islamabad and Dacca, the trial could have been stopped. Addressing party workers in Rawalpindi, he again said that the conditions might worsen if there was further delay in parleys with the Dacca administration.

Another important aspect of the question was India's influence in Bangladesh. Pakistan did not want the sub continental balance to be disturbed more adversely by allowing the unhindered growth of an India-Bangladesh relationship. Now that Bangladesh was no longer subject to Pakistan's political and economic will, Pakistan hoped to play upon religious affinities more effectively and extricate Bangladesh from "India's clutches". The achievement of this task would become difficult if the recognition of Bangladesh was delayed further.

Inherent in this desire to checkmate Indian influence in Bangladesh was the wish that Pakistan and Bangladesh should have some kind of special relationship, so that the psychological pangs of separation were partially mitigated. Bhutto had dwelt on the need for special links quite often. But the first time he spelt them out was in an interview with the *Guardian* of London in early December, during which he ruled out any idea of a federation or a confederation with Bangladesh from the scope of a special relationship, but said: "A beginning in this direction could be made through trade concessions or doing away with the visa restrictions."

If this was the urgency of the task, why did Pakistan oppose the entry of Bangladesh into the United Nations? Bhutto disclosed at Peshawar that Pakistan had strongly protested to Yugoslavia for moving the resolution on this subject. Bhutto seemed to be afraid of a public debate which would inevitably censure Pakistan's record of behavior. Explaining the protest, he said: "If the resolution was moved, there would be a debate and Bangladesh would level charges of carnage, murder, loot and arson against us. And we will deny them. There would be hot words, and hatred would increase." Besides, it would be greatly embarrassing to Pakistan if Bangladesh was admitted to the United Nations before Pakistan had recognized it.

The People's Party, at its national convention on 1 December, fully endorsed the Simla Agreement and its implications. With the NAP and JUI already in favor of an immediate recognition of Bangladesh, a favorable decision on this subject at the next session of the National Assembly was not considered as beyond the realm of possibility.

### **The Great Debate**

By the end of December, Pakistan was in the midst of a great debate—whether to recognize Bangladesh or not. Joining issues in this debate were all political parties and leaders, students, lawyers, the official media and the Press. The debate, unfortunately, had acquired ramifications not entirely relevant to its subject matter. The violence and counter-violence in which student demonstrators and the authorities indulged, gave the impression of a national confrontation in the offing. The real issues tended to get clouded in the process of mutual recrimination and mud-slinging.

The difference between now and the previous August, when the decision on this question was originally planned to be taken, was that a powerful section of national opinion was irrevocably committed to recognition. Even if the Pakistan People's Party had not formally adopted a resolution on the subject, Bhutto himself, as President of Pakistan, as well as governors and chief ministers of Punjab and Sindh, the provinces ruled by the PPP, had clearly and firmly taken public positions in favor of recognition. Besides, Bhutto no longer attached the condition that recognition had to be preceded by a meeting with Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, although he mentioned this requirement occasionally for the sake of form. The general line of Bhutto's argument now was, as he told a CBS television team:

It is in the interest of our people as a whole to give recognition to Bangladesh at an appropriate time. [But,] taking the objective realities into account, sooner or later, we will have to reckon with the reality of Bangladesh, ugly or pleasant. [And] the sooner it is done, the easier it will be for us to restore our links and contacts with that part of the subcontinent.

Bhutto explained his reference to "appropriate time" by saying: "It is undoubtedly an issue affecting the sentiments of our people."

Apart from Bhutto and his colleagues holding the reins of the Punjab and Sindh governments, it was the governments of Baluchistan and the NWFP, constituted by the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam which had consistently supported the recognition of Bangladesh. The NAP-JUI support began within a few months of the coming into existence of Bangladesh, and had remained so ever after. Of late, they had thrown their student fronts—the Baluch Students' Organization and the Pakhtoon Students' Federation—into the fray, to match the student front activities of opposite parties. The NAP, however, had always insisted that a full and free national

debate be allowed on the subject, with equal opportunities to all parties to influence national opinion through the official radio, television and the Press. Lately, Khan Abdul Wali Khan had also suggested that there be free voting in the National Assembly on this subject, uninhibited by party whips.

Thus, the Government at the Centre and those in all the provinces, wanted Bangladesh to be recognized soon. In addition to various realistic considerations which motivated them, they were also under the increasing pressure of POW families. President Bhutto was constrained to issue a special message to the POWs on the occasion of the first anniversary of their surrender, promising them: "We are doing our best to get you back at the earliest." The country commemorated 17 December as POWs Day to "reinforce our faith in the cause of the POWs". An organization of the families of POWs had been pleading for early recognition of Bangladesh. In a resolution adopted on 18 December the POW families "appealed to the world conscience to come to the rescue of Pakistani POWs and their families".

Arrayed against these viewpoints and interests were some elements of the PPP, and nearly all right-wing parties and individuals. That all sections of the PPP had not yet accepted the Bhutto line was obvious from the fact that the PPP had not found it possible to adopt a resolution on the subject so far. What was still more surprising was that a man like Mahmud Ali Kasuri, Vice-Chairman of the party and a former Central Minister, should be suggesting that a national referendum be held on the question of the recognition of Bangladesh, and the Government undertake to abide by the result.

More serious, however, was the opposition of right-wing parties, namely the Jamaat-i-Islami, the Council and Convention Muslim Leagues, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan and the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal. Realizing that their arguments against recognition, based on the two-nation theory and the related hotchpotch, did not work, they resorted to street methods and exhorted their student wings to organize demonstrations and protest rallies. The occasional violence exercised at these rallies in Lahore, Rawalpindi and other towns in Punjab was met with much greater violence by the police, followed by large-scale arrests of students. Very soon the entire situation snowballed into a veritable confrontation between the Government on the one hand and the students, lawyers and other sectors of society on the other, many of which organized demonstrations only to protest against police violence on students.

The right-wing Opposition cleverly utilized the occasion of these protests and tagged certain other issues to the anti-Government slogans being bandied about. Rising prices, shortage of consumer goods, violence and kidnapping in Tribal Areas, agreement with India on a line of control – all these were used with good effect to beat the Government with. The purpose was merely to discredit and weaken the ruling party. The PPP spokesman, Punjab Governor Ghulam Mustafa Khar, and others blamed the capitalists and "anti-people" elements for the disturbances. The Governor refused to acknowledge

that much of these were a reaction to the strong-arm methods of his police, and provocative acts of his party activists. A more tolerant approach on the part of the administration towards the expression of dissent by Opposition parties could have done greater service to the PPP's political stock, as also to the cause of democracy.

It was perhaps the impact of Opposition pressure which made Bhutto relent and say that in advocating the recognition of Bangladesh, he was, after all, stating his personal views only, and that recognition could wait until next March, when Bangladesh went to the polls. But the debate was on, and whether Bhutto really had to wait was to be decided in the National Assembly, where the debate would be transferred when it met on 30 December.

### **Bhutto's Mind**

A political leader is at his natural best while talking to the correspondent of an influential foreign paper. Uninhibited by constraints of internal politics, or short-term considerations of regional diplomacy, he is able to give frank expression to his views on a wide range of questions. The audience he presumes to be addressing on such an occasion is the entire world. The perspective in which he formulates his ideas is a long-term one. The views expressed in such interviews are therefore closer to the long-term needs of his country, than the various day-to-day statements made at home. This is what lent importance to the interview given by Bhutto to *Le Monde*, published by Pakistani papers on 28 December.

Bhutto was questioned on a number of issues of crucial importance to the country. The subject which seemed to exercise his mind most was the release of Pakistani POWs in India. In a moving reference to them he said: "The world has got no tears for them. The world had plenty of tears for the so-called atrocities in Bangladesh." Pointing out that India had no case to detain them after troop withdrawals were complete<sup>5</sup>, he said: "What justification is there now to keep these POWs as hostages in Indian cages, the Indian human zoos, as if they are animals?" Referring to the Geneva Conventions, he said: "Is there anything in Conventions which say that they apply to the whole world except Pakistan?" And finally, he asserted: "Let me tell you that as long as prisoners of war remain in India, we cannot even talk about Kashmir because that would be holding discussions under duress."

As against these remarks on the subject of the POWs, Bhutto told a largely-attended public meeting in Karachi a few days earlier, to bear in mind that the release of Pakistani POWs was linked with the recognition of Bangladesh. He was educating his people on the merits of recognizing Bangladesh. Bhutto was obviously facing a serious

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<sup>5</sup> Troop withdrawal was completed by 20 December 1972, subsequent to the completion of the process of delineation of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, which could not be done before 11 December 1972.

dilemma. There was tremendous national pressure for the return of POWs when he decided to postpone the recognition of Bangladesh in the earlier month of August. Bhutto placed his diplomacy in top gear on the question of POWs to pressurize India into releasing them. When that bore no fruit, he again thought of recognizing Bangladesh and started preparing internal public opinion. Faced with stiff resistance at home, he was simultaneously trying to build foreign pressure on India through remarks of the sort made to *Le Monde*.

On the basic question of recognizing Bangladesh again, one found simultaneously different approaches being adopted by Bhutto. He told *Le Monde*, for instance, that before Bangladesh was recognized, Pakistan must be assured that its POWs would come back, that no trials would take place, and that all questions of foreign debts and the division of assets and liabilities between Pakistan and Bangladesh would be settled satisfactorily. At home, however, he told his Karachi audience on 3 January that they must agree to recognize Bangladesh soon if they wanted to save Rs 90 crores annually, being paid at present by Pakistan as Bangladesh's share of external debt repayment. Besides, if they were friendly with other Muslim nations of the world. why not with this nation of 75 million Muslims? In the existing circumstances, these two approaches need not be regarded as contradictory. In Bhutto's own mind, they were complementary. The objective seemed to be to grant recognition as soon as feasible—but until then, to try and secure the best terms for it.

More interesting, however, were his observations with regard to India. Reacting sharply to alleged statements by India's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, that America should recognize the reality that India was a dominant power in the region, Bhutto said: "We do not accept that for a variety of reasons. We can't accept their hegemony, or dominance. How can India call herself a dominant power? She would be facing famine, if the United States did not pour out food to her." Bhutto said this after recalling a series of what he called "aggressive acts" by India in Junagadh, Kashmir, Goa, Pondicherry, China, Sri Lanka, Burma, and the Himalayan kingdom's. He concluded by saying: "They should not talk in terms of superiority to us. We should meet and live as equals."

These remarks should be read along with what he told Pakistan's senior army officers, whom he had just met in Karachi. Bhutto said that he was convinced that the reduced Pakistan would be the most important State in the subcontinent: Whether India had now claimed dominance in the region or not, what was to be remembered was that search for parity with India had been a dominant determinant of Pakistan's foreign policy since 1947. What Bhutto made clear was that even after Pakistan's defeat in 1971, this determinant would not necessarily lose its validity. This should have been a helpful thought to India's policy-makers.

Another aspect about which Bhutto revealed his mind rather eloquently, was his disgust with foreign powers for having ignored Pakistan. He was at great pains to

establish that Pakistan was an important country, for the same reasons for which other countries and regions adjoining the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf were considered important. He asserted: "Who can deny the importance of Pakistan?" and said that Bangladesh had been made an "international basket". If Pakistan had been given one-third or even one-tenth of the aid given to Bangladesh, it could have achieved a lot. Bhutto bemoaned that there was no response from the Consortium countries with regard to aid even after "we devalued heavily".

He concluded his interview with a blistering attack on Opposition politicians, whom he described as "derelict, senile, completely decrepit, and now trying to administer the last kick, but doing it badly". It was a measure of his self-confidence *vis-a-vis* internal political unrest that he described Opposition antics as motivated by a desire "simply to embarrass the Government, to weaken it and make it unpopular", and said, "We have dealt with them most-effectively."

### The POW Question

Bhutto's remarks in his interview to the news magazine *Time* in February 1973, that Bangladesh's recognition would be conditional on the repatriation of prisoners of war, gave a somewhat new dimension to the whole POW question. So much had happened within Pakistan, and about Pakistan *vis-a-vis* the rest of the world, that the POW question was no longer a simple matter admitting a neat solution in terms of the Simla spirit, as understood by India. Within Pakistan, it had got mixed with the cobweb of internal politics, wherein the forces opposed to normalization of the situation in the subcontinent were now on the ascendancy. Outside Pakistan, it continued to provide ammunition to those who were not particularly anxious to be regarded as India's friends, and who would like to avail of every opportunity to embarrass India.

It was months ago that Bhutto had sensed the mood of his people, particularly in the Punjab, which was the mainstay of his power, with respect to the recognition of Bangladesh, and stopped making any serious effort in that direction. After the language riots in Sindh in August 1972, Bhutto set out on a tour of Sindh and parts of Punjab, and later covered NWFP too, in a bid to educate people on the merits of recognizing Bangladesh. He obviously hoped that recognition, once allowed by the people, would pave the way for the repatriation of POWs. But large-scale student demonstrations in the Punjab, engineered particularly by right-wing parties against the proposed recognition, stayed his hands. It brought home to him the truth that there were powerful interests in his country which were still not prepared for a patch-up with Bangladesh, and he could ignore their wishes only at a serious risk to his own power.

By a fortuitous coincidence, he found that China, for its own reasons, was willing to veto the entry of Bangladesh into the United Nations. Bhutto regarded discretion as the better part of valour and brought the entire campaign in favor of recognition to a very

low key. On the contrary, he stepped up propaganda for the repatriation of POWs both within his country and abroad. This propaganda so gripped the imagination of the people that in the closing weeks of 1972, political leaders of all parties were demanding almost unanimously the release of POWs. The question of recognition was thus pushed to the background and not a voice was raised about it for many weeks. This admirably suited the interests of powers behind the throne, who had asserted their supremacy in yet another way, by successfully maneuvering the fall of elected governments in NWFP and Baluchistan.

Having thus evolved a sort of national consensus on the question of POWs, Bhutto publicly took the position, about January 1973, that the question of recognizing Bangladesh did not arise until after the general elections scheduled to be held in Bangladesh in March 1973. Now that the elections were only a week away, Bhutto declared that recognition was contingent on the repatriation of POWs and the settlement of principles for a division of assets and liabilities between Pakistan and Bangladesh. In other words, Bhutto brought himself to a position where he was least interested in rapprochement on the subcontinent, for which the recognition of Bangladesh, according to India, was the first step. Rather, he was interested in playing up the question of POWs and in maligning India on this pretext, irrespective of when their repatriation actually took place.

There was a lot of evidence to suggest that Bhutto had put his diplomacy in top gear to achieve the above-mentioned objectives. Pakistan's diplomatic missions abroad had, of course, been constantly engaged in putting across Pakistan's view on the subject. But of late, Bhutto's special envoys had visited some important countries in this connection. In the first week of February, Pakistan's Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, went to Moscow and London and had high-level meetings to canvas support for the release of POWs. He was followed by Minister Khursheed Hasan Meer, who visited Bangkok and Kathmandu for the same purpose. After that, Begum Bhutto availed the opportunity of her visit to Peking on the PIA inaugural flight across the Karakoram, to talk to Chou En-lai on this subject. Chou En-lai publicly reiterated the view that the relevant resolution of the Security Council had not been fully implemented and more than 90,000 Pakistani POWs had not been repatriated.

Pakistan had also been trying to involve the United Nations in this question. It had already been stated by Pakistani spokesmen, including Raja Tridiv Roy, who had led the last Pakistani delegation to the General Assembly, that Pakistan would raise the question of POWs at the United Nations. Lately, the visit of Dr Kurt Waldheim to Pakistan had been fully exploited for this purpose. The National Council for Repatriation for Pak POWs presented him with a petition containing over a million signatures, calling for an early return of POWs. Leaders of all shades of political opinion—like Khan Abdul Wali Khan and Shah Ahmed Noorani, apart from Bhutto himself—met him and urged him to spare no efforts for securing their repatriation. Dr

Kurt Waldheim was reported to have said that the question of the release of POWs was one reason for his visit to the subcontinent. When asked whether he agreed that the POWs had been detained too long, he said that the facts spoke for themselves.

These were internal and external dimensions of the POWs question as far as Pakistan was concerned. Therefore, it should not have surprised anyone in India if Bhutto had now taken the stand that the repatriation of POWs must precede the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan. One had to note his scheme of priorities at the moment, in which normalization of the situation in the subcontinent certainly did not occupy the first position. In this, whether he was living up to the Simla spirit or not was immaterial, if not irrelevant. What was important was India's response. Should India, by continuing the stalemate, have allowed itself to play into his hands and perpetuate tension in the region? Alternatively, could India call his bluff by taking the drastic step of suddenly releasing the bulk of prisoners, with the consent of Bangladesh, of course, and thus defreeze the situation? Whichever way India moved, what was important was that India should have been guiding the course of events according to its own objectives, rather than being trapped in a situation which served those of Pakistan.

### **Ending the Stalemate**

President Bhutto's remarks, in the course of his radio and TV address in the last week of March, that the stalemate between India and Pakistan "also should be broken", and that there should be "some equitable and genuine development", had been welcomed in India. They were in line with the hope expressed earlier by India's Minister for External Affairs that the time was now ripe for a fresh initiative on the problems of the subcontinent. India had followed it up by sending P.N. Haksar to Dacca to explore the possibilities of a fresh initiative. But there were uncertainties with regard to Pakistan's attitude. Pakistan's behavior with regard to matters of the subcontinent was not easy to explain. It was full of contradictions between what was promised and what was practiced. The emergence of Bangladesh had further complicated decision-making in Pakistan. Formerly, India alone provided a touchstone for the efficacy of a particular foreign policy decision. It had to be a decision which would somehow injure Indian interests. But now there was Bangladesh too. And there were a host of problems between the two. The biggest of them, for Pakistan, was to reconcile to the separate existence of a big chunk of its former self. Pakistan was finding it as painful to recognize and proclaim that Bangladesh was a separate nation as India was when Pakistan had been separated from the united subcontinent, even if the modes of separation in the two cases had been different.

For Pakistan, the decision was all the more difficult. For 25 years, it had rejoiced at the feat of having gained independence from the "shackles of Hindu and British imperialism", and seized every opportunity to hit back at "Hindu India". Now it was being asked to condone a phenomenon in which 75 million Muslims claimed to have

liberated themselves from the shackles of "Pakistani imperialism", and were hitting back at it every moment. This explained Bhutto's remark in an interview to the *London Weekly*, in which, on the question of recognition, he had said: "We cannot take such a detached view. Bangladesh, as you call it now, was a part of Pakistan, an integral part of Pakistan." The psychological preparedness did not yet exist. This largely explained the delay in the recognition of Bangladesh, notwithstanding a number of other factors, like internal and external pressures, and the various preconditions whose fulfillment Bhutto had been demanding from time to time.

Some of Bhutto's fulminations against Bangladesh could be explained only in terms of the anger of an humbled patriarch, for otherwise they were completely illogical, and even contradictory. For instance, he had often told Bangladesh that a point of no return would be reached if the POWs were tried for "the so-called war crimes". His argument was that Pakistan would try them under its own laws. But having said that, he absolved them of any crime on the plea that they were only trying to keep the country intact. "They were only discharging their duty. Any country would do it."

Bhutto had repeatedly said that he did not accept recognition to be a precondition for talks between Pakistan and Bangladesh. And yet, in the course of his radio-TV speech, he had bemoaned the Opposition's inability to educate the people on the benefits of recognizing Bangladesh, and condemned their *namanzoor* mentality. Making due allowance for his habitual inconsistency, was there reason to believe that there were fresh pressures or considerations which were swaying him in favor of recognizing Bangladesh?

There was, of course, continuing pressure to have the POWs back. But Bhutto had learnt to live with it, and had devised other means of getting over it. He had more or less succeeded in delinking the question of POWs from that of the recognition of Bangladesh as far as public imagination was concerned, and had put India on the defensive. But there was the additional pressure of aid-giving countries which Pakistan could ill afford to ignore. At a meeting of Aid Pakistan Consortium in Paris, Pakistan had made three requests: that its debt liability of 3.4 billion dollars be rescheduled for a period of 30 years, that Pakistan be absolved of 33 percent of this liability which related to Bangladesh and also that Pakistan be given fresh aid amounting to 600 million dollars. According to available reports, the Consortium countries had advised Pakistan to first settle matters bilaterally with Dacca, before its requests for rescheduling the debt liability and for being absolved of 33 percent of the liability could be considered. Pakistan's demand for fresh aid was of course sympathetically considered in view of its impressive export performance, but commitments by donor countries were postponed until another meeting of the Consortium was held in late April or May.

Pakistan had thus been made to realize that if it wanted to save itself the burden of paying 1.1 billion dollars on behalf of Bangladesh, and if it wanted to secure

rescheduling of its own share of repayments, it must talk to Bangladesh—and must do it soon. This, besides the usual reasons, was likely to be a significant factor in Pakistani decision-making on this subject. If the Pakistani leadership wanted to strengthen itself in favor of such a decision, its task had certainly been facilitated by the mammoth success of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in the March elections. What Bhutto really needed to carry out such a decision was a pretext, or a sort of face-saving mechanism, which could be provided by India and Bangladesh. If the two countries met him half way, he could perhaps take the requisite step of recognizing Bangladesh. They could offer to release the bulk of POWs provided, of course, that he undertook to fulfill his part of the bargain, which included not only the recognition of Bangladesh but also the repatriation of Bengalis in Pakistan.

Sheikh Mujib could afford to be liberal after the fresh mandate acquired by him in the elections. Both Bangladesh and India had vital stakes, much more than Pakistan could ever have, in early normalization of the situation in the subcontinent. It was in this spirit that India had again taken the initiative to defreeze the situation.

Pakistan, meanwhile, in line with its familiar strategy of scoring propaganda gains against India instead of taking steps to resolve the deadlock, had launched a bitter anti-India campaign with regard to developments in Sikkim. After an initial phase of factual reporting, Pakistan's official media had been distorting the situation in Sikkim and misrepresenting India's intentions. Radio Pakistan had accused India of having instigated trouble in Sikkim, and alleged that India had expansionist designs towards the Himalayan States. It compared the situation in Sikkim with that in erstwhile East Pakistan where, according to it, Indian troops went in December 1971 with aggressive intentions. Radio Pakistan had gone to the extent of saying that India had "captured" Sikkim.

Pakistan never tolerated the growth of friendly relations between India and its neighbors. Distortion and misrepresentation of India's multifarious dealings with Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Sri Lanka had been a primary obsession with Pakistan. But that, one hoped, would come to an end at least after the Simla Agreement, as one evidence of the change of heart in Pakistan. This, alas, did not happen.

Having despaired of the possibility of a change of heart, and anxious to defreeze the situation, India and Bangladesh had taken an initiative. The two countries, as a result of talks between their respective Foreign Ministers, had signed a joint declaration which was released on 17 April 1973. The declaration provided that, without prejudice to their respective positions, the Governments of India and Bangladesh were ready to seek a solution of all humanitarian problems through simultaneous repatriation of Pakistani POWs and civilian internees, except those required by the Government of Bangladesh for trial on criminal charges, of Bengalis detained in Pakistan, and of Pakistanis in Bangladesh.

The Indo-Bangladesh Joint Declaration was thus a bold step towards detente. Recognition of its sovereign status as prerequisite to the release of Pakistani prisoners was waived by Bangladesh. Bhutto could still stall further progress towards normalization, on the plea that the 250,000 individuals whom Sheikh Mujib was pushing out of his country could not be accepted in Pakistan. But then, Bhutto would only have given further proof of his insincerity about wishing the return of the POWs, for India and Bangladesh could hardly offer better terms in this regard.

### **Untenable Arguments**

Pakistan responded to the joint Indo-Bangladesh proposal regarding the release of Pakistani prisoners in the form of a statement on 20 April, which became the subject of comment in the Indian Press for some time. Most Indian commentators seemed to agree that the response was far from satisfactory, even if it left the door open for further negotiations. Officially, India described the response as "regrettable and disappointing". Rather than appreciating the Indo-Bangladesh initiative made in the spirit of conciliation and a direly-needed normalization, Pakistan had fallen back to the habitual temptation of indulging in polemics, which could not stand the test of cold analysis. The total Pakistan position was full of contradictions.

Pakistani arguments with regard to the proposed trials of 195 prisoners of war by "Dacca authorities" were the ones most untenable. According to Pakistan, the alleged crimes were committed "in a part of Pakistan", and the persons charged "are the citizens of Pakistan". Therefore, only a competent Pakistani tribunal could hold these trials, and the "Dacca authorities" had no jurisdiction in the matter.

To begin with, it may be noted that inhuman acts committed by a State against its own people, even in times of peace, cannot be condoned, and are cognizable as "crimes against humanity" in terms of the Nuremberg Charter, whose principles were later affirmed as principles of international law by the UN General Assembly. The heinous acts committed against the civilian population in "East Pakistan" were further declared as crimes under international law by the Genocide Convention of 1948, which has been ratified or acceded to by more than 75 countries, including India and Pakistan. Therefore, even if the alleged crimes for which Pakistani prisoners were to be tried were committed "in a part of Pakistan", they were cognizable crimes under international law.

As regards the Pakistani plea that the alleged criminals be tried in Pakistan by a competent Pakistani tribunal, there was the accepted principle of international law that such criminals could best be tried at the place where the crimes were committed. As early as 1943, in the Moscow Declaration on Nazi atrocities, the Allied powers had stated that members of the German armed forces guilty of heinous crimes would be:

Sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free governments which will be created therein.

This obligation was subsequently confirmed in the Genocide Convention also. Thus, it was legally necessary that the trials take place in Bangladesh, and be conducted by the authorities there. Besides, India was obligated to hand over the alleged criminals to Dacca.

Somewhat implicit in the Pakistani statement, but more explicitly expounded by Pakistan's media, was the plea that justice could not be expected from a national tribunal which Bangladesh would constitute. It had to be an international tribunal. Here again, precedents did not sustain the plea. The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg had exercised jurisdiction over those accused whose crimes had no specific "geographic location". Persons accused of all other crimes were tried by national tribunals of various Allied States. The United States, Great Britain, Belgium, France, Holland, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and some others had established such tribunals. In the interest of justice, however, the Bangladesh Government had already announced that it would allow the presence of international observers at the proposed trials.

Bhutto had argued occasionally that the so-called criminals had only been carrying out the orders of their superiors to maintain the integrity of the State, and had committed no crimes as such. In this respect, the Nuremberg Tribunal pointed out:

Individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual state. He who violates the laws of war cannot obtain immunity while acting in pursuance of the authority of the State, if the State in authorizing action moves outside its competence under international law.

There was little doubt, therefore, about the personal responsibility of Pakistani soldiers for their crimes, if they acted on orders from their superior, who would escape the clutches of law because they happened to be in Islamabad at the time of the surrender.

This much for Pakistan's stand on the proposed trials. The Pakistani statement then went on to threaten that some of the Bengalis in Pakistan would be tried on charges of subversion, espionage and high treason. This was obviously a belated attempt to pressurize Bangladesh to abandon the trials of Pakistanis. No case of subversion, espionage or treason by a Bengali was brought to light by Pakistan throughout the period of the war of independence fought by Bangladesh. Immediately after the war, all Bengalis were rounded up and put in camps. Any attempt to try the Bengalis would, therefore, have amounted to political vendetta not justifiable under legal norms.

Pakistan was on weakest ground when it accused Bangladesh of expelling an ethnic, linguistic or political minority. To begin with, it should not have been regarded by Pakistan as a persecuted minority, if Bangladesh was still a part of Pakistan, as laid down in the Pakistani Constitution. Bangladesh could not be charged of expelling them, for they were after all wanting to migrate from one part of "the country" to another, of their own free will.

However, this was just an instance of Pakistani double-talk to hoodwink world opinion, for Pakistan knew what it was. Radio Pakistan announced on 14 April 1973 the results of the population census conducted in the country in September 1972. Pakistan's population was given out as 6,48,92,000 - 51.33 percent more than it was in 1961, when the last census was conducted. If this was the number of people who constituted Pakistan, how was Bangladesh still its part? The crux of the problem was that Pakistan knew the realities and yet refused to recognize them.

### **Whither Simla Spirit?**

By the middle of May 1973, one felt it necessary to address oneself to the question about whether Pakistan cared at all for the Simla spirit. Much evidence had piled up since the Simla Agreement was signed in July 1972 to suggest that Pakistan had been using it as just another instrument to stabilize its internal politics. It was never anxious to take steps which would normalize inter-State relations in the subcontinent. But Pakistan's latest act of filing an application before the International Court of Justice, on 11 May 1973, praying for order to forbid India from transferring any Pakistani POW to Bangladesh for trial on charges of genocide, was the most conclusive proof that Pakistan was just not interested in patching up with India and Bangladesh.

All deviations from the Simla spirit committed so far by Pakistan had been sought to be explained in terms of Pakistan's internal difficulties. Many in India had often fallen prey to this reasoning. Paradoxically, however, as the difficulties were getting resolved one by one, Pakistan's attitude towards India was becoming harder. In April, when the joint Indo-Bangladesh proposal had been made, there was hardly an extraordinary problem with which Pakistan was faced. And yet Pakistan chose to undermine the proposal which had been universally acclaimed as a gesture of generosity and goodwill. One cannot escape the conclusion that there was a lack of will, in Pakistan, to establish friendly relations with India and perhaps Bangladesh too. This was not born out of temporary expediency but long-term necessity.

It should be useful to recall some of the measures that had just been taken by the Government of Pakistan, which clearly reflected its attitude on matters of the subcontinent. The removal of thousands of Bengalis from their homes in Islamabad was an entirely unwarranted provocation to the people of Bangladesh, even if the purpose

was to pave the way for the trial of a couple of hundred amongst them, as reprisal for the proposal trial of 195 Pakistani POWs by Bangladesh. The measure looked extraordinary in a situation where Islamabad's invitation to India for talks on the substance of the joint proposal was pending.

Pakistan's favorite pastime in its dealings with India had been to distort or misrepresent India's position on every conceivable issue. In keeping with this tradition, Radio Pakistan and other official media had launched a campaign in early May, to the effect that India had rejected Pakistan's invitation for official-level talks on the Indo-Bangladesh joint proposal. This was certainly not a helpful interpretation of India's reply to Pakistan's statement of 20 April, The essence of India's reply was that the joint proposal must be considered as a package, and that the various issues could not be dealt with in isolation, as was sought to be done in the Pakistani statement.

If Pakistan's approach was to be helpful, it should have pursued its viewpoint through secret diplomacy rather than through propaganda. In the same spirit of maligning India, Radio Pakistan put out commentaries accusing her of having engineered the April disturbances in Sikkim, and said that the recently concluded agreement in Sikkim "has ended the sovereignty of Sikkim, and is a clear proof of India's expansionist design".

Pakistan's application to the International Court of Justice, seeking to prevent India from transferring some POWs for trial to Bangladesh, represented the climax of Pakistani efforts to undermine the whole basis of the Simla Agreement and to sidetrack the Indo-Bangladesh proposal. Whether the Hague Court had jurisdiction in the matter was a moot question. What was basic to the situation was that it was a blatant violation of the Simla Agreement, which did not allow third-party intervention in Indo-Pak questions, and visualized only bilateral solutions to them. In the given situation, it was very obvious that Pakistan wanted to delay the solution of problems facing the subcontinent on one pretext or the other, and in this case by internationalizing the question of the prisoners of war and their trial.

Let us examine the familiar Pakistani plea that it had internal problems which obstructed the process of rapprochement with India and Bangladesh. To be fair to Pakistan, it must be admitted that it always had enormous problems, more so after December 1971. But given the atmosphere of bonhomie that prevailed immediately after Simla, there was nothing to prevent Bhutto from recognizing Bangladesh right then. However, Pakistan had, since then, moved miles forward. It had now a permanent Constitution based on national consensus. The fundamental issues of national existence which again threatened to tear the country apart had been resolved. The People's Party was now ruling at the Centre and in all the provinces. The Opposition, even though keeping a semblance of unity, stood humbled and disarmed. It had hardly an issue to play with, except the demand for immediate promulgation of the new Constitution and

fresh general elections thereafter. The only other issue with some combustible potential was the suppression of democratic rights in the Frontier and Baluchistan, where Bhutto was alleged to have imposed minority governments. But the capacity of NAP—and those among its former JUI allies who were still with it—to create mischief was rated as extremely limited, both because of their own demoralization and deterioration, and because of the heavy hand with which the Central Government was controlling the situation.

What prevented the Government of Pakistan from meeting India and Bangladesh half way to normalize relations with them, if it had no major internal obstacles? Sympathetic observers of Pakistan still liked to point out that the Pakistani army posed a major obstacle. Adverse reaction in the army was given as the major reason for Bhutto's fear of the war crimes' trials being held in Bangladesh. But the point had been overstretched somewhat, for Bhutto himself had lagged behind none in condemning General Yahya Khan and his military colleagues for their role in the entire 1971 episode, and had been threatening to try them. *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, written by Major-General Fazal Muqem Khan, which exposed their misdeeds still further, seemed to have been written with Bhutto's connivance, if not his instructions.

One had therefore to look elsewhere for an explanation for Pakistan's refusal to come to terms with India. A partial explanation seemed to lie in Pakistan's desire to be regarded as an international entity of great importance, even if that was not justified by its size and resources. In the past, this desire had been whetted by the arms given to it by the United States, for its own reasons. In future, this desire was likely to be sustained by the strong military links which Iran, the US and China might like to have with Pakistan. But what was most essential to the fulfillment of this desire was the continuing adversary relationship with India. Pakistan seemed to be gripped by the mortal fear of losing its international importance the day it established normal relations with India. It was in this long-term perspective that Pakistan's attitude towards the Simla Agreement could perhaps be understood.

## CHAPTER 8

### PAKISTAN AND THE SUBCONTINENT – II

#### A Year From Simla

The Simla Agreement signed in July 1972 may have belied many hopes, but the way it had worked had made it easier to understand the post-1971 Pakistan, and to discern the constants in its foreign policy. India's Foreign Minister Sardar Swaran Singh had said in the Lok Sabha in connection with the Simla Agreement: "It provides a framework which, if faithfully worked out can bring about an altogether new relationship between India and Pakistan." Implicit in this statement was the hope that with the breakaway of the East Wing, one imperative of Pakistan's anti-India policy had been eliminated, and this should make it possible for Pakistan to live by the Simla Agreement. But the year following Simla had proved that 1971 had made no basic difference to Pakistan's attitude.

Pakistan had been constrained to implement some parts of the Simla Agreement only for reasons of internal politics. It would never have agreed to the delineation of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, if it knew that the withdrawal of Indian troops from its territories could be achieved without it. Bhutto would not have been in as much of a hurry about the withdrawal of Indian troops, were it not necessary for him to pacify the people of Punjab and Sindh, his mainstay of power.

Now, if he was making renewed attempts to prepare the nation for recognition of Bangladesh, which was implicit in the Simla arrangements, he was doing so in the hope that such a step might save the 195 POWs who were to be tried for war crimes. He was anxious that the trials not be held; also, that the recognition of Bangladesh precede the resumed flow of foreign aid to Pakistan, and that the cancellation of its debts be utilized in the East Wing. Therefore, to the extent that Pakistan had implemented the Simla Agreement, or promised to do so, it was entirely dictated by the needs of stabilizing its internal politics.

On the other hand, there was a long record of activities by Pakistan which violated the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement. Apart from denying recognition to Bangladesh, Pakistan obstructed its membership to the United Nations in league with China. It violated the principle of bilateralism agreed upon at Simla by taking the question of POWs to the World Court, and by reactivating a pending civil air flights' case before the ICAO. It was holding up on one pretext or the other the trilateral repatriation of Pakistani POWs in India, of Bengalis in Pakistan and of non-Bengali Muslims in

Bangladesh. It was allowing external influences to play an important role in the politics of the subcontinent, by entering into a military arrangement with Iran and by reemphasizing the relevance of CENTO to its security. In brief, the various steps taken by it vitiated the atmosphere in the subcontinent, delayed normalization and prevented economic cooperation.

All this, however, did not mean that India should not have entered into the Simla Agreement. The agreement was based on sound principles. Committing Pakistan to those principles was itself an achievement. The Simla Agreement amounted to a charter of good behavior by which Pakistani deeds were to be judged. The extent of Pakistan's deviation from the norms provided by the Simla Agreement only exposed Pakistan's real intentions.

These intentions could be summed up as: (a) Pakistan would like to normalize relations with India and Bangladesh only to the extent it was absolutely necessary for its internal political and economic stability; (b) Pakistan would like to maintain an optimum level of tension with India and Bangladesh, which was necessary to retain for itself a modicum of importance in international politics, and without which it would stand to lose its relevance for major powers; (c) the economic advantages which should accrue to Pakistan from normalization of relations with India and Bangladesh were not considered indispensable by the Pakistani leadership because of alternative avenues of economic intercourse, which had meanwhile been developed for the country and (d) Pakistan did not fear that the military expenditure necessary to sustain the optimum level of tension with India and Bangladesh would prove unbearable to the country because of foreign powers which were always ready to feed its military machine. These were the intentions and considerations which seemed to govern Pakistan's attitude to the Simla Agreement.

As regards India, relaxation of tension in the subcontinent was no doubt a desirable goal of policy, and the level of tension in the region, it must be admitted, had gradually been reduced since the Simla Agreement. But what was considered of paramount importance by India was the possibility of economic cooperation between the countries of the region, and this was sought to be achieved through the gradual normalization of the situation in terms of the Simla Agreement. This, unfortunately, had been thwarted by a limited Pakistani response to the Simla Agreement.

In fact, if a lesson could be derived from the Simla Agreement, it pertained to the basic difference in the outlook and approach of India and Pakistan towards the future of the subcontinent. India, as the most vital factor in the structure of the subcontinent, was primarily concerned with its development through inter-regional cooperation. Pakistan, whose position in the subcontinent had been made peripheral particularly after the secession of its East Wing, was not bothered about what happened to the subcontinent,

as long as any threat that it might have from India was adequately met with the support of foreign powers.

Pakistan was beginning to perceive the increasing fulfillment of its destiny in coordination with its neighbors to the west. Therefore, its commitment to anything like the Simla Agreement would only be subsidiary to its basic requirement *vis-a-vis* the subcontinent—namely, external security and the elimination of threats to internal stability. More than that, the subcontinent was of no interest to Pakistan.

### **Pindi Parleys**

Talks were held in Rawalpindi between Pakistani Minister Aziz Ahmed and the Indian Prime Minister's emissary, P. N. Haksar, from 24 to 31 July 1973, to review the progress made so far in the implementation of the Simla Agreement. Pakistan had entered the talks with clearly stated reservations. It had been said on behalf of Pakistan at the highest levels, and on innumerable occasions, that if Dacca held the trial of 195 prisoners, the entire fabric of peace in the subcontinent would crumble. It had also been pointed out, and reiterated by Bhutto in London during his visit in July 1973, that Pakistan could not accept the so-called non-Bengalis whom Sheikh Mujib wanted to push out of Bangladesh. And, even if the National Assembly of Pakistan had passed a resolution enabling its Government to recognize Bangladesh, Bhutto had categorically stated that recognition would not be granted until all prisoners and civilian internees returned home.

Pakistan surely had its reasons for taking this stand. Its leadership was mortally afraid of the proposed trials by Bangladesh, because of the likelihood of being exposed for its own contribution to the 1971 events. It did not want the influx of 260,000 non-Bengalis to strain its economy and an already delicate social balance in the country. Perhaps it was not very keen on an early return of the prisoners too. If this was the attitude of Pakistan, there was precious little one could expect from the Indo-Pak talks, and the consequences could be injurious to Pakistan, not to India—and much less to Bangladesh.

Through the constant harping of its views with regard to war crimes' trials and the repatriation of non-Bengalis, after India and Bangladesh had made their joint offer in April last, Pakistan seemed to have become a captive of its own stand and was left with little room for maneuverability. Nevertheless, if it wanted to prove that it was genuinely interested in normalization of the situation in the subcontinent, it should have modified its stand and accepted the Indo-Bangladesh offer as it was. If it did not, it would only confirm the suspicion that it was no longer interested in further stages of normalization in terms of the Simla Agreement, and wanted to perpetuate the power structure in the region which allowed preponderant influence to the US, Iran and China

in the affairs of Pakistan, making it necessary for India and Bangladesh to invoke the support of the Soviet Union.

If Pakistan took a rigid attitude, what was India obliged to do? First, India and Bangladesh had gone to the farthest limit in accommodating Pakistan when they made the joint offer on 17 April. That Bangladesh no longer insisted on its recognition by Pakistan as a precondition for the release and repatriation of Pakistani prisoners and civilian internees, was a major concession. It was too much for Pakistan to expect that Bangladesh should drop the trials of 195 prisoners, or that India should pressurize Bangladesh on this score. The dictates of justice apart, the Awami League was committed to the trials. Besides, it was none of India's business to advise Bangladesh in the matter.

India's primary objective in the subcontinent was to establish friendship and cooperation with the countries of the region, so that external influences were eliminated and development took place faster. If Pakistan did not share this objective, India had no option but to live with it, and reduce its obsession with Pakistan as the most dominant factor in its foreign policy. At this stage, therefore, if Pakistan made the mistake of hedging on the Indo-Bangladesh proposal of simultaneous repatriation of POWs and civilian internees in India, of Bengalis in Pakistan and of non-Bengalis in Bangladesh, there was hardly anything that India could do.

Going by reports in the Pakistan Press, many in Pakistan had begun to hope that India and Bangladesh were soon going to fall out on many issues that had already caused tension between them, matters of trade and Farakka included. That, according to them, would be Pakistan's opportunity to deal directly with Dacca, and fish for greater concessions. Besides, they believed that after the new Constitution of Pakistan came into force on 14 August, the Government of Pakistan would find it possible to deal with Dacca from a position of greater strength.

Whether India and Bangladesh would fall out was a moot point. India, in fact, would have been only too happy if Pakistan established a direct channel of communication with Dacca and sorted out the many problems pending between them. That would have facilitated India's task of normalizing the situation in the subcontinent. What was pertinent to ask was whether Dacca would still concede what Pakistan demanded, *i.e.* the stoppage of trials, without Pakistan making a major concession to Dacca in meeting it on an equal footing, and also compensating adequately for its past excesses.

There was a fair possibility that Bhutto might have been advised by Edward Heath, during the former's London visit, to take a less rigid stand on the question of the trial of the 195 POWs and instead recognize Bangladesh soon, so that the situation in the subcontinent eased and the process of normalization was allowed to go ahead. After all, the United Kingdom could have been as perturbed as the US and China, at increasing

Soviet influence in the region. The latest developments in Afghanistan should only have added to the discomfiture of all these powers. China's *Hsinhua News Agency* had also expressed the view that the Pakistan National Assembly's resolution with regard to the recognition of Bangladesh had "opened a new prospect for a fair and reasonable settlement of the dispute of all parties on the South Asian Subcontinent". Obviously, China did not wish to be excluded from Bangladesh forever, and leave the field wide open to the Soviet Union.

The Rawalpindi talks, during which the two countries discussed the humanitarian issues set forth in the Indo-Bangladesh Declaration of 17 April 1973, namely the questions of repatriation of Pakistani POWs and civilian internees in India, the Bengalis in Pakistan and Pakistani nationals in Bangladesh, remained inconclusive. According to the joint statement issued at the end of the talks: "In the course of the talks certain issues arose which required further consideration by both sides." It was therefore agreed that discussions would be resumed in New Delhi.

### **Search for Durable Peace**

The Rawalpindi talks had paved the way for a successful round of talks in Delhi from 18 to 28 August 1973, culminating in the signing of the Delhi Agreement between India and Pakistan on 28 August. This agreement was hailed in many parts of the world as a major step towards durable peace in the subcontinent. By this agreement, the two countries made a big breakthrough for peace along the lines visualized in the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Declaration of 17 April 1973. The Delhi Agreement provided that the process of a simultaneous repatriation of Pakistani POWs and civilian internees in India, of Bengalis in Pakistan and of Pakistanis in Bangladesh, should begin immediately, that during the entire period of repatriation no trials of the 195 POWs should take place, and that after the repatriation was completed, or earlier, if they so agreed, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan would discuss and settle the question of the 195 POWs. Bangladesh made it clear that it could participate in such a meeting only on the basis of sovereign equality.

The search for durable peace had continued since 1947, when Indo-Pak confrontation began. But more specifically, the Tashkent Declaration provided the first comprehensive framework for establishing durable peace. In the changed context of the Bangladesh secession, the Simla Agreement also laid down outlines for a structure of lasting peace in the region. And yet, the desired peace was as elusive as ever. Did the present agreement give any greater hope that durable peace was round the corner?

For an answer to this question, one had to examine the nature of the Pakistani response to the earlier two agreements. As regards Tashkent, Pakistan developed cold feet after the troops had been withdrawn from each other's adversely occupied territories, and communications, particularly over flights, had been restored. Endless persuasion by

India that further steps be taken to normalize relations in terms of the Tashkent Declaration evoked no response from Pakistan.

At Simla, India agreed to withdraw its troops from 5,000 square miles of Pakistani territory under its occupation, on the unwritten understanding that Pakistan would soon recognize Bangladesh and thus facilitate an early normalization of the situation in the subcontinent. But Pakistan belied hopes on that account too. Both at Tashkent and at Simla, major concessions were made by India, even though it had not been a loser in the two wars. Perhaps the concessions were in order, for India always had greater stakes in establishing durable peace.

In its anxiety for lasting peace, India again persuaded itself, and Bangladesh along with it, to make concessions to Pakistan. The first major concession was made in April 1973 when the demand for recognition of Bangladesh was disaffiliated from the repatriation of war prisoners. The second major concession was made on 28 August, when the trial of 195 Prisoners, which had all through been upheld as of immediate importance to Bangladesh, was suspended. Pakistan might like to claim that it had made an equally significant concession in agreeing to forego the trial of some 203 Bengalis, detained in Pakistan. But that, as commonsense, would endorse, was no concession but the withdrawal of a threat which had been made primarily to improve its bargaining position. It would have been hard to establish even a *prima facie* case against these Bengalis.

Far from making any concession, Pakistan had successfully managed to stall the repatriation of POWs as long as it suited it, and yet held India and Bangladesh responsible for it. And Pakistan settled the matter just when it could afford to do so. Until now, the interests of the people and rulers in Pakistan conflicted on this question. While the people wanted the POWs back, the rulers were afraid of the political and economic repercussions of repatriation. But now, the political system having acquired some democratic stability due to the enforcement of the new Constitution, the rulers could afford the risk of repatriating 90,000 desperate and disgruntled citizens, the bulk of them from the army. The agreement was thus a feather in the cap of Bhutto. And one could not resist the conclusion that it represented the success of Pakistani diplomacy for, left to itself, India would have desired the POWs to be repatriated long ago.

As for the wider implications of this agreement, the "principle of simultaneity" was no doubt to apply to repatriation of all POWs and civilian internees in India, and to all Bengalis in Pakistan. But, as regarded the Pakistanis in Bangladesh, it was to apply to the repatriation of only a "substantial" number amongst them. After this "substantial" number had been repatriated, it was Pakistan's opportunity to bargain again. The additional number which Pakistan would agree to repatriate would depend on what Pakistan hoped to get in return.

Presuming, however, that Pakistan meanwhile recognized Bangladesh so that it was in a position to negotiate with the latter on the basis of "sovereign equality", as laid down in the Delhi Agreement, Pakistan would expect of Bangladesh to completely abandon the trial of the 195 POWs, as a precondition for the acceptance of any further number of non-Bengalis from Bangladesh. As a further pressure, Pakistan could also threaten to continue to veto the entry of Bangladesh into the United Nations through China. However, if Bangladesh did relent on the question of the trials, it would amount to climbing down on an international commitment.

These were some of the dynamics of implementation of the Delhi Agreement. Making concessions and compromises is not only inherent in any diplomatic exercise, but is also incumbent on the bigger partners in the game. But the only rationale of these concessions could be the hope that durable peace would be established soon. As had been rightly observed by many commentators before, the concept of durable peace included not merely the absence of war, but also the presence of a framework of political, economic and cultural relationships which ensured long-term coexistence and cooperation. It could well be argued that such coexistence and cooperation would follow the solution of humanitarian problems. One could hope that this would be so, just as one had entertained such hopes after the Tashkent Declaration. But the hope could be justified only if there was any evidence of basic structural changes being brought about in Pakistan's foreign policy.

Such changes should have pertained to Pakistan's attitude towards military alliances, towards Pan-Islamic groupings and towards a military buildup within. All these were motivated by a desire to counterbalance India's inherent strength *vis-a-vis* Pakistan, and they sustained Pakistan's policy of confrontation against India. The need for counterbalancing India having increased with Pakistan's reduction to half of its former size, it was futile to hope for any change in Pakistan's basic motivations. So far, at any rate, there was no evidence of change since the last war.

Therefore, much as one could welcome the Delhi Agreement as a means of solving humanitarian problems, its value as an instrument of durable peace depended on how soon, if at all, Pakistan agreed to implement the other provisions of the Simla Agreement which should have led to economic, scientific, cultural and ultimately political and military cooperation between India and Pakistan.

### **After Repatriation**

By October 1973, the process of the repatriation of Pakistanis, Bengalis, and Pakistani war prisoners and civil internees to their respective destinations, was well on its way and it was difficult to visualize anything that would interrupt it. Therefore, the most pertinent question was: what next? The question which should ordinarily have been of mere speculative interest at this point of time, acquired practical importance because of

Bhutto's statements at the United Nations and elsewhere during his trip in September 1973.

Of the various points made by Bhutto with regard to the situation in the subcontinent, there were two that deserved particular attention. Speaking to the Foreign Policy Association and the Asia Society of New York, Bhutto had referred to the Dacca Government and said: "It would have to drop the so-called war crimes' trials against 195 Pakistani prisoners of war." Earlier, he had told the UN General Assembly that the questions of admission of Bangladesh to the UN and its recognition by Pakistan would remain outstanding as long as these 195 prisoners were not released and repatriated. The second point related to Jammu and Kashmir. Bhutto told the General Assembly: "The important issue of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to which the UN and both India and Pakistan are committed will have to be saved and honorably resolved for the good of all of us in the subcontinent."

Whereas these observations could be said to embody the agenda of negotiations between the three countries after the process of repatriation was over, their significance had to be evaluated in the perspective of developments since the Simla Agreement. It is worth stating that the dominant impression one received of developments since Simla, was that they had resulted in a series of gains for Pakistan. The withdrawal of Indian troops from 5,000 square miles of Pakistani territory was the most spectacular achievement of Pakistan in 1972. The return of 90,000 war prisoners and civilian internees at the time most convenient to Pakistan was the next best achievement in 1973. And this, without Pakistan having to recognize Bangladesh in return.

On the other hand, the gains of Bangladesh had been of a far lower order. All that Bangladesh had been able to achieve was the return of the Bengalis from Pakistan, originally claimed to number about 4,00,000, but eventually found by international agencies to be less than 2,00,000. A secondary gain was Pakistan's willingness to accept an unspecified number of Biharis from Bangladesh, out of the total number of 2,60,000 who expressed a desire to migrate to Pakistan. But Bangladesh could not have the satisfaction of being recognized by Pakistan and a number of other Muslim countries, notwithstanding its assertions to the effect that it did not care for such recognition.

It was in this background that Pakistan's demand for the abandonment of the trials of 195 POWs had to be seen. The very fact that Pakistan had raised this issue before the process of simultaneous, three-pronged repatriation was complete, was an obvious violation of the Delhi Agreement. However, the trial of 195 POWs was of crucial importance to Bangladesh as a matter of principle as well as policy. The fact that she had reduced the number of persons to be put on trial from a few thousand, as planned earlier, to 195 was already a measure of her desire to give to Pakistan an absolutely minimum cause for resentment. But if it agreed to forego the trials completely, Bangladesh would have grievously injured its credibility in the world, apart from

harming its interests at home. Besides, it would have convinced Pakistan that its pressure tactics had succeeded again.

Therefore, in view of the shifting and inconsistent behavior of Pakistan on problems facing the subcontinent, the question of the trial of 195 POWs was likely to assume added importance when it came up for trilateral negotiation after the process of repatriation was over. It called for more than ordinary diplomatic skill and boldness on the part of Bangladesh and India to retrieve the situation in favor of durable peace. The trials were not to be abandoned for the mere gain of the recognition of Bangladesh, or its admission to the United Nations, which in any case could not be prevented forever.

The second important issue raised by Bhutto during his speech to the General Assembly related to the "unresolved" question of Jammu and Kashmir. In this context, it may be noted that the only benefit India could be said to have derived from the Simla Agreement and from developments since then, pertained to Jammu and Kashmir. Completion of a delineation of the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, sanctified by the commitment of the two parties in the Simla Agreement not to alter it by the use of force, led most Indians to imagine that the foundations of a lasting solution of the problem had been laid. This was also the impression of leading Indian journalists who visited Pakistan and reported that Kashmir no longer appeared an issue in Indo-Pak relations.

Bhutto chose to raise this question just after the seemingly intractable problem of the repatriation of POWs had been resolved. And this was accompanied by his continuing search for arms on the plea that India's dominant position or posture in the region must not be allowed to remain unchallenged. These arguments lent to the Kashmir question a significance which was familiar in the Indo-Pak context, irrespective of what the Simla Agreement laid down with regard to the use of force. In fact, the Simla Agreement also provided that the two Governments meet and find a final solution of the Jammu and Kashmir question. Therefore, apart from the question of the trial of the 195 POWs, the issue that was to assume importance in the post-repatriation phase of negotiations between the three countries, was that of the final solution of the Jammu and Kashmir question.

### **The Kashmir Question**

Bhutto paid a visit to Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir in early November, and made important statements which had a direct bearing on the Kashmir question. Whatever else may have been the significance of these statements, they at least served the purpose of reactivating the entire issue. Externally speaking, this reactivation had unfortunate implications *vis-a-vis* India, even though in real terms it did not alter the situation very much. Internally, the reactivation eventually proved useful to Bhutto, by bringing about closer integration of the region with Pakistan, and extending PPP rule there.

Bhutto's call to Kashmiris living in India to observe *hartal* on a particular Friday, to demonstrate the fact that the Kashmir issue was still alive, amounted to willful interference in India's internal affairs. Besides, it was a clear violation of the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement, and the Government of India this out to Pakistan. After all, a *hartal* in Jammu and Kashmir would not prove that the Kashmir issue was still alive, any more than had already been acknowledged in the Simla Agreement, which said that a final solution of the Jammu and Kashmir question had yet to be negotiated between India and Pakistan. The call for a *hartal*, therefore, seemed solely motivated by a desire to world attention on the Kashmir question which had long relegated to the backwaters of international diplomacy.

But, halving done so, how Bhutto proposed to solve the was still not clear. In one of his speeches, he had declared that the United Nations' resolutions had been futile in the not expected to serve any purpose in the future. In another speech he had said that even war would not solve the problem, for big powers were not interested in getting involved in a war between smaller countries. He had concluded by saying that ultimately the Kashmiris themselves would have to struggle for their right, to self-determination. He had gone to the extent of suggesting that those young men who wanted to be trained in guerilla warfare could join Pakistan's Special Services Guards or Commandos and undergo proper training. And this, despite the fact that guerilla infiltration as a means of changing the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir, had disproved its utility in the past, and had been disallowed by the Simla Agreement.

As he called for a *hartal* and for moral support to the idea of a guerilla war, Bhutto, almost in the same breath, pointed out that negotiations with India on the question of Kashmir would be held after the repatriation of POWs was over. One could almost believe that the whole idea of reactivating the question through a Waal and other means was to improve Pakistan's bargaining position at the time of negotiations with India. But this did not stand to reason if, as Bhutto had clearly stated, the negotiations on this question were not to be held until after matters like resumption of diplomatic relations, trade, and post and telegraph links, had been sorted out. The dramatic reactivation of the Kashmir issue at that time could, therefore, be understood only in terms of Bhutto's political needs at home, and to that extent was harmless for India.

Internally, Bhutto had been working for closer integration of Occupied Kashmir with Pakistan for some time. He had now suggested that, pending a final decision on the status of Kashmir, Occupied Kashmir could have a provincial status, a parliamentary form of government, and represent all of Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan's federal legislature. In the same speech, Bhutto had disapproved the idea of an independent Kashmir, saying that such a course would make the State a hotbed of international conspiracies. He had also said that a division of Kashmir was illogical, and expressed confidence that ultimately every Kashmiri was bound to opt for Pakistan.

It is difficult to imagine that Bhutto did not see the obvious contradiction between these statements and his loudly-proclaimed concern for the Kashmiris' right to self-determination. What scope was left for self-determination, when all possible options were being foreclosed by Bhutto himself? But the contradiction vanished if one realized that it was necessary for Bhutto to administer effectively that portion of Kashmir which was already held by Pakistan, and to keep open the future of the remaining portion on the basis of the slogan of "self-determination".

At that time, therefore, the main thrust of Bhutto's effort seemed to be in bringing Occupied Kashmir within the political structure of Pakistan, and in extending PPP rule there. He had been gradually moving in this direction during the last two years. His efforts to introduce the PPP into Kashmir politics during the 1970 general elections had been frustrated by President Yahya Khan. Towards 1972 end, he had encouraged the adoption of a nonofficial resolution by the Occupied Kashmir Assembly, demanding representation for the area in the Pakistan National Assembly. Later, as President, Bhutto had issued an ordinance under which a citizen of Occupied Kashmir residing in the UK would be deemed a citizen of Pakistan, if he had the protection of a Pakistani passport.

Bhutto had now openly offered to Occupied Kashmir the full-fledged status of a Pakistani province, with representation in the National Assembly. He had topped this by saying that he was willing to disband the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs (which had hitherto ruled in the area with an iron hand, and had been the target of Kashmiri attack). The idea was that if the Kashmiris accepted this scheme, it would facilitate fresh elections in Occupied Kashmir—which was an opportunity for Bhutto. Attempts by pro-PPP elements, earlier in the year, to dislodge the existing government headed by Sardar Abdul Qaiyum Khan of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, had failed.

Bhutto's desire to extend the rule of his party to Occupied Kashmir was in keeping with similar efforts in the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan. But it had a special significance in the context of Kashmir, in that it could be taken as a measure of his belief that the status quo in Jammu and Kashmir could not be altered basically. Everything else emanating from Bhutto on the Kashmir question could, for the time being, be ignored.

### **Changing Imperatives**

This author had the opportunity of visiting Pakistan for two weeks in the middle of December 1973. His most satisfying impression, after talking to a cross-section of people in Pakistan, was that the imperatives of a confrontationist policy towards India were beginning to change, although it was too early to say whether the foundations of deep

and abiding friendship between the two countries were beginning to be laid. All that could be said with reasonable certainty was that there was a widespread urge to establish a *modus vivendi* with India, so that the country could acquire a certain degree of economic and political stability. Any effort in this direction, it seemed, would not be hampered by disputes which did not admit an easy or early solution.

The first among changing imperatives was the settlement of the East Pakistan question in 1971. Even though Pakistan could not find it easy to forget or forgive the alleged role of India in the separation of the East Wing, not many Pakistanis were oblivious of the contribution of West Pakistan itself to the process of the disintegration of the country. However, irrespective of how it happened, two years after the East Wing broke apart, there were not many to shed tears on this loss. On the other hand, it was commonly realized that the new Pakistani s as relatively more compact, and economically better off.

This, coupled with the fact that the framework of a parliamentary democracy had been agreed upon and launched within two years, had lent some confidence and meaningful direction to the Pakistani national effort. It had correspondingly diminished the role of India-baiting in national life.

This new awareness of the national task was particularly relevant in shaping the attitudes of the younger generation, which, till recently, had fed on propaganda against India. The election campaign of the People's Party had, for the first time, given an economic orientation to the aspirations of the people. The questions of price rise and industrial production were discussed more often in coffee houses over the country now, than even the question of Baluchistan. Exposure to the outside world through radio and television, which in Pakistan was older and more widespread than in India, was also affecting their mental horizon. Attributing all national calamities to India's misdeeds would not be easy by a Pakistani government henceforth.

There was also a craving among important sections of society to know more about India, and to be known in India. In the universities, in theatre groups, art councils and cultural organizations, there was a desire to be acquainted with latest trends in respective fields in India. Journalists, especially the younger ones, were keen to visit India. People as a whole were crazy about Indian films, despite initial attempts of official media to ridicule this trend. Karachi residents bore the grudge: why should Lahore alone be chosen as the favored city by India to benefit from a TV station across the border at Amritsar?

And finally, the people had learnt a necessary lesson from the 1971 war. That the policy of confrontation had not paid off was generally recognized. If the nation had to be strengthened, its economy had to be built, and democracy stabilized. To achieve these objectives, there had to be a period of peace with India. Besides, the changed power

structure in the subcontinent made the policy of confrontation much less valid, if not redundant, now. This was the sort of reasoning which the Government also gave when it wanted to sell a measure promoting normalization with India.

While the imperatives of a confrontationist policy were thus changing, there were serious constraints on the speed and vigor with which the process of détente between the two countries could be taken ahead. Foremost among them was the deep-seated prejudice against India, and fear of India's designs on Pakistan, in some quarters. The prejudice was reflected in occasional outbursts of anti-India and anti-Hindu propaganda, despite claims by the directors-general of the Pakistan broadcasting and TV corporations that all such propaganda was officially banned. The fear was driven home to an Indian visitor through repeated reminders of India's largeness and strength, and reference to 1971. At places it was pointed out that Pakistan would be constrained to turn towards West Asia for moral and material support, if India did not allow Pakistan to coexist in peace.

It was this prejudice and fear which would also stand in the way of an early solution of the Kashmir question. Persons in responsible positions firmly believed that Bhutto's efforts were directed towards a gradual solution of the Kashmir question, and they asserted that his recent references to a *hartal* and guerilla training were by no means intended to disturb the status quo by use of force or subversion. But they, at the same time, admitted that a final solution of Kashmir would have to be slow and time-consuming. A former foreign minister of the country went to the extent of saying that Bhutto, in trying to solve the Kashmir question, was swimming against the public tide—such being the prejudice against India on this question in certain districts of Punjab.

One could not dismiss the extent of prejudice that still prevailed in Pakistan on this or other questions. But one at the same time could not accept Pakistani claims of efforts to solve the Kashmir question peacefully, without a pinch of salt. The Pakistan Government's repeated references to self-determination in terms of UN resolutions apart, it would like the Kashmir question to be kept alive for some time. It might be needed for some crucial internal purpose, if for instance the Baluchistan problem of the price situation went out of hand, or vote-catching at the next general elections became difficult. In any case, why should an important source of leverage *vis-a-vis* India be abandoned so soon?

This attitude on Kashmir, however, did not appear to prejudice Pakistan's stand on other measures of normalization. Pakistan dismissed the complaint of Bangladesh with regard to slow clearance of Pakistanis to be repatriated from Bangladesh, by stating that till 17 December it had cleared 48,000 cases, but less than 30,000 had been sent by Bangladesh due to alleged inefficiency on its part. Responsible Pakistani officials expressed willingness to hold the next round of negotiations with India on the

resumption of communications or the restoration of trade as soon as possible, but once the Islamic Summit due in Lahore was over.

All these were measures which would at best enable Pakistan to achieve a *modus vivendi* with India. For anything more than that, Pakistan was not yet psychologically prepared, and probably would not be for a long time to come. Pakistan's perception of its own importance in the region would not allow it to establish a relationship *vis-a-vis* India, which was ordained by its size and resources. To perform the role which it visualized for itself, Pakistan would like to maintain a respectable distance from India. This would, in fact, have to be accepted by India as part of the given situation in the region. It was, however, necessary for India to make a maximum use of the objective conditions that prevailed in Pakistan in favor of a *modus vivendi* with India.

### **Whither Normalization?**

In the middle of February 1974, Pakistan sent to India a note inviting an Indian delegation to discuss "in the first instance" the restoration of Postal, Telegraphic, Land and Sea Communications". This was in response to India's note of 31 December 1973, inviting Pakistan to hold talks to implement the third para of the Simla Agreement in its totality. A partial response to this note had been Pakistan in the middle of January itself. Unfortunately, however, Pakistan's note of mid-February did not find favorable reaction in India, and was dubbed as a "limited response" to India's proposal.

Ever since the signing of the Simla Agreement, India had justifiably held the view that the resumption of diplomatic relations should be the last priority, and should follow the implementation of other steps visualized in Article 3. Pakistan, on the other hand, had insisted that diplomatic relations be resumed first. Prime Minister Bhutto had repeated this to three Indian journalists who visited Pakistan in December 1973. One of them, however, was this author to whom he had said that he would not make an issue of it, for no principles were involved, and that he would be willing to go along if India gave priority to Article 3, for the objective after all was the normalization of relations. Pakistan, in its note of mid-February, had proposed talks on the restoration of postal, telegraphic, land and sea communications. There was no reason why India should have cold-shouldered this.

One would have thought that these talks would begin immediately after the process of three-way repatriation was completed. Already, by February 1974, about 99,000 Bengalis, 53,000 Pakistanis and 60,000 POWs and civilian internees had reached their respective destinations. At this rate, three-way repatriation was expected to be over by the end of March, and India and Pakistan could be psychologically prepared to discuss the restoration of communications.

But why did India choose to condemn the latest Pakistani proposal which, no doubt, was "a limited response" to the original Indian proposal for broad-based talks between the two countries, but need not have been dismissed for that reason alone? After all, the Pakistani proposal covered a vital part of the Simla Agreement which says: "Steps shall be taken to resume communications, postal, telegraphic, sea and land, including over flights." In any case, all steps visualized in Article 3 could not be disposed of in one round of negotiations.

It had been suggested that the Pakistani proposal was intended to make an impact on delegates to the Islamic Summit, due in Lahore in February 1974. Even if that was the motive, India's response could have been more rational. Rather than giving the impression that India had rejected the proposal, or reacted to it coldly, India could have welcomed it, and demanded the fixation of a firm date for the meeting. If, however, there was a hidden angle to the Pakistani proposal which was prejudicial to Indian interests, and not clearly perceived by laymen, Indian interests would have been better served if the Pakistani game was exposed.

Meanwhile, there was some uncertainty about whether or not Bangladesh would attend the Lahore Islamic Summit, which it eventually did. Nevertheless, Pakistan had its motives in trying to get Bangladesh to Lahore. It could be that Pakistan wanted to start a process of creating a dent in the Indo-Bangladesh alliance. A number of important Muslim countries, including Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia, which had been trying to intervene in the Pakistan-Bangladesh quarrel, had obviously done so at Pakistan's behest.

But what was Bangladesh's own record in the matter? It did not seem to be clear about its objectives. So often had it given the impression that it was willing to relent on the question of the trial of the 195 POWs. The Bangladesh Government had refuted all claims to such assurances. But the impression had been allowed to gain ground all over the world, by the endless delay in holding these trials, that Bangladesh was not serious about them. In fact, the impression was strengthened after Bangladesh had given amnesty to 40,000 "collaborators". If, therefore, the considerations of early normalization superseded those of settling old scores, there was no harm admitting them openly. The basic fact was that at this point of time India and Bangladesh did not appear to be doing what they actually believed they should, with regard to normalization of the situation in the subcontinent.

### **After Recognition?**

The recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan, which took place during the Islamic Summit at Lahore in February 1974, was long due. The Islamic Summit provided to Bhutto the face-saving pretext to expedite it. It also provided him enough justification and strength to fight any opposition to this decision at home. And the *bhai-bhai* spirit demonstrated at

the Lahore Shalimar Gardens between the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh, created the necessary climate for resolving other issues.

But normalization was not going to be an easy process. There were quite a few ticklish issues to be resolved in the immediate future. Foremost among them was the question of the trial of the 195 war prisoners. Even though the recognition accorded to Bangladesh was said to have been unconditional and the question of POWs to be resolved at a tripartite meeting between Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, some indications were available as to the way it would be disposed of. Among them was the statement of President Sadat in Lahore before he left for New Delhi. When questioned by newsmen on Bangladesh's position with regard to the trial of 195 Pakistani POWs, the President said: "I can assure you that there will be a response from our brother Sheikh Mujibur Rehman."

A final and formal settlement of this question was of crucial importance to Bangladesh. It was unlikely that China would accord recognition to Bangladesh, or would allow its entry to the United Nations, unless this question had been settled formally. However, recognition had facilitated the holding of a tripartite meeting which would settle this question, as also the question of the additional number of Pakistanis to be repatriated from Bangladesh after the "substantial" number previously agreed upon had returned.

Next in importance was the question of resuming trade and over flights. Pakistan had, of late, more than made up for the loss of the former East Wing market and its sources of supply. But there were commodities which it would still need from Bangladesh—newsprint, tea, jute goods and betel leaves included. Besides, it certainly wanted to divert some of its exports of cotton goods and rice, and sell some wheat and other goods to Bangladesh, if only to strengthen "brotherly" ties. Bangladesh was not completely impervious to the need for these exchanges.

For commercial exchanges to be meaningful, it was necessary that communications, including over flights, were , resumed. The question had assumed special importance after Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh.

And finally, there was the question of assets and liabilities. In 1971, Pakistan's total foreign debts amounted to 3.5 billion dollars, of which Pakistan wanted to be relieved of one-third, being the share of Bangladesh. Since then, most of the donor countries had agreed to write off this portion. But the distribution of assets was a complicated question which would not admit an easy or early solution.

Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh had brought into focus the basic reality that Dacca, Delhi and Islamabad were three inter-dependent pillars of the South Asian political structure. Economic and political stability in the region could not be built except on the basis of trilateral consultation and cooperation in all vital matters. Therefore, whether it

was the resumption of communications, or trade, or even diplomatic relations, joint and coordinated action on the part of the three neighbors alone could ensure maximum benefit.

### **Towards Durable Peace**

In the beginning of April 1974, trilateral and bilateral agreements were signed between Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. This was a magnificent tribute to the statesmanship of leadership in the three countries. They rose to the occasion and did not allow passions and prejudices of the past to come in the way of achievement of the larger objective, namely the establishment of durable peace in the subcontinent. All three countries deserved equal credit for having brought the subcontinent to the threshold of a new era of peace and cooperation within 28 months since the last war. The tri-partite agreement dealing with the future of the 195 war prisoners, and the repatriation of the Pakistan optees from Bangladesh, removed major irritants from the process of normalization. The question of the 195 POWs had been, emotionally, a very tricky issue ever since the war. It had been linked with the overall question of the repatriation of 90,000 prisoners and civilian internees, and the trial of quite a few thousand amongst them. The entire POW question had, in turn, been linked with Pakistan's recognition of Bangladesh.

It was a measure of the realistic approach adopted by India and Bangladesh that they had agreed to delink these questions at the time of signing the Delhi Agreement in August 1973. Again, in the larger interest, the two countries agreed to the repatriation of the bulk of prisoners without waiting for recognition on the part of Pakistan. And further, the number of those to be detained for trials was reduced to a bare 195, instead of nearly 5,000 proposed earlier, and the rest were allowed to go. It was now Pakistan's turn to respond. Pakistan chose the convenient occasion of the Islamic Summit at Lahore to accord recognition to Bangladesh, without insisting on a public assurance that the trial of the 195 POWs would not be held. The April 1974 accord in which Bangladesh agreed to the release of 195 POWs, without insisting on their trial, was thus a fitting climax to a series of mutually accommodatory moves on the part of the three countries.

There is no doubt that the trial of Pakistani POWs should have been held in the interest of justice, and in redemption of a pledge made to humanity by Bangladesh. But in the existing dynamics of the situation in the subcontinent, trials would have proved counterproductive if they were held now. Any such trial would have seriously threatened the democratic stability of Pakistan, which itself was the prime requisite of detente in the subcontinent. Under the circumstances, the fact that the trilateral statement recorded Pakistan's "condemnation and deep regret for any crime that these prisoners may have committed" should be taken as adequate vindication of the stand taken by Bangladesh since the war.

The question of the repatriation of Pakistan optees from Bangladesh, although less emotional, was no less important to normalization. The ouster of four lakh people from Bangladesh would not make a radical difference to its land-population ratio. But their forced stay would have seriously undermined the foundations of Bangladesh, committed as they were to the Pakistani ideology. By agreeing to the scrutiny of their eligibility for repatriation, Pakistan greatly facilitated the process of normalization. Sufficient guarantees were provided to ensure that the claims of optees were not turned down on flimsy grounds.

The trilateral agreement was to be specially welcomed for the far-reaching implications it was bound to have on the political situation in South Asia. Going by the known stand of China on Bangladesh, this agreement could be said to have paved the way for the entry of Bangladesh into the United Nations. Nothing more needed to be done to satisfy China with regard to the implementation of the UN resolution on this subject. Improvement of China's bilateral relations with Bangladesh and India was also facilitated by this agreement, although this was partly contingent on the pace of improvement in Indo-Pak relations.

Therefore, the importance of bilateral Indo-Pak agreements signed on this occasion. By including the question of travel facilities among those to be discussed at the next round of official-level talks, and by agreeing to release pre-1971 detainees in both countries, India and Pakistan made significant progress over the position existing prior to 5 April, with regard to the normalization of Indo-Pak relations. If the spirit in which these agreements were concluded was kept up, a fuller implementation of the third paragraph of the Simla Agreement could not be far away.

The trilateral and bilateral agreements signed on 5 April 1974 were, truly speaking, a triumph of reason and hope over prejudice and despair, and gave a blow to obscurantist and regressive forces throughout the subcontinent.

### **Pace of Reconciliation?**

A month after the 5 April agreements between Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, the progress and pace of the process of reconciliation in the subcontinent was not very encouraging. It was not very comforting to find that while the tripartite agreement was being implemented, there was no progress whatsoever on the bilateral, agreement. All POWs, including the 195 who had been held for trial, were repatriated, as scheduled, by the end of April. The process of repatriating the Pakistani optees from Bangladesh in accordance with specified categories was to take time, in any case. But there was nothing to prevent some progress taking place on reconciliation between India and Pakistan during this month-except the will of the countries concerned.

A close look at the developments would suggest that Pakistan had chosen to go slow in the matter. Pakistan's first priority seemed to be Bangladesh. The release of the 195 POWs as a result of the tripartite agreement led to such euphoria in Pakistan that rosy pictures were suddenly painted about the prospects of relations with Bangladesh. Bhutto, Aziz Ahmed, and the Press dwelt at length at the tremendous scope for trade and other relations with the "people who had fought for Pakistan and were, until recently, a part of Pakistan". Bhutto went to the extent of saying that he would not mind exporting rice to Bangladesh, which would otherwise earn valuable foreign exchange for Pakistan. Pakistan's newly found regard for Bangladesh was also reflected in low-key references in the Pakistani Press about developments in Bangladesh—like the army being called in, or goods being smuggled out. Bhutto specifically said that there was greater scope for improving relations with Bangladesh first.

All this was laudable. But Pakistan should, by now, have realized the limits of normalization of relations with Bangladesh in isolation from India. There is such inherent interdependence between the three countries that a mere wishful approach by Pakistan in favor of Bangladesh could not help: For instance, Pakistan's trade or diplomatic relations with Bangladesh could not develop meaningfully unless it had over flight facilities to Dacca, which were not possible unless it had an agreement with India on this and certain other issues. Similarly, Pakistan could have better telecommunication links with Bangladesh through India, which presupposed the resumption of telecommunications and other links between Pakistan and India. Even in matters of trade, no two countries of the region could afford to ignore the susceptibilities and potentialities of the third.

### **Pindi's Overreaction**

India exploded a peaceful nuclear device on 18 May 1974. That Pakistan should have reacted to India's explosion was natural, and that the reaction would be negative, was expected. But the loud and intense top-gear diplomacy against India resorted to by Pakistan, gave the impression that the mere fact of a nuclear explosion by India was an attack on the sovereignty of Pakistan.

The Pakistani argument ran somewhat as follows: the nuclear explosion was primarily an instrument of pressure and coercion. Pakistan would not allow itself to become a victim of nuclear blackmail; secondly, India went to war with Pakistan thrice during 25 years, and spurned all possible methods of peaceful settlement of disputes with Pakistan; thirdly, India was posing a threat not only to Pakistan but to all its South and South-east Asian neighbors, and in fact to the peace of the entire Afro-Asian community; fourthly, nuclear-weapon powers should not resort to "double perversity"—of not only condoning the Indian test but also blessing it by imposing restrictions on "the normal nuclear programmes of other states".

The argument was perverse. If India wished to exercise pressure, coercion or blackmail, conventional means were enough for the purpose, and nothing could prevent her from doing so, at least after the 1971 war, which it had won. On the contrary, India unconditionally returned 5,000 square miles of territory, and was a party to the repatriation of 93,000 prisoners, governed by the sole passion of speedily establishing durable peace in the subcontinent.

The second argument was a deliberate mutilation of truth and merits no serious consideration. To illustrate India's interest in peaceful methods, one may only mention the still pending offer of a no-war pact made by India in 1949, and persistently rejected by Pakistan. As for the third argument, it is strange that the tests conducted by China, leave alone other powers, should not have posed a threat to Afro-Asian peace, whereas that by India did. Perhaps the Pakistani objective was to utilize the occasion to isolate India from the rest of the Afro-Asian community.

The fourth argument was meant to pressurize nuclear-weapon powers to stop all aid to India, and give a completely free hand to Pakistan, along with knowhow for the development of its own nuclear programme. Fortunately, the attitude of nuclear-weapon powers at the recently held CENTO meeting and elsewhere, had been restrained, and expressed in terms of the general principle that nuclear proliferation should be discouraged.

Having condemned India, Pakistan proceeded to formulate its own response for the consumption of its people and the world outside. Bhutto said that in concrete terms Pakistan would not compromise the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir; nor would it accept Indian hegemony or domination over the subcontinent. The specter of "hegemony" has been raised from time to time when nothing else was available to beat India with. It has sometimes enabled Pakistan to get more conventional arms, if not nuclear protection. And the reference to Kashmir in the given context constituted a deliberate throw-back to the days of confrontation.

What Pakistan called "hegemony" was nothing but a manifestation of India's advance in a vital technological field. India did what Pakistan would do some years hence. Pakistan's allegation could be of some meaning if it had disowned all intentions of proceeding with its own nuclear programme. But Bhutto reiterated that Pakistan would acquire nuclear capability for peaceful purposes. He added that Pakistan was also exploring the possibility of political insurance against a nuclear threat. Elaborating upon this, he said that high-level special envoys were going to meet all the big powers. Political insurance by big powers had not helped in the past. It had only aggravated the situation.

## Bhutto's Bangladesh Visit

Bhutto visited Bangladesh as the head of a 107-member delegation in the last week of June. The visit, unfortunately, did not yield much results in terms of reconciliation. Bhutto's failure in his mission was tragic, judging by the tremendous importance Pakistan had attached to it. Reconciliation with Bangladesh had now acquired crucial importance in Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly in regional and Islamic contexts. The failure to do so. was conspicuous if compared with the series of successes Bhutto had had at the domestic and external fronts ever since he assumed power in December 1971. An obvious reason for the failure was, of course, that Pakistan was refusing to discard some of her old assumptions with regard to dealings with the people of Bangladesh.

As for Bangladesh, one would share the sentiment expressed by Kamal Hossain, Bangladesh Foreign Minister, that it was a matter of great disappointment that no results could be achieved. It was said that Pakistan's priorities were the establishment of diplomatic relations, of communications, and of trade between Pakistan and Bangladesh. There was every reason to believe that Bangladesh attached importance to these issues, as much for their intrinsic benefits as for reducing its total dependence on India. But Bangladesh could not be denied the privilege of having its own perspective-of priorities: in her perspective, issues pending since the war of independence needed to be settled first, before a superstructure of relations with the former colonial power could be built.

These issues were the distribution of assets and the repatriation. of over 4,00,000 non-Bengalis who had opted.. to go to Pakistan. There was nothing unusual about the Bangladesh demand for its share of assets of the united Pakistan which, according to some reports, came to four billion dollars, inclusive of its share of aircraft and ships, plus gold reserves of the value of million dollars. Bhutto tried to cold shoulder the demand by describing it as a "mathematical question" requiring consideration by a committee.

One would normally have expected Bhutto to fore think about this demand, so that he could have met Dacca at least half way, and saved the collapse of his mission. But Bhutto's attitude was inexplicable, particularly if considered in the light of his firm stand that the liabilities of united Pakistan be shared. by Bangladesh to the extent of one-third. The figure of united Pakistan's foreign debts as given from time to time, varied from six to four billion dollars, and a number of socialist countries had already exonerated Pakistan of the share of, Bangladesh.

On the question of the repatriation of non Bengalis, Bhutto in fact went back on commitments made earlier. The tripartite agreement of April 1974 ordained Pakistan to

consider sympathetically, all applications under agreed categories, and to give satisfactory explanation for rejections, if any. Bhutto's remark at his Dacca Press conference, that Pakistan had already reached a saturation point in this respect, took quite the contrary position.

What was the cause of this deadlock? One need not state the obvious—that it always takes two to break a deadlock, just as it takes two to make a quarrel. Perhaps Bangladesh need not have racked up the bitter anti-Pakistan memories of 1971 through its Press and radio on the eve of Bhutto's visit. But beyond this, Bangladesh could not be blamed. Bangladesh, in fact, became the victim of its own generosity, for Pakistan seemed to have misunderstood the spirit in which Bangladesh, along with India, had been dealing with Pakistan since December 1971.

Bangladesh's gesture of granting amnesty to 195 POWs who were slated for war crimes' trials was acclaimed all over the world. There were other gestures too from Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Pakistan took them as signs of weakness, or of one-sided enthusiasm for rapprochement. It was necessary for Pakistan to reciprocate on this occasion. Bhutto had been making much of the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in January 1972. One wonders if any alternative action would have helped the consolidation of remaining Pakistan, to the extent it has been found possible.

The real cause of this deadlock was that Pakistan wanted to emphasize the "Muslim" rather than the "Bangla" aspect of the personality of Bangladesh, and hoped to build bridges of friendship with Bangladesh on the basis of common religion rather than basic national interests. In other words, Pakistan was finding it difficult to get rid of the habit of taking Bangladesh for granted.

### **End of the Simla Spirit?**

Merely two years after the Simla Agreement of 2 July 1972, no one in Pakistan talked of it, except Khan Abdul Wali Khan, Leader of the Opposition in Pakistan's National Assembly. This was a measure of the low level to which the process of detente had been brought in the subcontinent. But what were the possible explanations for Pakistan's behavior?

A co-relationship between internal policies and external postures has always been easier to establish in Pakistan than elsewhere. Rigidity of attitude towards India and a denial of democratic rights at home have usually gone hand in hand in Pakistan. But the hopes generated in early 1952, that Bhutto's regime would bring a liberalization at both ends, were first shattered in February 1973, when the NAP-JUI majority governments were dismissed in the NWFP and Baluchistan. The next big blow came when the process of detente was halted, with Pakistan unilaterally calling off the bilateral talks due with India on 10 June 1974. Pakistani politics had been unstable again

since February 1973. But the first half of 1974 had been a particularly disturbed period. The Baluchistan question, of which a reasonable political solution had been promised by Bhutto from time to time, was still hanging fire. Even though a government based on a contrived majority in the provincial assembly had been installed in power, the month of June had witnessed renewed firing and bombardment by the armed forces, resulting in many casualties. The anti-Ahmadiyya agitation—which, according to the Ahmadiyya chief, had been engineered by the Government—had given another justification to the Government to suppress democratic freedom.

Dictatorial tendency on the part of the leadership had been witnessed within the People's Party itself. Intolerance of dissident views had led to the expulsion of J. A. Rahim, the party's General Secretary, and a federal minister. The earlier victims of intolerance had been party stalwarts, like Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri and Ahmed Raza Kasuri. And the perennial enemy of the PPP, the National Awami Party, had been subjected to a fresh wave of repression, with Khan Abdul Wali Khan having been denied permission to visit Kabul to attend the first anniversary celebrations of the Daud Khan regime.

Synchronized with these developments had been allegations regarding the mobilization of troops by India and Afghanistan to threaten Pakistan's security, and reference to an arms buildup by these two countries, as also by Iran. This had been preceded by a display of intransigence by Bhutto in Dacca, and the postponement of bilateral talks with India. There was also news of a postponement of Bhutto's visit to Moscow. Thus, the picture that emerged was that of a sudden deterioration of Pakistan's relations with Iran, Afghanistan, India and Bangladesh, and a none-too-happy state of relations with the Soviet Union.

Seen with the internal situation, the entire thing amounted to a throw-back to the days of Generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, which was unfortunate. But what were the causes? India's nuclear explosion could not be a convincing explanation, for no country other than Pakistan had said that it posed a threat to security. Criticism of the explosion by other countries had mainly been in terms of its implications for nuclear proliferation.

Improved prospects of reconciliation between Plebiscite Front leaders in Jammu and Kashmir and the Government of India, could also not be regarded as a provocation, for Bhutto himself was going ahead with the integration of "Azad Kashmir" with Pakistan. And internal problems, which were often quoted as the cause of Pakistan's tough external posture, were mostly Bhutto's own creation.

There was, however, a strong possibility of the Pakistani armed forces trying to reassert themselves both internally and externally. This could partly be a consequence of the heavy re-militarization of Pakistan undertaken since 1971, and partly the effect of the important role given to the army on various pretexts, including India's nuclear

explosion. However, it could also result from instability at home, and a stalemate in the subcontinent.

### **Anatomy of an Attitude**

Bhutto made a statement in Quetta in August, offering to resume talks with India. This statement beat his earlier ones, which sought to explain the postponement of Indo-Pak talks in June, in revealing an attitude which was devoid of any consistent or rational basis. There was no material change of circumstances between then and now, as far as India was concerned. Bhutto had seized the pretext of a policy statement by India's Foreign Minister, which only reiterated India's known position—to announce the change in his attitude. The change was in itself welcome. But what could be its possible explanation?

Bhutto had given three reasons. First, Pakistan wanted to test if "the massing of troops on the borders by Afghanistan and India was part of a coordinated plan or just a coincidence". If this was proved as "part of a coordinated plan", whatever that might mean, Bhutto would obviously not have agreed to resume the talks. If, on the other hand, it had been found as "just a coincidence", Bhutto should not have taken over two months to verify it. What was closer to the reality, therefore, was that the alleged massing of troops by India and Afghanistan was of no direct relevance to Bhutto's attitude on the question of talks with India.

The second reason given by Bhutto was that Pakistan wanted to abide by the Simla Agreement. It was sad that this desire should have escaped Bhutto's government in June. India did not feel called upon to demonstrate its commitment to the Simla Agreement any more than it had been doing before the nuclear explosion of 18 May. India had, of course, been reminding Pakistan of the need on its part to abide by this agreement. It was gratifying that India's message had met with receptive ears in Pakistan.

Thirdly, Bhutto said that he "had now received bilateral assurances which are more important than international assurances". One can't believe that these assurances, for whatever they were worth, would not have been available if Bhutto had not resorted to postponing the talks with India, particularly if one bears in mind the source from which such assurances were claimed, *i.e.* from China.

What is more plausible, however, is that the postponement of the talks was itself a part of an overall Peking-Pindi strategy towards the subcontinent, and India's nuclear explosion was merely utilized - as a pretext. Pakistan had been constrained to review its attitude towards the talks, perhaps because of the difficulties that arose in sustaining this strategy.

It is conceivable that part of these assurances might have taken the form of promises of sophisticated conventional weapons by China, as also by some other Western or West Asian sources. To that extent, Pakistan's tough posture on the question of talks with India could be said to have yielded dividends. But certain obvious constraints in the internal and external situation of Pakistan seemed to have made it difficult to sustain this posture much longer.

The most significant internal constraint was the refusal of Opposition parties to accept some major components of the hard-line strategy *vis-a-vis* India. In the course of the National Assembly debate on the massing of troops by India and Afghanistan in mid-July, the Leader of the Opposition as well as some other party leaders said that they did not believe the reports and that the bogey had been raised by Bhutto to side-track the nation's attention from real issues.

It is rare in Pakistan's history that a government should find it difficult to sell an anti-India line at home. But when such a situation occurs, it is for strong reasons. On this occasion, the postponement of talks with India satisfied only the loyalist and lunatic fringes of Pakistani population. For the rest, what was equally intolerable was the accompanying suppression at home, the gagging of the Press and a continuing denial of democratic rights in Baluchistan and elsewhere. The United Democratic Front of eight Opposition parties, in its two-day review of internal and external policies, did not as much as mention the alleged military activities by India or Afghanistan.

Among external constraints, the failure of Bhutto's efforts to cultivate Bangladesh, without simultaneously caring to improve relations with India, was important. While this was a big damper in his designs to isolate India, his inability to arouse international opinion against India or extract official condemnation of India's nuclear explosion from the US or the entire Muslim world, should also have acted as deterrents to his hardliner strategy. His offer of a non-aggression pact to Afghanistan also suggested that he had failed to arouse domestic opinion against Afghanistan to the desired pitch.

Having failed to sustain the hard-line strategy, Bhutto had come round. What had guided him was not policy but expediency.

### **Trade Protocol**

India and Pakistan had reasons to congratulate themselves for making a success of the philosophy of bilateralism adopted at Simla over two years ago. On 30 November 1974, the two countersigned a trade protocol. Looking at the history of Indo-Pak relations and the serious reservations prevailing in Pakistan since 1965 with regard to trade with India, it was no less than a miracle that trade resumption between the two countries had been agreed upon. The Pakistani leadership deserved the credit for having shown the

requisite flexibility of attitude, for India had always been in favor of resuming economic links.

Trade between the two countries was in the doldrums in as early as 1949, when differences cropped up between them on devaluation of their currencies along with the British sterling. However, trade dragged on until 1965, when it was suspended because of the war. The volume of trade had declined from Rs 186 crores in 1948-49 to Rs 26 crores in 1964-65, and Rs 10 crores in 1965-66. The trade balance had usually been in favor of Pakistan.

India took up the question of trade resumption in the wake of the Tashkent Declaration, whose Article VI provided that the two Governments would "consider measures towards the restoration of economic and trade relations". India failed to make a headway in this respect during minister-level talks with Pakistan in Rawalpindi in March 1966. India unilaterally lifted the ban on trade with Pakistan in May 1966, in the hope that Pakistan would eventually reciprocate. But the trade remained suspended, except for an occasional exchange of goods through third countries.

The matter was taken up by India again with Pakistan's Minister for Commerce during the second UNCTAD conference in New Delhi in 1968. As the Pakistani minister said on his return to Islamabad: "I told the Indian leaders, I will be ready to meet them at anytime and anywhere to discuss trade resumption, if all other matters—including the Kashmir dispute—are properly settled." This was Pakistan's stand right till the year 1971. The year 1971 can be regarded as marking a watershed in the evolution of the Pakistani attitude towards India. The most significant difference, apparently a consequence of the 1971 events, was that the efficacy of the use of force and third-party intervention for a resolution of disputes with India began to be doubted seriously. Besides, the problems of political compactness and homogeneity with which the post-1971 Pakistan was riddled, have been of a far less serious character than those of pre-1971, and did not warrant the same degree of hostility with India.

To these were added the compulsions of economic growth, made rigorous by the inflationary fallout of the oil crisis. The advantages of regional economic links are far too obvious to be ignored when national economies are under severe strain. Of late, the superpowers too seemed to have contributed to Pakistan's preparedness to resume economic ties with India. And when India gave ample demonstration of its desire to promote coexistence and cooperation, how long could Pakistan resist? Nevertheless, it must be said to the credit of Pakistan that neither Kashmir, nor the prior resumption of diplomatic ties, nor the nuclear explosion, nor the fear of trading in strategic commodities with a "hostile" neighbor, were eventually allowed to stand in the way.

The trade protocol of 30 November had a number of features which augured well for trade to develop. The decision to conduct trade on the basis of free convertible currency

would help avoid the pitfalls from which Indo-Bangladesh trade had suffered. The decision to conduct it initially on a government-to-government basis was intended to help eliminate certain fears in Pakistan that Indian monopolists would tend to dominate Pakistan's economy. And the commodities listed for exchange closely reflected the needs of the two countries. The only item talked of for some time, but not listed, was natural gas from Pakistan. This, according to some reports, was because of Pakistan's enhanced domestic requirements in the wake of the energy crisis. However, the growth of Indo-Pakistan trade was likely to be slow and cautious, for Pakistan would not like to disturb its trade pattern with the Muslim world, which it had built so carefully.

### Dialogue Resumed

Talks between India and Pakistan at the foreign-secretary level were held in New Delhi in the middle of May 1975. This is an important stage in the process of normalization of relations between the two countries. The preceding three years had witnessed a gradual forward movement with respect to Indo-Pak détente, despite frequent ups and downs. Even though the issues formally listed for discussion were the civil aviation question as well as the Salal Dam question, the talks were wide-ranging. It was more than a year earlier that the last minister-level discussions had been held between the two countries. Since then, quite a lot happened which had also cast its dark shadows on interstate relations in the sub-continent.

The ugliest of these events was the lifting of embargo by the United States on the supply of arms to Pakistan in early 1975, immediately leading to increased tension in the region. But this was not an isolated event. It was preceded by a high-pitched campaign by Pakistan against India's nuclear explosion. It had been followed by Pakistan's call for a *hartal* against the Indira-Sheikh accord over the Kashmir administration. Meanwhile, Pakistan had sup-pressed democratic forces within the country, thus weakening the elements helpful for Indo-Pak detente. Pakistan's publicity media had frequently been tempted to malign India on occasions like the Farakka Barrage negotiations with Bangladesh, or developments pertaining to Sikkim. Sometimes, this had been done in collusion with China.

But these events were not to be given exaggerated importance, and had to be seen in the total perspective of Indo-Pak relations since Independence. The letters exchanged between the two Prime Ministers in early 1975 provided the backdrop to these talks, and set their tone. In these letters, both Prime Ministers had reiterated their commitment to a durable peace in the subcontinent. What was equally comforting was Prime Minister Bhutto's emphatic assertion, made during a speech delivered at the Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul, that both India and Pakistan needed peace.

While speaking at Kakul, Bhutto had referred to the events in Indo-China and said that their tentacles would spread. Their shadow would fall on India and Bangladesh.

Having said this, Bhutto had emphasized that while in 1972, at Simla, Pakistan needed peace more than India did, today "India needs peace more than we do in view of the developments in Southeast Asia". These may have been soothing words to cadets and officers who had not yet come out of the trauma of the 1971 defeat. But these did not represent the real lesson of Indo-China, which was better embodied in the words: "Both India and Pakistan need peace."

The Salal Dam question was a technical issue and could be sorted out in the spirit in which the Indus Waters Treaty was being implemented since 1960. On the question of resumption of civil aviation and over flights, both countries should have done some re-thinking since their technical teams met in November 1974. There were damages being claimed on both sides. But the resumption of civil aviation would benefit both countries. The question required a political rather than technical approach, in terms of the quantum of damages and things of that sort. Given the political will, an agreement on this question should not have been very difficult.

Unfortunately, however, the two delegations ended their five-day talks on 19 May, without any success. There was no agreement on the resumption of air links and over flight facilities because of Pakistan's reluctance to withdraw its complaint against India from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Pakistan's position reflected a strange contradiction. While claiming that it was committed to begin a new chapter in bilateral relationships in accordance with the Simla Agreement, it was reluctant to withdraw the ICAO case and bury the past. India, on the other hand, had a strong case with respect to the compensation demanded from Pakistan for destroying an Indian Airlines' plane in Lahore in January 1971, but in the interest of reaching an accord, did not insist upon it.

On the question of the construction of the Salal hydroelectric project in Jammu, the two sides had useful talks and decided to ask their experts to exchange data and prepare a report within three months. Besides, the two delegations appreciated the need for measures to stop hostile propaganda through radio and other mass media against each other, in the interest of promoting good neighborly relations. It was, however, agreed that both sides should have another round of talks at a mutually convenient date.

### **Stalemate Again**

The failure of Indo-Pak civil aviation talks in New Delhi proved once again that in the diplomatic game, motives are far too complicated to be fathomed even by the negotiating teams, let alone the people of the contending countries. In hindsight, one got the impression that India was taken for a ride by the Pakistan Government, which stage-managed the New Delhi show more for world consumption than with any real intention to settle the issues involved. The entire episode raised two basic questions.

Why did the Pakistani team come to New Delhi at all, if Pakistan was not prepared to go further than it was in November 1974, to meet New Delhi's viewpoint on the question of the withdrawal of the over flights case from ICAO? And secondly, why was India so optimistic about the outcome of these talks?

To take the second question first, it may be recalled that India has always been at the receiving end as regards the timing of Indo-Pak meetings, and for valid reasons. Whether it was talks about the resumption of postal, telecommunication and travel facilities or resumption of trade or that of civil aviation and over flights, there was always an open invitation from India to Pakistan to hold talks at the earliest convenience. The reason was that while India never had any reservations about holding talks, Pakistan always had a dozen considerations to weigh, mostly domestic and some external, before it could agree to hold talks on a given occasion. Whenever Pakistan gave a green signal, India grabbed the opportunity, so that the situation in the region could be speedily taken towards normalization. So also on this occasion.

But there were other reasons too for India's optimism. More than six months had lapsed since the November talks, and one could justifiably hope that Pakistan had given sufficient thought to India's viewpoint and was now prepared for a withdrawal of the case from ICAO. Besides, Bhutto's letter to India's Prime Minister in February 1975 had reiterated Pakistan's commitment to solve bilateral problems within the Simla framework. And the subsequent interest shown by Pakistan in exploring trade possibilities with India lent a certain consistency to Pakistan's apparent reasonableness. Therefore, India could not be blamed for taking Pakistan too seriously as regards its intentions in coming to Delhi.

But the Pakistani delegation, as was now obvious, had come more for the record—to register its presence in New Delhi—and return, attributing the failure to India's insistence on a prior withdrawal of the case from ICAO. This is what Agha Shahi said on his return to Karachi. He, of course, listed three positive gains of the Delhi talks—namely, the emergence of a constructive approach to resolve differences on the Salal Dam question, a meeting of minds on ending hostile propaganda, and a discussion on the question of a nuclear-free zone in South Asia. But the fact remains that disagreement on the question of air links injected an element of uncertainty into the future development of Indo-Pak relations, and this was by design.

The explanation seemed to lie in the internal situation of Pakistan, which has always determined the shape of Indo-Pak relations. Kashmir had again emerged as the kingpin of Pakistani behavior. Bhutto's transparent high-handedness in installing a People's Party government in "Azad Kashmir" through rigged elections, and his attempts to bring "Azad Kashmir" closer to Pakistan politically as well as constitutionally, directly cut across his plea for self-determination in Kashmir. This has been vigorously criticized

by the United Democratic Front of eight Opposition parties, which was in any case on a warpath against the Government on many other issues.

At the UDF meeting in May, the top Opposition leaders warned the Government against an acceptance of the ceasefire line, in Jammu and Kashmir, as a permanent line of control which, they said, would negate the "Kashmiris" inalienable right to self-determination". JUI leader Maulana Mufti Mahmud wondered how the PPP could establish its branch in "Azad Kashmir, which as part of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir was itself a disputed territory". He also took exception on the same ground to Bhutto's bringing in changes in the constitutional setup of "Azad Kashmir".

This mounting criticism of Bhutto's Kashmir policy had to be seen in the context of a continuing boycott of Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies by the Opposition for the previous three months, a continuing ban on the NAP and the detention of its top leadership, and a continuously tense situation in Baluchistan. Added to all this was the speculation about Bhutto holding general elections in 1976 rather than in 1977, when they were due. Therefore, it became imperative for Bhutto to refuse any concession to India, least so on an issue like over flights, which was indirectly connected with Kashmir and Bangladesh both, if traced back to the circumstances of the hijacking of an Indian plane, and the implications of the suspension of over flights.

### **Premature Euphoria**

On 15 August 1975, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was assassinated in a military coup in Dacca. Pakistan's response to this ghastly event was characterized by unwarranted euphoria, not expected of a nation which claims to be mature in statecraft. Pakistan's hurried offer of recognition to the new Government in less than 24 hours of the change could, in fact, lead one to the conclusion that Pakistan had some foreknowledge of the event.

Whether or not this was true, as stated in some foreign Press reports, that it was involved in the coup, Pakistan's immediate offer of 50,000 tons of rice, 10 million yards of long cloth, and 5 million yards of bleached mull to Bangladesh was an obvious evidence of Pakistan's excitement at the change of government. A further evidence of Pakistan's jubilation at the change was its invitation to countries of the third world, and those which were members of the Islamic Conference, to accord immediate recognition to the new Government of Bangladesh.

The lead given by the Government was followed by the Opposition. In a resolution, the United Democratic Front of eight Opposition parties welcomed the change in Dacca as a step in the right direction, demanded of the Islamic Secretariat to convene an emergency meeting of the member countries to take concrete steps for helping the new regime, and declared that an attack on East Pakistan would be considered an attack on

Pakistan. The resolution also appealed to Muslim countries to provide guarantees against any external interference in the internal affairs of "East Pakistan".

Another Opposition leader, (Retd.) Air Marshal Asghar Khan of the Tehriq-e-Isteqal, which was not a member, of the United Democratic Front, made a three-point statement to the effect that first, he had foretold the coup to a Bengali audience in London; secondly, the coup represented a denunciation of the break-up of Pakistan and thirdly, it was time for a "real initiative" by Pakistan. The "real initiative" was interpreted by a Pakistani paper as a suggestion for bringing about the end of Bangladesh's sovereign existence.

Pakistan's leading columnists were not left behind in expressions of excitement over the change. H. K. Burki, referring to the coup, said: "As a gesture it represents a clear-cut break from Indian hegemony and formally establishes Bangladesh's independent identity as a Muslim state and thus upholding the 1940 Lahore resolution." A. T. Chaudhri wrote: "The success of the coup is due in a large measure to the tacit support of the people who are intensely hostile to India."

The all-round jubilation and sense of achievement in Pakistan was based on two assumptions, both of which turned out to be misconceived. The first was that the new Government had declared Bangladesh an "Islamic Republic", thereby shedding off its secularism. The second, which partly flowed from the first, was that the new Government would be hostile to India.

It was on the basis of these two assumptions that Pakistan had made haste to recognize the new Government, to offer it substantial gifts, and to advise other countries to recognize it. But Pakistan failed to realize that policies are largely determined not by individual whims but by certain imperatives of geopolitics, economics, history and culture. As soon as initial confusion gave way to clarity and stability of thought in Dacca, statements were not lacking from Dacca to the effect that Bangladesh would continue to describe itself as the "People's Republic" and not an "Islamic Republic", and would basically pursue the foreign policy of the previous Government. The new President of Bangladesh, Khondakar Mushtaq Ahmed, himself declared within a few days of assuming power, that Bangladesh would remain a secular republic and its three basic state principles would be "democracy, socialism, and nationalism".

One would appreciate Pakistan's desire for improvement of relations with countries of South Asia. But if a change of govern. went in Dacca was to be utilized as an occasion for renewed efforts in this direction, Pakistan should have addressed itself to the basic questions of sharing assets with Bangladesh and repatriating "Biharis" from there—two major issues which were still pending between the two countries. Instead, Pakistan gave vent to its inherently negativistic approach towards international politics of the region by extolling the possibilities of the rejection of secularism as well as friendship

with India by the new Government of Bangladesh. This can never be the basics on which foundations of lasting peace and cooperation in the region can be laid.

### **Pak Ambivalence**

After the failure of Indo-Pak talks in May and the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman in August 1975, Indo-Pak relations remained in a state of uneasy stalemate for quite some time. Part of the reason lay in the developments in Bangladesh, the factors responsible for them, and their repercussions on the rest of the region. But the stalemate was largely attributable to a calculated ambivalence in Pakistani attitude, born out of a decision not to go the whole hog in normalizing relations with India, and yet keep up the facade of desiring to do so.

Relations between India and Pakistan had undoubtedly registered a marked progress since 1971. But the progress was made mainly because of initiatives taken by India in the larger interest of evolving a peaceful and self-reliant community of nations in the region, to the exclusion of baneful foreign influences. Pakistan did cooperate and respond positively to those initiatives, but only to the extent it suited her from time to time. In most cases, Pakistan was the major beneficiary in terms of tangible gains. India's satisfaction was merely that they were steps towards evolving a climate of peace.

When over 5,000 square miles of territory in each other's adverse possession was restored to the respective sides, Pakistan was the main beneficiary. When over 90,000 war prisoners were repatriated Pakistan was again the beneficiary. Even when limited travel facilities between the two countries were restored, Pakistan's gain was greater, for the number of Pakistani nationals who liked to avail of this facility was much larger than the number of Indian nationals. And whatever the number of Indian applicants, the Pakistan Government was much too niggardly in giving them visas, as compared with the Indian Government *vis-a-vis* Pakistani applicants.

The resumption of telecommunications, postal links, banking facilities, visits to religious places on both sides, and Indo-Pak trade could be said to be of interest to India as well as Pakistan. But even in the matter of Indo-Pak trade, Pakistan's response had been very halting. India agreed to resume trade and lift two lakh bales of Pakistani cotton at a time when there was a slump in the Pakistani cotton market. India's total import of cotton from Pakistan amounted to Rs 25 crores in 1975, although India itself had a bumper cotton crop. In return Pakistan did not place any firm orders for imports from India, even though it had earlier shown interest in Indian products like coal, light engineering goods, iron and steel, *bidi* leaves and iron ore.

In a review of Indo-Pak trade at Islamabad in January 1976, the two delegations further identified specific commodity groups in which commercial transactions could usefully

take place between the two countries. Also, as a result of India's persistent pleadings, contracts were signed at this meeting for the import of 5,000 tons of pig iron and 250 tons of *bidi* leaves by Pakistan from India. But this was touching the fringe of the matter, for the existence of enormous scope for Indo-Pak trade in a variety of goods had been widely acknowledged by Pakistan's media as well as in official circles there from time to time. What was really holding Pakistan back? It was painful to find that Pakistani experts were still visiting far-off places in search of iron ore for the Karachi steel mill, when the ore was available next door in India. There could not be a sadder or more ironical comment on Pakistani professions of a desire to cooperate or coexist with India.

Seen in this context, a speech made by Pakistani Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs Aziz Ahmed, in the National Assembly towards the beginning of March, was interesting. He had said that Pakistan was now ready to discuss with India the three outstanding issues—re-establishment of diplomatic relations, restoration of over flights as well as air traffic between the two countries and settlement of the "Kashmir dispute". He prefaced it by saying that it was India which had been responsible for slowing the process of normalization of relations between the two countries, and that India had been indulging in anti-Pakistan propaganda, about which the Pakistani Government had written to the Indian Government.

Propaganda is a two-way game and there is no use pretending that India has particularly puritanical ideas about the use of this instrument of policy. It is quite possible that while observing due restraints about propaganda as enjoined by the Simla Agreement an official or a commentator somewhere may have given way to the age-old habit of sniping at Pakistan. But it must be stated that even after Aziz Ahmed had addressed the National Assembly Pakistani media had been full of irresponsible utterances on the question of Farakka waters between India and Bangladesh. Not only had the seriousness of the question been blown out of all proportion, India had been painted in the darkest colors as responsible for the problem.

The matter did not end with the Pakistani media. Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto, during his trip to Western Europe and the American hemisphere in February 1975, lost no opportunity of projecting India as the villain of the subcontinent. In this, Pakistan was living up to its tradition, irrespective of whoever ruled there. The basic question really was: when would Pakistan learn to live by itself, rather than negatively, *vis-a-vis* India. It was high time that Pakistan set its own house in order, found a viability all its own and began to look at India through an attitudinal prism which did not give a distorted vision of India.

It was good for Aziz Ahmed to say that Pakistan was now ready to discuss the three outstanding issues mentioned by him. To begin with, India had no objection to the restoration of diplomatic relations in principle, now that quite a few steps towards normalization, as visualized under the Simla Agreement, had been taken. As regards

the resumption of air traffic and over flights, it was not enough for Pakistan to express its readiness to discuss the matter; it should also have created the climate necessary for this. India's views were well known. Unless the ill-founded complaint against India in ICAO on the question of over flights was withdrawn, how could any discussions be fruitful? And her readiness to discuss the Kashmir question had no meaning when Pakistan had artificially integrated the occupied areas of Kashmir with the rest of the country, arbitrarily imposed PPP rule there, and arrested some known leaders of the area. This was neither in consonance with the needs of self-determination which Pakistan was so fond of advocating, nor intended to promote any solution of the question. In fact, it is doubtful if Pakistan was honest about any solution other than what it had already imposed by force, except reiterating it for the sake of record.

### **Pak Shadow over Farakka**

In the early months of 1976, Pakistan's relations with Bangladesh had improved considerably, and no one in the subcontinent had reasons to grudge this. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were resumed, and telecommunication links between them re-established. These developments were fully in accord with India's vision of the subcontinent, characterized by peaceful coexistence and cooperation among the States of the region, to the exclusion of baneful foreign influence.

Unfortunately, however, it was a negative spirit in which Pakistan was going ahead in strengthening ties with Bangladesh, which led to an aggravation of tensions in the region, and retarded the development of a harmonious relationship between the States of South Asia. The object of Pakistan's hostility, as always, was India – which, if left in peace, could perform its natural role of a focal point for a structure of peace and security in South Asia. Pakistan, historically, was used to misrepresenting India's relations with the neighboring States of Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, hoping, thereby, to redress its adverse political balance *vis-a-vis* India. The consequences of this policy had been disastrous for the whole region.

In early 1976 again, while seeking to improve relations with Bangladesh, Pakistan was unduly juxtaposing its own presumed goodness of behavior and affinity of interests *vis-a-vis* Bangladesh, against India's projected treacherousness, creating an avoidable distortion in perspective, as far as Indo Bangladesh relations were concerned. For instance Prime Minister Bhutto, at a banquet in Rawalpindi in March, looked towards Zahiruddin, the ambassador of Bangladesh who was present on the occasion, and posed the question: "How can one call him an ambassador?" He then remarked. "He is a brother-in-arms." The remark was made in the context of continuing propaganda in Pakistani newspapers for the last many months, to the effect that India was planning massive subversion in Bangladesh, and that pro-Mujib men were being trained in guerilla warfare to enable them to commence activity within a few months.

It was in this background of a generally hostile stance, that Pakistan's propaganda on the Farakka Barrage question, which really concerned India and Bangladesh only, could be fully understood. Pakistani newspapers took the line that the Farakka Barrage, to begin with, was unnecessary. But having constructed it, India would have to behave according to international law. India's unilateral diversion of waters at Farakka amounted to a violation of it this interim accord with Bangladesh. India would have to stop unilateral diversion. Besides, the question of sharing the waters should not be confined to the months of March, April and May, they said. India had caused grave hardship to the people Of Bangladesh and jeopardized its economy. India had changed its attitude only after the change of government in Bangladesh.

It was sad that Bangladesh should have allowed itself to be carried away by Pakistani opinion, perhaps because a residuum to Pakistani influence was still exercised there. As far as the current controversy was concerned, its basic points had been explained from time to time by the Government of India. In order, however, to place the problem in perspective, it is necessary to understand its origins during the days when Pakistan ruled the territory constituting Bangladesh.

The Farakka Barrage project was not something conjured up by India overnight. It had been before the nation for nearly a hundred years, on the basis of various expert studies, as the only viable solution of saving the Calcutta port from silting UP. The question was considered by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President Ayub Khan in 1961, and they agreed that the two countries deal with the river waters in a spirit of understanding and mutual accommodation. They also agreed that while examining the question of eastern rivers (the Farakka Barrage project in India and the Ganga-Kokadan project in East Pakistan), the two countries should eschew legalistic considerations, take into account reasonable interests of both sides, and refer the matter to technical experts.

While technical discussions were in progress, each successive meeting witnessed an enhancement in Pakistan's demand for the quantity of water needed from the Ganga in the month of April. Starting with 3,500 cusecs in 1960, it reached 49,000 cusecs in 1968. What lifted the issue from a purely technical plane to a political one, and made it appear as a major political problem, was the Pakistan propaganda blast in 1968. The provocation was the mounting political revolt, in both wings of Pakistan, against President Ayub Khan in the aftermath of the 1965 debacle with India. The centre of the agitation, however, was East Pakistan—where the demand for autonomy, based on Sheikh Mujib's Six Points, was being fanned by West Pakistani discontent, and spearheaded by leaders of all kinds, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

The challenge was sought to be contained by President Ayub through the invention of two instruments: the Agartala conspiracy case and the Farakka Barrage question, which was blown out of proportion. By thus focusing the people's attention on the external

enemy, namely India, these two instruments served the same purpose for East Pakistan as Kashmir served for West Pakistan. The Agartala conspiracy case had to be withdrawn by President Ayub Khan within a year. The Farakka Barrage question, one hoped, had acquired a purely technical significance again with the exit, from Bangladesh soil, of decision-makers who had negative motivations.

That the Farakka Barrage was a technically essential project does not have to be established. It was supported by renowned engineers like Sir Arthur Cotton in 1858, the Stevenson Moore Committee in 1919, Sir William Willcocks in 1930, T.M. Oag in 1939, A. Webster in 1946, and Dr Walter Hensen in 1957. It was in recognition of the need of this project that Sir Cyril Radcliffe awarded the partition boundary in such a way that the barrage site, the feeder canal and all head works of this project, fell well within the boundaries of India.

The argument that the Ganga waters be shared during the whole year, and not merely the lean months, does not hold ground, for the problem during the rest of the year is that of excess water. B. M. Abbas, the Bangladesh representative on the Indo-Bangla Joint Rivers Commission, had said some years ago at an ECAFE symposium in Bangkok: "The land in East Pakistan is rich and fertile, the climate ideal for multi-cropping, and the combination of copious rainfall, mighty rivers, and ground water sources creates one of the world's greatest natural systems." The main hazards in Bangladesh are destructive floods, inadequate drainage, erratic rainfall and daily sea-water inundation. The answer, therefore, lies not in more water from the Ganga but in the construction of coastal embankments and polders.

Never before, during the last 16 years of discussions on this subject, did the question arise that the waters be shared in months other than the lean months of March to May. And the question of sharing waters even during the lean months arises only within the framework of a cooperative approach, for there were no historic uses in existence which India was obliged to satisfy—as was the case in the Punjab, where certain canals of a unified system flowed from India into Pakistani territory. It is advisable, therefore, that Bangladesh as well as other countries whose counsels are available to her, approach the problem in a cooperative framework, rather than allow themselves to become victims of confrontationist habits.

### **Towards Indo-Pak Détente**

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan reached an agreement in the middle of May to resume civil over flights, goods and passenger traffic through rail and road, and also diplomatic relations between the two countries. This agreement represented a near-consummation of the process initiated at Simla four years earlier. Of all the items on the agenda drawn up at Simla for the a normalization of Indo-Pak relations, the only question which, in technical sense, could be said to have remained unresolved, was that

of Kashmir. In hindsight, therefore, one can derive satisfaction from the fact that the Simla style of managing Indo-Pak relations had delivered the goods, and far better than any other style in the past.

One of the characteristics of the Simla style was, of course, the emphasis on "bilateralism", and there could be no two opinions about the fact that this method had yielded enormous dividends, not only in resolving Indo-Pak problems but also in sorting out India's relations with various other neighbors. Besides, nothing could better promote a basic objective of India's foreign policy, namely to keep mischievous foreign influence away from the region.

Another distinguishing feature of the process initiated at Simla had been that in the negotiations held since July 1972, the two countries had not been bogged down with intractable problems like Kashmir, or economic claims or counter-claims, but had been seized with problems of relevance to the present and future life of the common man in the two countries—for example, the resumption of telecommunications, postal links, banking facilities, visits to religious places, as well as the resumption of trade, travel, over flights, etc. Thus, the resumption of diplomatic relations, which was really the form rather than the substance of the relationship, climaxed the process of improvement in substantive areas of the relationship—instead of preceding it, as had happened in the post-Tashkent phase. This was a tribute to the maturity and statesmanship of leaders on both sides.

The task of leadership, however, had been facilitated by certain favorable changes in the external environment. For the last few years, leaders in South Asia had been regretting the fact that while working for a relaxation of tension among themselves, the global powers had not been very keen to allow in a similar relaxation with regard to regional conflicts. While the basic attitude of global powers with regard to regional conflict might not have changed yet, the sharpness and intensity of regional conflicts was perhaps not as relevant to them now as it was until a few years ago.. Therefore, it was gratifying if they had contributed to the process of Indo-Pak detente by prevailing upon the leaders of the two countries to speed up mutual rapprochement.

More important were developments within the region, which had resulted from an increasing awareness of the need for mutual cooperation, particularly in economic and technological fields. Relations between India and Iran, which had registered an impressive improvement during the past two years, had a favorable impact on Indo-Pak relations too. The recent decision of India and China to raise their diplomatic relations to the ambassador level, after a break of 14 years, could be regarded as an isolated event. Pakistan, which might have been kept informed of Chinese thinking in this regard, should have drawn the necessary lessons. The gradual resolution of India's pending problems with neighbors: like Nepal and Sri Lanka had also contributed to creating the right climate. And a significant pointer to a gradual change in Pakistan's

attitude towards its neighbors was Bhutto's decision to visit Kabul in June to discuss mutual problems with Sardar Mohammad Daud.

For India, nothing could be more satisfying than the fulfillment of its cherished objective of a speedy normalization of relations with Pakistan. This had a two-fold importance for India. A country which perceives for itself a larger role in world affairs—flowing from its history, size and location—can least afford to remain endlessly involved in disputes with its neighbors. Secondly, it was now widely recognized that regional cooperation was an imperative of development in the entire Third World. And the perpetuation of Indo-Pak conflict had proved a major obstacle in promoting regional cooperation in South Asia. The decision to resume air, road and rail links, to allow goods and passenger traffic and re-establish diplomatic ties, was of direct and immediate relevance to the task of promoting cooperation in economic, technological and cultural fields between the two countries, paving the way for wider regional cooperation.

For Pakistan, the immediate and overpowering motive which impelled Bhutto in March 1976 to agree to withdraw the over flights case from ICAO, might have been his desire to deepen Pakistan's ties with Bangladesh where, according to his perception, the developments had been favorable during the past nine months. Besides, a near fulfillment of the goals enshrined in the Simla Agreement could be claimed by him as a major foreign-policy achievement, the kind which none of his predecessors could be proud of. And further, Bhutto knew, more than anybody else, that a viable Indo-Pak détente would tend to strengthen civilian and democratic forces in Pakistan, of which he would be the major beneficiary.

### **Train to Pakistan**

The first train to Pakistan, after a lapse of 11 years, left Amritsar for Lahore on 22 July 1976. Fortunately, however, this train left Amritsar in a much happier atmosphere than did Khushwant Singh's fictional *Train to Pakistan*, which crossed the Sutlej bridge in the traumatic days of Partition. Indo-Pak relations, in any case, have gone through an entire epoch of trial and tribulation since then. Both nations have emerged wiser from this experience.

The gradual normalization of relations between the two countries in the post-Simla phase, of which the resumption of road and rail traffic was a climax, had deeper significance than met the eye. There was some possibility that various measures attending this process of normalization would be possessed with greater durability than those of the post-Tashkent phase. The reasons were not far to seek. They were related to the bitter experience of the two countries during the past five years, the imperatives of economic growth, and the general climate of detente in the world.

It was not easy for Pakistan to forget the heavy price it had to pay for a policy of continuous confrontation against India, however much some militaristic sections of its population might still have been yearning to revenge the 1971 defeat. Similarly, India should have realized that the emergence of an independent Bangladesh had not been an unmixed blessing, because of its chronic underdevelopment in all respects, and that it might be as profitable, if not more, to invest in the cultivation of good relations with Pakistan, as with Bangladesh. As regards the imperatives of economic growth in the period following the oil crisis and galloping inflation, the need for intra-regional cooperation had been widely recognized in all parts of the world. And the gradually lowering level of tension among the super powers was also a damper on any local attempts to exacerbate Indo-Pak confrontation beyond a limit.

Nevertheless, it was the task of leadership in both countries to continue to watch developments in the region and prevent irresponsible elements from obstructing the process of Indo-Pak cooperation. In this respect, the task of the Indian leadership had been facilitated to the extent that there was a large measure of consensus among Indian political parties for many years as regards policy towards Pakistan. Whatever scope there was for irresponsible elements to weaken the Government's hands in this matter, had been mitigated by disciplinary provisions of the Emergency.

In Pakistan, however, the job of the leadership was not as easy. The elements traditionally opposed to Indo-Pak friendship were on the warpath, denouncing the 14 May agreements for normalization of relations between the two countries, on all conceivable pretexts. The most vocal among them was the Pakistan Muslim League, and the *Nawa-i-waqt* daily spokesman of right reaction and diehard conservatism.

Their criticism of the agreements was mainly on the following lines: (i) that the Kashmir issue had been shelved by these agreements, and there could be no real peace with India unless the Kashmir issue was solved; (ii) that India's primary interest in opening road and rail links with Pakistan lay in utilizing Pakistani routs for trade with the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, Iran and the regions beyond, and this would be detrimental to Pakistani interests and (iii) that the Government of Pakistan had allowed the spirit of detente to develop too far, by not opposing publicly the Iranian suggestion that India be included in the RCD, and if India agreed to join the RCD, it would seriously jeopardize the Islamic integrity of Pakistan.

The Pakistani leadership was hard-pressed to put up a defence of its policy *vis-a-vis* India. While Bhutto, the Chairman of the People's Party, and Dr Mubashir Hasan, the General Secretary, were doing the needful in countering Opposition attacks, all official media were also fully pressed into service to achieve the desired objective. The Pakistan Government's main emphasis was on the Kashmir question. It was at pains to reiterate that the Kashmir issue had not been abandoned, that Pakistan's traditional stand on the

question had not been compromised, and that this was the only pending issue between the two countries on which the next round of talks would take place.

A vigorous defence of Pakistan's India policy was available from the following statement of Federal Minister Malik Meraj Khalid, issued by him as a rejoinder to the denunciatory statement of the Pir of Pagaro, President of Pakistan Muslim League. Telling the Pir that he had committed a crime against the nation by issuing this statement, he observed:

This is what his preaching's come to – war with nuclear India – insult, blockade, and antagonize Iran, your only kindly neighbor – march your armies over Farakka (of course through India – torpedo RCD – court veto and have Kashmir issue killed – follow impulsive and erratic foreign policies – become a nuisance for world peace and a marked country on the world map – challenge the world opinion and have your nationals driven out of foreign countries – face economic strangulation – cause confusion, turmoil, and instability within your country so that the sapling of democracy is quickly uprooted – divert all advantages to India by your own behavior – and then await the earned doom.

While this was enough to effectively meet internal opposition to a policy of detente with India, it was also a welcome revelation of Pakistani motives towards gradual normalization of relations and possible eventual cooperation with India. It established beyond doubt that the Pakistani leaders had taken cognizance of existing realities, although they couldn't help playing the old tune occasionally, either by habit or for reasons of internal politics. It also meant that they were confident of the reasonableness of Indian attitude on all major issues being raised by Pakistani Opposition. India never closed the option of negotiations on Kashmir. She was not the sole beneficiary of road and rail lines with Pakistan, who would also have the opportunity of utilizing the transit route through India for trade with other countries. India would perhaps not like to join the narrowly conceived RCD, unless it was enlarged to include all the States in the Indian Ocean region, about which the Shah of Iran has also talked from time to time.

On an occasion like this, one could not help regretting the ban on the National Awami Party, and the detention of its leader, Khan Abdul Wali Khan, for he and his party would have been the most powerful supporters of the Prime Minister in his policies towards India. Even so, it was the National Democratic Party (NDP), said to be a reincarnation of the NAP, on whose leader, Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari, Bhutto called upon for support in the National Assembly. It was also sad that a responsible commentator like A.T. Chaudhri should have indulged in the luxury of stating, in his column in the *Dawn*: "If the South Asian scenario has begun to change, an obvious reason is that the balance of forces is no more in India's favor."

It was necessary at this point of time that the leadership in both countries maintained the right climate. It was frivolous to argue whether the balance of forces was in favor of India or Pakistan. What was important was to ensure that the balance was in favor of the region as a whole, as against outside powers which have been used to interfering too much at the cost of peace in the region. Common problems beacons India and Pakistan to act together, and explore areas of joint action rather than an attitude of confrontation.

### **Whither Indo-Pak Relations?**

By the year end, Indo-Pak relations seemed stuck at a point from where forward movement was very slow. Extremely significant steps were taken in July, when the two countries' ambassadors occupied their respective seats in each other's capitals, and rail, road and air communications were resumed. But once these steps were taken, it did not require much time and effort on the two sides to ensure that rail, road and air traffic was operating smoothly, or that the diplomatic missions were functioning without hazard. Since then the two Governments have had no heavy item on the agenda of mutual interaction.

A breakthrough in the situation was provided by the celebrations, in the last week of December, of the birth centenary of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in New Delhi and Bombay. The little-publicized functions were organized by the Pakistan embassy with the approval of the Government of India, and were attended from the Indian side at a fairly high level. The highlight of the celebrations was the presentation of a Quaid-i-Azam medallion to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad by the Pakistani ambassador.

These celebrations have to be viewed in the context of the traditional perceptions of the two countries about each other's leaders. The very fact that Pakistan should have thought of holding the celebrations in India, and that India should have welcomed the suggestion, was a pointer to changing perceptions on both sides, based on renewed confidence about each other's bonafides. If nothing else, the celebrations were a viable evidence of the fact that India paid utmost respect to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

This evidence should help build the climate very necessary for giving deeper content to Indo-Pak relations, after pending issues have been resolved. Among the pending issues Kashmir, admittedly, is the only major one which remains unresolved. But Kashmir is an issue which is realized on both sides to be a category by itself, and will require an opportune moment, especially from Pakistan's point of view, to permit a solution. It should not interrupt the gradual evolution of Indo-Pak relations along various other dimensions.

Among these, the cultural dimension deserves and permits early attention. In fact the Quaid-i-Azam's centenary celebrations in India fall within the cultural category; although they have deep political implications. It is very necessary that reciprocal steps of this nature are taken in Pakistan too, and birthdays of India's top leaders celebrated, so that a fundamental difference is gradually made to mutual perceptions at not only the elite, but also the mass level.

At the cultural front, we have already heard of the steps being discussed with regard to interaction in the fields of sports, cinema and Urdu literature. A related step which demands urgent attention is the exchange of newspapers, publications, and eventually scholars and writers. A free access to newspapers and publications on either side will not only enable the people to have first-hand knowledge of scientific, technological, economic and political development in the other country, but also prove a disincentive to the urge for hostile propaganda against each other. The exchange of scholars and writers will prove the surest and quickest way of removing misperceptions still persisting about each other's bona fides or intentions.

Another extremely fertile field for interaction, and of great contemporary socio-economic relevance, is that of family planning. The problem is of basic importance to both countries. India is perhaps richer in experience, having made an earlier start in vigorously pursuing the family planning programme. But of late, Pakistan has been trying to catch up. Among recent steps, one of which may be of interest to India is the decision of the Government of Pakistan to introduce population planning as a subject in all medical colleges of the country. Another is that a study entitled *Islam and Family Planning* has been undertaken, and a series of booklets are being prepared to educate the people and alleviate religious doubts preventing most of the people from adopting family planning measures. There are, in addition, the usual measures pertaining to motivational activities, the establishment of model clinics, etc. Thus, as regards techniques of family planning, Pakistan can benefit from India's greater experience. But as regards the alleviation of religious doubts, Pakistan's experience can be of great relevance to India, because of its vast Muslim population.

There is then the economic dimension, which is yet far from fully explored. The pace of economic interaction is painfully slow and lopsided. The resumption of trade towards the end of 1974 was significant. But the volume has so far been disappointing. According to information given in Pakistan's National Assembly, India imported goods worth 24.449 million dollars from Pakistan from 30 November 1974 to 30 September 1976, while India exported, during the same period, goods worth 1.7 million dollars only. Of Indian imports, the bulk, worth 24.422 million dollars, consisted of raw cotton only, making it an exceptional one-time situation.

After resumption of rail service between the two countries, Pakistan is said to have imported 160 wagon-loads of goods from India, including bamboo, wood, spices,

brooms, *katha*, betel leaves, green tea, tamarind, fruit and ginger. According to another report, Pakistan bought 4,000 Indian refrigerators, in preference to those offered by western countries. Evidently, there is enough scope for exchange of goods between the two countries.

And no lack of private enthusiasm either. *Pakistan Economist*, in a recent article, suggested that "some kind of arrangement between the three countries of the subcontinent has to be worked out and that arrangement has to include the nature of inter-regional trade agreement in which common customs and concessional transportation facilities are bound to be provided on reciprocal basis". This is not the first time that such a suggestion has been made. It is time, however, that inhibitions in this regard, wherever they exist, are removed, paving the way for a larger framework of economic interaction between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The field for political cooperation between India and Pakistan is vast, but sensitive. One can only mention the areas in which the two countries are needlessly working at cross-purposes. The annual Pakistani ritual of a UN resolution on a nuclear-weapons-free zone in South Asia, is one. Bhutto's proposal for a Third World summit is another. There is no doubt that the two countries approach some of these issues differently because of different perceptions of national interest. But at times the different approaches appear to be motivated by propagandist objectives too. Besides, the differences in perception can be narrowed if the two countries look inwards the subcontinent rather than outwards, for a solution of basic problems. One hopes that the Quaid-i-Azam's centenary year will prove a turning point with regard to the two countries' perception's of their national interest *vis-a-vis* each other.

## CHAPTER 9

### A NEW PAKISTAN

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on assuming power as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator on 20 December 1971, had said:

I have come in at a decisive moment in the history of Pakistan. We are facing the worst crisis in our country's life, a deadly crisis ... but we will make a new Pakistan.

This was a noble resolve made at a critical juncture in the history of the country. Bhutto has striven for five years to fulfill this resolve. In December 1976, when he had ruled the country for five years, and had tried to shape it according to his vision and capability, it became necessary to examine how far Pakistan was "new".

The most prominent characteristic of old Pakistan was its instability, caused by a lack of viable political institutions and responsible political behavior. How far did Bhutto succeed in creating these institutions and establishing norms of behavior which would lead to political stability and facilitate economic progress? In this respect, it is desirable to first take a look at Bhutto's positive contribution to the politics of Pakistan.

His foremost contribution has been that Bhutto succeeded in getting a Constitution for Pakistan adopted by a Constituent Assembly which, for the first time, consisted of directly elected representatives of the people. The Constitution was adopted on 10 April 1973, with the support of 125 out of 128 members present and voting in a House of 144. It was promulgated on 14 August 1973. The significance of this Constitution lay in the fact that it was a product of national consensus, and therefore carried within itself the roots of viability.

The first Constitution of Pakistan, adopted by an indirectly elected Constituent Assembly in 1956, was based on the principle of parity between the two wings of Pakistan, and therefore did not satisfy the East Wing. The second Constitution, given by General Ayub Khan in 1962, was also based on the principle of parity and did not satisfy East Pakistan. The third, a provisional arrangement called the Legal Framework Order promulgated by President Yahya Khan in March 1970, on the basis of his previously promulgated Provisional Constitution Order of April 1969 and Proclamation of Martial Law of 25 March 1969, provided for a Constituent Assembly to be elected on the basis of the strength of the population of the five provinces of Pakistan, namely East Pakistan, Punjab, Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan, into which the one unit of West

Pakistan had again been divided. This was therefore acceptable to the East Wing. But the Constituent Assembly so composed could not function because West Wing leaders were not prepared to accept the logic of the East Wing's numerical majority. The contradiction inherent in the situation was ultimately resolved by the secession of the East Wing in 1971.

In a sense, the task of Constitution-making for residual Pakistan was thereby made relatively easier. Nevertheless, the provinces of NWFP and Baluchistan, less developed than Punjab and Sindh, posed problems of provincial autonomy somewhat similar to those of East Pakistan. The problems were aggravated by the fact that both these provinces were being ruled by parties which in the National Assembly performed the role of the Opposition, namely the National Awami Party and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam. Bhutto's ability to get them round to evolving a national consensus on the Constitution, was therefore no mean achievement. It was a tribute to his political maturity and statesmanship.

In view of the record of political instability in Pakistan, Bhutto was keen to introduce such elements in the Constitution as would make it difficult for an ambitious politician to ride roughshod over the constitutional mechanism to satisfy his whims. Therefore, certain provisions were introduced in the Constitution which were normally not found in the parliamentary systems of government. For instance, the Constitution provided that in order to be valid, a motion expressing want of confidence in the Prime Minister must also name his successor. Such a motion cannot be moved during the budget session. Once a motion of no-confidence is defeated, a subsequent one cannot be tabled within a period of the next six months.

A provision introduced in the Draft Constitution was that for a period of 15 years or until the third general election, whichever was longer, a motion of no-confidence would have to be passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds the total membership of the National Assembly. The same formula would apply to motions of no-confidence against provincial chief ministers. The Opposition condemned this and certain other measures as dictatorial, and boycotted the Constituent Assembly in protest. Bhutto yielded to the Opposition's pressure, and as a measure of compromise, modified this provision as follows: for a period of ten years or until the holding of the second general election to the National Assembly, whichever occurs later, the vote of a member of the National Assembly cast in support of a resolution for no-confidence shall be disregarded, if the majority of the members of the party to which he belongs has cast its votes against such a resolution. This provision will apply to the provincial assemblies as well.

Bhutto justified these special provisions on the ground that he was trying to introduce an element of stability in the political system. His opponents, however, attributed these provisions to his dictatorial tendencies. To an extent the opponents seemed justified in their belief, for Bhutto had shown preference for a presidential type of government,

with concentration of great power in the chief executive. In fact, the Draft Constitution did recommend that there be a President at the Centre, and that he combine in himself the functions of the head of State and the head of government. For the provinces, however, the Draft Constitution recommended both the institutions of Governor and a Chief Minister. Bhutto eventually showed enough pragmatism to accommodate the views of the Opposition, and introduced a uniformly parliamentary system, both at the Centre and in the provinces, subject to the special provisions mentioned above.

The second contribution of Bhutto was that he succeeded in curbing the role of the armed forces to what it should be in a democratic setup, namely defending the country's borders against external threat, and helping the civilian administration in the maintenance of internal law and order, when called upon to do so. The army, in alliance with bureaucracy and big business interests, had ruled the country from 1958 to 1971, when it broke up into two parts. Bhutto assumed power in December 1971, with the responsibility of putting the country back on to the rails of democracy. It was therefore necessary to reduce the army to its normal role.

Bhutto's task had been made easier by the fact that the army had been humbled in East Pakistan, and stood discredited. But he chose to discredit it further by putting the entire blame for the secession of the East Wing on the army, and thus absolving himself of a large measure of responsibility for the secession, which was attributed to him by his opponents. The account of Bhutto's responsibility for secession, given to this author by Ahmed Raza Kasuri, a ranking People's Party insider, who later turned rebel, has been narrated in an earlier chapter. In a bid to divert the country's attention from his own dubious role, Bhutto turned all the fire of propaganda on the army, blaming it entirely for the 1971 breakup. *Pakistan Crisis in Leadership*, written by (Retd.) Major-General Fazal Muqem Khan at the behest of Bhutto, was an exercise in this direction. Although Bhutto, under public pressure, appointed the Hamoodur Rahman Commission to look into the causes of the 1971 debacle, the fact that he did not publish the report speaks for his consciousness of its consequences for himself, if the whole truth was revealed. It was for the same reason that Bhutto was not anxious for the return of Pakistani prisoners of war, more than 90,000 in number, to Pakistan too soon, until he had at least stabilized the domestic situation and promulgated the Constitution. The fear, on their return, of repercussions to his image was so great that he did not respond to the Indo-Bangladesh joint proposal of April 1973—which had facilitated the task of repatriation of POWs by delinking it from the question of the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan—for quite some time, until it suited him.

In order to keep the army under control, Bhutto eased out several inconvenient top officers early in 1972. They included General Gul Hassan, Chief of the Army Staff, and Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Chief of the Air Staff. Both of them were considered to have been associated with General Yahya Khan, who presided over the breakup of Pakistan. At about the same time, he appointed General Tikka Khan, a tried and reputed soldier,

as Chief of the Army Staff General Tikka Khan was known for his professionalism and efficiency. His loyalty to the civilian leadership was never in doubt. He was brought in at a crucial time, when the country needed at the helm the best among its civilian and military leadership, with excellent mutual rapport. Of particular relevance was the army's role in controlling unrest in Baluchistan in consequence of the dismissal of the elected NAP-JUI coalition government of that province in February 1973. However, while General Tikka Khan was appointed as Chief of Army Staff, he was given a rank at par with—and not superior to—the Chiefs of Air and Naval Staff. Besides, all the Chiefs of Staff were henceforth to have fixed tenures. These were the kind of checks and balances introduced by Bhutto in order to contain the political ambitions of the army. Bhutto did so under the dictum: "Professional soldiers would not be allowed to turn professional politicians."

Bhutto further demonstrated his control over the army and its subordination to civilian leadership, by issuing a White Paper on, defence in the middle of 1976. The paper dealt with improvements in the higher command structure of the armed forces, with a view to concentrating total decision-making in the hands of the Prime Minister. General Tikka Khan was appointed Special Assistant for National Security to the Prime Minister, with a Cabinet rank. Yusuf Buch was appointed Special Assistant (Defence) to the Prime Minister. Lieutenant General Sharrif, the senior most army officer after General Tikka Khan, was appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee—an organization which, by now, had been rendered moribund and ineffective. Bhutto elevated a junior officer, Lieutenant General Zia-ul-Haq, to the post of Chief of Army Staff, superseding about half a dozen senior officers, who promptly resigned.

In the process of restructuring the higher command, the Prime Minister was given primacy in defence policy, by making him Chairman of the Defence Council, which was to consist of some ministers and secretaries dealing with departments related to defence problems, plus Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the three service chiefs. The Prime Minister was also made responsible for coordinating defence with home and foreign policies.

The third contribution of Bhutto to stabilizing the politics of Pakistan, was to reduce the role of the civil service, which had become extremely powerful under Generals Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, to complete subservience and subordination to political executive. Bhutto prematurely retired 1300 officials of the Central Government in March 1972. Similar action was taken against 51 officers in the Punjab, 165 in NWFP and 75 in Sindh. This was done to tone up the administration because, as Bhutto's government said, they were dead wood, corrupt, and living beyond their means. Some of these officials may have suffered because of their past deeds under the Ayub and Yahya regimes, when bureaucrats were made instruments of the Generals' hatred against the politicians, which included Bhutto and his colleagues.

The supremacy of the bureaucracy revived a further blow at the hands of Bhutto through the administrative reforms of August 1973. This was a sweeping package of reforms which revolutionized the administrative structure overnight, in a manner in which no country in the subcontinent had been able to. By these reforms, all services and cadres in the Pakistani Civil Service were merged into one unified, graded structure. All classes among Government servants were abolished. From a peon at the bottom to the secretary at the top, all belonged to the same class of a unified service. The use of "Service" labels was discontinued. Horizontal mobility and out-of-turn promotions were made permissible. And lastly, the step with which an attempt was made to break the monopoly of bureaucratic power, was to allow lateral entry into the services of other professions.

Bhutto also made some contribution to the economic stability of the country by introducing certain reforms along socialistic lines. He tightened public control over industry, by taking over the administration and management of ten core categories of industries of strategic or basic importance, in January 1972. The 31 major industrial concerns, which were put under a Government-appointed Board of Industrial Management, were reported to have shown significant profits as a result of the takeover. In August 1973, an ordinance was issued authorizing the Government to take over majority shares in 18 companies. Simultaneously, the *vanaspati* industry was completely nationalized, except for foreign-owned concerns. Towards the end of 1973, an ordinance was issued nationalizing the banking industry, and assuming power to take over the management of any company engaged in the marketing of petroleum products and in the maritime shipping industry.

Similarly, in the field of land reforms, Bhutto introduced basic changes. A major set of land reforms was introduced in early 1972 when the ceiling on individual holdings was reduced from 500 to 150 irrigated acres, and from 1000 to 300 unirrigated acres.<sup>6</sup> Besides, Bhutto promulgated, during the five years of his rule, a series of labor welfare measures, and steps for ameliorating the condition of weaker sections of the society.

Bhutto thus succeeded in evolving political institutions and laying the foundations of an economic structure which would undoubtedly put the country on the road to stability – a structure based on democracy and socialism. Where Bhutto failed, however, was in establishing norms of behavior which would make democracy and socialism enduring phenomena. Bhutto's greatest weakness was his lust for power, which often led him to so molest the institutions created by himself that in actual operation the political system looked anything but democratic. In an attempt to establish his personal power within the People's Party, and to extend PPP rule over the entire country, Bhutto

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<sup>6</sup> The second set of land reforms by which he further slashed the individual ownership ceiling to 100 acres of irrigated land or 200 acres of unirrigated land, was introduced by Bhutto on the eve of announcing the next general elections, *i.e.* on 5 January 1977. At the same time, he abolished the centuries-old land revenue system and replaced it by an agricultural income tax system.

played havoc with established institutions, and with all norms of democratic and decent behavior. This no doubt gave him the satisfaction of having emerged as the most powerful man in the country. But in the process, it shook the foundations of parliamentary democracy based on federal consensus – the foundations which were still not very deep-rooted.

The most blatantly irregular act by Bhutto was the extension of People's Party rule in the provinces of Baluchistan and NWFP, and in the territory called "Azad Kashmir". These were the areas in which the People's Party was virtually non-existent in December 1970, when it was thrown up as a majority party in West Pakistan as a whole on the basis of its strength in Punjab and Sindh. In Baluchistan, the People's Party secured none out of the 20 general seats in the provincial assembly that was elected in December 1970. In NWFP, the People's Party secured only four out of 40 seats in the provincial assembly elections of December 1970. In "Azad Kashmir" the PPP did not exist in 1970. And yet in December 1976, it is the People's Party which come to function as the ruling party in all these three areas on the basis of so-called majority support. How this could happen without a fresh general election being held would batik and political imagination. The machinations through which this was done over a period of time were often described by Khan Abdul Wali Khan as the mechanism of "gold and guns". Bribery, blackmail, kidnapping, assassinations and by-elections were the familiar methods through which attempts were made to alter the composition of the assemblies in favor of the People's Party. The process was begun in February 1973, when the Baluchistan and NWFP governments, composed of NAP-JUI ministers, were toppled most unceremoniously. The immediate backdrop for the dismissals of these governments was provided by the discovery of an arms cache with Soviet markings in the Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad – a drama which appeared to have been staged to prove the involvement of NAP in some anti-national conspiracy. The final act of this, drama was of course a ban on the National Awami Party – for which an *ex-post facto* approval was obtained from the Supreme Court. This was accompanied by the arrest of most of its senior leaders, including Khan Abdul Wali Khan, who was leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, and had the distinction of having made a significant contribution to the evolution of a democratic Constitution in Pakistan.

Thus, the political culture which Bhutto symbolized was characterized by complete intolerance of democratic opposition, irrespective of the means which may have to be adopted for the purpose. Physical violence, which had always played an important role in the politics of Pakistan, got further stimulus under Bhutto's rule. The disruption of Opposition rallies, the kidnapping or Opposition leaders, attacks on their houses or families, assassination attempts on them and acts of arson and looting against them were a frequent occurrence throughout Bhutto's rule. What lent a touch of tragic irony to the situation was that even stalwarts of the People's Party, who dared express an independent or non-conformist opinion within the party, were also not exempt from this kind of treatment. Some of the leading lights of the People's Party who, at one stage

or the other, had occupied top positions in the PPP hierarchy but were later constrained to quit it rather than bow to the whims of the leader, are Mian Mahmud Ali Kasuri, J. Rahim, Khursheed Hasan Meer, Ahmed Raza Kasuri, Haneef Ramay and Ghulam Mustafa Khar. Some of them did meet with humiliating experiences after they had quit the party.

Complete intolerance of a free Press was also part of Bhutto's political culture. Any newspaper was closed or its editor arrested if found indulging in uninhibited criticism of Bhutto, printing presses were raided and ordered to be closed. The National Press Trust, a product of the Ayubian era of dictatorship, was fully utilized to throttle the normal channels of communication between the Government and the people, and to project official policies in a ruthless manner.

Similarly the judiciary, the last bastion of freedom, was gradually brought under control of the executive, Through amendments to the Constitution, it was deprived of its role as the defender of the rights of the people against the excesses of the executive.

The above survey of achievements and lapses should provide the perspective in which to examine whether Bhutto was able to build a new Pakistan—the promise with which he began his rule in December 1971. That the institutional framework with which he tried to clothe the country in five years was of a much higher order, with deeper roots than any in the past, cannot be doubted. In devising these institutions, Bhutto was guided by a sense of history, and of his own role therein. What he gave to the country was an extremely pragmatic structure—democratic enough to meet the urges of a semi-feudal society gradually moving towards industrialization, and controlled enough to prevent a sudden fall of government through shifting loyalties of legislators, or whims and caprices of heads of State—a phenomenon common to the previous history of Pakistan.

In this sense, Bhutto's Pakistan was certainly new, and this newness generated a sense of confidence in the country. The political institutions, economic policies, and administrative machinery of Bhutto have shown results. They have made Pakistan, politically and economically, a going concern. A country with political and economic viability and strategic location, Pakistan has earned for itself a respect from and relevance to all major powers, and a large section of the Third World, particularly the Muslim countries. Technologically, it is now one of the most advanced countries of the region in which it is located. Militarily, it is strong enough to defend itself against a potential aggressor in a one-to-one fight, unless the aggressor is a major power from outside the region. These are dimensions which have given to Pakistan a completely new personality, which it never possessed until 1971.

Despite the newness of institutional infrastructure and policy framework, the future of Pakistan has a big question mark to it, mainly because of the questionable norms of

behavior introduced by Bhutto. Institutions and policies are like the skeleton of a body-politic which gets its flesh and blood from the style and standard of its leadership, the spirit in which it operates the institutions and implements the policies. In this respect, unfortunately, Bhutto behaved no better than his predecessors, like Ghulam Mohammed, Iskander Mirza, Field Marshal Ayub Khan and General Yahya Khan. Bhutto built institutions in a spirit of idealism, with the hope that he would go down in history as the builder of democracy in Pakistan. His achievements look impressive in the short span of five years. In practice, however, he allowed personal ambition to have the better of him, and played havoc with the institutions. Under him, Pakistan functioned as a lame-duck democracy. Important legislation was often passed by the Government with Opposition boycotting the assemblies in protest against the high-handedness of Bhutto. This lent to the hard-built political system an air of temporariness and casualness, which proved highly dangerous. The system worked for the last five years under terrible stress. It survived for some time because every participant in the system, both in the Government and in the Opposition, had a sense of challenge to keep it going. It could not survive under stress forever. For Pakistan to function differently than it did in the past, and therefore for it to function newly, it was not enough to have new institutions. It was also necessary to have a new political culture. Bhutto did have the potentiality to serve as the fountainhead of such a culture, if only he took a long-term view of politics, and determinedly placed State before self.

## EPILOGUE

### WHITHER PAKISTAN?

As the year 1976 came to an end, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto completed five years of rule, there was widespread speculation with regard to the general elections which were scheduled to be held any time before August 1977. There were three questions that arose with regard to the politics of elections. The first question was whether at all the elections would be held in 1977. The second was about when they would be held, or how much time would be given to political parties for electioneering. And thirdly, what chances had the PPP of winning the elections again?

The question about whether or not elections would be held in 1977, had assumed importance particularly because of developments in the neighborhood; in Bangladesh they had been postponed indefinitely, and in India they had acquired an uncertainty in view of the extension of the life of the existing Parliament by another year. The factors that weigh on the mind of a leadership in deciding whether or not to hold elections, are the external and internal environment of the country at a given time. Pakistan's external environment couldn't have been more favorable at that time. Historically, the most antagonistic relationship of Pakistan, that *vis-a-vis* India, had undergone a qualitative improvement, unleashing favorable forces which were acquiring a momentum of their own. A process of normalization of relations with the other adversary, namely Afghanistan, had also set in, although the pace of improvement was very slow. Pakistan's relations with the Third World in general and the Muslim world in particular, were being built steadily. As regards Pakistan's relations with the super powers and China, there had come to exist a kind of "bilateralism" whose contours were known, and which allowed sufficient scope for periodic ups and downs.

With regard to the internal environment, Pakistan under Bhutto had acquired some level of political and economic stability, as mentioned in the last chapter. This stability could not be disturbed easily. There was no serious law and order problem facing the country. Whatever problem there was had been contained. Economically too, the country had shown sufficient resilience. Besides, Pakistan's Government did not face the kind of political challenge the Government in India did during 1975-76; nor did it have to go through the traumatic experience of the kind Bangladesh did. The external and internal situation of Pakistan, therefore, provided to Bhutto an excellent opportunity of establishing his one-upmanship over India and Bangladesh by holding the elections in 1977.

The question of timing was important. While the Opposition in Pakistan was keen to have some clear idea about when the elections would be held, the Government seemed

to be enjoying the spectacle of an Opposition kept guessing. In a statement made in early December in Lahore, Bhutto had said that only "reasonable" time would be given to political parties for electioneering. He said he would not repeat what Yahya Khan did by allowing one year for electioneering, and thereby enabling the politicians to fan parochial feelings which had led to the dismemberment of the country. In response to a suggestion that the Opposition was demanding four months, he said that even the Constitution did not allow that much time.

Article 224 of the Constitution said that elections to the National Assembly or a provincial assembly be held within a period of 60 days preceding the day on which the term of the assembly is due to expire, unless the assembly has been dissolved sooner, in which case the election be held within a period of 90 days after the dissolution. Articles 271 and 273 laid down that the term of the first National Assembly and the first provincial assemblies be up to 14 August 1977. Since the fiscal year of Pakistan begins on 1 July, and the budget session of the National Assembly takes place usually in the month of June, it was reasonable to expect that Bhutto would like to dissolve the assemblies and hold elections sufficiently before that. Besides, the electoral rolls were ready, and the *People's Representative Act*, which provided the election rules, had been passed by the National Assembly on 29 December. Therefore, there was nothing to hold Bhutto from the elections, as far as the mechanics were concerned.

What were the prospects of Bhutto's party winning the elections? If one took an extremely idealistic view of contemporary politics, one would be tempted to recall the acts of political high-handedness against his opponents permitted by Bhutto during the past five years—like assassinations, kidnappings, arson, misuse of emergency powers, Press restrictions, Section 144, etc.—and come to the conclusion that Bhutto would be condemned or rejected by the entire country. Such a conclusion might even have been warranted by the fact that in Peshawar and Karachi, non-PPP students (Pakhtoons in the former and right-wing Jamiat Tuleba in the latter) had won the recent university elections, and in Quetta and Lahore, non-PPP students (Pakhtoons and Jamiat respectively) had been *lathi*-charged or arrested while trying to hold meetings.

But politics is the art of the possible, and this subcontinent had witnessed a hardly more skilful political practitioner than Bhutto. It was not merely because of their inherent weakness and lack of integrity that Opposition parties were in complete disarray in Pakistan at that time. On the other hand, PPP ranks were swelling, as if by a miracle. The latest to join the PPP bandwagon was its former arch critic from the Muslim League—Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, MNA, who joined along with his followers. Besides, the inevitability of PPP rule in the entire country had been demonstrated by its extension, irrespective of the means adopted for the purpose, to the remotest areas where it hardly existed in 1970, *i.e.* NWFP, Baluchistan and "Azad Kashmir".

Khan Abdul Wali Khan, the only person who, at least individually if not in terms of his party, could have offered a viable alternative to Bhutto, had virtually been ousted from the political scene. The office bearers of the NAP, by virtue of it having been outlawed, had been disqualified from contesting elections for the next five years under the *People's Representative Act*.

It was not merely the lack of a viable alternative which gave Bhutto an advantage. It was also a generally positive image of his performance, both in the realm of domestic problems and foreign policy, under most trying circumstances, that made early 1977 as the most propitious time for holding the elections as far as Bhutto was concerned.

To the pleasant surprise of his countrymen, Bhutto announced on 7 January that the general elections to Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies would be held on 7 and 10 March. The existing assemblies were dissolved on 10 January. Bhutto's announcement acquired added significance when Indira Gandhi announced on 18 January that India too would go to the polls in March 1977. Together, they constituted a befitting answer to outside critics who had always had grave reservations about the democratic faculties of the people of this region.

By announcing the elections Bhutto earned the distinction of being a pace-setter in many respects. He was the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the country. He was also the first one to have taken the country to the polls according to constitutional requirements, thus strengthening the foundations of parliamentary democracy. He was also the first one to have introduced such a long series of socio-economic reforms, according to the dictates of socialism.

In the style of a veteran politician, Bhutto unleashed an impressive array of socio-economic welfare measures just on the eve of the elections. On 18 December, at the conclusion of Peasants' Week celebrations, Bhutto signed an eight-point National Charter for Peasants promising, among other things, that all cultivable State waste land would be distributed with full ownership rights among peasants who did not own any land, or who owned less than a subsistence holding. On 4 January, Bhutto's government announced the new labor reforms which would improve, among other things, the social security benefits, workmen's companion, share in profits, housing facilities and working of the labor courts.

On 5 January, Bhutto made a historic announcement abolishing the centuries-old land revenue system and replacing it by an agricultural income tax system. Simultaneously, he brought in a second set of major land reforms to further slash the individual ownership ceiling to 100 acres of irrigated land or 200 acres of unirrigated land, and reduced the limit from the existing 12,000 produce index units to 8,000 units. The first set of land reforms had been introduced in early 1972. And lastly, this package of

benefits included an announcement by the Federal Finance Minister on 6 January with regard to increased pensions and other benefits for civil and armed forces pensioners.

Bhutto can thus be said to have launched the election game on a fairly safe wicket. The results of the contest were almost foregone. What made the game specially interesting, however, was the decision of the Opposition to contest the elections in a more organized manner, under a united forum called Pakistan National Alliance, as against their earlier angry threats that they would boycott the elections.

The Opposition suddenly decided, to the dismay of the PPP, that they would contest the elections under the banner of Pakistan National Alliance, and would put up only one agreed candidate in each constituency. The alliance included all conceivable Opposition parties, totaling nine. This amounted to a straight contest between the ruling party and the Opposition, and called for maximum deployment of resources and skill on the part of both.

Bhutto must have pleased himself immensely by stating, in the course of the election campaign, that the leadership role in the subcontinent had changed hands, and that Pakistan had now forced the pace of events in India. The reference was to India's decision about holding elections, which followed that of Pakistan. But as the election game progressed, it revealed interesting dimensions of the state of democracy in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, democracy looked like a sophisticated toy placed in the hands of a child who does not know how to play with it, and therefore kicks it, molests it, and derives the satisfaction of having played with it. In the process the toy is broken, even if the joy could be had of having played the game. This was the impression one got by watching the manner in which the game of elections was being played in Pakistan. Otherwise, how could one explain the fact that the Prime Minister, the chief ministers of all four provinces, and a large number of ruling party candidates for the national and provincial assemblies were initially declared elected unopposed. The obvious inference one could draw was that either the Opposition in Pakistan was completely dead and gone, or what was actually happening in Pakistan was not elections, but selections, and that the administrative machinery was completely subservient to the powers that be.

Before one examines the issues involved in the Pakistani elections, it is necessary to take a quick look at the structure of the election game, and the instruments being employed by various participants therein. When the Prime Minister announced the decision for elections on 7 January, the Opposition consisted of about a dozen disparate parties. Even the United Democratic Front of eight parties was virtually defunct. But it took surprisingly little time for nine of these parties to constitute themselves into a Pakistan National Alliance. This combine included the Tehriq-e-Isteqlal, Jamaat-i-Islami, Pakistan Democratic Party, Muslim League, National Democratic Party, Jamiat-ul-

Ulema-e-Islam. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, and the Khaksars.

The emergence of PNA was thus the first major development which gave a broadly bilateral shape to the election game. A further development which helped this situation was the allotment of a common symbol to the PNA—a plough—by the Election Commission, much against objections filed by the ruling Party. Yet another significant development was the breakup of the PPP alliance with the Qayyum Muslim League, leading to the ouster of the Home Minister, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, from the federal cabinet. The QML had outlived its utility to the PPP. The Pakistan Socialist Party, according to a statement by its President, C. R. Aslam, was caught unawares by the election announcement, and was not prepared to contest too many seats. The field was therefore open for a straight contest between the PPP and the PNA—except in NWFP, where the QML was to cause triangular contests in many constituencies.

The nomination procedures being over by the end of January, the campaign for elections to the National and four provincial assemblies started in right earnest in the beginning of February. But the Pakistani election campaign was characterized by certain features, some of which can be said to be common to the developing world, while others were exclusively Pakistani. For instance, the extensive and unabashed use of official media by the ruling party is perhaps a common characteristic of the developing world. But the low level of dialogue and personal abuse exchanged between the contestants seemed typically Pakistani. For instance, Bhutto described (Retd.) Air Marshal Asghar Khan as a person who once did not have enough money to fly by PIA, and was now living on the doles of capitalists. Maulana Mufti Mahmud, Bhutto said, could not sleep without tranquilizers during his nine months of chief ministership of NWFP. About Bhutto, the Air Marshal said that he was "a rat from Larkana" who could not recite a single verse of Namaz, and yet claimed to be a good Muslim.

What baffled any democratic sense, however, was the number of uncontested returns which had initially been declared as having occurred in Pakistan. According to most accounts, the People's Party of Bhutto was said to have won, uncontested, 22 out of 40 seats in the Baluchistan Assembly, and 44 out of 100 seats in the Sindh Assembly. Similarly, for the National Assembly, it had reportedly won, uncontested, 17 out of 43 seats from Sindh, and four out of seven seats from Baluchistan. The uncontested PPP returns from Baluchistan could be explained by the fact that the PNA had refused to contest the elections in Baluchistan unless the army was withdrawn from there, and the situation normalized. But elsewhere, one wondered whether the uncontested returns could be regarded as tribute to Bhutto's popularity, or his "efficiency" in conducting elections. A widespread complaint, however, was that the Opposition candidates had been kidnapped, and prevented from filing their nomination papers.

And now the election issues. The ritual of issuing election manifestoes had, of course, been completed by the two main contestants. The PPP manifesto, issued towards the end of January, mainly reiterated the party's existing policies. There was, however, special emphasis on expansion and modernization of the arms industry during the next five years, and reduction of the country's dependence on foreign sources in this field. Besides, there was the promise of a 50 percent increase in national production, and another steel mill, during the next five years.

The PNA leaders, for quite some time, said that the Holy Quran was their manifesto. When pressed by PPP leaders to make more meaningful statements in this regard, the PNA issued its manifesto in the second week of February. But the manifesto made woeful reading. It was full of outmoded ideas, vague promises and contradictory statements. It was at best a charter of conservatism and reaction. One might easily agree with Bhutto's denunciation of it—that it contained "no philosophy, no ideology, no rationale".

The real battle, however, was being fought on issues totally unconnected with manifestoes. Bhutto's main attack on the PNA was based on the charge that it consisted of a band of capitalists and feudal lords who were opposed to the very creation of Pakistan. This was ironical, in view of the large number of feudal lords who had been defeated by the PPP in 1970, but had now got PPP tickets. Nevertheless, the PPP had a veritable record of socialistic measures adopted by it during the past five years.

In the PNA's counter-attack on the PPP, maximum importance was being given to the fact that the Hamoodur Rahman Commission's report had not been released by Bhutto. The PNA promised that if it came to power, one of the first things it would do was to hold an enquiry into the breakup of Pakistan and expose Bhutto's role in it. The second most important issue being raised was that of price rise, excessive governmental expenditure, and profligate living by ministers. The questions connected with suppression of provincial rights, democratic freedoms and civil liberties, were somehow not getting as much importance as they could have.

While the formation of the PNA was a net gain for the Opposition, its lack of a credible programme and its absence of any past record of achievements could be its undoing. The PPP, whatever its misdeeds in the past, had considerable positive record to show, and proven capability, to get things done the way it liked, irrespective of the means deployed. By all accounts, it was poised for a comfortable victory at the Centre and in all four provinces.

The National and provincial assembly elections were eventually held on 7 and 10 March, and the PPP won with a large majority. But it was only with mixed feelings that one could congratulate Bhutto for his massive victory. The country lost an excellent opportunity of laying another layer in the foundation of democracy because of the

display of rank opportunism and immaturity by leaders of the ruling party as well as the Opposition. The former needlessly resorted to large-scale uncontested returns and alleged rigging, and the latter, equally needlessly, boycotted the National Assembly elections in Baluchistan and the provincial assembly elections in all four provinces. Consequently, while the general elections had legal validity, they could be said to be devoid of political sanctity. Whether one liked it or not, the country had been landed in a politically ridiculous situation.

In the National Assembly, Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party won 155 out of 200 general seats, 19 of them unopposed. The score included 107 out of 115 in Punjab, 32 out of 43 in Sindh, eight out of 26 in NWFP, seven out of seven in Baluchistan, and one out of one in Islamabad Federal Area. The Pakistan National Alliances won eight seats in Punjab, 11 in Sindh and 17 in NWFP. The Muslim League (Qayyum Group) won only one seat in NWFP. Independents won eight seats, the total allotted to the federally-administered Tribal Areas.

In the provincial assemblies, the PNA having boycotted the elections, the PPP secured 232 seats out of 240 in Punjab, 100 out of 100 in Sindh, 68 out of 80 in NWFP, and 35 out of 40 in Baluchistan. The Muslim League (Qayyum Group) got two seats in NWFP. Independents got seven in Punjab, four in NWFP and five in Baluchistan. Results for one seat in Punjab and six in NWFP remained disputed. Of the total PPP score in the provinces, 60 were returned unopposed.

The verdict of the electorate was thus clearly in favor of the PPP, despite the alleged rigging, and the imbalance that had crept in on account of the boycott of the PNA. It was unfortunate that the PPP leaders lost their nerve and felt it necessary to resort to unopposed returns, even in as important a constituency as Bhutto's own, where victory—even if hazardous—would have been a certainty. In some prestigious constituencies, a contest was politically necessary for the sake of form. As for the alleged rigging, because of which the PNA boycotted the provincial polls, no details were provided in the beginning, nor any evidence to prove the vaguely made-up charge. Therefore, making due allowance for irregularities of all kinds, it could still be asserted that the PPP had deserved its massive majority in the National Assembly.

It was not difficult to discern the reasons which had led to PPP victory. Its achievements in the fields of domestic and foreign policy in a period of five years looked larger than their size, when juxtaposed with the stagnation and confusion of the preceding 25 years. The PNA, on the other hand, was carried away by the crowds it drew at the election rallies, without realizing that such rallies have an entertainment value in countries with large populations and little means of relaxation. The fact of PNA's formation, even if belated, was welcomed by the people. But the programme offered by the PNA in its manifesto was woeful. A bagful of reactionary ideas, incoherent slogans and platitudinous promises, it was an insult to the people's aspirations, even granting the

fact that a streak of conservatism and reaction characterizes the foundations of the Pakistani State.

A closer look at the election results, however, would suggest that the PPP had sufficient reasons to be remorseful about some aspects of its performance. Despite all the unscrupulous means adopted by it to spread its tentacles in NWFP, its credentials had not improved in this province. A true index in this respect was provided only by the National Assembly results, according to which the PPP in this province trailed far behind the Opposition combine, and remained a minority party, thereby confirming the 1970 verdict. The provincial assembly results could not be taken seriously as an index of the party's following, because they were fought with only one party in the field.

In Baluchistan, even the National Assembly results were deceptive, for they were boycotted by the PNA in protest against continuing large-scale military presence in that province. There too, among the seven out of seven seats won by the PPP for the National Assembly, four were returned unopposed. If the trend in NWFP (reflected in the National Assembly elections) was any guide, a fairly good showing by the PNA even in Baluchistan, could not have been ruled out, if it had fought the National Assembly elections. And the performance could well have been repeated by the PNA at the provincial level too, if it had not boycotted the polls. The boycott was therefore tactically a political blunder on the part of the PNA. And it made a mess of Pakistani politics, which was deprived of a valuable opportunity to re-acquire a balance between the dominant forces in Punjab and Sindh on the one hand, and NWFP and Baluchistan on the other.

The PPP performance was poor even in Karachi and Hyderabad, the largely populated industrial centers of Sindh. In Karachi, the PNA won eight out of 11 seats. The winners included PNA stalwarts like (Retd) Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Ghafoor Ahmed and Sardar Sherbaz Khan Mazari. But in Sindh and Punjab as a whole, the PPP reinforced its position, belying many expert assessments that it had, of late, lost ground in Punjab, because of the challenge posed by Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Haneef Ramay, and the deteriorating economic situation. A party which met its demise in its own stronghold was the Qayyum Muslim League, whose leader, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, lost from both the constituencies he fought from. The only leader returned by the QML to the National Assembly was Yusuf Khattak, from NWFP.

The election results had quite a few lessons to offer to the PPP and PNA, if both would care to learn these, in their own interest and in the interest of national stability. The biggest lesson for the PNA was that the negative approach enshrined in the politics of boycott, strikes and violence, was outdated. The political foe must be met at the political plane, and the necessary homework be done for it. The lesson for the PPP was that the politics of victimization had its limits. This had been amply demonstrated in NWFP,

where the anti-PPP vote was primarily a protest against the treatment meted out to the NAP and its leader, Khan Abdul Wali Khan.

However, Pakistan soon found itself in the throes of a grim political crisis, one of the worst ever faced by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his stormy political career. The crisis had been created by the Opposition's rejection of the National Assembly polls as unfair and rigged, by their complete boycott of the provincial assembly polls, and an agitation for fresh, countrywide general elections under the supervision of the army and the judiciary. To an extent, the fact that the elections had been unfair and devoid of legitimacy was admitted even by the People's Party.

This was implicit in the Government's initial offer to the Pakistan National Alliance, that they could hold negotiations with regard to some adjustment in the distribution of National Assembly seats between the PPP and the PNA, and Federal Minister Pirzada's suggestion at a Press conference that a way could be found to set aside the provincial assemblies' elections, so that fresh elections could be held to them. But the large-scale countrywide disturbances involving the intervention of the army, quite a few deaths, and arrests of nearly all Opposition leaders were a kind of verdict on the legitimacy of the polls, which could not be brushed aside so easily.

In course of time, details were available on the kind of rigging that had allegedly taken place in the National Assembly elections held on 7 March. The details were given out in a PNA White Paper on election malpractices, and in *Islami Jamhooria*, a weekly paper close to the PNA. The most glaring irregularity pointed out by the weekly was the fact that though the central office of the Election Commission had not received even the preliminary results of 41 National Assembly constituencies by the midnight of 7 March, their final results had already been announced by radio and TV. On the other hand, in the case of another 53 constituencies, the final results were withheld even after they had been received by the Election Commission. Giving another example, the weekly said that the position at the central office of the Election Commission at 3 A.M. of 8 March was: PPP leading in 67 seats; PNA leading in 32 seats; results withheld: 55; results not received: 13; PPP gains: 2; PNA gains: 1. The radio and TV had, however, announced the final results of 160 seats well before that.

The PNA White Paper referred to a vast variety of malpractices, with documentary evidence given in the form of annexures. Some of them are as follows: the polling agents of PNA candidates were arrested or beaten up by the police, abducted by People's Party candidates or their henchmen, or incapacitated by beating before the start of polling; in cases where they were forced to leave the polling stations, polling continued in their absence; the henchmen of PPP candidates forced their entry into polling stations, snatched ballot papers from voters or from polling officers, stamped them, and inserted them into the ballot boxes; polling officers themselves stamped ballot papers in the "scored column" and put them in ballot boxes, or connived at others

resorting to similar bogus voting; the marking ink used by polling officers was not indelible, so that bogus esters could not be detected; no polling took place at some polling stations, but the results declared by the returning officers showed heavy voting in favor of PPP candidates; at certain polling stations, ballot papers found in the ballot boxes at the end of toting were considerably in excess of the number of ballot papers issued by the presiding officers; and certificates of count on prescribed forms were not given in a large number of constituencies.

All this failed to satisfy the Opposition, which rejects Bhutto's offer for negotiations three times, boycotted the first National Assembly session on 26 March, and continued to spearhead a not-too-non-violent agitation throughout the country, for nothing less than fresh elections under the supervision of the army and the judiciary. Bhutto, after an initially conciliatory response, decided to meet the situation through a law and order approach, and arrested all Opposition leaders once again.

It was extremely unfortunate that Bhutto should have allowed unfair practices in the elections, in addition to uncontested returns, on such a large scale. It was not really necessary for him to do so, looking at his record of achievements in the past five years. Perhaps he was overawed by the large crowds gathered at PNA rallies and drew wrong conclusions from it. Here, a contrast with the Indian situation is called for, for the ruling party in India was faced with a far more viable challenge, and yet did not deem it necessary to allow irregularities in the elections. The difference lies in the maturity of a country as far as handling a sophisticated instrument like democracy is concerned.

Pakistan was at the crossroads of history once again. Few had imagined that Pakistan, after the dismal failures of 26 years, would successfully evolve a democratic Constitution and have it enforced by August 1973. Fewer still had anticipated that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, after acquiring the distinction of being the chief architect of democratic stability in Pakistan, would also prove to be the instrument of renewed political chaos and uncertainty. After 30 years of existence, which also witnessed its physical vivisection and the loss of half its population and territory, Pakistan was again faced with the basic question: did it deserve a democratic way of life?

The nationwide agitation which started in protest against the alleged large-scale rigging in National Assembly elections on 7 March, assumed wider dimensions as days passed. The issue no longer remained merely that fresh elections be held to the National Assembly under the supervision of the army or the judiciary, and that Bhutto resign. Significant voices were raised in the Press and political circles that every undemocratic act by Bhutto in the past five years be undone.

Bhutto had earned the respect of the world and the gratitude of his people for achieving the seemingly impossible task of administering his country through civilian control. But his political opponents in the country, or dissidents within his party, could not easily

forget the price they had to pay for this civilian control. Anybody who stood in the way of Bhutto's rule had to suffer the ignominy of political extinction. The country was throughout administered under a state of emergency. The Press was completely gagged. Provincial autonomy was butchered, and provincial governments belonging to non-PPP parties toppled through unlawful means. Dissidents within his party or opponents in other parties were harassed, kidnapped, or even murdered. A leading national party, whose President was the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly and was a signatory to the Constitution of the country, was declared anti-national and banned, simply because the party and its leader controlled the politics of two of the four provinces of Pakistan. PPP tentacles were spread over these two provinces and over "Azad Kashmir" through dubious means.

The people took all this lying down. Their resistance crumbled against the superior physical force of the Central Government. Their hope lay in the next general elections. Meanwhile, they derived cold consolation from the fact that they had at least a facade of democracy, as compared with the previous 25 years when their country had been the object of ridicule. Besides, from the abysmal depths of 1971, the country had been raised to a level of some consequence, at least in the regional context. For this, the credit went to Bhutto. Therefore, the people were tolerating him. They would have gladly given him another chance too, for the alternative to Bhutto's party was yet devoid of credibility. But Bhutto behaved shoddily once again, when the time for trial came. He took excessive caution to ensure that he did not miss the reins of power even narrowly.

Therefore, when the Pakistan National Alliance made the allegation that the elections were rigged, it carried conviction with a substantial section of the population; Bhutto's unscrupulousness was well known. Many people have grown with the belief that Bhutto could not disown political responsibility for East Pakistan's secession in 1971. Thus, as the PNA agitation spread, Bhutto's credibility sunk to low levels. The agitation came to symbolize a total rejection of all that was oppressive or irregular under Bhutto.

Gloomy prospects were being held for Pakistan in the days to come. It was speculated in certain quarters that the army might take over, in the event of the political deadlock continuing. There were elements like the Jamaat-i-Islami; a sworn enemy of Bhutto, which would perhaps not mind the army coming in, even if it served merely the purpose of snatching away power from Bhutto's hands. In fact, the Jamaat was largely responsible for giving to the agitation its violent and fanatical character.

By April-end, the agitation was characterized by widespread violence, engulfing nearly all the towns of Pakistan. The death toll was said to have run into hundreds, and that of arrests into thousands. *Hartals* and protest processions were a daily feature. Educational institutions were closed. Life was paralyzed. And there was no hope of a political solution. Both sides were adamant, the PPP insisting on a solution other than the

dissolution of the National Assembly, or the resignation of 'the Prime Minister, and the PNA on nothing less than these.

The PNA case had no legal validity. The Government had provided adequate constitutional remedies, in the form of unfettered powers to the Election Commission, to go into cases of irregularities and provide immediate redress. But the nature and magnitude of the PNA agitation had taken the entire issue outside the legal framework. The PNA seemed determined to snatch power from Bhutto, and was possibly sustained in its resolve by the success of Opposition in India. The PNA seemed confident of winning the elections, if held again. Whether or not this confidence was misplaced, PNA chances tended to improve the longer the stalemate continued. What made the situation grim, however, was the possibility of sharp aggravation in the PNA-inspired lawlessness, and the resultant breakdown of constitutional order, if Bhutto did not yield very long.

The situation posed a grave challenge to Bhutto's statesmanship, and also to his moral fiber. He made the gesture of lifting curbs imposed on the media for the past 15 years. Something more significant was needed to create the right national climate for a dialogue between the PPP and PNA. Perhaps lifting the ban on the National Awami Party, and releasing Khan Abdul Wali Khan and his colleagues, would help. Perhaps something else. Friendly countries like Saudi Arabia, Libya and United Arab Emirates tried to mediate between the PPP and the PNA to find a viable solution to the crisis.

After month-long efforts, the ice was broken towards the beginning of June. All political leaders belonging to the Opposition were released and a dialogue begun in right earnest. An agreement was finally reached on 15 June, by which the Government agreed to hold fresh elections under the supervision of the army and the judiciary, sometime in October. The PNA yielded on its second demand with respect to the resignation of Bhutto who, under this agreement, was to continue as Prime Minister until the holding of fresh elections. But in order to ensure that the elections were held in a free and fair manner, a Joint Implementation Council, consisting of five representatives of each of the two sides, was to be constituted to supervise the conduct of elections.

The news of this accord came as a great relief to the tortured souls of the people of Pakistan. The accord was awaiting to be signed by the two sides in a few days' time, when Bhutto suddenly went off to the West Asian countries of Saudi Arabia, Libya, UAE, Iran and also Afghanistan, ostensibly to thank some of them for their mediatory efforts at resolving the political crisis in Pakistan. The PNA leaders were bewildered at this unexpected move of Bhutto who, they thought, was trying to wriggle out of the agreement by delaying his signature on it on some pretext or the other. The expression of gratitude to friendly Muslim countries, they said, could have taken place after the

accord had been duly signed, so that no doubt was left about the commitment of the two sides to it.

After Bhutto's return from abroad, a fresh round of talks began between negotiating teams of the two sides, the PPP represented by Bhutto, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada and Maulana Kausar Niazi, and the PNA represented by Maulana Mufti Mahmud, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan and Ghafoor Ahmed. The purpose was to remove suspicions about each other's bonafides, which had cropped up since 15 June. The differences between the two sides seemed to pertain to the role of the Joint Implementation Council. Even though the PNA had agreed that Bhutto continue as Prime Minister until fresh elections were held, it wanted the Joint Implementation Council to be the supreme body as far as the conduct of elections was concerned. The PNA had absolutely no faith in the integrity or impartiality of Bhutto. Bhutto's government, on the other hand, was not willing to accept the imposition of a "super-government" on it, even as far as the conduct of elections was concerned. The lack of trust was therefore the basic cause of continuing discord between the two sides. An agreement was finally announced to have been reached at 6.25 A.M. on 2 July, at the end of a marathon 13-hour sitting spread over two sessions, constituting as it did the twelfth round of negotiations since Bhutto's return.

The agreement was subject to the approval of the Central Council of the PNA which, it was hoped, would be a mere formality. But the situation was destined to take a different turn. Every hour that passed was fraught with tension, such was the anxiety of the people of Pakistan about when the agreement would be declared fully and finally approved by the PNA Central Council. Unfortunately for the country, the agreement was turned down by the PNA Central Council. The rejection was announced by (Retd.) Air Marshal Asghar Khan at 8.30 P.M. on 3 July. This was a devastating blow to the hopes of the nation. Bhutto went into a frenzied meeting with the federal cabinet on the midnight of 3-4 July 1977. Addressing a Press conference in the early hours of 4 July, Bhutto said that the question of reopening the accord reached between the Government and PNA on the morning of 2 July did not arise. Bhutto met newsmen again at night on 4 July, after a cabinet meeting, and expressed his readiness for further talks with the PNA, but said that the Government would raise afresh as many points as the other side sought to. Maulana Mufti Mahmud, chief of the PNA, however, said on the same night that the PNA only wanted the holding of just, free and fair polls, and all PNA reservations related to this demand. Without adequate safeguards, the PNA could not accept an agreement.

As the nation was thus stuck with a political stalemate of the worst order, the army, which had been a silent though anxious witness to a most irresponsible and selfish confrontation between the political leaders, decided to act. General Zia-ul-Haq, Chief of the Army Staff, had prepared a contingency plan to be implemented in the event of a political deadlock. Being convinced of the impossibility of the crisis being resolved by

the evening of 4 July, General Zia struck at the midnight hour, and took over the reins of Government by the early hours of 5 July. He dismissed the Government of Bhutto, dissolved the National and provincial Assemblies, and imposed martial law throughout the country. He took into "protective custody" all prominent leaders of the PPP and PNA, and kept them at Murree for about two weeks. The main reason why General Zia took this action, as he explained later, was that there was no prospect of the PPP and PNA reaching a compromise "because of their mutual distrust and lack of faith", and there was fear of the country being plunged into a very serious crisis, verging on civil war. The fear was borne out by subsequent reports of the discovery of large quantities of arms and ammunition in the hands of the PPP supporters, said to have been distributed systematically by the ruling party with a view to meet the eventuality of an armed struggle with the PNA. According to some accounts, the PPP objective was to wriggle out of the agreement pertaining to fresh elections, by plunging the nation into large-scale political violence which would provide the necessary pretext for cancelling the elections. Perhaps the army saw through the game.

The army takeover was received by the people of Pakistan with mixed feelings; while there was anguish at this air of political surgery performed by the army, there was also relief that the country was saved from the banditry of politicians, combined with the hope that the army rule would be short-lived. The international Press described the politics of Pakistan as having come "full circle", meaning thereby that army rule had been imposed once again, after a civilian interregnum.

Soon, however, the Chief Martial Law Administrator announced that fresh elections would take place on 18 October 1977. The Constitution of Pakistan was kept intact, except in certain respects. The President continued to be the constitutional head of the State. The judiciary continued to function normally. Thus, there was something "new" about the political system of post-1971 Pakistan, which gave hope that the martial law of 5 July 1977 would really be a short-lived one, a temporary expedient forced upon the country due to the selfish recklessness of the politicians. As these pages go to press, there is widespread hope that the people of Pakistan will come out of this last phase of their struggle for the survival of democracy, and will so keep a check on the whims and caprices of the political leaders that the army will never again get a pretext to suspend, much less thwart, the democratic process.

## **BHUTTO'S PERCEPTION OF PAKISTAN: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR<sup>7</sup>**

Q. As a person who has made a significant contribution to the normalization of situation in the subcontinent, what is your perception of the future of South Asia and its role in world affairs?

A. Its role in world affairs will be determined in my opinion by the equilibrium we are able to establish between ourselves. This includes, of course, Bangladesh as well, and the progress we are able to attain. It is fundamental that we must have in the subcontinent the necessary strength to have our views felt. We see today how the whole world has gone upside down over this oil crisis. And for long people thought that Arabs did not have the power to assert themselves or to get justice for their cause. And now everyone is sitting up and everyone is taking notice of the Arab position. States which were prejudicial to the Arab cause and deridingly they used to, and contemptuously, write about the Middle East, they have suddenly woken up to the immense potential of powers in the Middle East and its great influence on the whole world. And from sand-dunes these countries have now become power centers. This was also true of China before revolution and now there is a dine. rent China. So, basically, we might temporarily find relief in the emergence of a powerful or great personality, someone who makes contribution in the realm of ideas. But there is very little scope for making a contribution in the realm of ideas. New ideas cannot be thrown up, new formulae like in the old days. The 20th century diplomacy is saturated with ideas. It has reached an intellectual saturation point in terms of contribution of new thoughts to world affairs and to diplomacy. There has been a crystallization, and the notions of balance of power or non-alignment and things of that nature which can also give prestige to a country. Thus, as I said, now there is little scope for that. So basically I would say that two things are necessary for the subcontinent or for the States of South Asia to play a role, to play a positive role in world affairs. We will have to find a settlement of our disputes, learn to live in the same subcontinent without the present suffocating atmosphere, and at the same time gain economic and social strength. Today we are going backwards. And this energy crisis and the recent developments that have taken place, they are going to have far-reaching ramifications on our economy, and I can see from here that they are going to knock the bottoms out of your economy. We do not like it at all, and if today we have diplomatic relations we would be able to consult each other and to find out where do we go from here, because this is really a sinking together. More than half of your foreign exchange earnings will have to go now into

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<sup>7</sup> This is the full text of the dialogue held between Pakistan's Prime 'Minister Z. A. Bhutto, and the author on 28 December 1973 in Rawalpindi and covers Bhutto's views on a wide range of national problems.

footing the additional bill, and this is a growing demand, it is an increasing demand. And we also are suddenly saddled with awesome situations. These things of this nature. You see sudden changes, sudden mutations take place and we find ourselves groping in the dark because we do not have a dialogue, we do not have relations with each other. And we are still hankering over the past feuds. Not that we should not settle them, they need to be settled. But the world has moved on, and we in the subcontinent have remained behind. Now this is in contrast with what we had thought in 1947 that we would be the harbingers of a new message to the world. And this was more conspicuous in India because in India Mr. Nehru took upon himself the mantle of non-alignment which made plenty of sense to the Third World at that time. Now it is a different situation, but at that time when the world was pitched between God and Satan, and to say that we will not take sides whichever was God and Satan....

Q. You have doubts about its validity in the present situation in any way.

A. I do not say that is not valid but it is not of that poignant relevance as it was. Today it is more of a philosophical approach. It does not carry the content of power blocks, such as it did earlier. So this is the point, we must find settlement of our disputes and we must make great strides to get on in the economic and social activities, in the subcontinent.

Q. Given the spirit in which the two countries have sorted out some of the crucial issues after '71 at Simla and Delhi, and so on, how much time do you think it might take for the two countries to get over the momentary problems which are the consequences of 1971?

A. It is difficult for me to say this because it is not entirely in our hands. It has to be seen how we grasp the opportunities and whether we allow opportunities to slip out of our hands out of some timidity or some fear or some suspicion. All these factors have been relevant in our relations. Suspicion has had its say and fear and prejudice. All these things have been rolled into our relations. How then can I say whether it will take two years or three years or six months, or a decade. This depends not on Pakistan alone. It depends on India and it depends on Bangladesh to a good extent as well. So it is for all the three to consider the need to seize opportunities and not to lose opportunities. We are excellent in losing opportunities and we are bad in seizing opportunities. We have made progress judging from the way things move in the subcontinent, lackadaisically and slowly. Simla was an achievement and it was an achievement for peace. It was not an achievement of one side against the other. Delhi has also made its contribution and now we await further developments. I would go to the extent of saying that we anxiously await further developments in the process of normalization. But there I would say that sometimes journalists have not been very helpful and nor have the politicians, who by habit, have taken a position. And you see, you cannot take positions by habit in politics. There are events, there are objective conditions, there are

circumstances, there are the forces of States, there are the alliances and the counter-alliances, all the factors which are relevant to a situation. On that basis you make an evaluation and on that evaluation you base your policy. But if the basis of that evaluation is removed or disappears, yet you base your policies on certain predilections which are routed in habit or in past notions, that is not making a contribution to your constituency, or to your country. But we have that brand of politicians, both in India and in Pakistan, and I dare say Bangladesh also has chosen types who are given to negativism in their approach. So they have been a kind of a hindrance in all the places. Loss of face; Pakistan has done better than India; Pakistan has got away with this. But there is no question of looking at it like that. If you look at this from that angle, that '*Oh pagal bana ke le gaya ye, vagaira*', that sort of stupid approach, it's *tea gup shup* you see, and that somehow or the other influences, you know, the thought processes.

Q. May I submit, Sir, that to weaken the force of such politicians and, elements on both sides....

A. And journalists ....

Q. And journalists, and all other elements combined who contribute to freezing the situation, is it not of the utmost importance that communications at various levels are resumed and communication gap, the barrier, is broken somehow? I mean whether we refer to it in terms of para 3 or whatever paragraph of the Simla Agreement, but essentially, objectively speaking, if we allow postal, telegraph, telephone links and newspapers, that to my mind is very basic. I would submit, Sir, in spite of the fact that there is a strong feeling here that diplomatic relations should be resumed first, and after all we have had diplomatic relations for all these years, 25-26 years, that has not helped matters very much either. For taking a stand on that....

A. I was not impressed, of course, I am not taking a stand on such matters, because these were not matters of principle, I was not impressed by Mrs. Gandhi's remarks on this matter, that we had diplomatic relations for 25 years and in spite of that we had war. We have had not only war, but wars. Now when you take such a statement, if you take that statement, then there is no need to have diplomatic relations ever.

Q. You are right, but I suppose, the spirit is that let us go after the tangibles, the substance of relationship rather than the form of it.

A. First thing that happens between States is that they take the diplomatic action. That is the first thing that happens, the first normal thing that happens. Why should we go backward. I am not saying that I am making an issue out of it, but it has been an enigma to me, why India has not agreed to....

Q. I suppose, the sole idea has been, let us go after the hard core of it, the substance of it, communications, trade, cultural exchange, etc. Now trade, cultural exchanges, may take time but let us begin with communications.

A. That is one way of looking at it. But there is another way of looking at it. I am not ascribing any motives. At the same time there is another way of looking at it, since our relations have been beclouded by suspicions and there has been justification for suspicion on both sides in the past. The other way of looking at it is that India might be interested in encouraging subversive elements, and I shall use the word "subversive" also in quotations. Encouraging "subversive" elements and then, not being here, it has not been having her presence here, so that she can tell Pakistan how can we be encouraging "subversive" elements.

Q. But this is a two-way game, Sir. Don't you think so?

A. We are not playing it. We are not playing it. I can tell you quite frankly and it is not because out of any moral greatness, but I have seen from experience of the last 25 years that it has not paid and it does not pay to play this game, and I would suggest, it would not be helpful for the bigger thing.

Q. I would submit in all humility that it does not pay India either. It does not pay anyone.

A. I would think so. I would think so. But, you know, people are charlatans. If there are bad relations, if there is a mental blockade, then these charlatans, they take advantage, they want some pecuniary benefits, they want something and then they put it in the garb of some noblistic ideal that look I have to fight an election. I need funds. I have to buy cars. I have to pay workers and this is needed to buy this and this is needed to buy that and they make money; it is after all, the point is that there is inflation in the world and people find it difficult to work out a living and so they enchant the people that yes I am a guerrilla leader, I can do this, I can do that. And some countries feel that, well, there is no harm if we can do it. But this kind of subversion, I would not say that it will pay India, I am convinced, it would not pay in the long run and now also you know this is propaganda, the All India Radio has resumed, the nasty outbursts, but I am not retaliating....

Q. It is again the consequence of old ideas and prejudices. I would like to submit to you, since I am having this privilege of meeting you, that some of your media occasionally try to extol the virtues of Islam not by itself, but in terms of attacking Hinduism. I have listened to a radio programme here. There is tremendous richness and wealth in Islam to be extolled by itself which is valid, understandable, and desirable, but why do it in negative terms?

A. Yes, it is a force of habit. I do not see. I do not see.

Q. I mean this on both sides. The minds of the people still have a hangover of the past. Whereas I suppose, there is need on both sides to get over this.

A. But on this other question of exchanges, communication, dangerous communication gap, it is not just a gap, it is a dangerous communication gap, so much so that when I was making my speeches in Azad Kashmir, because of the communication gap, they were reported as if I had gone there to train guerrillas, whereas the basic message of mine was that war has not served any purpose and we must settle this problem by peaceful means.

Q. I am glad you say that, Sir, because we got this news from various agencies and particularly the references to *hartal* and guerrillas created some misunderstandings. Now if the communication gap was not there....

A. Your ambassador would be here, your journalists would be here. But you know there also we are not defaulters because after I assumed office I allowed Indian journalists to come, as many as wanted, to come here.

Q. Yes, yes, and I suppose more from this side are also going....

A. But there was no reciprocity for a year and a half. Some of our journalists tried and after one and a half years, two journalists were allowed to go to Dacca via Delhi, and that had a bigger objective, that they were two friendly journalists, Mazhar Ali and Najiullah. So that was the only response.

Q. But now the visas of eight of them have been pending for the last many months and I have been talking to journalist friends here, and they have said that there have been other reasons, making arrangements of this thing and that thing. Foreign office also says that we would now persuade them to go over. Absolutely, in principle, there is no objection from the other side, no obstruction at all, and I think some of them will go now. But Sir, may I draw your attention to the other aspect of it. Suppose we succeed in breaking the communication gap in the next few months by and by, do you think fundamentally there is hope for cooperation at the economic level between the two countries?

A. Yes. . . .

Q. In a very significant manner.

A. Certainly, certainly.

Q. Are there any constraints on this side?

A. No, there is no constraint on our side. But there might have been constraints in the mind of past governments, but no constraints in my mind, in the mind of my government, because I believe that it is necessary for both India-Pakistan and Pakistan-Bangladesh that there is trade between us. It will be beneficial to them. It will be beneficial to us. No political principles are compromised at all and there have been countries who have had worst of relations and in the worst of those times trade had not been stopped. There have been countries who have been trading with South Africa although they are making all kinds of speeches in the United Nations against trading with South Africa. We are not one of those countries. We do not trade with South Africa. But I have given you an example that the countries who have had worst of relations, they trade with each other. There is the case of China not recognized by so many countries and yet those countries were trading with China. They were selling wheat to China much before they recognized China.. And this happened when the Soviet revolution took place. On the one hand there were white Russians and other efforts to try to frustrate the revolution, on the other hand trade was taking place. So I fail to understand why in the past this barrier was built. There could have been barriers, perhaps, for political reasons in other matters but I cannot understand why we should not have trade. Trade, as I said, compromises no political principles. It will be beneficial to the common man. It will be beneficial to the two countries and-we have no inhibitions at all.

Q. Are there some economic vested interests here which would not be happy....

A. They would not lose either. I have examined it from that angle also. I do not see how any of our real powerful economic vested interests would lose by it. I do not see it. Our textiles are as competitive as yours, even better in some respects. I do not see why they cannot compete and in any case we are not going to buy and sell textiles to each other offhand. I don't expect that to be the kind of thing that we will send to one another. But there is a question of food. Sometimes, you know, there are droughts in India, famine in India, sometimes we need food, sometimes yours is surplus, sometime we are in surplus. When we are prepared to sell to other countries far away why should we not sell across the borders?

Q. And then there is natural gas on this side which, probably, can be given to the other side, and iron ore, coal from the other side....

A. Yes, that I know. I know, we are prepared for trade relations and there is no inhibition from our side.

Q. What can be the similarly more fundamental bases of lasting cooperation between the two countries, by and by.

A. You know in Simla we agreed to the step by step approach and as I told the Prime Minister of India that it is very difficult to digest everything at one time and I told her, one of the failings, perhaps, one of the failings according to my estimate of the Tashkent [Agreement] was that everything was sought to be done in one go to clear the decks. And you do not clear the decks in the countries that have limited horizons. We have limited horizons. So it was not possible. Now I believe in step by step approach. Off and on there will be speeches made. Please do not think that this would be wrong after all. The other day I got a letter from Karanjia expressing disappointment. I am not making the foreign policy of *Blitz*. I am making the foreign policy of Pakistan. I did not say anything on which there had been a change. I told him that basically I subscribe to good relations between our two countries. In view of the changed situation, the totality of events that have gone into the situation. This is my objective conviction. And at the same time, I said look, you must not be sensitive. You must also be a little bit –I would say thick-skinned –a little patient and to see how these prejudices mellow out and peter out, because if you think that in one stroke you are going to change the course of centuries, all that will be making no contribution to the settlement of disputes. And today partly why I have been able to take some steps is because people do not consider me to be lackey or stooge or a person who was in the Congress and then later on came in and became some member of a party which is affiliated. Now if any of those people had been in office, they would not have been able to go one step. But here they knew that in national interest, as I saw national interest, I felt at one time that Kashmir dispute was a basic one and first to be settled and in those days perfectly and scientifically justifiable.

The American military assistance was the factor in the consideration which was in the 1965 war. If we had not made some of the mistakes, we could have done much better. There were other factors involved but I don't have to tell you because you are teaching also at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. You have read your books on strategies of Institute of [Strategic] Studies. So that situation was different from this situation. So all these things that war, or whether we were better prepared or had better opportunity, yet we were not able to make a breakthrough because both India and Pakistan made terrible mistakes. And now who knows that tomorrow even this one country is better placed than the other. If the same kind of assanine [sic] mistakes are made then you might be in an advantageous position. You might find yourself in a disadvantageous position. You would find yourself again in square one. We have seen the Arab-Israeli war. Again they are back to where they began from. So, everything put together I have said that I subscribe to good relations, to building up good relations. But there will be times when we say don't agree, that this cannot be done, and this remains our position. Sometimes it will be necessary to hide some point of view, some point of difference. But that does not take away from the cast-iron framework of good relations.

Q. Should I presume that you are equally hopeful in this framework of discussion of the solution of Kashmir also in the next few years or....

A. You know I can't. I have told this to a number of your colleagues that I can't take so much together. And I haven't given any thought to that problem in the sense that there have been so many immediate problems, the legacies of the 1971 war, the prisoners of war issue, the vacation of territory, the economic crisis we have faced, the Constitution, the floods that came, on top of it now the oil problem. I fail to understand why I must expect everything to be resolved in my time when there are certain basic things to be settled in terms of making the basic infrastructure of our society, in terms of seeing that the institutions, they take root, and by the time really we get over these problems and there has been some period of consolidation, we will be more or less at the time of the next elections, and in that period of time I don't see a problem that has not been resolved for 25 years will be resolved in the next three years. And even if it is possible to give attention to it, I don't think that with all the problems heaped on us, of a burning and immediate nature, that it would be advisable to go into the heart of that problem straightaway. Now having said that, it does not mean that at any stage I am not prepared to discuss the Kashmir problem. I am prepared for it, because I know the problem, having dealt with it almost from the beginning.

Q. People have to be carried along with it.

A. Yes, but I feel that there are some immediate problems, hurdles which have to be crossed, and it would be preferable to cross them.

Q. Would you mind elaborating your proposal made in New York about the reduction in defence expenditure?

A. Yes. It is this that we have found that none of the devices has worked to really make a breakthrough in the economic field. And when you really spin it around, you in your country and we in our country come to the same conclusion that the expenditure on defence is colossal. It is back-breaking expenditure for you in terms of your capacity, and for Pakistan in terms of our capacity. Now, if your Government is committed to social justice and to amelioration of the lot of the common man, like our Government is certainly committed to that programme and we are making every effort to implement it, but the exercise is counter-productive because of the amount that goes into defence. That being the position that at last in both countries you have a government which is sensitive to economic and social matters, Governments which have come into office on the promise of improving economic and social conditions of the people. This was not so important a factor with the past governments, either in India or Pakistan. Nehru came and the Congress came because they had fought for Independence. And one elections after another that was the basic thing. They had won Independence. They have fought for Independence. They had gone to jails. It was the personality of Nehru, heir of

Gandhi, all that kind of thing. Communist parties had not come up. Social consciousness had not come up. The rising expectations. But in the last elections certainly this was a predominant factor in your country.

Now in our country also in the past when every big Sardar got elected, and he didn't have to go to his constituency, there were pocket-boroughs and things like that. Well we smashed all that. We smashed all that again on the central economic theme. And now this is a new development in our mutual history, firstly, and secondly, as far as you are concerned, now you are moving into a new relationship with China. This is quite clear. I don't have to elucidate this. You accept this position. In the past you took the position, rightly or wrongly, that you had to cater for two threats. One was the Pakistan threat the other was the China threat. Now when you are making determined efforts to improve relations with China, and you have frozen that problem of Mac Mahon Line and all that, and in any case you have decided in your minds not to go to war over it.

Q. But that is up to the other party now....

A. About that, you will have no problem once you settle problems with Pakistan. You can take it from me in fact. So that is one thing which is out of the way. Secondly, Pakistan is dismembered. What I was telling you earlier, that the objective conditions were different earlier when I was preaching confrontation. Objective conditions were different. Now Pakistan is in two parts. One is Bangladesh, the other is Pakistan. You know that our military position after the stoppage, and I don't see why you don't want any American assistance to come to us. It does not mean we want to fight with India. We have our own problems. We have this problem which has been reactivated in the north by Afghanistan. We have to think of our territorial integrity, and by territorial integrity does not mean India alone. This whole Persian Gulf region has become an excitable place. Indian Ocean is attracting the attention of the great powers, and after the energy crisis and all that has taken place, we are located in such a position that we have to think of our security. We have to have our borders secure. And there is also a psychological factor after the separation of East Pakistan. So we are not getting all that assistance and your country is unnecessarily a hindrance. In that we don't raise a howl when you get so much military assistance from the Soviet Union. I really fail to understand why the Indians are so touchy about getting some of our commitments, which, under obligation from the United States. But taking all these factors into account, if India and Pakistan were to say alright, if we can't sign the "no-war" pact because "no-war" pact has a dirty history, because it was involved. . .it means almost the surrender of Kashmir in the minds of the people, the way it was brought about. And one phrase was used all the times, "no-war" pact, "no-war" pact, and it was said no, no, no, no "no-war" pact. So that has got a bad history. Now if there can't be something like that, then taking into account your requirements and taking into account our requirements, certainly our experts can sit across the table, and if they can devise a method whereby we can feel secure and you can feel secure and there need not be any change in the

preponderant outlook for your needs and our needs, rather than keep on escalating. Even if we can find some method to freeze in the first instance, that in itself makes a contribution. So it was made in that spirit. It was not made in the spirit that there should be disparity and the fact that....

Q. India's only objection can possibly be that there can't be parity because of the....

A. Parity not in that sense. Parity in the sense of your position and our position. But the logical way to clear the point would be to sit across the table....

Q. Surely, certainly....

A. And to accept in principle, accept in principle.

Q. Yes, we accept this very much in principle. Another question is, of late you have been taking increasing interest in West Asia. Do you think this would be compatible with your deep links with South Asia, or how far South Asia will also continue to be relevant to Pakistan.

A. No. No, no, not at all. We are parts of the subcontinent. You see, the point is that we are a part of the subcontinent, and we cannot in any case be a part of any other part of the world. No matter how much I might hate India, I might despise India, I might loath India, but we are in the subcontinent, and it is like a European State on the Mediterranean shores. It has to have good relations with Algeria. It must have good relations with Algeria, but it is a part of Europe. It is a part of continental Europe. Now these States which are very close to us, if you throw a stone you can get across to .oman, they are so close to us. And they are Muslim States. And they have got this economic potential which is vast and unimaginable. They have relations with us. There are so many Pakistanis living there, serving there, working there, immigrants, and all that. There are many common factors between us and them. But this does not mean that we say that we have opted out of the subcontinent because we cannot opt out of the subcontinent. So of course there is nothing incompatible.

Q. May I ask you a question on the internal situation? What do you perceive to be the role of religion in your national life in future?

A. Well, we had this problem during the elections, a great deal of it when we were accused of all manner of things, but Pakistan's basis, Pakistan's history, being religious and ideological, whatever name you want to give it, it will always have an important position. But the position will not be in its reactionary sense in the way it was used in the past. I hope that it will have, what we have tried to give it, that it is a progressive thought, a progressive influence, and does not come in the garb of wanting to perpetuate exploitation and prejudice. After all it is our religion and we are very proud

of it. But we have never preached chauvinism. We have said that of course we are Muslims and we are very proud of being Muslims. We consider ourselves to be as good Muslims if not better Muslims than these people who have tried to capitalize on this aspect of the problem, to keep things where they are, or to perpetuate the status quo and all that goes with it. In other words, we hope that it will be what it is—a progressive and enlightening message, an enlightening thought, an enlightening influence. This is our concept of it, this is our reading of religion, in the light of society. There are others who have not given it that interpretation. and they have tried to keep it as if it were a factor which would keep things exactly. But that is not the position. We consider it to be a dynamic force. Religion will always be a force in our society. But the point which is more important today is what kind of force. Is it going to be a force in the hands of reactionaries and those who want to perpetuate the abominable status quo, or is it going to be a factor in the pace of bringing salvation, enlightenment to the peasants, and ending feudalism, allowing the forces of egalitarianism to spread, and we are trying to use it—not use it but interpret because we can't use it, interpret it in that way, and we believe that is the correct interpretation.

Q. Do you think that after the separation of one wing your problem of national identity has been to some extent made easier?

A. No, I don't think so because in some ways it has given a very big jolt to us. I can see what you are aiming at but at the same time I don't think that it has made the task easier. And if the task had been made easier, there would not have been Pakistan in the first place. There was a basis for Pakistan, East and West Pakistan, and that basis now stands altered by what we consider to be an act of aggression, not by a natural process. If India had not intervened in the conflict, and if there had not been this intervention, perhaps, you might have been more correct. But in the minds of our people the separation of East Pakistan was not a result of the differences that developed between the two parties, between East and West Pakistan. In the minds of our people it was brought about, the severance was brought about by an act of war.

Q. But don't you think Constitution-making would have been far more difficult if one were to reconcile the interests of that wing also when your new Constitution was made?

A. No, in 1954 there was an agreement on the Constitution, and it was broken not because there was no agreement but because Mr. Ghulam Mohammed sought to perpetuate himself. We were able to do it....

Q. One can see certain amount of violence being perpetuated our national political life, and given the sort of democratic framework, there is hardly a scope for that, hardly a need for that. Actually it is counter-productive. Are you making serious efforts.

A. Yes, I know. But there are two or three things here. First of all, unfortunately, and it is a very bad trend, bomb-throwing, cracker-making, violence has become a part of a world-wide cycle you know. It is taking place every day. You read about bomb blast in London. You read about Belfast. The Prime Minister of Spain recently was tragically assassinated, and this trend is something which influences one society from another. Secondly, these things have become easily available. In the past they were not so easily available. And then people have read a great deal about these things. There is an element of romanticism in the minds of the younger generation. So that is also there. Thirdly, we are dealing with the legacies of the past. And in our society, in our temperament, sometimes democracy to the Opposition means installation of themselves in power. And if they are not in power there is not democracy for them. So all these things have come into play. But I am not disturbed by this trend. I hope to be able to resolve the basic political problems. Once the basic political problems are resolved, and they will take time. It was idealistic to expect people that in their first flush everything be settled and people will learn a lesson from the traumatic experience of East Pakistan. People don't learn lessons so easily. If they did, politics would be a much simpler affair. Now they say to you, we gave him a vote of confidence. But you see, we also do that. When we get a crisis immediately there is some element of panic or something or the other and confusion and people immediately rally. You must have seen it as a student yourself of your own society that immediately after rallying they also fall apart very soon. They don't have that sustaining effort to pursue a policy which is a good one for long because there are so many forces pulling them in different directions. It becomes unfashionable not to preach violence. It becomes unfashionable not to make a hard speech. If someone says, no, you know we must have negotiations with the Government, it is regarded that he has become a stooge, surrendering to the Government, that sort of thing. So they did give me that vote of confidence, of course, before I went to Simla, and all that, and I am thankful to them. I also arrived at certain agreements with them, on the Constitution, on restoration of provincial governments. It is not that it was a one-sided cooperation. But I had no illusion that they will continue to do this, because they said that no this must be done, that must be done, and they started falling apart, going hammer and tong making all kinds of nasty speeches, abusive speeches, we will do this, we will tear him apart, we will give his flesh to the dogs, and all this sort of thing. So, on the one hand I am very keen to establish democracy and I have full faith in democracy. If I did not have so much faith in democracy, I would not have taken on a struggle against Ayub Khan. I know that our people like freedom. Now the matter does not end there, that they like freedom, that they don't like to be suppressed. Obviously, they are freedom-loving people. But when you have to institutionalize that also. And in trying to institutionalize it after so many years we haven't been able to, as you said yourself, we haven't had a Constitution, haven't been able to institutionalize it. You were able to have a Constitution soon after Independence, but you also had many knocks. So many problems. Nehru was accused of being a dictator, by so many of his opponents. But he wasn't a dictator. I knew Nehru very well. I knew he wasn't a dictator. He was wedded to the idealistic thoughts. He

was wedded to the western concepts of democracy, his writings, everything else. But nevertheless, people said he was a dictator, he had thrown out Tandon, he has done this to this problem, he is using his heavy hand on so many problems. But no, in the beginning you have to try and give shape to things. Then they crystallize. I hope that we go through this transition. It is a painful transition. The thing is that the other side must also see the objective conditions carefully, and see that we are going through a transition. In the beginning, we had parliamentary system in the provinces, but in the Centre I retained the presidential system. Now it wasn't that I wanted to become President of Pakistan. And they said this is anomalous. It was not anomalous, because we had just gone through a terrible onslaught. We had 15 years of the presidential system and overnight it couldn't be just changed. And we had an Interim Constitution to keep things a little tight, see the provinces all are slowly given their provincial autonomy, establish parliamentary democracy. Then in five or six months when we had the permanent Constitution, I stepped down and became the Prime Minister. But in the beginning it was necessary to keep the driver's seat firmly in my hand and it was easier in that way. Now that there has been more consolidation, more progress, this has happened.

So also the Press. I am quite prepared to slowly stop giving Press advice and things like that. But our Press also, generally speaking, they haven't learnt much. Not a single lesson from 15 years of martial law. Either they have had to cope with no freedom at all, or they want excessive freedom. So I said our trouble has been either there has been too much government or there has been too little government. And it will take a little time before we strike that golden mean.

Q. You referred to the political problems which you have yet to tackle. Can you indicate what are those?

A. Basically, one of the basic problems I would say is to see how the Sardars reconcile themselves to the changes we are making. That is really the way it has emerged. They have given different colors to make it a noble cause. But it is how the Sardars of Baluchistan can reconcile themselves to the changes we are bringing.

Q. But the instrumentality again has got to be the Sardars themselves, either the one or the other.

A. Well, in a different position in the sense that they would not have their little kingdoms. Now you see the quarrel is whether the writ of the Central Government should go into the Marri area or not. Now there are Sardars not only in Baluchistan, there are Sardars in Sindh. Why are the Sardars of Baluchistan more important than the Sardars of Sindh? Not because the Sardars of Sindh are not important, but because the British had in their time taken the administration, the rule of law, the writ, to the Sardars of Sindh They didn't take it to certain parts of the Sardars of Baluchistan, Kalat,

Marri-Bugti areas. These are special areas. After Independence none of our leaders had the courage, Quaid-e-Azam excluded, to take it on because you know the line of least resistance is the best line. "*Bhai kyon takleef paida karein? Ab chhoro. Is baat ko kyo chherna chahte ho? Baad men dekha jayega.*" But I don't have that approach because I think first we must solve the internal problems. We can't have such anomalies left over. Then there should be schools and hospitals, and electricity, and roads in all the areas. There should be a deputy commissioner or a political agent in these places. That is also why I have taken our writ to the forward positions and Afghanistan is making a lot of noise about it. It is not for that reason. I believe that we have to serve the people. We can't serve the people in a vacuum, and with parallel governments running, one of the Maliks and the Sardars, and the other of the Central Government where by proxy they come and represent their people by their single individual selves. Now that position will change. The Sardar will still be there as a member of the National Assembly. But what is the position of the Sardar? Does he have a deputy commissioner where his tribesmen can either go to him for *khanagi faisala* or they can go to the deputy commissioner and superintendent of police. Today there is no deputy commissioner, no superintendent of police. So he is their *ma-baap* really speaking, lord and master. I can't allow that to happen no matter how much trouble there is, and no matter what the rest of the world will say that Baluchistan is becoming another Bangladesh and things like that which is not true. It is the penetration of civilization into these areas. Sardar Khair Bux Marri met me in Murree and we had discussions and I told him that I can't compromise on this matter. He said to me, and these are his words in front of Wali Khan and others, he said: "This country you say is a poor country." I said: "Yes, it is a poor country." He says: "If it is a poor country, then why don't you build these roads in certain other areas. Why do you want to bring them to Marri areas." Now, I mean that is no answer. That all the bounties of the poor country must fall on the Marri. If that is the way they look at it then naturally they will clash. But I believe that they got the message, because they also made the mistake. "*Aji dictatorship thi. Military rule tha. Ham unke sath. Yeh to democracy hai. Ya ke ji, sab kutchh hai.*" We will be able to deal, show this Government how we can deal with, when we could deal with Yahya Khan and Ayub Khan." So they thought they could take me on. "Me" means not personally but the Government. When they tried, I said no you can't do that. And now they are under detention since August, and of course I haven't put them in jail. They are living in guest house of the Government. But that means nothing, neither here nor there. Not that they are afraid of jails. They are brave people. But I think they got the message that they can't just get away.

Q. Are you hopeful of some solution

A. I hope so, I hope so. But I have not yet established any contact.

Q. There is lot of speculation here about the Soviet interest in the Pakhtoon-Afghanistan situation. Concretely speaking, what would Soviet Union gain out of all this?

A. I can't say. I can't say. We want to have good relations with the Soviet Union. We want to have good relations.

Q. Finally, about the economy. What are the serious bottlenecks in the economy, the price rise, etc.

A. That is a terrible thing. Eaten up so many of our achievements. It has been a great disappointment. It is again an international phenomenon. God knows now whether we are going towards a recession. So that one doesn't know. But many of our achievements have been lost in this spiral of prices. But at the same time the position is not as bad. I admit it is bad. But it is not as bad as it is being made out.

Q. It is bad in India too....

A. Oh, it is worse.

Q. But talking of Pakistan, what are the basic issues involved.

A. But now the question is basically one of larger investment. We must now invest more to increase our production, and to increase the employment opportunities. In the public sector we are going full steam ahead. The private sector is shying away from it for the fear that we are going to nationalize industries and things like that. But we will have to again resist these pressures because we are determined to establish a socialist order. But we don't want to make a lot of song and dance about it, and make a lot of noise about it. Because it is much better if you believe in these things to do it properly. I will just give you one small illustration of my approach to it. Some of these industrialists and others came to me once and said: "You know your television and radio is doing nothing but talking about class difference and other things," I said I will stop it. They thought it was a great victory. But when the others came to me and said why have you stopped it, I said look the basic thing is to do these things, and to have certain progress towards a planned democratic socialist economy. And we will go ahead in our programme according to our manifesto. And I think we will on the whole achieve good results.

Q. You took over about 18 industries, their management, and now probably are in the process of taking over their majority shares. Do you think it has made a difference to production?

A. Certainly it has. It has. It has increased and improved production, both.

Q. But at the same time it has created some problem with the industrialists, some uncertainty, and probably you are in the process of clarifying the position, the Government policy in the matter.

A. Yes. But this is, now you see, they are trying to take more commitments from Government than we can give. And you can't really give, in the world of today, any cast-iron commitments. Tomorrow something can happen to me and a new government can come, and anything can happen. There was an industrialist, a Pathan industrialist. He came to me and said, in the time of King Zahir Shah, that he would like to go and invest in Afghanistan, because and prospects of free enterprise were better in Zahir Shah's time which is true. Now within three months Daud Khan came into power and Daud Khan also talks about socialist changes, and all. So, you can't get cast-iron guarantees.

Q. How about the land reform programme. Is it making good....

A. That is making good progress. Now it is being implemented, and its effects are being felt. It has been a good programme. We have given land to the tiller without taking a soo [sic] from him, and no compensation to the landowner. The landowner is now responsible for seeds and all other encumbrances. And I think it has made a fairly good impact.

Q. So the manifesto of the party on the whole is being....

A. Yes, and now it can be subjected to scrutiny, and it can be seen that in two years the steps we have taken have been all in compliance with the pledges we made, and we have got still time to complete the rest.

Q. Do you hope to or wish to hold the general elections before the due date mentioned in the Constitution, 1977, or there is no need for it?

A. There is no need for it, but the point is, now in the parliamentary system the advantage is that you can hold it at any time within the period of five years. And I won't spring a surprise on the Opposition that they have the general elections tomorrow. I won't do anything like that. There is no need to do that. Because if we want to establish democratic traditions, if we play such a trick, the same trick can be played against us. But of course I think we will not be able to give a one year campaign like Yahya Khan gave. In no country in the world has there been a one-year election campaign, specially for a country that has had no elections for 15 years.

Q. Thank you, Sir.